



Four verses

1. Shemuel HaNagid, *Wine*, Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse (1981) (Ben Tehillim #203)

וזכרו אלי הודו	ומזוג באספמייא	וערב לשותהו	מאדם במראהו
בראשים אשר ירדו	ראשים אזי ירדה	אבל בעלותו אל	וחלש באגניו
ינוסון וירדו	יגוניו בדם אשכל	מכוסים בזמעותיו	ושכול אשר דמיו
עלי יהלום ידו.	מיד ליד גורל	עת יסובום אשיותיו	כאלו ידידים

Red to the eye, sweet to the drinker,
it is poured out in Spain – but its bouquet reaches India.
When it is in the bowls, it is feeble;
but once it goes to the head, it holds sway over swaying heads.
The wretch whose heart's blood is mixed with his tears
banishes his sorrows with the grape's blood.
As the goblets make their rounds, passing from hand to hand,
it seems as if the friends are casting lots for a diamond.

2. Shemuel HaNagid, Ben Mishlei #132 (<http://www.hebrewbooks.org/37121>)

אל נא תהי חבר לרשע, גם אל יהי רשע בחלקך
כי הוא אלי רשעו ישיבך, טרם תשיבהו לצדקך.

Be not a friend to the wicked / Also let not a wicked person be in your portion
For he to his evil will draw you / Before you draw him to your righteousness.

3. Shemuel HaNagid, *War*, Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse (1981) (Ben Mishlei #963)

אשר כל איש לשחק בה יאווה	קרב דומה בראשו אל יפהפה
אשר כל שוחרה יבכה וידוה.	וסופו כזקנה המאוסה

War is at first like a beautiful girl / with whom all men long to play,
but in the end like a repulsive hag / whose suitors all weep and ache.

4. Shemuel HaNagid, Ben Mishlei #245 (<http://www.hebrewbooks.org/37121>)

חלי לבך ועיניך	בסם יראה תרפא את
אשר דבר לשונך.	ובלשון מעשה תצדיק

With the medicine of awe [of Gd] you shall heal / the sickness of your heart and your eyes
And with the tongue of deeds you shall make just / that which your tongue has spoken.

5. Must-reads

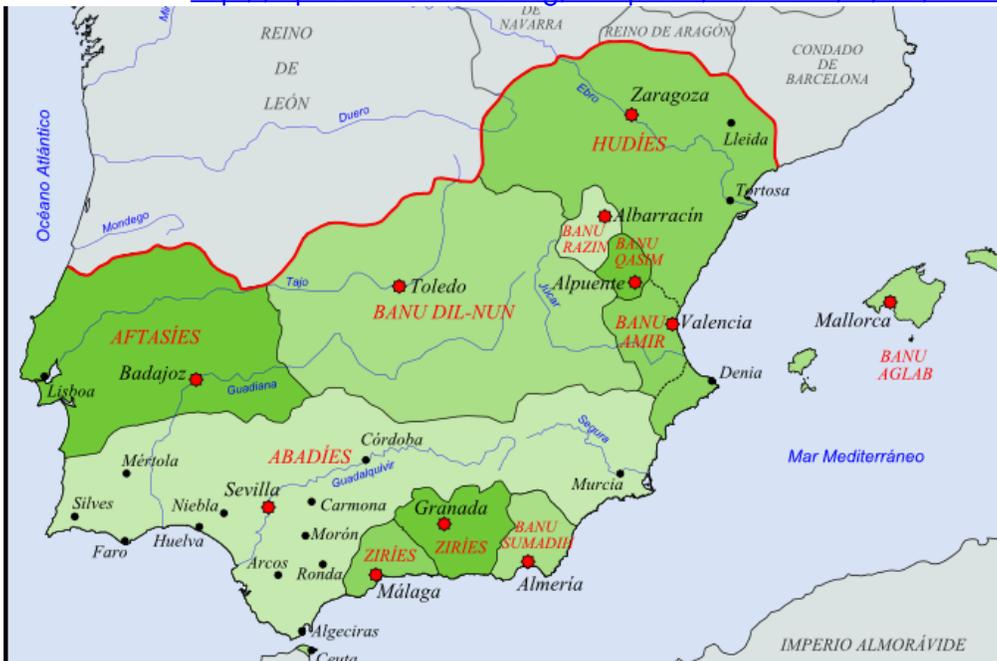
Hebrew	David Solomon Sassoon, The Diwan of Shemuel HaNagid, https://hebrewbooks.org/9415
English	Eliyahu Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vol. 2

