Jerrilyn D. Dodds, Maria Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008. Pp. xiv, 416. 10 b/w, 200 color illustrations.

Handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated, *The Arts of Intimacy* is hard to classify. Its numerous and beautiful illustrations, displaying examples of Arabic-Christian architecture and art, give it almost the feel of a coffee-table book, albeit a scholarly one. Its textual sidebars resemble those of the best available textbooks. Its almost exclusive attention to Toledo and its culture imitates a monograph's focus. The earnest attempt to create

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a truly multidisciplinary book—with emphasis on the intertwining of art and literature—embraces the kind of hybridity that is at the book's thematic core. Yet, although the word is seldom or never invoked, this is a book written in the spirit and advocacy of *convivencia*, with all the promises and difficulties inherent in such an approach. Here the intimacy of the title stands as a synonym for convivencia. Arguing for a history that sees religious minorities in Spain (Jews and Moors) and their interaction with the Christian majority not as a history of margins or of cultural borrowing but as one of hybridity, the authors begin with a broad chapter that traces the history of Spain—by which they mean essentially Castile—from its pre-Roman past to the central Middle Ages, chapter 1 serving as context for what follows.

Chapter 2, "Dowry," shifts the perspective from the Castilian realm to Toledo. As the capital of Visigothic Spain, and with a large Mozarabic population (Christians who had embraced Arabic culture and language), Toledo was the epicenter for the integration of Christian and Muslim cultures. Chapter 3, "Others," describes the social, cultural, and political consequences of Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo in 1085. Succeeding chapters explore the coexistence and growing antagonisms between Christians and Muslims with sporadic forays into Jewish culture. The focus remains fixed on Toledo with occasional incursions into other regions of Castile. This is certainly the case in chapter 5, "Babel," where we follow the Christian expansion into western Andalusia, and chapter 6, "Adab," which, centering on Alfonso X and his cultural program, emphasizes that sense of hybridity or "intimacy" between the two cultures. The final chapter, "Brothers," points to those instances, even in the late Middle Ages, when Christians and Muslims became allies as well as enemies, and to the enduring power of artistic forms created within that melange of cultures so peculiar to the peninsula. A postscript indicts the Catholic Monarchs as the rulers responsible for, in the authors' formulation, the betrayal of intimacy.

There is much to praise and celebrate in this book. Its singular commitment to providing excerpts of literary works in their original language and in translation reinforces the sense of the complexity of Spanish culture in the Middle Ages. The wonderful asides and explications provided in the textual boxes range from discreet discussions of buildings to material culture, poetry and prose, and representatives of Spain's mosaic of cultures. They all provide unusual richness to the text and are guides to further inquiries into some of these fascinating topics. Numerous vivid photographs, chosen with great taste, offer a stunning visual guide to the artistic achievements and legacy of Christian-Muslim

hybridity. And then, there are luminous moments when one cannot help but be moved by the presentation and the manner in which information has been conveyed. One of those instances is the fate of a beautiful "honeycombed crystal" presented by the Muslim ruler of Saragossa to William of Aquitaine, the "Eleanor vase," that ended up among the treasures gathered by Abbot Suger at St. Denis (109). There is also a superb architectural tour of Toledo's Mudejar monuments (a style adroitly defined here as part of a cultural process of hybridization; 140). Many such moments make this book worthwhile and enchanting.

Yet others raise questions as to the book's overall intent, and its often single-minded argument for intimacy while neglecting to mention conflicting evidence and/or interpretations. Whether we name it intimacy or convivencia, the history of the relations between Spain's medieval Christians and Muslims—since Jews play only a small role in this account—was as fraught with conflict as it was with cooperation. Violence between religious groups, though often tempered by ritual and custom, was, as David Nirenberg has famously shown, part of the quotidian. The image of Alfonso X, one of the most important protagonists in this story, as the ruler of a multiconfessional society clashes with the reality of a king who could acquiesce with the slaughter of the Muslim garrison at Salé and with selling into slavery those captured in the Christian raid in North Africa. He also sponsored vitriolic legislation against Jews and Muslims in his *Siete partidas*, while supporting a multicultural *scriptorium*. While he allied himself with Muslim rulers against his own son, he could also banish Murcia's Muslim inhabitants from their homes and lands, or expel all Muslims from western Andalusia after the mid-1260s Mudejar rebellion.

