

A Society in Transition: Jews in the Kingdom of  
Castile from Re-conquest to the Toledo Riots  
(1248-1449)

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## Abstract

This dissertation traces the course of Jewish history in the kingdom of Castile from the late-thirteenth century to the Toledo riots of 1449. It shows that the security afforded to Jews through their protection by the Crown, and the high-office gained by Jewish royal administrators and tax-farmers, permitted a crossing of cultural boundaries by Jews, rarely seen elsewhere in Europe. Economic reliance underpinned royal protection; a fresh examination of taxation registers shows the extent of the Crown's dependence upon the substantial revenues provided by the communities. These revenues, however, were considerably diminished in the course of the fourteenth century as a consequence of the war of Trastámaran succession.

The Castilian and Hebrew records indicate that the integration of the Jewish court elite conferred privilege but was also dangerous for the individuals involved. Rabbinical correspondence reflects fears of secular learning and apostasy, fears confirmed by the conversion of influential Jewish scholars. These converts soon became supporters of the friars' mission to the Jews in the fourteenth century. Though their efforts had little initial success, some voluntary conversions did occur even before the mass riots of 1391. A few such individuals showed how thoroughly they integrated into Christian society, acquiring wealth and property through marital alliances following their conversion.

The many forced baptisms that occurred in the riots of 1391, were followed by a further wave of conversion in the early fifteenth century owing much to the preaching of Vincent Ferrer, and his insistence on the segregation of Jews. This study portrays the social pressures, even within a permissive cultural environment in late medieval Castile, pressures which led to the emergence of New Christians. Their contested identity was central to the Toledo rebellion of 1449 which marked a new and ominous chapter in faith relations in the Peninsula.

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## Abbreviations, transliteration, transcription and translation

ACA	Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó
ACM	Actas Capitulares Murcia
ACS	Archivo de la Catedral de Sevilla
ADMS	Archivo de los Duques de Medina Sidonia, Sanlúcar
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
AJS	Association for Jewish Studies
AMHB	Archivo del Monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos
Arch. Colegial de Cov.	Archivo Colegial de Covarrubias
Arch. Vat. Suppl.	Archivos del Vaticano Supplicationes
BAE	Biblioteca de Autores Españoles
BNP	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
BRAH	Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia
MHE	Memorial Historico Español

All translations from Hebrew, Latin, Castilian or Catalan appearing in text and footnotes are my own unless otherwise stated.

Transcriptions and spellings of Old Castilian or Judeo-Castilian are as they appear in the published documents. The transliteration of Hebrew words uses the convention of the *h* to represent the letter *ħ* and the ‘ for the letters *ʿ* or *ʾ*. Other conventions are used where citations have been taken from other sources.

The spelling of individual names corresponds to how they appear in the documents cited; thus, for example, Abenxuxen may appear as Aben Xuxen or ibn Susan in order to remain faithful to the original transcribed record.

## Table of Contents

### List of Figures and Tables

Introduction ..... 10

### Chapters:

1. The Price of Reconquest: Collecting the Taxes for Alfonso X .....	22
An economy in crisis .....	22
Taxation and the coinage .....	25
The king's political and economic imperatives .....	27
Farming the King's taxes .....	29
Conclusion .....	37
2. Serving the Heirs of El Sabio .....	40
Royal revenue and kingship in France, England and Castile .....	40
Jewish education in the Iberian Peninsula .....	45
The social and political crises of the early fourteenth century .....	47
A dangerous patronage: el Barchilón and the Conde de Haro .....	48
Land, revenue and the alienation of royal estates .....	53
Regency – a power vacuum .....	56
The rebuff of ecclesiastical censure .....	59
Two Jewish <i>privados</i> of Alfonso XI in parallel narratives .....	63
A poetic witness .....	71
Conclusion .....	73
3. The Jewish <i>pechero</i> in Fourteenth-century Castile .....	75
The <i>maravedí</i> as a currency of account .....	77
Population and revenue .....	79
The financial administration of the <i>aljamas</i> .....	83

Tax records and the economic status of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Castile .....	94
Royal revenue from Jewish debt: ‘ <i>Las Entregas de los Judíos</i> ’ .....	107
Conclusion .....	109
4. Social Pressures and the Portrayal of Jews in the Fourteenth Century .....	111
Together or apart: Jews dwelling among Christians .....	112
Desolation, plague and revolt .....	117
A changing rhetoric: Jews in the Marian literature .....	124
The representation of the Jew as agent in the conflict between Pedro and Enrique Trastámara .....	133
Pedro, the ‘Jewish’ king .....	134
The French and the English in Castile .....	139
The desertion of Blanca, a Jewish ‘ <i>privado</i> ’ and accusations of magic and fraud .....	140
The assault on the <i>aljamas</i> : the evidence from Jewish and Christian narratives .....	147
Victory and beyond: 1369-1391 .....	152
Moral literature and cultural boundaries .....	158
Blurred identities and literary camouflage .....	167
Conclusion .....	171
5. The Momentum of Conversion and an Emerging Social Reality .....	174
Confidence and doubt in Jewish scholarship .....	176
The mission of the friars .....	179
Apostasy and the transformation of the conversionary dialogue .....	182
Abner of Burgos/Alfonso de Valladolid .....	183
The resolution of converso doubt: Profiat Duran and Joshua Halorki/ Hieronymus de Sancta Fide .....	191
Shlomo ha-Levi/Pablo de Santa María (1350-1445) .....	195

Death, martyrdom and a widening circle of conversion .....	199
Elite converts of convenience: Juan Sánchez de Sevilla and Los Marmolejos .....	205
Artisan conversos in Toledo .....	211
Vincent Ferrer and the undoing of <i>convivencia</i> .....	217
Conclusion .....	231
 6. Contested Identity: The Toledo Rebellion of 1449 .....	232
Conclusion .....	247
 Conclusion .....	249
Bibliography .....	254



## List of figures and tables

### Figures:

1. Privilege granted by Alfonso X to Aguilar de Campóo .....	31
2. Map of the Bishoprics of the Castilian Extremadura .....	100
3. Town plan of Ávila: boundaries of the <i>juderías</i> in the 14th-15 <sup>th</sup> centuries .....	114
4. Cantiga §3 showing Teófilo being counselled by the Jew .....	128
5. Cantiga §108. The boy with his head backwards .....	130
6. Lineage of Juan Sánchez de Sevilla (Samuel Abravaniel) .....	209
7. Toledo <i>juderías</i> 1380-1422 .....	216

### Tables:

1. Revenues of the <i>aljamas</i> and <i>martiniegas</i> of the Christian communities in the Bishopric of Osma, 1292 .....	101
2. Revenues from Christians and Jews in the <i>Cuaderno</i> of Enrique II (1378) .....	102
3. Comparison of annual accounts of <i>aljamas</i> 1290-1292 versus 1378 .....	104
4. Stability of the <i>martiniegas</i> in the 14th century .....	106
5. <i>Entregas de los Judíos</i> compared with other revenues ' <i>en cabeza</i> ' (1292) .....	109

# Introduction

Jews lived in the Iberian Peninsula for two centuries after they were banished from England (1290) and from France (1306). Not only was their continuing and uninterrupted presence until 1492 so exceptional in the European context; during much of that period, the Jewish communities, the *aljamas*, also thrived and contributed to the economy, to the administration and to the cultural life of the kingdoms.

This dissertation is an examination of how the situation of the Jews evolved over nearly two centuries before the Inquisition and their expulsion. My aim has been to re-evaluate the nature of the social and cultural transition that occurred in Jewish and Castilian society over a period of political upheaval and change. The study concentrates on economic, cultural and religious aspects of the Jewish communities in Castile. The records of individual interactions of Jews within and outside their own communities, of their economic welfare and of their faith and religious doubt, all have a bearing on this investigation. So too does an examination of polemical and secular literature and of poetry and ballads, insofar as they reflect social attitudes that continued to shift from the thirteenth and into the fifteenth-century.

The choices of start date and end-point for the study have been carefully considered. The incorporation of the Jews into the Christian realm in the middle of the thirteenth century, following the reconquest of most of Andalusia from the Muslims, has been characterised as a major catalyst to their integration into Castilian society.<sup>1</sup> This transition coincided with the reign of Alfonso X, a monarch whose political priorities and legal codifications would have long-lasting effects on the lives of his Jewish subjects. The study ends with the rebellion in Toledo in 1449, an uprising that was accompanied by violence and rhetoric against converts from Judaism (*conversos*) and their descendants that was unprecedented in the Peninsula.

The massacres and forced conversions of Jews in 1391 came at the end of a century of civil strife, disease and deprivation throughout the Peninsula. Although

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Ray, 'The Reconquista and the Jews: 1212 from the Perspective of Jewish History', *Journal of Medieval History*, 40 (2014), pp. 159-75

certainly a tragedy and a turning point for thousands of Jews, the rebellion in Toledo in 1449 was of comparable importance. Because it marked a new social awareness of difference between New and Old Christians, it was transformative. It was, after all, a harbinger of the Inquisition and of the eventual expulsion of the Jews that would end a millennium of their existence in Iberia.

For modern historians, the concept of *convivencia* has been central to the discussion of cultural interactions between the three faith communities which populated medieval Iberia. This concept, first advanced by Américo Castro seventy years ago, has come to be understood as depicting a relatively harmonious social interaction between Muslim, Christian and Jew, that fundamentally influenced Spain's later social and cultural development.<sup>2</sup> Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz contested this, emphasising instead the persistence of the Visigothic legacy throughout the Peninsula's history.<sup>3</sup> Although this latter approach has not found general acceptance, Castro's original representation of *convivencia* has been much criticised and refashioned by more recent scholarship, being considered too simple and idealistic.

The connotations of *convivencia* are just as important for the history of Muslims in Christian Spain (*mudéjares*) as for Jews, though it is only the Jews who are the subject of this study. Glick emphasised the more stratified nature of Jewish society, allowing some individuals to 'step out of their ethnic roles' in a way that was less feasible for the Muslim minority.<sup>4</sup> His analysis contrasts Castro's perception of social evolution with a largely immutable 'temperamental inheritance' as posited by Sánchez-Albornoz. Rejecting this latter biological model, he has provided a useful elaboration of the concept of *convivencia* that emphasises the 'struggle between cultural norms' and the place of conflict as well as of harmony between groups in

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<sup>2</sup> Appearing in later elaborations and translations as in Américo Castro, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to their History*, transl Willard King, Selma Margaretten (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 584.

<sup>3</sup> In Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España: Un enigma histórico* (Buenos Aires: 1956); the controversy between Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz and the accompanying bibliography is discussed in Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 7-12, 277-299, 314-316.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Glick, 'Convivencia: An Introductory Note', in Vivian Mann, Thomas Glick, Jerrilynn Dodds (eds.), *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (New York: G. Braziller, 1992), pp. 1-9, 5.

cultural exchanges. Tolerance and susceptibility to minority cultural influence were affected by the fluidity of peninsular politics up to the twelfth century. The concept of a crystallisation of Castilian identity that occurred after the reconquest, and that ensured a greater resistance to cultural exchange, is valuable in considering the intolerance that increasingly characterised late medieval Castile.<sup>5</sup>

The term *convivencia* means literally no more than ‘living together’. Recently, historians have either been inclined to discard the term altogether, or else have sought to unpick from it those elements of social interaction that may be helpful in understanding the cultural pluralism that typified the medieval Iberian kingdoms. Although the more neutral term, *coexistencia*, has been proposed as a substitute, it does little to advance understanding of complex communal relationships.<sup>6</sup> Salvador Martínez’s concept of *coexistencia* refers to parallel cultural development with occasional intersections that result in a crossing of cultural boundaries. He portrays Alfonso X as a monarch who, whilst promoting cultural *convivencia*, actually impeded its social connotations through his legal codes.<sup>7</sup>

Recent reviews of *convivencia* by Soifer Irish and by Ray have rejected the binary definitions of tolerance and intolerance as concepts inappropriate for the late Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> *Convivencia* was an idealised construct, better replaced by a modern understanding of acculturation and cultural diffusion. Tolerance, Ray argues, was predicated on a perception of mutual benefit, primarily by the Crown who might be disinclined to curtail Jewish privileges if they were not in its best interest. A clear distinction between the processes of integration, acculturation and assimilation of social groups was provided by Glick and Pi-Sunyer. Their description of a stabilized pluralism that safe-guarded the discreteness of the minority communities fits well the

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<sup>5</sup> Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain*, pp. 277-299.

<sup>6</sup> Francisco García Fitz, ‘Las minorías religiosas y la tolerancia en la edad media hispánica: mito o realidad?’, in Alejandro García Sanjuán (ed.), *Tolerancia y convivencia etnico-religiosa en la Península Ibérica durante la Edad Media: III jornadas de cultura islámica* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2003), pp. 13-56; Brian Catlos, ‘Contexto y conveniencia en la corona de Aragón: propuesta de un modelo de interacción entre grupos etno-religiosos minoritarios y mayoritarios’, *Revista d’Historia Medieval*, 12 (2001-02), pp. 259-68.

<sup>7</sup> Salvador Martínez, *La convivencia en la España del siglo XIII: perspectivas Alfonsíes* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2006), pp. 11-24.

<sup>8</sup> Maya Soifer Irish, ‘Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain’, *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1 (2009), pp. 19-35, p. 21; Ray, ‘The Reconquista and the Jews’, p. 163.

situation of Jews and Muslims in Iberia.<sup>9</sup> However, they conceded that pluralism was not, in fact, stable over time. Where the cultural boundaries between communities were permeable, acculturation and eventual assimilation to the majority culture became inevitable.<sup>10</sup> Barkai describes a polarisation of Iberian society that was based upon different levels of dialogue between the three cultures. On one hand this resulted in an intellectual and even spiritual closeness, and on the other in a rejection based upon hatred of difference.<sup>11</sup> This polarity reflected a fine balance between conflicting cultural influences that shifted in both directions and which was related to many interdependent factors.

Yet, economic and environmental pressures cannot be ignored in this equation. According to González Jiménez, in time of crisis and unstable royal regencies hatred of the Jews and of *conversos* increased, and could result in persecution and violence.<sup>12</sup> Monsalvo Antón argued that the economic decline of the early fourteenth century together with the attempts by the Crown to increase its authority over the municipalities (*concejos*) increased anti-Jewish sentiment.<sup>13</sup> The value of this proposition is tested in this study as is the extent to which this hostility was fostered by Enrique Trastámara in his bid to replace his brother on the throne of Castile.<sup>14</sup> Whether persecution was really an inevitable consequence of the social instability of the mid fourteenth century will be examined here in the light of the very different circumstances prevailing both earlier and later in the century.

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Glick, Oriol Pi-Sunyer, 'Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1969), pp. 136-154. See also Robert Burns, cited in Elka Klein, *Jews, Christian Society, and Royal Power in Medieval Barcelona* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 11: he argues that the medieval Jew prized his separateness and was 'an accomplice in his own exclusion'.

<sup>10</sup> Glick, 'Acculturation', pp. 139-141, 153; David Nirenberg, 'Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain', *Past & Present*, 174 (2002), pp. 3-41, 12. As Nirenberg points out, the destabilization of group boundaries, especially after 1391, was of concern to Christians as well as to Jews.

<sup>11</sup> Ron Barkai, 'Les trois cultures Iberiques entre dialogue et polemique', in Ron Barkai (ed.), *Chrétiens, Musulmans et Juifs dans l'espace Médiévale: de la convergence à l'expulsion* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1994), p. 227-251, 227.

<sup>12</sup> Manuel González Jiménez, 'El fracaso de la convivencia de moros y judíos en Andalucía (ss.XIII-XV)', in Eufemio Sans Lorenzo (ed.), *Proyección histórica de España: en sus tres culturas* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1993), vol.1, pp. 129-149.

<sup>13</sup> José María Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución de un conflicto social: el antisemitismo en la Corona de Castilla en la baja Edad Media* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1985), pp. 208-212.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325; Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla y la revolución Trastámara* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1968), pp. 37-47.

This dissertation is predicated on the proposition that the Jews in Castile were not an alienated minority which prospered or suffered at the whim of royal decree or murderous pogrom.<sup>15</sup> The distinction between the status of Jews in Iberia and those in England, France and the Holy Roman Empire was made by Roth and more recently by Ray. Roth's contention was that we lack evidence for popular animosity against Jews on account of the privileged status they mostly enjoyed in Iberia. Yet this can hardly be reconciled with Nirenberg's portrayal of an endemic culture of violence against and between the Jewish and Muslim minorities.<sup>16</sup> As Ray has proposed, the problem for Jewish community leaders in Iberia was not so much that of exclusion but rather of acceptance. His view is that the permissiveness of society allowed acculturation to occur relatively unhindered, and that this therefore constituted a threat to social cohesion.<sup>17</sup> Evidence for this proposal will be seen throughout this dissertation.

Until 1391, pogroms were uncommon or small-scale in Iberia in comparison with the Rindfleisch (1298) and Armleder (1338) massacres in Franconia, or with the murders following accusations of well-poisoning in the wake of the Black Death.<sup>18</sup> But even if widespread violence were not a quotidian feature of Jewish life in Iberia, there was always hostility. Nirenberg describes a background 'static' of violence between Christians, Muslims and Jews. This was often ritualised, as during Holy Week, and there was a chronic fear of miscegenation, a crossing of sexual boundaries that had both religious and racial overtones.<sup>19</sup> Nirenberg believes that the ever-present tension between hostility and coexistence was integral to the maintenance of *convivencia*. In a similar vein, Baumgarten describes group interactions as 'entanglements' that may have reflected both connection and separation. The complexity of interactions may result in both hostile and tolerant encounters and she has broadened the whole concept of *convivencia* to incorporate acculturation, overlap

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Norman Roth, 'The Civic Status of the Jew in Medieval Spain', in Paul Chevedden, Donald Kagay, Paul Padilla (eds.), *Iberia and the Mediterranean world of the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Robert I. Burns* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), vol.2, pp. 139-161; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Ray, 'Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval "Convivencia"', *Jewish Social Studies*, 11(2) (2005), pp. 1-18, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Stow, *Alienated Minority*, p. 231: 34,000 may have died in the Rindfleisch massacres in 1298 according to the *Memorbuch*.

<sup>19</sup> Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, pp. 127-165, pp. 200-230; 'Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain', *American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), pp. 1065-93.

and hybridity.<sup>20</sup> A simpler model has also been proposed, wherein Jews might adopt norms of the majority culture without sacrificing their identity as Jews. Marcus terms this ‘inward acculturation’, as opposed to an ‘outward acculturation’ that blurs the individual’s affiliation to the group and which may be a prelude to full assimilation.<sup>21</sup>

The debate by historians over a terminology that seeks to define or set limits on the behaviour of individuals or groups, reveals the usefulness but also the limitations of this approach. It becomes clear from the present study that both Jews and Christians sought to minimise or to prevent the crossing of group boundaries. There were many stages, however, between completely separate development and the full assimilation of conversion.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, disagreement could occur about where the demarcation between one social group and another was to be determined. The most damaging manifestation of this was the conflict between the Old Christians and the descendants of Jewish converts to Christianity, outlined in the final chapter of this dissertation. The events of the 1449 rebellion provide an example of how a cultural boundary was redefined by one of the parties (Old Christians) in response to the new social reality of widespread conversion. Although on one side of the conflict those descended from converts (*conversos*) thought themselves ‘fully assimilated’ into Christian society, the rebels opposing them thought otherwise.

The result of *convivencia*, however understood, was that Christians, Jews and Muslims continued to live relatively peaceably alongside each other after the Christian reconquest of the thirteenth and until the latter part of the fourteenth-century. It has been argued that the Jews of Sepharad (the Hebrew term for Spain) should be regarded, as they very likely regarded themselves, as owners of multiple identities. They were artisans, shop-keepers, even owners of small agricultural plots and vineyards, as well as being part of a Jewish community. They were not confined within a ghetto but often lived and worked, as will be shown here, alongside Christian or Muslim neighbours. They had identities that belonged to the localities in which they lived and since they were mobile, not subjected to restrictions on their movements

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<sup>20</sup> Elisheva Baumgarten, Ruth Karras, Katelyn Mesler, ‘Introduction’, in Elisheva Baumgarten, Ruth Karras, Katelyn Mesler (eds.), *Entangled Histories: Knowledge, Authority, and Jewish Culture in the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 1-20, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> As argued by Glick, ‘true cultural isolation is pretty much a fiction’; he sees many alternatives between separateness and complete cultural eradication (assimilation), in Glick, ‘Acculturation’, p. 141.

around the kingdom.<sup>23</sup> A few, the subject of the first two chapters of this study, moved within the King's court as an intellectual elite. They formed alliances with the nobility or were recipients of extensive privileges that involved them in affairs of state or of municipality.

Conditions were propitious for the flourishing of an intellectual elite of Jewish administrators in the late thirteenth century as is outlined in the first two chapters of this study. The need for Jews to manage the money economy of the kingdom is a reflection of the poorly developed royal administration in thirteenth-century Castile. Castilian society was 'organised for war', whether in continual campaigns against the Muslims or against the other Peninsular kingdoms.<sup>24</sup> It was not until the determined efforts of Alfonso XI to establish a clerical class of *letrados* within his administration, in the fourteenth century, that the preeminent position of Jews at court would begin to be supplemented and eventually surpassed by Christian or *converso* appointees.<sup>25</sup>

The focus of this study is on the economic and cultural aspects of Jewish life, and so the legal status of the Jews will not be considered here in great detail. However, the civic status of Jews following the reconquest is pertinent to their perceptions of their rights, their freedom to move, to trade and earn a living and to obtain justice. Alfonso VIII's fuero granted to the town of Cuenca in 1189-1193 stated that: *Nam judei servi regis sunt et semper fisco regio deputati* ('The Jews are servants of the King and always belong to the King's treasury').<sup>26</sup> Roth has dispelled the notion that *servi* implied that the civic status of Jews in the kingdom was anything other than that of free citizens, *vecinos*.<sup>27</sup> The meaning was not perjorative, but rather reflected the ambiguity of a frontier society, whereby Jews 'could easily combine servitude (to the

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<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Ray, 'Images of the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1 (2009), pp. 195-211.

<sup>24</sup> Jaime Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia económica de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Teide, 1959), p. 229; Elena Lourie, 'A Society Organized for War: Medieval Spain', *Past & Present*, 3 (1966), pp. 54-76.

<sup>25</sup> For a general outline of Jews in the medieval European economy see Lester Little, 'The Function of the Jews in the Commercial Revolution' in *Povert  e ricchezza nellaspiritualit  dei secoli XI e XII: 15-18 ottobre 1967* (Todi: Presso l'Accademia Tudertina, 1969), pp. 273-287; for Castile see also Salvador de Moxo, 'La promoci n pol tica y social de los "letrados" en la corte de Alfonso XI', *Hispania*, 35 (1975), pp. 5-30.

<sup>26</sup> This fuero copied that awarded to Teruel in 1177 by Alfonso II of Aragon.

<sup>27</sup> Roth, 'Civic Status', p. 151.



King) with citizenship'.<sup>28</sup> The freedoms extended to the right, granted by Alfonso X in the *Siete Partidas* and confirmed by subsequent monarchs in the *Leyes del estilo*, to have autonomy in judging legal actions between Jews in their own courts and according to Jewish law. Only in cases that were between Jews and Christians was it necessary for judgements to be made in a Christian court and even then, by a judge appointed specifically for this purpose by the Crown, an *alcalde apartado*.<sup>29</sup>

Despite frequent interventions by the municipalities (the *concejos*), who resented the prerogative of the King to interfere in local affairs through the appointment of these judges, the legal status of Jews in Castile changed little over the centuries before the expulsion. The leaders of the *aljamas* convened in Valladolid in 1432 in order to discuss and codify many aspects of communal administration. Considered in relation to the collection of taxes in chapter III of this dissertation, the record of the meeting also shows that the rabbis debated the appointments of Jewish judges (*dayanim*) and confirms that local juridical autonomy was conserved in the Jewish communities into the fifteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Juridical independence and the high-level appointments of Jewish *privados* to the court are but two aspects of Jewish coexistence in Castile. The contribution that was made by the Jews to the revenues of the kingdom of Castile has usually been considered to be disproportionate to their numbers, but has been insufficiently studied. Baer's view of the Jews of Aragon as a 'sponge to be squeezed dry' is an oversimplification of the situation, both there and in Castile.<sup>31</sup> There is ample evidence, in both kingdoms, of the high value placed by the Crown on maintaining the

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<sup>28</sup> David Abulafia, 'Nam Iudei Servi Regis Sunt' in Harvey Hames, (ed), *Jews, Muslims and Christians in and Around the Crown of Aragon: Essays in Honour of Professor Elena Lourie* (Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 97-123, 123; Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations, 1000-1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 116-118.

<sup>29</sup> Dwayne Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 De los judíos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), ley 7.24.5, p. 77; Alonso Díaz de Montalvo, *Las leyes del estilo. El fuero real de España* (Madrid; Aznar, 1781), ley LXXXIX, p. 33; Norman Roth, 'Dar "Una Voz" a los judíos: representación en la España medieval', *Anuario de historia del derecho Español*, (56) 1986, pp. 943-952; Teofilo Ruiz, 'The Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities: The Case of Burgos 1248-1350', *Past & Present*, (77) 1977, pp. 3-32, 23; Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 86-88.

<sup>30</sup> Fritz Baer, *Die Juden Im Christlichen Spanien. 2. Teil Urkunden und Regesten, Kastilien/Inquisitionskaten* (Berlin: IM Schocken Verlag, 1936), doc. 287 (Judaeo-Castilian): pp. 280-298. Paris, Bibl. Nat., ms. Hebr. No. 585 f.1- 21; see chapter III p. 92 of this dissertation.

<sup>31</sup> Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain. vol. 1. From the Age of Reconquest to the Fourteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), hereafter *JCS* vol.1: p. 175.

integrity and financial autonomy of its Jewish communities. The particular challenges of warfare and a poor agrarian economy made the exchequer reliant to an extraordinary degree on its income from the Jews.<sup>32</sup> This study has provided an opportunity to explore this in greater detail than has hitherto been possible. Understanding this reliance is critical to an explanation of the protection afforded to the Jews by successive monarchs in Castile. Its impact has also wider implications for the extent and manner of financial self-administration that was permitted to the *aljamas*, and this aspect of community self-governance will also be considered here.

The traditional view of historians that hostility to the Jewish minority was linked to economic decline and civil unrest has already been mentioned. It has also commonly been claimed that the anti-Jewish stance of Enrique Trastámara in the civil war in mid-fourteenth-century Castile led to an altered perception of Jews that radically transformed their status vis-à-vis the Crown and in the eyes of the population.<sup>33</sup> These assumptions are challenged in chapter IV of the dissertation. That the communities suffered physically and financially throughout the first half of the fourteenth century is not in doubt; however, the rhetoric and the civil disturbances must be viewed within the political and economic context of that period. Records examined in chapter IV, of the demographic of Jewish and Muslim habitation in one medium sized Castilian town, Ávila, indicate how closely associated all the faith communities were in their daily lives. Personal interactions in the market, in the street, even in a neighbour's home, would potentially have moderated (or possibly aggravated) relations between the communities.<sup>34</sup>

These relations would not have been improved, however, by the negative perceptions that one community had of the other, disseminated by legend, ballad or public performance. These must have been as influential on the townsfolk as any

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<sup>32</sup> Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia*, see chapter XXII; Miguel Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla: 1252-1369* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1993), pp. 77-85; Gregory Milton, 'Jews and Finance in Medieval Iberia', in Jonathan Ray (ed.), *The Jew in Medieval Iberia 1100-1500* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), pp. 227-253.

<sup>33</sup> Julio Valdeón Baroque, 'La judería Toledana en la guerra civil de Pedro I y Enrique II', in *Simposio Toledo judaico, Toledo 20-22 abril 1972* (Toledo: Colección Toledo universitario, 1973), pp. 107-131; *Los judíos de Castilla*.

<sup>34</sup> Teofilo Ruiz, 'Judíos y Cristianos en el ámbito urbano bajomedieval: Ávila y Burgos, 1200-1350', in *Xudeus e conversos na historia: Actas do Congreso Internacional, Ribadavia, 14-17 de Outubro de 1991* (Santiago de Compostela: Editorial de la Historia, 1994), pp. 69-93, 78, 84-87.

political propaganda by one side or the other of the warring parties.<sup>35</sup> It is possible to discern a change in tone from the *Cantigas de Santa María* and Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* of the thirteenth century to later popular balladry and the rhymes of Ayala's *Rimado de Palacio* or the self-mockery of late fourteenth-century *converso* poetry.<sup>36</sup> Chapter IV shows how the tales of Satanic Jews and of the redemptive power of conversion in earlier poetry were replaced by more worldly, though equally negative, stereotypes of Jews in the later period.

It is impossible to know whether change in popular perceptions of Jews by the Christian population contributed to the violence and mass conversions of 1391. It is not difficult, however, to understand how the stark choice between martyrdom and conversion would have appeared to the Jewish victims. A greater challenge for historians, however, has been to explain the thousands of conversions that, although starting before the disturbances, gathered pace in the following decades. The obtaining of conversions by the friars-preacher from the thirteenth century onward may have been less successful than had previously been thought.<sup>37</sup> Scepticism of the Jewish population towards the friars is well documented, nevertheless, the threat of apostasy was considered a serious challenge by rabbinical leaders as illustrated by their passionate debate described here in chapter V.

How Jewish scepticism turned to submission to baptism in the early decades of the fifteenth century will be discussed from a number of standpoints. Assumptions have been made previously about differences in the mental outlook of Ashkenazi Jews in the north of Europe and the Sephardi Jews of Iberia. The view of some historians has been that the simple religiosity and rightness of belief amongst Ashkenazi Jews that generally favoured martyrdom over baptism was not shared by the Jews of Sepharad.<sup>38</sup> This judgement has, however, been challenged recently, notably by

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<sup>35</sup> Angus MacKay, 'The Ballad and the Frontier in Late Mediaeval Spain', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* (Liverpool), 53 (1976), pp. 15-33.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Gerli, 'Seville and Córdoba', in David Wallace (ed.), *Europe: A Literary History, 1348-1418*, vol. 2 (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 143-149.

<sup>37</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982); Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Gerson Cohen, 'Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sepharadim', in Max Kreutzberger (ed.), *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute* (New York: Unger, 1967), pp. 147-151; Baer, *JCS* vol.2, p. 144;

Malkiel and by Tartakoff. Citing records of conversion amongst Ashkenazi Jews, both sincere and venal, Malkiel has suggested that apostasy there was a ‘part of everyday life’.<sup>39</sup> A re-assessment of long held opinions may have highlighted a more than negligible incidence of Ashkenazi conversion, but the records of thousands of conversions in Iberia are incontestable; they point us to conversion on a scale that still lacks a full explanation.

The polemical background to the wave of conversion is reviewed in chapter V, utilising the works of Jewish missionizing apostates and of those faithful Jews who opposed their vision. It is reasonable to assume that individuals who converted of their own volition and who integrated successfully into society would have set an example to others in their communities. The few well documented cases of such *conversos*, discussed in chapter V, provide insight into how the lineages of such families were established. Yet, this cannot have accounted for the large tide of conversions attributed to the preaching of the Dominican Vincent Ferrer in the early decades of the fifteenth century. His sermons and the attempts by the Crown, under his influence, to segregate the habitations of Jews, *conversos* and Old Christians were further disturbing signs of the rupture of *convivencia* in the kingdoms of both Castile and Aragon.

The establishment of a completely new stratum of society, the New Christians, in the first decades of the fifteenth century, represented the absorption of a large sector of the minority into the majority culture. The rebellion in Toledo that ends this study, raises the issue of identity of these assimilated ‘New Men’.<sup>40</sup> Just as their religious affiliation was challenged by their opponents, so modern historians have disagreed as to whether their conversion constituted a perfect assimilation to Christian society, or even a new and hybrid identity of ‘Jewish Christians’.<sup>41</sup> The brief overview here, of the *converso*

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Haym Soloveitchik, ‘Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example’, *AJS Review* 12(2), 1987, pp. 205-221, 213.

<sup>39</sup> David Malkiel, ‘Jews and Apostates in Medieval Europe — Boundaries Real and Imagined’, *Past & Present*, 194(1) 2007, pp. 3-34; Paola Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, 1250-1391* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 67-75.

<sup>40</sup> Bruce Rosenstock, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology, and Society in Fifteenth-century Castile* (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002).

<sup>41</sup> Bruce Rosenstock, ‘Alonso de Cartagena: Nation, Miscegenation, and the Jew in Late-Medieval Castile’, *Exemplaria*, 12(1) (2000), pp. 185-204; John Edwards, ‘Conversion: New Light on the Converso Debate: the Jewish Christianity of Alfonso de Cartagena and Juan de Torquemada’, in Simon

literature that sprang from the events of 1449, leaves the issue unresolved. Nevertheless, the contested identity of the protagonists that it portrays would acquire overwhelming significance in the following decades of Inquisition and Expulsion.

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Barton, Peter Linehan (eds.), *Cross, Crescent and Conversion: Studies on Medieval Spain and Christendom in Memory of Richard Fletcher* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 311-326.

# Chapter I

## The Price of Reconquest: Collecting the Taxes for Alfonso X

The economic usefulness of the Jews to the Crown owed much to the part played by Jewish officials in the administration of the vast territories acquired by recent conquest from the Muslims. In this chapter, I examine in detail a series of privileges granted to one such individual who was pledged to farm the taxes of Alfonso X. The documents serve to illustrate the complexity of a developing system of taxation and allow an assessment of the importance of these impositions to effective government in Castile. When viewed together with the near contemporary chronicles, they also tell us something of the part played by a Jewish official in the King's service and invite speculation over his interactions with a largely Christian hierarchy.

In order fully to comprehend the task undertaken by the tax farmers, it is necessary to outline the strains that faced a fragile agrarian economy, the nature and great variety of the taxes to be collected and Alfonso's political ambitions. All of these impinged on the King's financial officers: their duties were not lightened by an unstable coinage that was regularly subject to debasement.

### An economy in crisis

It has been estimated that the land area of Castile increased by fifty percent following the conquests of early thirteenth century, yet the population increase was only ten percent as Muslims, most of them agricultural labourers, fled to Granada.

Depopulation was a serious problem for the kingdom and was a contributory factor in its delayed economic development.<sup>1</sup> Vicens Vives has provided highly speculative figures for population numbers based on extrapolations from a fifteenth-century census. He arrived at an approximate figure of four to five million inhabitants by the middle of the thirteenth century of whom he estimated 300,000 were Muslims.

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<sup>1</sup> Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia*, p. 224.

Although his work is not well referenced, it raises issues that are relevant to the financial challenges faced by monarchs in the latter part of the thirteenth century.

Many of the characteristics of what has been termed the Commercial Revolution of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe, are exemplified by the situation of Castile. As defined by Lopez, the essence of this revolution was the emergence of a cadre of professional merchants skilled in the use and understanding of the money economy and constituting an urban middle class.<sup>2</sup> However, historians have pointed out the imperfect nature of this development in Castile, attributable to the crisis in manpower, a struggling agrarian economy and inflation fuelled by frequent monetary devaluations by the Crown.<sup>3</sup>

For a time, at least, Jews played an important role in an economy severely lacking in administrative and financial skills. It was they, interposed between the Crown, the nobility and those of the third estate, who performed a vital role that a century later would largely be taken over by Christians. Wilhelm Roscher (1875) had first expressed this succinctly and his views on Jewish ‘guardianship’ of the mercantile economy in Europe and of their eventual displacement have influenced later historians.<sup>4</sup> In a more biased interpretation, Jews ‘took a hold of the finances and administration, serving the King with the utmost flattery whilst audaciously exploiting the lower orders who hated them in return’.<sup>5</sup>

For Little, the hostility of Christian society in the late Middle Ages to the money-based economy was based upon Christian teachings and conveyed through preaching and art. Society could no longer be imagined as a three-fold division of those who prayed, fought or worked, and the image of the ruthless usurer was seen to replace that of the ‘rampaging knight’. If Christians could not practise the cupidity

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Lopez, 'The Trade of Medieval Europe: The South', in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 306-379, 330.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation During the Reign of Alfonso X of Castile', *Traditio*, 27 (1971), pp. 379-398, 380.

<sup>4</sup> Wilhelm Roscher, 'The Status of the Jews in the Middle Ages Considered from the Standpoint of Commercial Policy', tr. Solomon Grayzel, in *Historia Judaica*, VI (1944), pp. 1-26 with an introduction by Guido Kisch.

<sup>5</sup> Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia*, p. 229.

condemned in the Gospel by St. Paul they could allow the Jews to bear the guilt of what had become a necessity of everyday life.<sup>6</sup>

The numerous documents of *repartimiento* (land allocations) show the many donations of land to new settlers and illustrate well Alfonso's endeavours of urban repopulation. Land grants were frequently accompanied by privileges of tax exemptions that recall the incentives granted during the earlier stages of resettlement.<sup>7</sup> However, as with many medieval monarchs, preservation of the kingdom from external threat by warfare was Alfonso's foremost priority and was the greatest drain on his treasury. The ports of Tarifa and Algeciras had remained in Muslim hands and were important points of entry for periodic military forays by the North Africans. An alliance between Granada and the Banu Marin of North Africa in 1264, resulted in a revolt by the *Mudejares* and some of the King's recently won possessions passed briefly back into Muslim hands.<sup>8</sup>

Quite apart from the threat to the territorial integrity of Castile, these disturbances had an adverse effect on the royal revenue. A tribute (*paria*) of 150,000 *alfonsíes* annually had been pledged to Fernando III by the emir Muhammad I in the treaty of Jaen in 1246.<sup>9</sup> The figure given by the chronicle was 600,000 gold *maravedís* which it quotes as amounting to one-half of all of Fernando's revenue.<sup>10</sup> Some of these *parias* inevitably disappeared following the absorption of Muslim territories into the Christian kingdom. Although substantial, these figures should be considered in the context of the contributions to the royal fisc made by his domestic taxation policy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Little, 'The Function of the Jews'; 'Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom', *The American Historical Review*, 76 (1971), pp. 16-49; Georges Duby, *Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> Manuel González Jiménez, Antonio González Gómez, *El libro del repartimiento de Jerez de la frontera: estudio y edición* (Cadiz: Instituto de estudios Gaditanos, 1980); Julio González, *Repartimiento de Sevilla* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1951); Hipólito Sancho de Sopranis, 'La Repoblación y el repartimiento de Cádiz por Alfonso X', *Hispania*, 61 (1955), pp. 483-539.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 364.

<sup>9</sup> Miguel Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones de la fiscalidad regia castellano-leonesa en la segunda mitad del siglo XIII (1252-1312)', in *Historia de la hacienda Española (Epocas antigua y medieval): Homenaje al Profesor García de Valdeavellano*, (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 1982), pp. 319-406, 362.

<sup>10</sup> Manuel González Jiménez, *Crónica de Alfonso X: segun el Ms. II/2777 de la Biblioteca del Palacio Real* (Murcia: Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1998, ch.1).

<sup>11</sup> O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation', see p. 390, n.47 for a breakdown of tax revenues.



## Taxation and the coinage

Stable government and a well ordered and productive society were necessary to Alfonso in order to supply the income he needed through taxation. The system of taxation that Alfonso inherited was complex and it became even more so under his reign and that of his successors.<sup>12</sup>

Equally complex was the issue of the coinage to which the monarchs devoted considerable attention.<sup>13</sup> The *maravedí de oro* (derived from the Almoravid *morabitino*) was replaced between 1230 and 1250 by the debased *pepionis* of a copper/silver alloy minted by Fernando III.<sup>14</sup> Alfonso X issued a silver based coinage (*moneda de plata*) of which six were equivalent to a single gold coin.<sup>15</sup> These were also known as *dineros burgaleses* or *alfonsíes*, as *moneda blanca* or *moneda de la guerra*. These changes were approved by the Cortes as was his subsequent issuance of the debased silver *dineros prietos* at Valladolid in 1258.<sup>16</sup> As the scarcity of precious materials for the mint increased further, the threat and the reality of further devaluations of the coinage became a significant cause of hardship and of popular discontent. The instability of the currency at this and in later periods has been given comparatively little attention in the literature. That it was a disruptive factor at every level of society is indisputable. However, whether it was related to a scarcity of precious metals and to what extent it was a cause of, or a reflection of, economic distress remains debateable.<sup>17</sup>

A consequence of the distress and confusion resulting from these currency fluctuations was a special tax, the *moneda forera*. This was first levied by Alfonso IX in 1202 and was a pledge by him, purchased through the tax, that the King would not

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<sup>12</sup> Luis de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia de las instituciones Española: de los orígenes al final de la edad media* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1975); Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones'; O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation'; Evelyn Procter, *Curia and Cortes in León and Castile, 1072-1295* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Joseph O'Callaghan, 'Paths to Ruin', in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror: Intellect and Force in the Middle Ages*, in Robert Burns (ed.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 41-67. See also chapter III of this dissertation.

<sup>14</sup> Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia*, p. 256.

<sup>15</sup> Farrés Octavio Gil, *Historia de la moneda Española* (Madrid: Novedad Edit, 1959), pp. 331-333; González Jiménez, *Crónica de Alfonso X*, p. 5, n.3.

<sup>16</sup> O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation', p. 383.

<sup>17</sup> O'Callaghan, 'Paths to Ruin', p. 61; Angus MacKay, *Money, Prices, and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Castile* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981), p. 5.

alter or debase the coinage for a period of seven years.<sup>18</sup> Alfonso X continued regularly to demand this extraordinary tax (*servicio*) in return for promises that were not always kept. He did not always wait for the seven year period to elapse nor is it clear that its payment made any difference to the King's minting of coins of increasingly debased content. Indeed when the need arose, other *servicios* were demanded, often in the shape of the *moneda* as a basic form of tribute.

Exemption from the *moneda* might be granted in return for noble service to the King as seen in a privilege to *cavalleros* (nobles) *et los fijosdalgos* (knights) *de la noble ciudad de Toledo* awarded in 1259.<sup>19</sup> In 1282 the Infante Don Sancho, at the time of the rebellion against his father, issued a charter at Valladolid to the *alcaldes* and *merinos* (local officials) of Burgos no doubt to gain their support in his struggle. He reassured them that, for the benefit of the kingdom, he would restore the currency as it had been in the time of his grandfather and great-grandfather, that is *los burgaleses*, *los leoneses*, *los pepiones* and *los salamanqueses*. All transactions, he promised, should henceforth be exclusively in his new money and the old *moneda blanquiella* was to be done away with.<sup>20</sup> The complexity and ever shifting value of the currency must have been as bewildering to the general population as it remains today to historians of this period.

The taxation system that Alfonso X inherited was further complicated by him with yet more indirect as well as direct tax demands. These unpopular measures required the deployment of tax farmers (*arrendadores*) and just as in the case of the *bailes* of the kingdom of Aragon, many of these were Jews.<sup>21</sup> Several forms of indirect taxation were developed over the thirteenth century. The *alcabala* and the *sisa* were taxes on sales, and there were also levies on imports and exports of goods by sea and across land frontiers. These as well as the intermittent extraordinary demands (*servicios*) were a prominent cause of the discontent amongst all sectors of the population.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Valdeavellano, *Curso de Historia*, p. 603; Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 330; O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation', p. 380.

<sup>19</sup> Antonio Ballesteros y Beretta, *Alfonso X El Sabio* (Barcelona: Salvat, 1963), p. 227.

<sup>20</sup> *MHE*, vol.2. 1851, CCIX, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Lee Shneidman, 'Jews in the Royal Administration of Thirteenth Century Aragon', *Historia Judaica*, xxi (1959), pp. 37-52.

<sup>22</sup> Valdeavellano, *Curso de Historia*, pp. 606-610.

The wool trade was hugely important to the manpower starved economy of thirteenth-century Castile.<sup>23</sup> The movement of sheep herds from north to south in winter and back again in the spring was formally organised in a body known as the Mesta.<sup>24</sup> Fees and fines were levied on the pasturage required for this transhumance, for the passage of the *ganaderos* (herdsmen) across municipal boundaries and for the maintenance of the sheep trails (*cañadas*). The tax, the *montazgo*, became formalised into a regular payment, the *servicio de ganados*, initially to defray the expenses incurred by the wedding of the Infante Fernando de la Cerda (1269) to the daughter of Louis IX of France. Although instituted as an extraordinary expense it became a regular levy or *servicio* on the towns and one upon which the Crown came to depend.<sup>25</sup> Klein cites the conflict of interests that repeatedly arose between the *entregadores*, men appointed by the Crown as judicial protectors of the Mesta, and the local judiciary, the *alcaldes*.<sup>26</sup>

How each municipality determined the regular direct taxes owed to the Crown (*pechos*), differed from time to time and from place to place.<sup>27</sup> Not all the taxes raised ended up in the coffers of the Crown. Those sums that were needed by the municipality would first have been deducted and only the remainder was taken as Crown revenue. Whatever sums or other tributes that were surplus to the amounts promised to the exchequer remained the property and profit of the *arrendadores*.

### The King's political and economic imperatives

The reliance of Alfonso and of his heirs on Jews for the administration of the tax revenues can be related to the character of the monarchs who presided over the Reconquest and its aftermath. The Castilian Kings were not anointed at their coronations: Alfonso X was 'raised up' on a shield, rather than receiving his kingship at ecclesiastical hands.<sup>28</sup> Ruiz in his study of the 'unsacred monarchy' of Castile concluded that a monarch who started his reign in this fashion was one who would

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<sup>23</sup> Vicens Vives, *Manual de historia*, p. 231.

<sup>24</sup> Julius Klein, *The Mesta: A Study in Spanish Economic History, 1273-1836* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1920), see especially ch. XIII.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 401; Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, p.597.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph O'Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 6.

continue to display an independence from the Church and a pragmatic attitude to the material challenges that he faced.<sup>29</sup>

Nowhere is this seen to be truer than in Alfonso X's use of his Jewish subjects in managing the Castilian economy. Most often he acted against the express wishes of all three of his estates and his royal successors would follow in the same tradition.<sup>30</sup> The chronicler Jofré de Loaysa (d.1307/1310) described Alfonso X as 'from his childhood, generous, aspiring to and exercising justice, handsome of figure and quite graceful in appearance'.<sup>31</sup> Alfonso's own *Estoria de Espanna* is prefaced by an anonymous eulogy that celebrates that other aspect of his character for which he was renowned. It extols 'the King, who is the ornament of Spain and the treasure of philosophy and gives instruction to the Spanish people'.<sup>32</sup>

Yet elsewhere the chroniclers delivered a frankly critical assessment of Alfonso's reign, summing up in a few words his ambitious nature and the resulting extravagance that impoverished his people. In a chapter relating to the quest for empire in 1267 the *Crónica* records:

And as he wished his fame was great in other lands, but this and other like things that he did greatly impoverished the kingdoms of Castile and León.<sup>33</sup>

This view is reflected in Jofré de Loaysa's description of the King's twenty year pursuit of the title of Holy Roman Emperor and the toll that this took of his subjects. Though Loaysa wrote in Castilian, only the Latin version survives:

This same King, through favours to Germans .....incurred huge and extraordinary payments and costs, because of which it was necessary to

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<sup>29</sup> Teofilo Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150-1350* (Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 7, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> José Manuel Nieto Soria, 'Los judíos de Toledo en sus relaciones financieras con la monarquía y la iglesia (1252-1312), Conclusión', *Sefarad*, 42 (1) (1981), pp. 79-102, 313.

<sup>31</sup> Jofré de Loaysa, *Crónica de los Reyes de Castilla, Ferdinando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV y Fernando IV (1248-1305)* tr. Antonio Martínez (Murcia: Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1982), p. 77: 'ab ipso puericie sue tempore liberalis multum fuit ac justiciam diligens et exercens, speciosus quidem forma et in aspectu non modicum graciosus'.

<sup>32</sup> See in Joseph O'Callaghan, *The Learned King*, p. 270.

<sup>33</sup> Cayetano Rosell, *Crónica de Don Alfonso Decimo* (Madrid: BAE, 1919), t.1, XVII, p. 13: 'E como quier que esto fui grand e buena fama del rey don Alfonso en las otras tierras, pero esto e otras cosas atales que este Rey fizo trajieron grand empobrescimiento en los reinos de Castilla e de Leon'.

demand services (*servicios*) from the people of his land and to impose unaccustomed taxes.<sup>34</sup>

Evident from these few near-contemporary sources are Alfonso's reputation for scholarship and imperial ambition on the one hand and for economic oppression of his subjects on the other. Historians have also lauded his scholarship whilst at the same time casting doubt on his wisdom in government. Inheriting the relatively new joint kingdoms of León and Castile (united only as recently as 1230), Alfonso faced an enormous task. In his endeavour, however flawed, to exercise his authority and to secure his realm, the Jews played an important role.

### Farming the King's taxes

Surviving letters and charters concerning the commissions given to the Kings' Jews, primarily for the collection of his taxes, are relevant to this study for two reasons. They are essential instruments for understanding the means used to raise revenue for the Crown. They also provide us, together with reports of the chroniclers, with some insight into the individuals themselves, their interactions with the three estates and their sometimes grim fate.

An early example of a Jewish tax farmer (*arrendador*) is given in a transcript of privileges granted by Alfonso X to the Jew Zag de la Maleha. A close reading of the letters provides an insight into the wide variety of taxes and fines imposed by Alfonso and the considerable sums of money that were pledged by Zag to the Crown.<sup>35</sup> It is further justified by the understanding it affords of the *modus operandi* of the tax farmer and of his relationships with other officials who must have been involved in the revenue process.

The documents show the financial impositions placed not only on those taxable common folk (*pecheros*) who had any sort of income but also on the noble knights and the clergy. Fraud of various sorts is seen to be a significant preoccupation of the Crown and the fines exacted (usually in the form of a double payment) were a potent source of revenue as well as a bonus for the collectors themselves. Probing as they did

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<sup>34</sup> Loaysa, *Crónica de los Reyes*, p. 80: 'idem rex pro donando Alemannis et aliis ..... sumptus maximos et expensas fere incredibiles toleravit, propter quod necessario habuit ab hominibus terre sue servicia postulare et eisdem collectas imponere insuetas'.

<sup>35</sup> *MHE*, 1851: vol 1. CXL, pp. 308-324.

into financial malfeasance in all areas of society, the monarch must have been aware that they courted unpopularity and hostility. But since they stood outside the majority as Jews, the King could have confidence in them to be less influenced by vested interest and thus be all the more effective in collecting what was due to the royal treasury.

