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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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By Bianca Carrera

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Palestine is the al-Andalus of the possible



Sources: Source: Mondoweiss [Image: View of the Alhambra in Granada from the viewpoint of San Nicolás (August, 2012) Jebulon-Wikimedia Commons]

Translated for Rebellion by Paco Muñoz de Bustillo

While Palestinian and Arab poets used to compare the fall of Grenada to the loss of Palestine, the younger generation is redefining "al-Andalus" as the Palestine yet to come.

In 1992, when officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization shook hands with Israeli representatives in Madrid, paving the way for what would become the Oslo Accords, Mahmoud Darwish* published his collection of poems *Once astros en el último cielo andalusí*.

Darwish could not overlook that, 500 years after he Mohamed XII [Boabdil for Christians] signed the treaty by which he surrendered Grenada to the lords of European colonialism,

the Palestinian leaders were also selling their land to the Zionist colonial project... and the occurred in the same country.

As a prophecy that revealed what these agreements Darwish saw in the history of al-Andalus a way to warn the Palestinians what would happen to them soon.

*Since That I have accepted the peace pact I do not keep in mind
for Spend tomorrow near my yesterday. Castile will hoist
his crown on the minaret of God. I hear the tinkling of the keys in
the Door to our golden age. Goodbye to our history.*

Will it be me? Who will close the last gate of heaven?

I am The last breath of the Arab.

A warning about The Peace Accords

The last line of Darwish's poem refers to "The sigh of the Moor", a common orientalist trope in Spanish historiography concerning the weeping of Mohamed II/Boabdil when leaving Granada, the last remnant of Muslim territory in Spain. History says that although Mohamed II thought that the agreement obliged the Catholic Monarchs to respect the rights of the Muslims under Christian rule, ten years later a royal decree I would expel them all.

In Darwish's poem "The Kings of the End," Yasser Arafat replaces Mohamed II. "Mahmoud Darwish predicted that the Oslo Accords did not would be respected and that the Palestinian Authority would get nothing out of them, as it happened with the Capitulation of Granada," Abdelkhalak Najmi, a Moroccan expert on Arabic literature, told *Mondoweiss*. and Spanish settled in the Andalusian city. "His poem was a warning'.

The warning, in a sense, was that Palestine would soon would be forgotten:

*Soon we will look for what once was Our History
in the margins of your history,
in distant countries.*

And to the In the end, we will ask ourselves:

Was Al-Andalus here or there? In our land... or in the poem?

Many other Palestinian poets seem to have internalized this warning, using al-Andalus in the same way: the collection of poems by Mohamed Al-Qaisi on the nostalgia of Granada, Khaled Abu Khaled's *Quraysh Falcon* on Córdoba, or the Ez's Eldina Manasra's parallelism on land whose rulers fail protect.

Two lost paradises

The parallels with al-Andalus are not unique to Palestine. Many Arab poets have used it more widely to express feelings of loss and grief. Iraqi poet and writer Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayati used the figure of Granada to transmit the feelings he experienced for exile: like the Moors in Spain, He was now a stranger in his own land. Nizar Qabbani would invoke the Captivating city to talk about the glorious times of civilization Muslim in another era, a way to cope with an increasingly worsening present that I didn't want to see.

"Al-Andalus is rooted in the popular consciousness of Arabs in general," says Samar Abdel Jaber, a Palestinian poet based in now in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As he explains to Mondoweiss, " considers a golden age of Arab and Islamic civilization, a symbol'.

But Samar also explains why the link between al-Andalus and Palestine is especially accepted among Palestinians: "It presents a time of diversity and peoples living together in harmony, and That is something that perhaps ties more closely with the Palestinian experience."

Cities such as Toledo or Granada were considered examples of peaceful coexistence of three major religions and communities Cultural: Muslims, Christians and Jews. Resemblance to former Palestine Zionism is tremendous: a land of prosperity and wealth marked by its diversity.

In this sense, the memory of al-Andalus illustrates how Coexistence and cultural diversity were rooted in the Muslim-majority civilizations, an element that dates back to 622 the Christian era with the Charter of Medina**, and that Zionist figures have tried to deny to present their movement as a religious conflict and not as a colonial project.

For poets such as Darwish, al-Andalus and Palestine They represented a model of greatness for a civilization that had been lost:

I am the Adam of two paradises, twice lost.

So expel me slowly,

and kill me quickly,

under my olive grove, next to Lorca.

The new poetry Document the history of a generation

With these poems the Palestinians dared to launch a warning and a strong message to those who decided the future of their People: Poetry became a terrain of struggle. Decades later it continues being so, but the new generations have decided to use it in another way.

"Most Palestinian poets now write about they are more personal and less political," says Samar. "Obviously [the poetry] is still political, but we focus more on telling our own

History, we focus more on the daily personal struggle of a Palestinian, since whether in Palestine, in the occupied territories or abroad, in exile."

She notes that the situation of the Palestinians has changed. so radically that you cannot compare the difficulties of a child born. in Gaza with those of an inhabitant of the West Bank, Jerusalem or living in the exile. Nor with those of a Palestinian refugee who has nowhere to return and feel like a foreigner wherever you go.

"Poetry may not have the same significance now. politics than before, but it is important because it documents the history of our generation continues," Samar continues, convinced that the historical analogies such as the one established with al-Andalus played a role. important in the past, but now it's about documenting the present through poetry.

Like Samar, young Palestinian poets like Asmaa Azaizeh, Farah Chamma or Mossad Abu Toha have also opted for poems based on The experience to tell his childhood experiences of war and life with the purpose of transcending the current history of its people, while They heal themselves.

"Poetry helps me understand my life, it allows me to to project a global look at the world," poet Asmaa Azaizeh, whose poetic spectacle "Don't believe me if I talk to you about war," poet Asmaa Azaizeh told *The Federal*. was the highlight of the Kerala International Theatre Festival. 'Each Every day I make a continuous effort to make my life more livable, and poetry is what that gives me strength for it."

After all, the word "poetry" in Arabic (*Shi'ir*) has the same roots as the Word "feelings". And what can be felt remains alive.

Perhaps this new generation of Palestinian poets will consider than to write about Palestine as a living memory, rather than to write about She, as if she were in the past, is precisely the key to her being impossible to erase. Perhaps, just as the old poets are pessimists. on the possibility that their land will follow the same fate as the lost one al-Andalus, young Palestinians maintain the hope that, sooner or later, Early, the occupation will crumble, because they will never forget their roots.

In the words of Farah Chamma in "Falastini Ana":

My Palestine continues to grow

Because I see it in the sesame seed in the Zaatar

Because I see it in the sumac that Sprinkle on the eggs in the sun [...]

I see her in the dark night over the Sea Dead

And in all the dead that is still alive in we

Perhaps Palestine is not the exact parallel of al-Andalus. But even for Mahmud Darwish, "Palestine represents the aesthetic beauty of al-Andalus, it is the al-Andalus of the possible."

In other words, this time paradise may not be there. lost and, if the [recent Israeli state crisis](#) serves as a clue, its return may not be far.

N. of the T.:

* Mahmud Darwish (1941-2008) is considered the poet Palestinian national and one of the most celebrated contemporary Arab writers. Was born in a village destroyed by the Israelis when he was six years old and lived in the most of his life in exile. In his work, Palestine becomes a metaphor of Eden, birth and resurrection, as well as anguish for dispossession and exile.

** Text attributed to Muhammad instituting a pact with the Jews and Christians subjected to Islamic domination in which their religion and property and were guaranteed certain rights.

Translation of the poems: María Luisa Prieto and P.M.B.

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