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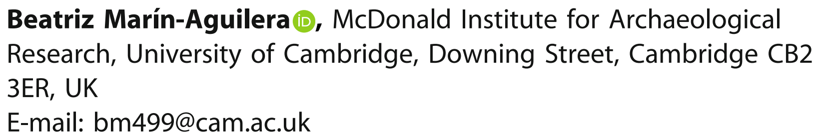
RESEARCH

Distorted Narratives: Morocco, Spain, and the Colonial Stratigraphy of Cultural Heritage



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ABSTRACT

International cultural development projects entail a neoliberal agenda that frequently echoes colonial ideologies and discourses. Using the case study of Chaouen, a northern city in Morocco, I argue in this paper that former colonies and aid-receiving countries usually overlap, and serve the former metropolises to continue controlling the former colony's human and economic resources. I discuss how the former colonial power, in this case Spain, regulates and promotes a particular heritage discourse that has conveniently been depoliticised. I further contend that in line with previous colonial narratives, Spain has silenced the painful history of struggle and resilience of the inhabitants of Chaouen.

Résumé: Les projets mondiaux de développement culturel impliquent un programme néolibéral faisant souvent écho aux idéologies et discours coloniaux. En utilisant l'étude de cas de Chaouen, une ville du nord du Maroc, j'avance dans le présent article que les anciennes colonies et pays bénéficiaires d'assistance se chevauchent en général et permettent aux anciennes métropoles de continuer à contrôler les ressources humaines et économiques des colonies d'autrefois. J'explique comment l'ancienne puissance coloniale, dans le présent cas l'Espagne, gouverne et favorise un discours patrimonial particulier ayant été dépolitisé à point nommé. Qui plus est, je soutiens que l'Espagne a, dans la foulée des récits coloniaux précédents, mis sous silence l'histoire douloureuse des conflits et de la résilience des habitants de Chaouen.

Resumen: Los proyectos internacionales de desarrollo cultural implican una agenda neoliberal que frecuentemente hace eco de ideologías y discursos coloniales. Utilizando como ejemplo el caso de Chaouen, una ciudad del norte de Marruecos, en este trabajo sostengo que las antiguas colonias y

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los países receptores de ayuda suelen superponerse y servir para que las antiguas metrópolis sigan controlando los recursos humanos y económicos de la ex colonia. Trato sobre cómo la antigua potencia colonial, en este caso España, regula y promueve un discurso patrimonial particular que ha sido convenientemente despolitizado. Además sostengo que, en consonancia con las narraciones coloniales anteriores, España ha silenciado la dolorosa historia de lucha y capacidad de recuperación de los habitantes de Chaouen.

KEY WORDS

International cultural development programmes, Cultural heritage, Colonial discourse, Refugees

"Hasta que los leones tengan sus propios historiadores, las historias de cacería seguirán glorificando al cazador."
Eduardo Galeano, El libro de los abrazos.

Introduction

'There is, really, no such thing as heritage', says Laurajane Smith, at the start of *Uses of Heritage* (2006: 11). 'There is rather a hegemonic discourse about heritage, which acts to constitute the way we think, talk and write about heritage'.

Discourses on the past have been particularly fruitful since the 19th century, strongly linked to power legitimation, national ideology and identity (Evans and Boswell 1999; Fladmark 2000; Rowlands 2002). Most recently, cultural heritage projects have also transformed past remains into an aesthetic space of consumption, mainly linked to the tourist industry (Walsh 1992). Cultural heritage has entered the national and international agendas across the world, in the form of either lucrative heritage tourism packages, or 'cooperation and development' programmes, often both (The World Bank 2001; Timothy 2011; Basu and Modest 2015; Labadi and Logan 2016).

Even if promoted as generous and apolitical help, development and cooperation programmes have generally helped the economy of Western countries more than those that they purport to develop (Dos Santos 1973; Stiglitz 2002; Cooke 2003). When applied to cultural heritage, cultural and educational 'development' programmes have, in many cases, reactivated or reinforced colonial ideologies and discourses in former colonial territories (Basu and Modest 2015; Basu and Damodaran 2015), and even recently in

Western countries regarding refugee crises (Breene 2016; Byrne 2016; Paoli Yazdi and Massoudi 2017).

International projects focused on cultural development entail a neoliberal agenda not dissimilar to that promoted by Western cooperation and development programmes, ie. economic liberalisation and commodification of cultural heritage for touristic consumption (Berriane 1999; Meskell 2005; Hassan et al. 2008; Herzfeld 2010).

I argue in this paper that the neoliberal ideology behind those projects masks the overlap of former colonial territories with cooperation aid-receiving countries, in which the former colonial power uses its privilege to oversee and control the former colony's finances and social resources. I contend that in doing so, the former colonial power also regulates heritage discourse—and its associated semantics—that eventually becomes established and consumed uncritically by tourists. I further argue that in line with neoliberal discourses, the chosen language in international cultural heritage discourses is consciously depoliticised, undermining local agency and silencing painful past experiences.

As a test case, I explore in this article the (neo)colonial heritage narrative created and promoted by the Spanish development programmes in Chaouen, a very touristic city in northern Morocco (Figure 1), which welcomed Andalusian and Morisco refugees in modern times, and was ruled by Spaniards during the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco. I define this type of heritage as neo-colonial because the heritagisation process was carried out by the former colonial power—Spain—in the northern Moroccan region, and because of the discourse displayed to promote the Andalusian and Spanish colonial heritage, as I will argue in this paper.

