

**THE ESTRANGED SELF OF SPAIN:  
ORIENTAL OBSESSIONS IN SPAIN AT  
THE TIME OF GAYANGOS AND RIAÑO  
1830-1875**

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When we consider nineteenth-century considerations of Islamic Iberia within Spain, so much under the sway of liberal nationalism, we may be inclined to fall back on three touchstones of much modern academic analysis: that nationalities were understood in an essentialist manner, that the ‘Oriental’ was rendered exotic in order ultimately to subject it, and that Orientalist description and mapping –literal and metaphorical– was an instrument of colonisation. Some scholarship of the past decade on Orientalism in the West –for example Mackenzie– has, of course, queried some such assumptions deriving from Said among others, not least any straightforward assertion that the effect or intention of describing the Oriental as ‘other’ was always to subject and colonise, or that the West itself maintained over a long period of history a consistent view or discourse of the Orient. As Mackenzie and Macfie both indicate in their criticism of ‘Occidentalism’, the specific, contingent historical and political context of European discussion of the Orient should take precedent over suppositions that there was an underlying and continuous ‘discourse’ of Orientalism. Equally, some scholars working on English and Scottish culture, such as Craig and Chandler, have questioned whether understandings of national historicism were always fundamentally essentialist and ahistorical. At the same

time, some academics, such as Reina Lewis, have shown how accounts of the relationship between ‘West’ and ‘East’ could be significantly shaped by concerns other than those of religion or nationality, such as gender or class.

Reflections on the relations of the Occident and the Orient have come to have an increasing significance for nineteenth-century Spanish studies as, like in Anglophone and French/Francophone studies, academics have turned their attention to the sometimes neglected texts and images of empire and Orientalism. There has been a growing focus on both the persistence of imperial possessions and overseas military activity, and on the relationship, historic and actual, with north Africa, for example, and among others, in Anderson, Blanco, Charnon-Deutsch, Hooper, Iarocci, Labanyi, Schmit-Nowara.

Nineteenth-century Spain may appear to be particularly fertile ground for studies that question any straightforward intellectual subjugation of the Orient by the Occident, given the historical relevance to national histories of the presence of Islamic governments over many centuries in the peninsula.

This chapter explores the immediate cultural context in Spain, first during the years prior to Gayangos’s *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties* (1840–43), and then at the time of his son-in-law Riaño’s continuation of his Hispanic Orientalist enterprise in the catalogue of the South Kensington Museum (1872). For reasons of space, it has not been possible here to explore the equally relevant area of Spanish academic Orientalism, a matter considered elsewhere in this collection. The aim is both to interrogate suppositions about Hispanic Orientalism and, in so doing, to understand the contribution of works by Gayangos and Riaño to established cultural dialogues.

## **Orientalism and The Restoration of Liberalism**

In the years after the fall of the liberal government of the Trienio (1820–23), increasing numbers of intellectuals in exile and in Spain, most of them affiliated in a broad sense to liberalism, began to rethink their interpretations of both national and European history and culture. The impulse to do so came from the rise of post-revolutionary liberal thought in France, the impact of new literary and cultural directions encountered in Britain –not least Scott–, and the divulgation of the ideas of A.W. Schlegel in forms that were acceptable to liberals, under the influence not least of Victor Hugo in France (see Ginger 1999). In political terms, the new trends relate to an attempt to exploit new political opportunities, with the 1830 July Revolution in France, and the same year, the birth of the Infanta Isabel of Spain, which intensified the internal tensions and convulsions of the ruling Bourbon family. In the ensuing civil war, liberals were able to form an uneasy alliance with the Regent María Cristina, and thereby return to power.<sup>1</sup>

As Jo Labanyi has observed, it is remarkable that during these years so many major political, cultural, and intellectual figures revisit Islamic Spain in their literary works. Francisco Martínez de la Rosa play *Aben Humeya* (1830) was performed in Paris; Duke of Rivas, wrote and then published his *El moro expósito* (1834); the young playwright and Progressive militiaman Eugenio Hartzenbusch wrote his acclaimed drama, *Los amantes de Teruel* (1837). In addition to the texts studied in depth by Labanyi, the seminal Romantic theorist Durán stressed the role of Arabic literature in his 1832 account of the ballad both as a key, if belated influence on the development of Spanish literature and, as he explained later in 1849, in what he considers to be the

apogee of Spanish chivalric culture, the *romances moriscos*.<sup>2</sup> The young radical and influential writer José de Espronceda numbers among his early works the novel *Sancho Saldaña* (1834) in which a leading female character is a Moor.

These works are part of a wider phenomenon in which a significant number of such highly influential figures place, at the heart of what they perceived as a new national literary history and literature, population groups who in other contexts would be perceived as Oriental or exotic, but who had had an important role historically in territories that had belonged or came to pertain to the Spanish monarchy: Moors, Incas, Gypsies, Jews. Under the Spanish crown, all had been involved in tensions, conflicts, or just oppression, from the defeat and later expulsion of the Moors to the successive Inca rebellions of the eighteenth century against Bourbon reform, or the recurrent prejudice against as well as fascination with gypsies. Thus, a gypsy woman is given prominence as a sympathetic if ambiguous character in the drama that launched García Gutiérrez's career, *El trovador* (1836), and the male protagonist of Rivas's great Romantic play *Don Álvaro* (1835) is an eighteenth-century *mestizo*, the son of a Spanish noble and an Inca royal.