Much is also made of Ferdinand III's epitaph (written in Latin, Castilian, Arabic, and Hebrew) at the cathedral of Seville. It serves in the book as an iconic signifier of the intertwined relations between Christians and Muslims, as well as to the growing importance of Castilian. Nonetheless, Ferdinand III's conquest of Seville differed greatly from Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo. If the Muslim population was allowed to remain in the latter, that was not the case in Seville. Ferdinand III did not enter the city until the entire Muslim population had been forcefully removed and the mosque had been sacralized as a Christian church. Similarly, the Latin version of the epitaph includes pejorative language about the Muslim population (pagans) and emphasizes sectarian filiation. The use of Arabic and Hebrew may also be read not as intimacy but as a willful appropriation of the other's language and a demonstration of superiority. While the Castilian version of original Arabic story of *Calila*

e Dimna may have been "at the very inception of Castilian culture," this reifies literary texts, ignoring that the use of Castilian in the epitaph only reaffirmed Alfonso X's decision to shift all royal documents to the vernacular. In fact, Castilian was the vehicle for vigorous cultural production—in everyday life documentation, in the chronicles and legal codes, in the ordinances of the Cortes, and in the royal chancery—by the mid-thirteenth century, and its early linguistic hegemony serves also as a point of departure for Castilian culture.

But most of all: can we read the entire cultural history of the peninsula and of Christian-Muslim relations singly through a Toledan lense? Can Toledo stand for the whole? While I admit that Toledo's experiences and cultural impact played a significant role throughout the Castilian realm, the history of both art and sectarian relations needs to be problematized and complicated. *Intimacy* is a laden term, but it is also a double-edged sword. Intimacy implies close and warm proximity, hybridization. It may also mean the "enemy in the mirror," to borrow Barkay's formulation. As I write this, Gaza has just been invaded. There is close intimacy there, but it is a fatal one.

Finally, there are numerous annoying mistakes in which historical accuracy is neglected or ignored. A few examples may illustrate this. When Abd-al-Rahman, the Caliph of Cordoba, is said to have been "irrevocably Spanish" (22), we enter the kind of essentialism present already in Simonet and that Glick rightly chastised when discussing Sánchez Albornoz and Castro's works. Burgos was not settled from León (30). The discussion of the Cid on pages 40 to 43 ignores the anti-Jewish elements in the *Poema*. It is also hard to take seriously the assertion that "hundreds perhaps thousands of nubile female performers from Barbastro" influenced the development of troubadour poetry (106), unless most of Barbastro's population consisted only of nubile female performers. Ferdinand III did not incorporate Castile into his kingdom (185). He became king of Castile in 1217 when his mother resigned the throne and then incorporated León in 1230; nor was Seville the capital of Castile in 1248 (192). Similarly Ferdinand III did not conquer Valencia; James I did (193). Peter I did not kill his two younger brothers and his half brother Fradrique. All three were half brothers. Most of all, the idea that "intimacy was betrayed" during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs is untenable. If there was intimacy at all, it had been betrayed much earlier. It was put to severe and damaging tests in the wake of the IV Lateran Council, in the punitive edicts of the Cortes in the mid-thirteenth century and afterward, in the expulsion of Muslims from the lands or their semi-enserfment in the Crown of Aragon, and in the fre-

quent pogroms against the Jews, culminating in 1391. Ironically, though the provisions of the settlement were utterly ignored, the treaty leading to the surrender of Granada harkened back to Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo rather than to the harsh policies of the mid-thirteenth century.

Having written all of this, I would still praise this book for its optimism, its desire to see the past through a lens of hope, but most of all for the sheer beauty, conveyed so eloquently here, of what Muslims and Christians could indeed build and write together, in spite of conflict, violence, and mutual distrust, in Spain a long time ago.

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