

dation stages of the fledgling university at Oxford, that village named after the spot in the River Isis where the oxen forded the stream. While not a Franciscan friar, nonetheless Robert spent considerable time with the followers of St. Francis of Assisi and contributed substantively to the philosophical training of the friars in the early thirteenth century.

McEvoy argues with some persuasion that Robert served as a chancellor of the University of Oxford. Of particular interest is the nicely developed history of the formative years of this center of British education. Given the early tensions, especially between the citizens of Oxford and students and their masters, one wonders indeed how this institution ever developed into the world-class center of academic excellence that it eventually became.

Grosseteste, who McEvoy suggests is by far the most prominent of the first generation of Oxford masters, published philosophical and scientific treatises, commented on Aristotle, wrote biblical exegesis, and translated much from the Greek. Roger Bacon later praised Robert "for promoting the study of the Bible, mathematics, natural science, and ancient Greek." Elected bishop of Lincoln in 1235, ten years later Robert attended the First Council of Lyons, where he argued against papal intervention in English ecclesiastical appointments. McEvoy notes that in the matter of English benefices, Robert took a bold stance, defending the liberties of the English church against Roman interference. Using his knowledge of Aristotelian political theory, Robert transferred Aristotle's concept of good monarchical rule to the practices of the church hierarchy. Given this tussle with papal authorities, Grosseteste is sometimes called a "Proto-Reformer" and is referred to often as "a harbinger of the Reformation."

Yet it is Robert's significant contributions to philosophy and science that are singularly important. McEvoy notes that Robert had a "distinctly philosophical turn of mind." Well grounded in Aristotelian logical theory—where he developed a sense of modal logic regarding necessary propositions—Robert launched a decisive move in the direction of mathematical science, which McEvoy suggests alone "merits a niche all to himself in the history of science." Sounding much like an early Pythagorean, Robert argued that mathematics makes up the very internal texture of the natural world and presides over its functioning. Antedating Newton, Robert suggested that God is the "Divine Mathematician."

Robert's "metaphysics of light," developed in his *Tractatus de luce*, is, McEvoy suggests, "the original creation of a bold and powerful mind." This is a speculative interpretation of the biblical account of Creation as found in the Book of Genesis. Light in nature can be grasped intellectually through geometry. McEvoy's narrative of this difficult bit of Grosseteste's writing is excellent and thought provoking, especially when McEvoy suggests that Robert's account hints at a "big-bang" theory of the beginning of the universe.

Other chapters discuss Robert's exegetical writings, his Greek translations, and the earliest Franciscan masters at Oxford. Three appendices include translations of Grosseteste's work.

This is an excellent introduction to the significant philosophical work of a somewhat neglected early Oxford master. Easily readable while scholarly significant, this book is a fine contribution to a fine series on medieval writers.

ANTHONY J. LISSKA, Denison University

MARÍA ROSA MENOCAL, RAYMOND P. SCHEINDLIN, and MICHAEL SELLS, eds., *The Literature of al-Andalus*. (The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature.) Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. ix, 507; 10 black-and-white figures and diagrams. \$150.

Medieval Iberia may well qualify as the first European location to which the term "multicultural," with all its connotations of difficult and easy coexistence, can be applied. Schol-

ars and students of medieval Spanish literature in particular must take the coexistence of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultures most seriously as a parameter in their research on many significant literary texts in medieval Spain. The question is no longer one of attributions, such as "an element with an Islamic origin" or "a motif going back to Jewish philosophy." Several twentieth-century scholars have already shown, with ample documentation, the presence of such diversity in medieval Spanish literature. Rather, the question now is one of establishing the many nuances of this diversity, recognizing its remarkable impact, and reaching for hitherto inaccessible or neglected factors for an even better understanding of it.

The Cambridge volume on the literature of al-Andalus provides a very good point of departure (as well as companion) for medieval comparatists curious about Arabic, Hebrew, and Spanish letters in the many centuries during which Iberia was home to a substantial stratum of the Islamic Empire. Divided into thematic clusters dealing with space, language, knowledge, literary genres, music, and illustrious Andalusians, the volume also takes into account the impact left on Sicily by Islam. In addition, it provides useful surveys of two fascinating groups—Mozarabs and Moriscos—who negotiated the political and intellectual facets of multicultural existence in thought provoking ways. Ten illustrations (most of which are photographs) showcase the splendid hybridity of Andalusian architecture. Each broad thematic cluster ends with one such photograph and an often informative, though brief, explication of features that foreground the diverse heritage of al-Andalus.

María Rosa Menocal's introduction to the volume rightly posits key conceptual questions, of interest particularly to those unfamiliar with the sheer scope of linguistic mixing and frontier shifting when it comes to al-Andalus. To be interpreted meaningfully, this region's literature, because of its unique geographical and cultural home, calls for a "wide variety of miradores . . . and a wide variety of viewers" (p. 7). Menocal observes, again correctly, that a methodology based on single-language lines will not yield very useful results for the study of Andalusian literature. Rather, one must be alert at all times to the "vexed nature of identities" (p. 12) that is part and parcel of medieval Iberia in general and of al-Andalus in particular. (At the same time, and usefully, the essays in the volume drive home time and again that much of the cultural production of the region is also fundamentally located within the classical Arabic heritage.)