As Labanyi argues, it is striking that in many of these works such dimensions of Spanish history are used to explore alternative models of nationhood. For example, in *Aben Humeya* and *El moro expósito*, there is a notable frankness about Castilian backwardness and intolerance, and an openness to a more plural vision of national culture. There is moreover what Labanyi describes as a sense of 'the loss at the heart of the nation's enforced homogeneity' following the defeat and later expulsion of the Moors. Rivas's epic poem in particular focuses symbolically on 'multiple border-

crossings', on the mixed race of its two sympathetic protagonists (Mударra and Kerima), and at times on a corresponding androgyny. There is a marked rejection of any historical narrative of Christian triumphalism.<sup>3</sup> The reader of *El moro expósito* is torn between the possibility of successful cultural hybridity and the reality that history foreclosed that opportunity.

The issue of contingent frontiers and tolerance is part and parcel of wider efforts to reflect upon how 'Spain' could be reconstructed in the light of postrevolutionary liberalism and after the loss of much of its empire by the 1820s. It relates therefore to questions of value and of what was called 'civilisation', and with these to the search for a positive potentiality within the historical legacy that could be reinvented and reconstructed in modern terms. Such potentiality, even where distinctive and in that sense 'national', was clearly a product of historical circumstances, not in any straightforward sense an ahistorical essence. The problem for both Martínez de la Rosa and Rivas is the difficulty of reconciling the Iberian territories of the future Spanish monarchy with their historical occupants, and the consequent contingency of the relationship between a Christian Spain and those territories. *Aben Humeya* recounts the Alpujarra rising of the *moriscos* in the sixteenth century against the victorious and now unified Spanish monarchy. In its prologue, Martínez de la Rosa singles out this event as of especial significance for Spanish and European history for two reasons. Firstly, the future of Spain as an imperial power, which he views with some ambivalence – 'des prétensions ruineuses' –, could have been abruptly aborted had the rebellion triumphed with the support of the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, the rebellion called into question the identification of a geographical territory with a single nation, one of the most widespread

variants of nationalism according to many more recent theorists: ‘on vit paraître une nation musulmane au milieu d’une nation.’<sup>4</sup> In a not dissimilar way, with respect to events centuries earlier, while reaffirming that Castile’s star would rise as Al-Andalus waned, *El moro expósito* is remarkably relaxed in its acceptance that the eleventh-century peninsula was divided into kingdoms, and that the Islamic area was part of an empire that stretched beyond Iberia. While the valour and constancy of backwards Castile are the seeds of its ultimate victory, there seems to be no Providential guarantee of a unified Christian Spain, if only because the poem repeatedly indicates either that the ways of Providence are unknowable, and characters who believe they have interpreted Providence are mistaken or deluded.<sup>5</sup>

The question of what is and is not ultimately incorporated into or excluded from the appropriately ‘national’ is a question of the contingency of frontiers, both literally and metaphorically. At the same time, unsurprisingly perhaps, it is a question of the meaning of tolerance for liberal intellectuals as they reconsidered their national history. However, the notion of *tolerance* needs to be placed in context. In his *Avant-Propos* to *Aben Humeya*, Martínez de la Rosa speaks of ‘ces Morisques des Alpujarras, très avancés en civilisation, et conservant néanmoins un air sauvage [...] on voit sous les traits de l’Européen couler le sang de l’homme d’Afrique’. Just as he places a clear divide between two historic nations on the peninsula, he thus also at once expresses a tolerant regard for Islamic achievement, while then reinforcing the inherent superiority of a supposedly more European people, the Castilian Christians. His words are reflected in the action of the play, where it is the pursuit of violent vendettas that destroys the rebellion internally, bringing about Aben Humeya’s fall and the salvation of ‘Spain’; such is the

savagery within a civilised people. Martínez de la Rosa's historical stance seems then to rest upon a double judgement: that, on the one hand, Spanish Catholicism needs to abandon its fanatical intolerance and recognise Islamic achievements, while, on the other, it must also reaffirm a superiority over the Moors which appears to be geographical in origin. Equally, on the one hand, the identity of nation and territory is somewhat contingent, whereas on the other, it is possible to distinguish people in the same territory according to characteristics derived from different continents. This precarious intellectual balancing act promotes a reconsideration of Spanish national cultural and religious attitudes, while restricting that consideration to the viewpoint of what is deemed Catholic and European. It is a tempered acceptance of Spanish heterogeneity similar to that adopted by Durán. In those respects at least, something similar is found in Hartzenbusch's *Los amantes de Teruel*. Hartzenbusch attributes to the Moors, in the form of the luxuriant and vengeful Zoraida, a violently sensual form of love, with little regard to whether affection is corresponded. In this respect, he seems at first sight to participate in the stereotyping of Islam as decadently physical and ultimately corrupt, as opposed to Christianity which is truly spiritual. However, this apparently trenchant judgement sits alongside a clear parallel between Zoraida's feelings and those of the powerful Christian nobleman Rodrigo. More still, the medieval honour code of the Christians, which encourages a physically violent society and, quite specifically, the oppression of women is described as a Koran ('alcorán') by Isabel's mother.<sup>6</sup> Hartzenbusch is thereby erasing the significance of the religious and national divide and equating the two sides; things that are supposedly a result of an 'Oriental' condition to out to be no more than widespread medieval vices. Exactly the same might be said of the depiction of Zoraida in

Espronceda's *Sancho Saldaña*: she shares in her sensuality and even her cruelty both the excesses of the more dangerous Christian figures, such as Jimeno, and the exaltation of love as a supreme value that we find in the Byronically ambiguous Sancho Saldaña himself.

