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WOODEN BEAM, CARVED ON THREE SIDES. FROM THE HOUSE OF SAMUEL HA-LEVI IN TOLEDO

SPAIN, TOLEDO; C. 1360

H: 19; D: 19; L: 238 CM

Despite the strife in Spain between Muslims and Christians, there was also extensive religious tolerance in both camps right to the 16th century.

This beam comes from the house in Toledo of Samuel Ha-Levi, the Jewish treasurer of the Christian King Pedro the Cruel. It was placed above a door opening, where its carvings on three sides came into their own.

Toledo was conquered by the Christians in 1085, and in the ensuing period the city's Muslim craftsmen were known for their fine woodcarving and other skills. Their work was much in demand throughout southern Spain among the wealthy non-Muslim clientele of the day.

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