In what follows, I will firstly delve into the context of international heritage programmes, with a particular emphasis upon discourse construction, and subsequently introduce the history of Chaouen and its long relationship with Spain since at least medieval times. Afterwards, I will focus on Spanish development and cooperation programmes that have targeted the cultural heritage of northern Moroccan cities.

Finally, I will analyse the colonial implications underpinning the Spanish cultural 'development' schemes applied to Moroccan cultural heritage and the city of Chaouen in particular. The aim is to critically investigate the connection between Spanish (neo)colonial politics, power legitimation and heritage discourses in what was the former Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco.

Figure 1. An Andalusian style street in Chaouen, also known as the 'blue city' (Photograph: author, January 2017)

International Heritage Programmes and Neo-colonial Ideology

Meaning is given to particular material and immaterial realities through the continuous production and reproduction of discourses. In this process of meaning generation, semiotics is crucial. Linguistic signs play a central role in how different social groups and societies imagine and understand themselves (Wilce 2012). Speakers (and writers) have access to several codes, different registers, expressions, etc., that they can choose and use to communicate their messages (Duranti 2009: 23). Hence, language is always, consciously or not, a selection.

A specific selection of language that represents some particular aspect of history, which may be alternatively represented, is an ideological proposition (Fairclough 2010: 34). Whichever representation prevails at a given time is a function of power. In this regard, the pervasive of 'expert knowledge' in international development schemes is particularly hazardous when it comes to ideological representations of past remains.

International heritage management—led mainly by Western countries—has more to do with political competition and the control over the resources and finances of the countries to be 'developed', than with an unconditional and generous help to promote those countries' historical sites (Byrne 1991; Caffyn and Jobbins 2003; Lafrenz Samuels 2009). Furthermore, the conjunction of cultural heritage 'experts' and military forces to rescue antiquities in war zones obscures Western political agendas and ideologies, and resonates well with a clear colonial ideology (Price 2008; Hamilakis 2009; Pollock 2016).

This neo-colonial ideology can be traced back to the beginning of the post-colonial period in many parts of the globe, ie. the independence of the former colonial territories. The western post-colonial intervention was undertaken following World War II under the more attractive banners of 'aid' and 'development'. These new concepts introduced the *new* and depoliticised western interference in the economic, political and social life of emerging nations in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

According to the European Commission words, 'upon achieving independence from the 1960s onwards, ex-colonies wished to *retain the benefits* of this association (preferential access to their commodities on the European market and financial assistance). They have since negotiated their new-found relations with the EEC on a contractual basis, the latter wishing to lend its support to fledgling states' (European Commission n.d., my emphasis). Leaving aside the condescending language deployed by the EU institution (eg. fledgling states), the development cooperation schemes were and are sold as mostly—even uniquely—beneficial for the former colonial

territories, whereas it is the desire of the western nations to transform and control the so-called 'third world' what is at play in these programmes (Cooper and Packard 1997; Escobar 1998).

It is in this context of depoliticised language—preferential access to commodities, financial assistance, EU/UNESCO,etc., lent support—that international heritage management dwells. Flows of information, expertise, and technology move predominantly from the 'developed' west to the 'underdeveloped' former colonies, in most cases without acknowledging power and economic asymmetries (Berliner 2011; Basu and Modest 2015). Following the same colonial and imperial logics that assumed the backwardness of the colonised (Said 1994), western experts and institutions presume that former colonies need to be taught and guided throughout the process of preservation and promotion of heritage.

In addition, international funding schemes like the World's Bank 'framework for action in the Middle East and North Africa' (Cernea 2003), or the 'Interreg', 'Culture' programmes (2000, 2007–2013) programmes, and 'More Europe' initiative, all funded by the European Commission, have provided generous incentives to invest in cultural heritage in Europe and beyond the European borders.

However, the conversion of cultural heritage into a tourist attraction to suit every taste and almost every budget has too often led to the elusion of any controversial or painful histories that the cultural site/monument might represent, in search for the comfortable enjoyment of the tourist visitor (Lowenthal 2002; Silberman 2008 with bibliography).

International heritage programmes thus endorse particular representations of the past that, even if contested, become institutionalised discourses and accepted as a regime of truth (Milliken 1999; Herzfeld 2010; see also Foucault 1979). Those discourses not only silence alternative interpretations and indigenous or local agencies (Boccara and Bolados 2010; Gnecco 2012; Porter and Barry 2016), but also obscure suffering and uncomfortable experiences. The Moroccan town of Chaouen is an example of this.

Historical Context

Today Spain and Portugal were under Muslim rule between 711 and 1492, when the Christian Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula conquered Granada, the only region under Muslim control at that time (Kennedy 1996; González 2006; James 2009). Islamic Iberia was dominated by the Umayyad Emirate of Córdoba (756–929), followed in 929 by the Caliphate of Córdoba established by the Umayyad dynasty, which covered Islamic Iberia and part of today northern Morocco. The Caliphate lasted until 1031, when the Islamic territory in Iberia was divided into independent small kingdoms

(*ṭā'ifa*) due to a civil war between the descendants of the last caliph. These kingdoms were small emirates, such as the *Ṭā'ifa* of Mértola in Portugal, the *Ṭā'ifa* of Toledo, the *Ṭā'ifa* of Valencia, the *Ṭā'ifa* of Córdoba and the ones in Seville and Granada in Spain, among many others.

