

THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

IN THE LIGHT *of*
MEDIEVAL SPAIN

ISLAM, THE WEST,
and the
RELEVANCE *of* THE PAST

Edited by Simon R. Doubleday
and David Coleman

Foreword by Giles Tremlett



THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

BONNIE WHEELER, *Series Editor*

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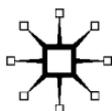
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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>Foreword: "Welcome to Moorishland"</i> <i>Giles Tremlett</i>	xi
Introduction: "Criminal Non-Intervention": Hispanism, Medievalism, and the Pursuit of Neutrality <i>Simon R. Doubleday</i>	1
1 Juan de Segovia and the Lessons of History <i>Anne Marie Wolf</i>	33
2 Reading <i>Don Quijote</i> in a Time of War <i>Leyla Rouhi</i>	53
3 Memory and Mutilation: The Case of the Moriscos <i>Mary Elizabeth Perry</i>	67
4 Expulsion from Paradise: Exiled Intellectuals and Andalusian Tolerance <i>Denise K. Filios</i>	91
5 Contemporary Moroccan Immigration and Its Ghosts <i>Daniela Flesler</i>	115
6 Spain's New Muslims: A Historical Romance <i>Lisa Abend</i>	133

7	The Persistence of the Past in the Albaicín: Granada's New Mosque and the Question of Historical Relevance <i>David Coleman</i>	157
8	Postscript: Futures of al-Andalus <i>Gil Anidjar</i>	189
	<i>List of Contributors</i>	209
	<i>Index</i>	211

FIGURES

7.1	Granada's New Mosque, Albaicín, opened 2003	158
7.2	Tower of Parish Church of San José, Albaicín, Granada	168
7.3	Anti-"Moor" Graffiti, Albaicín, 1994	169
7.4	"Romantic" Graffiti, Albaicín, 1994	171
7.5	Casa Morisca Hotel, Albaicín, Granada	182
7.6	Graffiti, Albaicín, Granada, 2005	183

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FOREWORD: “WELCOME TO MOORISHLAND”

Giles Tremlett

It is September 2006 and my e-mail is filling up with the normal mixture of news bulletins, invitations, and unwanted junk. Amongst the invitations, are some of the latest, often heated, comments from online opinion columns in the debate over a new charter of self-government for Catalonia, approved three months earlier, its historical references going back to 1359. There is also an invitation to the presentation of a new book by New York University’s H. Salvador Martínez on the co-existence of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in thirteenth-century Spain that has come to be known since the 1940s as *convivencia*. Finally, in the unwanted junk category, comes an e-mail from the town of Buitrago del Lozoya, fifty miles north of Madrid, which boasts a walled city first built by Muslims. It invites me to attend the town’s medieval fair. This, bizarrely, is to be themed around J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* or, more accurately, the blockbuster films being made of the story; it is to be complemented by fictional elves, orcs, and hobbits visiting from the Middle Earth.

All three e-mails have something to say about Spain’s relationship to its own medieval past. They do so in different and overlapping ways, but they give an idea of the multiple forms in which the medieval resurfaces in contemporary Spain. On the one hand, there is the “historical-political” form, of which the Catalan charter is a shining example. This is a country that differs viscerally over much of its own history. “Few Europeans have disagreed so much about their own country as Spaniards,” warns Henry Kamen. “The difference of opinion, centering both on culture and on politics, dates back to at least the eighteenth century and is

still alive today. It affects the way Spaniards look at their past and write about themselves, their history and their literature.”¹ Spanish politicians have proved themselves quite ready to seek ammunition for contemporary debates from real or imagined versions of the medieval period. Accompanying this conspicuously politicized element of the presence of the medieval, on the other hand, lies the “historical-cultural” dimension, including the academic and encompassing a genuine interest in the country’s heritage. But let us turn first to the “theme park medieval,” embodied in its Tolkienian version at Buitrago.

