The Mystics of al-Andalus

The twelfth century CE was a watershed moment for mysticism in the Muslim West. In al-Andalus, the pioneers of this mystical tradition, the Mu’tabirūn or “Contemplators,” championed a symbiotic reading of Muslim scriptural sources alongside Neoplatonized cosmological doctrines. Ibn Barrajān of Seville was most responsible for shaping this new intellectual approach to the Qurʾān and Hadith in the Muslim West, and is the focus of Yousef Casewit’s book. Ibn Barrajān’s extensive commentaries on the divine names and the Qurʾān stress the significance of God’s signs in nature, the Arabic Bible as a means of interpreting Muslim scripture, and the mystical “crossing” (i’tibār) from the visible to the unseen. With an examination of the understudied writings of both Ibn Barrajān and his contemporaries, Ibn al-ʿArīf and Ibn Qasī, as well as the wider socio-political and scholarly context of al-Andalus, this book will appeal to researchers of the medieval Islamic world and the history of Sufism in the Muslim West.

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The Mystics of al-Andalus

Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century

YOUSEF CASEWIT
The University of Chicago
To my dear wife, Maliha Chishti, 
the love and joy of my life, 
who surpasses me in character and scholarship.
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Notes on the Text

The Arabic transliteration system employed throughout this book follows a slightly modified version of the system recommended by the International Journal of Middle East Studies. Proper nouns as well as technical Arabic words that are now common in English, such as Qurʾān, hadīth, jiḥād are fully transliterated. I rely on a slight modification of the transliteration system used by Encyclopaedia Iranica for the rare transliterations of Persian words.

Both hijrī and Common Era dates are provided in the form hijrī/CE. Thus, Ibn Barrajān died in 536/1141. References in the footnotes are short, and consist usually of the author’s surname and a shortened title of his/her work. A handful of works are referred to by other abbreviations which are listed in the next section. Encyclopedia articles are cited in the footnotes as: Abridged Name of Encyclopaedia, “Title of Article,” (Author). For example: EI3, “Abū Madyan,” (D. Gril). Manuscripts (sing. MS, pl. MSS) are cited as Abridged Title of Manuscript, Place, MS Library Collection and Number (Number of Folios; hijrī date of copying). For example: Sharḥ, Istanbul, MS Topkapı Ahmet III 1495 (257 ff.; 595 h).

Translations of the Qurʾān rely considerably upon S. H. Nasr’s The Study Quran (New York, 2015) and A. J. Arberry’s The Koran Interpreted, 2 vols. (London, 1955). Formulaic invocations of blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad and/or his family and Companions are often omitted from the English translations for the sake of brevity.
Abbreviations

EI³ Encyclopaedia of Islam Three, eds. K. Fleet et al., Leiden, 2007–.