



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Research Programs application guidelines at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/fellowships> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Research Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: The Memory of Al-Andalus and Spanish Colonialism in Morocco, 1859-1956

Institution: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Project Director: Eric Calderwood

Grant Program: Fellowships

Research and contribution

The Daughter of Granada and Fez explores how Spanish and Moroccan writers used the history of al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Iberia) as a framework for understanding Spanish colonialism in Morocco (1859-1956). At the heart of the book is a paradox: during the colonial period, the historical memory of al-Andalus served simultaneously as a justification for Spanish colonialism and as a sign of Moroccan anticolonial resistance and national identity. In the spirit of the NEH “Bridging Cultures” initiative, my book analyzes colonial and postcolonial discourses that are built on the multidirectional use of a shared, interfaith past. Theorists of nationalism have long emphasized the anachronistic nature of nationalist imaginaries, which legitimize the nation by projecting it back onto a distant past. What is unique about the use of al-Andalus in the context of Spanish colonialism in Morocco is the simultaneous deployment of the *same* mythic national past, the Andalusian past, by two ideological projects that are fundamentally at odds with each other: Spanish colonial propaganda and Moroccan national self-determination. My book not only provides a fresh account of Spanish colonialism and of Moroccan nationalist discourse, but it also sheds a light on the politics of the contemporary Mediterranean world, where the historical memory of al-Andalus continues to structure debates about Europe’s evolving relationship with the Muslim world.

Celebrations of al-Andalus permeate contemporary literature, historiography, political discourse, and tourism on both sides of the Mediterranean. A diverse array of Mediterranean cultures lay claim to the cultural legacy of al-Andalus. In particular, Morocco and Spain have cast themselves as the direct descendants of al-Andalus. The most recent Moroccan constitution, ratified in 2011, provides ample evidence of how al-Andalus has become an institutionalized element of Moroccan culture and politics. Its preamble cites the influence of the “Andalusian tributary” on Morocco’s “national identity” and celebrates “the Moroccan people’s attachment to the values of openness, moderation, tolerance, and dialogue” (2). The constitution thus aligns Morocco with one of the most potent modern myths associated with the history of al-Andalus: the idea of *convivencia*, the supposedly harmonious coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in medieval Iberia. The constitution also exemplifies what I call the “Andalus-centric” narrative of Moroccan history: the idea that the Christian Reconquest of Muslim Granada in 1492 did not mark the demise of Andalusian culture but rather its migration from the Iberian Peninsula to Morocco, where it has continued to thrive until the present day.

Despite the apparently medieval origins of Morocco’s Andalusian identity, my book argues that the “Andalus-centric” narrative of Moroccan history is a modern invention that emerges from the colonial encounter between Spain and Morocco in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Starting with the Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859-1860, Spanish writers revived the historical memory of al-Andalus in order to legitimize Spain’s historical connection to North Africa and to justify Spain’s colonial projects in Morocco. The exploitation of Spain’s Muslim past reached its apogee in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), when Franco and his Fascist collaborators used the image of al-Andalus as a tool to recruit approximately 80,000 Moroccan soldiers to fight in the Rebel army. To ensure Moroccan support for the Rebel cause, Franco granted unprecedented freedoms to the Moroccan nationalist movement, including the creation of an Arabic-language nationalist press and the legalization of Morocco’s first nationalist party. From these organs of Moroccan nationalist politics, forged in the opening months of the Spanish Civil War, emerged a widespread call for the creation of a Moroccan national culture, whose cornerstone would be Morocco’s Andalusian heritage. It is therefore not a coincidence that the 1940s witnessed a revival of various Moroccan artistic traditions that claimed descent from al-Andalus. Thus, in one of the eloquent ironies of colonial history, the Spanish insistence on Morocco’s Andalusian legacy, which had served as a

justification for Spanish colonialism, sowed the seeds of the Moroccan national culture that would supplant colonial rule.

Methods and work plan

An NEH fellowship will allow me to finish the book manuscript, which will entail writing the introduction and finishing Chapter Four (summarized below). The introduction will put the book into dialogue with recent developments in Mediterranean studies and postcolonial studies, where scholars have called for transnational and transcolonial approaches to the study of Mediterranean colonial history. I also hope to revitalize communication between modern Spanish studies and modern North African studies. While scholars have devoted much attention to the medieval history of al-Andalus, there has been much less scholarship on modern Hispano-Arab cultural interactions. Likewise, classical accounts of European colonialism in North Africa have tended to focus on French colonialism, often disregarding Spain's colonial possessions in Morocco and the Sahara. My book's introduction will reinsert Spain into modern Moroccan history, Morocco into modern Spanish history, and Spanish colonialism in Morocco into the study of Mediterranean colonial history.