By the same token, the contemporaneous critic Larra went so far in his 1837 review of the play as to suppose that since the justification of all the characters' actions, including the hero and heroine Diego and Isabel, is love, the Moorish woman and Rodrigo are no more guilty than anyone else;<sup>7</sup> it follows that Oriental feelings of love are not fundamentally different in quality or value to any others. It seems more likely, however, given the exaltant *liebestod* of the two Christian lovers at the end, noted by Flitter, that Hartzenbusch is seeking to locate within the historical legacy of the Christian Spanish states an interpretation of Christianity that is opposed both to Islam and to the dominant, conventional, and ignorant trends of medieval Christendom. This is the more civilised future to which Isabel's mother refers, in which women will no longer be oppressed and their freedom compromised by patriarchal values, in which mutual love will be the basis of society. In this case then, the engagement with Islamic Spain serves again to question a sense of the superiority of hegemonic historical forms of Christianity over Islam, but at the same time to point the way to a purified and renovated Christianity. As regards Rivas, it is true that there is not much by way of trenchant hostility to Islam or vocal support for Christianity in *El moro expósito*. Stereotypically pejorative descriptions of Muslims and Orientals are striking for their absence; Almanzor is certainly not luxuriant, decadent, and violent, nor is he languid, but simply a tolerant and cultivated ruler. The narrator warns that it is unjust to judge people on the basis of their religion or



customs.<sup>8</sup> However, the text must be placed in the wider context of its author's political life: by the mid-1830s Rivas was a leading figure in a political party which did not promote absolute religious tolerance, and which had little interest in installing mosques on Spanish territory (if indeed any party had any such interest at that time). In *El moro expósito* we find nothing but acceptance of the reality of ultimate Castilian and Christian victory. It is more likely that Rivas is interested in maintaining his support for Castile and Catholicism while detaching them from a ferocious, superstitious hostility to Islam and opening up an awareness of the historical significance of and positive potential within Islamic Iberian history.

Espronceda alone stands out from such trends because, as is characteristic of his work, he disturbs belief in our fundamental ability to provide meaningful narratives of the past at all. Instead of seeking to transcend good and evil after the manner of Byron or Hugo, or even, much more modestly, accepting the significance of Christian victory based on constancy and valour as Rivas does, Espronceda finishes his work by noting that the chronicle upon which his story is based contains many contradictions and defects, thus calling into question the credibility of the narrative. He goes on to note that nothing but dust remains of any of what he has recounted,<sup>9</sup> thereby signalling that all narratives of national history and the values they encapsulate, Christian or Islamic, are as nothing in the face of human mortality.

On the whole, then, and with exceptions, efforts at unsettling and ironising Christian triumphalist narratives, and a corresponding questioning of Orientalist stereotypes, were intended to renew rather than to overthrow the values of Christian Spain. Equally, however, precisely because Islamic Spain was revisited as part of a much

wider project of national reconstruction, ‘Spanish’ Muslims are portrayed as no more ‘other’ to or problematic for modern-day liberalism than are a series of supposed historical features of the peninsula that are not specific either to Christians or Moors. Much of the abusive violence and prejudice seen in *Aben Humeya* and *El moro expósito* is the doing of either tyrants or of the ignorant, superstitious masses, not least when the latter are unleashed to pursue a revolt or revolution.<sup>10</sup> Significantly at one point in *El moro expósito*, the key factor that averts a sectarian fight between Christians and Moors at a banquet is the joint intervention of good aristocrats from either side,<sup>11</sup> those who, irrespective of religion, combine both birth and tolerant civilisation and are therefore free of the defects of feudal or absolutist abuse but also of the dangerous masses. From a quite different, Progressive Liberal political perspective, Hartzenbusch is fundamentally perturbed by the destructive impact of patriarchal social structures on the development of freedom.

Even where problematic psychological characteristics are linked to geographical origins, these often cut across the Islamic-Christian divide. In the case of *Aben Humeya*, the shared virtues and vices of Muslims and Christians in Iberia are linked to a wider Mediterranean condition that entails a problematic combination of admirable but dangerous passion, as Martínez de la Rosa tells us in his Avant-Propos. Under that interpretation, the self-destruction of the Moorish revolt and even its more vindictive aspects could as easily occur among other Mediterranean peoples, and are supposed to be part of a much wider problem in directing the history of the region towards an admirably tolerant civilisation. Similarly, for both Martínez de la Rosa and Rivas, born in Granada and Seville respectively, loyalty to and fascination with the region of Andalusia,

enhanced by nostalgia during their long political exile, cuts across distinctions between Christians and Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

### **Gayangos and the *History of the Mahommedan Dynasties***

In 1837, shortly after the publication of most of the works we have so far considered, Pascual de Gayangos set off for Britain, where he would produce his translation and edition of the *History of the Mohameddan Dynasties* (1840–43) with support from the Oriental Translation Fund. Gayangos's enterprise makes considerable sense with respect to the Spanish cultural context from which he came to Britain.