Differences between rulers and the inexistence of a centralised kingdom facilitated the Christian conquest of the Islamic territory, and thus Islamic governors sought help from the Almoravids. The latter, who already controlled the western Maghreb, ended up reigning over Islamic Iberia (1050–1140). Uprisings against the Almoravids rule led to a second period of division into small kingdoms in Iberia, and a subsequent conquest by the Almohads that came too from Morocco (1145- ca. 1228). New local rebellions triggered the fall of the Almohad Empire in Iberia, a third period of division into small kingdoms, and the emergence of the Nasrids of Granada in 1232, the last Muslim Kingdom that survived in the Iberian Peninsula until the Christian conquest in 1492. The history of Portugal, Spain, and Morocco is therefore deeply intertwined since medieval times (and even earlier with the Phoenician colonisation and the Roman Empire) (Figure 2).

The *Andalusian* Chaouen

Chaouen (S̲h̲afs̲h̲āwan[1] in Arabic, Xexuão in Portuguese, Xauen in Spanish, and Chaouen in French and English) literally means 'horns', due to the shape of the mountaintops above the city (Sánchez 1998; Ferhat 2012). The town was founded in 1471 on the left bank of the *wadi* of the same name by Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Rās̲h̲id. It was the core resistance against the expansion of the Portuguese into the interior of northern Morocco, who had already taken Tangier that same year (Abun-Nasr 1987: 207–208).

Hasan chose for the founding of the city a rugged place difficult to be accessed, rich in water resources, like in Ra's al-Mā. Located in a key strategic position, 40 km from the coast, Chaouen dominates the route between Tétouan (*Tīṭṭāwīn*) and Fez (*Fās*) and crossroads for the D̲j̲bāla region.

Hasan was succeeded by his cousin ʻAli b. Rāshid, who was very successful in fighting during the Granada wars in Spain. He fortified Chaouen, built the citadel (*ḳaṣaba*) and a residence for him and his family. ʻAli was quickly followed by many other Granadan families who built their houses nearby, giving birth to the Souiqa neighbourhood (Sánchez 1998).

Between the Portuguese power along the western and northern Moroccan coast, and the Wattasids in Fez, ʻAlī b. Rās̲h̲id became stronger in the Rif region and established an independent principality in Chaouen (Abun-Nasr 1987: 209). The city played an essential role in fighting the Portuguese established in Ceuta, Tangiers and Asilah (*Aṣīla*); and their citizens

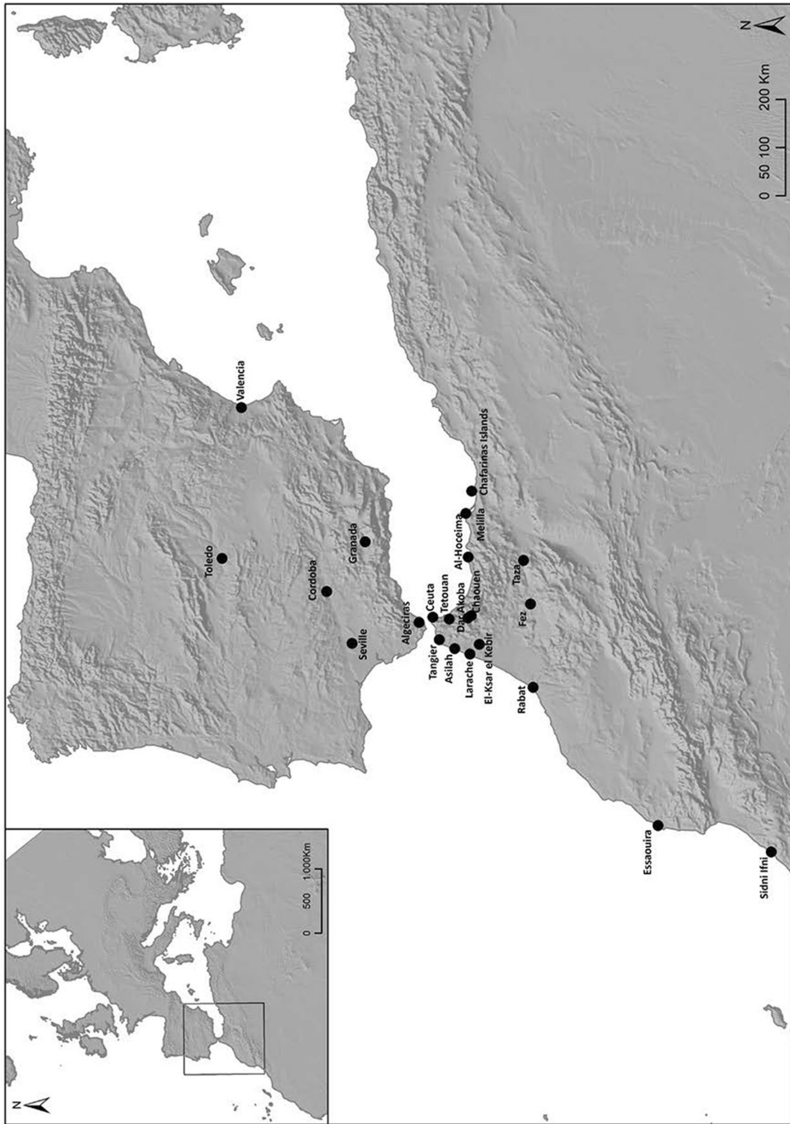

Figure 2. Map with the cities mentioned in the text (Courtesy of Alejandra Galmés)

were freed from taxes precisely because of their participation in that fight (Ferhat 2012).

