Medieval Spain was a celebrated crossroads of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, and a hotbed of cross-cultural medieval literary activity. Jewish writers adapted Arabic poetics to give birth to a new Hebrew poetry. Muslim poets penned elaborate Arabic poems based on popular Spanish lyrics. Christian writers pioneered the use of the vernacular to tell Saints’ lives and write court histories. One tradition all three religions had in common was the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, an acronym for Torah, Nevi’im, Ketuvim, respectively the Five Books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Scriptures. All three groups retold its stories in both their classical (Latin, Hebrew, Arabic) and vernacular languages. Medieval Iberians of all three religions participated in a common culture of biblical retellings that fused the doctrines of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity with the languages and cultures common to all three groups.

The story of Adam and Eve addresses in narrative form some of the most fundamental questions regarding human society, from family life to the establishment of an agricultural society, and is the subject of a number of commentaries, translations, dramatic pieces, and other retellings by Medieval Iberian authors. In this paper I provide an overview of how Jewish, Muslim, and Christian narrative retellings of Adam and Eve’s exile from Eden shed light on the differences between the three traditions’ approach to the story as well as how these traditions interacted in Medieval Iberia.