In his introduction to the *History*, Gayangos issues a series of protests about prejudice towards the Arab contribution to civilisation, among Europeans in general and Spaniards in particular.<sup>13</sup> He rails especially against the Spanish monarchy's 'remnant of inquisitorial jealousy about its literary treasures' which he claims excluded him from use of their collections. However, these remarks must be contextualised, both in the nuance of Gayangos's own comments, and in relation to the wider parallels between his enterprise and the cultural endeavours in Spain in the preceding years. Gayangos acknowledges that since the second half of the eighteenth century there has been a 'more liberal policy' in Spanish governments, and that this has encouraged the study of Arabic works. Moreover, he recognises in Spain figures with similar broad sympathies, such as the Royal librarian Joaquín Patiño – 'enlightened and zealous'. This suggests that Gayangos's hostility is directed at an historical phenomenon of prejudice, rather than particularly towards more recent intellectuals, and that his criticism of contemporary

Spain on this account is selective, targeted at those whom he sees as perpetuating archaic attitudes and specifically the Court. Such a view would have been shared by many members of Spain's political classes, as, even among some Progressive Liberals such as Marliani, would his concern that in the rush to sell-off monastic property, valuable archival collections had been dispersed.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the clear implication that Britain was a more enlightened country was hardly a novelty among sectors of the Spanish elite.

Many of Gayangos's statements strike a familiar note in the context of Spanish Orientalism of the preceding years. The significance of the Arabs needs to be taken seriously into account as part of what he calls 'Spanish history' as well as of literature, or Spain will remain incomprehensible.<sup>15</sup> Older prejudice against the Moors was due to the 'superstition and intolerance of the Spanish government' especially with the consequences of the destruction of Arabic books by Cisneros after the defeat of Granada.<sup>16</sup> There is a need to rescue the history of the Spanish middle ages, presently 'a tissue of fables and contradiction' –the very words put one in mind of *Sancho Saldaña*– from Spanish historians who have 'compiled their history chiefly from one-sided national authorities'.<sup>17</sup> Little notice should be taken of 'the many pious frauds of which the tonsured chroniclers of the middle ages were often guilty'.<sup>19</sup> In short, it is again necessary to reinvent the narrative of Spanish history by questioning triumphalist Christian accounts and integrating alternative perspectives.

Even Gayangos's precarious but somewhat casually expressed balancing act in assessing the Islamic past is redolent with by now familiar attitudes. On the one hand, the Muslims were a 'cultivated race [...] entitled to a prominent place in the annals of Europe', deserving of 'the gratitude of modern ages'; they had a 'superior culture and

civilisation'; life for Christians was often more pleasant in the Islamic territories than in the rough conditions of the Christian kingdoms, as is also seen in *El moro expósito*.

Equally and in the same breath, however, the Muslims could be seen as 'enthusiastic warriors whose victorious arms spread terror and consternation over our continent' and 'threatened more than once the liberties of Europe'; the Christian mountain territories were indeed 'the cradle of Spanish liberty'; and Muslims could be just as prejudiced and intolerant of Christians who stayed in their territories as Christians were of Muslims:

'The Arabs, however, always looked upon them as outcasts, and a distinction was established [...] in the same manner as the Moriscos or their sons, converted to Christianity after the taking of Granada, were called *Cristianos nuevos*'.<sup>20</sup> Gayangos's re-evaluation of the Islamic legacy does not call into question the significance of the future Christian victory, but neither does he see intolerance and prejudice as direct correlates of a particular religion, Christian or Muslim.

What is clearly distinct in Gayangos's account is the scholarly investigation of a multitude of Arabic writings, what Irwin has recently seen as in the strict sense Orientalism. With this comes a sifting of a multitude of textual material – the footnotes often contain extensive citations from other works – in an attempt to reconstruct the facts. This leads him in at least one instance to balk at explanations, rooted in the theory of the sublime, such as had been habitually offered for medieval beliefs: fables do not arise from the 'heated imagination' of the middle ages, nor from 'the more fantastic minds of the Arabs'.<sup>21</sup> He is certainly not interested in the imaginative versions that, as Alcalá Galiano notes of *El moro expósito*, make up for a lack of hard historical. However, even here Gayangos to some degree echoes the scepticism about our ability to make sense of

the past and its chronicles ventured by Rivas or Espronceda: Gayangos speaks of the darkness that envelops events at the time of the Islamic invasion, and wonders of his sources 'How are these accounts to be reconciled?'.<sup>22</sup>

Seen from an Iberian perspective, the publication of the *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties* was not an isolated event, but rather a further extension of a series of reflections among leading Spanish intellectuals on the significance of the Islamic presence in Spain, alongside that of other population groups in historical Spanish territories who might otherwise be considered exotic or Oriental, Gypsies, Incas, Jews. For all that there was an underlying, ultimate sympathy for Castilian-Aragonese victory, and, with possible exceptions like Espronceda, for some form of Christianity, there is little evidence of any direct connection between such preferences and a consistent 'discourse of Orientalism'. Muslims and Islam are rarely depicted as radically and absolutely 'other'; many features that Said and Kabbani detect as consistent stereotypes of Orientalist discourse are often absent or heavily qualified or questioned; national and ethnic essentialism plays only a limited and again highly qualified role; and, just as importantly, Muslims are not presented as being any more 'other' than numerous aspects of Spanish Christian history. Disconcerting as it may seem in the light of theoretical debates about Orientalism post-Said, there is an almost complete disjunction between, on the one hand, contentment with (Christian) Aragonese-Castilian victory in the peninsula, and, on the other, any overarching commitment to considering Islamic Spain in the uniquely prejudiced terms of the supposed 'discourse of Orientalism'. It was precisely because the Islamic past was not portrayed as radically and distinctively other that it

presented such a powerful opportunity for liberals to re-imagine Spain's (Christian) historical identity and values.