After the fall of Granada to the Christians in Spain in 1492, thousands of Andalusians fled their homes. Statistics are hard to grasp, but at least 40,000 people left the Spanish Kingdoms for Morocco between 1485 and 1501 (García 2013: 324). Castilians permitted the legal departure of Andalusians only after they paid fees for both the right of transit and the right of exit. Less wealthy people could not afford to pay those fees, and thus became largely a clandestine exodus, especially since the Albaycin uprising in 1499 in Granada and the forced conversions in 1502.

A Granadan military *ḳāʾid* (chief), al-Mandrī, arrived in Tétouan with Andalusian refugees after the capitulations in Granada. Tétouan, destroyed by the Castilians in 1399 and again by the Portuguese in 1437, was rebuilt by them and acquired significant importance in fighting against the Christians (Cano 2004:123).

Local tribes, however, opposed al-Mandrī and the Andalusian refugees, and therefore the latter asked ʻAli b. Rāshid, the *ḳāʾid* of Chaouen, for help. ʻAli sent his army to Tétouan, and encouraged Andalusian refugees to settle in his city (Gozalbes 1984: 363; Abun-Nasr 1987: 208–209). The arrival of new refugees from Andalusia expanded the urban perimeter of Chaouen with the Rif al-Andalus quarter, north of Souiqa (Sánchez 1998) (Figure 3).

From 1492 and 1540, Andalusian communities made Chaouen expand its boundaries with the creation of two more neighbourhoods, Rif al ʻNasr (Aonsar) and al-Sabbanin (Sebanin). The town became a hot hub for trade with great influence over the region between the 15th to 16th centuries, but also a fundamental city of saints because of the importance of its *zāwiya*, shrines, and mosques (Rahmouni 2015: 66–69; Campos 2016: 127).

Hostilities did not end in the Iberian Peninsula, and violence escalated leading to the War of the Alpujarras (1568–1571) in the Kingdom of Castile. The war was one of the most violent wars of the 16th century, featuring several massacres of priests committed by the Moriscos, or Muslims living in Spain, as well as the death, expulsion, and slavery of thousands of Moriscos by Christians. In 1573, the remaining 1500 Moriscos were sold as slaves in Córdoba (Kamen 2014: 169). Refugees—mostly from Andalusia but also from Valencia—settled again in different cities in Morocco (Serels 1995; García 2013: 324–325).

Yet another wave of Spanish Muslims, around 275,000 people, fled Spain between 1609 and 1614 due to the Decree of Expulsion of the Moriscos, according to the latest calculations (Vincent 2007; Lomas 2011). About 70,000–100,000 of them settled in Morocco (de Epalza 1992: 146).

The reception of the new wave of refugees in Morocco was not very welcomed by locals. The Moriscos arrived dressed as Spaniards, using

Figure 3. General view of the Uta Hammam square and the Kasba in Chaouen (Photograph: author, January 2017)

Christian names and surnames, and speaking Castilian—some did not even speak Arabic—and therefore their Muslim faith was not trusted (Cano 2004: 134–136; García 2013: 348). Despite that, Tétouan and Chaouen became the main core of some 40,000 Moriscos in Morocco. (de Epalza 1992: 146–147; Vincent 2007: 67–68), even though it cannot be established how many of that sum consisted of new Moriscos and of old Andalusians. The new arrivals forced the enlargement of Chaouen and a new quarter was built, al Suq (Sánchez 1998).

From the late 17th until the 19th centuries, however, the city lost its importance and is hardly mentioned in any source (Ferhat 2012).

The Rebellious Chaouen

The Spanish interest in Morocco reawakened, especially in the prelude to the 19th century 'scramble for Africa', with a clear imperial strategy. Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish cities in Morocco, were subject to recurrent border incidents. Using one of these cities as an excuse, Spain declared war on Morocco in 1859, kicking off the Hispano-Moroccan war.

The Catalan poet Víctor Balaguer compared this war with the Spanish victory over the Muslims in the Battle of the Navas de Tolosa (1212), and over the Ottomans in the Battle of Lepanto (1571), saying 'the sun of the Navas and Lepanto returns to shine in the sky for Spain' (1860: 7). The Hispano-Moroccan war was portrayed as a clash of civilisations between a Christian kingdom and one of barbarians/infidels, in which Spain would be victorious, as history proved against the Arabs of al-Andalus during the Reconquista and against the Ottomans in the 16th century.

In 1860, Morocco was defeated and forced to recognise the Chafarinas Islands as Spanish possessions, to extend the Spanish territory surrounding Ceuta and Melilla, to give Sidi Ifni to Spain, and to pay war reparations (Zunes and Mundy 2010: 99–100).