The whole document, catalogued as ‘Academia de la Historia. Archivo de Salazar, est. 10, leg.21’, constitutes a *cuaderno* which was a bound booklet of papers or parchment leaves issued by the chancellery and given to the recipients of a privilege for them to keep as a record.<sup>36</sup> It comprises six distinct documents and the originals, or copies, had been in the collection of the noted archivist Luis de Salazar y Castro (d.1734) and were bequeathed by him to the monastery of Montserrat after his death. It was finally acquired by the Academia between 1808 and 1835.<sup>37</sup> The original manuscript had been thought lost, however I have located a much degraded duodecimo in the Archivo General de la Fundación Casa Medina Sidonia (A.D.M.S) at Sanlúcar de Barremeda. The *cuaderno* is written in a cursive thirteenth or fourteenth-century Castilian script and the single leaves of the quire are tied together by silk threads without a seal.<sup>38</sup> Much of the manuscript is illegible and some fragments of the parchment leaves are missing. However, the appearance and the order of the content corresponds to the MHE printed transcript of Salazar y Castro’s document (see Figure 1).<sup>39</sup>

The main charter is a royal privilege to the town of Aguilar de Campóo, granting retroactive exemption from certain taxes and fines and specifically from those relating to the damage to the sheep trails (*cañadas rompidas*) and pasturage (*dehesas*) of as well as ‘other matters that followed’, *las otras cosas que se siguen deste fecho*. Perhaps the people of Aguilar de Campóo needed a copy to hand of the gamut of ‘*las otras cosas*’, the other taxes that had previously been demanded by the Crown. Indeed the beginning of the King’s letter is vague in that he states that he excuses the town dwellers from all his demands up until now, except for ‘those items that are recorded

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph O’Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León, 1188-1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *MHE*, 1851, vol 1. p. xxx

<sup>38</sup> Jesús Muñoz y Rivero, *Manual de paleografía diplomática española de los siglos XII al XVII: método teórico-práctico para aprender á leer los documentos españoles de los siglos XII al XVII* (Madrid, Moreno y Rojas, 1880), lamina 2a.

<sup>39</sup> A.D.M.S legajo 1307, ff.1r-12v

that I should retain' (*salvo ende aquellas cosas que son escriptas que retobe para mi*). It is noteworthy that only the charter itself bore a notarial signature indicating its origin in the chancery.

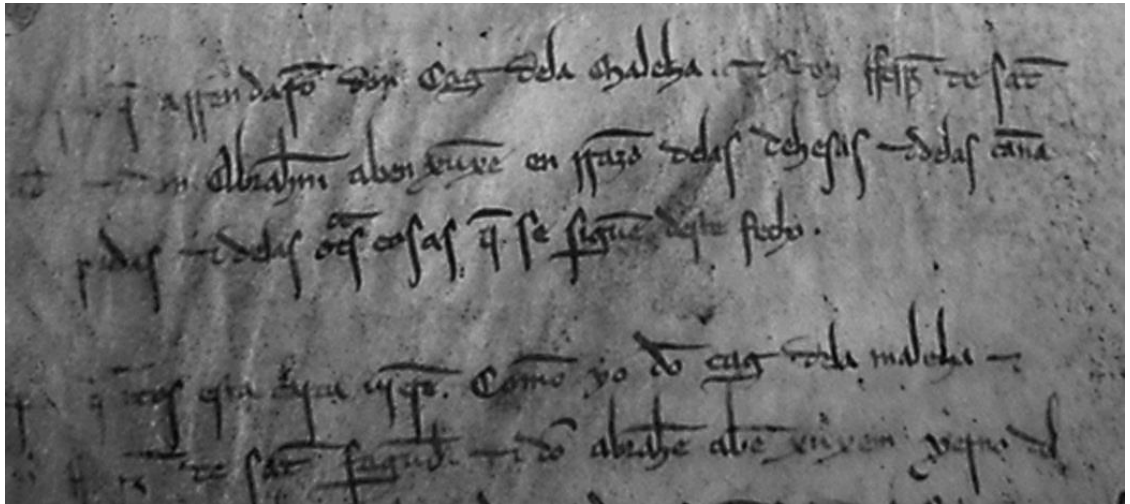


Figure 1: Privilege granted by Alfonso X to Aguilar de Campóo, 20 June 1277; Archivo de los Duques de Medina Sidonia, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, A.D.M.S. legajo 1307, ff.1r-12v, f.1

- L.1: [.....] que arrendaron don Çag dela maleha et roy fferrandez de sant [...]/  
 L.2: [.....] et don Abraham abenxuxen en rrazon delas dehasas et delas caña [...]/  
 L.4: [.....] Como yo don çag de la maleha et [.....]/  
 L.5: [.....] de sant fagund et don abraham abenxuxen yerno [.....].

The royal charter dated 20 June 1277 refers to three tax farmers (*arrendadores*): Zag de la Maleha, Roy Ferrandez de Sant Fagund and Abraham Aben Xuxen. Just two of these are Jews, the third is a Christian. Intercalated within this charter are the five other letters written in the first person by Zag. They are dated between 2 October 1276 and 3 January 1277 and refer also to Zag's other *arrendador* colleagues, his brother Yucef and brother-in-law, Aben Xuxen. Both Zag and his brother are recorded several times as sons of the treasurer (*almoxarife*) Don Mair and Aben Xuxen as son-in-law of Mair (*yerno del Almoxarife Don Mayr*).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> This *almoxarife* was Mayr ibn Susan (Abenxuxen) as noted by Norman Roth, 'Two Jewish Courtiers of Alfonso X Called Zag (Isaac)', *Sefarad*, 43 (1) (1983), pp. 75-85, 79 and in José Manuel Nieto Soria,

There is a telling comment within the last of these five letters in which Zag seems to boast that his pledge to the King exceeds that of his erstwhile Christian associate ‘*que avien pujado (pledged) Roy Ferrandez de Sant Fagund à sesaenta mil maravedís que vos daré yo agora por el setahenta mil moravedis de la moneda blanca en tal manera*’.<sup>41</sup> Competitive bidding between tax farmers existed also between Jews as would be seen again twenty years later in the case of Abraham el Barchilón, the distinguished *arrendador* for Sancho IV.<sup>42</sup>

There has been a controversy in the literature over the precise identity of the tax farmer who is sometimes named in the documents only as Zag (Isaac) and whether more than one such individual is referred to. This is of importance historically when considering the *arrendador*’s ultimate violent fall from the King’s favour. Zag de la Maleha was a native of Seville and Baer describes his short and lustrous career in Alfonso’s service as well as his ignominious end.<sup>43</sup> According to Roth’s more recent assessment, Baer confused Zag de la Maleha with another Zag who was the son of Solomon ibn Sadoq.<sup>44</sup> Roth denies that Isaac ibn Solomon ibn Sadoq was the man who appears in the letters of privilege. In this he contradicts all other authorities before and after Baer who have repeated this version of the story.<sup>45</sup> From the documents it is clearly stated that Zag and his brother Yucef were sons of Mair ibn Susan, who had also acted as *almoxarife* at the court.<sup>46</sup>

Only in the main document, the King’s privilege to the town of Aguilar de Campóo, and in the two of the five intercalated charters of *arrendamiento* is the appellation ‘la Maleha’ used. It would seem improbable, however, that the subsequent letters in the first person (‘*yo Don Zag*’) would have been penned by someone else or that the concessions, both of which were for the collection of fifteen years of taxation

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‘Los judíos de Toledo en sus relaciones financieras con la monarquía y la iglesia (1252-1312), *Sefarad*, 41 (1) (1981), pp. 301-319, 305.

<sup>41</sup> *MHE*, vol 1. p.313: ‘(He) has pledged 60,000 mrs. and I will give you 70,000 mrs.’.

<sup>42</sup> Teofilo Ruiz, ‘Trading with the ‘Other’: Economic Exchanges between Muslims, Jews and Christians in Late Medieval Northern Castile’, in Roger Collins, Anthony Goodman (eds.) *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence. Studies in Honour of Angus Mackay* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2002), pp. 63-78, 67.

<sup>43</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, pp. 124-130

<sup>44</sup> Roth, ‘Two Jewish Courtiers’, pp. 75-85.

<sup>45</sup> Most recently, Susan Einbinder, ‘A Death in Wisdom’s Court: Poetry and Martyrdom in Thirteenth-Century Castile’, in David Mengel, Lisa Wolverson (eds.), *Christianity and Culture in the Middle Ages: Essays to Honor, John Van Engen* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), pp. 253-71. She identifies the subject of a eulogy by the poet Todros Abulafia, Isaac ben Zadoq, as Zag de la Maleha.

<sup>46</sup> *MHE*, vol.1. p. 313



arrears and dated just eleven days apart, would have been given to two different people with the name Zag and working with the same associates. Furthermore, the original documents of the *cuaderno* are all written in the same thirteenth-century hand, which would be unlikely were they dealing with privileges awarded to different individuals.

A highly significant passage in these documents is the demand made by Alfonso in October 1276 that all arrears of taxes be collected from the time of the conquest of Niebla (1261) up to the present time (1276).<sup>47</sup> This order has attracted the attention of historians insofar as it highlights both the financial crisis facing Alfonso in 1276 and his belief that defaults of payment were common and needed to be rectified. Detailed analysis of the sums promised to the Crown by Zag have estimated an amount totalling 1,670,000 *maravedís*.<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere this is specified as being paid in the silver-based coinage, the *moneda blanca que fué fecha en tiempo de la guerra* and so would have been equivalent to one sixth of this amount in the older gold coinage.<sup>49</sup>

The very fact that such a demand for arrears could be made and that the tax farmers were prepared to attempt this undertaking, indicates that both records and a procedure to ascertain and force the payments would have been available to them. Copies of municipal registers (*padrones*) existed in which were recorded the details of those towns-folk from whom taxes would be due. Although Ladero Quesada notes that these registers came into common use only under Fernando IV, their mention in these charters means that the tax farmer and his team of collectors (*cogedores*) did have access to them.<sup>50</sup> In his own letter of 2 October 1276, Zag writes that by the King's command, 'they would give me the copies of the register from which were taken all the *pechos* that had been demanded since the war of Niebla'.<sup>51</sup>

Procter has shown that there was a legal mechanism to investigate cases of civil abuse just as there was for the investigation of criminal cases.<sup>52</sup> The *pesquisa* or *procedimiento inquisitivo* originated in León in the tenth century and became a

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<sup>47</sup> 'las quantas de todos los pechos que yo eché en toda la tierra del ano de la hueste de Niebla à acá.', *Ibid.*, p. 311

<sup>48</sup> O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation', p. 390, n.47, Nieto Soria, 'Los judíos de Toledo', p. 306

<sup>49</sup> see n.15 above.

<sup>50</sup> Valdeavellano, *Curso de Historia*, p. 597, Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 401, n.251

<sup>51</sup> 'et que me den los traslados de los padrones', *MHE*, vol 1, p. 312.

<sup>52</sup> Evelyn Procter, 'The Judicial Use of 'Pesquisa' (Inquisition) in León and Castile, 1157-1369', *English Historical Review*, Suppl. 2 (1966), pp. 1-35.; *Curia and Cortes*, p. 40.

prominent part of all legal procedure in the thirteenth century. The *pesquisidores* were independent officials appointed by the King who were deployed *ad hoc* and under oath to report to him over matters both civil and criminal. Zag needed their help and wrote: ‘Furthermore that they undertake all the inquiries (*pesquisas*) of the tax collectors (*cogedores*) that you commanded to be done and that those that have been carried out, that they deliver them to me’.<sup>53</sup> Though the *pesquisa* is only mentioned once, so frequent are the references in the documents to the avoidance of taxation and to fraud, that it seems that much of his evidence for imposing fines must have derived from these inquiries.

It cannot be assumed that an official like Zag would necessarily have had much contact with individual tax payers or even with the municipalities (*concejos*) themselves. As *arrendador* he was positioned within a hierarchy of officials to whom the accounts were rendered.<sup>54</sup> Zag indicates this: ‘*que me den ende quenta los cogedores et los seismeros que lo recabdaron*’.<sup>55</sup> The *cogedores* were accountable to Zag and would have been directly involved at a municipal level, probably using the figures entered for each hearth (*hogar* or *fuego*), in computing the amount of direct taxation owed. After that, his task was to deliver to the *almoxarife mayor* (treasurer) of the *curia* the sums he had pledged. This lofty position was frequently taken by Jews and in this period was occupied by either Solomon ibn Sadoq or by Mair ibn Susan (both of whom have variously been cited by historians as the father of Zag de la Maleha).<sup>56</sup> Just as was the case of the *bailes* and *tesoreros* of Aragon, these positions were quite frequently held by members of the same family.<sup>57</sup>

It is hard to discern whether Alfonso intentionally attempted to develop a directed economy as a remedy for Castile’s financial predicament.<sup>58</sup> His protectionist agenda was only partially successful and included the control over exports from the kingdom of the *cosas vedadas*.<sup>59</sup> In the document dated 18 December 1276, there is an extensive itemisation of goods such as cloth and silver and of animals and sheep

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<sup>53</sup> *MHE*, vol 1, p. 312.

<sup>54</sup> Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, pp. 592-598.

<sup>55</sup> *MHE*, vol 1, p. 311: ‘that the tax collectors give me what they receive’.

<sup>56</sup> Ladero Quesada, ‘Las transformaciones’, p. 399.

<sup>57</sup> Nieto Soria, ‘Los judíos De Toledo’, p. 319.

<sup>58</sup> Vicens Vivens, *Manual de historia*, p. 263.

<sup>59</sup> O’Callaghan, ‘Paths to Ruin’, p.55.

illegally removed from his kingdom.<sup>60</sup> In some of these cases may be seen an understandable anxiety to preserve a fragile agrarian economy, in others a further instance of the King's need to exact yet further tributes to his struggling finances.

The last of Zag's letters, that of 3 January 1277, refers to the dues owed by ecclesiastical institutions to the Crown.<sup>61</sup> Linehan has emphasised the subservient nature of the Church's relationship to the Spanish Crown. In recompense for the Kings' victorious crusade against the Moors, Innocent IV had acceded to Ferdinand III's demand that the prelates give him one third of the ecclesiastical tithe, termed the *tercias reales*. The tithe was taken by the Church for the upkeep of its buildings and to provide for the needs of the prelates themselves. However, its diversion to the Crown, granted as a singular favour from the papacy, had become a regular *servicio* and this loss of control over its income had a crippling effect on the Church.<sup>62</sup>

Alfonso's relationship with the Church was fraught with conflict in matters of jurisdiction, inheritance and taxation.<sup>63</sup> A charter issued to the *concejos* of the bishopric of Salamanca in 1255 provides a clear exposition of the King's position on the matter of tribute paid to the secular Church from their possessions. He invokes his powers that are derived from Jesus Christ himself, who had responded to the Jews saying: 'give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's'. In that he reigns over his land in the name of the Lord, no one should be excused from contributing the *diezmo* to the maintenance of the ecclesiastical estate.<sup>64</sup> Alfonso does not mention the *tercias* by name but it is implied when he lists all of the worthy uses to which it will be put: upkeep of the churches, clerical vestments, sustenance of the prelates, for the hungry poor and finally for the service of the King whenever he or his realm is in need.

In his letter, Zag refers to the *tercias* owed by the ecclesiastical estate to the Crown. In this case, it is the *terceros*, both lay and clerical, who are to collect the tribute from the *ricos omes*. He states that 10,000 of the 70,000 mrs. he has pledged

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<sup>60</sup> *MHE*, vol 1, p. 321.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Linehan, 'The Economic Problems of the Castilian Church', in *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 101-127; Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, p. 608; Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 363.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph O'Callaghan, 'The Ecclesiastical Estate in the Cortes of Leon-Castile, 1252-1350', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 67 (2) (1981), pp: 185-213, 87.

<sup>64</sup> 'E por que el diezmo é deudo que debemos dar á nuestro Señor, ninguno non se puede escusar de non lo dar', *MHE*, vol 1, XXXIV, p. 70.

will be given, on the order of Alfonso, to his falconers and other members of his company and the remainder to the king.<sup>65</sup>

Zag's career and his favour with the King was short lived. His disgrace illustrates how great was the risk run by a highly placed official of becoming embroiled in the intrigues of the court. According to the Chronicle, in 1279 the King had entrusted a large sum to Zag to deliver to his troops who were then besieging the port of Algeciras against the Banu Marin. The money never reached the men for whom it was destined but was seized by Alfonso's son Sancho who diverted it to his mother, the queen Violante, so that she might return to Castile from her exile in Aragon:

And the king was anxious that the sums collected ..... be sent to them and knowing that Don Sancho had taken this and sent it to the queen Donna Violante, was very angry.<sup>66</sup>

The chronicler describes vividly the privations suffered by the troops which must have included scurvy through lack of fresh provisions:

For many of them being on the ships and not having provisions, their teeth fell out and they had many other ills.<sup>67</sup>

The siege was abandoned and Alfonso took vicarious revenge on his rebellious son by executing his faithful *arrendador* and his brothers a year later in 1280 in the centre of Seville. It seems that Sancho was a witness and had wanted to save Zag but was counselled against this. The chronicler is explicit in his view that Sancho:

Remained angry with the king on account of the death of this Jew for all that he had done and the service he had given.<sup>68</sup>

In the same chapter, after a digression about the King's dealings with Philip III of France, the chronicle relates that the King issued an order in great secrecy:

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<sup>65</sup> *MHE*, vol 1, p. 314

<sup>66</sup> González Jiménez, *Crónica De Alfonso X*, LXXII, p. 200: 'E el rey, que cuydava que les enbiaría acorro del avar que recabdana ,,,, et sopo commo el infante don Sancho aviédado a la reyna donna Violante, pesól ende mucho.'

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 201: 'ca muchos dellos estando en las galeas e non aviendo las viandas, cayéronles los dientes et ovieron otras muchas dolencias'.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*: 'pero que fíncó en grant querella del rey por esta muerte deste judio e que touo que todo gelo fiziera por el serviçio que le fiziera', p. 210.

In which he commanded that all the aljamas of the Jews be imprisoned on a Saturday. And once imprisoned to demand from them 12,000 maravedís daily of the current coinage.<sup>69</sup>

The details of this extraordinary event seem unusual for a monarch who had hitherto had good and fruitful relations with his Jewish subjects. He was however fearful for his throne, angry with his son and by this time a sick man. Roth has suggested that the prior reference in the chronicle to Alfonso's recent dealings with the King of France might have been influential in view of that kingdom's repressive policies towards the Jews.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

In O'Callaghan's opinion, the fact that so many of the powerful figures within this late medieval system were Jews 'could only draw down upon their heads the hatred of the Christians'.<sup>71</sup> The immense scale of the tax operation, however, probably meant that the *pecheros* and even the municipalities would have had little personal contact with these elite Jewish officials. There certainly were hatred and jealousy, as is known from declarations in the Cortes. The King was repeatedly petitioned, as Sancho IV was in 1295, only to award such posts to:

Good men of the respective locality..... so that there should be no Jews or any other troublemakers, and that they may not be tax farmers.<sup>72</sup>

The demand that only local people carry out these tasks was also reflected in a royal ordinance of accountability that required government officials to reside within the district and to remain there for a defined period after the completion of their duties. This revival of a Roman law the '*residencia*' of fifty days for the lodging of any

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*: 'en que enbió mandar que todas las aljamas de los judíos fuesen presos en un dia de sàbado. Et desde que presos todos pleitearon con ellos el rey don Alfonso por doze mill maravedis cada dia de aquella moneda que corria' and see also p. 210 n.311. See also Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 130 who estimated a total ransom of 4,380,000 gold *maravedís*.

<sup>70</sup> Roth, 'Two Jewish Courtiers', p. 85.

<sup>71</sup> O'Callaghan, 'The Cortes and Royal Taxation', p. 391. For a similar view see Vicen Vives, *Manual de historia*, p. 229.

<sup>72</sup> Cortes of 1295, 'a omes buenos' de las localidades respectivas 'porque no anden y judios ni otros omes revoltosos, et que non sean arrendadas' in Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 399.

possible complaint against the official, must surely have been disregarded in the case of men like Zag.

The King's subjects were aware of the anomaly and objected to it.<sup>73</sup> Later, Alfonso's grand-son, Fernando IV, responded plaintively to such requests by the Cortes:

I am requested not to farm my taxes to certain people, and that neither Jew nor Moor might collect these. But they know full well the state of my revenue, and the pressure upon me, and the news that arrives daily from the frontier, and to this end I will examine the matter, if God wills it, that the frontier shall be safe and I shall be served, and that it may be the greatest benefit and security possible.<sup>74</sup>

Alfonso's employment of Jews in his service should be seen from this same standpoint of expediency. The execution of Zag and the extortion of the Jews that followed, remind us that neither friendship with nor affection to the *arrendador* or to his people were probably ever factors in the King's relationships with either of them. The nature of friendship in Alfonso's Castile has recently been the subject of study. It was conditional and was 'destined to perish when the original motivations and interests binding the involved parties were either satisfied or expired'.<sup>75</sup>

Yet, relationships were perhaps not always without emotional content. The chronicle seems to indicate the remorse that the Infante Sancho felt for Zag's predicament.<sup>76</sup> The pragmatic attitude of Sancho IV and later of Alfonso XI to the employment of Jewish court officials would be demonstrated repeatedly with the appointments of men such as the *arrendadores* Abraham el Barchilón and of Juçaf de Eçija in the next century. Their powers and the favours they received would exceed

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<sup>73</sup> Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, p. 486 and see also reference to the Florentine practice of *sindicatio* in John Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England 1170-1300* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> 'A lo que me pidieron que no arrendase los mios pechos a ninguno, e que judío non moro non sea cogedor de ellos. A esto, bien saben ellos la mi hacienda, e la priesa en que estoy, e las nuevas que me llegan cada dia de la frontera, e a esto yo cataré carrera, si Dios quisiere, porque la frontera sea acorrida, e yo sea servido, e que sea el mayor pro e la mayor guarda que pueda ser', Cortes de 1302, in Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 402.

<sup>75</sup> Antonella Liuzzo Scorpo, *Friendship in Medieval Iberia: Historical, Legal, and Literary Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 199.

<sup>76</sup> See above n.68.

those even of Zag de la Maleha, but this would not protect them, either, from scandal or imprisonment by their patron.

## Chapter II

### Serving the Heirs of El Sabio

Jews continued in the service of the kings of Castile after Alfonso X's death and the disgrace and execution of Don Zag de la Maleha. His demise had resulted from the conflict between the Infante Sancho and his father and patronage is seen to have been important to Zag's successors too. Their closeness to disaffected nobles at times threatened their security and would endanger their communities just as it had done in the time of El Sabio.

The study of these Crown appointments of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century provides an insight into the fragile position of elite Jewish administrators and of the opposition to them and to their role in the administration. It helps us to assess how far anti-Jewish sentiment underlay such opposition and how much arose from their involvement in the factionalism of the court or stemmed from the social tensions and the resentment of the towns that intensified in Castile throughout this period. Jewish officials also faced the hardening of the Church's attitude to Jews, although the sources do not show that ecclesiastical demands substantially damaged the freedoms of the *aljamas*. Nor did they significantly affect the protection by the Crown that Jews continued to enjoy throughout this period.

In understanding how Jews continued in their elite positions at the court, it is helpful to compare the situation with that in France and England. By the beginning of the fourteenth century Jews had been expelled from both these lands (they returned to France, only to be expelled later in the century). The contrast afforded by the status of Jews in Castile serves to emphasise the different cultural and economic imperatives that prevailed within the three kingdoms at this time.

#### Royal revenue and kingship in France, England and Castile

The Jews of Castile were more fortunate than those in either England or in France. There was no equivalent reliance in those two kingdoms on a Jewish administrative elite and the ability of Jews to earn their livelihoods through commerce or money lending was increasingly restricted towards the end of the thirteenth century. Although



a comparison of the events in the three kingdoms is problematic, some interesting parallels can be drawn.

It is helpful to consider the nature of kingship and the value of the Jews to the economy. Motivations cannot be securely determined at this distance in time, but the written record provides a basis for informed speculation about the causes of the decline in Jewish fortunes in France and England and of their relative stability in Castile. The concerns of the Castilian monarchy throughout the first part of the fourteenth century were fourfold: to establish royal authority over rebellious nobles and other members of the 'patrician' class, to secure both revenue and men-at-arms for the intermittent conflict on their borders with Muslim rulers, to maintain law and order, and to hold the clergy in check whilst maintaining the King's aura of a Christian monarch. These ambitions were often interrelated and they were all served by maintaining an effective royal administration.

The continuing prominence of Jews as favoured officers of the Crown (*privados*) reflected the desire by Alfonso X's heirs to centralise royal administration.<sup>1</sup> The employment of Jews in these roles derived from their exceptional literacy and numeracy, from their separateness and from their dependence on royal favour (*privaça*).<sup>2</sup> Royal protection of the Jews owed as much to the services of these gifted men as it did to the substantial taxation revenue provided by their communities, a linchpin of the Castilian economy which will be examined later in more detail.

In France and in England, Jews did not occupy similarly elevated positions at court. There, their benefit to the Crown arose largely from their money-lending activities. The heavy tax burden imposed on usury by the Crown was a lucrative form of 'indirect taxation' of those who borrowed. By 1260 the rate of taxation on the wealthiest lenders had reached a level of fifty percent in England.<sup>3</sup> In France the

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<sup>1</sup> Salvador de Moxo, 'La promoción política'.

<sup>2</sup> David Nirenberg, 'Christian Love, Jewish "Privacy", and Medieval Kingship', in Katherine Jansen, Guy Geltner, Anne Lester (eds.), *Center and Periphery: Studies on Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 25-38. Nirenberg finds the roots of the Castilian terms *privado* and *privaça* in the Latin *privatus* of Rome. See also Maurice Kriegel, *Les Juifs à la fin du Moyen Age dans l'Europe Méditerranéenne* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), p. 67 on the particular qualities of Jews as royal treasurers according to the fourteenth-century Catalán theologian Francesc Eximenis and also below.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Stacey, 'Jewish Lending and the Medieval English Economy', in Richard Britnell, Bruce Campbell, (eds.), *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086 to c.1300* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 78-101, 100; Sophia Menache, 'The King, the Church and the Jews: Some

repeated *captiones* in which the King seized both the interest and principal (*catallum*) of Jewish loans, impoverished the community and diminished their economic value to the King.<sup>4</sup> Revenue of £22,000 from the Jews of England has been estimated just prior to the expulsion, a sum Mundill claims not to be significant in relation to overall royal expenditure.<sup>5</sup> Jewish wealth in England was concentrated in very few hands and though it amounted in 1240 to perhaps a third of all circulating coin, Edward's *Statutum Judaismo* of 1275 banned usury completely.<sup>6</sup> There was an attempt by Jews thereafter to switch to other activities including commodity trading and some small loan transactions continued despite the ban. However, the resulting impoverishment of the community meant that by 1290 Jews played only a modest role in the English economy.<sup>7</sup>

By contrast, in Castile there is good evidence for a continuing and substantial contribution by Jews to the money economy from the fall of Seville at least up until the Black Death.<sup>8</sup> How much of this revenue was derived from money-lending remains unclear since these profits were taxed separately as '*los entregas de los judios*' and the figures are largely unknown.<sup>9</sup> Revenues from moneylending and the Jewish involvement in other commercial activities are examined in detail in the next chapter.

The repression of Jews in France and England resulted in the loss of their economic viability and usefulness to the Crown. Historians have attributed their actions to the profession by Kings of their Christian faith as well as to their ambitions for political harmony within a purified Christian nation. It was characteristic of French monarchs that they portrayed themselves and were portrayed by others as the most Christian of Kings (*rex Christianissimus*).<sup>10</sup> This sentiment was expressed in the bull

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Considerations on the Expulsions from England and France', *Journal of Medieval History*, 13 (1987), pp. 223-236, 230.

<sup>4</sup> William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Robin Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution, 1262-1290: Experiment and Expulsion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> Stacey, 'Jewish Lending', p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones', p. 336. In 1291 the accounts of Huete recorded the revenues of all the *aljamas* and indicated 'either a very high level of wealth or a veritable pillage of the Jewish community'.

<sup>9</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1: p. 85, Baer believed money-lending was never a principal occupation for Spanish Jews.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Strayer, 'France: The Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the Most Christian King', in David Herlihy, Robert Lopez, Vsevolod Slessarev, (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 3-16, at p. 9.

(1311) *Rex glorie* of Clement V: ‘the kingdom of France as a peculiar people chosen by the Lord to carry out the orders of Heaven, is distinguished by marks of special honour and grace’.<sup>11</sup> Edward I may have had a similar vision of his reign as an ‘Israel of the spirit’ but Menache claims that both in France and in England, royal policy to the Jews was not only the result of religious antipathy. Its purpose was also political, to silence opposition and to strengthen a sense of national unity.<sup>12</sup> It has been suggested that the expulsions may ultimately have failed as propaganda, finding favour neither with the church nor with contemporary chroniclers. Whatever the view may have been of these policies, however, their end result was the destruction of the Jewish communities in both kingdoms.<sup>13</sup>

There is a contrast between what has been termed by Ruiz the ‘unsacred monarchy’ of Castile and that of Edward I of England.<sup>14</sup> This is evident in the responses to papal complaints to these kingdoms regarding the spiritual danger posed by unrestricted contact with Jews. In 1286 Honorius IV wrote to the English archbishops referring to the ‘accursed and perfidious Jews that have done unspeakable things’, and warned that ‘they attempt to entice the minds of the faithful to their pestilent sect’.<sup>15</sup> In his *Statutum Judaismo* of 1275, Edward I had already forbidden all usury and desired that Jews ‘practice trade, to live by their labour and for those purposes freely to converse with Christians’.<sup>16</sup> His statute echoed the French ordinance of Melun issued by Louis IX in 1230, ‘*quod vivant propriis laboribus*’, although neither in France nor in England was this objective ever realised.<sup>17</sup> Edward’s response to the Pope’s complaint was the expulsion of the Jews from Gascony (which had in

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘sic regnum Francie in peculiarem populum electus a Domino in executione mandatorum celestium specialis honoris et gratie titulis insignitur’, p. 15, n.51 (Registrum Clementis Papae V [Rome 1885-1892] no. 7501).

<sup>12</sup> Sophia Menache, ‘Faith, Myth, and Politics: The Stereotype of the Jews and Their Expulsion from England and France’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 75 (1985), pp. 351-374, at p. 360.

<sup>13</sup> Sophia Menache, ‘The King, the Church and the Jews: Some Considerations on the Expulsions from England and France’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 13 (1987), pp. 223-236, at p. 230. Not only had there been previous expulsions in France in 1182 and 1253 but some Jews returned there in 1315. The English expulsion was total and lasted for over three centuries.

<sup>14</sup> Teofilo Ruiz, ‘Unsacred Monarchy: The Kings of Castile in the Late Middle Ages’, in Sean Wilentz (ed.) *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) pp. 109-144 and see chapter I, p.27 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> Lionel Abrahams, ‘The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 (Concluded)’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 7 (1895). pp. 440-442.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>17</sup> Jordan, ‘*The French Monarchy*’, p. 296, n.38. However in England many Jews did resort to commodity or bullion trading as a livelihood subsequent to 1275 for which see Stacey, ‘Jewish Lending’, pp. 98-100.

any case been demanded at the Council of Lyons in 1274) and then, in 1290, from the entire kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

In Castile, however, the *gravamina* of Pope Nicholas III of 1279 received a different reception. In 1279 the papal legate delivered the *Memoriale secretum*, a lengthy letter of accusations against Alfonso X, including complaints about his use of Jews in positions of authority over Christians.<sup>19</sup> The King passed the *Memoriale* to his son the Infante Sancho with a partial Castilian translation, intending that he would answer the papal charges. Among the evils imputed to the King's appointments was the corruption of Christians:

The Jews are placed over the Christians..... from which many bad things follow.... and they are corrupted by their traditiona and evil rites.<sup>20</sup>

Linehan argues that the papal letter portrayed the monarch as 'a barely Christian tyrant manipulated by Jewish counsellors'. The charges against the King's ecclesiastical policies were also extensive and could attract the sanction of excommunication.<sup>21</sup> Sancho consulted the canons of Burgos Cathedral, who expressed support for the Pope's position and despair at the path followed by both King and designated heir.<sup>22</sup>

A Latin extract from Sancho's reply to the *Memorial* provides an indication that Alfonso may have feared excommunication as had recently been suffered by his neighbour Afonso III of Portugal:

The king replied that he had not been able to do anything formerly however he proposed to set things right in the future.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike his English counterpart, Alfonso was not prepared to expel the Jews. His drastic actions in 1280, following the fracas of Algeciras, may have been intended to

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<sup>18</sup> Abrahams, 'The Expulsion', p. 443.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Linehan, 'The Spanish Church Revisited: The Episcopal Gravamina of 1279', in Brian Tierney, Peter Linehan (eds.), *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on his Seventieth Birthday* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 127-147, at p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> 'Otrosti que los judios son puestos sobre los cristianos ....dela qual cosa vienen muchos males entre los quales es mayor mal quelos cristianos son subiectos a ellos e son corumpidos por sus costumbres e por sus malos husos.' *Ibid.*, p. 146

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138, n.46, Biblioteca del Cabildo, cod. 8, f. 201v.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143 'et rex respondit quod non potuerat aliud olim facere quamvis proponeret corrigere in futurum'

‘set things right’, as his son had promised and to thereby impress the pope with his change of heart. The execution of his servant Zag de la Maleha and the *captio* and ransoming of the Jews of his kingdom described in the previous chapter have until now been seen as an act of revenge on the rebellious Sancho or as an attempt to court popularity with his subjects.<sup>24</sup> It is equally likely that the ailing Alfonso feared for the fate of his immortal soul. His act of retribution on Zag and the Jews might have had the threefold purpose: that of expanding the royal coffers, of venting his anger with his son and of mollifying the pope.

Fear of papal displeasure does not seem to have troubled either Alfonso’s heir Sancho IV or his successors. Just three years after acceding to the throne, Sancho appointed another Jewish *almoxarife*, Abraham el Barchilón, investing him with powers that exceeded even those Don Zag had exercised. For more than half a century thereafter, individual Jews continued to serve the Crown in the face of rising opposition from lay and ecclesiastical representation in the Cortes and in the municipal *concejos*.

### Jewish education in the Iberian Peninsula

Jewish *privados* enjoyed the favour of the King as his *servi regis*, whose loyalty transcended the rivalries of the court. The cynical view of the Catalan friar, Francesc Eximenis (1330-1409), was that their value derived from their avarice, their hostility to the Christian populace and a slavish loyalty to the King.<sup>25</sup> In reality, their especial value to monarchy lay in their abilities in the fields of letters, languages and finance. The skills of these elite administrators owed much to the value accorded to education in the Jewish communities. This was already understood in the twelfth century as testified by the writing of a pupil of Peter Abelard who noted the primacy of education for Jewish children:

Jew, however poor, even having ten children, put them all to learning their letters.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución*, p. 211.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Probst, 'Francesc Eximeniç: ses idées politiques et sociales', *Revue Hispanique*, 39 (1917), pp. 42-46 and see earlier p. 41, n.2.

<sup>26</sup> Aryeh Grabois, 'Écoles et structures sociales des communautés juives d'occident aux IX-XIIIe. siècles', in *Gli Ebrei Nell'alto Medioevo: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 1978* (Spoleto: Il Centro, 1980), 'Judeus enim, quantumcumque pauper, etiamsi decem haberet filios, omnes as litteras mitteret', pp. 937-962, 938.

What little is known of Jewish education indicates that in Iberia families of means could give children elements of secular learning in addition to liturgy and Talmud. All Jewish communities in Europe valued religious education but in Iberia and in southern France young men also had access to a secular curriculum that included logic, mathematics and metaphysics. This tradition had developed in Muslim Spain where the acquisition of Arabic was also considered essential to advancement in wider society.<sup>27</sup> Wealthy patronage provided a bilingual and secular education also to poorer boys. This was case with Abraham ibn Ezra in twelfth century Tudela, enabling him to embark on a life of itinerant scholarship.<sup>28</sup>

This tradition of instruction in the liberal arts and knowledge of not only Hebrew and Castilian but also Arabic must have been important in equipping the men who could take on heavy responsibilities at court. Not infrequently, high positions in the royal administration were occupied by members of the same family. An example of this is seen in the case of Zag de la Maleha, described in the previous chapter. He was the son of Alfonso's *almoxarife* Mair ibn Xuxen and also brother of Yuçef ibn Xuxen as well as brother-in-law of another tax farmer, Abraham Abenxuxen. Zag and Yuçef had collaborated in the *arrendamiento* of 1276 described earlier, and Abraham went on to be *almoxarife* of queen María de Molina.<sup>29</sup> It seems likely that all would have benefited from the same broad education afforded to sons of wealthy and literate members of the Jewish community.

This unique secular education in Iberia has, however, been thought by some historians to have introduced the seeds of discord, even of apostasy, into the community. An acrimonious split developed from the twelfth through thirteenth centuries between the advocates of 'Greek wisdom', the followers of the teachings of Maimonides, and their conservative opponents. The philosophical questioning of their religion by 'highly cultured aristocrats' Baer believed, led to an Averroistic outlook and ultimately to betrayal of faith in the later fourteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: London, 2007), vol. 6, p. 173

<sup>28</sup> Grabois, 'Écoles', p. 940 and Michael Friedländer, *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra* (London: Society of Hebrew literature, 1873), pp. ix-xxvii.

<sup>29</sup> See chapter I, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 1, p.240; Grabois, 'Écoles', who is doubtful of the seriousness of this split which he says was resolved preserving communal unity, p. 962. This issue is further examined later in this dissertation, chapter V.

In the fourteenth century, promotion of the learning of law and letters, especially by Alfonso XI, increasingly led to the involvement of Christian *letrados* at all levels of the administration. Many of these were laymen or else minor clerics trained in the liberal arts in the new universities, providing skills needed for effective government.<sup>31</sup> Later in the century, they would increasingly supersede the necessity for the employment of Jews at the court, though never entirely abolishing it.

### The social and political crises of the early fourteenth century

The lives of individual Jewish *privados* should be viewed in the context of the social upheaval of the first half of the fourteenth-century. Attacks on them were rooted less in religious hatred and more in political tension and social unrest.

The crisis in agriculture that followed the reconquest has already been discussed in the previous chapter. At the end of the thirteenth and in the early fourteenth century, the unrest was exacerbated by two long periods of regency during royal minorities. This resulted in a change in the social fabric and eventually in the acquisition by Castile of a more modern and effective administration under Alfonso XI.<sup>32</sup> At a time of monetary devaluation and inflation there was a need for an effective management of royal finances, and this provided openings for skilled administrators, several Jews among them.

In understanding how Jews managed to continue in such prominent positions at the court, the growing importance of an emerging 'middle class' of townfolk should be taken into account. The thirteenth and fourteenth-century records repeatedly show how vocally the representatives of the towns expressed their opposition to Jewish presence at court. It also reveals, however, a significant class discontent that was directed at all outside interference in local affairs. In many cases, opposition to

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<sup>31</sup> Moxo, 'La promoción política'; José Antonio Maravall, 'Los "hombres de saber" o letrados y la formación de su conciencia estamental' in *Estudios de historia del pensamiento Español* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1973), p. 335-390, especially at p. 381.

<sup>32</sup> For which see Teofilo Ruiz, 'Expansion et changement: la conquête de Séville et la société Castillane (1248-1350)', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 3 (1979), pp. 548-565; Carlos Estepa, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power in Castile under Alfonso XI', in Isabel Alfonso Antón, Hugh Kennedy, Julio Escalona (eds.), *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimacy in Medieval Societies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 179-222; Salvador de Moxo, 'La sociedad política castellana en la época de Alfonso XI', *Cuadernos de historia: anexos de la revista Hispania*, 6 (1975), pp. 187-326.

authority was expressed equally against Jew and cleric as well as against the rapacious nobility.

Into this social landscape emerged a new group, the non-noble knights (*caballeros villanos*). These were townsmen without land, but possessing a horse and weapons of war, who received a stipend (*soldada*) from the Crown and who were exempt from the head tax (*pecho*). The privileges granted to the non-noble *caballeros* by the monarchy increased considerably over the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were an essential element in the defence of the realm against the constant threat of the Muslims from the south but also served royal interests in the assemblies, as a counterweight to the interests of the landed nobility.<sup>33</sup>

References to the *caballeros* and to the *omes buenos* (burghers) are found throughout the recorded proceedings of the Cortes. They were the representatives (*procuradores*) of the municipalities at these assemblies called by the King. The burghers paid the *pecho* tax and their resentment against those who were exempt, such as the *caballeros*, magnates and nobles, was repeatedly voiced in the assemblies. The diminished authority of the Crown during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI allowed hostility between the *caballeros* and the tax-paying townfolk (*pecheros*) to erupt into frequent violent clashes that necessitated armed intervention by the Crown.<sup>34</sup>

Such urban disturbances make the absence of recorded violence against the Jews all the more remarkable. Their prominence in fiscal administration throughout this period, together with their role as money-lenders in the local communities, could have made them targets for popular anger. Anti-Jewish sentiment was occasionally evident but, as will be shown, it was expressed mainly as criticism of prominent Jews in positions of authority.<sup>35</sup> Protest against Jews was limited to regular petitions of the *procuradores* to the Cortes for the dismissal of Jewish officers and for relief from debt

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<sup>33</sup> Ruiz, 'The Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities', pp. 3-32.

<sup>34</sup> Ruiz, 'Expansion et Changement', p.559; María del Carmen Carlé, 'Tensiones y revueltas urbanas en León y Castilla (siglos XIII-XIV)', *Anuario del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*, 8 (1965), pp. 325-49.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341; Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución*, pp. 207-225; Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Los conflictos sociales en el reino de Castilla en los siglos XIV y XV* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1979).



to Jewish creditors. Anti-Jewish sentiment throughout this period seems to have remained latent and free of violence, at least until the Trastámaran rebellion.<sup>36</sup>

### A dangerous patronage: Abraham el Barchilón and the Conde de Haro

The career of a Jewish *privado* appointed by Sancho IV at the end of the thirteenth century, illustrates both the power and the dangers inherent for these men in noble patronage. The King appointed Abraham el Barchilón as *arrendador* (tax farmer) in 1287 on the recommendation of his counsellors. His service, which spanned at least seven years, also shows how the King's concern for the exercise of authority over his lands took priority over appeasement of his dissenting Cortes. Unlike his predecessor Zag de la Maleha, Barchilón survived as a valued servant of the King, despite the disgrace and death of his noble patron and the objections of the Cortes.

The lengthy text of the privilege awarded to El Barchilón makes clear Sancho's aims. It also supports the contention of Spanish historian, Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, that he had become a surrogate in the power struggle between two powerful noble houses, those of Haro and Lara. In 1278, the succession controversy between the Infante Sancho and his father resulted in the flight of Alfonso's presumptive heir, his grandson Alfonso de la Cerda, to France. There he was joined by the brothers Nuño González and Juan Nuñez de Lara who were bitter opponents of the house of Haro and opposed to Sancho's accession to the throne.<sup>37</sup> Sancho became increasingly reliant upon the Laras' rival, the Conde Lope Díaz de Haro who had supported him in his rebellion against his father in 1282.<sup>38</sup>

The published version of the *cuaderno* issued to Barchilón at Burgos 1 June 1287 lacks its first folio, but indicates the recommendation that Sancho had received from Lope Díaz de Haro and others:

On advice of the Infante Don Juan my brother, of Don Lope de Haro and Don Diego López de Salzedo.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución*, p. 207.

<sup>37</sup> Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla* (Madrid: 1922), vol 1, pp. 167, n.1, p. 144.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Macdonald, 'Law and Politics: Alfonso's Program of Political Reform' in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned*, pp. 192-199; O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 393.

<sup>39</sup> Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol.1, p. CLXXXV: 'con conseio del Inffante don ihoan mjo hermano, de Don lop díaz de Haro et de don diego López de Salzedo'.

The Infante Juan was the King's brother and Lope Díaz was Juan's father-in-law. Ballesteros was clear that this appointment was a cunning ploy by the Conde to arrogate powers to himself through his surrogate with a view to the eventual succession of his son in law.<sup>40</sup>

The lengthy letter of privilege to the Jewish *arrendador* included a large number of concessions. The right to mint new gold coin for a period of two years in the whole kingdom fulfilled a promise the King had previously made as an encouragement to his nobles when he was still Infante.<sup>41</sup> The debasement of the coinage under his father was unpopular and Sancho had repeatedly promised to provide new money at the Cortes at Palencia (1286) and at Haro (1288). He further promised that the value of his new coinage would remain stable throughout his lifetime.<sup>42</sup>

Ballesteros considered this concession to a Jew as dangerous to both King and country. Her view reflects a suspicion of Barchilón's integrity, perhaps based upon the common complaints about Jewish *privados* by the *procuradores* in the records of the Cortes.<sup>43</sup> There were five royal mints in the recently united kingdoms of León and Castile, Seville being one of the most important.<sup>44</sup> The charter does not indicate whether his privilege extended to all five mints or just to the one. Control of the mint was certainly a position that could cause damage to the economy if abused. Yet we know that Barchilón was still active in the King's service in 1294; his long service suggests both honesty and effectiveness in the fulfilment of his duties.<sup>45</sup>

The *arrendador* was charged with the collection of the taxes on pasturage, that of the *aljamas*, the revenues of the chancellery and the dues and fines on forbidden exports. The terms of the contract differed little from those granted to Zag de la Maleha by Alfonso ten years earlier. Yet one clause reveals Sancho's centralising

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>41</sup> *MHE*, 1851, vol.2, CCIX, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup> *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla, por la Real Academia de la historia* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1861), vol. 1, hereafter *Cortes*: XVII, Haro, 1288, 3, p. 96.

<sup>43</sup> Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol.1, p. 144.

<sup>44</sup> Miguel Crusafont i Sabater, Anna Balaguer, Philip Grierson, *Medieval European Coinage: With a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, vol. 6, *The Iberian Peninsula* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 203

<sup>45</sup> Jose Nieto Soria, 'Los judíos de Toledo en sus relaciones financieras con la monarquía y la iglesia (1252-1312) (Conclusión)', *Sefarad*, 42 (1982), doc.5, p. 97.

intent. The King wished for Barchilón to oversee the replacement of local tax officials (*entregadores*) by men of his own court:

For I ordain that he appoint good men of my own household as *entregadores* and that they swear to do justly.<sup>46</sup>

His command was, however, accompanied by a warning:

I also firmly order that no one dare to act contrary in any way whatsoever to what I command, nor to hinder don Abraham nor those who help him with the revenue collection. Those who do so incur my anger.<sup>47</sup>

The reactions of the nobles and other representatives in the Cortes should be seen in the light of this centralising challenge to their power rather than solely as antagonism to the *arrendador* as a Jew, even though he was often referred to as such.

Of equal importance was the King's growing realisation of the threat that the Conde represented to his authority. The sources support Ballesteros' claim that Lope Díaz used Barchilón as a pawn in his struggle to gain control over the monarch.<sup>48</sup> The Chronicle records that in 1286 Díaz had petitioned Sancho for the honour of Conde de Vizcaya and with it, the gift of office of *mayordomo* (chief steward). In return:

He would sort out the salaries of the knights and would ensure peace in all his kingdom and furthermore would grow his exchequer year upon year.<sup>49</sup>

His advice to Sancho to appoint Barchilón, may be viewed as a sensible move in light of this vow to the King. Yet suspicion of the newly elevated Conde was growing within the court and among his noble rivals. Having forged a close link with Juan the King's brother through the marriage of his daughter to the Infante, he was perceived as

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<sup>46</sup> Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol.1, p. CLXXXVIII (1287): 'Et otorgo quel mande dar omnes buenos por entregadores et que sean de mi casa, et que juren en mi mano que lo fagan bien et derecha mente'.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: Et defiende firma miente que ninguno sea osado de yr contra esto que yo mando en ninguna manera, nin delo embargar adon abraham, nin a aquellos que lo ovieren a Recabdar por el. Ca quales quier que lo fiziessen, pesar mye.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>49</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Don Sancho Cuarto*, III, p. 74: 'que el ordenaria toda la caballeria commo oviesen sus soldadas e que faria que toda la su tierra vivese en paz e en sosiego e demás desto que el faria que acrecentase en tesoro el Rey muy grand algo de cada año'.

a potential threat by the queen. María de Molina was fearful of the influence the Conde had upon her husband and her family:

She ..... perceived how the King was coming under the power of the Conde and of his *privados* and because she knew of all that he was doing that was dishonouring the King and damaging her and her sons.<sup>50</sup>

The record for 1287 also relates the concerns of the nobles and magnates that:

The contract that the Conde had procured he had made for his own great benefit and to the detriment of everybody else, and also greatly to diminish the King's power and lordship.<sup>51</sup>

Over the following year, the relations between Lope Díaz and the King deteriorated. This was caused in part by the Conde's desire to persuade the King to an alliance with Aragon in opposition to one with France, as counselled by his rival Álvaro Núñez de Lara.<sup>52</sup> Sancho decided not to heed the Conde's advice and his suspicion was reinforced by a warning he received from his ally, King Dinis of Portugal, during their joint siege of Arronches. Dinis warned Sancho that when he died, his son Fernando may not succeed him, but rather the Infante Juan, who was the Conde's son in law. Mindful of the danger to his kingdom, the King sought ways to rid himself of Lope Díaz.<sup>53</sup>

The association of Barchilón with his ambitious and contentious patron is made clear from the contemporary reference to him as '*el judío del Conde*'. Yet critical accounts of the Conde in the chronicle do not impute malicious or self-serving motives to his *arrendador* nor do they condemn the latter as a Jew. A rivalry arose between Barchilón and another Jewish *arrendador*, Samuel de Bilforado, named in the chronicle as the *judío del rey*.<sup>54</sup> The two rivals appealed to the Bishop of Astorga for the grant of a royal privilege whereupon the Bishop awarded it to Samuel.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75: 'E la Reina .....veia commo el Rey andava en poder del Conde e de aquellos suas privados, magüer que sabía ella de todas estas cosas por que el Conde lo facia, e que era amenguamiento del Rey e daño della e de sus hijos'.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 'El ordenamiento que que el Conde avia fecho que lo ficiera á gran pro de sí mesmo e á gran daño de todos ellos, a á grand menguamiento del poderío del Rey e de su señorío'.

<sup>52</sup> O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 393.

<sup>53</sup> Rosell, *Don Sancho Cuarto*, IV, p. 76.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Barchilón then complained to his patron:

Saying such things to him that he became so enraged with the Bishop that he the Conde went to confront the Bishop ..... and in a great rage he gravely insulted the bishop.<sup>55</sup>

Such a rivalry between Jewish *privados* would become damaging later, as will be shown in the case of the rival *almoxarifes* of Alfonso XI. Confrontations, such as that with the bishop, brought the Jews perilously close to the factionalism of the court. The Conde's angry outburst resulted directly from Barchilón's report to him. It supports a view that Díaz truly saw him as his surrogate in his ambitions to control or even to supplant Sancho with his royal companion, the Infante Juan. Sancho had further angered Lope Díaz and Juan by favouring the alliance with France. The King confronted the two of them at Alfaro in June 1288 and demanded that the Conde give up his castles. When this request was angrily refused, the King killed Lope Díaz and imprisoned the Infante.<sup>56</sup>

This reverse, occurring to a man who had sponsored Barchilón's position at the court and with whose ambitions he was identified, could have cost the *privado* his office or even his life. Yet there is no indication that Barchilón suffered as a consequence. Perhaps Sancho was mindful of Alfonso X's retribution a decade earlier on Zag de la Maleha because of his own rebellion against his father.<sup>57</sup> It is more likely that el Barchilón was just too valuable to the King summarily to be lost.