The theme park version of medieval Spain—based on commercially motivated and sometimes false, idealized, or dramatically skewed notions of history—is there to make euros out of the past. It ranges from some film and television depictions of that period to the hard-nosed schemes of tourism departments in countless Spanish cities, provinces, and regions for whom medieval Spain is, first and foremost, a marketing tool. If it is true that politicians and, to a certain extent, historians themselves can be accused of shaping the medieval past in response to their own interests, in theme-park-medieval Spain almost anything goes. From the “City of Three Cultures” in Toledo to the “Routes of al-Andalus” or the newly denominated “Route of El Cid,” exploiting the past is seen as a key way of tapping into the tourist sector that accounts for 11 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.

One of the main manifestations of this process is what I call Moorishland, the semifictional version of Spain’s past where exotic offerings of orientalism-with-tapas are combined with “nostalgia” tourism for Sephardic (Spanish-rite) Jews, and where Charlton Heston’s *El Cid* meets the sun-loungers of the Costa del Sol beaches. Spain’s Moorish history is happily raided to provide a narrative that will attract visitors, above all foreigners. Granada provides one of the most conspicuous examples. For many years the Alhambra, and the narrow, winding streets of the Albaicín district were the sum of its Moorish offering to tourists. Now the streets of the Albaicín boast couscous restaurants and gift shops selling Moroccan knick-knacks, as if they had always been there. While the restaurants serve typically Moroccan food, the gift shops actually import much of their material directly from Morocco. On one recent visit, I found the shops of Granada stocked with exactly the same goods as those I had seen being sold in the square in Chefchaouen, at the start of the Rif Mountains in Morocco, just a few months earlier. I was delighted. The lamps I could not fit into my suitcase in Morocco were easily stowed in the back of my car.

Granada’s transformation into Moorishland is relatively new. A decade ago, at least one of the same shops that was now selling Moroccan

knick-knacks had been devoted to selling Christian religious figures, crucifixes, and *estampas* of the Virgin Mary. One travel writer puts it like this:

On some streets of the Albaicín you'd be forgiven for thinking that the Moors are still holding sway here. The Calderería Baja is lined with Moroccan-style tea shops offering mint tea and honey pastries. These establishments, along with book stores selling Arab texts and shops stocked with Moorish-style crafts, are a sign of the *Granadinos'* renewed interest in their Islamic past. There is even a *hammam*, an Arab public bath offering an atmosphere which recalls Moorish times, among trickling fountains and dazzling tile work.²

Recent reinventions of medieval Spain are not driven exclusively by financial factors. In the kitsch, colorful “Moors and Christians” festivals of Valencia and Alicante provinces, for instance, other elements are at play. Anthropologists would probably point to the ritualization of an ancient conflict or the playing with concepts of the Moorish “other.” For the casual observer, it is also obvious that some very Spanish characteristics are at play—a love of ritual, the reaffirmation of community, and, simply, that very Spanish pastime of having fun in large groups. And the only medieval event that many *granadinos* themselves seem keen on celebrating is the *Toma de Granada*, the capture of Granada in 1492, a fiesta that takes place every January 2 in a revindication of the city's Christian status. Amongst those who turn up to the celebrations every year is a small group from the ultra-right Falange party. A group of intellectuals and artists, including Amin Maalouf, Yehudi Menuhin, and Ian Gibson, have tried to have the fiesta changed, but mayors of all political colors have refused to budge. “If they want to wear turbans, then they should come to the Three Kings parade,” said one mayor, referring to the Epiphany celebrations when three people dressed up in Arab costume play the part of the magi and hurl handfuls of boiled sweets into the crowds. The fiesta illustrates a decidedly ambiguous relationship with the past. “Islam can be as profitable a thing as any other religious or political phenomenon. But it looks somewhat ridiculous when politicians try to exploit our history with the message ‘visit Andalusia and Granada, a beautiful Moslem and Jewish land, but without any Jews or Moslems in it.’” Tomás Navarro, a journalist from Granada, observes in his *La Mezquita de Babel*.³