The five broad thematic clusters that follow (each one ending with the explication of architecture mentioned above) contain a total of twenty-five essays. Menocal's projection of the possible readership for these (p. 8) is confirmed by the scope of the essays: by and large, they appear to be aimed at a sophisticated and curious readership with some familiarity with Arabic literature. That said, those Arabists who do not require introductions to the *maqamat*, the history of the Arabic language, or the life of 'Ibn Arabi (topics that fall into a classic syllabus for a medieval Arabist) will find useful essays on specifically Andalusian subjects such as the life of Petrus Alfonsi or Mozarab culture.

All the essays provide sound surveys of their subject matter. They are thorough, well written, and succinct without compromising coherence. For the non-Arabist, Consuelo López Morillas's piece on language (pp. 32–59) provides much-appreciated information while her sections on the Aljamiado phenomenon or the use of Romance speech by Muslims showcase the fascinating linguistic context of al-Andalus. Dwight Reynolds's piece on music (pp. 60–82) is equally informative and thorough, with great benefits for those unfamiliar with Arab musical traditions. Reynolds's essay, much like that of López Morillas, provides an admirable synthesis of the principal issues. It has a clear theoretical underpinning, constantly calling attention to the importance of appreciating the ways in which the dialogue between different periods and groups shaped the musical culture of al-Andalus.

Indeed, the same can be said of all the essays in the collection: they are most informative for the nonspecialist and provide excellent introductions to topics that are not immediately

accessible to all scholars. Those who stand to learn a great deal from the collection are students and scholars of medieval European literature; it is by now a well-known fact, to all Europeanists, that Arab culture played a great role in transmitting knowledge to the West. But a collection of essays such as this allows for immediate access to sound bibliography, more thorough explanation, and above all a more multifaceted exposition of the methodological necessities that command the study of a literature at once as hybrid and classical as that of al-Andalus. Rina Drory's piece on the *maqama*, Beatrice Gruendler's chapter on the *qasida*, and the entire section of biographies (of eminent Andalusians such as Ibn Arabi, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Zaydun) provide just such platforms. Not only do they give useful and solid background, of particular interest for the nonspecialist, but they incorporate—within the very act of synthesis—a heightened consciousness of the special methodology needed to convey information on such a multicultural region.

Naturally, a project of such ambition will leave a number of lacunae, especially for specialists who might wish to see more fine-tuned source criticism of well-established topics. The collection is refreshingly aware of its own gaps, and the preface goes so far as mentioning a shadow book that would, ideally, have covered all the missing bases. On page 21, in the first chapter, Menocal offers an admirably honest list of topics that have had to be forsaken, but at least, in so doing, she provides paths for further research and offers a sound justification of the existing collection's scope.

For this reader, one area that might have been substantially expanded are the photographs and explications of architectural and visual monuments. Architecture is an extraordinarily fluent and compelling testimony to the complex culture of al-Andalus. The collection would have gained from a more visible and systematic allocation of space to the sections on Madinat al Zahra, the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the Aljafería of Zaragoza, and the other photographic examples given.

The fact remains, though, that this is a sound and detailed introduction of enormous utility primarily for Europeanists interested in the presence of Islam in the West and, secondly, for Arabists interested in certain specifically "Iberian"/Western manifestations of a vast classical culture (the piece on Michael Scott the translator, for instance, or the chapter on Mozarabs). The editors are to be commended for producing a solid work of reference in a variety of disciplines.

LEYLA ROUHI, Williams College

ELAINE R. MILLER, *Jewish Multiglossia: Hebrew, Arabic, and Castilian in Medieval Spain*. (Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs: Estudios Judeoespanoles "Samuel G. Armistead y Joseph H. Silverman," 2.) Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta, 2000. Paper. Pp. 160. \$16.95.

The uses and development of various languages in medieval Spain have, of course, been the subjects of countless studies, from brief linguistic notes to large monographs. Numerous journals, in Spain and elsewhere, are devoted to these topics. This small book, in spite of its title, focuses exclusively on Jewish linguistic development in medieval Spain. It is not intended for scholars familiar with even the broad outlines of that development, but it can serve as an introduction to the topic for general readers or undergraduate students who are looking for a brief and easily understood summary. The author has done an impressive amount of reading; and if there are errors, this is perhaps excusable for one who has not done original research in the field.

Inasmuch as we completely lack any linguistic documentation for Jews in the Visigothic period, our knowledge begins only with the Muslim era (approximately 800–1200). Jews spoke Arabic, as they did in all Muslim countries, although we have little evidence as to