### **The Mid-Century and the African War**

A well established, but increasingly obsolete 'grand narrative' of Spanish history has it that both large and small 'c' conservatism came subsequently to dominate mid-nineteenth-century Spain, and that this entailed a closure or severe limitation of the dynamic intellectual possibilities that emerged with the rebirth of liberalism in the 1830s. As regards the matter of Islam and Orientalism, this story of modern Spain might suggest that the exploration of Hispanic hybridity and plurality, and the sense of loss brought on by homogenisation, were replaced by much more restrictive and constraining versions of national subjecthood. However, as both Isabel Burdiel and I have indicated, the evidence does not support such a view of Spanish history. Leftist trends continued in Spanish thought quite unabated, and indeed expanded with the rise of the Democratic Party in the 1850s; cultural experimentation was a marked feature of the period 1840–73; the aftermath of the revolutions of 1840 and 1854, and the subsequent rise of the Liberal Union Party, undermined and then all but disabled the more traditionalist wings and ultimately even the historic core of the Moderate.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, since there had never been a major breach between the affirmation of (Christian) Castilian-Aragonese victory over Islam, on the one hand, and, on the other, an interest in cultural hybridity and pluralism, there was no particular reason why the former should be consolidated at the expense of the latter.

With the mid-century came both a changed political panorama and, in part in consequence, the invasion of Morocco in 1859–60. The new Liberal Union Party, politically dominant for much of the period 1854–68, and in government at the time of the war, favoured the pursuit of new overseas ventures for the first time since the American conflicts; the Progressive and Moderate Parties both split; and a new Democratic Party emerged. However, intellectual and cultural developments remained in key respects remarkably consonant with earlier discussions about Islam and North Africa. After the war in 1861, Valera waxed lyrical on the contribution of Arabic (and Jewish) literature and thought to Spanish history, hoping the work of Gayangos would be extended; before the war, in his influential history of Spain published from 1850 onwards Modesto Lafuente at once applauded the contribution to civilisation of the Arabs in Spain, and their ultimate defeat.<sup>24</sup> Belief in the Castilian-Aragonese triumph is echoed in celebrations or urgings of the invasion of Morocco by figures as diverse as Alarcón, Ros de Olano, Fortuny, Castelar, Rubio, Rosales, and Lucas. There was very little political opposition to the war from any party, though reasons for supporting the assault varied considerably, from a desire to block further French expansion, to a need to expand democratic liberation into the African continent, to an imperative to exact trade concessions. At the same time, sympathy towards the North Africans was widely expressed and is a characteristic of the works of all these figures, in painting, thought, and literature. It is sometimes thought that what had changed is that colonialist ideology appropriated the notion of a hybridity between Spaniards and North Africans in order to justify colonial occupation. Hence, in the temporary monuments raised across Spain for victory festivities, a Moorish style is often adopted. However, some of those on the left,



like Castelar, who favoured outright colonial occupation did so, not (or not just) on grounds of cross-culturalism and ethnic hybridity, but rather because of an appeal to a common humanity that crosses supposed racial lines.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, many like the Andalusian Alarcón, who, in line with the government policy that was celebrated by those hybrid monuments, supported war but opposed colonial occupation, were much concerned with the interrelationship between Spaniards and especially Andalusians and North African Muslims. So much was this so that one of the most important of the non-strategic reasons given for not occupying Morocco was that Moroccan resistance would be like that of the Spaniards against the French at Bailén. The autonomous and culturally distinct dignity of the Moroccans is a key concern in Alarcón as it is in Ros.

Recollections of the victory of Isabel I against Granada in the triumph of Isabel II against Morocco only served to reinforce such preoccupations.<sup>26</sup>

If this is so, the repeated balancing act between support for (usually Christian) Castile and Aragón and a desire to explore sympathetically the Muslim/North African perspective was not particularly altered by the shift to overseas military activity or by political changes. Just as before, some are less and some (like Ros) more prone to Oriental stereotyping, even as they also suggest that defects observed in North Africans might equally be found among Christian Europeans. As Valera's 1861 review of a translation of Arabic poems particularly eloquently indicates in its enthusiasm for Gayangos,<sup>27</sup> it is not at all apparent that contemporaneous liberals would have seen a contradiction between the earlier stances and their present military adventures, or indeed that there was one. The apparent contradiction arises only if one anachronistically equates

the absence of an unmitigated 'discourse of Orientalism' with a love of multi-culturalism, relativistic religious pluralism, and international peace.

At least three trends do emerge in response to the war among some cultural figures, which may well be relatively new, but in perhaps unexpected ways. The first is a difficulty in conceptualising in existing terms a problematic relationship between the urban and infrastructural re-development of Spain and the Islamic past. The second is a difficulty in conceptualising cogently in existing terms the relationship between Spain and the Islamic past given the pressure of a violent close encounter due to the new overseas policies. The third is a re-statement of the concern with autonomous Moorish or Moroccan dignity in a way that departs from the more exotic and dynamic air of earlier works, again under the pressures of a real encounter. These three trends were at times, but far from always interrelated. To a very significant extent, it may be argued that cultural figures adjusted their vision of the Orient in response to the redevelopment of the Spanish state in these years, both as an international military power and as a promoter of dynamic internal reconstruction.

