

(continued from front flap)

of Christians and other groups—all this in the service of social control by autocratic rulers and a class of religious authorities.

*The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* provides a desperately needed reassessment of medieval Spain. As professors, politicians, and pundits continue to celebrate Islamic Spain for its “multiculturalism” and “diversity,” Fernández-Morera sets the record straight—showing that a politically useful myth is a myth nonetheless.

“Fernández-Morera takes on the long-overdue topic of assessing medieval Muslim Spain’s reputation for ethnic pluralism, religious tolerance, and cultural secularism. Finding this view based on a ‘culture of forgetting,’ he documents the reign of strict *sharia* in Andalusia, with its attendant discrimination against non-Muslims and subjugation of women. **So much for the charming fantasy of open-mindedness and mutual respect.**”

—DANIEL PIPES, historian of Islam and publisher of the *Middle East Quarterly*

**DARÍO FERNÁNDEZ-MORERA** is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University. A former member of the National Council on the Humanities, he holds a BA from Stanford University, an MA from the University of Pennsylvania, and a PhD from Harvard University. He has published several books and many articles on cultural, literary, historical, and methodological issues in Spain, Latin America, and the United States.

Jacket design: Nadia McDannels

Cover image: Muslim horsemen and their black slave warriors herding Christian prisoners and their cattle, from the *Cantigas de Santa María*, thirteenth-century illuminated manuscript



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HISTORY / CULTURAL STUDIES

Fernández-  
Morera

THE MYTH OF THE ANDALUSIAN PARADISE

### PRAISE FOR *THE MYTH OF THE ANDALUSIAN PARADISE*

“*The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* prompts readers to rethink their traditional notion of Islamic Spain. Fernández-Morera shows that it was not a harmonious locus of tolerance. Paying special attention to primary sources, he documents how Islamic Spain was in fact dominated by cultural repression and marginalization. ***The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* is essential reading. It will soon find its place on the shelves of premier academic institutions and in the syllabi of pioneering scholars.**”

—ANTONIO CARREÑO, W. Duncan McMillan Family Professor  
in the Humanities, Emeritus, Brown University

“I could not put this book down. *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* constitutes a watershed in scholarship. Through an unbiased and open-minded reading of the primary sources, Fernández-Morera brilliantly debunks the myths that for so long have dominated Islamic historiography and conventional wisdom. We were waiting for this great breakthrough to come to light, and Fernández-Morera has done it. Bravo!”

—RAPHAEL ISRAELI, Professor Emeritus of Middle Eastern,  
Islamic, and Chinese History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

“Fernández-Morera examines the underside of Islamic Spain, a civilization usually considered a model of dynamism and vigor. Through the study of primary sources, he questions the historiographic and intellectual view of the superiority of that civilization. **This is an intelligent reinterpretation of a supposed paradise of *convivencia*.**”