But Spanish imperialism over Morocco did not stop here. In 1904, Spain and France signed an agreement, according to which both countries divided up Morocco in two 'areas of influence', with the northern part of the country becoming Spanish territory. Two years later, after the Conference of Alger (1906), Spain and France gained control over the police and finances of the Moroccan coastal cities. In 1911, Spain sent troops to northern Morocco and occupied the cities of Larache and Alcázarquivir, and in 1912, the Spanish and French Protectorates over Morocco were finally established (Howe 2005: 64).

Chaouen fell under Spanish rule. Nevertheless, the *ḳabīla* groups fiercely opposed the Spaniards, and the government resorted to military intervention in the region (Cano 2004: 216–217). In 1922, disregarding international laws, Spain launched a war against the *ḳabīla* using chemical

weapons (Balfour 2002; de Madariaga and Lázaro 2003). Chaouen was, from 1922 to 1926, the rebels' base of operations against the Spaniards, led by ʿAbd al-Krīm (Cabanellas 1926).

By 1924, even with the use of chemical weapons and outnumbering the *ḳabīla* groups, it was clear that the Spanish army could not defeat the local tribes and control over the Rīf region. Military action was thus subordinated to negotiation.

The most difficult retreat for the Spaniards was precisely the one from Chaouen, where there were about 10,000 militaries. In December 1924, they drew back to Dār Akoba by bribing the *ḳabīla*. There were 2000 Spaniards dead after the retreat, 190 of whom were military officers (de Madariaga 2013: 114–116). Only in 1926, and thanks to a deal with France against ʿAbd al-Krīm, Spain extended the protectorate to the Rīf, which included Chaouen (de Madariaga 2013: 118–119). The Spanish rule in Morocco lasted till 1956, when the country gained independence from both France and Spain, and it was not until the early 1990s that official relations were re-established between the two countries.

Spanish Development and Cooperation Programmes in Morocco

The first agreement between the newly established European Economic Community and Morocco was established in 1957, a year after the country's independence (Iglesias 2011: 19). But it was only 30 years later that Spain established diverse cooperation agreements with its neighbour and former protectorate (Iglesias 2011: 22–23).

Spain built stronger ties with Morocco from 1994 onwards, with the latter being a recipient of the 'Interreg' initiative (Iglesias and Gutiérrez 2011). The 'Interreg II' programme extended its funding and implementation objectives to countries neighbouring Europe. This new funding and policy scheme considered neighbouring countries to be not just those that shared a direct border, but those that shared the same sea basin, such as the Mediterranean. This opened a new field of action for Spain, and for Andalusia in particular, in relation to Morocco. Indeed, it was with the direct involvement of the Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government of Andalusia) in the cooperation plans that the cultural and historical aspects of the northern Moroccan region were reinforced (Iglesias 2011: 35–39; Veguilla 2011).

In accordance with the 'Interreg II' scheme, there were three Moroccan regions eligible for developing cooperation projects: the Tangier-Tétouan region, the Oriental province, and the Taza-al Hoceima region (Rodríguez et al. 2012: 169–170). The first two were former colonial territories under

the Spanish Protectorate, and the third is located on the former colonial border. The Andalusian/Spanish/European development aid was aimed at three northern Moroccan towns: Larache, Tétouan, and Chaouen (Junta de Andalucía 2012).

In 2000, a new 'Interreg' scheme was set up for the period of 2000-2006, the so-called 'Interreg III-A: Spain-Morocco'. Two of the main axes of cooperation were precisely 'crafts and Andalusian culture' and 'tourism and cultural heritage' (Rodríguez et al. 2012: 169). Within this framework, a new agreement was signed in 2003 between Morocco and the Junta de Andalucía, called *Programa de Desarrollo Transfronterizo de Andalucía y el Norte de Marruecos* (Cross-Border Development Programme of Andalusia and northern Morocco) (Melado 2007: 192).

In this period, Andalusian cooperation projects increased exponentially (Figure 4), expanding to other cities such as Aṣīla, where the main square of the historical centre was restored. Several projects continued in Tétouan, Larache and Chaouen, where several houses were restored in the Rif al-Andalus neighbourhood—again dated to the period of the 15th to 17th centuries, when Andalusian refugees settled in the city (Junta de Andalucía 2012).

Similar European cooperation programmes have been renewed after 2006, first under the 'European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument' (ENPI) regulation for 2007–2013, and subsequently under the 'European Neighbourhood Instrument' (ENI) regulation for 2014–2020 (European Commission 2016).

Between 2007 and 2013, Andalusia implemented even more projects than in the previous cooperation period in northern Morocco, expanding

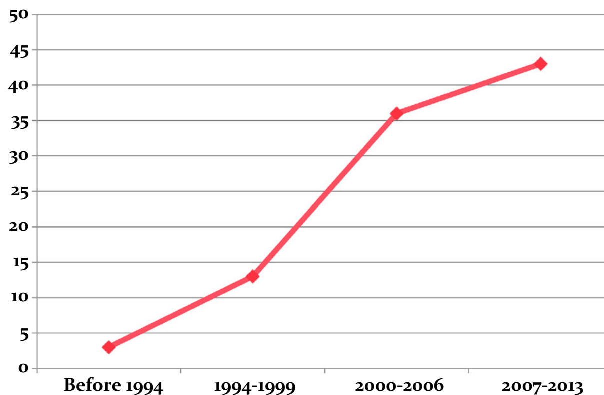

Figure 4. Spanish/Andalusian cooperation project by European financial scheme. (*Source*: author's own elaboration using data from Junta de Andalucía 2012)