The first trend is seen in Clifford's photographs of the temporary monuments erected across Spain to celebrate the victory, and in Ros de Olano's literary prose works between 1860 and 1863, that is during and just after his participation in the war. In a typical Clifford image we see an Islamic arch erected over a railway line along which the Royal party was to pass, apparently uniting the extension of infrastructure, the military triumph, and the hybridity of Spanish culture in relation to its Islamic past. However, as Fontanella has argued is characteristic of Clifford's work, the arch, shot from below, looms up somewhat weirdly over the scene, as if not quite belonging there. Clifford

thereby suggests that attempts to explain Spain's present direction in terms of its historic past remain at once pertinent, because invoked, while also seeming at odds with the direction of a country that is so drastically leaving the past behind, by, for example, investing in railways. The effect is to create a distance between the contemporary viewer and the repeated outlook of Spanish Orientalism, and a tension between the historicist terms in which the war was discussed and the national redevelopment that enabled the campaign in the first place. It should be noted, however, that, just as in the 1830s, in many respects Islamic Spain was no more other than much of the Christian past, so in Clifford's work the Islamic past is no more alien and estranged by re-development than the entirety of national historicism.

As regards Ros de Olano's parallel but distinct response to the extensive redevelopment of Spain and the Moroccan war, it is important to interrelate two texts written within three years of one another: the short *Leyendas de África* (1860) composed while he lay ill in a tent during the campaign, and his celebrated fictional work *El doctor Lañuela* (1863) published three years later. *Leyendas* proposes that the modern Christian world's obsession with restless change and reflection has distanced it from the more contemplative, inner monotheistic belief that is to be found in North Africa, and which was part of its own inception. Christianity can only be restored by a fusion between the 'European' and North African worlds, by a profound respect for and willingness to learn from Muslims. The significance of this apparent variant on earlier trends is made evident in *El doctor Lañuela*. There, the redemptive, spiritual woman Luz (*light*, but also *electricity*) is the daughter of a north European and a Greek woman in an Oriental country: she would appear therefore to represent precisely the kind of originating

synthesis of northern and southern Europe with the Oriental to which Ros appeals in *Leyendas de África*. However, the synthesis is in fact violated at its very point of origin, because Luz is the child of an illicit affair between Luz's mother and Lañuela, who explicitly symbolises worldly realities, and is linked to modern intellectual trends. The fact that Lañuela takes Luz away from her home means that she is deprived even of the role of consolation for a violated synthesis. Instead, the light of the modern world, forced into service by Lañuela for his medical operations in contemporary Madrid, is separated violently and radically from any cultural synthesis across Europe and the Orient, is herself sick, and ultimately dies.<sup>28</sup> What all this suggests is that, for Ros, worldly modernising forces have poisoned at root the cultural hybrid that could have renewed Spanish Christianity. Placed alongside the message of *Leyendas de África*, this means that Ros believes earlier attempts to renew Christianity through reflection on relations with Islam would not succeed if they did not acknowledge that the impulse to accelerated change, or rather the manner in which it had been undertaken, was fundamentally flawed: it was at odds, in his interpretation, with the significance of Islam. Spanish victory in Morocco demonstrates precisely that attempts to achieve a mixed culture will fail when they are undertaken as part of a struggle for accelerated development that is alien to such hybridity; this is why triumphal Spanish forces are incapable of understanding the country they invaded.

A decade later Ros's friend Alarcón was to return once more to a lengthy prose treatment of the question of Spain's relationship to Islam, in his travelogue *La Alpujarra*. The work recounts a journey undertaken by Alarcón in March 1872 into what he depicts as the uncharted territory of Aben Humeia's short-lived Kingdom inside Iberia, one of many

such significant, unexplored and isolated locations within Europe.<sup>29</sup> It is, as it were, a search for Spain's inner Moor. Referring to the relationship of Morocco and Spain, Alarcón describes the two countries as a Romeo and Juliet who never manage to sing a duet.<sup>30</sup> In more than a figurative sense, Alarcón thereby revisits the legacy of older approaches to Spanish cultural hybridity: he literally re-reads *Aben Humeya* during his journey. The real point of *La Alpujarra* is, however, once more a feeling that the redevelopment of liberal Spain in the mid-century has led to a new and more radical alienation among the mass of the population from the significance of the Reconquest period. Alarcón is responding not just to the impact of economic and infrastructural changes, such as the increase in fruit exports,<sup>31</sup> but to the political turbulence during the reign of King Amadeo, following the 1868 Revolution. Indeed, Alarcón wrote up his notes just after the subsequent proclamation of a Republic in February 1873. He reminds us continuously in the narrative of the presence of Federal Republican agitators in the country, and, just two years after the Paris Commune, conjures up the spectacle of the International.<sup>32</sup> For Alarcón, such developments set contemporary Spaniards at odds with both their Christian ancestors and Islamic Spain, because what both had in common was a religious faith that is supposedly now collapsing.<sup>33</sup> We have then, as a decade earlier in Ros, a vision of a modern country radically at odds with the cherished and redemptive Oriental fusion that, in the form of a renewed Christianity, might save it. Similarly, what Alarcón now proposes is a healing return to the original severing of that potential for hybridity during the *morisco* revolt. In his view, the triumph of Cisneros's policy of Catholic intolerance, over the tolerant settlement that had originally been agreed, was directly responsible for the *morisco* revolt.<sup>34</sup> But more than that, it was in consequence at

fault in two more wide-reaching respects. It marked the triumph of a dogmatic, violent intolerance in established Catholicism that drives its opponents away. This leads to a dangerous secularism that becomes the ultimate if often entirely unintended consequence of modern ideas.<sup>35</sup> For the same reason, it alienated North African Muslims from Christianity. What was lost in the Alpujarra, and what Alarcón ultimately seeks to imagine in a dream-like allegorical vision, was the possibility that Catholicism might be wed to tolerance, and that Africa might be converted from Islam – by persuasion and example not force.<sup>36</sup> In immediately contemporary terms, the consequence is the recent collapse of the corresponding balance between religious tolerance and a confessional state after the 1868 Revolution (article 21, Constitution of 1869). This outcome, which Alarcón and his party the Liberal Union supported, was now being destroyed by a militant secularism as the revolutionary coalition of 1868 broke up.

