Abstract

This paper examines a recent wave of nostalgic media remembrance of Al-Andalus—the Muslim rule over Spain (8th-15th C). It focuses on two cases. The first is a social media campaign that started in 2011 to commemorate the fall of Al-Andalus. On 2 January, the Muslim defeat anniversary, thousands of online Arabs tweet and use Facebook to commemorate the historic loss and celebrate past Islamic grandeur. The second case is a web and television series starring the popular Egyptian Islamic preacher, Amr Khaled. The series, launched in Ramadan 2013, discusses the lessons of Al-Andalus history. Through a textual analysis of both cases, the paper argues that the political turmoil in the Arab region has fueled new ways of remembering Arab and Muslim pasts. The fresh engagement with the past aims at reconceiving collective identities and influencing preset-day political and cultural transformations.

Omar Al-Ghazi is a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. His research focuses on Arab memory, collective action, and political identity formations. His work has appeared in Media, Culture and Society, Popular Communication and the International Journal of Communication. A former Fulbright fellow, Omar comes from a journalism and media analysis professional background and has previously worked for the BBC and Al-Hayat daily.