Historical background: The World of Shemuel HaNagid

6. Arabs vs Berbers

7. 750-751 CE Abbasids drive out the Umayyads, who form the Caliphate of Cordoba

8. Ta'ifas <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8b/Taifas2.gif>



(see also <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/archive/8/8b/20090317160337%21Taifas2.gif>)

9. Jonathan Ray, *Reassessing our approach to Medieval Convivencia*, *Jewish Social Studies* 11:2 (2005) Some regard medieval Iberian society as a model of tolerance and cross-cultural interaction... They argued that *España es diferente*—"Spain is different"—from the rest of Latin Christendom, its civilization the product of a unique religious and cultural frontier that brought Muslims, Christians, and Jews together in close contact with one another.

Castro's vision of Spanish history as the result of cross-cultural influences was challenged by his lifelong critic and counterweight, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, who saw Muslims and Jews as having little impact on the formation of the Spanish character, and who argued that medieval Spanish culture is best characterized by conflict, not cooperation. Although a somewhat altered version of Castro's thesis has generally won out among most Hispanists, the corrective offered by Sánchez Albornoz has found increasing support within Jewish Studies, especially among scholars assessing Jewish life in Muslim Iberia.

The Rise to Political Power

10. Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, Vol. 2, pg. 52

But as he sat in his shop in Malaga he was overcome by depression and struggled powerfully with himself... There were no circles of young scholars or writers, like himself, with whom he could discourse and benefit thereby from their erudition, nor could he learn of or discuss new developments in literature and science... He suffered all the pain of one abruptly removed from his birthplace and all the misery of loneliness.

11. Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, Vol. 2, pg. 54

As was usual among Moslem theologians, Ibn Ḥazm sought to demonstrate that the Torah of Jews was fraudulent and was not the Holy Book of Gd. Among the various verses he cited as unethical, and thus proof of fraudulence, is the phrase in Genesis 12:13, "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister"... Samuel ha-levi replied that "sister" in Hebrew can also mean a kinswoman. Whereupon Ibn Ḥazm further cited the verse in Genesis 20:12, "and moreover she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother."... The Moslem theologian did not fail to introduce an old argument employed in all such debates – Ibn Ḥazm asked how Samuel would explain Genesis 49:10 – "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah."...

12. *Samuel Ha-Nagid*, The Jewish Encyclopedia

In his exalted position Samuel remained the same pious and modest scholar, and disarmed his enemies, who could not forgive him his Jewish faith, by his gentleness of manner and his liberality. The following is an illustration of his magnanimity: A fanatical Mohammedan dealer in spices, who lived near the calif's palace, once grossly offended Samuel while accompanying the calif. Incensed at the offense, the calif commanded Samuel to punish the fanatic by cutting out his tongue. Instead of executing this order Samuel made a present to the offender, and thus gained his gratitude. When the calif again noticed the seller of spices he was astonished at the change, and questioned Samuel about it. "I have torn out," answered the vizier, "his angry tongue, and given him instead a kind one."

Scholarship

13. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (12th century Spain), Extended Commentary to Exodus 32:31

The Naggid said that *ana* has a 'swallowed' *lamed*, like *al na*, and *al* is from the root *ho'il* (an oath). This is unlikely...

14. Rabbeinu Asher (13th-14th century Germany/Spain), Commentary to Ketuvot 1:12

Rav Achai wrote that ten are required for the blessing of *kiddushin*. And Rabbeinu Shemuel HaNagid disagreed with him, saying only the blessings of marriage (*sheva berachot*) require ten, for the requirement of ten was only mentioned for these...

15. Eliyahu Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vol. 2, pp. 121-122

Yet his most amazing achievement surely was the writing of a treatise against the Koran... Most of the writings about Islam by Jewish scholars were comprehensive theological essays or polemics defending Judaism against the arguments of the Moslems, who sought to demonstrate from the Bible that Mohammed was a real prophet, and so on. But the Jews were careful not to denigrate the sacred book of the Moslems. And then along came Samuel to point out the Koran's contradictions and errors. He called attention to Sura 41:8-11, where it is stated that the world was created in eight days, while according to Sura 32:3 it was created in six days...