### Land, revenue and the alienation of royal estates

Soon after Barchilón's appointment, the King revoked a significant part of his commission. The sources show that the alienation of royal lands, a matter of great concern to Sancho and to all subsequent Castilian monarchs, was at the heart of the matter. Alienation of royal lands either to lords (*señoríos*) or to the Church (*abadengos*) was addressed in the Cortes at Haro in 1286, even before Barchilón's appointment.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 'el judío del Conde fuese para el Conde e dijole muchas razones e tantas palabras que le metió en saña contra el Obispo en guisa que el Conde se ovo á mover de ir á la posada del Obispo .... e con grand saña que ovo con el denostólo de denuestos malos e feos'. See also Ballesteros, vol.1, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol.1, p. 165.

<sup>56</sup> Rosell, *Don Sancho Cuarto*, V, p. 79.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter I, p. 36.

Such grants resulted in loss of income to the treasury and repeated attempts were made in charters and ordinances of the Cortes to reclaim the lands (*bienes raíces*) for the Crown.<sup>58</sup> The Jewish *arrendadores* were commonly charged with this mission as was the case in a charter of 1286 that recorded the mandate given to Abraham Abenxuxen, the *almoxarife* of Sancho's queen, María de Molina. He was to collect from the Archbishop of Santiago:

All those revenues due from estates that had passed over to the magnates, the knights, the Orders, the *abadengos*, the clerics and others and in whatever manner.<sup>59</sup>

Abenxuxen is interesting firstly because, as son-in-law of the *almoxarife* Meir Abenxuxen (whose name he adopted) he illustrates the familial nature of such appointments. Secondly, he was brother-in-law and associate of Zag de la Maleha and appeared in the *cuaderno* of 1276 discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>60</sup> Unaffected by Zag's execution, his ability to survive and to continue in his profession of *arrendador* testifies to his value to the Crown. His length of service is also noteworthy: his name appears in letters as late as 1294, together with those of three other Jewish officials, Mose Falcón, Todros el Levi and Abraham el Barchilón.<sup>61</sup>

Although the disgrace and death of the Conde did not seem to affect the fortunes of his protégée or that of other Jews at court, Sancho conceded in the Cortes of 1288 that no Jews would, in future, be either a collector or a farmer of the King's taxes.<sup>62</sup> Such a categorical statement by the Crown to exclude Jews from the court occurred repeatedly over the next half-century but was hardly ever implemented. Repeated royal promises about the Jews, since they were mostly not kept, seem to say more about the attitude of the estates to the economic situation than it does about a genuine expression of royal intent. As we have seen, the King was petitioned again over this in the Cortes of 1295 and his son Fernando's response in 1302 to the same demand explains the royal expediency of ignoring it. He reminded his petitioners of

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<sup>58</sup> *Cortes*, vol 1, XVII, Haro, 1286, 11, p. 98 and see Ladero Quesada., 'Las transformaciones', p. 382.

<sup>59</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol. 2, p.73, S.183 (1286): 'en como mandava el Rey recabdar el regalengo e las heredades pecheras que pasavan a los ricos omnes e los cavalleros e a las ordenes e a los abadengos e a los clérigos de religión..... en qual guisa quier'.

<sup>60</sup> See also Nieto Soria., 'Los judíos de Toledo (*conclusión*)', p. 88, n.68.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1982, doc. 5, p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> *Cortes*, vol 1, Haro, 1288, XVIII, 21, p. 104.

the state of his revenues and the security of his frontiers. He needed to consider both and implied that these priorities would take precedence over their complaint.<sup>63</sup>

Subsequent grants to Barchilón, either alone or together with other Jewish officers, confirm his continuing presence at court and the amount of revenue he collected. In December 1288 he received several commissions in a *cuaderno*, sealed by the King and co-signed by the *arrendador* himself in Hebrew. The commissions he was given included all of the revenues of Murcia (140,000 mrs.), of the chancellery (80,000 mrs.), of gambling houses (*tafurerías*) together with the debt incomes of the Jews and Muslims (100,000 mrs.), of the export of forbidden goods (*cosas vedadas*, 100,000 mr.) and of the *pesquisas* of the frontier (80,000 mrs.) with a few smaller items totalling a total sum of 547,000 *maravedís* of the *moneda blanca* over a two year period.<sup>64</sup>

Collaboration between Jewish *arrendadores* was not uncommon and often occurred between members of the same family. It is harder to explain when apparently unrelated individuals are mentioned in the same charter. In 1290 the King was petitioned by his chancellor, the Archbishop Gonzalo, over the impounding of property in the archdeaconry of Talavera. The intended *pesquisa* and seizure of royal lands (*realengo*) deemed to have been appropriated as church land (*abadengo*) were overseen by Barchilón and by a colleague, Todros el Levi. It is unknown whether such collaboration was a purely commercial enterprise or whether bonds of friendship or kinship ties were involved. In this case, Sancho decided in favour of the clerics though with a caveat: 'other than those (lands) that the Orders and the Church purchased in which I may lose my rights'.<sup>65</sup>

A document of 1294 shows yet more extensive collaboration in the rendering of accounts by these men, joined by both Abenxuxen and Mose Falcón.<sup>66</sup> The account listed revenues collected to a total of 116,990 mrs. of which 25,000 were from the *aljamas* though this constituted only one quarter of the 100,000 that were owing. It

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<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 38.

<sup>64</sup> Pilar León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1979), vol 1, doc 12, p. 380. For debt income (*entregas de los judíos*) see chapter III of this dissertation.

<sup>65</sup> Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol.3, doc. 319 (1290), p. CCI 'salvo ende sobre aquellos que las órdenes o la iglesia compraron de que yo pierda mio derecho'; Nieto Soria., 'Los judíos De Toledo (*conclusión*)', p. 83.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 5, p. 97 (AHN, 985B, f.81v).

also records the sum collected by the *arrendador* don Samuel, *almoxarife* of the infante don Fernando. This is the same don Samuel de Bilforado whose quarrel with Barchilón had been arbitrated by the Bishop of Astorga. Samuel later obtained more extensive powers under his patron once he was King, but his unpopularity and dismal fate would reflect a less favourable social climate for the Jews at the start of the fourteenth century.

### Regency – a power vacuum

The social changes evident in Castile at the turn of the fourteenth century were accelerated by the weakness of central authority during the regencies of 1295-1301 and 1312-1325. The tensions this political situation generated in the urban environment sometimes erupted into violence and were accompanied by mounting calls in the Cortes for the dismissal of Jewish *privados* and for restrictions on Jewish lending.<sup>67</sup> Examination of the many complaints and ordinances from this period permits a re-assessment of the seeming paradox of Jewish persistence as a stable and productive entity in the midst of civil strife.

The queen mother, María de Molina, acted as regent during her son Fernando's minority and again for a large part of that of her grandson, Alfonso XI. She saw the burghers as potential allies in defence of her son and later her grandson against the aspirations of the Infante Juan and his allies in Aragon and Portugal.<sup>68</sup> The increasing influence of representatives of the municipalities in the Cortes (the *procuradores*) may be seen during the period of Fernando's regency and throughout his reign. Their demands became particularly strident during the second minority, that of Alfonso XI. Their voice is detectable in the many petitions that railed against the offices and practices of the King's Jews.

Yet these petitions did not only single out the Jews. They were equally directed at the ravages caused by the nobles and the tax exemptions of so many *privados* and *ricos hombres* to the detriment of the inhabitants (*vecinos*) who bore the main fiscal

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<sup>67</sup> The urban violence of the early fourteenth-century is further considered in chapter IV of this dissertation.

<sup>68</sup> O'Callaghan. *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 401. There was a serious risk during Fernando's minority of a rupture of the union of Castile and León.



burden. Also at this Cortes, the *procuradores* complained about deceitful practices of the Jews which harmed Christians:

Because of the many deceptions practised by the Jews through their Jewish documents (*cartas judiegas*) and the testimonies they make amongst themselves that seize the debts owed by the Christians, that such documents and testimonies should not have validity in the seizure of Christian debt but only if the document is prepared by a Christian public scribe.<sup>69</sup>

The term *cartas judiegas* merits consideration. It may mean that such documents were actually written in Hebrew.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps some contracts of loans or pledges of goods to Christians might have been written exclusively in Hebrew but, if so, it has not been documented hitherto. This complaint shows a level of suspicion on the part of Christian debtors which was aggravated by the drawing up of documents that they could not comprehend. The validity of contracts and the demand for Christian notarisation was mentioned elsewhere even in 1293 during Sancho's reign. Although there was no mention there of *cartas judiegas*, the ordinance stated that because of frauds and deceits practised by Jews and Moors the creditor must provide proof (*manifiestos*) of all loans and pledges made.<sup>71</sup>

More trusting commercial interactions between Christians and Jews can be observed in the case of small loans. If the debt owed was small, less than eight *maravedís*, no oath or witness was required and the lender needed only to be convinced of the integrity of the borrower:

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<sup>69</sup> *Cortes*, vol. 1, Palencia, 1313, XXXVII, p. 241: 26, and 28, 'Otro si nos pidieron que por muchos engaños que les ffazian los judíos por cartas judiegas e por testimonios que ffazian enter ssi que enbargan las debdas que deuen a los christianos, que tales cartas nin tales testimonios commo estos, que non ualan nin enbarguen al christiano ssus debdas ssaluo ssi ffuere la carta de escribiuano publico christiano.'

<sup>70</sup> For which see Javier Castaño, 'Los documentos hebreos de León en su contexto prenotarial', in Elena Romero (ed.), *Judaísmo hispano: estudios en memoria de José Luis Lacave Riaño* (Madrid, CSIC, 2002), pp. 459-481.

<sup>71</sup> *Cortes*, vol. 1, Valladolid, 1293, XX, 24, p. 128: 'por que se fazian muchas encubiertas de furtos e en otra manera por que los christianos pierden su derecho, e pedian que los iudíos e los moros fuesen tenudos de dar manifiestos a aquellos gelos enpennaron'.

Jews may provide loans up to a value of eight *maravedís* without an oath and without witnesses to a man or woman of good standing and above suspicion.<sup>72</sup>

When a dispute arose over such small loans, the Jew was to swear on the Torah in the synagogue to the truth of the loan: *iure en su sinagoga sobre la tora aquella iura que nos mandamus* and should then receive the debt.<sup>73</sup> The oath to be taken by the Jew was ordained by the King and there is an even-handedness in this legislation that belies a view that the Jew was always disadvantaged in dealings with Christians.

In the case of larger debts, however, the need for greater transparency is made clear:

We command that a Jew who lends more than eight *maravedís* does so before witnesses and that the Jew and the Christian swear by the hand of a notary.<sup>74</sup>

At this Cortes the rate of interest on loans was set at *tres por quarto al anno* as it had been in the time of Alfonso X (equivalent to 33%) and the place of the transaction and the names of the bondsmen were to be recorded.

For the first time, limits were set on ownership of land by Jews.<sup>75</sup>

That neither Jews nor Moors acquire land from Christians through purchase or resolution of debt or in any other way. Because of this a great part of our income has been ruined and we lose our right.<sup>76</sup>

The ordinance goes on to say, however, that if royal lands have been acquired by Jews through settlement of debt they must sell or otherwise the land would revert to the Crown. There is no reason to believe that this command reflected anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim sentiment. More likely, this was an economic imperative since Jews paid a

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*,: ‘los iudíos puedan dar sobre pennos fasta ocho mr. sin iura e sin testigos a omme bono o muger bona que parezca sin sospecha’.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘el judio que diere dineros sobre pennos de ocho mr. arriba, tómelos ante testigos e iure el christiano e el judio en mano del notario’.

<sup>75</sup> Monsalvo Antón. *Teoría y evolución*, p. 218.

<sup>76</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Valladolid, 1293, XIX. 26, p. 118: ‘que los iudeos e los moros non oviessen los heredamientos de los christianos por compra non por entrega nin en otra manera, que por esto se astragava muy grand pieça delos nuestros pechos’.

global tax to the Crown through the *aljama* rather than paying land rent. The intention was that royal revenue specifically relating to land possession should not be lost.<sup>77</sup>

It would be too simplistic to deduce a high level of religious antagonism from restrictive legislation over land and the notarisation of loans. On the contrary, trust between individuals is demonstrated by some of the pronouncements of the Cortes already cited and economic expediency underlay many royal commands over land acquisition. However, the matter of local accountability continued to be of prime importance to the municipalities. In this they were in opposition to the demands of the Crown already referred to.<sup>78</sup> The *procuradores* petitioned that officials should not be from among the King's own men, but rather that local men be preferred. But it was not only Jews they objected to. Clerics too were deemed unsuitable as was acknowledged by the regent, Infante Felipe, in an ordinance of the Cortes of 1322:

That there be no clerical administrator nor Jew or other such and that the clerics and the Jews be thrown out.<sup>79</sup>

The willingness of the King or of his regents to override local concerns in this matter was soon manifested by Felipe. Just three years later he would renege on his promise with his recommendation to the King of the Jewish *almoxarife*, Juçaf de Écija.

### The rebuff of ecclesiastical censure

During the minority of Alfonso XI, there was mounting ecclesiastical pressure on the court to curtail not just Jewish privilege, but also many of the freedoms exercised by the Jewish community. Despite the absence of a strong King upon which Jews could rely for their protection, few of these pressures are seen to have been met by the King, whether as a minor or later on attaining his majority. The continuing value to Castile of its Jews, the preoccupation of the Crown with its ever-present military conflict with the Muslims in the South and the extreme nature of the Church's demands may all have mitigated the effects of their edicts.

The Council of Zamora issued its anti-Jewish decrees in 1313, perhaps expecting them to have greater impact on the weakened central authority of the

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<sup>77</sup> José Martín Rodríguez, *La Península en la Edad Media* (Barcelona: Editorial Teide, 1976), p. 473.

<sup>78</sup> See earlier p. 51, n.46 and chapter I, p. 37, n.72 of this dissertation.

<sup>79</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Valladolid, 1322, XLIII, 6, p. 338: 'que non aya y officio clérigo nin judío nin otro por ellos e que tire los clérigos que agora y andan e los judios'.

regents. The deliberations of Zamora were themselves in accordance with those of the General Council of Vienne held in 1311. That Council had been convened by Pope Clement V and was confirmed after his death by John XXII. It reiterated many of the recommendations of the Lateran councils of previous centuries.<sup>80</sup> Following Zamora, two sessions of the Cortes were held in Palencia in 1313 before the regents María de Molina and the Infantes don Juan and don Pedro. Though some of the ordinances made there reflected a new and repressive attitude to Jews, they fell far short of the extensive measures that had been adopted earlier in France and in England.

A few of Zamora's discriminatory decrees were adopted by the Cortes and this has been seen by Suárez Fernández as a turning point in relations between the Crown and the Jews. In his view, new legislation destroyed the privileges that had hitherto sheltered the *aljamas*.<sup>81</sup> For Amador de los Ríos this outpouring of oppressive edicts rivalled that of the Visigothic era of Sisebut. He also suggested that in its implementation of Vienne the bishops overstepped the mark. All they achieved, he believed, was to arouse popular anger against the Jews whilst the King and his court continued in their dependence upon them.<sup>82</sup> Valdeón Baruque agreed that the extremity of the measures was reason enough for their lack of implementation, but that the decrees did accelerate the development of popular anti-Judaism.<sup>83</sup> All such historical comment assumes, however, a wide impact of the ecclesiastical decrees, a claim hard to prove. Documentary evidence for a general upsurge in anti-Jewish sentiment following issue of the decrees is lacking. The constitution, in accordance with Clementine ordinances was:

Directed towards the Jews in order to constrain and prevent their evil deeds and presumptions which they inflict on the Christians.<sup>84</sup>

In the Cortes of Palencia, all Jews were commanded to wear the yellow circular badge on front and back (*roella*) 'as they do in France' (*ssegunt lo trayan en Francia*) and

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<sup>80</sup> 'Ordenamiento del concilio provincial de Zamora', in José Amador de los Ríos, *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal 1875* (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1984), vol. 2, p. 561, henceforth Zamora.

<sup>81</sup> Luis Suárez Fernández, *Judíos españoles en la Edad Media* (Madrid: 1980). 'it signalled a new age, unfavourable to the Jews in their relations with Christian society', p. 147.

<sup>82</sup> Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, p. 118.

<sup>83</sup> Valdeón Baruque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> *Zamora*, p. 562: 'fechas contra los dichos judíos para constrennir e vidar sus malicias e las sus presunciones con que se avuelven contra los cristianos'.

this in accordance with the petition of the *caballeros* and *ommes buenos*.<sup>85</sup> The reference in the Zamora document (edict VII) is: ‘*segunt diçe el derecho et se guarda en otras provinçias*’ probably in reference to the dress code already prevalent in Aragon, though only loosely implemented there.<sup>86</sup> Other decrees also echo those of the Zamora council. No Christian woman should live with or be a nurse to Jewish (or Muslim) households, the punishment of lashes being that accorded by their own law.<sup>87</sup>

The sharpest comment of the council was reserved for the Jewish privileges awarded by the Crown and the secular elite. The prohibition of Jews exercising authority over Christians had a long tradition last expressed a generation earlier in Castile, in the papal *gravamina*.<sup>88</sup> It also fitted the economic and social objections of the *procuradores* and inevitably was therefore incorporated in the ordinances of the Cortes assembled by María de Molina.<sup>89</sup> Other items that preoccupied the bishops were, however, ignored by the Cortes, such as an insistence on returning newly built synagogues to their original condition or the prohibition of social intercourse between Jews and Christians ‘so that those with little understanding of the faith might not fall into error’.<sup>90</sup>

Other edicts were more ambivalent. Both Ríos and subsequent authors have interpreted edict VIII as a prohibition of Jewish physicians treating Christians ‘*non usen de plática con los christianos, por letrados nin provados que sean*’.<sup>91</sup> This may, however, be a misinterpretation. The word *plática* here means conversation or debate and should be interpreted as prohibition of theological discussion of Jews with Christians of unproven scholarship. It reflects a concern about ‘judaizing’ and reveals the underlying anxiety about the threat to Church and the faith posed by the freedoms granted to Jews.

Edict XII demanded a total prohibition of all usury:

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<sup>85</sup> *Cortes*, Palencia, 1313, XXXVI, 26, p. 227.

<sup>86</sup> Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century* (New York: Hermon Press, 1966), p. 157; Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, p. 156.

<sup>87</sup> *Cortes*, Palencia, 1313, XXXVII, 42, p. 244, Zamora, V.

<sup>88</sup> See earlier p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Palencia, 1313, XXXVI, 31, p. 230: ‘que non ayamos almozarife judío nin arrendador nin tomador delas cuentas nin pesquiridor nin escriuano nin que aya otro offiçio ninguno en casa de nuestro señor el Rey nin en mi casa en quanto ouier la tutoria’. See earlier p. 43, n.63.

<sup>90</sup> Zamora, III (‘por que non tomen erronia aquellos que poco entienden la Fée’) and XI, p. 564.

<sup>91</sup> Ríos, *Historia*, p. 116, *Zamora*, VIII.

They shall not use contracts (loans) against Christians nor demand or obtain anything from them as it is forbidden by the constitution of Pope Clement V.<sup>92</sup>

This ban did not find its way into legislation. On the contrary, in the last years of the regency at the Cortes of Valladolid (1322), the Crown set out conditions for repayments to Jewish debtors:

I command that no debtor be excused his payment to the Jews because of a Bull or decretal of the Pope.<sup>93</sup>

This royal response, in its rejection of a ban on usury, highlights a fundamental difference in the attitude to the Jews to that shown by Edward 1 of England in his Statute of the Jews of 1275.<sup>94</sup> The rejection of papal influence on financial matters demonstrates well how the Crown of Castile, even during the King's minority, asserted its independence from the Church. Ecclesiastical concern about the corruption of Christians by interactions with Jews was not shared by the King or his regents and this was just as had been the case with Sancho's disregard of Clement V's *gravamina* discussed earlier in the chapter.<sup>95</sup>

There was no sign in Castile of the Kings wishing to appear 'rex Christianissimus' like their northern neighbours, nor of a yearning to be a spiritual Israel.<sup>96</sup> The confrontation with the Muslims on the borders and the unfinished business of Castile's own crusade against the infidel threat from North Africa must have given its rulers sufficient sense of a Christian mission. There was no reason to purge their kingdom of Jews. Besides, Castile's economy was backward and in serious need of an effective system for revenue collection. Until it was able to provide trained Christian *letrados* to take on these tasks, Castile still needed its Jews.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, and Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, p. 116: 'non usen de cartas contra los christianos nin gelas demanded nin logren otra cosa por ellas, ca es vedado por la constitucion de Clemente Papa Quinto'

<sup>93</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Valladolid, 1322, XLIII, 57, p 356: 'mando que ninguno de los debdores non sse escusse de pagar a los judíos ssus debdas por bulla nin por decretal del Papa'

<sup>94</sup> See earlier p. 42 and n.6.

<sup>95</sup> See earlier p. 44.

<sup>96</sup> Strayer, 'France: The Holy Land', p.15.

## Two Jewish *privados* of Alfonso XI in parallel narratives

Evidence for Jewish involvement in affairs of the Crown in the first half of the fourteenth century derives almost entirely from Christian sources. An alternative narrative is however provided by the history written by a Jewish scholar from Castile, Solomon ibn Verga, first published in 1550.<sup>97</sup> Together with contemporary Hebrew poetry, it provides a valuable Jewish perspective of the reign of Alfonso XI.

At the Cortes of 1322 at Valladolid, the Infante Felipe, the new regent and uncle of the young King, presented himself as one who would rectify the disorder left by the King's previous tutors. Among his reforms of the administration he specified the ejection of not just the Jews but also of the clerics.<sup>98</sup> The way this measure was presented by Felipe indicates that, for the *procuradores*, it was the 'foreignness' and unaccountability of these individuals that they rejected and not the Jews *per se*. It was so important that Felipe promised that:

Should I not wish to eject these clerics and Jews from the chancellery as stated above, then I will no longer serve you (i.e the King) as tutor.<sup>99</sup>

Felipe's true intentions were quite different. By 1325, as Alfonso attained his majority, Felipe advised him to empower a Jew with the highest powers in his household. The *privado* had almost certainly already been in Felipe's service around the time he had made his promise to the *procuradores*:

And at that time it was customary in the household of the kings of Castile to have Jewish almozarifes, and thus and also because he had been asked by his uncle Don Felipe, he (i.e the king) took as almozarife a Jew called don Juçaf de Écija who had ..... great power in the kingdom.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Solomon ibn Verga, *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*, Isaac Baer, Ben Zion Dinur (eds.) (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik, 1947), pp. 52-55 (Hebrew).

<sup>98</sup> See earlier p. 59, n.79.

<sup>99</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Valladolid, 1322, XLIII, 6, p. 339: 'Si yo non quisiere tirar los officios.... a los clérigos e a los judíos que andan en la chancelleria.....que non ssea mas vuestro tutor.

<sup>100</sup> Diego Catalán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977) LI (1325), p. 376: 'de luengos tiempos era acostunbrado en las casas de los rreyes de Castilla que avia almozarifes judíos, el rrey por esto, e por rruego del ynfante don Felipe su tio, tomo por almozarife a un judío que dexian don Juçaf de Écija que ovo...gran poder en el rreyno'.

Moxo's view of Felipe is of a valiant but impetuous and indecisive man with little idea of government.<sup>101</sup> His duplicity in so advising the King might be consistent with this view but was hardly anything unusual. As Moxo further points out in his study of Alfonso, the young King was to be a true innovator in the organisation of the Castilian administration.<sup>102</sup> Felipe may have been thus emboldened, aware that his nephew would be concerned only for the effective supervision of the economy.

Ballesteros' study of Juçaf of nearly seventy years ago, draws upon chronicle accounts and Baer's descriptions based on the Hebrew literature.<sup>103</sup> Juçaf's full Hebrew name appears as Yosef ben Efraim ben Avi Shabbat ha-Levi in *Shevet Yehuda*, a text composed in late fifteenth century Castile but published a century later. Ibn Verga is perhaps the first true Jewish historian in a modern sense of the term since late antiquity. Until the sixteenth-century, Jewish scholars disdained narrative accounts of their own history. Their preoccupation was with the suffering of their people in a hostile exile and contemporary events were either totally ignored or else viewed exclusively in the light of God's plan and of his testing of his Chosen People.<sup>104</sup>

A number of interesting facts about Juçaf emerge from the *Shevet Yehuda* narrative. There are details of his life and death not mentioned in the Chronicles and striking omissions too, despite ibn Verga's evident access to the Christian accounts. Both accounts agree on the high status and favour accorded to the *almoxarife*. Thus in the Chronicle, Juçaf de Écija:

..... had a great estate of many knights and foot soldiers who were his guards and was a man who had the ear of the King and in whom the King had great trust.<sup>105</sup>

While ibn Verga wrote:

All the King's work he did from beginning to end in righteousness, he was a man of understanding, a musician and very handsome and God

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<sup>101</sup> Moxo, 'La sociedad política castellana', p. 205.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Antonio Ballesteros, 'Don Juçaf de Écija', *Sefarad*, 6 (1946), pp. 253-287; Catalán, *Gran crónica*, cap. LI, p. 376 and *passim*; Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 325.

<sup>104</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), p. 33.

<sup>105</sup> Catalán, *Gran Crónica* 1977, LXXXXIX, p. 441: 'traya gran fazienda de muchos cavalleros y escuderos que le aguardaban e era ome del Consejo del rrey en quien el rrey fazie muy gran fiança'.



was with him ..... He was second in command to the King and great amongst the Jews .... and a chariot was prepared for him and horses and fifty men to run before him.<sup>106</sup>

The Hebrew allusion to Juçaf's comely physical appearance and to his talents, is unusual in Hebrew writing; the last comment is a direct biblical reference to Absalom in the Second Book of Samuel (15.1). His musical talents are corroborated in an affectionate letter from Alfonso IV of Aragon in 1329, requesting that he send musicians to aid his recovery from sickness.<sup>107</sup>

Ibn Verga's account then skips a period of fourteen years leaving out a great deal that is recorded in the chronicle. Although of interest to the historian, much of this is hardly flattering to either Juçaf or his immediate colleagues. According to the Chronicle, in two instances a prominent part in events was taken by scheming women and it is possible that such a narrative would have seemed demeaning to Juçaf who throughout the Hebrew narrative is portrayed in noble even heroic terms.

As had been the case with Barchilón, in the chronicle Juçaf, too, is seen to have been associated with two nobles (*caballeros*) close to the King and who were embroiled in conflict with him.<sup>108</sup> One of these two *caballeros*, Garçi Laso, was later murdered and Juçaf's association with Alvar Nuñez nearly cost him his life whilst on a mission of the King to Valldolid in 1328. The plot against the *almoxarife* set out in detail in the Chronicle and described in Ballesteros' study, was the work of a jealous noblewoman who inflamed the mob with a false rumour about Juçaf's mission. Having been led to believe that he had come not to escort the Infanta Leanor to her brother the King, but rather to marry her off to the much hated Alvar Nuñez, the mob rioted and attempted to capture and kill Juçaf.<sup>109</sup> His salvation was through the rather humiliating expedient of being protected beneath the saddle cloth of the Infanta.<sup>110</sup>

A recurrent theme concerning Jewish *privados* and their closeness to rival factions of the court is evident from this episode. Antagonism and violence against them occurred on account of their financial activities on behalf of the Crown or from

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<sup>106</sup> וכל עבודת המלך הוא יוסף בצדקו מתחלה ועד סוף. נבון דבר ויודע לנגן, וטוב תואר מאוד.... הוא משנה למלך וגדול  
Ibn Verga, Shevet Yehudah, p. 52, L.27

<sup>107</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.1, doc.193, p. 262 (A.C.A. Alfonso III. CRD caja 7, no.918)

<sup>108</sup> Catalán, *Gran Crónica*, LIII, p. 379.

<sup>109</sup> Ballesteros, 'Don Juçaf', p. 260; Catalán, *Gran Crónica* 1977, LXXXIX, p. 441.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*: 'e la ynfanta ..... sallo en su mula, e el judío en pos della a la falda de su pelote'.

the perception (false in Juçaf's case) that they acted on behalf of a nobility known for its greed and rapacity.<sup>111</sup> It is notable that nowhere in the contemporary record are anti-Jewish tropes voiced against Juçaf.

This is not to say that the sometimes devious dealings of the Jewish *privados* went unrecorded by the chronicler, even if Ibn Verga chose to ignore them:

They showed him some claims for damages that Juçaf had inflicted in the land through his office of the revenue collections.<sup>112</sup>

The chronicle claims that on account of the great wealth accumulated by Juçaf, he was later dismissed from the court never again to be admitted to the King's Council.<sup>113</sup>

The record of the rivalry between such officials shows that they were not banished from court. The following year Samuel ibn Wakar, the King's physician, was entrusted by Alfonso with minting a new silver coin, the *marco de la plata*. According to the chronicle, ibn Wakar minted the coin at an inflated value of 120 *maravedís* rather than the 100 *maravedís* demanded by the king. He and the 'other Jews who were with him' by buying up merchandise at high price caused a rise in the cost of living throughout the realm.<sup>114</sup>

When in the same year Ibn Wakar acquired the revenues of the frontier, Juçaf became envious of his rival's advantage and tried to regain the favour of the King by making a competitive bid:

The other Jew Juçaf de Écija,..... seeing what great profit that don Samuel had from those revenues .... in order to have some part of it, and in order once again to have the favour of the king, bid for the revenue collections of the frontier which belonged to that Don Samuel.

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<sup>111</sup> The hatred of the citizens of Valladolid for Núñez was understandable: '*mandaba que talasen las huertas et quemassen los panes de los de la villa que estaban en las eras*', in Valdeón Baroque, *Los conflictos sociales*, p. 62.

<sup>112</sup> Catalán, *Gran Crónica*, CI, 1329, p. 468: '*mostraronlo algunas querellas de daños que don Juçaf su almoraxarife avia fecho en la tierra con el poder de las cosechas*'.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, CIII, 1329, p. 473.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, CXVI, 1330, p. 496.

And don Samuel, seeing this, spoke secretly with the king telling him to cancel these exports with the Moors and he did this in order to damage don Juçaf.<sup>115</sup>

Alfonso, unaware of the damage this could cause to his shaky truce with the Moors, gave his approval.

The omission of these episodes from the later Hebrew narrative by ibn Verga must have been a conscious one, given his description of events that occurred ten years later including the demise of the two *privados*. Yet, as *Shevet Yehuda* portrayed him, Juçaf was not only ‘second to the king’ but also ‘great among the Jews’.<sup>116</sup> After being dismissed from the King’s service he dispensed generously of his wealth to his own community in Écija. A charter, granted in June 1332 in Seville, made a generous bequest to the *aljama*. This document is a translation made in 1399 from Hebrew into the vernacular and certified before witnesses more than 60 years after it was drawn up.<sup>117</sup> His bequest of 5000 mrs. to the rabbi and to the religious school and students shows his concern for the religious education of the young men of his birth-place. Although he inevitably crossed cultural boundaries, his career was evidence of acculturation rather than of assimilation to Christian society.

Ibn Verga’s Hebrew account resumed with the tragic and heroic events of 1339-1340. The historian, having ignored both the machinations of the two *privados* and Juçaf’s narrow escape in Valladolid, concludes with a narrative of biblical proportions. The tragic end of both men is described as a result of a plot against them and the entire Jewish community by a noble favourite of the King, Gonzalo Martín. Elevated by Alfonso to Maestre de Alcántara for his military services at the Frontier, the chronicle relates of the Maestre:

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, CXVII, 1330, p. 498: ‘otro judío don Juçaf de Écija veyendo la gran ganacia que aquel don Simuel hazia en aquellas rentas, por aver ende parte, e otrosi cuydo que por aquello que tornaria a la privancia del rrey, pujo las rrentas de los almoxarifazgos de la Frontera que que tenia aquel don Simuel. E el don Simuel desque esto vio, fablo con el rrey en su secreto, e aconsejole que non diese mas la saca a los moros; e esto fazia el por dar daño aquel don Juçaf’.

<sup>116</sup> See p. 65, n.106.

<sup>117</sup> Antonio Paz y Melia., *Series de los mas importantes documentos del archivo y biblioteca del exmo. señor duque de Medinaceli* (Madrid: 1915), XXIX, (1399), p. 33.

This noble had great favour from the king who had great trust in him.  
For all things were directed by him alone, and all the revenue of the  
kingdom was in his hands and in his power.<sup>118</sup>

In relation to Gonzalo the Christian and Hebrew narratives pursue quite different  
courses even though clearly referring to the same individual. Ibn Verga has him as first  
serving Juçaf:

There was a man named Gonzalo Martín, a great soldier and serving  
Joseph, but Satan prompted him to rebel against Joseph .... because he  
was jealous of Joseph his lord and said: Should a Jew lord it over us?  
And he had an evil thought to destroy him.<sup>119</sup>

According to the Hebrew account, Gonzalo spoke to the King saying he would give  
the King 8 talents of silver to help him fight his war if he sold to him 10 Jews,  
including Juçaf and ibn Wakar. Echoing the biblical Book of Esther, Verga describes  
him as the צורר (*tsorer*, persecutor) of the Jews:

And the king took off and gave his ring to Gonzalo. And it was written  
all that the צורר had commanded.

Here is the first of the biblical allusions of ibn Verga since an almost identical wording  
occurs in the biblical Esther III v.10:

And the king took off his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman ben  
Hamdatha Ha-Aggagi the צורר of the Jews.<sup>120</sup>

The identification of Gonzalo with the biblical Haman is complete and would also  
have been identified as such by his Jewish readers since the events, according to the  
narrative, take place in the Hebrew month of *Adar Rishon*, the date of the Jewish  
festival of Purim. The Hebrew continues with Gonzalo seizing both men, Juçaf and ibn

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<sup>118</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Alfonso Onceno*, CCI, 1337, p. 302: 'avia grand privanza en la merced del Rey et fiaba del mucho; ca todos los fechos se guiaban por el su consejo del solo, et todas las rentas del regno eran en su mano et en su poder

<sup>119</sup> Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, p. 53, L.1: היה שם איש אחד שמו גונזלו מרטין. איש גבור חיל עבד ליוסף, ויקם סטן. לו וימרוד ביוסף..... ויקנא ביוסף גבירו ויאמר: המלוך ימלוך איש יהודי עלינו? וחשב רעה לאבדו

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, L12: ויסר המלך את טבעתו ויתנה לגונסלו

ויסר המלך את טבעתו מעל ידו ויתנה להמן בן המדתה האגגי צורר: Book of Esther III v.10, ויכתב ככל אשר צוה הצורר היהודים

Wakar. Juçaf died but ibn Wakaar first languished in prison, was tortured, finally died and lay unburied for a full year.

*Shevet Yehuda* continues with a description of Gonzalo's success in battle against Abu Malik and his suggestion to the King that he might finance his continuing war with the Muslims by imprisoning and plundering the wealth of the entire Jewish community. The King hesitated but it was the unlikely figure of the Archbishop Gil of Toledo, who rebuked Gonzalo:

The Jews are the treasure of the king and you tell him to do what his forefathers never did? You do not hate the Jews, you hate the king!<sup>121</sup>

Despite all this, and full of hubris, he thinks that the King would at last listen to his plan for his enemy the Jews. However, he was mistaken, and ibn Verga tells how the King repents and sends horsemen to capture Gonzalo.<sup>122</sup> The Jewish reader of this account would have believed that it was the Archbishop's words coupled with divine providence that changed the King's mind. However, the Chronicle described matters very differently and attributed Gonzalo's fall to an intrigue by the King's mistress Leonor de Guzmán and to the noble's subsequent betrayal of Alfonso.<sup>123</sup>

Having forged traitorous alliances with the King's enemies in Portugal and Granada, Gonzalo fled the King's anger and took refuge with his men within the confines of one of his fortresses. Despite all the gaps and divergences between the two accounts up until at this point, they converge here to a remarkable degree. The agreement on many details, including Gonzalo's execution, points unequivocally to the fact that ibn Verga must have had access to a copy of the Chronicle.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah* p. 54, L.21: כי היהודים הלא הם אוצר למלך..... ואתה מבקש לאבדם ושיעשה המלך מה שלא עשו אבותיו. אין אתה שונא ליהודים כי אם למלך

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55, L.8

<sup>123</sup> Rosell, *Alfonso Onceno*, CCI, 1337, p. 302.

*The pursuit of Gonzalo Martin, as recounted in the Christian and the Hebrew literature*

And that man Gonzalo Martin appeared on another tower called the Tower of Tesoro and told those with him in the castle and battlements to attack the king and those with him with rocks, arrows and other weapons. This they did and hit the king's shield, his saddle and the haunches of his mount. They also attacked the king's men, notably Freyre de Alcantára who later died and he had been standing close to the king's horse'

Et aquel Gonzalo Martin pareció en otra torre..... et dixo luego a los que estaban en el castillo et en los andemios del adarve, que triasen piedras, et saetas et armas contra el Rey..... et dieron una saetada a un Freyre de Alcántara de que murió luego. Et este Freyre estaba de pie cerca del caballo del Rey.

*Alfonso Onceno: CCIV/V (1339-1340)*

Preserving the biblical allusion to the last, ibn Verga's account now again resorts to the Esther theme. Alfonso repented of Juçaf's murder and of the plunder of the estate of ibn Wakar which he ordered to be restored to the Jews. Just like the biblical King Ahasuerus, taking off the ring (seal) that he had previously given to Gonzalo, he passed it to his scribe Moshe Abzardiel:

And the king removed the ring that he had taken from the persecutor and gave it to Moshe.<sup>124</sup>

ויסר המלך את טבעתו אשר העביר מהצורר ויתנה למשה

And the king removed the ring that he had taken from Haman and gave it to Mordechai<sup>125</sup>

ויסר המלך את טבעתו אשר העביר מהמן ויתנה למרדכי

After this the king commanded that he be captured, and he shut himself up in a high tower. And he resisted him (the king) and spoke harsh words to the king, and archers shot from the tower and struck the king's horseman who fell at his feet and died.

אחר זה צוה המלך לתפשו, ויסגר במגדל גבוה. וילחמו עליו, וידבר למלך קשות, ויורו המורים מן המגדל ויכו את פרש המלך נושא כליו, ויפול לרגליו וימות.

\*וישחטוהו וישרפוהו

*Shevet Yehuda: p.55, L15*

<sup>124</sup> Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, p. 55, L. 31.

<sup>125</sup> Esther, VIII v.2.

The capture of the Jews and the seizure of their assets did not happen. We may not know for sure how ‘things really were’ and the Hebrew account surely lacks the relative objectivity of the Christian chronicle. Yet Ibn Verga’s account indicates that the Jews must have perceived these events in a biblical context and that they would have seen their deliverance as a divine intervention of a merciful God.

### A poetic witness

The contemporary records, in both charters and chronicles, provide an authoritative if not always faithful description of people and events. In the case of the Christian chronicles, these were usually written some time after the events they describe. Accounts were always likely to be influenced by the favour awarded to the chronicler by the King. In the case of *Shevet Yehuda*, both style and content were suited to the biblical inclination of its Jewish readership.

The many poems of Shmuel ben Joseph ibn Sasson provide yet another perspective. Since the verses were contemporary to the events described, they give some indication of how the Jewish *privados*, Juçaf and ibn Wakar, were perceived by their respective communities.<sup>126</sup> His poem eulogising Juçaf reflected the esteem in which he was held by his fellows. This verse was dedicated to ‘the beloved don Joseph ben Shabbat on the passing of the mantle of power to don Samuel ben Wakar’:

The great Josef is left behind	יוסף גביר שרד
He flourished like Ben Porat	פרח כבן פורת
Traversed all of Spain	בגבול ספרד רד
To the borders of Granada	עד קץ גבול רבת
Another in his wisdom	אחר בחכמתו
Took from his greatness	לקח גדולתו
It was said of him	ואומרה אותו
Thus far the realm of Shabbat	עד כאן תחום שב"ת. <sup>127</sup>

Juçaf was likened to the biblical Joseph, the fruitful bough of Genesis (49.22). His poetry included a lament for the torture and death of Juçaf:

<sup>126</sup> Samuel ben Joseph ibn Sasson, *Sefer Avne Ha-Shoham*, Haim Chamiel (ed.) (Tel Aviv: Mahbarot Ie-sifrut, Sura, 1962); Ross Brann, Angel Saenz-Badillos, Judit Targarona, 'The Poetic Universe of Samuel Ibn Sasson, Hebrew Poet of Fourteenth-Century Castile', *Prooftexts*, 16 (1996), pp. 75-103. Ibn Sasson's dates are unknown, but approximate to the first half of the fourteenth-century.

<sup>127</sup> Chamiel, *Sefer Avne Ha-Shoham*, p. 71, לב. The last line is a pun on Juçaf's name 'ben Avi Shabbat ha-Levi'.

I will scream and shout till the skies are no more  
because the waters have reached my neck like mud

He was delivered to prison, clapped in chains, and good  
was lacking, the prince of beautiful face departed  
He was cast alone into the dust, he was scoured and nicked up,  
thrown discoloured alone into the casket.<sup>128</sup>

This poem provides confirmation of ibn Verga's account of Juçaf's torture and death in prison, events that do not appear in the Castilian sources. It is also possible that the Hebrew historian may have used the poet's description as the basis of his own narrative. It may be an indication of the relative honour accorded to the two *privados* that ibn Sasson did not compose any eulogy for ibn Wakar or for his brothers incarcerated with him.

Whether or not Alfonso XI was, or felt, responsible for the deaths of his *privados*, the sources provide a sort of post-script in the form of a letter that he wrote to Pope Clement VI in 1342 only two years after these events. As already noted, the building or expansion of synagogues had been forbidden at the Council of Vienne:

Since the city of Seville was taken from the hands of the Moor .....  
..... because of its great size many residents were needed, many Jews  
and indeed Moors were admitted in order to populate that city,  
wherefore Jews were especially needed for they contributed to the  
needs of the city even sometimes going out with the Christians against  
the Moors and they faced death without fear; ..... a once powerful  
Jew by the name of Juçaf de Écija, who served the said king in no small  
measure, constructed at that time a house to serve for the worship of the  
Jews as a synagogue.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22, ; Brann, 'The Poetic Universe'; this is Brann's translation, pp. 80, 96 n.11.

<sup>129</sup> *Arch. Vat. Supplicationes* v1 pars 1f.92v; my translation from the Latin, in Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.2, doc.167, p. 163: 'Supplicat S.V devotus filius Alfonsus...rex, quod cum dudum .....civitas Ipsalensis fuit erepta de manibus saracenorum...et propter sui magnitudinem multarum gentium indigeret incolatu, multi iudei admissi sunt pro populate dicte civitatis necnon et saraceni, qui iudei sunt summe necessarii, quia contribuunt in necessitatibus civitatis necnon aliquotiens exeunt una cum christianis adversus Saracens et se exponere morti non formidant; et...quidam iudeus, nomine Juçaf de Eceia, iudeus inquam potens qui in prelibis dicto regi servitia non modica impendit, construxisset quondam domum altam ad opus iuxta ritus eorum pro sinagoga.'



Alfonso's letter went on to request the pope's dispensation for the use of the synagogue as recompense for the services to him by the Jews, and Juçaf in particular. The King's letter was unusually emotive and seems to display a loyalty, if not actual affection, both for Castile's Jews and for Juçaf himself. Some of these attributes carried over into the reign of his son Pedro who, however, lacked the authority and skills of government of his father. His closeness to, and promotion of, Jews at court proved a focus for popular antipathy: his downfall at the hands of his brother, Enrique II Trastámara, would herald a new and less favourable epoch in Christian-Jewish relations during the second half of the fourteenth century.

## Conclusion

The heirs of Alfonso X continued to find that Jewish *privados* were indispensable in the administration of the financial affairs of the kingdom. The Crown, even during two long and unstable royal minorities, was able to withstand the objections both of the Cortes and of the bishops to these appointments. This is seen, in part, to have owed much to the nature of kingship in Castile, which differed from that in France and in England. Yet Jews did not depend solely on royal patronage for their progression at the court. When it suited them, members of the nobility were also instrumental in the promotion of their Jewish favourites as a means of advancing their own interests.

Though the careers of elite Jewish *privados* benefited them and their communities, they also risked their fortunes and even their lives, just as Zag de la Maleha had done years earlier. However, the threat of disgrace, imprisonment and death reflected their embroilment in court intrigue and rivalry, and cannot be attributed directly to their status as Jews. The few Jewish sources that we have provide historical detail of the *privados*' lives that both support and supplement that provided by the chronicles. They suggest that some, if not all, of these men were viewed positively by their communities. Their elite position, although it entailed crossing cultural boundaries that must have distanced them from the *aljamas*, did not inevitably lead to alienation from their fellow Jews or from Judaism.

Yet the administrators, important though they were to the Crown, were only one aspect of the value of the Jewish minority to the economy of Castile. Considered in the next chapter are the considerable revenues that the communities provided to the

King in taxation. The large sums that he received underpinned royal protection and serve to explain the continuing survival of the Jewish communities in the kingdom.

## Chapter III

### The Jewish *Pechero* in Fourteenth-Century Castile

A study of the wealth of the Jewish communities in late thirteenth and fourteenth century Castile is important for understanding their position in society and their continuing presence in the kingdom. The Jews' status as a minority protected by the King and whose taxes belonged to him, corresponded to that enshrined in the *fueros* of Teruel and Cuenca (1176-1177).<sup>1</sup> The precise meaning of the term *servi regis* in these *fueros* may still be debated, but the importance of their tax revenues to the Crown is not in doubt. The size of their contributions bore a direct relation to their prosperity, which was heavily dependent on royal protection of their interests. It also depended on the organisation of the communities themselves and on how they managed their affairs so as to render their dues in timely manner to the King.

An investigation of the economic life of the Jews must seek answers to a number of critical questions. These include establishing their importance to the Crown relative to their Christian and Muslim neighbours and whether this might have changed over a century of weak regencies, plague and civil war. Unfortunately, records of royal accounts for this period are scarce, especially so for the latter part of the fourteenth century. The study is further complicated by the complexity of the currency system and by the repeated and extreme devaluations of that currency that resulted in severe monetary inflation.

The size of the tax paying population is unknown though speculative attempts have been made in the past to estimate it using revenue figures. The results have been widely divergent and sometimes based on erroneous understanding of the currency or on unreliable contemporary records. Medieval population statistics can never be an exact science, however an attempt will be made here to use the account registers, a survey of recent work on the coinage and the few available registers of urban habitation to arrive at a more reliable notion of the Jewish population of the kingdom.

Detailed registers of royal income in the reign of Sancho IV have recently been published and these permit an extensive study of taxes, and therefore indirectly of the wealth of all the three faith communities. Until now, the *repartimiento* of the Jews

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction, p. 16.

compiled for Sancho in 1292 at Huete had been the only register of accounts readily available for this period. It has appeared in several editions since the eighteenth century and the critical edition by Carrete Parrondo has corrected a number of previous errors.<sup>2</sup> This has now been supplemented by the extensive transcription of Sancho IV's treasury records by Francisco Hernández. His work provides an essential tool for establishing the contributions of Jewish and other communities to the Castilian economy as well as the manner in which revenues were collected and how they were disbursed.<sup>3</sup>

The administration of the Jewish *aljamas* is key to this study since communities possessed a high degree of autonomy in matters of tax raising as well as of justice. The Hebrew sources are helpful in the detail they provide about the hierarchy of communal administration and the conflicts that arose from perceptions of inequitable distribution of the tax burden within those communities. The rabbinic responsa (*she'elot u-teshuvot*, questions and answers) dealt frequently with judicial questions that included matters of tax raising and of tax evasion. The questions and answers relating to individual communities point to the consternation and divisions that preoccupied them and which are seen often to mirror complaints and petitions made to the King by the townspeople in the Cortes.

The circumstances of the Jews deteriorated in the later fourteenth century. To a large extent this resulted from the civil war and the accession of Enrique de Trastámara, whose ransoming of the communities furthered his strategic aims during that conflict.<sup>4</sup> It is important, therefore, also to examine the part played in this transition by changes in their economic status. Any substantial diminution in the Jewish communal tax base would have reduced their value to the King, affected their position as a protected minority and destabilised an already fragile social equilibrium existing within the kingdom.

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<sup>2</sup> Carlos Carrete Parrondo, 'El Repartimiento de Huete de 1290', *Sefarad*, 36 (1976), pp. 121-140; hereafter 'Huete'.

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey: sociedad y fisco en el reino castellano del siglo XIII* (Madrid: Fundación Ramón Areces, 1993), 2 volumes.

<sup>4</sup> Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 44.

## The *maravedí* as a currency of account

The examination of financial records requires an understanding of both the money that was in circulation in the fourteenth century and how the various sums recorded in the registers equated to that coinage. The royal registers of income and expenses, *ingresos y gastos*, were almost entirely recorded in *maravedís* (mrs.) throughout the period under study. Many different species of coins of gold, silver or billon were minted in Castile and there were constant changes in the currency as the Crown issued new money and withdrew older issues. There were also repeated devaluations of the base currency, the *maravedí*, the value of which had fallen by 1500 to less than one-sixtieth of its worth in 1300. It was the least stable of all the European currencies, as shown by Spufford's study in which this (and other currencies) are compared to the Florentine florin over a span of nearly two centuries.<sup>5</sup>

These changes were accompanied by the frequent minting of new coin and a consequent increase in the amount of circulating money and a rise in prices, that is, monetary inflation.<sup>6</sup> This instability affected wages and the cost of living, both of which fuelled social discontent.<sup>7</sup> An appreciation of the nature and value of the coinage is also important in comprehending the income to the Crown through taxation (*ingresos*) as well as the disbursements to the municipalities and to designated individuals (*gastos*). These disbursements frequently appeared in the registers alongside the revenues, often accounting for the larger part of the recorded tax income.

The *maravedí* was the largest denomination coin and had its origin in the gold *morabitino* of the Almoravid dynasty. As the *maravedí de oro*, it continued to be issued in the kingdom of Castile until the middle of the thirteenth century. It seems to have been withdrawn from circulation at the end of Fernando III's reign and was replaced by the silver coin termed the *moneda blanca* (the silver *maravedí*).<sup>8</sup> The Castilian *doblas*, however, were gold coins first minted by Alfonso X before 1272. Circulating only in small numbers, they were originally worth ten *maravedís de la guerra*, but later issues by Alfonso XI and Pedro the Cruel bore values of between 15

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). See table 5, p. 295 and chart at p. 299.

<sup>6</sup> James Bolton, *Money in the Medieval English Economy 973-1489* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012). For an explanation of the relation of money supply to prices see pp. 5-8.

