

working on this for many years, and has critically read a remarkably wide range of relevant sources and modern historical writing; the bibliography covers twenty pages (111–30). This is a study that has long been needed by the historians of Early Medieval Iberia, and Ann Christys demonstrates here that she was the ideal person to do it.

ROGER WRIGHT

*University of Liverpool*

GLAIRE D. ANDERSON. *The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia. Architecture and Court Culture in Umayyad Cordoba*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate. 2013. 267 pp. ISBN 978 6534291.

In this book the *munya* estates of Umayyad Córdoba are finally accorded a central place in the culture of al-Andalus and in the long history of the villa. The fragmentary nature of their remains has often left them in the shadow of the nearby tenth-century palacety of Madīnat al-Zahrā' and of the even more celebrated Alhambra in fourteenth-century Granada, but this volume reveals their social and political significance as well as the richness of their architecture and the abundance of their gardens. By choosing to use the word 'villa' for the *munyas*, Anderson connects them with the ideology of the villa, and offers a medieval chapter to fill the usual lacuna between late antiquity and the Italian Renaissance. She finds support for this in the work of Oleg Grabar, who considers the early Islamic country estates of Umayyad Syria in the context of their predecessors of late antiquity, and the Alhambra within the wide tradition of Mediterranean villas. Her use of the term is innovative but never contentious; and her overall interdisciplinary approach has deservedly earned the volume the Eleanor Tufts Award for 2015. The book is also well designed for teaching, as extracts from the key text are provided in the appendix and embedded black and white images support the argument throughout; sixteen colour plates are grouped separately.

The *munya* was a suburban walled garden encompassing a villa and small-scale agricultural land. It had a literary existence as 'a place of delight' in Arabic poetry but is otherwise largely invisible. After the methodological introduction, the second chapter of this book sets out the long chronology of the

*munya* tradition, from the appropriation of Roman suburban villa sites after 711 to the height of *munya* patronage under the Caliphate. A larger map of the identified – and probable – *munya* sites would have been a useful addition, but the timeline of the *munya* is very clearly displayed in a foldout. Rulers used villas to cement and express their power partly by donating them to 'unfree' elite eunuchs and concubines. The later expansion of this practice to include a few free aristocrats, alongside the use of some villa sites for military units in the late tenth century, shows how this patronage responded to changing power structures in Córdoba.

The two elements that were integrated within these estates, their architecture and gardens, form two chapters at the core of this book. The physical setting of the *munyas*, in the fertile lands outside Córdoba that border the River Guadalquivir, had once attracted Roman suburban villas, and Anderson highlights similarities between the typology of antique and Islamic villas, notably between Cordoban al-Rummāniyya, recently excavated by the German Archaeological Institute, and São Cucufate in southern Portugal. While it is essentially convincing, this section might have benefited from further consideration of the differences between earlier Roman villas and late antique examples. Mosaics from the latter are used to give an impression of the original appearance of the corner towers and crenellated walls of the Islamic villas, and similar questions about the purpose of such 'fortifications' certainly apply in both cases. The predominance of zoomorphic motifs and foliate scrolls on surviving decorative elements is particularly indicative, and the comparison between these pieces and Cordoban ivories does much to evoke the aesthetic life of the villa and its delight in the juxtaposition between nature and artifice. The second of these chapters considers not only the planting of the vast gardens for culinary ingredients, fragrances and medicines but also the way that court elites expressed notions of refinement (*zarf*) and retreat (*nazh*) at *munyas*. Whereas *zarf* evoked courtly etiquette and elegant living, *nazh* related to the Roman idea of *otium* and encompassed relaxation and country pursuits. The reinvention of such classical ideas in this period is supported by Susana Calvo's discussion of the notion of *paideia* at

Madīnat al-Zahrā' in 'The Reuse of Classical Antiquity in the Palace of Madīnat al-Zahrā' and its Role in the Construction of Caliphā Legitimacy' (*Muqarnas*, 31 (2014), 15–33).

The final chapter shows how *munyas* operated as the political and ceremonial face of the Caliphate, as symbolic stopping points along civic processions, and the setting for feasts and diplomatic encounters. As at Madīnat al-Zahrā', their panoramas across bounteous landscapes were linked to ideas of good governance, exemplifying yet another antique metaphor that was employed throughout the Middle Ages. In summary, this book succeeds in offering fresh ideas and material to those who are interested in the classical tradition and the relationship between art and landscape.

ROSE WALKER

*Courtauld Institute of Art*

SIMERKA, BARBARA. *Knowing Subjects: Cognitive Cultural Studies and Early Modern Spanish Literature*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. 2013. 260 pp. ISBN 98 765240.

Barbara Simerka's consideration and application of cognitive cultural approaches to early modern Spanish literature begins by engaging the sceptical reader's resistance to this fast-growing field of study. She does this by outlining her 'ecological' framework, whose goal is to 'embrace embodiment rather than Cartesian binarism ... and emphasize context, connectivity, and the construction of meaning [by depicting] thought as metaphorical and narrative in nature' (1). This simultaneous nod and lure sent in the direction of the sceptic is largely successful in guiding Simerka's reader through her able presentation of the cognitivist conceptual toolbox, as well as her negotiation of these concepts with canonical readings of a number of well-known Golden Age texts.

Chapter 1 builds on Howard Mancing's pioneering work, as well as Lisa Zunshine's better known, if less literarily capable, applications of theories of Social Intelligence (SI). For the uninitiated, SI (also called Machiavellian Intelligence) and its subordinate concepts fall under the umbrella term *Theory of Mind*. Many of the discoveries of cognitive science, starting with the groundbreaking

work of Antonio Damasio, came out of research on damaged or supposedly 'primitive' minds, in which scientists hypothesized about normally functioning brains by identifying what is 'lacking' or underdeveloped in autistic, primate, or child subjects. Simerka follows this work in order to present intelligible and workable versions of the evolving concepts: such as Theory Theory, which is analogous to a Chomskian universal 'grammar' of theoretical assumptions individuals use to predict the behaviour of others; and Simulation Theory, a more localized application of Mind Reading in which the individual imaginatively places herself in the shoes of another in order to predict probable outcomes of different social strategies. Her goal is 'to delineate "organized insights" concerning the patterns of cognitive activity, exploring situational uses and also seeking to delineate trends among the representations of characters from particular social subgroups' (9).

Chapter 2 begins the application of these theories by using scientific studies of neophilia (love of novelty) among ape populations to frame the analysis of the fickleness of romantic partners, both male and female. Simerka's claim is that having an 'awareness of these cognitive mechanisms enables us to better understand the normative discourses concerning social manipulation ... and the continuing prevalence of gender stereotypes' with respect to deceptive courtship behaviour (26).

Chapters 3 and 4 move from the development of SI in children and the related use of deception by primates to an analysis of the use of SI by picaresque and courtly protagonists in their unsuccessful attempts to move up the social/caste ladder. The main argument links the development or lack of development of SI with the successes and failures of the characters. Although the findings are compelling, it becomes apparent that cognitive assumptions concerning social development are not sustained by the texts themselves. For example, when commenting on Guzmán's inability to detect the duplicity of the female objects of his romantic pursuits, Simerka observes that women are often presented as more adept at Machiavellian Intelligence, i.e., they are more deceitful, than males. She channels this observation through the context of a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.