The literary result of Alarcón's reflections is itself both an echo of and a departure from his friend Ros. In a work that extends to some 563 pages in the 1874 edition, just 19 days of Alarcón's life are covered. This reflects Ros's predilection depicting what he saw as the alienations of contemporary life in expansive episodic moments into which epic forms are, paradoxically, now compressed. In Alarcón too, a brief time span dilates vastly to encompass not just the epic story of Aben Humeya and a diagnosis of the ills of western civilisation and of contemporary Spain, but a refraction of these through the Easter story. Multiple, expansive time levels thus co-exist within a very brief timescale in the present day. As such the work is an almost Ros-like take on the literary model of Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*. However, where Alarcón departs from Ros is in an attempt to overcome the irrevocable sense of loss that pervades the latter's parallel

and more experimental works, such as *El doctor Lañuela*. Instead, Alarcón creates his multiple time levels out of the historical evidence and example of texts, which he uses to verify, the correspondence of historic truth and the landscape through which he journeys. The territory of the Alpujarras is not really literally unexplored: Alarcón is often accompanied by local guides. Rather, the exploration and charting of the mystery is the process of reuniting through physical presence, intellectually and emotionally, the Islamic past of Spain and its present day in the annihilated Kingdom of Aben Humeya.

Despite the obvious differences between their respective positions, Clifford, Ros, and Alarcón see a profound tension between a victorious and/or rapidly redeveloping Spain, and the widely entertained narrative of historicist renewal through cultural hybridity. Clifford and Ros share with the painter Eugenio Lucas a sense that the reality of the war renders more, not less problematic, the project of national historicist reconstruction in relation to Spain's Islamic past. Lucas exhibited a painting in Paris in 1859 entitled *Flight of the Moors from Spain*. The only known work by Lucas with which this seems to correspond even closely is an image apparently of the custom of Moroccan horsemen racing by with rifles in their hands, a painting sometimes attributed instead to Lameyer. It is conceivable that, as is not infrequently the case with Lucas and some other painters of the time, there is a playful use of anachronism here, a ludic overlapping of different time scales and situations that we find in many other paintings: the run of the present-day recalls the Moors, without guns, fleeing from Spain, visions of the present are imbued with the past and vice-versa. Alongside this possible confusion of time scales, and rather more compellingly, the painting resists a simple interpretation. It is painted in a pastiche of the style of Delacroix, but, at the same time, the image is far more blurred

and fragmentary than would be a work by the French painter, suggesting, again as elsewhere in Lucas, an inability to produce a sharp and clear vision and understanding of the moment in history and time that is being depicted. This suggests a profound difficulty in using established Orientalist approaches, their harmonious combination of empathy and distance, to make sense perhaps of the departure of the Moors from Spain, but certainly of Spanish attitudes towards the Moroccans. One need not suppose that Lucas is subverting near universal opinion among the Spanish social elite – why should he? – in order to recognise his suggestion that, from the viewpoint of the mid-century, with the reality of hostility towards Morocco, it was now more difficult to perform convincingly the habitual intellectual balancing act over Spain's Islamic past. Again, however, as was the case with Clifford, Orientalism is just one among a multitude of aspects of Spanish historicism that now presents Lucas with similar difficulties across his whole body of work.

On the one hand, the war seems to lead some cultural figures to question how and whether to make pertinent the terms in which complex attitudes to the Islamic past had often been expressed. On the other, as I have argued elsewhere, the empirical immediacy of the encounter with Morocco and the insistence in many quarters on respecting the autonomous dignity of Spain's separated twin, led to a parallel alteration in the style of Spanish Orientalism. In parts of Alarcón's diary of the African war, and in the majority of Fortuny's paintings of Morocco, we find a departure from the energetic narrative and style in which even the least exoticising Orientalism had often been cast. There is now a more sober emphasis upon recording the everyday life of the Moroccans. In addition there is an insistence upon a quiet interiority that resists the control and gaze of the



Spaniards, and is reproduced in some of Fortuny's paintings as what I have described elsewhere as a 'meditative blanking'. It is in this way that the Moroccan experience served to renew Spanish national art. Insofar as this is a matter of contemplative meditation, it recalls also Ros's concerns about rescuing cultural hybridity in response to the extensive re-development of Spain at the time of the war.

In short, the time of the first African war and following years saw some fundamental questions posed about the viability or relevance of existing Spanish Orientalist terms of reference. However, this questioning was not connected to a fundamental rejection or closing off of earlier cultural hybridity, nor to a greater intellectual subjection of Moroccans through an accentuation of their 'otherness'. Nor, for that matter, was there much by way of renunciation of the fruits of victory in 1492, although calls for religious tolerance were more marked with the rise of the Democrats. Rather, the reason for the change in some quarters was that cultural figures felt compelled to wrestle with the greater immediacy of violent conflict and with the implications of extensive national re-development.