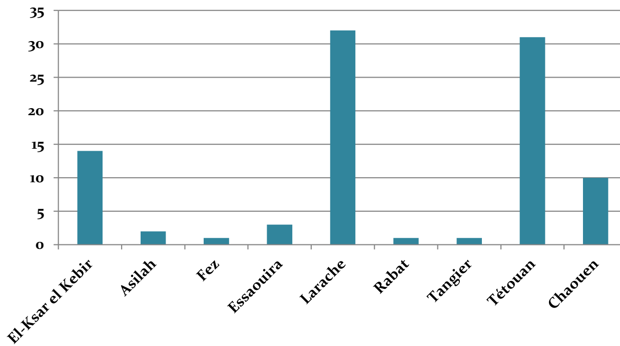

Figure 5. Number of projects by Moroccan city. (*Source*: author's own elaboration using data from Junta de Andalucía 2012)

their aid to three more cities: Al-Ksar al Kebir (Alcazalquivir in Spanish), Essaouira, and Tangier (Figure 5). Projects in Chaouen, Tétouan, and Larache also continued in this period (Junta de Andalucía 2012).

(Neo)Colonial Overlaps and Selective Heritage

Since 1989, Spanish development and cooperation aid has mainly targeted Moroccan cities that were once part of the colonial Protectorate (Figure 6). Such overlapping of former colonies and cooperation projects carried out by former colonial powers is hardly a new phenomenon and has been uncovered and criticised on many occasions (Cooke 2003; Kothari 2006; see also Barbière 2015).

Spanish cultural programmes, within the framework of cooperation aid, have focused almost exclusively on two periods of Moroccan history: the Andalusian legacy of the 15th to 17th centuries, and the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco, emphasising the historical cultural (and colonial) ties between Morocco and Spain.

Andalusian heritage is present not only in the former colonial territories, but also in other Moroccan cities that were not under Spanish colonial rule in the 20th century, but rather French colonial jurisdiction, such as Rabat and Fez (Bahrami 1995; González and Rojo 2015; see also Shannon 2015). Yet, Spanish heritage programmes targeted only Moroccan cities located in the former colonial territories, such as Larache, Tétouan, Asilah, El-Ksar el Kebir and Chaouen.

Besides the strong influence of France in the former French Protectorate in Morocco (Sater 2010: 87–116), the main reason for this choice of cities in former colonial territories is, ultimately, the fact that heritage and

Figure 6. Moroccan cities targeted by the Spanish cultural cooperation programmes, whose boundaries coincide with the Spanish Protectorate in Northern Morocco. (*Source*: author's own elaboration using the Sogeresa-Madrid 1924 Spanish Protectorate map as a base map)

touristic programmes were already in place since the era of the Spanish Protectorate in the north (Verdugo and Parodi 2008; Araque 2015).

Larache, Tétouan and Asilah have seen their Spanish colonial heritage being restored, whereas in El-Ksar el Kebir and Chaouen, development schemes have concentrated on Andalusian heritage (Figure 7). The colonial legacy is only mentioned in commissioned publications (Junta de Andalucía 2012). The Uta Hammam square (Figure 3), named 'Plaza de España' during the Spanish Protectorate, was restored, paved and landscaped during the colonial period. Yet, there is no indication of this or of the colonial period more broadly in the didactic panels for tourists.

Interestingly enough, the Moroccan Andalusian heritage of Chaouen was already highlighted during the Spanish Protectorate (Duclos and Campos 2006: 93; Araque 2015: 65), when Chaouen was the crown jewel of the colonial touristic policies. Most importantly, Chaouen played a leading role in the Rif War fighting Spanish colonial rule in Morocco, unlike Tétouan or Larache. By focusing on the Andalusian heritage of Chaouen, Spanish development programmes can avoid referencing the important defeat against the *ķabīla* groups and their bloody retreat from the area in 1924, and more generally, the problematic establishment of the colonial Protectorate in northern Morocco as a whole.

Furthermore, Andalusian heritage helps Spain to recite a convenient historic narrative that resonates very well with the cultural legacy and myth of al-Andalus and the supposedly peaceful coexistence of different cultures—a touristic best-seller (Hernández 2008; Shannon 2015). It also establishes a

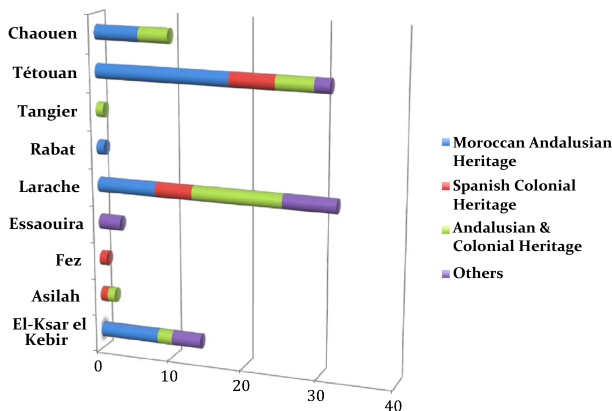

Figure 7. Moroccan cultural heritage targeted by Spanish/Andalusian cooperation projects by type. (*Source*: author's own elaboration using data from Junta de Andalucía 2012)

teleological discourse of continuity in Morocco that echoes colonial narratives written during the Spanish Protectorate.