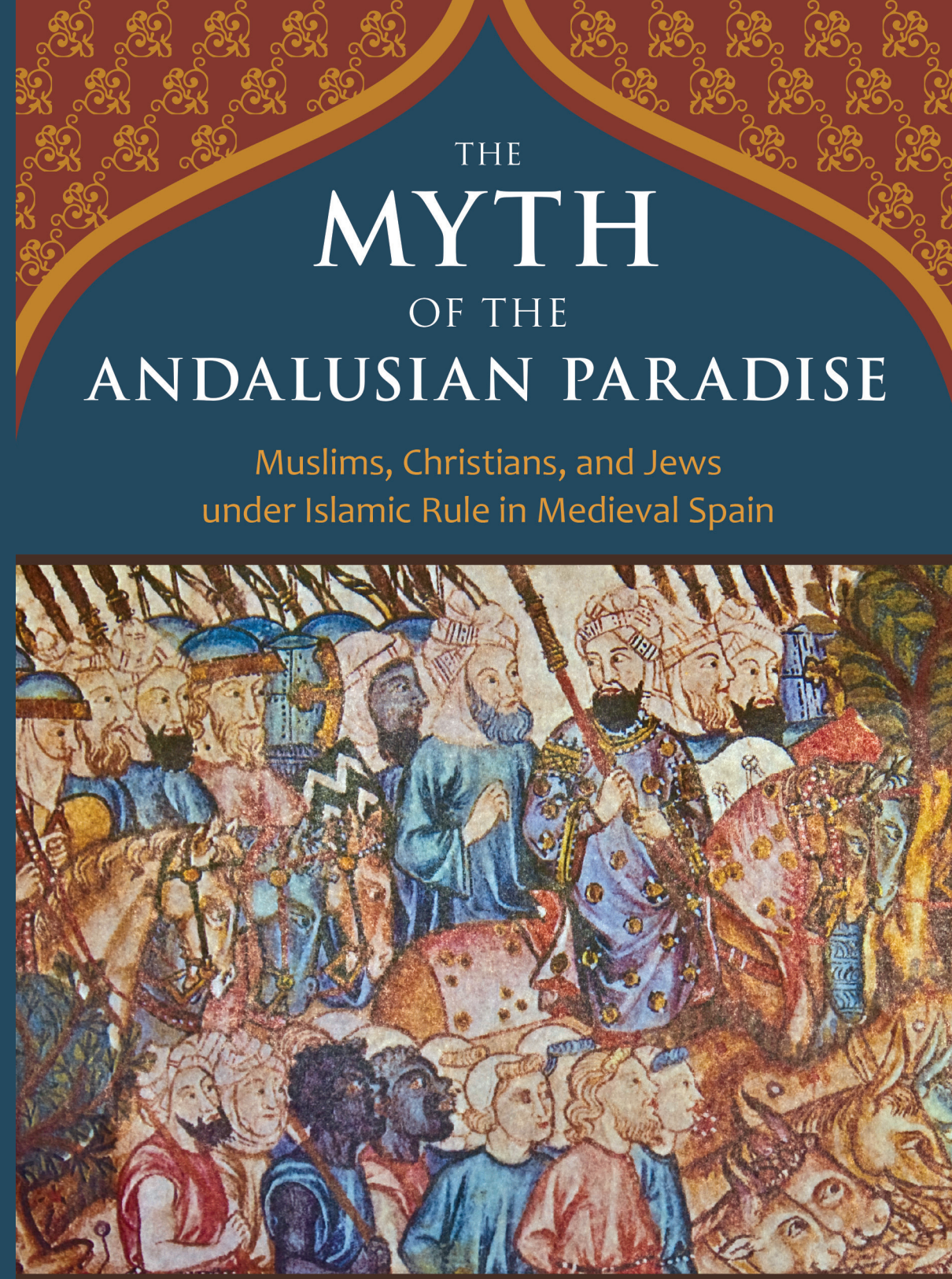
—JULIA PAVÓN BENITO, Professor of Medieval  
Spanish History, University of Navarra

“**Desperately, desperately needed** as a counter to the mythology that pervades academia on this subject. This book sheds much-needed light on current debates about the relationship between the West and Islam. It displays rare good sense and a willingness to face truth that is all too often absent in discussions of this era.”

—PAUL F. CRAWFORD, Professor of Ancient and Medieval  
History, California University of Pennsylvania

“**A splendid book.** This sober and hard-hitting reassessment **demolishes the myths** of religious tolerance and multiculturalism that have hopelessly romanticized the precarious coexistence and harsh realities of medieval Spain under Muslim rule. Well documented and persuasively argued, this book is **must-reading** as a window into the lessons of the past.”

—NOËL VALIS, Professor, Department of Spanish  
and Portuguese, Yale University



# THE MYTH OF THE ANDALUSIAN PARADISE

Muslims, Christians, and Jews  
under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain

Darío Fernández-Morera

\$29.95

“Muslim rulers of the past were far more tolerant of people of other faiths than were Christian ones. For example, al-Andalus’s multi-cultural, multi-religious states ruled by Muslims gave way to a Christian regime that was grossly intolerant.”

—The Economist

“Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia.”

—President Barack Obama

“The new Islamic polity [in Spain] not only allowed Jews and Christians to survive but, following Quranic mandate, by and large protected them.”

—Yale University professor  
María Rosa Menocal

Scholars, journalists, and politicians uphold Muslim-ruled medieval Spain—“al-Andalus”—as a multicultural paradise, a place where Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in harmony.

There is only one problem with this widely accepted account: *it is a myth.*

In this groundbreaking book, Northwestern University scholar Darío Fernández-Morera tells the *full* story of Islamic Spain. *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* shines light on hidden features of this medieval culture by drawing on an abundance of primary sources that scholars have ignored, as well as archaeological evidence only recently unearthed.

This supposed beacon of peaceful coexistence began, of course, with the Islamic Caliphate’s conquest of Spain. Far from a land of tolerance, Islamic Spain was marked by religious and therefore cultural repression in all areas of life and the marginalization

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