Only two chapters of my book project (Chapters One and Two) originated in my dissertation, which explored Spanish and Moroccan representations of the War of 1859-1860, the war that paved the way for Spanish colonialism in Morocco. **Chapter One** focuses on Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's *Diary of an Eyewitness to the War of Africa* (1860), and **Chapter Two** analyzes the elegy and the chronicle that the Moroccan poet and religious scholar Mufaddal Afaylal wrote about the war and the subsequent Spanish occupation of his native Tetouan. Both Alarcón and Afaylal represent the Spanish campaign in Morocco as an extension of the medieval Christian Reconquest of al-Andalus. These chapters thus illustrate Spanish and Moroccan efforts to rewrite the origins of Spanish colonialism as the continuation of medieval Andalusian history. Much of my research and argument for the book – including all of the material for Chapters Three, Four, and Five – took shape during my postdoctoral fellowship at the Michigan Society of Fellows. **Chapter Three** explores the contradictory ideological legacy of Blas Infante (1885-1936), hailed today as the “Father of the Andalusian Fatherland.” In post-Franco Spain, Infante's legacy of *andalucismo* (Andalusian nationalism) has become inexorably linked with the myth of *convivencia*, interfaith harmony in al-Andalus. Yet Infante's posthumous fame as a champion of intercultural tolerance masks his influence on Spanish colonialism in Morocco. By tracing the afterlife of Infante's work in Francoist writings about Morocco, this chapter demonstrates how Spain's colonial projects made strange bedfellows of Spanish liberals and fascists, both of whom defended Spain's historical right to rule Morocco.

Chapters Four and Five examine the representation of al-Andalus in Spanish and Arabic writings from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) until the first years of Moroccan independence (1956-1959). Finishing Chapter Four will be one of my main goals during my fellowship period. **Chapter Four** opens with an account of the Lebanese-American writer Amin al-Rihani's visit to Morocco in 1939, as an official guest of Juan Beigbeder, the High Commissioner of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco. Al-Rihani's official state visit was part of a concerted effort by Spanish fascists to promote the idea that the Francoist mission in Morocco was to resurrect the glories of al-Andalus. In fact, al-Rihani's account of his trip helped to propagate this idea for an Arabicspeaking readership beyond Morocco. In it, al-Rihani credits Beigbeder with wanting “to renew the Hispano-Arab culture” and “to resurrect Cordoba in Tetouan” (271). The idea of “resurrecting” al-Andalus in Tetouan, the capital of the Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956), formed the basis of Spain's cultural policies in Morocco under Franco. Through the creation of such institutions as the Hispano-Moroccan Music Conservatory and the School of Indigenous Arts,

Spanish colonial authorities codified a canon of Andalusí arts, which, today, are upheld as essential components of Morocco's Andalusí identity. In order to finish my research for Chapter Four, I will spend one month of my proposed fellowship period working in archives that have materials related to the Spanish promotion of Morocco's Andalusí heritage: the General Archive of Administration in Alcalá de Henares (Spain) and the General Library of Tetouan (Morocco). **Chapter Five** explores the emergence of the "Andalus-centric" narrative in Moroccan historiography and letters in the 1940s and 1950s. At the center of this chapter is one of the first and most emphatic proponents of the Andalus-centric idea of Moroccan history: Muhammad

Dawud's twelve-volume *History of Tetouan*, which Dawud began in the 1930s and continued to write through the 1970s. Dawud's *History of Tetouan* is a polyphonic text, in which many leading Moroccan nationalist thinkers participated, including al-Tuhami al-Wazzani and M'hammad Bennuna. In fact, it was Bennuna, in his prologue to *The History of Tetouan*, who coined Tetouan's moniker as "the daughter of Granada and Fez" (15), which gives my book its title. Chapter Five shows how Dawud and his collaborators appropriated the Spanish celebration of al-Andalus and re-purposed it as a tool for anti-colonial resistance. It also places modern Moroccan representations of al-Andalus in transcolonial perspective by highlighting their dialogue with contemporaneous Levantine and Egyptian writings about al-Andalus, which began to circulate in Morocco in the 1930s.

Competencies, skills, and access

My book will be the first comparative study of Spanish colonialism in Morocco, based on both Spanish and Arabic sources. I have acquired fluency in both languages after studying for several years in Spain, Morocco, and Syria. My project also incorporates primary and secondary texts in French and Catalan, as well as drawing upon medieval Iberian texts in Arabic, Latin, and Castilian. Over the past nine years, I have developed deep relationships with colleagues at several Moroccan and Spanish research institutions, such as 'Abd al-Malik al-Sa'adi University (Morocco) and the University of Granada (Spain). These colleagues have helped me to refine my book's argument and to identify several sources that are not known outside of Morocco.

Final product and dissemination

The final product of this project will be a scholarly monograph that I will publish with an academic press. I believe that the book will be of interest to scholars working in several areas, including Spanish and North African cultural studies, Arabic studies, Mediterranean studies, and postcolonial studies. While my book is intended for a scholarly audience, it will also inform my ongoing work as a journalist. In addition to my academic publications, I have also contributed essays and commentary to such venues as NPR, the BBC, *Foreign Policy*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The American Scholar*. A commitment to the public life of ideas shapes my identity as a scholar. My book is part of my continuing efforts to contribute to the public debate about the relationship between Islam and the West in the past, present, and future.

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