But the fact that this “beautiful Moslem and Jewish land” is often primarily a convenient source of profit is clearest at the headquarters of the Grupo Al-Andalus, a business set up to exploit Spain's Moslem past for tourism. The group has opened hammam-style baths in Granada,

Madrid, and Cordoba and is moving into tearooms, restaurants, and hotels. In Madrid's case there is evidence that the renovated baths being run by the company may actually be Roman in origin. That, I suspect, does not market quite as well. Tourists, and Spaniards themselves, think of Spain in terms of al-Andalus not—as they might in Britain—in terms of the Romans; far better, then, to make your baths Arabic. The narrative of *convivencia* in its most idealized form is especially valuable to the marketers. I once asked the tourism councilor at Segovia's city hall whether she believed in *convivencia*. "Not really," was her reply. "Except when it is useful." That same week Segovia was playing host to parties of tourists who had come for a special day of events to mark the city's Jewish past. As reflected by the Web site "reddejuderias.com" (which belongs to the Red de Juderías de España), the Sephardic legacy in fact provides especially rich pickings. In November 2006, the Web site featured a "three cultures" medieval fair in Cáceres, courses in Sephardic cooking for entrepreneurs and restaurateurs in Ávila, courses on Jewish history for people in the tourism business in Córdoba, and information on an exhibition dedicated to kosher wine and medieval Jewish Spain by a museum in La Rioja. Despite its rather obvious attempts to promote tourism, the Red de Juderías states that it is "a non-profit public association with the goal of protect the urban, architectonic, historical, artistic and cultural Sephardic Heritage of Spain."

This in turn brings us to the "historic-cultural relationship" of the Spanish with the surviving expressions of the medieval: in art, for instance, and especially in architecture. The architectural presence of the medieval—the proliferation of medieval cathedrals, convents, and monasteries and the few remaining synagogues and mosques—is pervasive. In 2005 workmen renovating a building in Porto, northern Portugal (medieval Portugal and Spain are often hard to differentiate) discovered a walled-up sixteenth-century synagogue, allegedly one of those built to cater for the tens of thousands of Jews who flooded across the Portuguese border after they were expelled from Castile. "The house of worship was hidden behind a false wall in a four-story house that Agostinho Jardim Moreira, a Roman Catholic priest, was converting into a home for old-age parishioners," the Associated Press news agency reported at the time:

Father Moreira, a scholar of Porto's Jewish history, said that as soon as the workers told him of the wall, "I knew there had to be some kind of Jewish symbol behind it." His hunch was confirmed when the wall came down to reveal a carved granite repository, about five feet tall, arched at the top and facing east to Jerusalem. It was the ark where the medieval Jews

kept Torah scrolls. Decorative green tiles in the ark further confirmed the age of the ark when experts dated glazing to a method used in the 16th century.⁴

The cultural impact of medieval architecture is impossible to measure and difficult to overestimate. Antoni Gaudi (1852–1926), the modernist Catalan architect whose Sagrada Familia cathedral is still under construction in Barcelona, was deeply inspired in both an architectural and a religious sense by the Cistercian monasteries of the Catalan countryside. Equally, at the time of writing a novel based around the construction of Barcelona’s Santa María del Mar church—*La Catedral del Mar*, by Ildefonso Falcones—is the country’s bestselling novel. In this way, the past enters the realm of the familiar.