### **Riaño in 1872: Gayangos Re-Invented?**

Such transformations of Spanish Orientalism shed significant light on a key 1872 publication by Gayangos's son-in-law, Juan Facundo Riaño: his descriptive catalogue of Spanish art objects in the South Kensington Museum. In the family tradition, Riaño maintained close links with Britain, published there, and advised on museum collections; but that is not the main reason why the descriptive catalogue matters for the purpose of

this chapter. Rather, what is important is how Riaño revisits broad aspects of Gayangos's earlier exploration of national hybridity, while implicitly recasting them in the light of pressing preoccupations with contemporaneous Spanish national redevelopment. In so doing, Riaño can be seen to offer a response to a dilemma that troubled numerous cultural figures in Spain.

Riaño's introduction to the catalogue returns to the issue, not just of the merits of the civilisation of Islamic Spain, but to the valuable effects of hybridity during the middle ages. The diverse cultural melting pot of Spain includes not just Arabic, but also Byzantine and Italian influences.<sup>39</sup> In these respects, as much earlier for Durán, the distinctive cultural achievements of Spanish art are a product of a series of historical developments, a combination of factors from elsewhere, rather than the result of some eternal essential character. As should by now seem familiar, he insists upon a co-existence of Christians and Muslims, alongside historical intolerance and religious struggle: 'The continued contact of the Christian and Mahomedan races, notwithstanding the barbarism of the time and the differences of creed, did not oblige them to live perpetually as enemies'.<sup>40</sup>

Riaño seems pointedly to reaffirm the relevance and significance of this hybridity for a present-day understanding of Spanish culture, thereby siding with people like Fortuny. Indeed, the insistence on everyday objects like pots and tiles might also resemble Fortuny's concerns. However, the real importance of Riaño's interest in manufactured objects lies not least in the process of manufacturing itself. Riaño's phrasing is significant, for example, when he comments, 'The continued influence of the Arabs has caused a number of *Spanish industries* to present a special character which

cannot fail to excite great interest' (my italics).<sup>41</sup> This is, after all, an account of industrial arts in a museum whose celebrated purpose was to maintain collections related to the work of artisans and manufacturers. The South Kensington Museum was closely linked, of course, to a desired renewal of British industry and craftsmanship. In turn, Riaño's account of the Spanish collections is focused to a not insignificant extent on the circumstances and ways in which objects were produced. More still, it unites and fuses aesthetic appreciation, an account of national cultural development, and, in a broad sense, industry.

Seen in that light, the point of Riaño's work is that it overturns any opposition between, on the one hand, a preoccupation with the hybrid past of Spain and, on the other, its recent striving for extensive national re-development. The two should instead be intimately interrelated. Riaño's descriptive catalogue thus renews Gayangos's enterprise by addressing head-on the preoccupations of mid-century Spain.

## Notes

1. Burdiel, *Isabel II*, pp.39–93.
2. Ginger, *Political Revolution and Literary Experiment*, pp.138–39.
3. Labanyi, ‘Love, Politics, and the Making of the Modern European Subject’, p.238–41.
4. Martínez de la Rosa, *Aben Humeya*, ‘Avant-Propos’.
5. Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, 251–54, 302, 323.
6. Hartzenbusch, *Los amantes*, Act II, scene vi, 405
7. Larra, *Artículos*, p.573.
8. Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, 110.
9. Espronceda, *Obras completas*, 568–69.
10. See, for example, Martínez de la Rosa, *Aben Humeya*, Act II, scene ix; Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, 413–18.
11. Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, 420–21.
12. See Martínez de la Rosa, *Aben Humeya*, Avant-Propos; Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, 250–51).
13. Gayangos, *History*, I, vii.
14. Gayangos, *History*, I, xix.
15. Gayangos, *History*, I, vii, xii.
16. Gayangos, *History*, I, viii.
17. Gayangos, *History*, I, vii.
18. Gayangos, *History*, I, vii.
19. Gayangos, *History*, I, 528.
20. Gayangos, *History*, I, vii, 418; II, 458.

21. Gayangos, *History*, I, 515.
22. Rivas, *El moro expósito*, I, xxviii, 515–16.
23. See, for example, Ginger, *Political Revolution and Literary Experiment; Painting and the Turn to Cultural Modernity*, chapter 8; Burdiel, *Isabel II*, p.193.
24. Valera, *Obras completas*, pp.214–16, 224–26; Lafuente, *Historia general*, pp.41–59.
25. Castelar, *La fórmula del progreso*, pp.40, 73–77, 142.
26. See Ginger, ‘Some Cultural Consequences’.
27. Valera, *Obras completas*, p.224).
28. Ros de Olano, *El doctor Lañuela*, pp.192–204.
29. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, pp.1494–95, 1552–53, 1559.
30. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, p.1631.
31. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, pp.1559–61, 1595.
32. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, p.1539.
33. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, pp.1628, 1643.
34. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, pp. 1508–10.
35. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, pp.1545–46.
36. Alarcón, *Obras completas*, p.1663.
37. ‘verificar’ as he puts it; see, Alarcón, *Obras completas*, p.1574.
38. Ginger, ‘Some Cultural Consequences’.
39. Riaño, *Classified and Descriptive Catalogue*, pp.vi, viii.
40. Riaño, *Classified and Descriptive Catalogue*, pp.v-vi.
41. Riaño, *Classified and Descriptive Catalogue*, p.xxx.

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