<sup>7</sup> Carlé, 'Tensiones y revueltas', pp. 325-356.

<sup>8</sup> Crusafont, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 11 and *passim*.

and 35 *maravedís*.<sup>9</sup> The persistence of this gold coinage throughout the period is relevant to this study, since many of the Hebrew records refer to *zehuvim* coins (gold coins) when relating disputes over taxation. If these were *dobla*, the sums mentioned should be converted to *maravedís* at a rate of between 10 and 35 *maravedís* per gold *dobla* depending on the date of the transaction.<sup>10</sup>

It is generally accepted that the silver *maravedí* was in circulation for only a short time. Thereafter, and certainly from the reign of Sancho IV, it was used solely as a money of account (*moneda de cuenta*). Because of the diversity of coinage in the kingdom, this accounting convention is very convenient for the historian when studying Crown revenues (*las rentas del rey*). A problem arises, however, because it is sometimes unclear from the records to which species of *maravedí*, gold or silver, this currency of account refers. The *maravedí de oro* corresponded to six silver mrs.<sup>11</sup> Gil believed it was the gold *maravedí* that constituted the currency standard for accounts, yet according to Spufford, it was the lesser silver coin, worth ten ‘small Castilian *dineros*’, that occupied this position.<sup>12</sup>

The silver *maravedí*'s worth was plainly stated to be ten *dineros* by Fernando IV in the Cortes of 1298.<sup>13</sup> There is, however, a lack of clarity about both the *maravedí* and the *dinero* in much of the existing documentation. Hence, the older historiography has tended to confuse the issues, sometimes leading to unjustified assumptions about taxes and about the people who paid them, the *pecheros*. One example of this is the criticism made by Amador de los Ríos of the sixteenth- and eighteenth-century authors Morgado and Asso y del Río.<sup>14</sup> A series of misinterpretations by these historians led Amador de los Ríos to estimate the annual capitation tax of the Jews in 1284 to be three *maravedís de oro* which he considered to be equivalent to thirty *dineros* of the billon coinage. He used this sum in order to arrive at an erroneous and huge overestimate of the Jewish population number.

The calculation made by Amador de los Ríos was incorrect on three counts. Firstly Morgado was accurate in his description of the thirty *dineros* tribute (though

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308, 343, 349. See also Catalán, *Gran Crónica*, CXVI: (1330), p. 496, ‘y la dobla que valiese veynte e cinco maravedís segund que valia antes que se comañase a labrar la moneda’.

<sup>10</sup> See below: ‘The financial administration of the *aljamas*’, pp. 83-86.

<sup>11</sup> Gil, *Historia de la moneda*, p. 332.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331, p. 332; Spufford, *Money and Its Use*, p. 412.

<sup>13</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Valladolid, XXIV, 1298, 6, p. 138.

<sup>14</sup> Ríos, *Historia*, p. 58 and n.1.

two centuries later, Asso y del Río misquoted this as *dineros de oro*, but not *maravedís de oro* as later further misquoted by Amador de los Ríos).<sup>15</sup> Secondly, it is clear from the older works that the thirty *dineros* were to be paid as the ecclesiastical *diezmo* to the Church and would have been additional to the capitation owed directly to the Crown (*cabeza del pecho de los judeos*).<sup>16</sup> Lastly, the *maravedí* Ríos had referred to as worth ten of the billon *dineros* was in fact the silver coin, so that the ecclesiastical tribute was worth three silver rather than three gold *maravedís*.

The total revenue from all the *aljamas* of Castile in 1284 is known to have been in excess of 2,000,000 mrs.<sup>17</sup> Amador de los Ríos, on the basis of his 3 *maravedí* ‘capitation’ estimate, calculated a total Jewish population of Castile of 854,951. Baer was much more conservative, wishing to avoid the ‘fantastic estimates such as still appear in the modern literature’.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of the tax rolls of 1290, he estimated that no more than 3,600 families lived under the Castilian Crown. He arrived at this approximation by a comparison of the revenues from different *aljamas*, using as a referent the town of Ávila with a known Jewish population and recorded tax revenue.<sup>19</sup>

## Population and revenue

There have been many extravagant claims for the numbers of Jews living in Castile throughout the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Fr. Gil de Zamora, a scholar

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<sup>15</sup> Ignacio Jordán de Asso y del Río, Miguel de Manuel y Rodríguez, *El ordenamiento de leyes, que D. Alfonso XI hizo en las cortes de Alcalá de Henares el año de mil trescientos y quarenta y ocho. Publicado con notas, y un discurso sobre el estado, y condición de los judíos en España* (Madrid, 1774), p. 150; Alonso Morgado, *Historia de Sevilla*, libro 4, cap.10 (Sevilla: Andrea Pescioni y Juan de León, 1587), f.118b: ‘que el tributo de los treinta Denarios, que pagavan los Iudios por cada una persona partiesen por iguales partes entre el Arçobispo, y el Cabildo. Y el decir subsecutivamente, que la misma partición se hiziesse de las Decimas, que pagavan los mismos Iudios, y Sarracenos’. This tribute was also confirmed in 1677 and understood as 3 mrs. per person over 16 years, in Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales eclesiasticos y seculares de la muy noble leal ciudad de Sevilla: que contienen sus mas principales memorias, desde el año de 1246 hasta el de 1671* (Madrid: 1677), p. 184.

<sup>16</sup> A charter of Fernando III (1219) had previously set the ecclesiastical *diezmo* at one sixth of a gold *maravedí* (i.e equivalent to 1 *maravedí* of the later *moneda blanca*), to be paid by all Jewish males of twenty years or older: ‘quilibet iudeus qui uicessimum annum iam compleuit aut agere uicessimum cepit annum .... domino archiepiscopo sextam partem unius auri annuatim soluere teneatur, nec ullus ab hac solutione defectu pecunie uel occasione aliqua excusetur ..... exceptis tamen mulieribus’, in Julio González, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III* (Córdoba: Monte de Piedad, 1980), doc.76, p. 95. Alfonso X raised the tribute to 30 *dineros* (i.e 3 silver *maravedís*): ‘Onde vos mando que los treinta *dineros* que gelos dedes cada anno, asy commo los dan el *aljama* de los judios de Toledo a la Egleſia’, Manuel González Jiménez, *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X* (Sevilla: El Monte, Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991), doc.187, 1256. Sancho IV lowered the age of tribute to 15 years, see Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol. III, doc.257, p. CLIII, 14 July 1289.

<sup>17</sup> Ríos, *Historia*, p. 58; Ladero Quesada, ‘Las transformaciones’, p. 336.

<sup>18</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1: p. 190, p. 418 n.1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, n.2 and the footnote in Baer, *Die Juden*, vol. 2, p. 86, doc.96.

at the court of Alfonso X, wrote about the Jews of Toledo and, according to Baer, gave a figure of 70,000 Jewish taxpayers there, not counting men, women and the poor.<sup>20</sup>

This may be a misinterpretation by Baer of Zamora's Latin text:

In haec urbe LXX milia judeorum tributa solvencium, absque parvulis et mulieribus et pauperibus, nostris temporibus sunt inventa.<sup>21</sup>

Another translation would be: 'in that city the tribute of the Jews of 70,000 was paid except by the young, the women and the poor'. According to the fourteenth-century chronicler Lope de Ayala, 1,200 Jews were slaughtered there in 1355 during the civil war, but this represented only a small proportion of the total population.

They began pillaging a separate judería called Alcaná and robbed and killed up to twelve-hundred persons, men and women big and small. But they could not take the main judería.<sup>22</sup>

Other than the erroneous citation by Amador de los Ríos of a rate of individual taxation for the Jews, there has so far been no attempt to estimate how much might have been paid in taxes by the Jewish *pecheros*, nor to compare this directly with their Christian and Muslim neighbours. Yet even a crude assessment of how much the *aljamas* provided, and how much of a burden this was for the individual household, would be instructive for an understanding of the long and continuous protection by the King of his Jewish subjects. The method adopted by Baer, of comparing communities with respect to their tax revenues with what is known of their population numbers, is still a valid one. There would be a way, however, to cross-check such calculations if one had any concept of the average individual tax rate, the *cabeza del pecho*, itself.

One method for doing so is presented by the records of the Cortes of Valladolid in 1312, where Fernando IV made the following complaint:

I have been informed that the Jewish *aljamas* of my kingdom used to pay taxes to my grandfather don Alfonso and to don Sancho my father

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<sup>20</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 418, n.2.

<sup>21</sup> From *Liber illustrium personarum* of Fr. Gil de Zamora in Fidel Fita, "Dos Obras de Gil de Zamora", *BRAH*, V (1884), pp. 131-200, at p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> 'comenzaron a robar una juderia apartada que dicen Alcana e robaronla e mataron los judios que fallaron fasta mil e docientos personas, omes e mugeres grandes e pequeños. Pero la judería mayor non la pudieron tomar', in Fritz Baer, 'Los Mozarabes de Toledo en los siglos XII y XIII, a Review', *Tarbiz*, 5 (1934), pp. 228-236, n.21. See also chapter IV of this dissertation.



at a rate of six thousand mrs. every day and no Jew was excused from this. But they have paid me one fifth and because more than five thousand of the richest Jews of my kingdom are exempt.<sup>23</sup>

If the King had lost four fifths of his revenue (4,800 mrs. daily) through the exemption of five thousand wealthy Jews this would mean that those *pecheros* owed him on average almost one *maravedí* daily which would be 350 to 400 *maravedís* of capitation yearly.

There are many suppositions involved in this calculation, not least faith in the accuracy of the King's own figures. His quoted sum of 6,000 mrs. daily amounts to 2,190,000 mrs. annually, which is close to a true figure for the total Jewish taxation burden in 1280-1290 as set out in *Repartimiento de Huete* and other registers.<sup>24</sup> The *Crónica de Alfonso X* recorded the doubling of this figure to 12,000 mrs. per day by Alfonso X in 1279, as a revenge for his 'betrayal' by his *almoxarife* don Zag de la Melaha.<sup>25</sup> It was reduced by his son Sancho to 7,000 mrs. and then to 6,000 mrs. daily in the *Partición de Burgos* of 1287.<sup>26</sup>

The preamble to this last document is of great importance as it is key to resolving the issue of gold versus silver coinage as the money of account:

And the King through his mercy reduces their contribution by one thousand '*mr de la guerra*' each day from the vii thousand mr which they paid previously.<sup>27</sup>

Hernández has understood the significance of the *moneda de la guerra* referred to here. This was a silver coinage and not the *maravedí de oro* to which Baer had referred and which was six times more valuable.<sup>28</sup> It is justifiable to assume that, as posited by

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<sup>23</sup> Cortes, Valladolid, 1312, XXXV, 102, p. 220: 'Otrossi me ffiçieron saber que las mis aljamas delos judíos delos mis rreynos ssolian pechar al Rey don Alfonso mio auelo e al Rey don Sancho mio padre, sseys mil mr. cada día, e desto non sse escusaua ningún judío, que me pechauan ami el quinto; e que son escussados mas de cinco mil judíos en mis rreynos, delos mas rricos'.

<sup>24</sup> Parrondo, 'Huete'.

<sup>25</sup> González Jiménez, *Crónica de Alfonso X*, LXXII, p. 210.

<sup>26</sup> Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol.1, see 'Tributos de los judios en 1286-1289', f.1/51r, p. 337.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*: 'e quitoles el rey por las fazer mercet, mill mr de la guerra cada dia de los vii mil mr que ante pechavan'.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. CXXXVI and n.100; Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 130.

Spufford, all the subsequent registers of accounts used this referent rather than the gold coinage as was assumed by earlier authors.<sup>29</sup>

Baer concluded that there were likely to have been around fifty Jewish householders in Ávila according to a register compiled there in 1303.<sup>30</sup> The revenue recorded in the tax roll for Ávila in 1290, was 59,592 mrs.<sup>31</sup> An average individual taxation of 400 mrs. as earlier calculated, would give a figure of nearly one hundred and forty taxpayers amongst fifty households. Since women and minors were exempt it is quite conceivable that fifty households might yield two or three taxpayers each. A conservative estimate of just two *pecheros* per family yields a speculative total population in Castile at the end of the thirteenth century of 2,500 families, not too far off Baer's assumption of less than 3,600 noted above.

A similar computation to that of the town of Ávila can be made in the town of Miranda de Ebro in the Rioja district of north-eastern Castile. A document of 1294 published by Cantera includes the names of fifteen householders testifying before the *alcalde*, the justices and other *omes bonos*, regarding the payment of the tax (here called the *pagado de la vezindat*). The Jews conceded that they were the only members of the community living in Miranda and that they paid the tax and other demands of the municipality.<sup>32</sup> In most cases, the tax collection was the responsibility of elders of the *aljama* and although Rabi Çegui was there to testify, he was accompanied by other local artisans including the tailor (*Alazar alfayate*). Such a small community probably lacked the direction of more venerable elders that would have represented the *aljamas* of larger towns. The revenue of Miranda in the tax register of that time was 3,312 mrs. That would equate to an average individual tax of about 220 mrs.

The sum of 400 mrs. of tax owed by Jews in Pancorbo in the archdiocese of Burgos is found in a charter of Alfonso X in 1263, addressed to the municipality:

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<sup>29</sup> See above p. 78, n.12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419, n.2; María del Pilar Laguzzi, *Ávila a principios del siglo XIV* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Sección Española, 1949), pp. 145-180: '*Becerro de la Catedral de Ávila*' (A.H.N. secc. cod. 879, fols. 93-121v). For details of this registry see chapter IV p. 113 of this dissertation.

<sup>31</sup> Parrondo, 'Huete', p. 128.

<sup>32</sup> Francisco Cantera, 'De Hispania Judaica. La Judería de Miranda de Ebro (1099-1350)', *Sefarad*, 1 (1941), pp. 89-140: 'E dissieron los dichos judios q. mas judios dellos non biuian en Mirando, salvo Çagui Pardo, et q. eran pagados de la uezindat e de lo q. el conçeio les fazian', p. 112.

They said to us that the Jews used to pay to you 400 *maravedís* for the *martiniega* that they used to give and for the *fonsadera* [exemption from bearing arms] and the *enfurción* [land rents] and for the other taxes.<sup>33</sup>

It is unclear whether this sum was the amount due from the whole Jewish community, but this seems unlikely. Twenty-seven years later, the total revenue of the Jews of Pancorbo *en cabeza* was 23,850 mrs.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the document seems to support our estimate of a sum of around 400 mrs. as the revenue due from the individual Jewish *pechero*.

Although this analysis can provide a rough approximation of taxation and of population numbers it is flawed. Individual Jewish *pecheros* did not pay tax at a single uniform rate. The ordinance of 1312 refers to ‘the richest Jews’ so that the calculation based on a 350 – 400 mrs. annual tribute by these wealthy individuals must yield a substantial underestimate of a population, most of which probably paid much less. Many, as a study of the rabbinical *responsa* will show, probably paid nothing at all. Therefore, the previously suggested figures of between 2,500 and 3,600 Jewish families in Castile must be taken as a very conservative underestimate of the total Jewish population of the kingdom at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

### The financial administration of the *aljamas*

A high level of autonomy was granted to the Jews of Castile, both in the administration of justice and in the collection of taxes.<sup>35</sup> It is, therefore, the Hebrew sources that provide most of the information about how each community determined the individual contributions of its members.

Within each Jewish community there were a number of individuals who had responsibilities for both law and order and for determining the taxes due to Crown. The organisation of communal affairs had its origins in the Geonic period (500-1000 C.E), but in Iberia it acquired some characteristics comparable to those seen within the

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<sup>33</sup> Luciano Serrano, 'Fueros y privilegios del concejo de Pancorbo (Burgos) ', *Anuario de historia del derecho español*, 10 (1933), pp. 325-331, 331: ‘et dixieron nos que los judíos solien pechar convusco en los quatroceintos moravedis de la martiniega que soliedes dar en la fonsadera et an la enfurcion e en los otros pechos’, Sevilla 13 May 1263, Arch. de Silos, Ms.10, fol.10.

<sup>34</sup> Parrondo, ‘Huete’, p. 134.

<sup>35</sup> Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, p. 106.

Christian municipalities. Although the *aljama* (*kahal* in Hebrew) managed much of its own internal structure, the delegation of responsibility for allocating the individual tax burden lay ultimately with the Crown. This is seen from a 1219 ordinance of Fernando III. The document has previously been referred to in connection with the ecclesiastical *diezmo* to be paid to the diocese of Toledo. Stipulating how the money was to be raised, the document goes on to require of the archbishop:

Furthermore, that four of the senior *adelantados* from the *aljama* of Toledo and two from every other *aljama*, nominated by the said archbishop, just these and no more, are to be sworn so that whenever doubts arise, that they determine, each in his own *aljama*, whether or not a particular account is to be paid.<sup>36</sup>

The titles given to such officers were variable and not always clearly defined. Sometimes referred to as *adelantados* as in the Christian municipalities, they are often referred to in the Hebrew records as elders of the community (זקני הקהל). In *Sefer ha'Shetarot*, the twelfth-century Catalan rabbi Judah ben Barzilai al-Barceloni wrote in connection with the allocation of the tax burden:

That the elders of the community and the judges decide between them how much each one should pay in this or that tax or in this or that charity.<sup>37</sup>

In other cases, the distribution of the tax burden or of judgements was delegated to seven 'good men of the town' (טובי העיר) comparable to the *omes buenos* of the towns frequently mentioned in the Christian records. Shalom Albeck's work on the rabbinic literature has highlighted the emphasis placed on fairness and on the participation both of the individual and of the whole community, in what were ultimately majority decisions. Only in rare cases was most of the tax be paid by the wealthy without burdening those of limited means.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> González, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III*, doc.77 and see above n.16: 'addit etiam quod quatuor de senioribus adelantatis de aliamia Toleti et duo de qualibet alia aliamia, quos dictus archiepiscopus nominaverit, semel et non amplius iurare teneantur quod, quotiescumque super etate dubietas emerit secundum suum intellectum fateantur, singuli in sua aliamia, de quibuslibet dubitatis an ratione etatis dicte solvere teneantur necne'.

<sup>37</sup> Shalom Albeck, 'The Principles of Government in the Jewish Communities of Spain until the 13th Century', *Zion*, 25 (1960), pp. 85-121 (Hebrew): 'שעושין זקני הקהל והדיינים להשוות ביניהן כמה יתן כל אחד 'ואחד בכך וכך מס או בכך וכך צדקה', p. 98 (*Sefer ha'Shetarot*, p. 137).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98, n.21.

The rabbinical responsa provide many insights into issues that troubled Jewish community leaders. Since the first recorded works in Geonic times, responsa were written as replies to questions put to scholars about matters ranging from the pragmatic to the finer points of Talmud or religious law (*halakha*). The preoccupation of the elders of Iberian communities with the equitable distribution of the tax burden is reflected in many responsa that dealt with exemptions and tax evasion. Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel (1259 – 1327), born in Germany but later residing in Toledo, was asked to adjudicate on a procedure for regulating the collection of the tax according to individual wealth in an unnamed community:

The King wrote in his letter that the community should pay 1,000 gold coin so that all who possess 120 gold coin pays 8 gold coin and what remains to be paid of the 1,000 gold coin is paid by all those who possess more than 120 gold coin, each according to his wealth. Three men investigated in order to apportion 8 gold coins from each, whoever has 120 gold coins. There are men from whom nothing was demanded in the register of 8 gold coins, rather they wrote that the mentioned sum was not known for those men and they recorded their names and they apportioned the remainder of the taxes from those with more than 120 gold coins.<sup>39</sup>

The Hebrew text uses the term 'בררו' (*boreru*, they investigated) with reference to the three men, who in other responsa were called *berurim* (investigators). The term was used interchangeably with *ne'emanim*, *m'ayanim* or *mukademim* to denote those charged with administrative responsibility in the community.<sup>40</sup> In the context of R. Asher's responsum, the task undertaken by the three men appears similar to that of the *pesquisidores* appointed by the King to ascertain facts relating to civil or criminal cases within the Christian *concejos*.<sup>41</sup> The procedure adopted is an example of imitation, within the Jewish community, of legalistic practices current within the kingdom. Just as the *pesquisidores* or the tax collectors (*cogedores*) would consult the

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<sup>39</sup> Asher ben Yehiel, *She'elot u-Teshuvot leha-Rav Rabenu Asher*, (Venice: 1607), klal 6, responsum 4: זהובים: 4: ובררו ג' אנשים לחלק חזק זהובים על מי שהיה לו ק"ב זהובים: 4: Hereafter 'Asher ben Yehiel'. Baer's translation is cited here, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 423, n.15.

<sup>40</sup> Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, p. 106.

<sup>41</sup> Procter, *The Judicial Use of 'Pesquisa'*; *Curia and Cortes*, p. 40. See also chapter 1, p. 33 of this dissertation.

registers (*padrones*) of the town for the names and assets of the townsfolk, so the question to R. Asher shows that there was such a register (referred to here as the *pinkas* ‘פנקס של שמנה שמונה’) in the *kahal*, at least one for all those that owed 8 gold coin in tax.

Although the community had deep respect for the opinion of the eminent scholar, they still expected him to take advice from others in order to come to a decision on the matter. The taxation of 1,000 gold coin (זהובים) was interpreted by Baer to be of silver *maravedís*.<sup>42</sup> This would have been a very small sum, even from a small community. It is more likely to have referred to the gold *dobla*, a coin minted in small numbers by Alfonso X in the 1270s and replacing the old *maravedí de oro*. The revenue demanded of the community would therefore have been equivalent to between 10,000 and 35,000 *mrs de la guerra*, the usual money of account.<sup>43</sup>

In another question to the Rabbi, an individual claimed that 1,000 gold coin were collected from him unlawfully since the community had sold their tax rights over him to another community. This case was taken to the judges of the community (*dayanim*) and the investigation of the matter was undertaken by *m’ayanim* who were answerable to the *beit din*, the community court, rather than by appointing *berurim* as in the previous case.<sup>44</sup>

The regulations made by the communities were known as *takanot* and were subject to agreement (*haskamah*) by the whole community. To what extent this actually occurred in practice is unknown. However, Albeck quotes a number of responsa indicating that this was the norm. Although, at least in the larger communities, the *kahal* was headed by a rabbi with knowledge of Jewish religious law (*halakha*), decisions were generally agreed with the advice of the elders and the consent of the entire community.<sup>45</sup> It becomes clear from a *responsum* of R. Asher’s son, R. Yehuda ben ha-Rosh, that if agreement of the whole community was not obtained or if the elements of the agreements (*haskamot*) were not complied with, the *takanot* themselves were suspect as were judgements based upon them. Thus:

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<sup>42</sup> Baer, *JCS* vol.1, p. 423, n.15

<sup>43</sup> The *maravedí* equivalence of the *dobla* varied over the fourteenth-century, see above p. 78 and n.9.

<sup>44</sup> Asher ben Yehiel, klal 13, responsum 20

<sup>45</sup> Albeck, ‘The Principles of Government’, p. 114

They also made a register (*pinkas*) of most of the community and most of the community were dissatisfied with this register and the regulation (*takana*) and wanted it cancelled.<sup>46</sup>

The grounds for complaint by the *kahal* were based on the fact that two of the ten investigators (*berurim*) did not swear their oath within the town. It may be, however, that this was an excuse for the community to nullify what they considered an inaccurate or punitive register of the taxes owed. The questioner concluded:

Inform me whether, for these two reasons, the *takanot* are to be invalidated and reply with clarity.<sup>47</sup>

These extracts from the responsa literature illustrate two important principles with respect to taxation of the Jewish communities in Castile: equitability and consensus. In only one of the cited extracts is there any indication of how the level of contribution was to be determined from each member. It is clear however from that responsum and from a number of the royal tax registers considered below, that the King or his delegates determined how much was due from each *aljama*. Whether this was done by a consultation with elders of all the communities of the kingdom, as asserted by Baer, is not recorded.<sup>48</sup>

As already outlined, the Crown required each *aljama* to submit a global amount of tax, leaving it to those Jews delegated with the task to apportion individual contributions appropriately. Failure by an individual to pay meant that others had to pick up any shortfall that remained at the year's end.<sup>49</sup> Resentment about tax exemptions was not confined to Jewish communities. Such complaints were frequently voiced by the *procuradores* of the municipalities. They accused the *ricos omnes* and *caballeros* in possession of royal privileges of exemption of ruining the villages whose inhabitants consequently bore the main brunt of taxation.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Yehudah ben Asher, *Zikhron Yehudah: Sefer She'elot u-Teshuvot*, (Berlin: 1846), responsum 51, p. 8: וגם עשו פנקס על רוב הקהל ורוב הקהל נתרעמו מאותו פנקס ומאותה תקנה ורצו לבטלה

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: הודיעני אם יש באילו בי הטעמים לסתור התקנות והשיבני על הכל באר הטב.

<sup>48</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 212.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Asher, *Zikhron Yehudah: responsum* 51, p. 8: the year's end refers to the Hebrew month of Elul which is the last month of the Hebrew calendar. This implies that Jewish taxes may have been remitted to the Crown at that time rather than as a *marzadga* or *martiniega*, the taxes traditionally paid by the Christian *pecheros* in March or November. For those taxes see Teofilo Ruiz, *Spain's Centuries of Crisis, 1300-1474* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 128.

<sup>50</sup> *Cortes*, vol. 1, Palencia, 1313, XXXVII, p. 241: 26.

Allied to this concern was the imposition of laws made by the elders (*takanot*), which had not been properly drawn up, according to the agreement of the majority. Yet the democratic process described by Albeck does not take account of how authority was devolved to the community leaders by the Crown. Nor does his analysis, or that of other historians, show how the revenue contributions of each *aljama* was determined. The fiscal demands made on the Jewish communities are precisely documented and the revenue records of Sancho IV's reign (*cuadernos*) show these were largely met by the Jewish *pecheros*.<sup>51</sup> Baer referred to the federal nature of Castilian Jewry and the existence of a rabbi with court authority, *rab de la corte*, who presided over representatives of all the communities in order to agree on taxation and other judicial and administrative matters.<sup>52</sup> Though this appellation occasionally appears in fourteenth-century documents, there is no definite evidence for such overarching authority prior to the fifteenth century and the appointment of R. Avraham Bienveniste by Juan II in the 1430s.<sup>53</sup>

The text of the query to R. Asher, referred to above, perhaps should not be taken too literally. It stated that: 'the King wrote in his letter that the community should pay 1000 gold coin'.<sup>54</sup> This implies a written direction to the community rather than a tax allocation determined by some higher Jewish authority, though it does not exclude it altogether. A mention of a rabbi with court authority (*rab de la corte*), however, is found in a petition of 1369 from the inhabitants of the town of Molina in north-east Castile. Yet here, the sense seems to be rather of an office sanctioned by the King with local, rather than kingdom-wide responsibility.

The town of Molina bordered the kingdom of Aragon. During the civil war between Pedro of Castile and his bastard brother Enrique Trastámara, the town decided to petition Pedro IV of Aragon to accept them under his protection. The Jews of Castile had much to fear from the openly anti-Jewish policies of Enrique and had also suffered from the oppression by his brother, Pedro. Molina's Jews as well as their Christian neighbours, opted to defect to Aragon. The document is interesting for many reasons, not least because it reflects a dialogue between the Christians, Jews and the

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<sup>51</sup> See earlier pp. 75, 81.

<sup>52</sup> Baer, *JCS*, p. 315.

<sup>53</sup> See below p. 92 concerning the convocation at Valladolid in 1432.

<sup>54</sup> See above p. 85 and n.39: המלך צוה בכתבו שיפרעו הקהל אלף זהובים



Muslims of the town. Amongst other things it implies that it was the King who determined how much tax was to be paid by the *aljama*. The Jewish petitioner, Samuel Abolafia, requested:

That furthermore because they (the *aljama*) are desolated, may it be your favour to absolve them from all taxes for five years, so that the community may be restored.<sup>55</sup>

The petition raised other matters of general concern to the citizens of Molina. Those presenting it to the King included not only Samuel Abolafia, but also Bartholme Sanchez, the *alcalde* and *procurador* of Molina and two public scribes of the town and three other Christian inhabitants. The Christians swore loyalty to their new King ‘swearing fealty on the cross’ (*jurament de fieldat sobre la cruç*), and Samuel ‘swore on the Book of Moses and the Ten Commandments and sovereignty of the Creator’ (*juro sobre el libro de Moysen e los diez mandamientos dela ley a entendimiento del creador*). The Christian representatives also pleaded for themselves, the Jews and the Muslims to be freed of taxes. The Muslims were few (*que sean pocos*) and the King was asked that they not be ‘separated from the rest of the townfolk’ (*que sean conceiales e no apartados por aliama*).

Samuel, described in the petition as the ‘representative of the *aljama* of the Jews of the said town of Molina (*procurador de la aliama delos judíos dela dita villa de Molina*), made many other requests on behalf of his community and of himself. They included a plea that the Jews of Molina should not be forced to wear the badge (*senyal*).<sup>56</sup> He furthermore requested:

That disputes between Jew and Jew be judged by their *adelantados* ..... and that any party that appeals should appear before don Samuel Abolafia and that he acts as rabbi and auditor of Jewish disputes as the *rab en la corte* of the King of Castile used to do, in civil and criminal disputes, and that you confirm the *azquama*, which is to say, the

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<sup>55</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.1, doc.292, p. 423: ‘por quanto son estroydos que sea vuestra nercet delos quitar de todo pecho hasta V anyos, por que se pueble esta aljama, como solia’, 22 May 1369, San Mateo, A.C.A. Reg. 917 ff.104v-107v.

<sup>56</sup> There is evidence that although the wearing of the badge was irregularly enforced in Aragon, this was not generally required in Castile, see Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, p. 156; Ruiz, ‘Judíos y Cristianos’, p. 81.

ordinance, which was made in Seville and which has been used up until now by the Jews of Castile.<sup>57</sup>

The King subsequently agreed to this and to Samuel's request that his office should be for life and should pass to his descendants, so long as they had the aptitude to do this:

We grant the office of rabbi and auditor of disputes between Jews ... to you Samuel and after your death to those who are your descendants in direct line ..... according to the usage and custom of the rabbi in the King's court in Castile.<sup>58</sup>

Samuel petitioned the King to exempt not just himself from all taxes for his lifetime, but also his brothers, one Jucef Abolafia, his nephew Mosse el Nieto and Rabbi Juceff, 'as other Jews have done in your kingdom, for the service that we have given to you'. It is clear from this how those seeking power and were among the most wealthy, also sought exemption from taxation for themselves and their kin. This problem of royal privilege, already highlighted in earlier responsa, is again exposed by this petition and would surely have aroused the resentment of those households who had to meet the annual tax levy of 8,000 mrs. It is possible that Samuel and his relatives saw freedom from taxation as a just recompense for obtaining a 'tax holiday' for their community. A much later document shows how far this practice was held in contempt by those drawing up a comprehensive agreement that would be binding on the Jews throughout the kingdom.<sup>59</sup>

The extracts from the petition of the citizens of Molina hint that a more authoritative Jewish figure may perhaps have held office in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. References to an earlier 'ordinance of Seville used by the Jews of Castile'

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<sup>57</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.1, doc.292, p. 424: 'quelos pleytos que hoviere judio con judio, que sean judgados por sus adelantados ..... por ante don Simuel Abolafia e que usa por rab e oydor delos pleytos delos judios de Molina segund que usava el rab en la corte del Rey de Castella, assi en pleyto criminal como en cevill, et que les confirmedes la *azquama* que quiere dezir ordenacion, la qual fue feyta en Sevilla e usavan por ella hastaqui los judios de Castiella'. For *azquama* read *haskama* (communal agreement).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425: 'atorgamos el officio de rab e ohidor delos pleytos delos judios..... a vos dicho Samuel e apres muert vuestra a los qui descendrien de vos por drecha línea..... qual officio usedes en la dicha villa segund ha acostumbrado de usar rab en la cort del rey de Castiella'.

<sup>59</sup> See below p.94.

and to ‘usage and custom of a Castilian *rab de la corte*’, might indicate the existence of such a personage.

Should the performance of such a rabbi appointed by the Crown prove unsatisfactory, he might be replaced by another by order of the court. This is apparent from a privilege granted to Rabbi Hahym (Chaim) by Don Pedro, archbishop of Toledo and the King’s chancellor in 1388. Don Çulema Alfahar had previously acted as *juez* (judge) over all the Jews in the archdiocese of Toledo: ‘for he was appointed as your rabbi in the archbishopric of Toledo and surroundings’ (*que en el dicho arzobispado de Toledo e sus comarcas fue puesto por vuestro rab*). He had, however, ‘absented himself to live permanently elsewhere, there to spend his earnings’ (*ayan ocasion de yr a otras partes a espende lo que tienen*). The chancellor made clear his prerogative to appoint a new man in his place:

Therefore it is our obligation to remedy this situation in the *aljamas* of our towns and places so that justice be provided ..... and considering that Rabbi Hahym, our physician, is a man of sound lineage, prudent and good and well educated ..... therefore being confident of his wisdom, we give him to you as your judge.<sup>60</sup>

The appellation *vuestro rab* here, does indicate royal appointment. But there is no indication that this appointment extended R. Hahym’s jurisdiction beyond the boundaries of the Toledan archdiocese. The term ‘*rab en la corte*’ or ‘*rab de la corte*’ in the fourteenth-century records may be taken to denote an individual who held his appointment, however limited in scope, from the King or his minion rather than having been elected by his own community. In his discussion of the appointment of Jewish community leaders in the late thirteenth century, Romano found no evidence for an individual who held authority from the King over all the Jews of the Castile.<sup>61</sup> In this, he takes issue with Baer, who believed that Rabbi Todros ben Yosef Halevi Abulafia held such a favour from Alfonso X.<sup>62</sup> Romano had no access to the rabbinic responsa

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<sup>60</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol 2, doc.241, p. 228, ‘Por ende a nos pertenesce de proveer e poner el remedio que cumple en las aljamas de las,nuestras villas logares, por que ayan cumplimiento de justicia .....confiando de la su buena discreción, diemos e damos vos le por vuestro juez’. A.H.N Toledo, Catedral, papeles leg.634.

<sup>61</sup> David Romano, ‘Alfonso X y los judíos: problemática y propuestos de trabajo’, *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 15 (1985), pp. 151-177, at p. 176.

<sup>62</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol 1, p. 119.

and came to the erroneous conclusion that the common members of the *aljama* had no say in the community's administration.<sup>63</sup>

The archbishop's preoccupation with Hahym's lineage and good standing may indicate that he came from a line of scholars, or of men who had served the King or their own community in the past. The hereditary nature of many of the appointments of Jews at the court has been alluded to previously. It was also desired by those aspiring to acquire favour from the King in their own communities, as is seen in the petition of Samuel of Molina to the King of Aragon. The privileges of exemption from taxation would have been significant in the creation of individual wealth that diffused through families and over generations.

The most complete and persuasive evidence for an office of *rab de la corte* with authority over all the Castilian communities derives from a much later document with Hebrew date of Iyar 5192 (22 April 1432). Because of the long established traditions of Jewish communal government, its contents throw light on the problems inherent within the *aljamas* throughout the preceding century and on the evolution of administrative practice in the reign of Juan II. The document is written in Judaeo-Castilian (in Hebrew lettering) and is incomplete. It has five sub-sections dealing with Talmud Torah (religious instruction), the administration of justice and appointment of judges (*dayanim*), informers (*m'sirut and malshinut*), taxation, and the laws of dress and adornment.<sup>64</sup>

It is a record of the convocation in the great synagogue of Valladolid that was convened by 'the noble Don Avraham, *rab de la corte*, of the lord King'.<sup>65</sup> This was Avraham Bienveniste who had been appointed by the King as court rabbi, chief judge and overseer of the taxes of all the Jews in the kingdom.<sup>66</sup> The assembly included men of learning from certain of the *aljamas* (*kehilot*) and *omres buenos* (sic), 'que andan b'hatzer adonainu ha-meleh' (who attend the court of the Lord our King).

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<sup>63</sup> Romano, 'Alfonso X', p. 175.

<sup>64</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol 2, doc. 287 (Judaeo-Castilian): pp. 280-298. Paris, Bibl. Nat., ms. Hebr. No. 585 f.1- 21.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281: 'cuando se juntaron en vezes el sar ha-nehbad don Avraham rab dela corte del dicho señor rey': the transcriptions from Hebrew letters are my own.

<sup>66</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol 2, pp. 259-270.

The text indicated that in times past:

The Kings had granted permission to heads of each *kahal* to make laws and *takanot* and make sensible paths for their members to follow.<sup>67</sup>

This suggests that laws and taxes may have been determined previously at a more local level. The statute of 1432 lamented that:

Since that time no *takana* at all has been made by which the *kehilot* should conduct themselves ..... so much harm has been done to the *kehilot* and disturbances in their order.<sup>68</sup>

A different situation prevailed here from that of a century earlier. Then, scholarly opinions in the form of the responsa were sought over cases of administrative or legal doubt. In the section of the 1432 statute that dealt with taxation, issues of equitability and of avoidance of tax payment are discussed, just as they had been in the earlier responsa. In the formulation of the new *takana*, the representatives clearly expressed the interests of the Crown to protect its Jewish revenues. The intention of R. Avraham and his colleagues was to impose order and fairness on the taxation of the communities and that intention clearly converged with the interest of their King.

So, when individual Jews went to live in other communities, seeking to pay fewer taxes, this not only increased the burden on their fellow *pecheros*. It also reduced royal income.

Some of them go to reside in the lands of other princes because of the exemptions that they claim there. So .... the lands of the King are depopulated and ....this is a disservice to the King and damages the *kehilot*.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol 2, doc. 287 p. 281: 'en todos los zmanim (*times*) pasados .... fueron mitkanim takanot kolelot u-godrim g'darim ciertos ..... vaha-melekhim ha-kadmonim hayu not'nim reshut l'rashei ha-kehalot vahaomdim aleihem pora ordinar y seer mitkanim u-bereru derakhim hegonim asher yelkhu bahem'.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 'e de tiempos aca non se fizo takana clal sh'yenhagu bah ha-kehilot.....ciertos de lo cual b'avanut se pelean muchos daños enlos kehilot v'kilkul b'sidreihem'.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292: 'e algunos van a morar a algunos lugares de señores por francquezas algunas que fazian... por donde se despueblan los lugares realengos.. lo qual es deservicio del dicho señor rey e viene dello grand daño alos kehilot.'

The new *takana* outlawed every exemption from tax of both men and women, whether it be through a privilege from the King himself or from any lord or lady or any official of the Crown.

The oppression of ordinary members of the community and of the poor by men of power and influence is condemned in the document. Bullying apparently extended even to those entrusted with compiling the register of taxes (*enpadronadores que reparten los pechos*):

Thus they frighten them and cow them into lightening the amounts they are to pay even to the extent that the *enpadronadores* delete them, listing just those they want listed and this is great oppression and injustice and strengthens the hand of the powerful.<sup>70</sup>

The community was permitted the imposition of two sanctions in matters of tax avoidance and of bullying by the more powerful members. The guilty might be excommunicated and expelled (יהיו מוחרמים ומגודים) or named and shamed in the presence of all of the congregation and before the Holy Torah in the synagogue on *Shabbat T'shuvah* (the Sabbath between New Year and Day of Atonement).<sup>71</sup>

## Tax records and the economic status of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Castile

Like the Muslims, the Jewish *aljamas* were taxed separately from the Christian townsfolk, yet their contribution to the royal fisc was far greater than that of their Muslim neighbours and was sufficiently large to be a major preoccupation for the Crown. Historians have estimated that within the Crown of Aragon, Jewish revenues constituted 22% of the royal income from taxation in 1294.<sup>72</sup> Until now, it has been impossible to reach a figure for the kingdom of Castile. However, the recent transcription of revenue accounts of the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, has allowed a similar calculation to be applied to them. Direct comparisons of the contributions to royal income by each of the three communities are now possible,

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295: 'por donde mepahdam u-mor'am... mekilim dela cuantia que son mehayavim de pagar... e este es gran ol v'gazal v'gorem l'ha'zvik yadei ha-notenim hatima b'erez hayyim'.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol 1, p. 179

although these are most comprehensive for the reign of Sancho IV, and less so for the second half of the fourteenth century.

The royal accounts of the *Repartimiento de Huete* were compiled in 1290 by the archbishop of Toledo, Gonzalo Pérez, at the behest of Sancho IV. The preparation of the register is thought to have originated with the King's *mayordomo mayor* who was, until his execution in 1288, the Conde Lope Díaz de Haro.<sup>73</sup> It is therefore possible that his Jewish *almoxarife* Avraham el Barchilón also played some significant part in its formulation.<sup>74</sup> The preamble to the register named three Jews from Jerez, Córdoba and Niebla, and charged men appointed by the bishopric to find one other from Jaen, who were to collect the taxes from the *aljamas* of the frontier (Andalusia). If these men failed to agree amongst themselves, they were to consult *don Dauí Abudarhan, viejo del aljama de los judíos de Toledo* to resolve any dispute.<sup>75</sup> The many layers of administration of the tax revenue are apparent and all of them, from the elders and the *berurim* of each community, through the four men appointed by the archbishop, to Abudarhan the *viejo de Toledo* and the *almoxarife* at the court, were Jews.

The register originated in the Cathedral of Toledo and more than twelve editions have been published since that of Asso y del Río in the eighteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Carrete Parrondo's edition is based on the previous versions and corrects a number of the discrepancies between them.<sup>77</sup> All of these editions, however, lack detailed accounts for the provinces of León and Andalusia, though some more recent publications have rectified these deficiencies. The work of Hernández has examined the extant accounts of all of the different communities of Castile between 1287 and 1292 and, together with other studies, it provides an important tool for a comparison of the economic situation of all three faith communities in Sancho's kingdom.<sup>78</sup>

The chancellery published accounts almost annually at this time. The numerous disbursements to his vassals are recorded in these accounts and may reflect Sancho's

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<sup>73</sup> For which see chapter II, p. 51.

<sup>74</sup> Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. XIV

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138; Parrondo, 'Huete', p. 126.

<sup>76</sup> Asso y del Río, *El ordenamiento de leyes*: The original ms: AHN de Madrid, Clero, paps., leg. 7218, num. 4 September 1290.

<sup>77</sup> Parrondo, 'Huete', pp. 121-125.

<sup>78</sup> Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey*, 2 vols.

concern that his nobles and *caballeros* be paid and be prepared for his planned offensive to capture Tarifa in 1292. The detail preserved in the registers is unique for thirteenth-century Castile and Ladero Quesada has suggested that no similarly detailed accounts are known before the fifteenth century. This was because of a lack of concern for the preservation of fiscal records, which may have been discarded once they had served their purpose; a further reason may be that many records were destroyed as a consequence of war and disorder.<sup>79</sup>

A further reason, however, for the sparse documentation of the royal accounts was the lack of a fixed royal archive. In the absence of a single central archive, documents were carried around the country as the court moved from place to place and this was so even under an administration recently reformed by Alfonso XI.<sup>80</sup> Though by his mandate of 1329, records were to be held in one of four notarial houses, the systematic conservation of revenue accounts did not occur until the reign of Juan II in the early fifteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

Although fewer fourteenth-century registers are available for study, a 1379 *cuaderno* of Enrique II survives, though it is far less comprehensive than Sancho's *libros de cuentas*. It nevertheless provides information about taxation in the period immediately following the Trastámaran civil war and constitutes a valuable source for comparison with the registers of the previous century.<sup>82</sup> Monetary comparisons that span a century are difficult especially because, as already mentioned, the changes in the value of the currency and therefore of the cost of living varied greatly throughout this period. However, direct comparisons between the revenues to be collected from Jews and from their Christian neighbours does still permit limited speculation about wealth of communities and even population numbers, wherever the differences are sufficiently large. In addition to information about the relative tax contributions made

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, Prólogo, p.XIII (introduction by Miguel Ladero Quesada).

<sup>80</sup> Moxo, 'La sociedad política', pp. 316-318: Moxo believes the poor documentation of royal accounts was due to the lack of an 'authentic royal archive'. This was despite the efforts of Alfonso XI to reform his administration through the appointment of *letrados*. These men with a secular legal education replaced many of the Jews who had hitherto occupied these offices and were competent to manage the increasingly complex administration. See also Moxo, 'La promoción política', p. 26.

<sup>81</sup> Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol.1, p. LXIX. The remarkable preservation of Sancho's accounts may have been fortuitous since the chancellor was archbishop of Toledo and the records remained in the cathedral archive until modern times.

<sup>82</sup> Julio Valdeón Baroque, 'Un cuaderno de cuentas de Enrique II', *Hispania*, 26 (1966), pp. 99 -134.



by the respective communities, therefore, it should be possible to detect any large fluctuation in community size or prosperity following the ravages of the civil war.

### 1. The *libros de cuentas* of Sancho IV (1287-1294)

The accounts of revenues received from all of the regions of the kingdom were recorded under the general headings of the bishoprics (*obispados*) of Castile, of León, Trassierra (including the western Extremadura as far south as Badajoz), Murcia and la Frontera (Andalucía). The *repartimiento de Huete* of 1290, showing taxes received from the Jews, did not detail the incomes from individual *aljamas* of León nor of the frontier but gave the following total revenues from the Jews for these regions:

León	218,300 mrs. <sup>83</sup>	Frontera	191,898 mrs
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The income from Murcia is not mentioned. The capitation tax, referred to as *tiene en cabeza* or *encabezamiento* is the sum that equates to the *martiniega*, one of the direct taxes (*rentas ciertas*) levied on the Christian communities.<sup>84</sup> The *aljamas* did not pay the ecclesiastical tax (*tercia eclesiástica*, 2/9 of which was ceded to the Crown as the *tercia real*). Instead, as has been previously noted, each Jewish *pechero* paid the Church the fixed tribute of 30 *dineros* (equivalent to 3 mrs.) which was also termed the *decima* or *diezmo*. Of this the Crown took one-half ‘*e tomamos los desta moneda mr. y medio*’.<sup>85</sup> The *repartimiento* also details the extraordinary taxes levied on an irregular basis by the Crown, the *serviçios*, and these were cited separately from the ‘*en cabeza*’ tax in the register.

The total annual revenues from the Jews of the whole of Castile may be computed from the figures given for 105 individual *aljamas* over the years 1286 (*reparto de Palencia*) to that of 1290:

1286: 2,520,000 mrs	1287 – 1289: 2,160,000 mrs	1290: 1,947,780 mrs
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If one adds to the 1290 revenue *en cabeza*, the *serviçio* of 450,000 mrs levied by Sancho in 1291, the total tax burden of all of the *aljamas* of the kingdom for 1290-

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<sup>83</sup> The registers generally combined together León with smaller revenues of the Trassierra.

<sup>84</sup> There is an instance where the Jewish taxes were referred to as a *martiniega*: ‘los judíos solien pechar convusco en los quatrocientos moravedes de la martiniega que soliedes dar’, see earlier p. 82. For an explanation of the *rentas ciertas* and other taxes see Hernández, *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. LXXXI.

<sup>85</sup> See earlier p. 79 and Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol. III, doc.257, p. CLIII, 14 July 1289.

1291 was 2,397,780 mrs.<sup>86</sup> Only a relatively small portion of the Jewish tax revenue came from León and Andalucía at this time. Whereas the income from the *aljama* of Toledo in 1291 was 216,505 mrs., that from Seville in the *cuenta de Johan Mathe* of 1294, was only 115,333 mrs. The total revenue of the Jews of the frontier recorded in this document, was 21.6 percent of all *rentas ciertas* of the frontier collected by Mathe.<sup>87</sup>

Hernández has provided an analysis of all the direct revenue income (*rentas ciertas*) to the Crown for Castile-León for 1290, enabling an assessment of the proportion derived from the Jews. For Castile alone the figures are:

Castile: total income 3,615,968 mrs of which the *aljamas* supplied 1,515,141 mrs

León: total income 1,079,892 mrs of which the *aljamas* supplied 218,200 mrs.<sup>88</sup>

Thus the Jews provided approximately 42 percent of the *rentas ciertas* of the Crown in Castile, 20 percent of these revenues in León and 21.6 percent of the frontier.

Throughout the kingdom, this percentage was 34 percent which was even higher than the 22 percent that Baer had calculated for the kingdom of Aragon.<sup>89</sup> An important caveat must attach to these figures, in that these sums do not take account of the *serviçios* nor of the tributes to the Church paid by Jews (*diezmo*) and Christians (*terçias ecclesiásticas*), nor of the many other taxes, direct and indirect, that were collected on an annual basis.<sup>90</sup>

There is less information about the revenues taken from the Muslim population (*mudéjares*) but the sums were much smaller. In León they amounted to 1,187 mrs and in Andalucía to 8,610 mrs, therefore only 1 to 5 percent of the Jewish contributions in these regions.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder*, p. 80. The data published by Amador de los Ríos showed a total tax income of 2,801,345 mrs. even excluding León and Andalucía. Some of his figures are erroneous however and do not correspond to later editions of the register, see earlier p. 78.

<sup>87</sup> Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. 494. from an original *cuaderno* AHN, ms 985B, f.1v. The revenues from the *aljamas* of Seville, Niebla, Écija, Córdoba and Jaén totalled 197,333 mrs and from the whole of the frontier including the Jews was 910,425 mrs. (p. 506): For the 1294 *cuenta de Johan Mathé*, see also Ballesteros, *Historia de Sancho IV*, vol. III, doc.583, p. CCCXCV.

<sup>88</sup> Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. LXXXVII.

<sup>89</sup> See abovep. 94, n.72.

<sup>90</sup> These included taxes on the mines, on pasturage, levies on the transportation of goods and the sales tax (*alcabala*) amongst others.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.CXXXIII; Ladero Quesada, 'Fiscalidad y poder', p. 76

## 2. The *cuaderno de cuentas* of Enrique II (1379)

The record of accounts that was drawn up for Juan I is based upon outstanding debts owed to the Crown in 1378, the last year of the reign of his father, Enrique II. The information about sums owing to the Crown is much less detailed than that of Sancho's reign nearly a century earlier, but is nevertheless of interest. The content of the manuscript, *legajo 407* in the *Archivo General de Simancas*, suggested to Valdeón Baroque that royal finances may have been further centralised in a *Casa de Cuentas*.<sup>92</sup> It also permits a limited comparison of Christian and Jewish revenue contributions at the end of the Trastámaran civil war, a conflict in which Enrique had used anti-Jewish tropes as propaganda in his campaign against his half-brother Pedro.

During the conflict Enrique had demanded a ransom of 1 million mrs. from the Jews of Burgos (1366) and then later that year, the same sum was demanded from the Jews of Toledo to coincide with the King's triumphal entry to the town.<sup>93</sup> Further demands were made on this community in 1369 in revenge for their previous resistance to Enrique, requiring them to sell their assets and to give him 880,000 mrs. or be imprisoned and suffer torture, starvation and thirst until they complied.<sup>94</sup> The conclusion of hostilities (1369) therefore enables us to examine possible effects of the war and of the King's ransoms on the Jewish communities. A significant reduction in revenue might reflect impoverishment of the *aljamas* or losses caused by the plague or by movement of fearful or disaffected communities to other parts of the peninsula.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Valdeón Baroque, 'Un cuaderno de cuentas', p. 101. The record is also notable for the paucity of Jews in high offices of Enrique's treasury. Some names such as that of Samuel Abravaniel appear in connection with large debts that he owed to the king 'lo que deve de la debda que don Abravaniel devie al rey es esto ..... 300,000mrs.' p. 129

<sup>93</sup> Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 44 and see chapter IV, p. 149 of this dissertation.