As the remarkable survival of a *marrano* community in the Portuguese hill-town of Belmonte indicates, the medieval past also continues in more human forms. This crypto-Jewish community survived right through to the 1980s, when they were “rediscovered” by mainstream Judaism. Subsequently, rabbis from elsewhere have tried to persuade them both to observe more orthodox forms of Judaism; in the 1980s, many of the adult men were circumcised. One of the most curious religious legacies of the medieval period is the survival of a Spanish Roman Catholic community that defines itself as *Mozárabe*. Based in the city of Toledo, and with a community of some 2,000 families spread around Spain and the world, the Mozarabs consider themselves the true heirs of the Christian tradition bequeathed by the Visigoths and surviving among the Arabized Christian communities under Moslem rule. They even have their own religious brotherhood (*cofradía*) in Toledo, established in 1966, the “*Ilustre y Antiquísima Hermandad de Caballeros Mozárabes de Ntra. Sra. de la Esperanza de San Lucas*.” Isolated from Rome during the years of Moslem domination, Toledo’s Mozarab community held on to liturgical elements that had developed separately in the Iberian peninsula in the fifth to eighth centuries. Under the Moslem rulers who took over the city in 711 they were allowed to continue worshipping, being divided into six parishes. When the city was conquered by Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085, they found that many of their practices had been banned by Rome more than two centuries earlier. Eventually a compromise was reached and the six Mozarabic parishes were permitted to hold on to their liturgy. The so-called *Rito mozárabe* was conserved in these parishes through to the beginning of the sixteenth century. By this time, however, the community and the liturgy appeared in danger of extinction. Cardinal Cisneros then appeared as savior, creating a committee that researched the manuscripts and produced both the

Missale Gothicum mixtum and the *Breviarium gothicum*. A Mozarabic chapel was also created at the cathedral. The six parishes still formally exist, though only four now have buildings and the Mozarab parish priests now have personal, rather than territorial, jurisdiction over their widely scattered parishioners. The community has held on to parish registers and *tazmías* with censuses of Mozarab families.⁵ In 1992 a new Hispanic-Mozarab Missal was published, after nine years of investigation spent, especially, recovering lost material. Pope John Paul II celebrated a mass in the Vatican using the Missal. “We believe it was the first time that the Mozarab Mass had been celebrated by the Pope,” the Archdiocese of Toledo proclaims.⁶

Yet this apparent medieval “survival” is surely not politically innocent. It seems probable that the Church’s continued support of the Mozarab “community”—from the age of Cisneros, though the Franco era to that of John Paul II—reflect a sustained attempt by Christian Spain to stretch its narrative back through the period of Muslim domination to the Visigoths (just as the modern-day Muslim Spanish converts discussed in Lisa Abend’s and David Coleman’s essays later in this volume also seek to stress continuity). This reintroduces us to the hotly contested “historical-political” dimension of the medieval Spain in contemporary political discourse, exemplified by the new Catalan charter of self-government, the *Estatut*, approved by referendum in June 2006. The charter’s Preamble begins by stating that Catalonia has been shaped over the course of time through the energy of many generations, traditions, and cultures that found in Catalonia a land of welcome. The Catalan people, it continues, have maintained a constant will to self-government over the course of the centuries, embodied in such institutions as the *Generalitat*, created in 1359 by the Catalan *Corts* (representative estate) held that year in Cervera. But political autonomy for Catalonia does not go down well everywhere, and once again, the arguments can turn on history. Catalan politicians were indignant when, in 2003, the head of Spain’s Constitutional Court, Manuel Jiménez de Parga, claimed that in the year 1000 his native Andalusia had boasted fountains of colored or perfumed water while other self-proclaimed “historic communities” (by which he meant Catalonia and the Basque country) in Spain “did not even know what washing themselves at the weekend was.”⁷

Elsewhere, too, the debate over Spain’s regional tensions frequently provokes recourse to the medieval. In my book *Ghosts of Spain*, I told the story of Iñaki, a history teacher in the Basque country, who found a pupil handing in an illustration of the battle of Roncesvalles complete with Basque soldiers carrying the *Ikurriña*, the Basque flag inspired by the Union Jack in the late nineteenth century.⁸ The cultural subtext

