

the French Thèse d'État it is a testimony both to the perseverance required of French historians, and to the wealth of the Islamic sources which have allowed an elaboration on this scale. While the relationship with Frankish outposts south and West of Aleppo are not the focus of the book, its political chapters reconstruct the division which followed Saladin's death and the infighting among his sons and brothers. That, and the Mongol invasion of the Middle East, explain the survival of the Crusaders' cities for another 100 years. Moreover, the elaboration of the institutional structures of the Ayyubid state offers interesting comparative possibilities. In spite of the general perception that Islam did not have "feudalism", at least not in the European sense, the land grants, *iqtā*, made by the Ayyubids to family members, military commanders and tribal chiefs affected the sultan's attempts to concentrate power in his hands in a very similar way to that in which the Frankish nobility conducted relations with their own monarchy. The constant lack of manpower, the occurrence of female regency, the military tactics and siege warfare, were all shared concerns of both the Latin cities and Aleppo's masters at different times. Moreover, Frankish Antioch's collaboration with the Mongols and the Armenians against Aleppo, reflect the degree of the Latins' integration in the region and their familiarity and share in the political game. The chapters dealing with the economy reinforce this sense of peaceful Western integration by documenting the penetration of the Venetians into the regional trading network through numerous treaties now commonly signed with other Muslim rulers in the region. The chapters on the cultural and religious life demonstrate the sophistication of municipal and learning institutions that dotted the Alepine urban scenery and that neither Frankish society nor the Mongols, Kurds, Turks and others gathering at the gates could have either enjoyed or appreciated at the time. In the larger frame of the Islamic perspective of the history of the Crusades, this new synthesis manifests, how unique was the momentary unification that resulted in Saladin's triumph at Hattin. It was not the unity achieved by Saladin, but the political patterns described in the bickering of his heirs, which was the norm. These were the intrinsic patterns of the region during the roughly five centuries that separated the Abbasid empire from that of the Ottomans, and during which the Crusades took place. The image conjured here is of a society of cultural strength and political fragility.

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Nuessel, Frank & Cedeño, Aristófanés (Ed.). *Selected Literary Commentary in the Literature of Spain*. Ottawa: Legas, 2004.

Selected Literary Commentary in the Literature of Spain presents a collection of literary commentary from major literary works of the Spanish Peninsular canon. According to the authors, their intention has been to provide a representative sample of the historical development of literary theory and literary commentary in peninsular literature.

It comprises ten chapters with literary commentary found in the works of major writers. There are seven chapters on the Golden Age period including

literary commentary by Juan de Valdés, Juan Martínez de Jáuregui, Góngora, Quevedo, Lope de Vega and Cervantes. The three texts from the nineteenth century exhibit literary commentary by Mesonero Ramos, Larra and Pardo Bazán. Each text is fittingly organized and contextualized. Every chapter starts with biographical information and the literary-historical contextualization of the author's work. Additionally, there is bibliographical information on relevant critical sources. Regarding the actual selection of literary commentary, the authors have highlighted important terms, name of authors, etc., and these appear, in lieu of footnotes, at the end of the book.

As for the specific content of the selections, for the Golden Age period, the authors have chosen a number of texts illustrating Juan de Valdés' views on Spanish literature, namely a Renaissance perspective on Spanish literature; the debate on *culteranismo*; Lope's ideas on the dramatic work; and Cervantes' theory of the novel. The nineteenth-century selection includes texts representing Mesonero Romanos' parody of Romantic literature, Larra's views on Spanish literature and Pardo Bazan's reflections on Naturalism in Spain.

Selected Literary Commentary in the Literature of Spain has been prepared with literary pedagogy in mind. It provides an excellent introduction and context to the study of some of the major literary debates of the Peninsular canon. One wonders if the project might have been better served if it had focused exclusively on one of the major periods. Nevertheless, the book could be an excellent aid as an introduction to some of the most important literary issues in Peninsular literature from the perspective of literature itself. Those who habitually work or might be interested in working with some of these literary debates in their courses will benefit from having them organized and properly contextualized in this book.

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La presse judéo-arabe dans la Tunisie coloniale (1884–1896). Mohamed Larbi Snoussi. Preface by Khalifa Chater. Tunis: MediaCom, 2003.

Supplementing and correcting the work of such earlier scholars as Eusèbe Vassel, Daniel Hagège, *et al.*, Mohamed Larbi Snoussi examines numerous journals published in "judéo-arabe" (Tunisian Arabic transcribed in Hebrew characters) between 1884 and 1896. Tunisian Jews split into two communities: the Twansa (indigenous Jews) and the Grana (Jews of Italian ancestry and sympathies). For the early period of this study, covering journals published under the press law of October 1884, Mohamed Larbi Snoussi details publishers and editorial content of such ephemeral publications as *Moubachar Sidq* (1885), *Mounawar El Haq* (1886), *Moucharrah Al-Asdar* (1886), *Al Badr Al Kamel* (1886), and *Fahhah al-Asrar* (1887). The liberal press laws of 1887 to 1897 saw the publication of numerous, for the most part short-lived, journals in Judeo-Arabic, of which the most important were the Zionist *El-Boustan* (1887–1895), which opposed the evangelizing efforts of Cardinal Lavigerie, *El-Mouhayyar* (1891–1892), and *Al-Ittihad* (1893–1894), which unfavorably contrasted the situation of Jews of Tunisia with those of France and which called on Tunisian Jews to assimilate French culture.