<sup>94</sup> Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, p. 572, in *Archivo de la Catedral de Toledo*, 1369 'que los tenga presos é bien recabdados é les dé tormentos, é non les dé a comer nin á beber'.

<sup>95</sup> Or a transfer of sovereignty as in the case of Molina's shift of allegiance to Aragon referred to above, p. 88.



Figure 2. Bishoprics of the Castilian Extremadura<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Modern boundaries, map found at:  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Comunidades\\_de\\_Villa\\_y\\_Tierra.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Comunidades_de_Villa_y_Tierra.svg)

The neighbouring bishoprics of Osma and Sigüenza in north-eastern Castile provide a useful indication of Jewish and Christian tax revenues in Sancho's reign and of how this changed after the accession of Enrique II (Figure 2, Tables 1 and 2).

Communities	Christian Martiniegas <sup>a</sup>	Jewish capitation*
	<b>1292</b>	<b>1292</b>
Osma	6,000	14,510 (4,536)**
Sant Estevan	12,096	16,861 (5,271)
Soria	46,776	31,351 (8,544)
Roa	6,000	6,085 (1,365)
Ágreda	5,100	3,549 (1,251)
Magaña	1,850	-
Aza	-	2,129 (1,410)
Sant Pero	3,900	-
Aguilar	1,080	-
Cervera	4,800	-
Calatañazor	8,400	-
Total	<b>96,002</b> (Obispado de Osma)	<b>80,485 (22,377)*</b> (Obispado de Osma)

Table 1: Revenues of the *aljamas* and *martiniegas* of the Christian communities in the Bishopric of Osma, 1292

<sup>a</sup> libro de rentas 1292.<sup>97</sup> \**repartimiento de Huete* \*\**servicios*

Simply comparing revenues derived from the capitation taxes (collected in November as *martiniega* from the Christian townsfolk and as *cabezamiento* from the Jews), there appears to be near parity between the two communities in the registers for the whole bishopric of Osma compiled for Sancho. The total *martiniega* for the two neighbouring bishoprics of Osma and Sigüenza was 205,322 mrs. and for all of the *aljamas* within both regions was 187,777 mrs.

<sup>97</sup> Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. 50, 'Extremadura'.

The data for 1378 is rather fragmented since a global sum for only three of the *aljamas* of the two regions are cited in the *cuaderno* (Table 2):

Table 2: Revenues from Christians and Jews in the *Cuaderno* of Enrique II (1378).<sup>98</sup>

Obispado de Osma <sup>a</sup>	<i>Aljamas</i> of Soria, Atienza, Almazán
100,500 (96,002*)	16,750 (100,868*)

<sup>a</sup> without the *aljamas* \*totals in 1292.

The revenue for the bishopric of Osma, received as *martiniega* from the Christian towns, is nearly the same as it was a century earlier. There is no indication that it included the contribution of the Jews and that of the *morería* was discounted from the final sum. It appears from the revenue provided by the three *aljamas* that their contribution had fallen by 84 percent from that of 1292.<sup>99</sup> This would indeed imply a drastic change, either in the population numbers or wealth of these communities, or both. Valdeón Baruque postulates that this was the global tax paid by these three communities, however, this conclusion may not be warranted.<sup>100</sup> The text of the *cuaderno* suggests that this sum was a *serviçio*, rather than a *pecho en cabeza*: ‘the tax-collectors should compensate the King for the *servicios* of the Jews’.<sup>101</sup> In that case the appropriate comparator should be the *serviçio* tax paid by these communities in 1292 which amounted to 27,026 mrs.<sup>102</sup> This is greater than that demanded in 1378, but since the *serviçio* was a special tax it cannot be directly compared with what had been taken by the King a century earlier.<sup>103</sup>

The diminished revenues taken from the Jews of Ávila towards the end of the fourteenth century present a stark contrast with their previous prosperity. As has already been mentioned, much is known of that city at the end of the thirteenth and

<sup>98</sup> Valdeón Baruque, ‘Un cuaderno de cuentas’, p. 122, p. 133.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133, In fact a sum of 50,250 mrs is given as payment over a period of the preceding three years.

<sup>100</sup> Valdeón Baruque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 56 and n.94.

<sup>101</sup> Valdeón Baruque, ‘Un cuaderno de cuentas’, p. 133, ‘otrosi an de fazer emienda al rey los rrepartidores del serviçio de las aljamas de los judíos’.

<sup>102</sup> Parrondo, ‘Huete’, pp. 137, 138.

<sup>103</sup> However in 1290 the *serviçio* levied on the Jews could be calculated uniformly as 20 percent of the total tax demand. It may have been different for the Christians and according to O’Callaghan the tax was irregular varying between 6 and 20 percent of the annual payments, O’Callaghan, ‘The Cortes and Royal Taxation’, pp. 135-143. If the proportionality of *serviçio* to *pecho en cabeza* persisted into Enrique’s reign, it may be speculated that the actual *pecho en cabeza* owed by the three communities in 1378 would have been 83,750 mrs, still a significant reduction from a century earlier.

beginning of the fourteenth centuries. The tax paid to the Crown in 1290 was 59,592 mrs. by some fifty households.<sup>104</sup> However a letter of privilege, confirmed by Juan I in 1384, suggests a considerable change in their condition.<sup>105</sup> Juan granted to the dean and chapter of Ávila Cathedral 3,000 mrs. that were previously received annually by the Crown as the capitation tax of Ávila's Jews.<sup>106</sup> This was intended to replace the 3,000 mrs. of *martiniega* tax owed by the Christians that the King had previously reapportioned to the monastery of Santa Clara.

The sum of 3,000 mrs. is therefore equal to only 5 percent of what had been taken annually from the Jews in Sancho's reign. The *martiniega* demanded of the Christians of Ávila in 1292, was 26,400 mrs. 'en cabeza'.<sup>107</sup> The text of the privilege does not, however, suggest that the sum previously apportioned by the Crown to the cathedral from the *martiniega* constituted the whole of the revenue contribution of the Christians at that time.

It has been suggested that following the war Enrique's enmity towards the Jews changed and that the Crown once more became their protector.<sup>108</sup> Yet the tenor of Juan I's letter to the cathedral reflects a harsh and punitive attitude to Ávila's Jews that is reminiscent of Enrique's ransom demand in Toledo. If the money were not forthcoming, they were to be seized and imprisoned and their goods and chattels sold to provide the needed capital.<sup>109</sup>

The revenues of some other communities also changed significantly in comparison with the sums recorded in the registers of 1290-1292 (Table 3):<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Parrondo, 'Huete', p. 128; see earlier p. 82.

<sup>105</sup> Pilar León Tello, *Judíos de Ávila*, (Ávila: Instituto "Gran Duque de Alba", 1963), doc. 11, p. 36, A.H.N. Clero. Ávila Catedral, Pergs. carpeta 32, num. 3.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 'que ayedes et tengades de nos de aquí adelante en cada anno, los dichos tres mil mrs. para siempre jamas en la cabeça del pecho que los judíos de la dicha çibdat de Avila nos an a dar de cada anno'. p. 39.

<sup>107</sup> Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. 71, f.49v.

<sup>108</sup> Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 53.

<sup>109</sup> León Tello, *Judios de Ávila*, doc. 11, p. 40: 'et si bienes desenbargados non les fallaren, que les prendan los cuerpos et los tengan presos et bien recabdados et los non den sueltos nin fiados fasta que fagan pago de los dichos tres mil mrs. cada anno'. See similarly in Toledo, n.94.

<sup>110</sup> Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, pp. 55-56; Parrondo, 'Huete'; Valdeón Baroque, 'Un cuaderno de cuentas', p. 109.

Table 3: Comparison of annual accounts of *aljamas* 1290-1292 versus 1378

<i>Aljamas</i>	<b>1290 - 1292</b>	<b>1378</b>
Zamora	37,400	6,500
Aguilar de Campóo	8,600	3,000
León	218,200	8,000*
Belorado	8,500	4,000
Trujillo	3,769	6,000
Alcalá de Henares	6,800	8,000
Murcia	22,414	25,000
Olmedo	31,659	0
Coca	4,200	0
Pedrasa	4,100	0

In three cases, the registered amount either increased (Alcalá and Trujillo) or was relatively unchanged (Murcia). Otherwise the sums to be collected from the Jews fell significantly at the later date, especially in the cases of León and Zamora. In the case of three *aljamas*, Olmedo, Coca and Pedrasa, no Jews at all were living there by the time of the 1378 register ‘*otrosi de los aljamas de los judíos de Olmedo e Coca e Pedraza e Castroxeriz ..... que non Morava y judio ninguno*’.<sup>111</sup>

The *cuaderno* recorded a revenue of 115,100 mrs. from Toledo although this included the *aljamas* of both the Jews and the Muslims. This would be of particular interest since Toledo always constituted the largest centre of Jewish population in Castile and the unspecified contribution of the Muslims would have been small. The revenue from the *aljama* of Toledo had been 216,505 mrs in 1290 but one cannot conclude a halving of its wealth since the 1378 document records these sums as ‘*del servicio de las aljamas de los Judíos e moros*’. As was the case with Osma and Sigüenza, this may mean that the capitation taxes were much higher.

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\* i.e: the Kingdom of León: for the sum of 8,000 mrs see: Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p.56. That there may have been such a drastic reduction in revenue is supported by the *cuaderno*'s citation of 2,795 mrs ‘de lo que recabdo del servicio de las aljamas de los judios e moros del regno de León’. This would be consistent with a putative servicio of 20 percent on a pecho of 8,000 mrs.; Valdeón Baroque, ‘Un cuaderno de cuentas’, p. 126.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.



The most important information about the wealth of the Jewish community at the start of Juan I's reign is the global sum to be collected from all the *aljamas*:

The King further commands that the aforementioned seven hundred thousand *maravedís* that are due from the aforementioned *aljamas* of the Jews of his kingdom should be given in *dineros* to Gomes Garcia his treasurer (*thesorero*) at his dwelling in Madrid as required by Gomes Garcia's vassals and if not that they and their possessions be seized.<sup>112</sup>

The Crown required the money to be collected in three instalments (*terçios*) of 233,333 mrs. each instalment.

A comparison between the 700,000 mrs., levied on all of the Jews of the kingdom at the end of the civil war, with the 2,397,780 mrs received by Sancho IV, suggests either a significant impoverishment of these communities or a reduction in population numbers. A further element to be considered is the previously mentioned devaluation of the coinage over the period studied. The rate of exchange of the *maravedí* against the Florentine florin had been 5 mrs. 8d. in 1250, 25 mrs. in 1358 and 30 mrs. in 1370.<sup>113</sup> According to MacKay both Enrique II and his son Juan I 'frantically debased the coinage in an attempt to meet the financial strains imposed by war'. The chronicler, López de Ayala, wrote of Enrique:

But these coins caused a great deal of harm for a considerable time because things became so expensive that a *dobla* was worth three hundred *maravedís*, a horse cost sixty thousand *maravedís* and so it was with the prices of other things.<sup>114</sup>

The cost of a horse as quoted by Ayala may be a useful measure of the cost of living, however his observations must be treated with caution. His monetary equivalence for the *dobla* coin appears an order of magnitude greater than that documented elsewhere.<sup>115</sup> Carlé suggested that during the reign of Fernando IV a horse cost 200

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>113</sup> See Spufford, *Money and Its Use* in n.5 earlier.

<sup>114</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Enrique II de Castilla* (BAE, 1923), III, p. 3: 'pero por tiempo dañó mucho la dicha moneda, ca llegaron las cosas a muy grandes prescios, en guisa que valia una dobla trescientos maravedís e un caballo sesenta mil maravedís e asi las otras cosas'. See Angus MacKay, *Money, Prices, and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Castile* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981), p. 94.

<sup>115</sup> See earlier n.9.

*maravedís* in Castile.<sup>116</sup> Even an inflation rate of thirty fold (reducing Ayala's figures by a factor of ten) may seem unlikely. There is, however, evidence from the exchange rate calculations already cited, that there was further massive devaluation shortly after the publication of the 1378 *cuaderno*. By 1390 the rate for the Castilian currency had reached 70 mrs. to the Florentine florin, so that the *maravedí* was worth one-fourteenth of what it had been one hundred and forty years earlier.<sup>117</sup>

As has been shown, the lack of clarity in the 1378 document makes direct comparisons difficult between its tax revenue figures and those of Sancho's more precise records. Various taxes are often combined in the *cuaderno* (ecclesiastical *tercias*, *diezmos*, *monedas* and the *alcabala* sales tax). The capitation tax can be used, however, in direct comparison of a few of the urban communities over nearly a century. An examination of presumptive *martiniegas* for two towns and one larger bishopric demonstrates a remarkable stability of tax income (Table 4). The assumption is that these were capitation values but, only in the case of Segovia, is the revenue actually specified as being a *martiniega*:<sup>118</sup>

Table 4: Stability of the *martiniegas* in the 14<sup>th</sup> century

Christian communities	1290-1292	1378
Bishopric of Osma	96,002	100,500
Ávila	26,400	25,529
Segovia	24,800	21,000

The stability of the tax demanded from the Christian inhabitants contrasts not only with the reductions in that of some of the *aljamas* but also with the global contribution of all the Jews of Castile- León. As already indicated, the latter had fallen to 700,000 mrs. annually, 30 percent of the global figure of 2,397,780 mrs in Sancho's reign. This may argue against the changes being caused by an external event such as the plague and more in favour of a reduction in Jewish wealth and population following the depredations of Enrique de Trastámara and the civil war.

<sup>116</sup> María del Carmen Carlé, 'El precio de la vida en Castilla del Rey Sabio al Emplazado', *Cuadernos de historia de España*, XV (1944), pp. 132-141, 137.

<sup>117</sup> Spufford, *Money and Its Use*, pp. 292, 299, 314.

<sup>118</sup> Valdeon Baroque, 'Un cuaderno de cuentas', p. 117.

## Royal revenue from Jewish debt: ‘*Las Entregas de los Judíos*’

It is uncertain how Jewish communities acquired the wealth that enabled them to meet the huge tax demands made by the Crown. Undoubtedly some of this was derived from money-lending, though this was a less important source of livelihood for Jews in Castile than it was in other parts of Europe. Baer believed most loans were ‘petty transactions’ or consumption loans, and that the records of many such small transactions would not have been kept as they did not need to be notarised.<sup>119</sup> More recent studies of the money economy of Castile and Aragon have examined Jewish loan activity noting the involvement of Christian lenders as well as Jews in credit sales and monetary loans.<sup>120</sup>

It has been insufficiently emphasised by historians that the Crown profited from Jewish money lending in two ways. It was not a principal activity for most members of the *aljamas*, most of whom had a trade as is evident from the records of the *repartimientos* and from registers of habitation such as the *becerro* of residents compiled in Ávila in 1306.<sup>121</sup> The trade of many of the *vecinos* appears alongside their names in these documents. Nevertheless, a significant portion of their wealth must have derived from lending at interest, and in many transactions land or property of the debtor was surety for the loan.

The King was evidently the beneficiary of the wealth accrued by his Jews since without it they would be unable to meet the tax burden he imposed upon them. There was, however, an additional benefit which derived from the collection of unpaid debt. These collections were enforced either by direct appointees of the Crown (*porteros* or *entregadores del los Judíos*) or by officers of the municipalities (*alcaldes de los concejos*).<sup>122</sup> The sums that were thus obtained were termed the *entregas de las debdas*

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<sup>119</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 201 and see earlier, chapter II, pp. 57-58.

<sup>120</sup> Nina Melechen, ‘Loans, Land and Jewish Christian Relations in the Archdiocese of Toledo’, in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Robert I. Burns* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 185-215; Maya Soifer Irish, ‘The Problem of Old Debts: Jewish Moneylenders in Northern Castile (Belorado and Miranda De Ebro, Ca. 1300)’, *Sefarad*, 74 (2014). pp. 279-302; Milton, ‘Jews and Finance in Medieval Iberia’, p. 242.

<sup>121</sup> Pilar Laguzzi, *Ávila a principios del siglo XIV*, pp. 145-150. Learning a trade was encouraged by the rabbis since it not only led to the acquisition of wealth but also benefited bodily and spiritual health, see Simha Assaf, *Mekorot le-Toldot ha-Hinukh be-Yisra'el : (Mi-Teḥilat Yeme-ha-Benayim 'ad Tekufat ha-Haskalah)*, (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1925), vol. 2, p. 59 ‘ והמלאכה מלבד תועלת ריזה הממון שבה יש בה תועלת רפואת הגוף’

<sup>122</sup> Ciriaco López de Sílanes, *Coleccion diplomática calceatense* (Logroño: Comunidad Autónoma de La Rioja, 1985) doc. 14, Sancho IV, 1293: The discontent of the municipalities with Crown appointed

*de los Judíos* and the Crown received a portion of the money collected, which was 10 percent of the debt.

For the Jews do not recover their debts nor do my *entregadores* their *diezmo*.<sup>123</sup>

Though it is impossible to know how much individual Jews profited from their loan activities, Sancho's registers include a record of some of the sums that were collected by his officers (Table 5).<sup>124</sup> This does allow a calculation of these profits, though only of that obtained from debtors who had defaulted on their loans.

Though this has not been noted by previous historians, the *entregas* are sometimes listed as being granted to a Crown official also to include the taxes on *tafurería*, gambling ('*son puesta en esta guisa: A Garçi Ferrandez de Piña las entregas e la tafureria de Osma*').<sup>125</sup> In these case the specific contribution of Jewish debt is uncertain.

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officers and the concerns of the King with delays and interference with due process by the municipalities, show the importance attached to the sums involved. For which see Irish, *The Problem of Old Debts*, and Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. CXXXVIII.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. CXXXIX, n.109, *Carta real dada en Sevilla*, 8 jun. 1327; 'por que los judios non cobren sus debdas, nin los mios entrgadores su diezmo'; Melechen, 'Loans, Land', p. 203; Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder*, p. 78, n.90.

<sup>124</sup> Hernández, *Rentas del Rey*, vol 1, p. 135, Libro de 1292, ff.93r-94r.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56, f.38r.

Table 5: *Entregas de los Judíos* compared with other revenues ‘*en cabeza*’ (1292).<sup>126</sup>

<i>Aljamas</i>	Entregas	Total debt collected <sup>a</sup>	Capitation (J)	Martiniega (C)
Fuent Dueña	300	3,000	4,463	11,400
Cuéllar	300*	3,000	1,929	12,905
Peñañiel	300	3,000	6,597	
Atienza	1,000	10,000	42,434	
Ágreda	175	1,750	3,549	
Osma	110*	1,100	14,510	6,000
Uclés	1,000	10,000	28,514	
Buytrago	300	3,000	6,098	
Almoguera	200	2,000	4,588	
Corita	300	3,000	6,899	
Alcaraz	300	3,000	12,771	
Béjar	200	2,000	3,430	

\*these sums included an unspecified *taferuría* tax <sup>a</sup>based on the 10 percent *entrega*

## Conclusion

It has long been assumed that the tax revenues of Iberian Jews were considerable. However, a closer examination of these revenue streams in the kingdom of Castile is now possible using the published records of the late thirteenth century. These point to considerable variation in the proportions contributed by different parts of the kingdom. Thus the Jewish contribution ranged from 20 percent in Leon to 42 percent in Castile. The figures must be treated with caution since the revenues recorded in the *libros de cuentas* did not include many other indirect taxes or fines imposed on the citizenry. Though Jews did not pay the ecclesiastical *tercia*, they did pay an annual tithe to the Church in the form of the 30 dinero (3 mrs) exacted from all males over the age of sixteen years. This can now be seen to be a paltry sum compared to the overall *aljama* tax, though it may not have appeared so to the younger, or the poorer section of the community. Women and the indigent were exempt, yet communities had sometimes to be reprimanded by the Crown or Church for withholding the tithe.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135, Libro de 1292, ff.93r-94r.

There is sufficient documentation of the complex monetary system now to be fairly certain of the magnitude of the tax revenues and even to make more accurate predictions about population numbers than was hitherto possible. The value to the Crown of its Jewish population becomes ever more apparent from this analysis of their prosperity and from a comparison of all the three faith communities on a 'like for like' basis over a short time span.

Additional difficulties of interpretation arise later in the fourteenth century because of devaluation, yet the stability of remittance by some Christian communities over the century permits falls in Jewish revenue to be viewed in context. The fact that in some communities, such as Murcia, tax levels stayed the same or even rose should be investigated further and needs to be reviewed at further times following the disturbances of 1391.

Study of the *responso* of the rabbinical scholars shows the care taken by the elders of the *aljamas* to ensure an equitable distribution of the tax burden. The difficulties they faced are reflected in the anguished questions put to the rabbis by community leaders. The taxes imposed by the Crown were onerous not only for the Jews. They were so for all communities, reflected in complaints about taxation and exemption expressed by the townspeople through their *procuradores* and already mentioned in previous chapters.

The *aljamas* were small and tightly-knit social groups and it may be imagined that discontent turned readily to disillusionment and resentment. It is possible that discord arising in this way would have fuelled social problems and weakening of religious identity amongst some members of the communities. If so, these factors could have played some part in the large number of conversions which took place in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

## Chapter IV

# Social Pressures and the Portrayal of Jews in the Fourteenth Century

The violence that suddenly erupted against the Jews of Iberia in 1391 was a turning point for their communities.<sup>1</sup> The extent of the slaughter and the number of conversions precipitated by the violence have been hard to ascertain. Of particular interest is the sharp contrast the events present to the relatively peaceable existence of the Iberian Jewish communities over many centuries. Though long debated by historians, the reasons for such a dramatic rupture of *convivencia* remain unclear. In this chapter it is intended to examine the social circumstances of the Jewish communities in Castile through the fourteenth century and how these may have changed over time. The views of modern historians are discussed here together with the evidence from contemporary records, in order to question some of the widely held perceptions and misconceptions as to the causes for the rising hostility and violence against Jews.

A contemporary chronicle attributed the violence to the inflammatory preaching of the Archdeacon Ferrant Martínez. It might be expected that his invective against the Jews found a receptive audience amongst people who had suffered famine, pestilence and war throughout the preceding century. In this scenario, assaults against the Jews are seen as a culmination of social and economic pressures superimposed upon longstanding latent hostility. This hostility, it has been claimed, was further sanctioned by the anti-Jewish rhetoric used by Enrique Trastámara in his civil-war propaganda against his brother King Pedro the Cruel.

An examination of the contemporary record does not fully support these propositions. Although deteriorating socio-economic conditions played a significant part in the break-down of order in the kingdom, it will be shown that they were not a primary cause of the disruption of *convivencia*. Furthermore, it is hard to identify a

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<sup>1</sup> It is not intended to give a detailed account of the riots here. A comprehensive study of events in Aragon has recently been published, see Benjamin Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots in the Crown of Aragon and the Royal Response, 1391-1392* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

deliberate policy of Enrique to inflame the population against the *aljamas*, though this is often invoked as being integral to the evolution of the inter-communal violence.

The seemingly abrupt transition from co-existence to conflict in late fourteenth-century Castile serves as an excellent subject for the study not only of socio-economic factors, but also of the respective roles of popular and elite attitudes to the Jewish minority. Though widespread and with long-lasting effects on the integrity of the *aljamas*, the disturbances can be viewed as a symptom of an evolution in the Christian-Jewish relationship and as the culmination of changes in that relationship that had been occurring throughout the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries.

### Together or apart: Jews dwelling among Christians

The proposition that it was primarily the economic downturn and the social instability of the fourteenth century that precipitated violence against the Jewish communities of Castile can be contested from the evidence of the historical record. There was hunger and disease in the first half of the century and escalating social discontent directed particularly at elements of the governing municipalities.<sup>2</sup> Yet although Jews were targeted on a few occasions these sporadic outbursts figure little in the record in comparison to widespread and violent confrontations with local officials.

Demonstrating the absence of an event is always more challenging than documenting its presence. It is nevertheless possible to surmise a general lack of violence directed against Jews, when uprisings by the populace are known to have occurred repeatedly in urban environments with a significant Jewish presence. There is evidence, already cited in the previous chapters, for the prominence of Jews in the Castilian economy at all levels, and as we have seen, this was unpopular with the nobility and with municipal and ecclesiastical representatives in the Cortes. Therefore, it is all the more remarkable that the antagonism found so little violent expression at the level of the *gente menuda*, the disenfranchised urban and rural classes.

A key to the co-existence of Jews with their Christian neighbours in a time of urban turmoil may be found in the pattern of settlement of the minority groups within the

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<sup>2</sup> María del Carmen Carlé, 'Tensiones y revueltas', pp. 325-356.



towns as well as in the social factors responsible for the unrest. A study of urban demography reveals that, in some of the larger towns, Jews lived cheek by jowl with their Christian neighbours. Baer emphasised the extent to which Jews lived amongst Christians of the towns and cities, even where separate Jewish quarters existed.<sup>3</sup> If there had been deep seated animosity, whether religious, cultural or economic, such closeness would either have been unlikely or, if it existed, would have increased opportunities for conflict. Both the physical proximity and the relative tranquillity prevailing between the two communities in Castile during the early part of the fourteenth century, accords with Elukin's proposition that harmonious interactions between Christians and Jews in the medieval period were much more common than has generally been assumed.<sup>4</sup>

The best documented evidence for the living conditions of Jews, Christians and Muslims in a town of medium size, is provided by the town of Ávila. The *becerro* (census) of those living in church-owned property in the town was compiled by the town's bell ringer and scribe, Pascual Sánchez, in 1306. Around fifty householders cited as Jews or possessing Jewish names appear in the register which provides remarkable detail of location, structure of the dwellings and in many cases the occupations of the inhabitants and the rental paid.<sup>5</sup> Not only did all three confessional groups live as neighbours, they sometimes shared the same court-yard (*corral*). Laguzzi's contention that the majority of the Jews had no profession other than money-lending is not supported by the documentation, which indicates that many of the occupations listed were common between communities.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). See pp. 1-10.

<sup>5</sup> Pilar Laguzzi, *Ávila a principios del siglo XIV* and for the tax revenues of the *aljama* see chapter III, p.82.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150, and see Ruiz, 'Judíos y Cristianos', p. 75: Ruiz lists 18 occupations of Jews mentioned in the *becerro*.

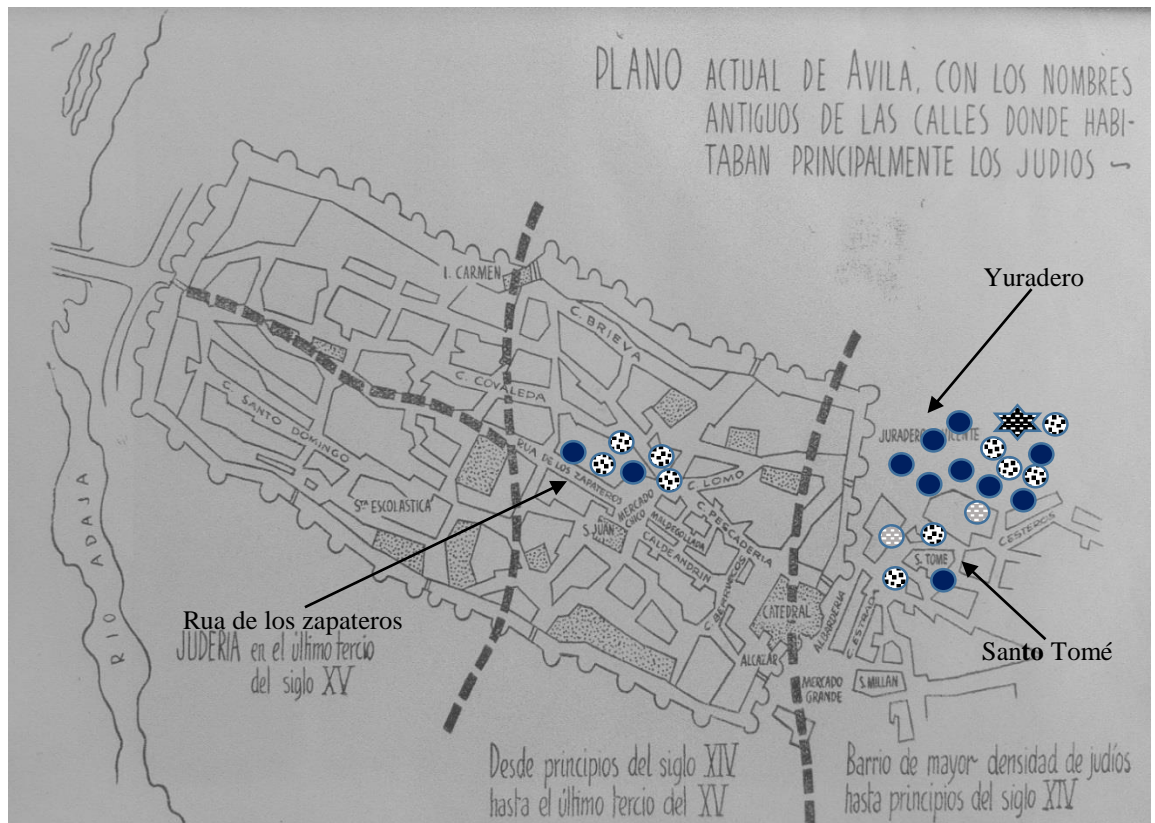


Figure 3. Town plan of Ávila with superimposed boundaries of the *juderías* in the 14th-15th centuries.<sup>7</sup> Households: ● Jewish ● Muslim ● Christian ✠ synagogue

The district of Santo Tomé was, according to León Tello, the '*barrio de mayor densidad de judíos*' until the early fourteenth century.<sup>8</sup> In a road leading from the plaza lived the carpenter Martín Díaz who possessed a house with fine doors (*con buenas puertas*). His neighbours were the Christian physician Master Johan, Abraham and Abdalla the painter:

The church houses in which lives Martín Lopez Carpenter, and behind are the houses belonging to the archdeacon Martín Díaz where Master Juan the doctor lives..... At the plaza entrance on the other side, Abdalla, painter, and opposite is Master Juan... in that plaza live both Abraham and Master Juan.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The town plan is from León Tello, *Judíos de Ávila*, p. 189. Only households whose location is clear from the *becerro* are superimposed.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Becerro de la cathedral de Ávila*, A.H.N. secc. cód. 879, fols. 93-121vº, p. 151, para: 2, 4, 5, in Pilar Laguzzi, *Ávila a principios del siglo XIV*: 'Et las casas de la elesia en que mora Martin Lopez Carpintero et a las espaldas las casas que tiene Martin Diaz (*el arcidiano*) en que morava Maestre Iohan fisico ....

Further on towards the centre of town on *calle del Lomo* lived the wife of Acenar Ximeno, a Christian, close by the houses of the Jew Yuçaf Davila. So close by, in fact, that water from the Jew's roof inundated Acenar's house:

At the end of calle del Lomo.... on the left side, the house owned by Acenar Ximeno's wife, touching the houses of Yuçaf Davila....water falls on it from Yuçaf Davila's roof and it should not.<sup>10</sup>

It seems that Acenar Ximeno himself shared a courtyard with a Jew and also the wife (or widow) of the presumably Christian Santius Munnoz:

The yard of Acenar Ximeno and Yaco and of the the wife, that was, of Santius Munnoz.<sup>11</sup>

Two cobblers, one Jewish and one Christian, worked side by side and the Christian also owned the upper floor (attic) of both houses. Their immediate neighbour was a Christian:

Then there is the cobbler shop of Samuel where he lives, next to cobbler Roman Perez, adjacent to the houses that were those of Domingo Nunnez. Roman Perez owns the attic of both shops.<sup>12</sup>

The Yuradero district lay just outside the walls of the town (Figure 3). It was home to a number of Jews: three blacksmiths (*ferreros*), a seamstress (*que affila los pannos*), and a milliner (*chipelero*).<sup>13</sup> However, Haziz the locksmith (*cerrageo*) was probably a Muslim and the houses of Christians, Gonçalo Gonçalez and Vidalez el Luengo, were also there. The Christian tenants, like some others, suffered from inundation (*cahe el agua en esta casa y a de aver canal poro oyya fuera*).<sup>14</sup> There was a single Jewish

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A la puerta la dicha plaza et de la otra parte Abdalla el pintor et de la otra las do morava maestre Iohan ..... La dicha plaça et la casa do mora Abraham et las dichas de maestre Iohan.?

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159, paras: 41, 42: 'En somo desta calle del Lomo... a man siniestra la casa que tiene la mujer de Acenar Ximeno que esta arrimada a las casas de Yuçaf Davila ..... Sobresta casa cae el agua del tejado de Yuçaf Davila et non debe y caer.'

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167, para: 84: 'El corral de Acenar Ximeno y Yaco y la mujer que fue de Santius Munnoz'. Yaco is probably Yacobo, other Yacos are certainly referred to as Jews: Yaco *zapatero* (cobbler) and Yaco Merchan *albadero* (saddler), p. 159, para: 48, and p. 160, para: 50 respectively.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.170, para: 100: 'Y luego la tienda en que mora Semuel çapatero con la otra cabera en que mora Roman Perez çapatero en linde de casas que fueron Domingo Nunnez ..... et el sobrado de amas tiendas tiene el dicho Roman Perez'.

<sup>13</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Ávila*, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Becerro*, p. 160, paras: 51, 52. 'water falls from this house and it needs a channel to divert the overflow'.

butcher close to the houses of Johan Nunnez, Sant Pedro and Yahuda Mucache. The synagogue and the rabbi's house were nearby, also situated in the Yuradero.<sup>15</sup>

The 1306 census of Ávila provides a unique insight into the location and proximity of Jewish, Christian and Muslim inhabitants. There is an extensive literature on other *juderías* of Castile in the late Middle Ages, though none provide quite the detail available for Ávila. Seville, a much larger city, was second only to Toledo in the size of its Jewish population. It numbered perhaps more than 200 Jewish families at the time of the 1290 tax registers of Sancho IV, and up to 500 in 1391. Many of them lived, worshipped and conducted their businesses close to the Christian community and beyond their own quarter.<sup>16</sup> A few wealthy families were awarded their own village in the post-reconquest *repartimiento*: it was situated just outside Seville at Paterna and was known as '*Paterna de los Judíos*'.<sup>17</sup>

Yet the situation of the Jewish artisan and of his household regarding their Christian neighbours in the fourteenth century was complex and non-uniform. It was dependent on factors such as geographical location, social status and the nature of the local economy. The situation of Jews in Ávila was different from that in Burgos where the majority of Jews live within the *judería*.<sup>18</sup> Physical proximity of Jewish dwellings to Christian neighbours was not the case everywhere nor was there necessarily equality of commercial opportunity. A series of charters and confirmations from the small town of Belorado in the Rioja region of Old Castile shows what restrictions were placed on Jewish commerce there. In the reign of Fernando IV (1301), no Jew was allowed into the centre of town for the Monday market, though a later ordinance of Alfonso XI indicated the opposite, with a stern warning about practices of the Jews:

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164, paras: 71, 72.

<sup>16</sup> González Jimenez, 'El fracaso', p. 137; Antonio Collantes de Terán Sánchez, *Sevilla en la Baja Edad Media: La ciudad y sus hombres* (Sevilla: Sección de Publicaciones del Excmo. Ayuntamiento, 1984), pp. 87-93; Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho, 'Notas para el estudio de la judería Sevillana en la Baja Edad Media (1248-1391)', *Historia instituciones y documentos* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1983), pp. 251-277, n255.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>18</sup> Ruiz, 'Judíos y Cristianos', pp.70, 74. Teofilo Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). p 277. Ruiz emphasises the extensive Jewish participation in artisanal activities, in a towns such as Ávila with an agricultural economy, compared with Burgos, dominated by a Christian mercantile class involved in long-distance trade and with a geographically distinct judería.

That they neither deal with, nor trade with old Christians\* since these Jews do many frauds and tricks ..... King Alfonso conceded to the town that the Jews should be separate and apart from the Christians and that they do not trade with them except each week on a Monday.<sup>19</sup>

So, although the pattern of Jewish habitation was not uniform throughout Castile at the beginning of the fourteenth-century, there is sufficient evidence to show that Jews commonly lived and worked outside the confines of a *judería*. The physical proximity to their Christian neighbours that this entailed must be borne in mind when considering the severe economic and social conditions and the rising discontent throughout the kingdom during the first half of the fourteenth-century.

### Desolation, plague and revolt

The great famine of 1315-1317 and the plague which followed in 1348 were environmental disasters which, despite their huge impact on Northern Europe, had less easily discernible effects on the population of Castile. The Black Death resulted in accusations and violence against the Jews not only in the north but also south of the Pyrenees in the kingdom of Aragon with many incidences of anti-Jewish disorders there and in Catalonia.<sup>20</sup> However the record is largely silent on accusations or violence against the Jews in Castile. Indeed recorded mention of the plague itself is mostly indirect. References to pestilence in the Cortes were mainly concerned with its presumed effects on depopulation, agriculture, and on the economy.<sup>21</sup>

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\* *cristianos viejos* this unusual reference has been dismissed as a transcription error or perhaps a deliberate change by later historians.

<sup>19</sup> Fidel Fita, 'La aljama hebrea de Belorado: documentos historicos ', in *BRAH* (Madrid: 1896), XXIX, pp. 338-45: 'y que no tratasen, ni vendiesen ni comprasen con los cristianos viejos, porque hacían los dichos Judíos muchos fraudes y bellaquerías .... el dicho Rey Don Alfonso concedió a la Villa, que los Judíos estuviesen apartados y separados de los cristianos viejos, y que no tratasen, ni vendiesen ni comprasen con ellos sino en los lunes de cada semana', p. 339, Valladolid, 2 septiembre de 1325 – f.328. See also Luciano Huidobro and Francisco Cantera, '*Juderías* Burgalesas (Beleña, Belorado)', *Sefarad*, 13 (1953), pp 35-59, 46; Maya Soifer Irish, 'The Problem of Old Debts: Jewish Moneylenders in Northern Castile (Belorado and Miranda de Ebro, ca. 1300)', *Sefarad*, 74 (2014), pp. 279-302.

<sup>20</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, p. 24; Valdeón Baroque, *Los Judíos de Castilla*, p. 24, n.16. Charles Verlinden, 'La Grande Peste de 1348 en Espagne. Contribution a L'etude de ses Consequences Economique et Sociales', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, XVII (1938), pp. 103-146, 144 n.4; Amada López de Meneses, 'Una consecuencia de la Peste Negra en Cataluña: El pogrom de 1348', *Sefarad*, 19 (1959), pp. 92-131.

<sup>21</sup> *Cortes*, vol. 2, Valladolid, 1351, VIII, 11, p. 136. The mortality was such that the cost of labour increased: 'en razón de los menestrales por que dizen que por la mortendad que ovo en el tiempo pasado, los dichos menestrales e los labradores que han a labrar las heredades, que son encareçidos', so the land was not worked and lay desolate, 'que son yermas las mas delas heredades'.

Charles Verlinden claimed that Castile was the last kingdom to be affected in the peninsula, and that the deaths from plague were less there than in Catalonia and in Aragon.<sup>22</sup> A more recent review by Vaca Lorenzo was critical of an account that, extrapolating figures from a register of the Bishopric of Palencia, calculated a mortality of one third of the population in Castile. The surviving records that directly attribute deaths to plague are scanty and mostly apply to Galicia. Evidence for Jewish deaths from plague in Toledo comes from six epitaphs in the Jewish cemetery and a single possible attack on the Jews of Arjona is unsubstantiated.<sup>23</sup> Thus, most evidence supports the often quoted view of a less severe incidence of plague in the Kingdom. It also fails to show significant scapegoating of and attacks upon the Jews.

The ravages of the Black Death may have been less intense, but the social situation in Castile in the first half of the fourteenth century was almost equally disruptive. Even allowing for the possibility of exaggerated claims by the *procuradores* agitating for reductions in taxation, the towns suffered decades of poverty, ruin and desolation. Severe rain and poor harvests, scarcity of labour, increased prices and scarcity of food stuffs were recorded repeatedly in the Cortes and in the chronicles of both Fernando IV and of his son Alfonso XI. The price of wheat rose at least five fold between 1300 and 1345 and in Andalucia by as much as ten-fold.<sup>24</sup>

References to pestilence and war are prominent in the *Poema de Alfonso XI* as is the wasting of the realm by bandits and by ‘those (the nobles) who ought to have aided me (the King)’:

Ffago razón	I have reason
de muy gran pesar aver:	to have great sorrow
toda Castilla e León	all Castilla and León
están para sse perder.	are to be lost

<sup>22</sup> Verlinden, ‘La Grande Peste’, p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Cabrillana, ‘La crisis del siglo XIV en Castilla: la peste negra en el obispado de Palencia’, *Hispania*, 28 (1968), pp. 245-258; Angel Vaca Lorenzo, ‘La peste negra en Castilla: aportación al estudio de algunas de sus consecuencias económicas y sociales’, *Studia historica: Historia Medieval*, 2 (1984), pp. 89-107; Ramon Bermejo-Mesa, *Edición y traducción castellanas de veinticinco inscripciones sepulcrales hebraicas: pertenecientes al cementerio judío de Toledo (Siglos XIII al XV)* (Madrid: C. Bermejo, 1935).

<sup>24</sup> Julio Valdeón Baroque, ‘Aspectos de la crisis Castellana en la primera mitad del siglo XIV’, *Hispania*, 29 (1969), pp. 5-24, 19. The climatic extremes in Castile ante-dated those that preceded the great famine in Northern Europe.

Las villas e las çibdades andan en bandería,	Villages and towns afflicted by banditry
Todos me ffazen pesar, Pestilencia e grant guerra;	Everything causes me sorrow Plague and great wars
Los que me devían ayudar Esos me corren la tierra.	Those who should have helped me They lay waste to my lands. <sup>25</sup>

Previously, in the reign of Fernando IV (1302), the chronicler had recorded the desperate situation brought about by famine:

That year there was a great famine in the whole land; people died in the streets of hunger and so great was the mortality among the people that they estimated that one quarter of the population died.<sup>26</sup>

It is notable that attacks on Jews are not reported throughout the late thirteenth and for most of the first half of the fourteenth centuries despite urban discontent erupting into violence in a number of towns.<sup>27</sup> An examination of the social background to these disturbances sheds indirect light on the concerns of the population about their situation. It suggests that they attributed little of their hardships to their Jewish neighbours.

Rather than the Jews, it was the officers of the municipalities who bore the brunt of popular resentment. Social historians have highlighted changes in the administration of the towns and in particular the strengthening in numbers and power of the *caballeros villanos*.<sup>28</sup> These non-noble knights possessed sufficient wealth to own a horse and arms and they played an ever increasing role in the running of the

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<sup>25</sup> Yo Ten Cate (ed.), *El poema de Alfonso XI* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1956), verses 107-109.

<sup>26</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey Fernando Cuarto*, cap VIII, p. 119: 'este año fué en toda la tierra muy grand fambre .... e fue tan grande la mortandad en la gente que bien cuidáran que muriera el cuarto de toda la gente de la tierra'.

<sup>27</sup> In Toro in 1283, there was an armed struggle between the *caballeros* and the *concejo* resulting in many deaths, in Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Alfonso Decimo*, LXXVII, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 447; José García de Cortázar, *La sociedad rural en la España medieval*, (México, D.F: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1988). See p. 244 for an estimation of numbers of *caballeros villanos* and their power in relation to the urban and rural population of land-owning *hidalgos* (noble knights), *pecheros* and *labradores* (peasants).

*concejos*. However the privileges and the powers they obtained from the Crown made them a target for urban discontent.

The influence in urban affairs acquired by the *caballeros* owed much to privileges granted by Alfonso X and his successors, such as those awarded in Burgos in 1256. The charter illustrates the extent of the exemptions granted not just to individuals, but extending to their families and household, indicating the importance the Crown attached to this emerging class.

I command that the *caballeros* who have the best houses in town, with wives and children..... that they be exempt from *pecho* tax.<sup>29</sup>

A number of historians have documented the power they wielded and how their status changed through the fourteenth century. In Burgos, by 1322 all officers and members of the *concejo* came from this class of men, and Alfonso XI's centralising reforms of 1345 ensured that his sixteen royally appointed officials (*regidores*) administered the city in the King's name.<sup>30</sup>

The civil administration of the towns was transformed over this period from a much earlier informal assembly open to all citizens (*concejo abierto*), to one that was closed and consisting solely of appointed officials (*concejo cerrado*). This institution was consolidated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a process that probably contributed to growing urban discontent. Ruiz is sceptical that the former, more inclusive, institution operated at all in the late Middle Ages and it is evident that there was an evolving social separation of the 'good men' of the towns (*ommes buenos*, *pecheros*) from the ruling oligarchy that included the *caballeros villanos*.<sup>31</sup> Numerous instances of civil disorder from the late thirteenth century onwards have been attributed to a combination of economic depression and alienation of the urban and rural population from a privileged elite, ever more closely associated with the authority of the Crown.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *MHE*, vol.1. XLV, p. 97: 'e mando que los cavalleros que tovieren las mayores casas pobladas en la villa con sus mujeres e con fijos .....que sean escusados de pecho.'

<sup>30</sup> Carlé, 'Tensiones y revueltas', p. 328; Ruiz, 'The Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities', p. 7; *Crisis and Continuity*, pp. 235-261 and above n.28.

<sup>31</sup> See below n.33 and Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, p. 184.

<sup>32</sup> Carlé, 'Tensiones y revueltas'.



A petition to the Cortes of Burgos early in the minority of Alfonso XI (1315) shows concern for the weight of exemptions further encumbering the *pecheros*, the common people, with an insupportable tax load and that it was a cause of country-wide desolation:

Since in some towns and places they have privileges and letters of favour from the Kings that they are exempt from taxation..... and after their death their wives and children are exempt..... so that the other *pecheros* are ruined and the lands are desolate and laid waste.<sup>33</sup>

In 1308, Fernando IV rode to Córdoba to quell a rebellion against the *caballeros*:

There was a great uprising in Córdoba of the people against some of the most honoured *caballeros* of the town ..... and he served justice on those who had started and had been leaders of this rebellion of the people, for there had never been such an uprising since the city had been in Christian hands.<sup>34</sup>

There is no indication that Jews were targeted in this rebellion, despite their considerable wealth, documented in the *Cuenta de Johan Mathe* of 1294. This record listed revenues to the Crown from Christians, Muslims and Jews of Córdoba some fourteen years before to the revolt. These were 94,620, 2,000 and 38,333 mrs respectively, evidence of the substantial Jewish contribution to the city's fiscal well-being.<sup>35</sup>

The chronicle relates that in 1322, the last years of the regency of Alfonso XI, it was upon the *caballeros* and their dependents that the townsmen vented their fury. The town of Segovia, according to its taxation revenues, was of similar size to Ávila. Its Jewish population, too, was of similar size and prosperity; in the royal accounts of

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<sup>33</sup> *Cortes*, vol.1, Burgos, 1315, XXXIX, 41, p. 227: 'otrosi porque en algunas villas e logares an privileios e cartas de mercedes delos reyes apartada miente de non pechar ..... e después que ffinan que sse escusan ssus mujeres e ssus fijos ..... que sse astragan los otros pecheros e sse yerma e sse astraga la tierra por ello.'

<sup>34</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Fernando Cuarto*, chapter XVII (1308), p. 164: 'e vino para Córdoba por razón que avia en la villa de Córdoba grand levantamiento del pueblo contra algunos de los caballeros mas honrados de la villa.....é el Rey fizo grand justicia en aquellos que falló que eran mercedores, que fueron comienzo é acuciadores deste levantamiento del pueblo, ca desde que la cibdad fuera de cristianos nunca tan grand levantamiento ovo como aquél'.

<sup>35</sup> Hernandez, *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol.1, p. 496, [Ingresos y gastos de la Frontera en 1294], f.3r-3v.

1292-1294 the Jews contributed 43,300 mrs to the exchequer compared to 24,800 mrs as *martiniega* of the Christian population.<sup>36</sup>

A great many people of the villages of Segovia gathered together and entered the city .... and came to the houses of Garci Gonzáles and Garci Sánchez, those two caballeros ..... in order to kill them.<sup>37</sup>

There was a popular uprising in Seville too at this time, with the ejection from the city of many of Infante Felipe's officials, the *caballeros* and the *alcalde mayor*. As in Córdoba and in Segovia, there is no mention of any harm to the Jewish population of Seville. The *aljama* was second in size to that of Toledo, was much wealthier and more numerous than in Segovia, and contributed 17% of the city's total tax revenue at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

The chronicler summed up the state of the kingdom in 1322, towards the end of the long minority of Alfonso XI. He indicated the popular nature of the discontent referring to '*algunas gentes de labradores á voz comun*' as those responsible for the many revolts:

Those having power, took the King's revenues and kept about them many men,.....in some such towns for this reason, some of the peasants rose with one voice and killed some of their oppressors.<sup>39</sup>

Violent uprisings by the townspeople were not, however, confined to those directed at the *caballeros*. There are records that indicate a threat of confrontation and also of actual violence against Genoese merchants and money-lenders settled in Seville since the twelfth century. Well established within their own quarter of the city, they were of considerable importance to the Crown and their money-lending activities may have

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62, libro de 1292/f.42v, p. 164, libro de 1290/f.18v.

<sup>37</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Alfonso Onceno*, XXXV, p. 196, 'juntarónse grandes gentes de los pueblos de Segovia et entraron en la ciubdat... et aquellas gentes fueron a aquellas casas de Garci Gonzalez et de Garci Sanchez, los dos caballeros ..... por los matar,' indicating the likely involvement in the riot of the rural population of the surrounding countryside.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 196; *Las Rentas del Rey*, vol. 1, pp. 494-495, 1294: Cuenta de Johan Mathe, ff.1v-2v. Derechos y rentas del rey: Arcobispado de Sevilla: 550,186 mrs, pecho de los judíos de Sevilla: 115,333 mrs.

<sup>39</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Alfonso Onceno*, XXXVII, p.197: 'los que avian el poder el tomaban las rentas del Rey et mantenían con ellas grandes gentes.....en algunas villas destas a tales levántanase por esta razon algunas gentes de labradores á voz de común et mataron algunos de los que los apremiaban'.

