

Reading Columbus. By MARGARITA ZAMORA. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. Illustrations. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xvi, 247 pp. Cloth, \$42.00. Paper, \$18.00.

Uncovering the Real Columbus. By JOHN B. WOLCOTT. Huntington, W. Va.: Aegina Press, 1992. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. 163 pp. Paper. \$9.00.

While Margarita Zamora's *Reading Columbus* stands as a useful interpretive synthesis, John Wolcott's *Uncovering the Real Columbus* should rapidly fade into obscurity. Aside from such factual errors as the identification of *encomienda* as a type of plantation (p. 53), the author does his best to present "pure conjecture," arguing that a drunken father forced Columbus into the role of codependent (p. 14). While a Felipe Fernández-Armesto can spend two pages on the difficulty of identifying Domenico Colombo, Wolcott chooses to assume a great deal.

Zamora, on the other hand, demonstrates the benefits and subtle dangers of hypercriticism in textual analysis. First she does an excellent job of fully reviewing Bartolomé de Las Casas' role as editor, transcriber, and in many instances coauthor of the surviving Columbian discourse. Then she goes on to demonstrate the extent to which the surviving "Columbian" documents reflect "the interrelatedness of the profane and sacred" in a discourse of pilgrimage and commercial travel of which Columbus' writings were a part (pp. 134–35). Of course, this is far from an original interpretation, but Zamora does introduce some subtlety, using documents attributed to Columbus as microhistorical windows on European cosmology. Ultimately, the so-called Columbian texts are left in search of an author, having been shaped by many early modern "editors" and by the confines of formulae attributable to *capitulaciones*, *mappaemundi*, *portolanos*, and *relaciones*.

In the tradition of Michel de Certeau and others, Zamora reminds the reader how a passive female America is portrayed as discovered by an active European male, creature of *scientia* and commerce. The Columbian texts themselves refer to an earth shaped like a woman's breast, with the newly "discovered" lands at the nipple. Such an analysis of the eroticization of imperialist ends is far from new, but it warrants the fullest possible exploration, given all the subtle meanings associated with "possession."

This reader, however, is left unsatisfied by Zamora's willingness to ascribe to Amerindians the status of perpetual victims. In so doing, she participates in an infantilization that begins in the Columbian texts (pp. 7–8). Amerindians helped to construct colonial Latin America, even if the dominant terms were Spanish. Preexisting hierarchies and *mitas* aided the establishment of the Spanish variants. The European imposition was not a "conquest of paradise." The presence of Las Casas, and his ability to draw the reader's attention to the margins, speaks to a very real quest for justice coexisting with the atrocities described by this European promoter of the myth of the noble indigene. To avoid reductionism completely, Zamora's "reading" should be juxtaposed with the work of William D. and Carla

Rahn Phillips. The interpretive shadow of Lewis Hanke should not be forgotten in the study of Spanish imperial discourse.

ABEL A. ALVES, Ball State University

Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After. Edited by ELIE KEDOURIE. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992. Plates. Illustrations. Map. Notes. Index. 248 pp. Cloth. \$40.00.

For one who was privileged to attend his classes, Elie Kedourie was the quintessential teacher. In a balanced, magisterial style, he conveyed an apparently limitless understanding of history, leaving his students convinced that he had answers to riddles of the universe, if only he could be persuaded to reveal them. Now Kedourie has bequeathed to teachers and students a collection of essays about a period in world history that—possibly stimulated by the Quincentenary observance—is just now undergoing considerable reinterpretation. From the most distinguished historians of the relationship between Spain and the Sephardim, Kedourie elicited essays that encapsulate their thinking, sans the original scholarly apparatus. He presents these to us as a grand intellectual buffet, without attempting to reconcile their differences.

Merely to name the contributors to this volume is to call the roll of the finest scholars in the field. They include (in order of appearance) Angus MacKay, Eleazar Gutwirth, Henry Kamen, Haim Beinart, Moshe Idel, John Lynch, Aron Rodrigue, Jonathan Israel, and Aubrey Newman. As this list indicates, the volume favors no side in the current scholarly controversies. Beinart's traditional view of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, with an estimate of 200,000 exiles, is juxtaposed with Kamen's revision: the purpose of the order was conversion, not expulsion, and only some 30,000 Jews left—no calamity for Spain, as they were impoverished. Kedourie offers a typical gloss in his introduction: "As the decree made clear, the authorities had two main objectives in mind . . ." (p. 12). John Lynch weighs in with "The Crown calculated between the demands of religion to expel and the needs of the economy to retain. . . . orthodoxy was balanced against solvency: when the government needed revenue, the Jews were more tolerated" (p. 141).

Jewish and converso lives appear throughout the volume as a continuum—a rare accomplishment in the literature of this period. From the Middle Ages in Iberia through the dispersions eastward to Turkey and northward to England, life in and out of the *aljamas* is described in its several legal, ecclesiastical, and social contexts. Individual statesmen, financiers, and philosophers are written into their respective periods, conveying a sense of the kind of men (no women here) who created the Sephardic religious, artistic, and intellectual tradition. Cabala, Christianity, and the Enlightenment are discussed in terms of their impact on normative Judaism. Finally, the various Sephardic diasporas are examined. (Unfortunately,