

The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture

Jerrilynn D. Dodds, Maria Rosa Menocal, Abigail Krasner Balbale

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This splendidly illustrated book is a history of medieval Castile from the 11th to 14th centuries, told from a largely cultural standpoint. Whilst the political narrative of these centuries may emphasise war and intolerance - the inexorable forward march of the reconquista, the authors argue that the cultural record tells a very different story. They emphasise the concept of hybridisation, and show how interaction rather than antagonism more often informed cultural transactions between Christians, Muslims and Jews in the great cities of the region, focusing on Toledo, Seville and Cordoba. The extraordinary architecture of the region receives probably the most attention, but none of the visual arts miss out, and there are also extensive discussions and translations of the poetry and written culture of the three communities. A beautiful testament to a unique artistic culture, and an engaging presentation of the growing argument for a surpringly mixed cultural world.



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