

International Conference: *“Mary’s Grandsons: Marian devotion, colonial politics and native strategies against imperial pressure”*

Center for Humanities and Social Sciences (CCHS-CSIC)

May 2026, Madrid, Spain.

To celebrate the end of the MSCA project *“Under the Guidance of Mary. “Moriscos” and “Indios” against the expansion of the Spanish Empire and the politics of Marian devotion”*, articulated between Brown University (RI, USA) and the Spanish National Research Council (Madrid, Spain), we invite researchers to participate in an international conference that would be held in Madrid in May 2026. Inspired by the research conducted during this three-year project, around the fabrication by Tlaxcalan and Granadan native elites of forged stories and artefacts that projected the Virgin as the guardian of these regions and their native population, this international meeting aims to promote new insights into the political significance of devotional culture and the comparative study of “native” populations under Spanish rule. Centered around the multiple expressions and the rhetorical use of Marian devotion, this event intends to reunite and foster an open dialogue among researchers working on Early Modern Iberia, Morisco Studies, Spanish Colonial America, and Native American communities, and welcome ongoing research in the comparative study of these communities and the global dynamics of the Spanish Empire. The conference invites contributions that explore the politics of devotional culture and its transformations, the significance of local Marian cults, the role and agency of native elites across the Atlantic, the construction of civic history and community identities, the debates about Indigenous and Morisco integration and assimilability, and the formulation of civic rights across Spain’s colonial domains.

We welcome proposals that consider the following or related themes:

- The role of Mary in the emergence of local Christianities
- Marian devotion and local identities
- Cross-Atlantic Marian devotions and the formation of imperial identities
- Devotional changes and colonial politics across the Atlantic
- Mary, imperial rhetoric and colonial policies towards “Moriscos” and “Indios”
- The role of Mary in the development of native strategies of resistance, subversion, or negotiation
- Mary and the formation and self-image of “subaltern” elites
- Marian devotion and native struggle for land rights, civic rights, local autonomy, or access to positions in colonial administration or ecclesiastical hierarchy.
- Religious history and local, corporative, or community identity
- Historical forgeries and the formation, reconfiguration, and reinvention of local memories.

Contributions should be in the form of individual **20-minute presentations**. Please submit a descriptive title, 200-word abstract, and one-page CV.

Submit proposals by **November 15, 2025**. Send all queries and abstracts to: amanda.valdes@cchs.csic.es.