The passage goes on to say that many left their lands and fled to Aragon or to Portugal as a consequence of oppression and the dangers they faced, of robbery and death from marauding *robadores*.

been even greater than that of the Jews. Certainly these interests extended beyond large public loans that financed Castile's military adventures to small loans granted to private individuals.<sup>40</sup> An entry in the *Liber iurium genuensis* from 1281 shows that Alfonso X was aware of the antipathy and the threat to this community and sought to protect it:

No-one should dare to act contrary to the privileges I grant to the community of Genoa ..... if they do so they will incur my anger and a fine of one thousand marks of new money and in case of injury the fine is doubled.<sup>41</sup>

The King's concern was well founded as is seen from a pardon given to the citizens of Seville following a violent confrontation and deaths of Genoese in 1303:

Because through your agreement with the Genoese ... you avoided war between myself and the Genoese and that you compensated the Genoese ....for the assault and for the deaths and for everything that happened.<sup>42</sup>

In this state of near anarchy and with an aggrieved population burdened with heavy taxation, there existed large and prosperous Jewish communities as shown by their large tax returns to the Crown. Many of the townsfolk amongst whom the Jews lived and worked, would have held debts to their Jewish neighbours and in their desperation

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<sup>40</sup> Ruth Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 1-2; Ramon Carande, 'Sevilla fortaleza y mercado. Algunas instituciones de la ciudad, en el siglo XIV especialmente, estudiadas en sus privilegios, ordenamientos y cuentas', *Anuario de historia del derecho Español* (Madrid: [A.G.E.S.A.], 1925), pp. 233-401, pp. 291-295. Their privileged position in the collection of debts was confirmed by Pedro I, see Luis Vicente Díaz Martín, *Itinerario de Pedro I de Castilla: estudio y regesta* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1975): 'por la que confirma a los genoveses el privilegio de asentamiento en Sevilla, dado por Fernando III conciéndoles otros nuevos como no ser llamados mas que por portero de corte, primacia en el cobro de las deudas', 1350, agosto 5 Sevilla, doc.38, p. 154.

<sup>41</sup> *Liber Iurium Republicae Genuensis*, (Augustae Taurinorum: ex officina Regia, 1854). t.2: 'que negunno non sea osado de las de les pasar contra las franquesas que disen los mios privilegios que yo di al común de genoa los sobredichos ..... quello ficiesse aurie mi yra. Et pechar mie mille marchas de la moneda nueva et a los que tuerto irezibiessem todo el danno dublado', 1281, 9 gennaio, Cod. A. f.300, Cod C. f.448v.

<sup>42</sup> Nicolás Tenorio y Cerero, *El concejo de Sevilla. Estudio de la organizacion politico-social de la ciudad, 1248-1312* (Sevilla: 1901), XXXIII, p. 241: 'que fizierades vuestra avenencia con los genoveses ..... por desviar guerra e mal... e que aveiades fecho emienda a los genoveses segund la postura que aviades conellos de que teniades su carta de quitamiento assi de tomas como de muertes como de todo quanto y acaesciera'.

might have turned on them. This happened with the Genoese in Seville and so often occurred in similar situations elsewhere in Europe.

Yet such attacks are not recorded either in the chronicles or in the Hebrew literature of the period. The silence of the records on this matter is not proof that this violence did not occur, but if attacks had happened, it is likely it would have been recorded. The records often reveal hostility to Jews, especially with reference to court Jews and officials and to their money-lending activities. Yet they do not refer to confrontations with Jews in the early fourteenth century when the prevailing social tensions could have led to violence against their communities. This was true even when the misery of the townsfolk was escalated still further by climatic extremes that caused harvest failures and by the plague.

The evidence presented here does not support the argument that latent anti-Judaism needed only the pressure of economic crisis for it to be converted into violence. Valdeón Baroque's view was that 'it only needed the appearance of a profound economic crisis for it (anti-Semitism) to explode and materialise in a collective assault upon the *juderías* and murder of their inhabitants'.<sup>43</sup> Monsalvo Antón, in his assessment of the state of 'Hostilidad sin violencias' in the century preceding 1350, reached a similar conclusion: 'The Jews were hated not only for their religion or their customary occupations. The economic and social situation demanded a search for guilt and for solutions. In both cases, they thought of the Jews'.<sup>44</sup> It is apparent, however, that in seeking an answer to the explosion of violence against the Jews at the end of the century, it is necessary to look elsewhere.

### A changing rhetoric: Jews in the Marian literature

Negative stereotypes of Jews were common in the literature of Castile dating back to the thirteenth century and before, and there were regular reminders of Jewish perfidy from church councils, notably in the canons of the Council of Zamora alluded to earlier in this work.<sup>45</sup> This literature would have been inaccessible to the majority of the population and it is uncertain whether ecclesiastical pronouncements and prohibitions by the Church would have cascaded down to the level of the common people.

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<sup>43</sup> Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución* p. 214.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter II of this dissertation, p. 59.

Ecclesiastical restrictions and conciliar decrees were mostly unsupported by the Crown and in the absence of a popular culture antagonistic to the Jews and Muslims, people were perhaps largely accepting of their neighbours. Indeed, such acceptance is implicit in the exhortations of Church councils which repeatedly pointed to the dangers that free social intercourse posed to the faith of the Christian population.

Secular literature and poetry may have had a wider reach, although the level of literacy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries is uncertain. Lawrance concluded that the diffusion of books, even to seigneurial households, was slow in Castile in comparison with that found beyond the Pyrenees.<sup>46</sup> Literacy did not depend solely on the possession of books, since works were read aloud and the images that accompanied the texts were accessible even to those unable to read. Nevertheless, contemporary literature does little to inform about popular perceptions of Jews, other than by extrapolation. The poetry, and especially the ballads, current from the mid-fourteenth century, are more likely to reflect the contemporary image of the Jew current among the general population.

The portrayal of Jews in the Castilian literature of the mid thirteenth century is instructive at many levels in understanding the evolution of Christian attitudes towards the Jews. Two works of Marían verse, the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* of Gonzalo de Berceo (1220-1264) and the *Cantigas de Santa María* of Alfonso X (1252-1284), were virtually contemporaneous and in a few cases relate similar tales about Jews that themselves had much earlier antecedents. The differences in emphasis and tone between the works have been reviewed in recent scholarship, which has also sought an explanation for the apparent contradiction between El Sabio's negative stereotyping in the thirty *cantigas* concerning Jews, and his comparatively tolerant treatment of them during his reign.

Both the *Milagros* and the *Cantigas* deal with enmity between the deicide Jews and Christianity. Their content centres on the Virgin Mary and their tone harks back to centuries of Christian anti-Jewish polemic. Alfonso's work put greater emphasis on the redemptive nature of conversion than that of Berceo.<sup>47</sup> For the purposes of this study, both works provide a bench-mark with which the verse and prose of the following

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<sup>46</sup> Jeremy Lawrance, 'The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62 (1985), pp. 79-94.

<sup>47</sup> Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. 237.

century may be compared. The many illustrations of Jews that accompanied the *cantigas* have also been studied, in order to probe the true nature of Alfonso's attitude to the Jews. Finally, since one section of the Alfonsine law code, the *Siete Partidas* deals extensively with the Jews (*Partida 7: titulo XXIV*), attempts have been made to demonstrate consistency between the King's literary compositions and his law-making endeavours.

It is significant that the references to Jews in both the *Cantigas* and the *Milagros* go beyond describing their blind obstinacy that denied Christ as Messiah and rejected the purity of the Virgin. The Jew is depicted as cruel and vengeful, as avaricious and in league with the Devil. The tale of the deposed bishop Teófilo and of his pact with the Devil was known in various forms for two centuries even before the ninth-century Latin version of Paul the Deacon. Berceo depicts the Jew as an intermediary of the Devil, who introduces the desperate Christian to Beelzebub:

<p>§18 Do morava Teófilo en essa bispalia avié y un iudío en essa iudería; sabié el, cosa mala toda alevosía ca con la huest antigua avié su confradría.  Era el trufán falsso pleno de malos viçios Sabié encantamientos e muchos maleficios Fazié el malos çercos e otros artefiçios Belzebud lo guiava en todos sus offiçios</p>	<p>In that bishopric where Theophilus lived there was a Jew in the judería; He knew evil things, every treachery for he had his brotherhood with the Devil  The false trickster was full of evil vices he knew enchantments and many machinations The evil one drew circles and did other artifices Beelzebub guided him In all his work.<sup>48</sup></p>
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<sup>48</sup> Gonzalo de Berceo, in Juan Carlos Bayo, Ian Michael (ed.), *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (Madrid: Castalia, 2006), *Milagro* §18. The translation is from Gonzalo de Berceo, *Miracles of Our Lady*, transl. Richard Mount, Annette Cash, Annette (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), p. 131. For a discussion of the Jews' connection with both Satan and magic see Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983). p. 66. The Theophilus legend was key to the depiction of 'the Jewish magician explicitly as operating through the agency of Satan' against unsuspecting Christians.

The Jew's association with sorcery is clearly stated in the poem. The diabolical magic of the Jews had an enduring appeal and appeared later in a more topical form in ballads and other accounts from fourteenth-century France and Castile.

The part played by the Jew in Alfonso's version of the legend is less prominent. In *cantiga* §3, the Christian Teófilo is simply counselled by him to sign a letter with the Devil in which he denies both God and the Virgin.<sup>49</sup> More explicit association with the Devil appears in *cantiga* §109. A Christian wayfarer having been saved from an ambush of several devils, seeks refuge with the Virgin in a nearby church. A passing Jew asks the devils why they do not pursue his people:

<p>§109: Un judeu os conjurou por Deus, que dissessen porque os judeus non fillavan. Diss' un demo: Ca meus sodes e punnades de me servir ....</p> <p>por esto non vos fazemos mal ca sodes todos nossos sen al'</p> <p>mal-los que do batismo o sinal tragen, aqueles imos percodir</p>	<p>Then a Jew required them, in God's name to tell him why they did not possess Jews</p> <p>The Devil replied: "Because you are already mine and work to do my will".</p> <p>and so we do not do you any harm because you are unquestionably of our number while those bearing the sign of baptism those are the ones we pursue.<sup>50</sup></p>
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Of the total of 427 *cantigas*, Bagby has classified the 30 songs that concerned Jews into five categories: those that portrayed the Jews as enemies of Christ, as the Devil's disciple, as avaricious, a traitor or as a Christian convert. Discussing the anomaly of Alfonso's learned and often tolerant behaviour towards Jews as monarch and his portrayal of the malevolent Jew in his writings, Bagby sought to characterise the king as a man of 'flesh and blood, practical and swayed by the attitudes of his day'.<sup>51</sup>

Hatton and Mackay addressed the same apparent paradox, but reached a more

<sup>49</sup> *The Oxford Cantigas de Santa María Database* at <http://csm.nml.ox.ac.uk/>: Theophilus, §3:2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* §109: 'The Possessed Man who was Exorcised at Salas'. The translation is from Stephen Parkinson, *Alfonso X, The Learned: Cantigas de Santa Maria: An Anthology* (Cambridge, Modern Humanities Research Association, 2015), p. 77.

<sup>51</sup> Albert Bagby, 'The Jew in the Cantigas of Alfonso X, El Sabio', *Speculum*, 46 (1971), pp. 670-688, 688.

moderate verdict on Alfonso's beliefs. The theme of conversion is prominent in many of these songs and these authors stressed the softening of the moral embodied in a number of those that mention Jews.<sup>52</sup>

A further difficulty in determining the attitude of the author of the *Cantigas* to the Jews, is presented by the many illustrations that accompany the text. The almost casual introduction of the Jew in *Cantiga* §3 is quite different from the overt demonic associations of the iconography. This satanic association is seen in the right-hand panel of Figure 4. In both panels the physiognomy of the Jew is that of the hooked nose and the florid black beard.

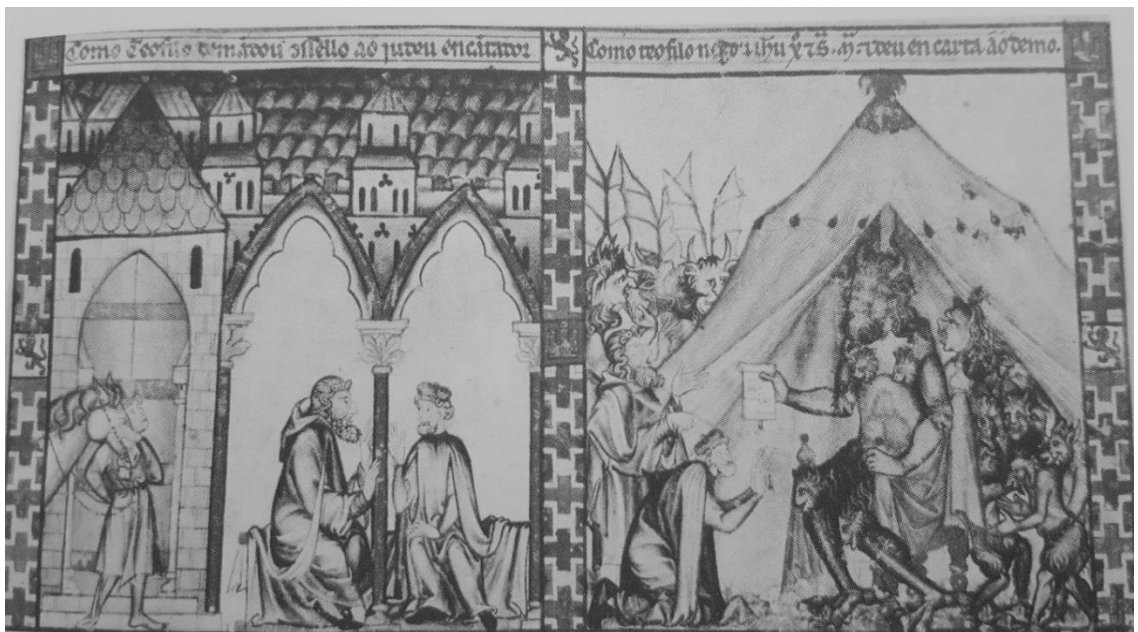


Figure 4. *Cantiga* 3 showing Teófilo being counselled by the Jew (left) and presenting his letter to Satan in the company of both the Jew and a company of devils (El Escorial, Ms. B. I. 1, f.8r).<sup>53</sup>

Opinion has been divided as to Alfonso's authorial control over the images which were probably added to the El Escorial MS some years after the composition of the verses. The detail has little correspondence to the *cantiga*'s written version. It seems rather more likely that they reflect a prevailing *topos* about demonic Jewry as expressed in

<sup>52</sup> Vikki Hatton, Angus MacKay, 'Anti-Semitism in the "Cantigas de Santa María"', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 60 (1983), pp. 189-199, at p. 193.

<sup>53</sup> In Paulino Rodríguez Barral, *La imagen del judío en la España medieval: el conflicto entre cristianismo y judaísmo en las artes visuales góticas* (Bellaterra Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Servei de Publicacions, 2008), p. 61.



the versions of the tale as composed by Berceo and by the Franciscan Gil de Zamora who wrote his own version of the story whilst at Alfonso's court.<sup>54</sup> Debate over Alfonso's underlying anti-Judaism is of less relevance when viewed in the context of the deeply rooted beliefs about Jewish perfidy and demonic associations.<sup>55</sup> More important is the extent to which such *topoi* may have been current amongst the population who were in close contact with their Jewish neighbours in daily life.

The redemption gained by those Jews who converted after they learned the lesson of the Virgin's mercy is to be seen in a number of the *cantigas*. *Cantiga* §4 (which appears as Berceo's *milagro* §16) provides an example of Alfonso's particular preoccupation with conversion, not shared by Berceo. A Jewish glassmaker, enraged by his son's participation in church communion, throws the boy into his furnace. The boy emerges unscathed and both *milagro* and *cantiga* attribute the miracle to the beneficence of the Virgin. The legend, of sixth-century Greek origin, appeared in many different forms before that of the French monk Gautier de Coincy and later on, Alfonso X, in the thirteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

In *cantiga* §4 Alfonso, like Berceo, delivers justice to the evil father, casting him into the furnace. But in his poem, the boy's mother now believing in Mary, is baptised together with her son:

§4	Por este miragr' atal log' a judea criia e o meñio sen al o batismo recebia.	Because of this miracle the Jewess believed, and the son was baptised without delay. <sup>57</sup>
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<sup>54</sup> Pamela Patton, 'Constructing the Inimical Jew in the Cantigas de Santa María: Theophilus's Magician in Text and Image', in Mitchell Merback (ed.), *Beyond the Yellow Badge: New Approaches to Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 233-256, at p. 249.

<sup>55</sup> Rodríguez Barral, *La imagen del judío*, pp. 59, 77.

<sup>56</sup> Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 8-27.

<sup>57</sup> Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 15-16 (Rubin's translation).



Figure 5. *Cantiga* §108. The boy with his head backwards clings to Merlin as his father remonstrates with the wizard. The assembled Jews are converted. ‘*Como merlin conuertia os judeus*’ appears as a caption above the illustration (El Escorial, Ms. B. I. 1, f.155v).<sup>58</sup>

In *cantiga* §108 the conversion theme is even more prominent.<sup>59</sup> A Jewish father mocks the Virgin before Merlin the Celtic wizard. The subsequent birth of the Jew’s child with his head turned backward is perceived by the mother and all the assembled Jews as a miracle which brings about their conversion, as shown in Figure 5. The symbolism of the child’s backwards-turned head and of the facial features of the father and of the converted Jews in the synagogue are loaded with significance in the illustrations that accompanies the *cantiga* in the Escorial MS. As both Lipton and Rodriguez Barral have pointed out, the long nose of father and son are in contrast with the gentile features of the seated Jews (and of the female figures, not shown here) and

<sup>58</sup> Rodríguez Barral, *La imagen del judío*, fig. 41

<sup>59</sup> *Cantiga* §108: ‘*Como Santa María fez que nacesse o fillo do judéu o rostro atrás, como llo Merlín rogara*’, in Andrew Casson, ‘*Cantigas de Santa María for Singers*’, at <http://www.cantigasdesantaMaría.com/>, 2015.

serve to indicate to the observer the facial distinction between the backwards looking or hooked nose and bearded Jew and the enlightened converts.<sup>60</sup>

The depictions of Jews in this and other tales within these two works have appeared in many versions before and after those of Berceo and of Alfonso, and have been extensively reviewed.<sup>61</sup> Alfonso's veneration of the Virgin and his attitudes to the Jews expressed in his law code, *Siete Partidas*, may be seen as coming together in the *Cantigas*. Burns and Bagby both portray Alfonso's works as an expression of his ambiguity towards Jews, 'an inchoate jumble of themes, inherently contradictory and dualistic in form'.<sup>62</sup> In the introduction to the *Siete Partidas* VII, titulo XXIV, ley I, Alfonso presented his own peculiar modification of the Augustinian view of the sufferance of the Jews in Christian society.

The reason that the church, the emperors, kings and other princes suffer the Jews to live among the Christians is this: that they live as if in eternal captivity and as a reminder to the people that they are descended from those that crucified our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup>

It is noteworthy that he placed this section immediately after a chapter dealing with soothsayers, sorcerers and mountebanks: 'De los agoreros, et de los sorteros, et de los otros adivinos, et de los hechiceros, et de los truhánes'. So in his section dealing with the Jews he states:

As we have spoken in the last chapter about soothsayers ..... which is a sort of rejection of God, being a way of seeking to be equal with him and to know his ways and his secrets, we wish now to speak of the Jews

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<sup>60</sup> Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2014), p. 185; Rodríguez Barral, *La imagen del judío*, p. 77.

<sup>61</sup> Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 8-27; Patton, *Constructing the Inimical Jew*; Lipton, *Dark Mirror*; Rodríguez Barral, *La imagen del judío*.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Burns, 'Jews and Moors in the Siete Partidas of Alfonso X the Learned: A Background Perspective', in Roger Collins, Anthony Goodman (eds.), *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict and Coexistence. Studies in Honour of Angus Mackay* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). pp. 46-62, 51; Bagby, 'The Jew in the Cantigas', p. 674.

<sup>63</sup> 'E la razon por que la iglesia e los emperadores e los reyes e los otros principes sufrieron a los judios bevir entre los cristianos es esta: por que ellos biviessen como en cativerio pora siempre e fuesse remembrança a los omnes que ellos vienen de linaje daquellos que crucificaron a Nuestro Sennor Jhesu Christo', in Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: VII, XXIV, ley 1*, p. 60.

who contradict and insult his wondrous and saintly deed of sending his son our Lord Jesus Christ into the world.<sup>64</sup>

This juxtaposition should not be viewed as incidental. Alfonso's thinking corresponds to the imagery seen already in Berceo's *milagro* §18 and throughout Marian literature. It equates the blasphemy of seeking to predict God's ways through magic and sooth-saying with the Jews' rejection of Christ. However his attitude to the conversion of the Jews, so evident in the *Cantigas*, is also clearly presented in the introduction to his section on the Jews:

That the Jews who do convert to Christianity should not be oppressed: and that the lot of those who do convert should be better than those who do not; and that punishment is merited by those who damage or dishonour them.<sup>65</sup>

It remains moot whether the author of the *Cantigas* actually held the strong anti-Jewish sentiments that were expressed in his works. Part of this uncertainty relates to the intimacy of his control over the writing of the poems and of the iconography. The extent of his authorship is disputed, especially with regard to those legends that were in already in wide circulation and with which scribes and illustrators would have been familiar.<sup>66</sup>

The diffusion of the Marian poetry is relevant to an understanding of popular perceptions of Jews. There is indirect evidence that the portrayals of Jews in the *Milagros* and the *Cantigas* may have reached a wide audience. Since the monastery of Gonzalo de Berceo was close to the pilgrimage route to Santiago, the poems may have been read aloud or even enacted as entertainment for pilgrims.<sup>67</sup> The *Cantigas* were set to a musical accompaniment of 60 instruments and would have been performed at least

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57: 'Onde pues que en el titulo ante deste fablamos de los adivinos ..... que es como manera de depreciamiento de Dios, queriéndose egualar con él en saber de los sus fechos el las sus puridades; queremos agora aquí decir de los judíos que contradicen et denuestan el su fecho marivilloso et santo que el fizo quando envió a su fijo nuestro señor Jesucristo en el mundo'.

<sup>65</sup> 'et cómo non deben seer apremiados los judíos que se tornen cristianos; et que mejoría ha el judío por se tornar cristiano de los otros que se non tornan; et que pena se merescen los que les fisciesen daño o deshonra por ello', in *Las Siete Partidas del Rey Don Alfonso el Sabio, cotejadas con varios codices antiguos por la Real Academia de la Historia*, (Madrid: RAH, 1807), VII, XXIV, p. 669.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Snow, *The Poetry of Alfonso X, El Sabio: A Critical Bibliography* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1977), p. 102; Rodríguez Barral, 'La imagen del judío', p. 77.

<sup>67</sup> Gonzalo de Berceo, *Miracles of Our Lady*, transl. Richard Mount, Annette Cash (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997): see Introduction, p. 13.

on feast days of the Virgin as Alfonso had decreed. The arched devices seen in Alfonso's iconography have been seen as depicting performances of the works. The concept of a 'theatre in the round' to accompany the sermons is highly speculative, but it is unlikely that these works and the images they portray were just confined to royal or monastic libraries.<sup>68</sup>

The inconsistency of Alfonso's attitudes to his Jewish subjects was apparent in his actions, as in his vengeful *captio* of Jewish assets at the end of his reign in 1280.<sup>69</sup> Such an action by a Castilian monarch would not be seen again until the accession of Enrique Trastámara a century later. The rhetoric that accompanied Enrique's actions against the Jews in the civil-war in the mid-fourteenth century, has been interpreted as expressing an agenda opposed to the Jewish minority. Examination of the record, however, suggests that his motive was more complex than one of an innate hatred of the Jews.

### The representation of the Jew as agent in the conflict between Pedro and Enrique Trastámara

The situation of the Jews changed during the struggle between Pedro and his half-brother Enrique that began shortly after Pedro's accession in 1350. The conflict had serious implications for the communities for reasons that will be shown to have been both political and cultural. The Chronicle is quite explicit in its descriptions of the support provided by Castile's Jews to Pedro, who was the legitimate heir of Alfonso XI. For the first time in history of Castile's Jews, the whole community suffered directly for its partisan adherence to one or other political faction.

The cultural shift that affected the Jews was more subtle, and was also the consequence of the civil war. Amador de los Ríos had no doubt about the hatred of the Trastámaras for the Jews and specifically about the adverse consequences for them

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<sup>68</sup> John Keller, 'Drama, Ritual and Incipient Opera in Alfonso's Cantigas', in Robert Burns (ed.), *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X, The Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990), pp. 72-89: Keller asserts that Alfonso intended the work as 'propaganda' to acquaint all his subjects with certain aspects of life and belief. See also John Keller, Richard Kinkade, *Iconography in Medieval Spanish Literature* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), pp. 7-9.

<sup>69</sup> See chapter I of this dissertation, p. 37.

once Enrique became king.<sup>70</sup> Graetz's opinion of Enrique was more measured and he concluded that 'Henry had no particular aversion to the Jews'.<sup>71</sup> Yet the Spanish historiography of the twentieth century has continued to portray the king as a propagandist who cynically used anti-Jewish tropes in order to divert popular opinion away from Pedro and towards his own illegitimate cause.<sup>72</sup>

It will be shown here, that there is little evidence for a deliberate programme on the part of Enrique to incite popular hatred against Jews. The evidence against this view is derived both from the king's actions and pronouncements following his victory over Pedro, and from misinterpretations of the available contemporary record. Much of the cruel treatment of the Jews and their negative portrayal in ballad and literature may be seen to have been derived from French or English sources. Attitudes to Jews in Northern Europe differed from those that had prevailed in Iberia for centuries and the surrogate involvement of Castile in the Hundred Years War between France and England had far-reaching consequences for its Jewish population.

#### *Pedro, the 'Jewish king'*

The representations of Pedro the Cruel as either illegitimate or a Jewish changeling were current during his lifetime and persisted well beyond the fourteenth century. Though the rumours are given no credence by modern historians and were not mentioned by Lope de Ayala (1332-1407), the chief chronicler of Pedro's reign, their provenance and the confusion they generate, even today, are worthy of examination.

The historical ballads, the *romances noticieros*, although they cannot be considered as objective witnesses to historical events, would almost certainly have been sung and had both a popular provenance as well as an audience amongst the general population.<sup>73</sup> The canon of Castilian balladry, the *romancero*, is unsurpassed in

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<sup>70</sup> Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, p. 225, 'quedaba en tal manera ejecutoriado el ódio que los bastardos de Alfonso XI abrigaban contra los descendientes de Judah, y no era para éstos dudosa la suerte que los esperaba bajo su dominio',

<sup>71</sup> Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1894). p. 125.

<sup>72</sup> Valdeón Baroque *Los judíos de Castilla*, p. 37; Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución*: 'the anti-Semitism of Enrique II and his followers was distinct from popular anti-Semitism: the bastard prince used anti-Semitism in his propaganda in order to dishonour his half-brother, in that way to gain popularity', p. 235. Estow also subscribes to this view, citing Enrique's 'anti-Jewish propaganda abroad', see Clara Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 229.

<sup>73</sup> Mackay, 'The Ballad and the Frontier', pp. 15-17. MacKay, however, is doubtful of the wide diffusion of these ballads whose origin may have been with minstrels of the frontier armies and whose influence was perhaps local rather than national; see also Michael Gerli, 'Seville and Córdoba', p. 143; Louise

Europe because of its size and its narrative intensity. It probably had its origins just before the civil war and Entwistle considered it to be of a strict historicity with only little appeal to the supernatural. The cycle of ballads of King Pedro was recited and sung at a time of an extreme factionalism which polarised the allegiances of Castilian society.<sup>74</sup> In their direct or indirect references to Jews, the ballads would have reflected societal attitudes pre-conditioned by a much older ecclesiastical and faith based literature.

The nine ballads of the *Romancero del Rey Don Pedro* include some with direct relevance to the character of Pedro and to his relationship with the Jews. A ballad, a *romance fronterizo*, about the siege of the Andalucian town of Baeza by Pedro refers to a person named Pero Gil. He is, today, most often assumed to be Pedro himself:

§37	Cercada tiene a Baeza es, arráez Abdalla Mir con ochenta mil peones, caballeros cinco mil; con él va ese traidor el traidor de Pero Gil. Por la puerta de Bedmir la empieza de combatir	Baeza was besieged there was the commander, Emir Abdalla with eighty thousand foot soldiers, five thousand mounted men with him, that traitor the traitor Pero Gil. At the Bedmir gate they commenced the battle. <sup>75</sup>
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The ballad is thought to relate an assault on Baeza in 1368, although no such event is described in Lope de Ayala's chronicle. At that time, however, Pedro was engaged in attacks on several towns in the south; Córdoba, Jaén, and Úbeda are all in the vicinity of Baeza and were loyal to Enrique.<sup>76</sup> These campaigns were fought by Pedro in an alliance with Muhammed V of Granada and according to the chronicle two of the

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Mirrer-Singer, *The Language of Evaluation: A Sociolinguistic Approach to the Story of Pedro el Cruel in Ballad and Chronicle* (Amsterdam Philadelphia: J. Benjamins Pub. Co, 1986), Introduction and p. 87.

<sup>74</sup> William Entwistle, *European Balladry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939). pp. 152-161.

<sup>75</sup> Paloma Díaz Más, Samuel Armistead, *Romancero* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1994), § 37, p. 182; Şizen Yiacoup, *Frontier Memory: Cultural Conflict and Exchange in the Romancero Fronterizo* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013), pp. 66-72. She cites the ballad as an example of linguistic transculturation and typical of the unstable nature of political allegiances in Iberia at that time.

<sup>76</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Pedro* (Madrid: BAE, 1919), 1368, IV-V, pp. 581-583.

towns were laid waste '*estas dos cibdades de Jaen é de Ubeda, que asi fueron destruidas*'.<sup>77</sup>

Pedro's alliance with the Muslim king was consistent with Enrique's projection of him as a godless tyrant, a protector of both Jews and Muslims. Pedro's supposed affinity to both these groups is most clearly set out in an ordinance to the municipality of Covarrubias one month after Enrique's self-coronation in the monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos (1366). Enrique proclaimed to the citizenry the justification for his usurpation of the Crown. Pedro's agenda had been to dispossess the nobility in favour of Moors and Jews:

We are aware of the destruction of the kingdom and of the land  
.... wrought by that evil tyrant, enemy of God and of his holy  
Church ..... raising up and enriching the Moors and the Jews  
and granting them possessions.

He promised to restore the social order, in the name of God and the Church:

... and to restore each and every one to his position and his estate  
and his rights  
  
so that God and his holy Church and his holy faith may  
flourish.<sup>78</sup>

This reference by Enrique to Jews and Muslims is possibly the only surviving documentation directly mentioning his personal antagonism to them. The statement was, however, couched in terms that outlined his desire to restore a social order disrupted by Pedro's administration of the kingdom. Although he referred to the faith and the Church, the tone of the ordinance supports the modern historians' view of Pedro as a monarch who sought to continue the reforms of the administration set in train by his father Alfonso XI.<sup>79</sup> If, as described by Viñas y Mey, these measures resulted in common cause between the urban merchants and the Jews, it also

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Luciano Serrano, *Cartulario del Infantado de Covarrubias* (Madrid: Silos, 1907), 'nos sentiendonos del destruyemiento de los regnos e de las tierras ... que aquel tirano malo enemigo de Dios fizo e fazia ..... acreçentando e enriqueçiendo los moros e los judíos e enseñorandolos', 'e poner a cada uno en su grado e en su estado e en su libertades porque Dios sea sevido e la santa Eglesia e la su santa fe sea acreçentada...'. Arch. Colegial de Cov., leg.VII, num 9, pp. 217-219.

<sup>79</sup> Maravall, 'Los hombres de saber', p. 381; Moxo, 'La promoción política', pp. 5-30.



antagonised the nobility, who saw their status and their possessions threatened by this alliance.<sup>80</sup> The ordinance set out Enrique's social agenda, even though his implied intention to exclude Jews from his administration in the future would not be fulfilled.

The precise date of the composition of the ballad *El Cerco de Baeza* is unknown; it came to attention only in 1588 with the publication of Gonzalo Argote's *Nobleza del Andalucía*.<sup>81</sup> It was probably composed between 1369 and 1389, the later date being that of the marriage of Enrique III to Pedro's grand-daughter Catalina de Lancaster.<sup>82</sup> The name, Pero Gil, found in the ballad, may have been a contemptuous nick-name for Pedro the Cruel. The claim by at least two modern authors that the name denoted the king's Jewish parentage is wrong.<sup>83</sup> Jewish descent was a charge levelled against Pedro, but it had nothing to do with Pero Gil, but rather appeared in the account of the French Carmelite friar Jean de Venette (d. 1370), the 'second continuator' of the Latin chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis:

Henry said that though Peter had obtained the kingdom a long time before, he had done so contrary to God and justice and that the kingdom belonged rather to him. He charged Peter with being a changeling not a true son of the dead king but a child of Jewish parentage secretly substituted by the queen for the daughter to whom she had just given birth.

So at least Henry strongly alleged. He also charged Peter with being a heretic and, worse, an adherent of the Jews and of their law who set at nought and condemned the law of Christ our Lord....<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Carmelo Viñas y Mey, 'De la Edad Media a la Edad Moderna. El Cantábrico y el estrecho de Gibraltar en la historia política Española', *Hispania*, 1, 5 (1941), pp. 41-105, 44: 'La burguesía y la judería pelean juntas a favor de Pedro I'.

<sup>81</sup> Gonzalo Argote de Molina, *Nobleza de Andalucía* (Sevilla: 1588). Libro segundo: f.237.

<sup>82</sup> William Entwistle, 'The Romancero del Rey Don Pedro in Ayala and the Cuarta Crónica General', *The Modern Language Review*, 25 (1930), pp. 306-326, 307. Catalina de Lancaster was Pedro's grand-daughter so any suspicion about her legitimacy would have implicated the purity of the royal lineage.

<sup>83</sup> María Jesús Lacarra, Juan Cacho Bleca, *Entre oralidad y escritura: La Edad Media* (Madrid: Crítica, 2012). p. 111: 'Pero Gil was the illegitimate son of a Jew, substituted for the daughter of King Alfonso at birth'. This confusion with a different legend also appears in Valdeón Baroque, *Los Judíos de Castilla*, p. 26.

<sup>84</sup> 'Continuatio Chronici Guillelmi de Nangis, ab anno 1301 ad 1368', in D. Lucae D'Achery (ed.), *Spicilegium; sive, collectio veterum aliquot scriptorum qui in Galliae bibliothecis delituerant* (Parisii: 1723), vol. 3, f.54-140, 139, 1366: 'dicebat enim Henricus quod licet dominus Petrus Regnum obtinisset diutius, quod hoc erat contra Deum et justiciam, et quod magis ad eum scilicet Henricum pertinabat: imponebat enim illi, quod non erat verus Regis filius defuncti, sed potius mutatus, et quod erat filius Judaeorum subrogatus per matrem Reginam secrete cito post partum ejus ..... prout dominus

The derivation of the name Pero Gil may have nothing at all to do with the king. An alternative is suggested in the chronicle of Argote de Molina (1588), describing the sack of Úbeda by Pedro and his Muslim ally in 1368:

The first town that they besieged was the town of Úbeda since it was not well defended and was supportive of the king Don Enrique. Among his company was Pero Gil, Lord of Torre de Pero Gil who followed the king Don Pedro and was the enemy of those in that town, having been thrown out of there.<sup>85</sup>

Yet another explanation for the abusive nick-name was that Pedro was reputed to be the illegitimate son of a union between the queen mother, María of Portugal (wife of Alfonso XI) and her kinsman, Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, in whose lineage the surname Gil appears - Alburquerque's son was Martín Gil.<sup>86</sup> Neither this nor the changeling accusation are at all likely to be true, and both were disregarded by Ayala in his chronicles.<sup>87</sup>

An interesting post-script is provided by a modern-day local historian of the town of Torreperogil, which today lies close to both Úbeda and Baeza. He confirms that the town has ancient associations with the historic figure of Pero Gil de Zático. The 4th Señor de la Torre de Hamdón, is thought to have been murdered alongside Pedro at Montiel in 1369 and may have been the *Señor de la Torre de Pero Gil* referred to by Argote. The story provides an historically credible alternative to the implied calumny of the *romance* and one that accords with the sixteenth-century account of Argote de Molina.<sup>88</sup>

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Henricus ei fortiter imponebat. Item objiciebat dicto Petro ipsum esse haereticum et quod pejus est, legi Judaeorum et eis adhaerentem et legem Domini nostril Jesu Christi vilipendentem et spernentem'. The English translation is from *The Chronicle of Jean de Venette* (translated: Jean Birdsall): Introduction and notes by Richard Newhall (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), p. 137.

<sup>85</sup> Molina, *Nobleza De Andalucia, Libro segundo*, f.237: 'la primera ciudad a quien puso cerco en esta entrada, fue la ciudad de Ubeda, asi porque in este tiempo no estaba bien cercada y tenia la voz del rey Don Enrique; como por llevar en su compañía a Pero Gil señor de la Torre de Pero Gil, que seguía la parte del rey Don Pedro y estaba enemistado con los de aquella ciudad, por averle echado della',

<sup>86</sup> Angel de los Ríos y Ríos, 'Como y por qué se llamó a D. Pedro el Cruel, Pero Gil?', *BRAH*, 36 (1900), pp. 58-65, 61; Entwistle, *European Balladry*, p. 160; Yiacoup, *Frontier Memory*, also believes the nick-name denoted Pedro's bastardy, pp. 67, 71.

<sup>87</sup> Though see below p. 152 and n.132 for Froissart's account of the murder by Enrique of his brother Pedro: 'son of a Jewish whore'.

<sup>88</sup> Ginés Torres Navarrete, at [www.vbeda.com/articulos/indexoa.php?num=143&titulo=Pero\\_Gil\\_historia\\_\(I\)](http://www.vbeda.com/articulos/indexoa.php?num=143&titulo=Pero_Gil_historia_(I)) and see above n.81.

*The French and the English in Castile*

Enrique's campaign to oust his half-brother from the throne of Castile was punctuated by extended sojourns in France where he sought refuge in 1356 and again in 1367. His presence there may explain the scabrous combination of polemic and legend that appeared in Froissart's chronicle and in the work of Jean de Venette. It certainly resulted in French intervention on Enrique's behalf in the Castilian war, which had serious consequences for the whole population and particularly for the Jews.

Both the Crown of France under Jean II and later Charles V, and the Avignon popes, were antagonistic to Pedro and supportive of Enrique's claim. Pope Urban V recognised Enrique and condemned Pedro for his desertion of his wife, Blanca. The king was excommunicated and at a consistory in 1366 the Pope authorised the invasion of Castile by the White Company led by the Breton Bertrand de Guesclin. Although the reliability of the Anglo-French chronicler, Jean Froissart (d. 1405), has been questioned, his accounts of the events are detailed and provide a useful comparison with those of Lope de Ayala in his chronicle of Pedro's reign.<sup>89</sup> Froissart was in England at the time of his composition of his work, in the service of Queen Philippa of Hainault and his chronicle is thought to be biased in favour of England's cause in the Hundred Years War. Yet his account leans heavily towards the Trastámaran side rather than that of Pedro despite the latter's alliance with the Black Prince.<sup>90</sup> Froissart and another French chronicler, Jean de Venette, are sources of much of the anti-Jewish invective that is most often attributed to Enrique himself.

The political motives Froissart offered to explain the support of the French and of the Avignon pope for Enrique's expedition are relevant to an understanding of French perceptions of Pedro's reign and of his perfidious alliance with Jews and Muslims. The funding of de Guesclin's White Company was acknowledged even at the time to be a ploy to rid France of the menace of undisciplined mercenaries who had

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<sup>89</sup> Jean Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II to the Coronation of Henry IV*, transl. Thomas Johnes (London: William Smith, 1839), vol.1, CCXXX, pp. 339-351; Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): Butterfield considers Froissart unreliable on names and dates but a source of some valuable insights and commentaries on contemporary events, p. 155.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, and see 'A Criticism of the History of Froissart', in Froissart, *Chronicles of England*, vol.1, pp. xxxvi-xxlvii.

wrought havoc on French soil.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Pedro was depicted as a man of unusual cruelty who had murdered his wife Queen Blanche de Bourbon, cousin of Jean II of France. He had allied himself to the Muslims of Granada and North Africa, was perceived as a threat to the Church and as an infidel and a heretic.<sup>92</sup>

*The desertion of Blanca, a Jewish 'privado', and accusations of magic and fraud*

The association of Pedro with the Jews is not mentioned at this point in Froissart's chronicle. However the demonic nature of Jewish influence on the king and on his relationship with Blanche is found in a French account of the life of Urban's predecessor, Innocent VI (d.1362). The text is from the seventeenth-century lives of the Avignon popes composed by Étienne Baluze (1693):

At this time (1353) Peter king of Castile took Blanca daughter of the Duke of Bourbon as a wife: who at first he loved tenderly, and honoured ..... eventually through the work of the devil he found her amazingly displeasing and hateful; and this was, so it is said, because of a certain woman who the king had formerly been passionately in love with: she seeing herself despised and completely abandoned by this king devised this hatred. And this with the help of one Jew who furthermore had particularly plotted against that queen..... for he and many others of this faith surrounded the king, and they received many favours and honours in his court

It is said, that the queen had given a beautiful belt of gold to the king. Being so grateful, he often wore it as an adornment. But that woman was jealous of the queen her rival, so she and that Jew got hold of that belt and cast a spell so that on a solemn festival, while the king girded his waist, just as all his court were present, it was observed by him and by all that a great and terrible serpent appeared .....

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339: 'At this period (1365) those companies of freebooters were so much increased in France that the government did not know what to do with them ..... These companies having been brought up to arms and taught to live on pillage and plunder alone, neither could nor would abstain from it..... Many of the inhabitants of France murmured much..... They were better pleased to see them with their neighbours than among themselves'.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340: 'The holy father then legitimated the birth of Henry the bastard, so that he might be in a condition to obtain the kingdom from don Pedro who had been cursed and condemned by the sentence of the pope'

This belt had been given as a gift by the queen his spouse. Because of this, he henceforth hated her and never wanted to see her again or to live with her.<sup>93</sup>

This fantastical account of a golden belt is almost certainly based on a popular ballad that may have been composed in the late fourteenth century. It is found in the *Romancero General* published by López in the seventeenth century. The queen in her final imprisonment in Medina Sidonia tells the bitter tale of the spell cast on the belt by a Jew and by Doña María, a woman ‘who got whatever she wished for’:

Hubola doña María	que quanto pretende alcança
entregola a un hechizero	de la Hebrea sangre ingrata
hizo paracer culebras	las que eran prendas del alma
y en este tiempo acabaron	la fortuna y la esperança. <sup>94</sup>

The Doña María of the ballad is María de Padilla, Pedro’s mistress, the ‘*quadam muliere*’ of the papal history, for whom Pedro abandoned his wife the day following their marriage.<sup>95</sup>

Pedro’s ill-treatment of his wife is attributed in these texts not only to a Jew, but to one who was capable of sorcery and doing the devil’s work. These themes, as in the Marían literature already cited, would have been commonplace and it may be speculated whether any specific Jewish person was implicated in the supposed plot to

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<sup>93</sup> ‘Prima Vita Innocenti VI. ex editione Bosqueti apud Baluzium’, in L. Muratorius (ed.), *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, (Milan: 1734), vol. 3, f. 591: ‘Dicto etiam durante tempore Petrus Rex Castellae Blancam filiam dicti Ducis Borbonii duxit in uxorem: quam a principio tenerrime dilexit, et merito ..... Sed demum satis cito, daemone operante, ipsam mirabiliter habuit ingratam et exosam; et hoc procurante, ut dicitur, quadam muliere, quam per prius dictus Rex adamaverat; quae videns se per dictum Regem propter ipsam haberi contemptui, immo et totaliter derelictam, machinata est odium supradictum. Et hoc per medium seu ministerium unius Judaei, quatiā adversus dictam Reginam specialiter conspiraverat ..... quod tam ipse quam plures alii Legis suae multipliciter frequentabant dictum Regem, habebant que multos favores et honores in Curia sua ..... ut dicitur quod dicta Regina dederat eidem Regi unam zonam auream pulcherrimam. Quam ipse admodum gratam habens, saepius pro sui ornatu deferebat. Dicta autem mulier ipsius Reginae aemula callide operata est, quod tam ipsa quam dictus Judaeus zonam ipsam habuerunt, et arte mágica sic fecerunt, quod una die festiva et solemnī, dum Rex ipsa zona praecinctus esse crederetur, quasi tota sua praesente Curia, visus est tam ab ipso quam ab omnibus loco zonae uno serpente magno et terribili praecinctus et circumdatus ..... quod hoc erat zona sibi pro munere et jocali data per Reginam conjugem suam. Propter quod ipsam ab illa hora in antea et exosam habuit, quos noluit eam ulterius videre....’

<sup>94</sup> Francisco López, *Romancero General: En que se contienen todos los romances que andan impresos, aora nuevamente añadido, y enmendado* (Madrid: Juan de la Cuesta, 1604), f.34r; Clara Estow, *La legitimización de lo ilegítimo: López de Ayala y la historiografía medieval* (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2006), p. 66, Texto 7, line 46: ‘Doña María... gave it to a sorcerer, one of the unpleasant Hebrew race, he caused snakes to appear, those things dear to the soul were then lost, fortune and hope’.

<sup>95</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, 1353, XII, p. 433.

separate the king from Blanca. In the *El Vitorial*, the chronicle of Gutierre Díaz de Gámez written for his master Pero Niño in 1431, there is a short and unflattering description of Pedro's character. Díaz de Gámez identified a Jewish *privado*, Samuel Levi, as being possessed of magical powers and of a king susceptible to these powers:

He had as *privado* a Jew called Samuel Levi . . . . This Jew, furthermore, showed him how to know of those things that were to come, through sorcery and through astrology.<sup>96</sup>

In his chronicle, Lope de Ayala recorded in some detail the relationship of Samuel ha-Levi to the king. Pedro had faith in his Jewish *privado*, and was indebted to him for his escape from capture by Enrique's brothers in 1354. Though the relationship between the king and Blanca de Borbón and his abandonment of her are dealt with at length, neither the legend of the belt nor of any Jewish involvement is mentioned by him.

In the prologue to his chronicle, Ayala announced his reliance on his own experience and the testimony of reliable witnesses.<sup>97</sup> He rarely drew upon legend or ballad in his chronicle and did not record anything that impugned Pedro's ancestry. This may be because the first version (*primitiva*) of his four chronicles (those of Pedro I and Enrique II), started by him in 1379, was superseded by a later version (*vulgar*) sometime after 1388. He introduced a number of changes that modified his earlier account, the better to suit the recent marital alliance of Enrique III with the house of John of Gaunt.<sup>98</sup>

Ayala's strong moral stance (most clearly seen in his poetic work *Rimado de Palacio*, considered below) and his talent for vivid portrayal of historical figures, have both been emphasised in recent studies of his canon. There has been considerable literary and historiographical debate about his credentials as an accurate reporter of events and over the extent of his political bias towards Enrique and his Trastámaran successors. Ayala abruptly switched his allegiance from Pedro to Enrique following the former's abandonment of Burgos in 1366, and there is little doubt that self-

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<sup>96</sup> Juan Carriazo (ed.), *Gutierre Díaz de Gámez, El Vitorial: Crónica de Don Pero Niño, Conde de Buelna* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1940), Ch. X, p. 48: 'Ovo privado un judío que llamava Samuel Levi . . . . este judío, otrosí, enseñavale a querer saber las cosas que son por venir, por hechizos e arte de estrellas'.

<sup>97</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, 'Proemio de don Pedro Lopez de Ayala a las crónicas de los reyes de Castilla', p. 400.

<sup>98</sup> Bretton Rodríguez, 'Pero Lopez de Ayala and the Politics of Rewriting the Past', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 7 (2015), pp. 266-282.

justification for his desertion and his defection to the cause of the usurper coloured his account. Having spent time at the papal court in Avignon, Ayala would have been influenced by the Schism, the Hundred Years War and the opinions of the French court.<sup>99</sup> In comparing Ayala's depiction of people and of events of this period with those of his French contemporary in England, Jean Froissart, it is apparent that Ayala was much less reliant on hearsay and legend, for all Froissart's protestations of historical veracity.<sup>100</sup>

Samuel ha-Levi's closeness and his value to the king are indisputable and his fortunes followed a trajectory similar in many ways to that of earlier Jewish *privados* of the Crown already described. Ayala's ability to portray the machinations of Pedro's court, is remarkable both for his use of reported speech and for the absence of polemic. The accounts in his chronicle, coupled with other available documentation of Samuel's affairs, demonstrate the *privado*'s involvement in Pedro's political, financial and marital problems. The records permit speculation as to how Jewish closeness to Pedro's court might have fuelled Enrique's invective against an unpopular king and how this might have diffused outwards into ballad and legend.

Samuel had come into the king's service as *tesorero mayor* through the recommendation of the noble, Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque in 1351.<sup>101</sup> Estow has disputed the view that his prominence was anything extraordinary in this period or that it was evidence for Pedro's sympathy for Jews.<sup>102</sup> The nobles opposed to Pedro met with him together with Doña María (his mother) and the Queen of Aragon (Pedro's aunt) at Toro in 1354. By this time, Ayala was page to the king (*doncel*) and may even have been present at the meeting. His verbatim account shows their resentment of Pedro's treatment of the queen, Blanca, and their disapproval of his choice of dishonourable counsellors, Samuel among them. The king was accompanied by Juan Fernandez de Henestrosa, Samuel ha-Levi, his chief treasurer and by Don Ferrand

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<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of Lope de Ayala's importance as a chronicler of late fourteenth century Castile, see Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance, 1350 to 1550* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), pp. 56-76; Robert Tate, 'Lopez de Ayala, Humanist Historian?', *Hispanic Review*, 25 (1957), pp. 157-174; Rodríguez, 'Pero Lopez de Ayala'.

<sup>100</sup> See earlier ns.89, 90.

<sup>101</sup> His career and downfall were described by Graetz, *History of the Jews*, pp. 116-121, and Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 363 and recently by Benjamin Taggie, 'Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia and the Hebraic Policy of Pedro I of Castile 1350-69', *Fifteenth-century Studies*, 5 (1982), pp. 191-208 and Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile*, p. 167.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Sánchez de Valladolid, his chancellor. He was addressed by his aunt, the queen of Aragon:

Having left your legitimate wife the queen Doña Blanca you follow a separate path ..... but this is the doing of your counsellors who are with you and so counsel you, one of whom is Juan Fernandez de Henestrosa and of Don Simuel el Levi and others; it will be good if you separate from these men.<sup>103</sup>

Conflict between the king's *tesorero* and Blanca and the noble faction loyal to her occurred in 1355. This was at a time when the inhabitants of Toledo had rallied around her and against the King.<sup>104</sup> According to a letter of 20 August 1355, the King accused the Toledans of rebelling against him and being in league with Blanca. They had followed her instruction in raiding the home of Samuel and looting the treasure he kept there on behalf of the King.

