further in chronological, intellectual and geographic terms. They trace crusader imagery even into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Siberry notes the ‘misuse’ of the term crusade by western European powers in the Crimean War. In addition, Riley-Smith notes that medieval notions of crusade as Christian-justified positive violence were utilised in the 1960s Christian Liberation movements in South America.

Despite its lack of revision and updating, this volume is characterised not only by impeccable scholarship, but lucidity and conciseness. Accordingly, the edition is an essential tool for both teachers and students of the crusades.

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The trickle of tourists who visited Spain in the 1830s, Raymond Carr states, professed to have discovered a country that had escaped the materialism of bourgeois Europe, and preserved the human value of traditional society that the advanced industrialised countries had lost. In more recent times, tourists have also turned to Spain to experience its perceived difference. During the 1960s, Spain’s own tourist promotions advanced the slogan ‘Spain’s different’ to entice visitors with the lure of the exotic. Not only has this exotic, different Spain shaped the imagination of northern European countries, locked in their long grey winters and dreaming of the Costa del Sol, it has also shaped the understanding of Spanish history. This book challenges these simplistic notions. Spain’s difference no longer provides an adequate starting point for understanding the urbanised, industrialised and democratic society of today.

Raymond Carr’s earlier works, *Modern Spain, 1875-1980*, *Spain 1808-1939*, and *Spain 1808-1975*, are the standard histories of Spain in English. This compendium adds a new and very necessary title to this rather slim historiography. Each chapter, by specialist contributors, offers reinterpretations based on new scholarship of the key phases of Spain’s historical development over the two thousand years from Roman occupation to the present day. Its historical chronology presents the *longue durée* of Spain’s history in which diversity and not difference is the unifying characteristic across the ages. Each contributor attempts to dismantle the common understanding of Spain’s difference, of those distinctive factors, namely the Moors, the Roman Catholic Church, its overseas empire, which made it a special case, a country with two cultures,
two economies, and different societies within it. Instead, Carr observes in his introduction, free of Francoism, modern historians of Spain have been able to appraise Spanish history as they would the history of any other European country. It still remains distinctive, not because of its difference, but because of its diversity.

This diversity has its origins in the peninsula’s geography. A fertile north and a southern desert produced unequal agricultural and industrial development, and distinct regional cultures. The diversity of its human inhabitants was already so established by the time of Roman occupation that the indigenous tribes were able to resist the imposition of a single language and single culture. The unity of the Spanish state today derives from the successful balance of central national government and regional autonomy, although this is jeopardised by separatist pressures, and particularly by Basque terrorism.

This unequal development, however, produced many alternative sources of power, such as the Church, antagonistic monarchies, wealthy elites, which contest between themselves within a ‘dappled and speckled cultural map’. Medieval Spain, characterised by instability, war, and shifting allegiances, as much as it was by the unequal cultural developments and distinctions between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, gave way in the 1400s to the unification of the thrones of Castille and Aragon in the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella. Reconquest, the emergence of a world empire, and the absolute authority of Christianity all unified the nation for the first time. Yet, the decline of Spain’s vast empire was not anomalous but a regression to normalcy. Spain’s acquired strength could not disguise the fragility of its achievement, and the cost of the empire’s success led to its fall.

The longue durée of Spanish history this book presents, a history unified across its vast sweep by the single theme of diversity, is highly contentious. While it establishes a sound basis for internal cultural diversity, it does not provide an adequate explanation for the political instability of Spain throughout much of its history. Carr’s own contribution, ‘Liberalism and Reaction’, appears to abandon this theme as an explanation of the radicalisation of Spanish politics and society during the troubled nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The struggles between liberalism and absolutism, and progress and reaction, show that Spain had become highly fragmented and factionalised. Efforts to consolidate a centralised ‘Spanish state’ were contested by those who made alternative claims to power. The failure of Spain’s two republics had as much to do with internal fragmentation as it did with external reaction by an elite that contested their authority. Diversity seems a poor explanation for such profound political ruptures.

The two thousand years of Spanish history retold in just under 300 pages, however, is overly ambitious, and no more than an introduction to the great phases of Spain’s historical development can be provided. Even this aim, however, is not
achieved; in too many instances the writing resembles a list of successive events with little pause for reflection. This inevitably leaves readers with many unanswered questions. The list of suggested further reading for each of the chapters is therefore a valuable complement.

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