(Neo)Colonial Language and Ideology

In 1918 Juan de Lasquetti, a Spanish lieutenant colonel, described Chaouen as follows:

> *Aquel trocito de la España retrospectiva parece haberse conservado sin otro objeto que recibir nuestra visita y dar fe ante el mundo entero de que el corazón de Yebala y las entrañas del Rif son la España* misma riente de los valles pirenaicos de la pintoresca Ronda, de la inimitable Alpujarra (de Lasquetti 1921: Introduction).[2]

The reference to the Alpujarra, where the Morisco uprising took place between 1568 and 1571, and the nostalgia for the preserved Andalusian past, rendered Chaouen the perfect town to legitimise the continuity of Spain over Moroccan territory, and thus its colonial control.

In his work, Lasquetti never uses the word 'refugee' when referring to Andalusians that were compelled to seek exile in Morocco after the conquest of Granada by the Christians, and the successive expulsions from Castile and Aragon. Instead, he uses 'moros' (Moors) or 'Andalus' for al-Andalus (de Lasquetti 1921).

The connotation of the word 'refugee' would not have helped the discursive colonial goal of the Spaniards in Morocco. The important fact was the presence of Spaniards—whether Andalusian Muslims, Sephardim, Moriscos or Moors—and the territorial and cultural bond with Spain embodied in the architecture and urban planning of Chaouen. In a Machiavellian shift, the Spaniards who were expelled for not being 'proper' Spaniards, ie. Catholics, now were more Spanish than ever, in order to serve the Spanish colonial discourse and imperial legitimacy over the territory.

The post-independence process of 'heritagisation' brilliantly echoes the colonial strategy. In none of the three main publications on the restorations carried out under Spanish development programmes in Morocco's 'Andalusian' cities is the word 'refugiado' (refugee) mentioned (cfr. Armas and Torres 2004; Duclos and Campos 2006; Regidor 2011). Instead, the word '*emigrado*' (emigrant) is cited in just one publication (Armas and Torres 2004: 52, 118, 168–169).

Similarly, in the didactic panels that visitors and citizens find today in their everyday walks and casual wonderings through Chaouen, the word 'refugee' is never applied—in Spanish. It is used, however, in their English translation (Figure 8). It is nevertheless worth noting that the majority of

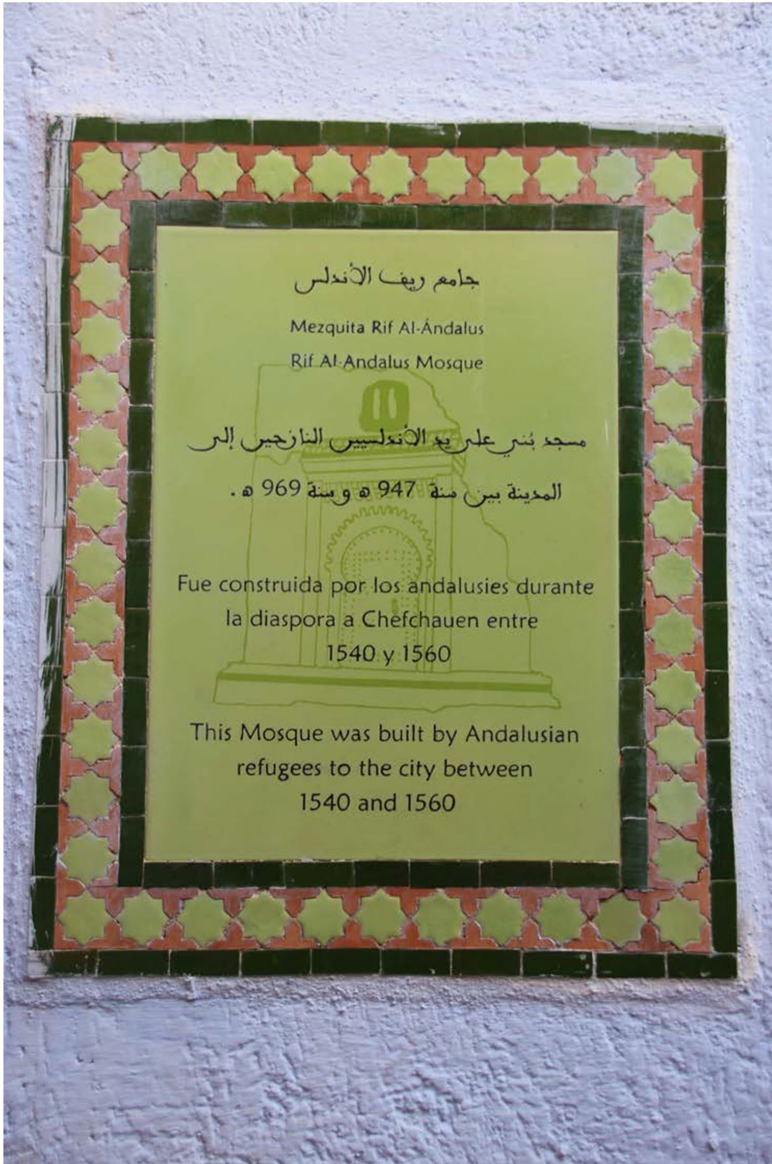

Figure 8. Informative panel on the wall of the Rif Al-Andalus Mosque (Photograph: author, January 2017)

tourists to Morocco are either Spaniards or French (Observatoire du Tourisme 2017).