Toledo has rebelled against me, in league with my wife, Doña Blanca, she together with the Toledans, seized all our treasure ..... held in the house of my treasurer Samuel Levi and great quantity of *maravedís* from my *juderías*.<sup>105</sup>

This seems to have put Samuel in opposition to the queen. It could have led to the popular rumour of his involvement in Pedro's estrangement from her, which would later lead to her death, possibly at her husband's hands.

It is fairly certain that Blanca de Borbón died in 1361. Where she died and the manner of her death are matters for speculation and accounts differ. Whether she died in Jerez or in Medina Sidonia, and whether she was murdered at the King's behest or suffered a natural death cannot be verified. What is of more interest here is what

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<sup>103</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de del rey don Pedro*, 1354, XXXV, p. 458, 'avedes andado dexando vuestra mujer legitima la Reyna Doña Blanca, é andar apartado por los castillos..... pero esto facen los privados que tenedes que vos asi aconsejan de los quales es uno Juan Fernandez de Henestrosa.... e Don Simuel el Levi e otros: e será bien que estos sean arredrados de vos'.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 449.

<sup>105</sup> Díaz Martín, *Itinerario*, doc.655, 1355, p. 334, 'porque Toledo se alzo con la voz que tomo contra mi...estando y la reina doña Blanca, mi mujer, et en como la dicha reina con consejo de los de Toledo, e su mandado me tomaron todo el nuestro tesoro ... que to tenia en casa de don Samuel Levi, mio tesorero mayor. Et otrosi me fue tomado por mandado de la dicha reina e con consejo de los sobredichos, muy grandes cuantias de mrs. de las mis *juderías*', Arch. San Clemente de Toledo, carp.16, num.11. See also doc.1.105 (undated) and *Crónica de del rey don Pedro*, 1354, XXVIII, p. 452.



people's perception of the truth might have been at the time and what part, if any, the Jews may have had in the affair. There are two ballads in the *romancero del rey don Pedro* which tell of the queen's murder. In one, a prophetic shepherd appears to Pedro and informs him that, should he not return to his legitimate spouse, he will lose his kingdom. The King, angered by the prophecy, believes that the queen is involved in this and has her killed.<sup>106</sup> A version of this narrative appears in the second, *vulgar* version of the chronicle although Ayala stopped short of the accusation of murder that he included in his earlier chronicle.<sup>107</sup>

The other ballad accuses María de Padilla, Pedro's mistress, of being the cause of the queen's misfortune.<sup>108</sup> No mention of Jewish complicity is found in the ballad or in Ayala's recording of her death. Jean de Venette, the continuator of the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis, was therefore the probable disseminator of the accusation of Jewish involvement in her murder. His contemporary account follows directly after his account of Pedro's Jewish ancestry. In it, he combines two anti-Jewish accusations. Firstly, that another woman, reputed to be Jewish (María is not directly cited), was responsible for the queen's murder. Secondly, that the whole of Spain was full of Jews through whom Pedro governed his kingdom.

The chaste, pure, holy and honest wife of royal French line, was killed and suffocated without cause, it is said by a Jew .... and likewise the King Pedro, he himself and his household ruled through the Jews of whom there was a great abundance in Spain: and through them, he governed the whole of his kingdom.<sup>109</sup>

The antagonism of Jean de Venette to the Jews was not matched in the popular Castilian balladry of the period. Blanca was of noble French lineage and her treatment by Pedro would have been familiar to all. Rumours of Jewish involvement may not

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<sup>106</sup> Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos* (Madrid: Biblioteca Clásica, 1898): Romance del rey don Pedro, no.66, 'Por los campos de Jerez', p. 126.

<sup>107</sup> Though the allegation of murder appeared in Ayala's first *versión primitiva* of the chronicle, it is ambivalent in his later *versión vulgar*, see Entwistle, 'The Romancero del Rey Don Pedro', p. 309. It is just as likely that she died of natural causes.

<sup>108</sup> Romance del rey don Pedro, no.68, 'Doña María de Padilla – no os mostreides triste', in Menéndez Pelayo, *Antología de poetas líricos*, p. 134.

<sup>109</sup> 'quia uxorem propriam de Regali Franciae prosapia progenitam, pudicam, castam, sanctam et honestam propter unam aliam superinductam, quae ut dicebatur Judaea erat, interfeci fecit et sine causa suffocari ..... et nihilominus dictus Rex Petrus per Judaeos qui in maxima abundantia erant in Hispania, seipsum et domum suam regebat; et totum Regnum suum per eos gubernabat', in 'Continuatio Chronici Guillelmi', p. 139.

have originated with Enrique's circle, but since they originated in France, would have been a provocation for Enrique's French and Breton mercenaries. For them it could have provided further justification for their support of the Trastámaran cause, even for their murder and spoliation of the Jewish communities.

Ayala described the promises the *tesorero*, Samuel ha-Levi, made to Pedro in regard to the revenues of his kingdom, recording in vivid detail their jocular conversation whilst the King was playing dice with his followers:

For, in a short time, I shall obtain for the treasury in whatever manner you shall determine, more than the 20,000 *doblas* that you claim you will have from the game of dice.<sup>110</sup>

Yet, five years later in 1360, Samuel was seized by the King together with a great quantity of treasure. He, and members of his family, were imprisoned and tortured to death. According to the chronicle:

He suffered great torture at the hands of the King to discover if there were more treasure and in the end he died due to the torture.<sup>111</sup>

His successor at the treasury was a Christian, Martín Yáñez. His fate would be no better than Samuel's. In 1367, when Pedro was in dire need of funds to pay off the Black Prince and the company who had supported the King, Yáñez was captured by Enrique together with a wagon full of Pedro's treasure. Later captured again, this time by Pedro, he was brought to Seville where the King had him executed, '*diciendo que por él avia perdido su tesoro*'.<sup>112</sup> Pedro's cruel treatment of Samuel, like that of Yáñez, was primarily inspired by an insatiable need for money not because he was a Jew.

There is a close analogy between the life of Samuel ha-Levi and that of Juçaf de Écija, treasurer of Alfonso XI twenty years earlier.<sup>113</sup> The details of Samuel's downfall are much better documented, although it is uncertain whether he really had

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<sup>110</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de del rey don Pedro*, 1355, XV, p. 466: "e yo vos quiero poner en ellos tesoro en poco tiempo en guisa que vos digades que avedes tesoro mas de las veinte mil dobles que decides que teniades en el juego de los dados. E al Rey plogo mucho de la razón que Don Simuel el Levi le dixo, e le a demandado quales castillos quería que el ge los mandaria entregar".

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1360, XXII, p. 510: 'e ovo grandes tormentos por saber el rey del si tenia mas tesoros; e en fin destos tormentos ovo de morir'.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 1367, XXVIII, p. 573.

<sup>113</sup> See chapter II, p. 63 of this dissertation.

embezzled from the Crown. The whole affair may have been contrived, though Samuel and his family would certainly, as Estow points out, have profited from his position at court. Ayala, in the final chapter of the chronicle refers to Pedro's greed and to the huge quantity of treasure found in his various palaces after his death, although the amounts cited are probably exaggerated.<sup>114</sup>

Samuel ha-Levi has left a visible legacy of his status and of his contribution to his own community in the El Tránsito synagogue that he had built in Toledo. Studies of the Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions which are still visible today in the synagogue, reveal him to have had a high opinion of both himself and of his patron the King. Especially significant is the heraldry which has been interpreted as being his own and which reflect his ambition to be seen as of long and noble Jewish lineage. Garrido's study of this and of the accompanying inscription in Arabic has concluded that Samuel was expressing a view, long held by elite Jews in Sefarad, that theirs was a noble and uninterrupted line reaching back to Jerusalem and to the Babylonian exile.<sup>115</sup> The antagonism of the Castilian nobility and of the magnates to a man like Samuel should be viewed in this context. Envy of his position at court could only have been aggravated further by such overt demonstrations of *hubris* in El Tránsito and by the lavish life-style that he and his family clearly enjoyed.

### The assault on the *aljamas*: the evidence from Jewish and Christian narratives

If there were negative attitudes to Jews during the civil-war, the records suggest that many of them originated in narratives from France or the papal court. Assaults against Jews during the fratricidal conflict are well documented, however not all the attacks were the work of Enrique or of his Castilian army. Furthermore, the active part that Jews played in defending Pedro's interests in the war has not been sufficiently acknowledged. Castile's Jews have generally been assumed to be passive victims of

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<sup>114</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, 1369, VIII, p. 593; Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile*, pp. 202, 106.

<sup>115</sup> Daniel Muñoz Garrido, 'Felicidad, bienestar, gloria y honor: la imagen pública que Samuel ha-Leví proyectó en la sinagoga del Tránsito', *Sefarad*, 76 (2016), pp. 97-120. The Arabic inscription, according to Garrido, may demonstrate the continuing veneration and nostalgia of Castile's Jews for the Hispano-Jewish culture of *al-Andalus*. Further support for this view comes from an epitaph on a tombstone in the Toledo Jewish cemetery, see Bermejo-Mesa, *Edición y traducción*, XII, p. 97: A plague victim, R. Meir ha-Levi Abulafia, is referred to as 'ר' מאיר הלוי הנקרה אבולעפייא בן כבוד ר' שלמה מ"ב בן אל-לאוי', son of Shlomo ben al-Lawi which is an Arabisation of the family name

greed and prejudice. Though this was certainly the case in some of the massacres described, in others it will be shown that Jews suffered, too, as active participants in the resistance to Enrique.

The first record of attacks by the Trastámarans upon the Jews in the war is from Toledo in 1355.<sup>116</sup> The smaller *judería* known as Alcaná bore the brunt of the pillage and murder, but the larger walled *judería* resisted the attack made by Enrique and his brother, the Maestre de Santiago.

They plundered and killed the Jews they found there (Alcaná), as many as 1,200 people, men, women, great and small.<sup>117</sup>

Ayala recorded that the brothers were resting in their camp whilst this was happening, *desque entraron en la ciudad, asegaron en sus posadas*, seemingly dissociating them from the slaughter. Significant in this account and that of a subsequent battle for Burgos in 1367 is the implied part that both *juderías* played in actively resisting Enrique's attack on these cities.

In the 1355 battle in Toledo, Jews and *caballeros* seem to have fought side by side within the walled *judería*:

Some *Caballeros* who took the side of the King, helped the Jews, and each one of them defended the main *judería*.<sup>118</sup>

Ayala provided much detail of the help these men provided to the Jews defending the main *judería*. Up to three hundred armed men passed across the river, holding on to the hemp ropes provided to them.

The later battle at Burgos (1367) was more one-sided. The *judería* seems to have held out on its own against Enrique who had been welcomed by the clergy and the population:

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<sup>116</sup> There may have been an earlier assault in Seville in 1354 but the record of this lacks detail of both the cause and the extent, see Antonio Pons, 'Los Judíos del reino de Mallorca durante los siglos XIII y XIV (Conclusión)', *Hispania*, 16, 65 (1956), pp. 503-594, at p. 528, doc.10, *Noves d'un excés a Xibilia contra jueus*, 15, mayo 1354.

<sup>117</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de del rey don Pedro*, 1355, VII, p. 462. 'e robaron e mataron los Judíos que fallaron fasta mil e docientas personas, omes, mujeres, grandes e pequeños'.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 'e algunos Caballeros que tenían ya la partida del Rey ayudaban a los judíos, e todos en uno defendían la judería mayor'.

The Bishop and all the clerics and all the honourable and good men of the city received him with great solemnity, whilst shots and arrows were fired from the castle and the *judería*.<sup>119</sup>

Enrique ordered the tunnelling and mining of the *judería* and the castle and set up siege engines. This done, he ordered his forces to engage the *judería*: *e asi fué fecho, e mandó combater la juderia*. The Jews seeing they could not defend themselves, treated with the king and falling on his mercy, promised him a ransom of *un cuento* (one million mrs.).<sup>120</sup>

There is no doubt that the Jews of Castile sided militarily with Pedro against his brother and de Guesclin's company. Both Jean de Venette and Froissart recorded the participation of Jewish men-at-arms on Pedro's side. De Guesclin is portrayed by de Venette as a fine and vigorous soldier, '*miles bene strenuus*':

There were many valiant feats of arms performed by Bertrand and his Bretons; many adversaries were slaughtered and subjugated by Henry, and very many Jews, who assisted in great number in Peter's army, were killed and slaughtered in great numbers.<sup>121</sup>

To the extent shown by the Castilian, French and English chroniclers, the actions of Enrique against the *juderías* were acts of war, acts accompanied, however, by massacres of innocents. In 1360, Enrique returned from exile in France and Ayala recounted his army's slaughter of Jews at Nájera. It is not known if he was accompanied by Frenchmen at this juncture and the motive for the killing reveals a cynical ploy by Enrique. He aimed thereby to ensure the loyalty to him of those who had committed the murders, because they would then fear the wrath of Pedro:

The Conde Don Enrique ..... and other caballeros who were with him had already entered Castile and as they arrived at Nájera they allowed the killing of the Jews. And the Conde Don Enrique allowed this killing

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 1367, XXXV, p. 578: 'el Obispo e toda la Clerecia e todos los honrados.....le recibieron con grand solemnidad, como quier que del castillo, e de la judería tiraban truenos e saetas'.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*: 'e sirvieronle con un cuento'.

<sup>121</sup> 'Continuatio Chronici Guillelmi', p.139: 'et ibi multos actus strenuos in armis dictus Bertrandus cum suis Britonibus exequutus est, multos adversarios occidendo et Henrico subjugando, et pottissime infinitos Judaeos, qui in potentis armorum Regum Petrum adjuvabant, trucidando potenter in magna potentia'. Froissart was dismissive of Pedro's Jewish soldiery: 'they had strange people to encounter such as Moors and Portuguese: the Jews who were there soon turned their backs and would not fight', in Froissart, *Chronicles*, p. 387.

of the Jews to happen because the people did it willingly, and for that very reason they became scared of and mistrusted the king and took the side of the Conde.<sup>122</sup>

By 1366, both sides in the conflict had enlisted help from beyond the Pyrenees. Pedro, together with Edward, the Black Prince and his companies vanquished the forces of Enrique and de Guesclin at Nájera in 1367. The events of this period towards the end of the civil war are described in a contemporary Hebrew work, *Mekor Hayyim* by the Jewish scholar Samuel ibn Zarza (1368). The epilogue to this philosophical tract describes the depredations of the communities during the war. Ibn Zarza was quite clear that the foreign troops, both those of the Black Prince and of de Guesclin, were responsible for the massacres. In 1368, ibn Zarza recorded the entry of Enrique to Castile:

The soldiers who were with him were a shameless nation who did not distinguish the old from the young, whose speech was unknown and unintelligible.

At the beginning of Enrique's reign the foreigners that came with him killed the pure and holy community of Briviesca..... Not one was left of the two hundred householders who lived there.<sup>123</sup>

Pedro's mercenaries proved equally barbarous:

The soldiers with the King Don Pedro killed many of the holy community of Villadiego.<sup>124</sup>

That the English mercenaries who accompanied the Black Prince were responsible for much of the slaughter is confirmed in a document from Aguilar in 1370 after the war had ended. The *aljama* was unable to meet a demand of the monastery of Santa María

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<sup>122</sup> Rosell, *Crónica del rey don Pedro* 1360, VII, p. 503: 'Don Enrique .... e los otros Caballeros que con ellos venían, eran ya entrados en Castilla e como llegaron at Nájera e hicieron matar a los Judios. E este muerte de los Judios fizo facer el Conde Don Enrique porque las gentes lo facian de buena voluntad e por el fecho mesmo tomaban miedo e recelo del Rey, e tenían con el Conde'.

<sup>123</sup> והחיילות שבאו עמו היו גוי עז פנים אשר לא ישא פנים אשר לא יחון עם עמקי שפה אשר לא ישמע לשונו ובתחילת מלוך המלך דון אנדריק הרגו הגוים שבאו עמו לקהל הקדוש והטהור קהל בירב"י איש"קה.....לא נשאר מהם עד אחד in Fritz Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.2, doc.209, p. 200.. Baer's copy is from MS.51 of Samuel ibn Zarza's, *Mekor Hayyim* in the Staatsbibliothek München, see digitalised version at: <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0010/bsb00103782/images/index.html?id=00103782&groesser=&fip=193.174.98.30&no=&seite=1063>

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, קהל וי"ל דיי"איגו, קהל הרבה קהלות הקודש,

for a *diezmo* of 3,000 mrs on account, it protested, of the depopulation of the community and its abandonment after the killing and other damages caused by the English.<sup>125</sup>

The suffering of the Jews throughout the fifteen years of the civil war should not be perceived as part of a deliberate campaign nor of a systemic hatred of the Jews as it has often been portrayed. The *aljamas* were in possession of a significant portion of urban wealth, as has already been described in the examination of the tax revenues from the late thirteenth century.<sup>126</sup> They were a target for huge ransom demands, especially from Enrique since he knew they could help cover his military expenditure and were in no position to refuse. The troops, especially the English and French, might loot and kill at their will, finding reward for their services when none was forthcoming from their leaders.<sup>127</sup> Jews also suffered alongside their Christian and Muslim neighbours from the ravages of war and siege. The latter is exemplified by the lengthy siege of Toledo by Enrique's forces in 1368-1369. This event provides an example of concordance between two contemporary accounts, one Hebrew and the other Castilian.

*Crónica*: His intention (Pedro) was to come to the aid of those in Toledo, who were besieged .... they had no food, especially not bread. Many had died or were weakened and had no more horses because of the great famine in the city.<sup>128</sup>

In his *Tsedah la-dereh*, ibn Zerah stated that Toledo was twice stricken by siege:

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<sup>125</sup> 'e aunque los judíos excepcionaron que el aljama estaba despoblada e se había abandonado el pueblo por muchas muertes e malos e daños que recibiera de los ingleses', Biblioteca Colombina, Archivo de Santa María de Aguilar, in Antonio Benavides, *Memorias de D. Fernando IV de Castilla* (Madrid, 1860), DXXXIX, p. 787.

<sup>126</sup> See chapter III of this dissertation.

<sup>127</sup> Francisco de Cascales, *Al buen genio encomienda sus discursos históricos: de la muy noble y muy leal, ciudad de Murcia* (Murcia: F. Benedito, 1775), 1367, chapter XII, p. 151b. In 1367, Pedro wrote to the city of Murcia requesting funds to pay off the Black Prince and his men who were ravaging the countryside in lieu of payment that he admits he was unable to provide: 'porque las compañías del dicho Principe andan por mis reynos haciendo daño, como vos lo sabeis, porque no les puedo pagar el sueldo que les he de dar'. The looting and pillage by de Guesclin's mercenaries had occurred in France too, the Jews were simple a more profitable target. See earlier p. 140, n.91.

<sup>128</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de del rey don Pedro*, 1369, II, IV, pp. 585, 589: 'e su intención era de venir a acorrer a los de Toledo que estaban cercados....non tenían viandas, señaladamente pan'. 'Muchos muertos e gastados, e non tenían ya caballos de la grand fambre que en la cibdad avia'.

So that they consumed the flesh of their sons and daughters and there died in the siege 8,000 people great and small from the hunger and lack of everything.<sup>129</sup>

Menahem ben Aaron ibn Zerah (d.1385), composed the Hebrew work *Tsedah la-derekh*, between 1368 and 1385 in Toledo. It was intended as a guide to the essentials of Jewish law, probably for wealthy, acculturated Jews with a less-than-perfect grasp of Jewish law, *halaha*. The prologue to the work describes the troubles and privations of Iberian Jews in the fourteenth century. He described his miraculous escape from the massacres of Jews in Navarre in 1328, committed by the French *pastoureaux*. The Shepherd's Crusade began in France but spread across the Pyrenees into the French ruled kingdom.<sup>130</sup> Ibn Zerah travelled to Castile, only to suffer again in Toledo together with the rest of its inhabitants through the long siege. He eventually recovered thanks to the patronage of the Jewish *privado*, Samuel Abravaniel, to whom ibn Zerah dedicated his book.<sup>131</sup>

### Victory and beyond: 1369-1391

The war ended with the murder of Pedro by his brother at Montiel on 23 March 1369. Ayala's account of Pedro's death was further embellished by Froissart. His recorded speech has Enrique insulting his half-brother with the slur of Jewish parentage. Entering Pedro's tent, he proclaimed:

“Where is this son of a Jewish whore who calls himself King of Castile!”<sup>132</sup>

What may have been said in the heat of the moment cannot be known for certain and as has already been mentioned, it was not in Ayala's interest in his final version of the chronicle to impugn Pedro's lineage.<sup>133</sup> In the proceedings of the Cortes presided over by Enrique, both before and after Pedro's death, there are many instances where he, or the *procuradores*, make reference to ‘that evil tyrant who calls himself King’ (*aquel malo tirano que se llamava Rey*). Yet nowhere does the slander of Pedro's Jewish

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<sup>129</sup> Menahem ben Aaron ibn Zerah, *Tsedah la-dereh u-zeyadin le-'orha*, (Sabyonetah 1576): עד אשר אכלו בשר בניהם ובנותיהם וימותו במצור כשמונת אלפים איש גדולים וקטנים במצור ובמצוק מרעב וחוסר כל , f.16r.

<sup>130</sup> For the Shepherd's Crusade, see Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, pp. 43-68.

<sup>131</sup> For more on Abravaniel and his conversion, see chapter V.

<sup>132</sup> Froissart, *Chronicles*, p. 389.

<sup>133</sup> See earlier p.137, n.82.



ancestry appear, even when his closeness to the Jewish *privado*, Samuel ha-Levi, is mentioned in the same sentence:

Therefore they (the townsfolk) are ruined because of the quantities of money taken by the Jews.... through the offices of Samuel el Levi who was a great *privado* of that tyrant called King.<sup>134</sup>

It has been suggested that Enrique's hostile policy towards the Jews changed once he ascended the throne.<sup>135</sup> Yet it has not been possible to uncover a consistent anti-Jewish rhetoric employed by Enrique during the war. Most evidence for such rhetoric emanated from foreign sources, especially from France and the Avignon papacy. The responses of Enrique to his Cortes show his concern to continue with Jewish policies that differed little from those of his ancestors.

Pleas to the new King at the assemblies of the Cortes, petitioning him to alleviate the heavy load of debt to the Jews, were met with a sympathetic response. At the first Cortes that Enrique convoked in Burgos in 1367, he agreed to a reduction in interest repayment of one-third and to a two year delay in repayment of the debt. The privations of the Castilian population caused by his foreign mercenaries affected them as well as their Jewish neighbours:

Because of the foreign companies that accompanied you in our service, in as much as they robbed us.....and killed men and women.<sup>136</sup>

The townsfolk complained that because of the deprivations that were compelled to take large loans from the Jews. Their plea that only the principal itself be repaid and delayed for three years, was not accepted by Enrique. He agreed to an easing of the interest repayment so that one-third be payed within a year and the other two-thirds after two years.<sup>137</sup>

Petitioned by the Cortes not to have Jewish *privados*, officials or physicians ever again at his court Enrique replied, disingenuously, that no such demand had ever

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<sup>134</sup> *Cortes*, vol.2, Burgos, 1367, X, 9, p. 158: 'por quanto están muy estroydos e an levado los judios dellos grandes quantias de mr. .... lo qual fezieron con esfuerzo de don Semuel el Levi, que era grant privado de aquel tirano que se llamava Rey'.

<sup>135</sup> Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución*, p. 235.

<sup>136</sup> *Cortes*. Vol.2, 1367., IX, 2, p. 146: 'por aquellas companas estranas que vinieron connvusco en nuestro servicio, por quanto ffizieron muchos robos ....e mataron omes e mugeres'.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

been made to other Kings of Castile (*nunca a los otros reyes que fueron en Castilla fue demandad tal petición*).<sup>138</sup> Further explaining his predicament, the King claimed that he had no choice other than to appoint Jewish treasurers since no-one else could be found to fill the role; if a Christian were to be appointed, he would collect a lesser amount on his behalf than the Jews.<sup>139</sup>

Enrique's expression of concern for the poverty of the Jews of his kingdom is ironic considering the very large sums he exacted from them in ransoms in Toledo and in Burgos during the war.<sup>140</sup> At the Cortes in Toro in 1369, in response to another petition to allow further deferment of Jewish debts, he justified his need to compromise with the *procuradores*, saying: 'our *aljamas* of the Jews are poor and needy, because they have not been paid what has been owing to them for a long time'.<sup>141</sup> In a further ordinance that favoured the Jews, Enrique denied a request to revoke their previous privileges in relation to the retention of pledges: 'we ordain that the Jew's oath should be honoured as holder of any item or pledge demanded from him'.<sup>142</sup>

It is possible to cite two further instances that contradict the view of Enrique as a catalyst for anti-Jewish sentiment. The first is the appointment by him, as early as 1367 of a Jew, Yuçef Pichon of Seville, as *contador mayor* (the equivalent of *tesorero*).<sup>143</sup> Although Pichon was later accused of embezzlement, he regained the King's favour and a sale of his properties after death show him to have acquired considerable wealth (estates, corn fields, olive groves, vineyards, stocked cellars, and olive presses).<sup>144</sup> Early in his chronicle of Juan I's reign, Ayala described a quarrel

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 10, p. 151.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 'verdat es que nos que mandamos arrendar la dicha renta a judíos, por que non ffallamos otros algunos quela tomassen; ..... pero ssy algunos christianos quissieren tomar la dicha renta, nos gela mandaremos dar por mucho menos dela quantia por quela tienen arrendada los Judíos'.

<sup>140</sup> See earlier p.149, n.120 and also an *albalá*, issued by Enrique in 1369 in Toledo, demanding 20,000 doblas (more than 880,000 mrs) from the Toledo judería, in Ríos, *Historia*, doc.VIII, p. 571 (Archivo de la Iglesia Catedral de Toledo, 28 June 1369).

<sup>141</sup> *Cortes*, vol.2, Toro, 1369, XI, 68, p. 182: 'nuestras aljamas delos judíos están pobres e menesterosos, por quanto non an cobrado ninguna cosa delo suyo de grant tiempo acá'.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, (Toro), 1371, XIV, 19, p. 211: 'mandamos que el judío sea creydo por su jura, dando otor commo ovo la cosa o el penno quele demandan'.

<sup>143</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol. I, doc.281, p. 397 {A.C.A. Reg. 1708 f.57v-58}. Pedro IV of Aragon wrote to his son, the Infante Juan, (1367): 'los quals havien amenat aci Juce Pitxo, juheu de casa del rey don Enrich de Castella'.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.2, doc.223, p. 218 (Juan I, 19 August 1379): 'dicho rey, nuestro padre, vos fizo de todos los bienes muebles y raizes que don Yuzaf Pico, judío, vecino de la dicha cibdat de Sevilla, havia en Aznalcazar..... asi heredades y tierra de pan y olivares y majuelos y vinas y casas y bodegas y tinajas y molinos de azeite.....'

between Pichon and some other court Jews during Enrique's reign. Their accusations led to his imprisonment and later release after paying a ransom. His murder, summarily executed by his own people as an informer (*malsin*) after Enrique's death, occurred on the day of Juan's coronation:

Some Jews from the *aljama* came before the king, telling him about a Jewish informer who they had killed; they said it had always been their custom to kill any Jew who was an informer.<sup>145</sup>

Ayala recorded the King's anger and his revocation of the practice of judicial killing, which was still permitted to the quasi-autonomous Jewish communities in Castile.

The episode shows the favour and responsibility bestowed by Enrique on Jews at his court. For a later Spanish historian, it acquired another and probably spurious significance. We have Ayala's evidence for Pichon's standing in his own community and for the honour which he held at the court of both Enrique II and Juan I. The seventeenth-century Spanish historian, Ortiz de Zúñiga, went further and claimed that the affection of the people for Pichon inflamed their hatred for the Jews:

The people of Seville who loved him greatly, developed a great hatred of the Jews to whom he belonged, so that Don Fernando Martinez, Archdeacon of Écija, a man who led an exemplary life .... preached regularly against the usury of that avaricious nation, so that the common people was roused to hatred and even to excesses.<sup>146</sup>

It seems unlikely that the people of Seville were so enamoured of Pichon, a man whose job it was to collect Crown revenues. This claim has no known foundation in the record and yet the connection between his death and the vitriolic preaching of the archdeacon of Écija, Ferrand Martínez, was adopted by two nineteenth-century historians, Kayserling and Graetz.<sup>147</sup> It is interesting that two Jewish historians should

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<sup>145</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Don Juan Primero* (Madrid: BAE, 1923), 1379, III, p. 66: 'en esta fiesta de la coronación del Rey llegaron algunos judíos de las aljamas al Rey e dixeronle que entre ellos era algún judío malsín, que le ficiese matar; ca decían que siempre ovieran ellos por costumbre de matar cualquier judío que era malsín'.

<sup>146</sup> Zúñiga, *Annales ecclesiasticos*, vol.2, libro noveno, año 1391, p. 136: 'el pueblo de Sevilla, con que era muy bien quisto, quedo en gran odio con los Judíos, a que se juntaba que Don Fernando Martinez, Arcedianio de Écija, varon de exemplar vida, predicaba ordinariamente contra las usuras... de aquella codiciosa nación por lo qual irritado el vulgo, prorumpió en oprobrios y aun en excesos.'

<sup>147</sup> Meyer Kayserling, 'L'archediacre Ferrand Martínez et Les Persecutions de 1391', *Revue des Études Juives*, 38 (1899), pp. 257-267, 260, Graetz, *History of the Jews*, p. 157

have lent credence to Zuñiga's account, which laid some of the blame for the excesses of Martinez and of the mob upon the Jews themselves.

Such a view is, in any case, contradicted by an *albalá* (decree) of 25 August 1378, issued by Enrique II in Seville to the archdeacon, a year before the King's death. This was a full year before the murder of Pichon and the tone of the document reveals much about the Enrique's attitude to the Jews:

The Jews of the noble city of Seville have complained to us that you are doing them harm by preaching against them... so that they fear that the people will come to hate them.....We command that the *alcalde* and *alguazil* and other officials of the noble city of Seville.....that they guard and defend the said Jews.<sup>148</sup>

The sermons of Ferrand Martínez have not survived, yet the tone of his preaching is discernible from records of a tribunal taken by the public scribe of Seville, Martín Sánchez, ten years after Enrique's rebuke. On 11 February 1388, a Jew of Seville stood before the *alcázar* of that city and made representations before a tribunal comprising two *alcaldes* and the archdeacon himself. The Jew, his name variously transcribed as Hia aben Ataben or Judah Aben Abraham, was a victualler and draper who made bold accusations against the archdeacon, warning him of the King's anger should he not desist. He urged him to read again the previous letters from the Crown (*que son los dichos alvalaes estos que agora de presente vos nuestro e fago leer*) and that he not persist in doing that which had already been forbidden to him on many occasions. In his remarks, Judah cleverly reasoned that 'it was not the Church that could constrain the Jews but only secular power'.<sup>149</sup>

Eight days later, the same scribe recorded Martínez's response to the Jew's warning. After referring to the sins of Israel in not heeding and punishing their prophets, Martínez invoked other biblical crimes as illustration of their avarice and

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<sup>148</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.2, doc.221, 1, p. 212, 11 February 1388, A.H.N., Toledo, Catedral, Papeles, leg.634: 'quel aljama de los judíos de la muy noble cibdat de Sevilla se nos enviaron a querellar e dicen que vos que les fasades mal e danno... e que andades pedricando contra ellos.....de que diz que an recelo que se aborrecerán la gente contra ellos.... E sobre esto mandamos a los alcalles e alguacil.....que guarden e defienden a los dichos judios'.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 'que los judíos non sean estrennidos por la iglesia, salvo por los principes seglares'.

disobedience to God. His invective became increasingly aggressive, demanding the destruction of synagogues and the segregation of Muslims, Jews and Christians:

If it were up to me, twenty three synagogues within the *judería* of this city erected against God and against the law, would be razed to the ground, because they were made against God and the law ..... The other complaint of the Church that I hear of is that neither Jew nor Moor live with Christians, this .... against the harm of that comes from Christians conversing with the Jewish traitors.<sup>150</sup>

In the thirteen years of preaching by Ferrand Martínez against the Jews, the Crown issued other decrees, proscribing his inflammatory sermons in Seville and threatening retribution. The archdeacon dissociated himself from secular authority over his actions, proclaiming two separate jurisdictions:

So there are diverse jurisdictions; for the Holy Church of God nor its clerics can be judged by royal jurisdiction; the King and the nobles and the secular justices must aid and protect the Holy Catholic faith.<sup>151</sup>

The breakdown of secular and ecclesiastical authority caused by the accession of the eleven year old Enrique III and the death of Archbishop Barroso in 1390 had weakened the resistance of the Crown and the bishops to Martínez. The destruction of synagogues was followed by increasing violence in Seville that culminated in a massacre of Jews in June 1391 and the rapid spread of the violence to all parts of Iberia.<sup>152</sup>

Ayala chronicled the disturbances of 1391, placing the blame unequivocally on Ferrand Martínez. His view was that rapacity and greed motivated the mob and he recorded the losses suffered by the Jews throughout Castile and Aragon:

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 18 February 1388, p. 216: ‘sy yo derecho fesiese, que veinte e tres sinagogas .... desta cibdat edificadas contra dios e contra derecho, serian todas derribadas por suelo’ and ‘E a las otras cosas de los pleitos de la iglesia que yo oyo, mando que non moren judíos nin moros con christianos... por llos muchos males que se fasien e fasen conversando los christianos con los traydores de los judios’.

<sup>151</sup> ‘et asy son diversas jurisdicciones et la Santa Iglesia de Dios nin los sus clérigos non pueden ser juzgados por la jurisdicción Real, antes la Iglesia de Dios ha menester a los Reyes et príncipes et a la justicia seglar que ayuden et amparen a la Santa Fe Catolica’, in Henry Charles Lea, ‘Acta capitular del cabildo de Sevilla, 10-15 enero, año de 1391 (MSS. de la Biblioteca Nacional de España, 108, fol.78), and ‘Ferrand Martínez and the Massacres of 1391’, *The American Historical Review*, 1 (1896), pp. 209-219, 220-225, 224.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, and Kayserling, ‘L’archediacre Ferrand Martínez’, pp. 257-267; Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots*.

How the people of the city of Sevilla had robbed the *judería*, and that most of the Jews there had turned Christian, and many of them died. Then he heard they did the same in Córdoba and in Toledo and similarly in many other parts of the kingdom .... All of it was rapacity and greed, as it seemed, more than devotion. The people wanted to do the same to the Moors who lived in the towns and villages of the kingdom, but they dared not, for fear that the Christian captives in Granada and beyond the sea, would be killed ... This all started and the damage to the Jews came about through the preaching and the encouragement of the Archdeacon of Écija who was in Seville.<sup>153</sup>

The collapse of order during fifteen years of civil strife, together with more than a decade of venomous ecclesiastical rhetoric by the archdeacon, combined to destabilise the fragile social fabric. These factors, more than a deep seated hatred of their Jewish neighbours or an institutionally anti-Jewish monarchy, were responsible for violence that resulted in, or at least accelerated, the emergence of the new social class of New Christians (*cristianos nuevos*) throughout the Peninsula.

### Moral literature and cultural boundaries

The Jews were victims of the civil war, but they were not the only victims and furthermore, as has been shown, they were also participants in the long conflict. Despite having been on the losing side in the war, they continued to assert the rights of their own communities and seek the protection by the Crown. This was exemplified by the passionate defence against the sermons of Ferrand Martínez, proffered by Aben Abraham, the draper of Seville.

The moral debate within the Christian and the Jewish communities throughout the later fourteenth century affords literary evidence of the anxieties of both but also of a certain pride and confidence in the latter. The debate was secular as well as religious

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<sup>153</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Don Enrique Tercero* (Madrid: BAE, 1923), 1391, XX, p. 177: ‘como el pueblo de la cibdad de Sevilla avia robado la Juderia, e que eran tornados Christianos los mas Judios que y eran, e muchos de ellos muertos. E que luego estas nuevas sopieron en Cordoba, e en Toledo hicieron eso mesmo, e asi en otros muchos logares del Regno .... ‘E todo esto fue cobdicia de robar, segund pareció, mas que devoción. E eso mismo quisieron hacer los pueblos a los Moros que vivian en las cibdades e villas del Regno, salvo que non se atrevieron, por quanto ovieron rescelo que los christianos que estaban captivos en Granada, e allende la mar, fueron muertos’ ..... ‘E el comienzo de todo este fecho e daño de los Judios vino por la predicacion e inducimientto que el Arcediano de Écija, que estaba en Sevilla, ficiera.’

and, in one case at least, there was a convergence of the rhetoric of both communities which seems to indicate a crossing of a cultural divide. The courtier and chronicler, Lope de Ayala, expressed strong ethical and moral precepts in his poem, *Rimado de Palacio*, elements that are found also in the literature of a Jewish scholar, Shem Tov de Carrión (ca.1300-1360) whose work had appeared a generation earlier.

Shem Tov ben Yitzhak ibn Arduziel was a resident of the northern town of Carrión in the province of Palencia. The town may still have had a significant Jewish community in the mid fourteenth century as indicated by the *repartimiento of Huete* of 1290, which showed its tax revenue to be 73,480 mrs., greater even than that from the *aljama* of Ávila.<sup>154</sup> Shem Tov's poem, which only posthumously acquired the title *Proverbios Morales*, was written in Castilian and dedicated to King Pedro. The fact of its composition in the vernacular indicates that its audience was intended to be Christian as well as Jewish and speaks to the breadth of the poet's erudition, since he wrote works also in Hebrew and translated Arabic texts

In the dedication, Shem Tov lamented the death of Alfonso XI and explained that the 725 stanzas were intended as encouragement to his son, Pedro, to continue with the policies of his father:

1. Lord King, noble and high, hear this discourse, which Santob, the Jew from Carrión, comes forward to speak.
5. It is for the benefit of all, rhymed in the vulgar manner, and culled from glosses taken from moral philosophy

Referring to the dead King:

21. In the same way, you have survived him, in order to live a long life and do the things he wished to acquit.<sup>155</sup>

Shem Tov is known also for his works in Hebrew, a work of penitential poetry (*vidui*) and an enigmatic poem, 'The Battles of the Pen and the Scissors' (*Milhamot ha'et*

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<sup>154</sup> Parrondo, 'Huete', p.129. Ávila had 50 Jewish families and submitted a revenue to the Crown of 50,000 mrs. See chapter III, p. 82.

<sup>155</sup> Theodore Perry, *The Moral Proverbs of Santob de Carrión: Jewish Wisdom in Christian Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 17 (Perry's translation). For the original Castilian, see José Amador de los Ríos, *Historia crítica de la literatura española*, [1863] (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1969), vol. IV, p. 473.

*veha-misparayim*).<sup>156</sup> The *Proverbios Morales (PM)*, as it came to be known in the fifteenth-century, is not just an important work of literature, it was also a landmark in cultural *convivencia*. Shem Tov, whilst proudly asserting his Jewish identity, expressed universal moral values to a Christian audience in its own language.<sup>157</sup> In his treatment of the sins of greed, envy and anger, he emphasised the value of a ‘golden mean’:

381. Every good habit has a certain mean, and if a man exceeds it, the goodness is lost.<sup>158</sup>

There is no indication of the work’s immediate reception by the King or by his Christian contemporaries. However an indication of the esteem in which he was later held is given in a work of the fifteenth-century bibliophile, the Marqués de Santillana. In praising Shem Tov for his worthy verses, Santillana recognised that the poet’s words elevated him above his own people, to a class of noble troubadours.<sup>159</sup> The stanza of the *PM* that he cited in support of his claim, was §189: ‘*No vale el açor menos por nasçer en vil nío, ni los exemplos buenos por los decir iudío*’. The preceding stanza expresses a similar sentiment:

§185. For being born on the thorn-bush, the rose is certainly not worth less, nor is good wine, if taken from the lesser branches of the vine.

§189. Nor is the hawk worth less, if born in a poor nest; nor are good proverbs of less value if spoken by a Jew.<sup>160</sup>

This oblique allusion to the Jews as a ‘thornbush’ may have had a special resonance for the poet’s Christian audience. The Virgin Mary had been described in Marian literature as being born as a ‘rose from the thornbush’. That the image refers to the

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<sup>156</sup> ‘Shem Tov Arduziel (Santob de Carrión)’, in Peter Cole, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950-1492* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 289-291.

<sup>157</sup> Julian Weiss, ‘Castile’, in Wallace (ed.), *Europe: A Literary History*, chapter 49, p. 73; Perry, *The Moral Proverbs*, p. 4; Rios, *Historia critica*, ‘He gained the respect of the great and the praise of the discerning, his reputation remaining for later centuries as one of the outstanding poets of the 14th century’, p. 474.

<sup>158</sup> Perry, *The Moral Proverbs*, p. 23.

<sup>159</sup> In ‘Prohemio e carta quel Marqués de Santillana envió a condestable de Portugal’, in Francisco López Estrada, *Las poéticas castellanas de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Taurus, 1984), p. 60: ‘se llamó Rabí Santo; escribió muy buenas cosas, e entre las otras Proverbios Morales, en verdat de assaz comendables sentencias. Pusoló en quanto de tan nobles gentes por grand trobador, que asy commo él dize en uno de sus proverbios’.

<sup>160</sup> Perry, *The Moral Proverbs*, p. 20.



Jews themselves, is further suggested by Berceo's use of it in his *Los Loores de nuestra Señora*:

Your name is sweet, all of you is gentle; it emerged at your birth from the thorn-bush.<sup>161</sup>

Shem Tov and Samuel ha-Levi, Pedro's treasurer, were contemporaries at the court. Ha-Levi's flaunting of his noble aspirations as a proud Sephardic Jew can be compared with the more modest pretensions of the poet as both men expressed pride in their Jewish heritage, though in different ways. The poetry of Samuel ibn Sasson, whose works have been considered earlier, provides an indication of how Shem Tov may have been viewed by his own community. He lived close to his fellow poet, in the neighbouring town of Frómista, and the five poems dedicated to Shem Tov were lavish in praise for his talents, except in one regard. In one of the poems there is a veiled criticism of his use of the language of the Christians:

מז §44

Bring close to you the pure gift of expression  
Which only a teacher will mock  
Seize joy I beg you understanding of good fortune  
The banner of their idiom shall be removed.<sup>162</sup>

The 'linguistic heresy' of the *PM* alluded to by ibn Sasson is just one aspect of literary acculturation in Shem Tov's work.<sup>163</sup> Castro considered that the 'rose' and the 'hawk' metaphors expressed the poet's belief in his own worth in the face of society's resistance and lack of recognition of Jewish culture.<sup>164</sup> The most significant literary feature of his work was his ability to maintain his own identity as a Jew whilst also

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<sup>161</sup> 'dulce es el tu nombre; dulce toda su cosa; salió cuand tu naciste, de la espina rosa', 204b, in Brian Dutton (ed.), *Gonzalo de Berceo, obras completas. III. El duelo de la Virgen los himnos los loores de nuestra Señora*, (London: Tamesis, 1975). For a discussion of the history of the rose and thorn metaphor in literature, see Perry, *The Moral Proverbs*, part II, p. 65.

<sup>162</sup> 'קח שׁי הנב בר לך קרוב, בו רק כל רב בינה ישחק, קח רנה נה מבין לגד, דגל ניבם אנה נירחק' in Chamiel, *Sefer Avne Ha-Shoham*, pp. 76-78; Brann, 'The Poetic Universe', p. 81 and ns.36-39. The translations are my own.

<sup>163</sup> Jill Ross, 'Configuring Culture: Writing the Hybrid in Shem Tov of Carrión', in *Figuring the Feminine: The Rhetoric of Female Embodiment in Medieval Hispanic Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 181-203, 182. Ross proposes that another of his compositions, the Hebrew debate poem 'Battle between the Pen and the Scissors' is also a symptom of literary acculturation based in both Semitic and Latin/Romance traditions.

<sup>164</sup> Américo Castro, 'The Presence of the Jew in Literature and Thought', in *The Structure of Spanish History*, transl. Edmund King (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), pp. 551-558.

reaching out to the wider Christian audience through his ‘openness to all expressions of wisdom, whatever their provenance.’<sup>165</sup>

The reason for his writing in the vernacular is intriguing, but accords with the almost complete avoidance of any reference to Jewish theology in the *PM*.<sup>166</sup> Though his work may be compared to another moralistic work, the *Rimado de Palacio* of Lope de Ayala, it lacked the openly theological base of that work and thereby, perhaps intentionally, had an enduring appeal to a later Christian readership. The thematic commonalities of the *PM* to Christian literature has been problematic and even raised the possibility of Shem Tov’s conversion.<sup>167</sup> There is no evidence for this, yet the very fact of the doubt may reflect the transgressive nature of a work that is hard to fit within either the Jewish or the Christian tradition.

The *Rimado de Palacio* of Lope de Ayala resembles the *PM* only in its moral purpose. His deliberate choice of an already outdated meter, the *cuaderna via* (‘*versetes rudos de antiguo rimar*’) was used for scabrous criticism of almost every aspect of courtly, religious and commercial life.<sup>168</sup> His opinions of Jews found frequent expression in more than 2,000 verses and contrast strongly with his measured observations at the court, as recorded in his chronicles. Ayala wrote it over many years, probably commencing in 1385 after the defeat at the battle of Aljubarrota during his long incarceration in a Portuguese prison.<sup>169</sup> The work is usually seen as comprising two main sections, the first dealing with worldly and the second with spiritual matters, linked by a bridging section.

The earlier part of the work deals with the affairs of the court and the stanzas N§243 to §262 are of particular interest. They present a negative image of Jewish *arrendadores*; in one of the three stanzas, reference is made to two of these, Don Abraham and Don Simuel:

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<sup>165</sup> Perry, *The Moral Proverbs*, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> Sanford Shepard, *Shem Tov, His World and His Words* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1978). There is, though, an implicit reference throughout the work to the biblical *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes); Shepard identifies 2,000 parallels in the *PM*.

<sup>167</sup> Theodore Perry, 'The Present State of Shem Tov Studies', *La corónica*, 7 (1978), p. 34.

<sup>168</sup> Lacarra, *Entre oralidad*, p. 375.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377; Richard Kincade, 'On Dating the "Rimado De Palacio"', *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 18 (1971), pp. 17-36; Michel García, *Obra y personalidad del canciller Ayala* (Madrid: Alhambra, 1983), p. 287.

N§244

There came some Jews,	Alli vienen judíos
ready and prepared	que están aparejados
To drink the blood	para beuer la sangre
of the wretched poor	de los pobres cuitados
They present their papers	presentan sus escriptos
which they hold ready	que tienen conçertados
And promise their gifts,	e prometen sus joyas
and jewels to the <i>privados</i>	e dones a priuados.

N§253

After this arrive	Despues desto llegan
Don Abraham and Don Samuel	don Abrahan e don Simuel
With their sweet words	con sus dulçes palabras
that sound like honey	que vos paresçen miel
And make their bid	e fazen una puja
over those of Israel	sobre los de Issrael. <sup>170</sup>

Kincade considers these men to be the *tesorero*, Samuel ha-Levi, and the King's physician Abraham Abenzercer. Though much of the first part of the *Rimado* does deal with Pedro's court, García's conclusion that these are simply generic Hebrew names is more likely, since the work was composed more than twenty years after ha-Levi's death in 1360.<sup>171</sup> At that time Ayala was still in a very junior position of *doncel* at the court.

A number of other verses can be cited as evidence for Ayala's apparent antagonism to Jews:

N§261

For this purpose	Tienen para esto
they have very wise Jews	Judíos muy sabidores
To collect the <i>pecho</i>	para sacar los pechos

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<sup>170</sup> Germán Orduna (ed.), *Pero López de Ayala, Rimado de Palacio* (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 1981), pp. 174, 176. The poems are numbered according the MS. 4055 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (§N) used by Orduna. All translations of the *Rimado* are my own.

<sup>171</sup> Kincade, 'On Dating', pp. 17-36; García, *Obra y personalidad*, pp. 289, 290.

and the new demands	e los nuevos pedidos
They do not leave off	non lo dexan
because of weeping heard,	por lagrimas que oyan,
nor shouting	nin gemidos;
As for delayed payments,	demas, por las esperas
they are dealt with separately	aparte son servidos. <sup>172</sup>

His words need, however, to be seen in the context of his critical view of virtually all levels of society. Unlike the more general moral stance adopted by Shem Tov in the proverbs, Ayala's *exempla* were more specific and were couched in barbed attacks on the corruption and cupidity of individuals and of the ecclesiastical hierarchy at every level. Ayala lumped together the merchants and the Jews in their exploitation of the common man:

N§264, 265

So it is, I have seen it many times	Asi es ello, por cierto, muchas vezes lo vi;
What's not worth a dinero, costs a <i>maravedí</i>	lo que non vale dinero costar maravedí
The wine is sour, cloudy, bad, worthless;	el vino agro, turbio muy malo, valadi;
Whoever goes and drinks it never does so again	quien pasa e lo beve nunca mas torna y.
The poor peasants consume it	Conviene que lo gasten los pobres labradores;
Drink it or discard it; their protestations are pointless	beverlo o verterlo; non les valdran clamores,
later they make payment to the treacherous Jews	e fagan luego pago a judios traidores
Or else pay for it at interest	o lo sacan a logro

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<sup>172</sup> Orduna, *Rimado*, p. 177.

from good merchants.

de buenos mercadores.<sup>173</sup>

Criticism of the wealth and indolence of the papacy in Avignon and the ignorance of parish priests appears a number of times in the *Rimado*. It was probably in irony rather than from a genuine fear of apostasy, that Ayala referred to the Moors and Jews as mocking the Church and tempting honest Christians to convert.

N§208

The Moors and the Jews  
laugh at this situation  
And say to each other:  
“Look at the Law  
of these Christians,  
and how their estate  
is so well ordered:  
may God protect them”

Los moros e judios  
rrien desta contienda  
e dizen entre si:  
“Veredes que leyenda  
tienen estos christianos,  
e como su fazienda  
traen bien ordenada:  
asi Dios los defiend”.

Daily they tell us to convert  
to their holy law  
and that we worship it  
they guard it so carefully  
that we should not see it  
therefore we take heed  
that we hold the upper hand

“E dizen cada dia a nos que torrremos  
aquella su ley santa  
e que la adoremos,  
e commo la ellos guardan  
cuidan que non lo vemos  
por ende non cuidamos  
Que lo major tenemos.”<sup>174</sup>

Ayala has used the threat of Christian apostasy as a rhetorical device in order to highlight the disorder in the Church, not because he seriously feared that people would convert. This is quite different to the fears of the clergy that the Jews constituted a genuine threat to the faith, as was expressed fifty years earlier in the Council of Zamora.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* p. 178.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167

<sup>175</sup> See chapter II, p. 61.

