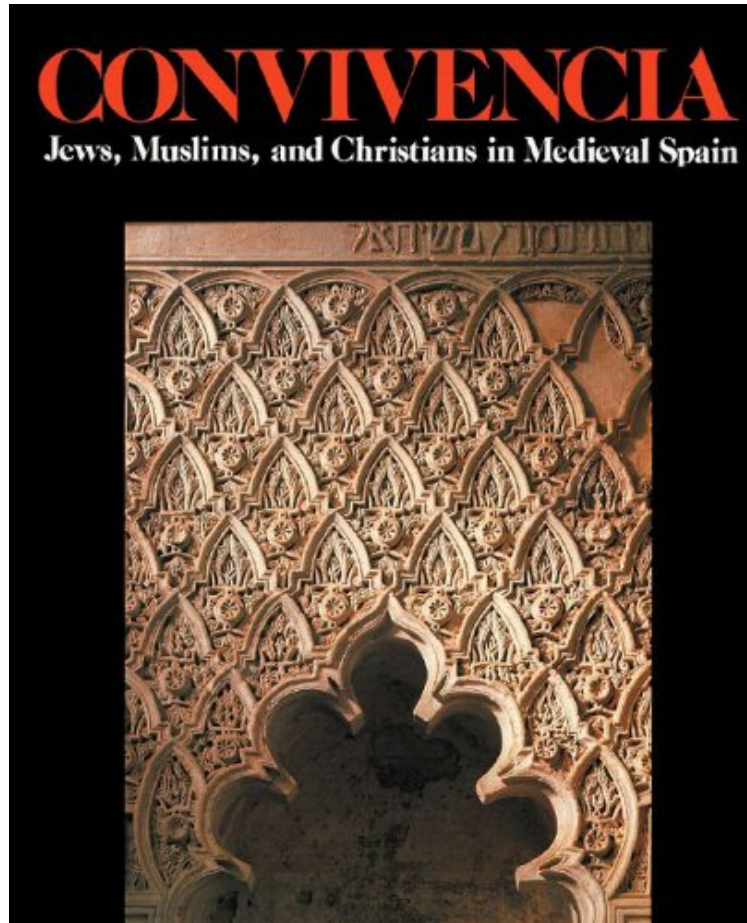


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## Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain

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12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Particularly interesting in this era of religious and cultural strifeBy Elizabeth A. RootThis appears to be a reprint of the work originally published in 1992, so I will repeat my review here.This is a catalog accompanying an exhibit at the Jewish Museum, New York, which was formally designated a project of the Spain '92 Foundation. Eight essays, a collection of catalog entries, and numerous photographs, mostly in color, reflect the culture of Spain and al-Andalusia, and to a lesser extent Portugal and Navarre, between 711 and 1492. The focus is primarily upon the culture of the Jews, who, never being in political power, offer an interesting perspective on cultural cross-fertilization and tolerance on the Iberian peninsula.I occasionally found the essays somewhat difficult to follow, not having much background in the various subjects. The greatest disappointment is that not all of the items in the exhibit are pictured, and so reading catalog descriptions of items that one cannot see is

somewhat frustrating. Despite these relatively minor criticisms, I found the book extremely enlightening, and considerably more subtle and complex than nostalgic views of a golden age. Particularly recommended in these times of religious and cultural strife. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Particularly interesting in this era of religious and cultural strife.

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Despite these relatively minor criticisms, I found the book extremely enlightening, and considerably more subtle than nostalgic views of a golden age. Particularly recommended in these times of religious and cultural strife. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

**Co-existence** By Customer An excellent study of Medieval Spain tracing the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian cultures that were troubled, yet thrived during the period before the Inquisition. Every student of history should peruse this book to get a perspective of both religious tolerance and intolerance. One must consider the fact that while Spain is the tail of Europe, it is also the head of Africa. Examining art, music, poetry, painting and ancient inscriptions, this book reflects Iberia's unique heritage.

**The Middle Ages in Spain** the period from the Muslim conquest of 711 to the expulsion of the Jews and the defeat of the last Muslim ruler in 1492 witnessed an extraordinary "Golden Age" through the intermingling of its Jewish, Muslim, and Christian inhabitants. This volume explores the nature of their coexistence (termed *convivencia* by Spanish historians), which embraced not only ideological interchange and cultural influence, but also mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion. The cultural and social dynamics underlying *convivencia* powerfully influenced the creation of poetry, art, architecture, and the material culture of Spain, as well as the transmission and absorption of scientific ideas and technology from East to West. Explored by leading scholars in each of these fields, the cultural treasures of *convivencia* range from Hebrew biblical manuscripts illuminated with Islamic stylistic motifs, to astrolabes with Latin inscriptions, to the first examples of secular Hebrew poetry. More than one hundred of the objects are united for the first time in an exhibition at the Jewish Museum, New York. At a time when the study of cultural fusion is receiving increasing attention, this volume offers a fresh and comprehensive view of Spain's pluralistic medieval society. Moreover, it celebrates an inspiring history of cultural achievement in the context of intergroup relations that were both negative and positive. 36 color and 60 b/w plates.

**From Publishers Weekly** The coexistence or *convivencia* of Jews, Muslims and Christians on Iberian soil from 711 to 1492 produced a remarkable cross-fertilization of ideas, as revealed by this splendidly illustrated catalog of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York City. One provocative essayist contends that Arabs and Jews, through exchanges in astronomy, philosophy and mathematics, "introduced a new epistemology to the Latin West." Another contributor traces how Arabic poetry helped to inspire the first Hebrew secular poetry since biblical times. The Mudejar architectural style, developed by Muslims under Christian rule, was grafted onto Sephardic Jewish synagogues and Christian churches. Other essayists discuss Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, articles of daily use, and stereotypes of Muslims and Jews in Christian literature. Scores of plates (36 in color) accompany an accessible text. Mann is a scholar at the Jewish Museum, Dodds a City University of New York art historian, Glick a Boston University history professor. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

**From Library Journal** This beautifully illustrated and produced catalog examines the cultural coexistence ( *convivencia* ) of the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian populations in Islamic Spain, who jointly created a civilization that was one of the most glorious in Islamic history. The topics range widely. In a provocative and insightful essay, *convivencia* is examined through Sephardic eyes. Other essays consider Hebrew poetry and Hebrew illuminated manuscripts that use Islamic motifs. All the topics examined are important to the history of medieval Spain, and the volume as a whole is an important addition to the scholarly literature on the subject. The items reproduced here are of the highest quality, and the reproductions themselves are very well done. A valuable bibliography is included. This volume effectively complements the exhibition yet can stand alone, for it offers a unique perspective on the cultural history of Spain. - Martin Chasin, Adult Inst., Bridgeport, Ct. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

**About the Author** Vivian Mann is the Morris and Eva Feld Chair of Judaica at The Jewish Museum, and is Director of the Bernard Manekin Institute for Jewish Art. Thomas Glick, Professor of History at Boston University, is the author of *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, and is co-editor of *Historical Dictionary of Modern Sciences in Spain*. Jerrilyn Dodds, Associate Professor of Art History at the City University of New York and a specialist in medieval Islamic and Christian art, is the author of *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*.