is an unconscious, but telling, misuse of history and symbols: “The men who invented the *Ikurriña* (Sabino Arana, founder of the Basque Nationalist Party) were right in their insistence that a Basque nation/people existed in the Middle Ages. Here they were, centuries earlier, carrying their flag as they saw off yet another invader.” A radical Basque separatist rereading of the battle of Roncesvalles can also be found in the pages of *Por qué luchamos los vascos*, written by a prisoner from the armed separatist group ETA—Fernando Alonso Abad. The same desire we see today to deny the existence of a Basque people was already patent in those years, Alonso writes in relation to the account of the battle of Roncesvalles given in the *Chanson de Roland*, which claims it was Muslims, not Basques, who carried out the attack. The book devotes several pages to the attempt to prove that the medieval Kingdom of Navarre was, in reality, a Basque state. This kingdom is seen by Alonso, and presumably by others prepared to use violence in order to fight for a separate Basque nation, as “the moment of greatest expansion of the Basque state.” The death of Sancho III, king of Pamplona, is presented as “the origin, along with other factors, of the state of partition and national domination that the Basque country is living through, eight centuries later.”⁹

It is, though, the memory of medieval al-Andalus that continues to be most politically contentious, especially in a context shaped by the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, and by those of “11-M,” the commuter train bombings that killed 191 people in Madrid on March 11, 2004. “If you take the trouble to focus on what Bin Laden has written and stated in recent years,” former prime minister José María Aznar of the conservative Partido Popular (PP) declared in his inaugural lecture at Georgetown University, “you will realize that the problem Spain has with Al Qaeda and Islamic terrorism did not begin with the Iraq Crisis”:

You must go back no less than 1,300 years, to the early eighth century, when a Spain recently invaded by the Moors refused to become just another piece in the Islamic world and began a long battle to recover its identity. This *Reconquista* process was very long, lasting some 800 years. However, it ended successfully. There are many radical Muslims who continue to recall that defeat, many more than any rational Western mind might suspect. Osama Bin Laden is one of them.¹⁰

Two years later, at the Hudson Institute, a Washington think tank, Aznar would denounce as a “stupidity” the Alliance of Civilizations between the West and the Islamic world being promoted by the socialist government of José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero. Wading into the polemic surrounding references to Islam made by Pope Benedict XVI

at Regensburg, Aznar maintained that double standards were being applied when judging Islam and the West. “Many people in the Muslim world are demanding an apology from the Pope for his speech. I have never heard a single Muslim ask me for forgiveness for having conquered Spain and maintained their presence in Spain for more eight centuries,” *El País* newspaper reported him as saying.¹¹ Mr. Aznar’s views were diametrically opposed to those, including the Moslem converts discussed in Lisa Abend’s essay in this volume, who take a strongly inclusive view of Spain’s Muslim past. As in the case of his Georgetown lecture, Aznar’s remarks at the Hudson Institute provoked angry debate, in which his ideological opponents also invoked the experiences of medieval Spain. “Aznar says that no-one has asked his forgiveness for the invasion of 711, but I say that he, Aznar, who appears to be a direct descendent of sons of Witiza, who betrayed the legitimate power of Don Rodrigo by handing people over to the Saracens, has never asked me for forgiveness,” a professor of history and geography at the University of Valladolid, Marcelino Flórez, wrote in reference to the Visigoth leaders who lost control of Iberia to the Moslems.¹² On the same opinion page in *El País*, Manuel Ángel García Parody, a high-school teacher from Cordoba, invited Aznar to attend “my modest little class at a high school in Cordoba, if he does not mind the school name of ‘Alhaken II.’ This ‘Moslem occupier’ owned a library of 400,000 volumes at a time when Christian Europe was hardly a shining example of culture and knowledge. . . . Al-Andalus is an essential part of this previous plurality that is my country, of this country about which he talks so much but appears to know so little.”¹³ The novelist Juan Goytisolo was moved to irony, asking who Aznar thought should be asking forgiveness given that neither Tarik nor Musa, nor any of the Umayyads, were still around. Perhaps it should be Morocco, or the Arab League and the Islamic Conference, he mused.¹⁴

Amidst such highly publicized polemic, the academics who study the cultural dimensions of Spain’s medieval past can hardly hope to escape the shadow of contemporary politics. Faced with this fact, what is the proper role of the intellectual engaged in research on medieval Spain? Is a traditional commitment to scholarly “detachment” appropriate in times of high tension, or rather, as Simon Doubleday will suggest in his “Introduction” to this volume below, do such claims to objective “neutrality” themselves raise difficult ethical questions? Scholars of medieval Spain are indeed confronted with a political minefield. Yet—perhaps uniquely in Europe outside the Balkans—they also find themselves in the privileged position of working in an area that actually has some real impact on political debate.¹⁵ And that is so whether they like it or not.

