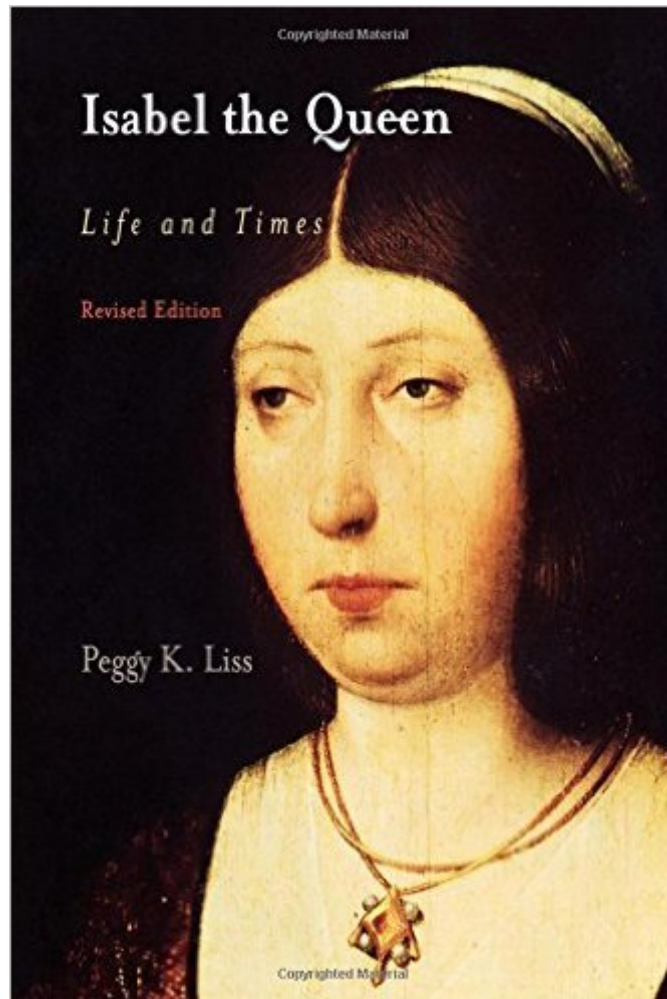


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Isabel The Queen: Life And Times (The Middle Ages Series)



Synopsis

Queen Isabel of Castile is perhaps best known for her patronage of Christopher Columbus and for the religious zeal that led to the Spanish Inquisition, the waging of holy war, and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims across the Iberian peninsula. In this sweeping biography, newly revised and annotated to coincide with the five-hundredth anniversary of Isabel's death, Peggy K. Liss draws upon a rich array of sources to untangle the facts, legends, and fiercely held opinions about this influential queen and her decisive role in the tumultuous politics of early modern Spain. Isabel the Queen reveals a monarch who was a woman of ruthless determination and strong religious beliefs, a devoted wife and mother, and a formidable leader. As Liss shows, Isabel's piety and political ambition motivated her throughout her life, from her earliest struggles to claim her crown to her secret marriage to King Fernando of Arag n, a union that brought success in civil war, consolidated Christian hegemony over the Iberian peninsula, and set the stage for Spain to become a world empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dense almost to the point of being annoying, this book, with its necessarily selective facts, nevertheless is a compelling portrait of Spanish history. To its credit, it shows Spain to be as complex, textured, troubling and as interesting as the land is beautiful. The genesis and the evolution of this complex culture is told completely as backdrop to the life of its most famous

royal. For me, one of the most interesting parts of the story was the historical prologue: of how Spain actually came into being. Up to the Middle Ages, Spain was just one of several countries emerging from the European darkness on the periphery of the dying Roman Empire. Spain was formed more as an afterthought than as a conscious plan to become a nation. It was an inchoate part of the scramble emerging from the debris left in the wake of the Roman decline. First the Visigoths and later the Western Goths, and then a succession of Christians, Muslims and Jews jockeyed over a wide stretch of history for their share of the spoils that would eventually coalesce into an unsteady national *modus vivendi*, called Spain. For the next dozen generations -- roughly until the Moors were eventually ejected, in 1492 -- Spain would move back and forth between Muslim and Christian rule. In fact, it was this state of turbulence that served as the political and religious backdrop to Isabel's entry onto the national, as well as the international stage. The main body of her story is by now well-known: that she successfully ejected the Moors; sponsored Columbus' maritime adventures; and also ejected the Jews. This book, is mostly itself a prologue up to the most famous of years of Spanish history of 1492. It explains why she did all the things she did during that period, and much more.

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