The word '*emigrante*' (emigrant) is used instead, or most commonly '*Andalusíes*' (Andalusians). In Spanish, '*emigrante*' refers to a voluntary action, not encapsulating the painful experience of forced exile, of leaving behind one's house, material and personal belongings, lifelong memories, way of life, friends, and family.

As mentioned earlier, the term '*Andalusí*', and al-Andalus in general, reminds Spanish visitors of home, recalling Granada, Seville, and Córdoba. It prompts them to think not only of a common history, but of their *own* cultural heritage, of which Chaouen is an important part. It perpetuates the colonial idea, following Lasquetti's work, that northern Morocco is *still* Spain—even if it was Spain, conversely, the territory conquered and colonised by Muslims for almost seven centuries. Especially interesting is the fact that both Almoravids and Almohads came from Morocco and subjugated Islamic Iberia, and not vice versa.

The marketisation of the Andalusian heritage of Chaouen serves the same consumption and tourist purpose than the Andalusian heritage in Spain: the celebration of al-Andalus' nostalgia (Shannon 2015, see Marín-Aguilera 2018). This trope of the vanishing, lost past, has resulted very profitable in other contexts as well (Berliner 2011; Cheer and Reeves 2015).

Even if the Andalusian heritage in Morocco has not been listed (yet) as World Heritage, it has gone through the same heritage machine: The conversion of the town's cultural heritage into a profitable asset for local economic development with the creation of a 'theme park' out of the Andalusian legacy (Lowenthal 2002). Prior to such conversion, any reference to colonial violence or unpleasant experiences was conveniently deleted to provide a pleasant (yet uncritical) consumption of the past.

Most importantly, the language chosen in the Spanish publications as well as in the didactic panels across the city is a conscious selection that, decorously depoliticised, represents a particular aspect (and view on) of history, which obscures the uprooting experience of Andalusians, Sephardim and Moriscos. Apparently, forced exile was not sufficient for those 'Spaniards' in the 15th to 17th centuries, that now the (again) Spanish heritage narrative in Chaouen silences their painful endurance.

Conclusions

In this article I have argued that the northern Moroccan region has a long history of relations with Spain, particularly with the region of Andalusia. Two historic moments are particularly crucial for the development of historic ties: the Andalusian and Moriscos' exile in the 15th to 17th centuries,

and the period of the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco (1912–1956).

Since the late 1980s, Spanish development and cooperation aid schemes in Morocco have targeted the cultural heritage of the former colonial cities, even though Andalusian heritage is present in other Moroccan cities. Such cooperation projects are focused either on the Moroccan Andalusian cultural heritage dated to the 15th to 17th century, or on 20th century Spanish colonial architecture and urbanism.

In the case of Tétouan, both periods are well represented in the list of Spanish restoration and development programmes, and the same can be said for Larache. Chaouen, however, represents a different and even more political picture. Cooperation has focused on Andalusian culture, leaving aside any reference to the Spanish colonial period in the city. Since Chaouen played a leading role in the Rif War fighting Spanish colonial rule in Morocco, referring to or restoring the colonial cultural heritage does not fit the narrative of depoliticised and celebratory cultural ties between Spain and Morocco.

Furthermore, in the pursuit of political correctness and profit, the language used in the touristic panel boards mutes the heartbreaking experience of exiled Andalusians, Moriscos and Sephardim, who lost everything when they were expelled from Spain between the 15th and 17th centuries.

Chaouen does have an Andalusian past, but it is a painful one. Instead of addressing the issue of expulsion and exile of Andalusians and Moriscos, which made Moroccan cities expand and eventually flourish, both publications and the didactic panels applaud only cultural ties and the similarities between Andalusian and northern Moroccan cities—as if the Andalusian, Sephardic and Morisco buildings that visitors enjoy today were the result of a happy and free migration. Interestingly, such cultural bonds are a matter of continuous and political discussions in Spain, where Muslim-themed tourism coexists with anti-Muslim sentiments in Andalusia and more broadly in Spain (see Marín-Aguilera 2018).

I have discussed the case of Chaouen because it shows the ambiguity of the Andalusian-Moroccan cultural heritage and the interwoven scheme of international heritage programmes and neo-colonial politics. The Spanish chosen heritage discourse has divested the historic city of any reference to suffering or violence, in order to ensure a comfortable and profitable touristic consumption from French and Spanish visitors especially—many of whom may not even be aware of the long history of struggle and resilience of the inhabitants of the city throughout its existence.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

Notes

1. In this article, I follow the English transliteration of Arabic used by the Brill *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Bearman et al. 2012).
2. '*That portion of retrospective Spain* [Chaouen] *seems to have been preserved only to receive our visit and bear witness to the world that the heart of the Yebala and the Rif regions are themselves Spain* laughing between the Pyrenees' valleys and the picturesque Ronda, of the inimitable Alpujarra' (de Lasquetti 1921: Introduction, my translation and emphasis).

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