Notes

1. Henry Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2005), p. 2.
2. Mark Little: "Granada at a Glance": <http://www.spainview.com/tickets>.
3. Tomás Navarro, *La mezquita de Babel: El nazismo sufista desde el Reino Unido a la Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía* (Granada: Ediciones Virtual, 1998), p. 21. Navarro's book deals with the controversial construction of Granada's new mosque, which is discussed in greater detail in David Coleman's essay in this volume.
4. "Builders Reveal Hidden Synagogue and Dark Era of Portugal's Past," *The New York Times* (26 December 2005). For a readily accessible web version, see: <http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/19827.html>.
5. www.architoledo.org/informacion/mozarabe.htm; www.geocities.com/mozarabestoledo/index1.htm; www.architoledo.org/informacion/mozarabes_en_toledo.htm.
6. www.architoledo.org/informacion/mozarabe.htm.
7. "En el año 1000, cuando los andaluces teníamos varias docenas de surtidores de agua de sabores distintos y olores diversos, en algunas zonas de las llamadas comunidades históricas ni siquiera sabían lo que era asearse los fines de semana" María Peral, "Jiménez de Parga cree un error hablar de 'nacionalidades históricas,'" *El Mundo* (22 enero 2003): <http://www.elmundo.es/papel/2003/01/22/espana/1318131.html>.
8. Giles Tremlett, *Ghosts of Spain: Travels Through Spain and its Secret Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 21.
9. Fernando Alonso Abad, *Por qué luchamos los vascos* (Txalaparta: Bilbao, 2005), p. 31.
10. <http://www3.georgetown.edu/president/aznar/inauguraladdress.html>.
11. "El PSOE critica la actitud "irresponsable" de Aznar con sus declaraciones sobre el Islam," *El País*, 23 September 2006: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/PSOE/critica/actitud/irresponsable/Aznar/declaraciones/islam/elpepuesp/20060923elpepunac_1/Tes.
12. "Dice Aznar que no le han pedido perdón por la invasión de 711, pues yo digo que él, Aznar, heredero directo, al parecer, de uno de los hijos de Witiza, que traicionaron al poder legítimo de Don Rodrigo, entregando a la gente normal en poder de los sarracenos, no me ha pedido perdón a mí." Marcelino Flórez, "Opinión," *El País* (26 September 2006): http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/senor/Aznar/historia/Espana/elpepiopi/20060926elpepiopi_7/Tes.
13. "Le invito a que venga a mis modestas clases en un instituto de Córdoba, si es que no le molesta su nombre: Alhakén II. Sí. El "ocupante musulmán" poseedor de una biblioteca de 400.000 volúmenes cuando en la Europa cristiana no brillaban precisamente las luces de la cultura y el saber. Allí podrá aprender, junto a los alumnos de la ESO, que no existió tal "ocupación", sino un extraordinario fenómeno de síntesis de religiosas y culturas que se llamó Al Andalus. Que ese Al Andalus fue un ejemplo de concordia y de tolerancia, es decir, de esa "estúpida alianza

de civilizaciones” de la que se mofa cada vez que puede. Y que ese Al Andalus es parte esencial de esa hermosa pluralidad que es mi patria, de esa patria que tanto pone en su boca pero de la que sabe bastante poco.” Manuel Ángel García Parody, “Opinión,” *El País* (26 September 2006): http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/senor/Aznar/historia/Espana/elpepiopi/20060926elpepiopi_7/Tes.

