



# **Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace: Christians and Muslims in the Fifteenth Century (History Lang and Cult Spanish Portuguese)**

*Anne Marie Wolf*

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Juan de Segovia (d. 1458), theologian, translator of the Qur'an, and lifelong advocate for the forging of peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims, was one of Europe's leading intellectuals. Today, however, few scholars are familiar with this important fifteenth-century figure. In this well-documented study, Anne Marie Wolf presents a clear, chronological narrative that follows the thought and career of Segovia, who taught at the University of Salamanca, represented the university at the Council of Basel (1431–1449), and spent his final years arguing vigorously that Europe should eschew war with the ascendant Ottoman Turks and instead strive to convert them peacefully to Christianity.


What could make a prominent thinker, especially one who moved in circles of power, depart so markedly from the dominant views of his day and advance arguments that he knew would subject him to criticism and even ridicule? Although some historians have suggested that the multifaith heritage of his native Spain accounts for his unconventional belief that peaceful dialogue with Muslims was possible, Wolf argues that other aspects of his life and thought were equally important. For example, his experiences at the Council of Basel, where his defense of conciliarism in the face of opposition contributed to his ability to defend an unpopular position and where his insistence on conversion through peaceful means was bolstered by discussions about the proper way to deal with the Hussites, refined his arguments that peaceful conversion was preferable to war. Ultimately Wolf demonstrates that Segovia's thought on Islam and the proper Christian stance toward the Muslim world was consistent with his approach to other endeavors and with cultural and intellectual movements at play throughout his career.

"This comprehensive study examines an important figure in the history of the fifteenth-century Catholic Church, Juan de Segovia, who is known both as a leading conciliarist and as an advocate of a more pacific manner of dealing with and proselytizing Muslims. Anne Marie Wolf does an excellent job of tying together the different strands of Juan's life and career. The book will interest historians of Spain, of the Catholic Church, and of Christian-Muslim relations in the premodern world." —**Mark Meyerson, University of Toronto**

"Juan de Segovia was one of the four or five most interesting interpreters of Islam in premodern Europe. In this meticulous, beautifully written, and deeply thoughtful book, Anne Marie Wolf presents his complicated views on medieval Christendom's great rival in the rich detail that they deserve, and gracefully illuminates his insistent search for peaceful modes of Christian-Muslim interaction. Essential reading for all scholars of the long encounter between Christianity and Islam." —**Thomas E. Burman, University of Tennessee**

"Anne Marie Wolf's book, *Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace*, is a well-researched and lucid investigation into the thought of this important fifteenth-century theologian, especially his ideas on Muslim-Christian relations. Wolf's discussion of several of Segovia's lesser known early works and her well-informed focus on the Iberian context of his thought offer important new insights into Segovia's role as an advocate of late medieval conciliarism and as a proponent of peaceful resolution to interreligious conflict. This is a significant and timely contribution to the study of this remarkable fifteenth-century Spanish

ecclesiastic." —Jesse D. Mann, Drew University and Montclair University

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