14. Juan Goytisolo, “¡Felicitaciones, señor Aznar!,” *El País* (27 September 2006): http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/Felicitaciones/senor/Aznar/elpepiopi/20060927elpepiopi_5/Tes.
15. On the Balkans, see Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts* (New York: Picador, 2005).

INTRODUCTION

“CRIMINAL NON-INTERVENTION”: HISPANISM, MEDIEVALISM, AND THE PURSUIT OF NEUTRALITY

Simon R. Doubleday

“Theory must always return to the earth to get recharged with new energy. For the word that breathes life is still needed to challenge the one that carries death and devastation.”

Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, “For Peace, Justice, and Culture:
The Intellectual in the Twenty-First Century.”¹

I

Casting new light on the relationship between history and its observers, the critical theorist Eelco Runia has arrestingly claimed that the past “may have a presence that is so powerful that it can use *us*, humans, as its *material*.” The starting point for Runia’s theory is the report compiled by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation on the massacre, in July 1995, of thousands of Muslim men and children near Srebrenica (Bosnia).² Like Spain between 1937 and 1939, Bosnia had been placed under an arms embargo by the liberal Western democracies, and the Dutch UN peacekeepers stationed at Srebrenica had maintained a strict and—it has been widely alleged—ethically culpable neutrality. Refusing to take sides, the authors of the report reproduced this deliberate and repressive impartiality; they disarmed the past, Runia argues, just as the peacekeepers had disarmed the Muslims in the enclave. Their 7,000-page report effectively neutralized the horror of the massacre, subconsciously working to reinforce the myth of the Dutch as a sensible and decent nation. “They may have been under the impression that *they* were mastering the past,”

he writes, “but, strangely and inexplicably, the past turned the tables and mastered these historians.”³ Glossing Runia’s “presence” theory, Frank Ankersmit points out that the Dutch politicians responsible for the report “behaved as if the Srebrenica drama had taken place in a wholly different galaxy without any ties to their own cozy little world; they behaved as persons regressing to the innocence of childhood in reaction to the irruption [*sic*] of an overwhelming reality. Mechanisms of repression and dissociation worked at top speed.” Ankersmit underscores Runia’s philosophical debt to Sigmund Freud, who theorized that what is not adequately remembered may be repeated through subconscious reenactment: “The picture one gets,” he states, “is that of a false coin that can unproblematically be passed on from one person to another as long as nobody scrutinizes it.” Like this false coin, the unseen myth is repeated, revealing the “stubborn persistence of the past.”⁴

Although Runia’s immediate concerns lie in contemporary history, he raises a number of issues relating to objectivity and neutrality in historical writing, and to the presence of history, that are equally pertinent to the study of the distant past. These theoretical issues are essential to address before grounding the discussion more concretely in the relevance of a pluricultural society—medieval Spain—that to some observers bore more than a passing similarity to modern Bosnia and that retains an even broader range of ethical and political significance in the contemporary world. The “false coin” at stake, the pretense to detachment, neutrality, and to the potentially allied ideal of objectivity, has, after all, had a much broader, and longer, circulation, in the study of history. Ankersmit’s reference to the “stubborn persistence of the past”—and more fundamentally the Freudian underpinnings of “presence” theory—echo a passage in Beverley Southgate’s study *What Is History For?*:

Whatever attempts are made, “the past” persists—eluding containment, seeping through boundaries and barriers into present consciousness once more, resurfacing against the odds, and finally resisting abolition.⁵

Ideological and cultural transactions in the present, it might be said, inescapably negotiate with the currency of the past: a historical economy in which we must necessarily deal. The attempts to which Southgate refers respond to the aspiration to a strict, impartial, detachment that has been fundamental to the discipline since the rise of positivism in the late nineteenth century. “Like medieval knights,” he writes, “historians have pursued their subject (and their objective)—the discovery of what ‘really happened’ in the past—with religious fervour and intensity, one of the last relics of an earlier age of faith.”⁶ The accusation may be overgeneralized.

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