The Jewish literature of Ayala's time, in contrast, reflected concern over conversion that resembles and mirrors that of the Church. Contemporary Hebrew works present a stark contrast in attitude to possible apostasy when compared to the ironic tone of the *Rimado*. Ibn Sasson's gentle scolding of Shem Tov for his linguistic transgression, referred to earlier, was replaced by much more explicit warnings of the danger to faith presented by debate with Christians or *conversos*. The scholar and moralist, Mehaem ibn Zerah of Toledo (d. 1385), composed his 'Provision for the Road' (*Tseda la-dereh*), a short guide to the essentials of Jewish faith and practice. His prologue identified his audience as the Jewish elite whose presence at the court, whilst benefiting their own communities, also permitted them to stray from the true path of tradition. The passage presents a perfect insight by the author of the problem posed by Jewish acculturation to the *mores* of the court, and of the threat of assimilation that this represented:

Those at the court of the king ... are a shield and a cloak to their people although, owing to the troubled times and their love of luxury and unnecessary speech, they live life outside the essential commandments.<sup>176</sup>

Ibn Zerah's guide to holiness had apparently little influence on his patron and dedicatee, Samuel Abravaniel. Samuel was *jefe de los contadores reales* to Enrique II, fell into debt, and converted to Christianity even before 1391. Under his *converso* name of Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, he became *contador mayor* to Juan I and Enrique III.<sup>177</sup>

Two other scholarly works, composed in 1375 by Moshe Cohen of Tordesillas, had a similar objective to the *Tsedah la-derekh*. The longer work, *Ezer ha-emunah* (An Aid to Belief), was written in Hebrew and the shorter, *Ezer ha-dat* (An Aid to Faith), in both Hebrew and Castilian. *Ezer ha-emunah* was a guide to those who might enter into disputation with Christians or Jewish converts over matters of faith:

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<sup>176</sup> ibn Zerah, *Tsedah la-dereh: hakdama* (prologue) f.16v: כי ההולכים בחצר אדונינו המלך ... מגן ומכסה לשאר עמו....ואמנם ברוב מהומות הזמן ובהמדת המותרות והדברים שאינן החרחיים הולכים הלך וחסור במצות המחויבות

<sup>177</sup> Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho, 'Notas para el estudio de la judería Sevillana en la Baja Edad Media (1248-1391)', in *Historia, instituciones y documentos*, (Universidad de Sevilla, 1983), pp. 251-277, at pp. 263, 271. See also several references to his accounts and debts in Valdeón Baroque, 'Un cuaderno de cuentas', p. 103 and *passim*. For Samuel Abravaniel, see chapter V p. 205 of this dissertation.

I wrote this work first and foremost in answer to the leaders as a guide to those who dispute with the gentiles in the year 5135 (1375).<sup>178</sup>

The work's contemptuous word-play refers to the books used by the converts, among them the conversion polemic of Abner of Burgos, the *Moreh Tsedek* ('Teacher of Righteousness'):<sup>179</sup>

They have to hand some books written by Avner, my brother Eshkol and my brother Anar and written within them are heresies without end and amongst these is the *Sefer Moreh Sheker*.<sup>180</sup>

Moshe made it quite clear that the Jews faced a threat that was not only physical, but was also spiritual. It was to this end that he wrote his compendium of Jewish law, in order that:

Every scholar who responds should make sure that he does not stumble in his discourse .... for should he be defeated by his opponent he dishonours the Holy Name and disgraces the Torah and his people.<sup>181</sup>

His advice included a warning, however, against being too frank in opposition:

If he speaks against their law or scorns their faith they will rise up mightily against him to kill him.<sup>182</sup>

## Blurred identities and literary camouflage

In the last quarter of the fourteenth century the tone of anti-Jewish rhetoric underwent a change. This change reflected an increasing rate of conversion of Jews to Christianity which, although massively accelerated by the disturbances of 1391, had been gathering pace from the mid-century onwards. A new element of disparagement of the New

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<sup>178</sup> חברתי זה הספר כדי להשיב על ראשון ראשון להיות מליץ להתוכח עם הערלים in Yehuda Shamir, *Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and his Book 'Ezer ha-Emunah: A Chapter in the History of the Judeo-Christian Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 10.

<sup>179</sup> For Abner of Burgos, see chapter V p. 183 of this dissertation.

<sup>180</sup> Literally 'Book of the Teacher of Lies' in Isidore Loeb, 'Polemistes Chrétiens et Juifs en France et en Espagne', *Revue des études juives*, 18 (1889), pp. 219-242, 227 : ובאו לידם קצת ספרים שחבר אבנר אחי אשקול ואחי ענר שכתוב בהם כפירות לאין חקר ובכללם ספר מורה שקר

על כן כל משכיל שיענה ישים לבו ועיניו, לבל יכשל בדבריו ומעניו..... שאם ינצחו : 9 : Shamir, *Rabbi Moses*, p. 9 : המתוכח עמו, הוא חלול ה' ובזיון תורתו ועמו

<sup>182</sup> Loeb, 'Polemistes', pp. 227-230, 228: 'ואם יטיח דברים כנגד תורתם יבזה אמונתם יקומו עליו ביד רמה להרגו' בערמה

Christians (*cristianos nuevos*) appears in poetry particularly that composed towards the end of the century. An ominous portent of later conflict, the full impact of worsening attitudes towards Jews and the emerging new class of *conversos* in Iberian society would not manifest itself until the fifteenth century. Yet this courtly poetry testifies to a dawning awareness of difference that prefigured the later preoccupation with racial purity (*limpieza de sangre*). The works demonstrate this emerging consciousness in various ways and highlight a significant change in the social circumstances of Jews and of *conversos*.

Michael Gerli described the patronage of poets by the Trastámaran court as encouraging a literary culture that served the political legitimisation of the dynasty.<sup>183</sup> The most comprehensive example of this is the *Cancionero de Baena*, an anthology of six hundred poems presented by Juan de Baena to King Juan II in 1430. The anthology has many poems that contain references, often cryptic ones, to Jewish and *converso* identity. In many cases it is unclear whether author or subject is Jewish, Christian or *converso*, and possibly this ambiguity in the poetry was a deliberate device to heighten the literary tension of the poem.

The precise dating of these compositions is largely unknown. Some were certainly composed in the late fourteenth century and so some of the poets and the targets of their satirical verse lived through the Trastámaran succession. Fray Diego de Valencia (born 1350) was a poet and a Franciscan theologian of this period. A teacher at the university in Salamanca, he is sometimes considered to have been of *converso* origin, although this has been inferred from his poetry rather than established from the historical record.<sup>184</sup> A poem (§501) satirises Juan de España, who is mocked for being a *converso*. The work contains many Hebrew words or modifications thereof and it is the borrowing of such a vocabulary, frequently highly inaccurate, that seems to establish not only the identity of Juan, but also perhaps of the poet himself.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Gerli, 'Seville and Córdoba', p. 148.

<sup>184</sup> Francisco Cantera Burgos, 'El cancionero de Baena: judíos y conversos en él', *Sefarad*, 27 (1967), pp. 71-111, p. 103; Josep Sola-Solé y Stanley E. Rose, 'Judíos y conversos en la poesía cortesana del siglo XV: el estilo polígloto de Fray Diego de Valencia', *Hispanic Review*, 44 (1976), pp. 371-385, at p. 383; Nirenberg disputes his Jewish ancestry in David Nirenberg, 'Figures of Thought and Figures of Flesh: "Jews" and "Judaism" in Late-Medieval Spanish Poetry and Politics', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), pp. 398-426, at p. 416.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, Sola-Solé and Rose estimated 60% of all nouns in the poem to be of Hebrew origin.



<p>Johan de España, muy grant saña  fue aquista de <i>Adonay</i>  pues la aljama se derraña  por culpa de <i>Barçelay</i></p>	<p>Johan de España, very great anger  was caused to God  since the <i>aljama</i> was disrupted  All because of Barzilai</p>
<p>e los sabios del Talmud  a los que llaman <i>çedaquin</i>,  dicen que non ha salud  el que non tiene <i>beçin</i>;  antes tienen por rroyñ  el que non trae <i>mila</i>  quien no puede <i>bahela</i>,  non le cunple <i>matanay</i>  pues se fizo <i>mi somat</i>  vuestra mujer por <i>tanay</i></p>	<p>And the Talmud sages  they call pious ones  say he is unhealthy  that he has no testicles;  formerly he was thought evil  he who was uncircumcised  who was incapable of intercourse  he could provide no gift  and so was converted  your wife on condition.<sup>186</sup></p>

There are, in all, five stanzas that continue in the same vein. Juan de España, perhaps formerly known as a Jew, Barzilai, is mocked for his conversion and scorned for the misfortune thereby brought down by *Adonay* (God) upon his community. In view of his own position as a Franciscan priest, the poet's scurrilous reference to his victim's manhood, is surprising. The subject of the poem is deemed by the Jewish sages to be unhealthy, as lacking testicles and uncircumcised, who therefore cannot satisfy his wife. She is a *meshumad* (apostate), like her husband, by virtue of her condition *por tanay* of matrimony.

Juan de Baena, the author of the anthology presented to the King, is also reputed to have been of *converso* origin. The evidence for this is less convincing than in the case of Diego de Valencia, but also rests on references in poems addressed to him:

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<sup>186</sup> Sola-Solé, 'Judíos y conversos', p. 376; Cantera Burgos, 'El cancionero', p. 97. The Hebrew words incorporated in the stanzas are: *Adonay* (יהוה – Lord God), *Barçelay* (ברזילי – Barzilai), *çedaquin* (צדיקים – pious ones), *beçin* (ביצים – testicles), *mila* (מילה – circumcision or penis), *bahela* (בעילה – intercourse), *matanay* (מתנה – gift), *mi somat* (משומר – convert), *por tanay* (תנאי – on condition): these are the most likely allusions intended by the poet and accord with the interpretations of both Cantera Burgos and Sola-Solé.

En vuestra tierra trobar	In your country one finds
que mas curan de sembrar	they take more care to sow
much buena berenjena	much good aubergine
el qual han por buen manjar	which they find good to eat. <sup>187</sup>

Two hundred poems by Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino (1350 – 1425) were included in the anthology and may be of later composition. Some are salacious and three poems concern a *converso*, Alfonso Ferrández Samuel, whom Villasandino addresses as a *meshumad* (Hebrew for apostate). In one of these we find:

En cuanto fuerdes judío	As to when you were a Jew
bien quarenta años o mas,	forty years ago or more
Simuel fi de Saltaatrás	Samuel son of Saltaatrás ('jump backwards')
noble fue tu atavió	your dress was noble
en invierno passafrido	in winter you feel the cold
en verano roçapoco	in summer nothing goes through
estonces mancebo loco	then a crazy young man
agora viejo atrevido	now an insolent old man. <sup>188</sup>

In the next poem, §141, Samuel is referred to as a cowardly castrate (*capón corrido*) who wears a fine cloak adorned with the knightly insignia (*balandrán .. bien sembrado de lagartos*) There is uncertainty whether Villasandino had *converso* origins as seems to be suggested by his borrowing of Hebrew.<sup>189</sup>

Throughout the *cancionero* there are exchanges of insult and sexual innuendo, admixed with Castilian versions of Hebrew words or allusions to Jewish custom. The

<sup>187</sup> The poem is by Diego d'Estuñiga, in Brian Dutton, Joaquín González Cuenca (eds.), *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena* (Madrid: Visor Libros, 1993), §424, p. 687. Baena is impugned as a *converso* because of his love of aubergine (*berenjena*), a vegetable favoured by Jews; see Hilary Pomeroy, 'Yantar e identidad religiosa', in Ricardo Izquierdo Benito, Uriel Macías (eds.), *La mesa puesta: leyes, costumbres y recetas judías, XVI Curso de Cultura Hispanojudía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2010) pp. 69-988, 73.

<sup>188</sup> Carlos Mota, 'Plázame de tus Enojos: Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino against Alfonso Ferrández Samuel', in Yedida Stillman, George Zucker (eds.), *New Horizons in Sephardic Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 185-203, the authors' translation.

<sup>189</sup> Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), Neither Roth (p. 167) nor Cantera Burgos in 'El cancionero', p. 88, are convinced of Villasandino's *converso* status.

poems demonstrate, at the very least, the very close cultural contact between Jews and Christians in the late fourteenth century.<sup>190</sup> Fray Diego was a native of Valencia de Don Juan which had a significant *judería*, so it is entirely possible that the poet and prelate would have had a passing knowledge of Hebrew words, especially of insults. Nirenberg questions the racist import of the exchanges which, he believes, may have reflected a linguistic development amongst a cultured elite, who may or may not have had *converso* origins.<sup>191</sup> Accusing others of being a *converso*, especially of being insincere, might have also been a form of cultural camouflage just as the taking of religious orders may have been in the case of Fray Diego himself.<sup>192</sup>

The presence of real rancour in the accusations of Jewish origin or practice implied in the poetry is questionable. Juan de Baena, the compiler of the anthology, did not hesitate to include verses that impugned his own Christian lineage in the work. Nevertheless, the view expressed by Lacarra and Cacho Blecua is that the poetry indicated a shift to a less pacific relationship between the different confessional groups in the Peninsula.<sup>193</sup> Whilst it may be true that the wounding references to judaizing were literary devices, the implication of the accusations was that Judaism was not a trait that could be readily erased through conversion. This marks an important shift away from the redemption theme of Alfonso's *Cantigas* and his accepting premise about Jewish converts in the *Siete Partidas*. According to the *cancionero*, Jewish 'features' could not readily be expunged through conversion as they were seen to be in the gentile-like images of the 'saved' Jews of Alfonso's illuminators.<sup>194</sup>

## Conclusion

The evidence for social and economic hardship in fourteenth-century Castile is incontrovertible as it is for the violence and disruption suffered by all the communities during the civil war. The wealth of the *aljamas* has been shown to have been disproportionate to their population numbers and they suffered especially. They experienced not only death but also huge financial losses as a result of the punitive ransoms exacted by Enrique and by Pedro in order to fund their armies. The reduction

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<sup>190</sup> Cantera Burgos, 'El cancionero', p. 97.

<sup>191</sup> Nirenberg, 'Figures of Thought', p. 416.

<sup>192</sup> Sola-Solé, *Judíos y conversos*, p. 384.

<sup>193</sup> Lacarra, *Entre oralidad*, p. 116.

<sup>194</sup> Gerli, 'Seville and Córdoba', p. 149. See also earlier p.130 and Patton, *Constructing the Inimical Jew*, p. 252.

in their prosperity as a result of a turbulent century has been detailed in the previous chapter.

As this chapter shows, there was significant social struggle by the townsfolk and peasantry, principally against the injustice of local rule and against the Genoese merchants in the first half of the century. This was compounded by urban and rural poverty and the plague, yet there is no documented evidence of widespread antagonism of the rebels against their more prosperous Jewish neighbours. The physical basis of the *convivencia* between Muslim, Jew and Christian was underpinned by the closeness of their dwellings and their work-places, exemplified by the detailed register of the city of Ávila in the early fourteenth century. Latent hostility may well have existed between these three confessional groups, but it was not sufficient to result in overt attacks or despoliation of the *aljamas*.

Rodriguez Puértolas has argued that not only Enrique but also his chancellor and chronicler, Pedro Lope de Ayala, were responsible for 'institutionalised anti-Semitism often bordering on terrorism'.<sup>195</sup> This is probably untrue in the context of the current meaning of the term and the evidence does not support a conscious anti-Jewish policy on the part of either that led directly to the events of 1391. It may be postulated that the strong anti-Jewish complexion given to this period in later accounts by Spanish and French historians from the seventeenth century onwards (by Zúñiga, Baluze) was coloured by the growing racism, the inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews that characterised the fifteenth century. Some of these opinions have survived into the historiography of the twenty-first century.

The legends of sorcery and treachery that were echoed in some of the contemporary *romances* of Castile had, as has been shown, their roots in scurrilous histories penned by French or English authors writing during the Hundred Years War. Yet this is not to underestimate the power of legend nor the ancient hostility to Jews expressed in the Marian literature. Ayala's anti-Jewish verses were of a different order. Rather than condemning in religious terms or in the 'irrational' language that associated

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<sup>195</sup> Julio Rodriguez Puértolas, 'Jews and Conversos in Fifteenth Century Castilian Cancioneros: Texts and Contents', in Michael Gerli, Julian Weiss (eds.), *Poetry at Court in Trastámaran Spain: From the Cancionero de Baena to the Cancionero General* (Tempe, Az: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), pp. 187-198, 188.

Jews with the devil or with unholy magic, the *Rimado* portrayed them largely in the context of a money economy and court administration that he despised.

A further evolution in the nature of anti-Jewish sentiment is apparent in the *Cancionero de Baena*. The mocking tone and ribaldry may or may not have a darker tone that prefigured the new class and racial conflict of the fifteenth century. The testament of the Jewish literature and poetry of the mid-fourteenth century, however, showed a pride in the Jewish lineage of Sefarad and in its culture, tempered by a prescient fear of apostasy. This concern for the integrity of Jewish faith and culture was not unfounded, as the numbers of conversions increased even before the disorders of 1391.

If social pressure and Trastámaran polemic were not to blame for that violence, it must be concluded that its primary cause was indeed a relentless thirteen-year campaign of vilification by the archdeacon of Écija. The disorder of war and the examples of plunder and pillage committed by the French and the English mercenaries was an example that was, as Ayala had recorded in the chronicle, profitably to be followed by the people of Castile. This was for their own advantage and not, as the prelate had intended, for the greater glory of God.

## Chapter V

# The Momentum of Conversion and an Emerging Social Reality

The violence of the 1391 riots throughout Iberia was directed solely against Jews, and the deaths and forced conversions proved to be a watershed for the Jewish communities.<sup>1</sup> In the decades that followed, however, the decimation of the *aljamas* was compounded by a further erosion as a result of non-violent, yet widespread, conversion to Christianity. The growth of a new group, *cristianos nuevos* (New Christians), was to have far-reaching effects. The blurring of traditional religious identities aroused Christian anxiety with the loss of what Nirenberg termed the ‘stability of group boundaries’. This change was to affect Jews as well as Christians throughout the fifteenth century and beyond.<sup>2</sup>

Whether voluntarily or under duress, the numbers of Iberian Jews who converted far exceeded those who did so in the Ashkenazi communities of Northern Europe, though why this was so remains a difficult historical judgement.<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to determine a precise figure for the size of the *converso* population in Iberia: perhaps 200,000 converted subsequent to 1391 and there may have been up to 600,000 *conversos* by 1480.<sup>4</sup> The question to be addressed here is what made it possible for individuals to countenance crossing cultural boundaries and to adopt a new faith, so alien to their heritage and upbringing.

One aspect of this was that of religious polemic, which showed a change over the thirteenth century. New attitudes to Jews were developed in the writing and preaching of the friars in both northern and southern Europe. The friars were

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim communities were also potential targets of their violence, saved only by the fear of reprisals against Christians in Muslim lands. See Ayala’s opinion in Rosell, *Crónica de Don Enrique Tercero* quoted in chapter IV of this dissertation, p. 158, n.153. For the fears in Valencia of an armed Muslim uprising and of the border incursions from Granada, see Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Nirenberg, ‘Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities’, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> The extensive literature on Ashkenazi piety, apostasy and martyrdom includes Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961); Ivan Marcus, *Jewish Culture and Society in Medieval France and Germany* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> David Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p. 74

particularly active in Iberia and some were well acquainted with the Talmud and Hebrew scriptures. Their intellectual assault on Jewish life and faith took the form of public disputations and forced sermons. These, together with attempts to curtail synagogue worship, posed an existential threat to Jewish communal integrity.

Still more important in the trend to conversion were those Jewish scholars who converted and turned the force of their polemic on their own communities. The very fact of their conversion was an affront to the faithful and threatened to undermine Jewish confidence and pride in their communal identity. An examination of the epistolary and polemical works of these converts will show how they confronted and overcame the doubts and hurdles that their apostasy presented to them as educated and thoughtful Jews.

How these pressures affected the *aljamas* is evident from the evolution of the Jewish polemical response to these new challenges. The confidence of scholars who wrote in the twelfth century, as if feeling free to direct criticism or even derision at Christian beliefs and values, was replaced by a more cautious tone. As Hebrew literacy among Christian scholars grew from the thirteenth century, Jewish polemic sought less to antagonise, and more to deflect the barbs of opponents, among whom were now erudite former Jews.

At the same time, a gulf in communal unity opened up. The rabbis of the Barcelona and Provençal schools directed hostile criticism at Jewish scholars who buttressed faith with arguments based on reason and philosophy. Rabbinical *responsa* and correspondence portray heated internal dissent that weakened the social fabric of Iberian Jewish communities.

Though some Jews chose martyrdom rather than submit to forced baptism in 1391, numbers of well-integrated court Jews converted for convenience or from new-found religious conviction. They were in the vanguard of what would be a tide of voluntary conversions in the early-fifteenth century. The influence of the preacher Vincent Ferrer on these conversions will be assessed from his sermons. The attempts to achieve social separation of the three faith communities were a direct result of his mission. Though not entirely successful, the physical and cultural segregation that he encouraged began to fracture the *convivencia* established in Iberia over many centuries.

## Confidence and doubt in Jewish scholarship

Jewish polemicists before the thirteenth century could expect their arguments to be read and understood only by their fellow Jews. This allowed them to express criticism of Christian belief and behaviour without fear of Christian censure. Their works show confidence in the rectitude of their own beliefs and communities and their scorn for the claimed superiority of Christianity. Two Iberian scholars of the twelfth century, who fled to Provence from Almohad persecution, reflect this communal pride and self-confidence.

In *Milhamot Adonai* (ca. 1170), Jacob ben Reuben expressed a sharp critique of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> Arguing on the basis of the gospel of Matthew, ben Reuben criticised the morality of Christians and especially of the monastic orders:

‘And I say to you love those who hate you and do good to your enemies’ (Matthew 5.39-40)...and each one of you falls between two stools, you forsake the Torah of Moses which is the Law of justice for the Law of graciousness that he gave you, but this Law too you do not follow in all sorts of ways, you fight amongst yourselves, you rob each other. Not just you but even those who enter the monastery and wear woollen garments and abstain from meat and wine.<sup>6</sup>

Joseph Kimchi made similar comments in the *Sefer ha-Berit* (ca. 1170). Upholding Jewish rectitude, he contrasted the morality of his own community with that of Christian society:

Oppression and theft are not as widespread among Jews as among Christians who rob people on the highways and hang them and sometimes gouge out their eyes.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Judah Rosenthal, ‘Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of *Milhamot Adonai* of Jacob ben Reuben’, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 26 (1957), pp. 127-137, at p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> Hanne Trautner-Kromann, *Shield and Sword: Jewish Polemics against Christianity and the Christians in France and Spain from 1100-1500* (Tübingen: Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1993), p. 55: ואני אומר לכם אהבו שונאיכם ועשו טובה לאויביכם..... תהיו נקרחים מכאן ומכאן לא תקיימו תורת משה שהיא תורת משפט בעבור תורת החן אשר הוא נותן לכם, גם תורת החן אינכם מקיימים כלל מכמה פנים אשר אתם נלחמים זה עם זה וחומסים זה לזה ולא אתם בלבד כי אם הנכנסים בבתי הכומרים ולובשים גיזת הצמר ושאינם אוכלים בשר ושותים יין.

<sup>7</sup> Joel Rembaum, ‘A Re-evaluation of a Medieval Polemical Manuscript’, *AJS Review*, 5 (1980), pp. 86-87: עושק וגזול אין ביהודים מפורסם כמו בנוצרים שמלסטמימ הבריות בדרכים ותולין אותם ומנקרים עיניהם למקצתם:





and reason rooted in a more secular scholarship.<sup>12</sup> This disunity is reflected in the *responsa* and correspondence of the rabbis as they confronted the new threats faced by the *aljamas*:

Today there are many who tear down the fences, who despise instruction and scoff at admonition . . . . . and hold to hollow superstitions, who embracing foreign teachings, would dissolve the covenant and dissipate the wealth of the Torah. These men preach homilies full of blasphemy, and even compose books in science and in philosophy drawn from Averroes and based upon Aristotle.<sup>13</sup>

This letter was sent by the Provençal scholar R. Abba Mari, also known as Astruc of Lunel, to R. Solomon ibn Adret (RaShBA) in Barcelona in 1303. The RaShBA and fourteen other scholars of Barcelona responded in a letter to the Montpellier rabbis, echoing Astruc's concerns, and demanding excommunication of those who followed secular learning:

We hear that our brothers the sons of our people, are learning philosophy, foolishness, rejecting counsel, and turning the whole Torah into allegory . . . . . take heed of the Canaanites (gentiles), who punish their own unbelievers . . . . . if they spoke of Abraham and Sarah as matter and form, would they not surround them with kindling and burn them.<sup>14</sup>

These scholars drew on the Christian treatment of heretics so evident in Provence and Languedoc. Fear of heresy and especially of loss of rabbinical authority over the *kahal* is apparent in a letter from Crescas Vidal, a native of Barcelona residing in Perpignan. The letter was included in Astruc's compendium:

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of philosophy and reason in Jewish-Christian polemic see Daniel Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), pp. 165-167. Also Soloveitchik, *Religious Law and Change*, p. 213.

<sup>13</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 1. p. 291, Baer's translation; see also Astruc of Lunel, Abba Mari b. Moses b. Joseph, *Sefer Minhag kēna'ot* (Presburg, 1838), letter #1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, letter #20: כי נשמע באוזנינו אחינו בני עמינו יקראו לפלסופיה, עגלה יפיפים, ונדחת תושיה, עשו התורה כלה משל . . . . . כי עברו נא חיי כתם אשר עד כנענים, ויענישו אותם על הגוים הכופרים . . . האם האומר על אברהם ושרה, שהם חומר וצורה, הלא יקפין זמורות ויסרפון כסיד

Today it is necessary to hurry since, little by little, youths acquiring learning have not seen the light of the Torah and, heaven forbid, the whole land will turn to apostasy, and will hate the Rabbinate.<sup>15</sup>

There is no record of extensive conversion at the time these *responsa* were written. Either the record is deficient or, more likely, the proselyting mission of the *converso* polemicist Abner of Burgos led the rabbis to a prescient understanding of the religious threat that they faced. This was a time, too, when the missionising activity of the friar preachers was increasing and the memory of their role in the Barcelona disputation of 1263 would still have been fresh in the minds, even of those who had not witnessed it.

### The mission of the friars

The Dominican Order of Friars Preacher was aimed at countering Christian heresy, but it soon turned to interest in converting Jews. Yet they met with little initial success. Jews were not impressed, on the whole, by the friars' attacks. Vose's view is that the primary aim of the friars was to re-enforce the faith of Christians and that their mission to convert may have been only a secondary consideration.<sup>16</sup> Yet much of the record rather indicates a sincere aim to reach out to the unbelievers. Their belief was that Jews and Judaism had no place in Christian Europe as testified by their polemical works that dwelt on the perfidy of Jewish heresy through the divergence by the Jews from their own Hebrew Bible.<sup>17</sup>

In 1245, Pope Innocent IV requested that King James I of Aragon should compel Jews to attend their preaching:

We wish and decree that whenever the archbishop, bishops or Dominican or Franciscan friars visit a town or locale where Saracens or Jews dwell and wish to present the word of God to the said Jews or

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, letter #12: אך היום יש לחוש, כי על יד הנערים המתחכמים, אשר לא ראו אור התורה, ח"ו תשוב הארץ כולה למינות, ותשנא את הרבנות

<sup>16</sup> Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*. He proposes that the missionizing role of the Orders has been much exaggerated, based on the misconception of their role much later on in the Americas. Their task was primarily to nurture and protect Christians from 'exposure to unbelievers', see his Introduction, p. 7. See also discussion of related historiography in Maya Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile: Tradition, Coexistence, and Change* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), p.79.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, p. 41, p. 195.

Saracens, these must gather at their call and patiently hear their preaching.<sup>18</sup>

In Aragon, such preaching by the friars took place in synagogues, accompanied by an entourage of ten upright men (*probi homines*).<sup>19</sup> Schools for the study of Hebrew were established by the Dominicans in the thirteenth century; the first *studium hebraicum* was founded by Raymond de Peñafort (d.1275) in Murcia in 1266 so that: ‘certain friars instructed in the Hebrew language, by discussion and good will in this manner are able to expose the wickedness and errors of the Jews’.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the intensified anti-Jewish polemic, the preaching which Jews were obliged to attend and the public Disputation at Barcelona, records of conversions up to the early fourteenth century are sparse.<sup>21</sup> However, despite Vose’s assertion to the contrary, the efforts expended in training young friars at the *studium* in the study of Hebrew and in Arabic show serious intent to confront the Jews’ blindness while using their own scriptures. Five years of logic were followed by theological study of texts that included Aquinas’s *Summa contra gentiles* and Raymond Martini’s *Pugio fidei* (Dagger of Faith).<sup>22</sup> As was explicit in edicts of the Council of Zamora in 1313, the bishops feared that lay people could be led astray in religious debates with Jews.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> Joannes Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, 4 vols. (Rome: 1759-1768), I, 376, #90: ‘volumus etiam et statuimus, quod quandumque Archiepiscopus, Episcopi, vel Fratres Praedicatorum, et Minores, accesserint ad villas, vel loca, ubi Saraceni vel Judaei moram fecerint; et verbum Dei dictis Judaeis, vel Saracenis proponere voluerint; ipsi ad vocationem ipsorum convenient, et patienter audient praedicationem coram’

<sup>19</sup> Jean Régné, *History of the Jews in Aragon: Regesta and Documents, 1213-1327*, Yom Tov Assis and A. Gruzman (eds.) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1978): R:209, ACA:Reg.12 fo107, R:217, ACA:Reg.12 fo111v, R:386, ACA:Reg.15 fo122v and see Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and the Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York: Behrman House, 1980), p. 255. Jaime I’s edict of 1242 is the first known royal instruction consistent with the papal ordinances for public preaching. It also proscribed the confiscation of a convert’s movable or immovable assets.

<sup>20</sup> Josè Coll, ‘Escuelas de lenguas orientales en los siglos XIII y XIV’, *Analecta sacra Tarraconensia: revista de ciencias histórico-ecclesiásticas* 19 (1946), pp. 217-240, 235; ‘in lingua etiam hebraica cum ipsius consilio et favore fratres aliqui taliter sunt instructi quos possunt iudeorum convincere malitias et errores’.

<sup>21</sup> Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Coll, ‘Escuelas’, p. 234.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter II, p. 61. The case for genuine medieval scepticism has been made by Susan Reynolds, ‘Social Mentalities and the Case of Medieval Scepticism’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1991), 1, pp. 21-41, 34: ‘this fear of the Jews reminds us that an alternative religion was available at least to the small part of the population that met and talked with Jews’; and also by John Edwards, ‘Religious Faith and Doubt in Late Medieval Spain: Soria circa 1450-1500’, *Past & Present*, 120 (1988), pp. 3-25, 21-23.

friar preachers needed to be well prepared for debate by their rigorous training and study of Hebrew and Jewish texts.

There is no evidence for forced sermons in Castile, where the Dominicans possessed more than forty convents by the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The interactions of the preachers with the Jews may have been different there, in the absence of royal edicts for obligatory attendance at sermons. In the Castilian cities the friars had frequent interactions with merchant families, and with that new category of urban knights (*caballeros villanos*).<sup>25</sup> This embeddedness allowed them contact with Jews, who traded alongside and with Christian merchants. Castile was also further from the centres of heresy in southern France, so the Dominicans there concentrated their efforts on converting Christians to a committed religious life, and Jews to Christianity.<sup>26</sup>

Jewish resistance to mendicant preaching was re-enforced by their long-standing scepticism about the friars' hypocritical life-style.<sup>27</sup> The scornful comments of some Mallorcan Jews in 1286 were transcribed from Catalan into Latin and are preserved in a seventeenth-century Venetian manuscript. It records a discussion between a Genoese merchant, Inghetto Contardo, and the Jews at the house of the *magister judeorum*. The report reveals an undisguised Jewish hostility that may have reflected a more widespread attitude of Jews to the efforts of the friars:

It has to do with your Friars Minor, Preachers, and others of the same character who preach and seduce the crowds saying: The Lord God has said this and that, but on the side they live evilly, fornicate and steal as much as they are able.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Francisco García-Serrano, *Preachers of the City: The Expansion of the Dominican Order in Castile (1217-1348)* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 76. For *caballeros villanos* see Chapter 4 of this thesis p. 119.

<sup>26</sup> A good example was the town of Zamora: 'then the glorious patriarch came to Zamora and finding there a great number of inhabitants, a flourishing commerce and a multitude of Jews who lived there for that reason, he had much material for the expression of his zeal, and started to preach frequently and with pleasurable energy', in *Ibid.*, p. 24 and see Manuel Medrano, *Historia de la provincial España de la Orden de Predicadores*, vol. 1 (Madrid: 1725), p. 583a.

<sup>27</sup> See earlier, *Milhamot Adonai* and *Sefer ha-Berit* p. 176. See also Américo Castro, 'Une charte léonaise intéressante pour l'histoire des mœurs', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 25/3 (1923), pp. 193-97; Peter Linehan, *The Ladies of Zamora* (Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 97 referring to fornication of Dominicans and nuns in a convent in Zamora.

<sup>28</sup> Larry Simon, 'Intimate Enemies: Mendicant-Jewish Interaction in Thirteenth Century Mediterranean Spain', in Susan Myers, Steven McMichael (eds.), *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, (Leiden: 2004), pp. 53-80, 62, citing Inghetto Contardo in Gilbert Dahan (ed.), *Disputatio contra*

Fifteen years after the Barcelona disputation (1263), Contardo's interlocutors also subtly mocked the efforts of Pablo Christiani and the other mendicant scholars who had presented the Christian case there. The Latin and the Hebrew reports of the debate gave quite different accounts, however there was no clear victory for the Dominicans nor any consequent conversions.<sup>29</sup>

Under the reign of Jaume, the good King of Aragon, .... the Friars Preacher and Friars Minor came to Girona as well as brothers Pau, the former Jew, and many other very able Christians ..... and they disputed with my Jews. How this turned out, ask those who were present and you will know if the outcome was to the advantage of the Christians or not.<sup>30</sup>

The intensified Christian polemic against the Jews of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had yielded few converts. However, the conversions of a few Jewish scholars to Christianity in the fourteenth century was to have a far more damaging effect on the integrity of the Iberian *aljamas*.

### Apostasy<sup>31</sup> and the transformation of the conversionary dialogue

Although much is known of the lives and works of the scholarly apostates of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, there is no certainty that they were directly responsible for procuring any large-scale conversions. They were all men of high standing in the Jewish communities, in many cases writing of their experiences in Hebrew. The use of Hebrew in their polemic and correspondence, and the Jewish poetry of the period, all show that their conversion was perceived either as a betrayal of faith or as an example to be followed by their fellow Jews. For modern historians, these records as well as those written in Latin, provide a valuable indication of the

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*Iudeos: Controverse avec les juifs*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993) : 'isti sunt uestri fratres minores et predicatorum et alii huiusmodi, qui predicant et seducunt gentes et dicunt: Dominus dixit hec et hec, et quando fornicantur, malitiose uiuunt et rapiunt que possunt'.

<sup>29</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 1, pp. 152-154.

<sup>30</sup> Simon, 'Intimate Enemies', p. 63: 'in tempore domini Iacobi boni regis Aragonum, .... fuerunt apud Gironam fratres predicatorum et fratres minores et frater Paulus qui fuit iudeus, et multi alii peritissimi Christiani.... Et disputauerunt cum meis Iudeis. Finis qualiter fuit, interroga eos qui fuerunt, et scies si finis fuit bonus pro Christianis an non', citing Contardo, *Disputatio*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>31</sup> The term is used here in the sense of a voluntary rebellion against or rejection of Judaism, *meshumad*, *min* or *mumar* in Hebrew as opposed to one who converted through force (Hebrew, *anus*) or for convenience.

mental processes that accompanied their crossing of the religious and cultural boundary from Jew to New Christian.

*Abner of Burgos/Alfonso de Valladolid*

Abner of Burgos<sup>32</sup> (1265-1347) was baptised at the age of fifty-six, taking the name of Alfonso de Valladolid. Baer's view of Abner was that he 'fathered that ideology of apostasy which was destined ..... to bring wrack and ruin upon Spanish Jewry'.<sup>33</sup> He drew on Torah, Talmud and Kabbalah, with the aim of persuading Jews of the Christian truths that rabbis were too blind or too obstinate to perceive. His mission was not only polemical, for he also influenced royal policy towards those aspects of Jewish worship he thought to be hostile to converts like himself.

Abner/Alfonso's polemical works were written in Hebrew intended to influence a Jewish audience. Little survives of Abner's original Hebrew texts, and what does is through contemporary Castilian translations, some made by Abner/Alfonso himself. His major work was the *Mostrador de justicia* (Teacher of Righteousness), *Moreh tsedek* (in Hebrew).<sup>34</sup> In it he offered a mystical explanation for his conversion. It was caused by his sorrow at the plight of his people and on two prophetic dreams:

I was aware of the oppression of the Jews, my people of whom I was one, who in this long captivity, mournful, broken and distressed by taxation, fallen from honour and the merit they once possessed, helpless and without strength.<sup>35</sup>

The *Mostrador* is a dialogue between a believer and an unbeliever, the 'teacher,' and the 'rebel', a Jew. In pointing out the Jews' error in denying the Christian messiah, Abner/Alfonso argued that their own sacred and Talmudic texts contain the truth they are too blind to see:

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<sup>32</sup> Later referred to here as Abner/Alfonso following his conversion

<sup>33</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 1, p. 330

<sup>34</sup> Ryan Szpiech, *From Testimony to Testimony: Thirteenth-Century Anti-Jewish Polemic and the Mostrador de justicia of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid*. PhD, Yale, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> 'Cate la premia de los Iudios el mi pueblo donde yo era que son en esta luenga captividad queixados e quebrantados e angustiados en fecho de los pechos, el pueblo que descendieron de la su onrra e del su loor que solian aver e non an ayuda nin fuerza en sy, *Mostrador de justicia*, BNP, Ms Esp. 43, f.12r, cited in Loeb, 'Polemistes', p. 54.

We wish to show here in this work the many good things of our Christian scripture, those good things the Jews have written down in the books of the Law of Moses, in those of the sainted prophets, according to the words of their great Talmudic sages . . . . . in which the Jews do not believe.<sup>36</sup>

The rhetorical device used by the author was the opposite of the condemnation of the Talmud as a heretical text in earlier Christian polemic.<sup>37</sup> This appeal to Jews to re-evaluate their sacred texts was more subtle than the outright denunciation by the friars. It depicted these post-biblical works as Christological proof-texts to whose meaning the Jews were simply blind.

Abner/Alfonso attributed his conversion to dream-like visions.<sup>38</sup> Another more prosaic explanation may account for his attachment to, and knowledge of, Christian theology. An early work, the *Libro de las batallas de Dios (Milhamot Adonai)*, although now lost was cited in the *Fortaliticium fidei* of Alonso de Espina, written a century later, in 1458:

The convert, Master Alfonsus, in the *libro de bellis dei* chapter 44, calls the Jews arrogant and merciless. For they do not pray out of charity like the Christians.<sup>39</sup>

A manuscript of this work, written in Castilian, was discovered in the library of San Benito Abbey in Valladolid in 1572. The manuscript bore an inscription indicating that it was the work of the *converso* Rabbi Abner and that it had been translated into Castilian at the behest of Doña Blanca, the Señora (abbess) of the Cistercian Monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos.<sup>40</sup> Las Huelgas had a large patrimony that

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*: Queremos agora mostrar en este libro muchos bienes de la nuestra ley Xprianiana, los quales bienes los Iudios tienen escriptos en los libros de la ley de Moysen y de los profetas santos, segund dichos de los sus grandes sabios del su Talmud. . . . . los quales bienes no fazen nin creen los Iudeos ninguno dellos, MS (BNP), f.3v.

<sup>37</sup> Chazan, *Church, State, and the Jew*, for the trial of the Talmud in 1240, see pp. 224-228.

<sup>38</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 1, p. 328.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Magister alfonsus conversus in libro de bellis dei caput xliiii, vocat iudeos superbos et crudeles. Quia non orant ex charitate sicut christiani’, in Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortaliticium fidei*, liber tercius, consideratio séptima, f.148v, col.1, (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1494).

<sup>40</sup> ‘Este es el Libro de las Batallas de Dios, que compuso Maestre Alfonso, Converso, que solia haber nombre Rabbi Abner, quando era Judio, e traslado de Hebraico en lengua Castellana, por mandado de la Infanta D. Blanca, Señora del Monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos’, Ambrosio de Morales, [1572] cited in Enrique Flórez (ed.), *Viage de Ambrosio de Morales por orden del rey d. Phelipe II, a los reynos de León, y Galicia, y principado de Asturias, para reconocer las reliquias de santos* (Madrid: 1765), p. 9.



included the *judería* of Santa Cecilia de Briviesca near Burgos, so the Señora's request suggests that Abner may have visited or even found employment there.<sup>41</sup> As early as 1270, a decree of Alfonso X portrayed a close association between the Jews of Santa Cecilia who paid their taxes to the monastery; they were also commanded to treat the nuns in case of illness.<sup>42</sup>

Abner's involvement with the nuns cannot be proven, but Castañeda has described *Maestre Alfonso* as both scribe and book-binder (*escriba, ligador de libros*) in the monastery library, under the Señora's direction. This assertion has been repeated elsewhere but without confirmatory sources.<sup>43</sup> Barcelona had many Jewish book-binders and they may have even been the majority of such craftsmen in the fourteenth century.<sup>44</sup> So if Abner/Alfonso had been familiar with the abbey's library, this too may have facilitated his attraction to Christianity, though this remains entirely speculative.

It is difficult to accept the view of some historians that Abner/Alfonso remained 'a Jew at heart'.<sup>45</sup> He not only wrote polemics against Judaism, but he also acted against the interest of that community. In the *Mostrador*, he called for persecution as the only way of turning Jews to Christianity:

What we see happening time and again that when many Jewish communities are massacred and the particular generation of Jews is thereby reduced in numbers, some Jews immediately convert to the

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<sup>41</sup> José Lizoain Garrido, Juan García González, *El Monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos: historia de un señorío cisterciense burgalés (siglos XII y XIII)* (Burgos, Ediciones Garrido Garrido, 1988), pp. 402, 412. The monastery's patrimony extended over 185 places and 14 provinces.

<sup>42</sup> Araceli Castro Garrido, Juan Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación del Monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1231-1306)* (Burgos: Garrido Garrido, 1987), vol 3 (1263-1283), doc.560: 'e que los metan en aquellas cosas que ovieren mester las duennas que enfermaren en el monasterio', *AMHB*. Leg. 4. Número 112-A, 19 May 1270.

<sup>43</sup> Vicente Castañeda y Alcover, *Ensayo de un diccionario biográfico de encuadernadores españoles* (Madrid: 1958), p. 16; Matilde López Serrano, *La encuadernación española: breve historia* (Madrid: Asociación Nacional de Bibliotecarios, Archiveros y Arqueólogos, 1972), p. 52, however with caveat - 'pudiendo atribuírsele (de un modo provisional)'; Norman Roth, 'Isaac Polgar y su libro contra un converso', in Johan Maier, Carlos Valle Rodríguez (eds.) *Polemica Judeo-Cristiana: estudios* (Madrid, Aben Ezra, 1992), pp. 67-74, at p. 67, n.2.

<sup>44</sup> Josep Madurell i Marimon, Jordi Rubió i Balaguer, *Documentos para la historia de la imprenta y librería en Barcelona, 1474-1553* (Barcelona: Gremios de Editores, de Libreros y de Maestros Impresores, 1955), p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.1, p. 334; Ryan Szpiech, 'The Jargon of Authenticity: Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid and the Paradox of Testimony', in *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 143-260, 165, 258, n.77; Carlos Sainz de la Maza, 'El converso y judío Alfonso de Valladolid y su libro Libro de Zelo de Dios', in *Las tres culturas en la corona de Castilla y los Sefardíes*, (Salamanca, 1990), pp.71-85, Sainz even considers Abner to be an extreme example of a heterodox Jew engaging in the turbulent controversy of the time, p. 84.

dominant Christian faith out of fear and in this way a handful are saved.<sup>46</sup>

Another side of Abner/Alfonso's character is revealed by his attack on Jewish liturgy, as captured by the  *Fortalitium fidei*, and there is no reason to doubt its veracity. The *magister Alfonso* sought to ban an ancient Hebrew prayer, the *birkat ha-minim*, which was recited three times a day in the synagogue.<sup>47</sup> In fourteenth-century Iberia, it opened with the following lines:

May there be no hope for apostates (*meshumadim*):  
And may all the *minim* and all the informers and all the traitors all  
immediately be lost.<sup>48</sup>

The meaning of the Hebrew word *minim* is crucial and has been variously interpreted as 'heretics' or even 'Christians'. Though the prayer was not named by de Espina, its prohibition by the King at Abner/Alfonso's behest, is related in detail:

The fourth prayer they make three times daily in which they curse Jesus Christ and his disciples and Christian Kings and princes who follow him

It is noted that the Jews call converts to the Christian faith *meshumadim*.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, destroyed. So these *meshumadim* are said to be destroyed without hope and all heretics and those who speak against Israel are swiftly torn apart.

These lies were made known to the illustrious King Alfonso [XI] by Master Alfonso. He disputed with the best and wisest of the Jews pointing out that they recited this prayer and curse against Christians.

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<sup>46</sup> *Mostrador de justicia*, Parmar MS., f.58, Baer's translation in *JCS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

<sup>47</sup> Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat Haminim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), see her Introduction, pp. 3-15.

<sup>48</sup> Ruth Langer, 'The Tzedah Laderekh's Apologia for the Birkat Haminim', in Arnon Atzmon (ed.) *Ke-Tavor be-harim: Studies in Rabbinic Literature Presented to Joseph Tabory* (A. Shevut, 2013), pp. 7-39, 9: למשומדים אל תהי תקוה, וכל המינים וכל המלשינים וכל המסורות כלם כרגע יאבדו

<sup>49</sup> משומדים – *meshumadim* meaning literally annihilated or destroyed. One of a number of Hebrew words for voluntary apostates as opposed to *anusim* (אנוסים), those forced to convert.

Because of this the King banned the reciting of that prayer and (ordered) that that it be expunged from all books.<sup>50</sup>

The passage also includes the ban on the prayer issued by Alfonso XI in a letter dated 25 February 1336:

I wish you to know that it has been related by the converso Master Alfonso, sacristan of the great Church of Valladolid, that for a very long time you use daily amongst yourselves, adults of either sex, a certain prayer in which you curse the Almighty God of the Christians and all those who convert to the Christian faith, as heretics and dangerous foes and publicly pray to God that he ruin and utterly destroy them.<sup>51</sup>

The elders of the *aljama* and Valladolid's leaders and friars were assembled by Abner/Alfonso.<sup>52</sup> The Jews denied that the prayer impugned Christians (*et licet aliqui iudeorum dicendo negabant hoc non dicere christianis*). Nevertheless, the King prohibited the recitation of the prayer throughout his kingdom:

The learned men swore there an oath on Jewish law, conceded by the writings of their books, enjoined by their forefathers to do this just as Master Alfonso said. Each in turn, strongly and in Hebrew, showed us that they refute and expunge this. We command in good Christian faith that throughout our kingdom they will not do this.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Spina, *Fortalicium fidei*: 'Quartam orationem faciunt quotidieter in die in qua meledicunt iesum christum et discipulos suos atque reges et principes christianos cuius tenor talis est . . . . ut intelligatur notandum que iudei vocant conversos ad fidem christi mesunadin. Idest destructos. Dicunt ergo sic mesunadin idest destructis non sit spes et omnes heretici et omnes qui loquunt contra israelitin brevi sint scisi. . . . . sed mentita est iniquitas sibi cum hoc fuerit publice omnium per supradictum magestrum alfonsum illustrissimo regi alfonso quod disputavit cum maioribus et sapientioribus iudeorum et fecit eos cognoscere que dicebant predictam oracionem et maledictionem contra christianos propter quod predictus rex inhibuit iudeis singulis ne illam oracionem dicerent. Et quod eam ab omnibus libris suis raderent et amoverent', f.148r. col.2 and 148v. col.1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Volo vos scire nobis fuisse relatum per magistrum alfonsum conversum sacristam maioris ecclesie vallisolitane vos uti a magnis temporibus inter vos quotidie ab utroque sexu adulte etatis oracione quadam in qua maledictionem omnipotentis dei christianis ac omnibus ad fidem christiani conversis imprecamini eos censendo hereticos, etiam inimicos capitales, et que publice deum exoratis ut eos destruat atque perdat.'

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: 'disputavit tum hoc dictus magister alfonso cum sapientioribus vallesole que de vobis fuerint adinuenti, coram iudicibus vostris ac scribis publicis et merinis atque probis viris de predicatoribus fratribus et multis aliis circumstantibus.'

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, col.2: 'Ubi iuramento legis iudeorum illi summe literati inter se, concesserunt dictis librorum suorum iniunctum ab antecessoribus hoc fuisse veluti dictus magister alfonso demonstrabat. Et ipsi suis nominibus super hoc vice et vicebus roborarunt in hebraico, vidente nobis hoc vituperare et erogare

What motivated Abner/Alfonso in his attack on Jewish practice? He knew well that he was one of those *meshumadim* or *minim* against whom the blessing (or curse) was directed. He knew, too, that the prayer discouraged others from following his example. Involving the King may have also been self-serving; a way to consolidate Abner/Alfonso's relatively lowly position as sacristan in Valladolid and also confirm him as a trusted son of the Church.

The ban issued by Alfonso XI was not strictly enforced. In 1380, Juan I re-issued the decree, with a punishment of one hundred lashes in public for transgression.<sup>54</sup> Through Abner/Alfonso's influence, a centuries-old prayer brought royal opprobrium on whole communities. The anguish that this episode caused the communities was real. We know this from verses by a contemporary, the poet Samuel ibn Sasson. Little is known of his life, but these verses were written between 1330 and 1340:

§.8 1.31 They persecute faith in other matters, roving trouble makers, the foe slanders their prayers. He who comes to pray at his temple, cannot.<sup>55</sup>

The 'foe' was Abner and in a dedication, the poet explained:

§.7 I wrote this at the time of the argument of R. Joshua with R. Abner, for at that time the sorrows multiplied and there was much idolatry amongst the people.<sup>56</sup>

The identity of R. Joshua is unknown. The poet knew that Abner's chief polemical adversary was R. Isaac Polgar, and he wrote admiringly of Polgar's defence of Judaism against the self-appointed 'teacher' (the *mostrador de justicia*, Abner):

§.67 I sent this to R. Don Isaac b. Polgar, may God preserve him

1.7 His darts strike the Teacher in the back, teaching much theology, his sword unsheathed against the Teacher, he strikes him.

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(derogare) fidei christiane in bonum duximus per mandatum ne in aliquo regnorum nostrum amplius hoc fiat.'.

<sup>54</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*. vol.2, doc. 227, p. 226.

<sup>55</sup> ועושים שמד בענינים אחרים, אנשים מדנים סוחרים, אשר אויב תפלתם רכל, ובא אל מקדשו להתפלל, ולא יוכל Chamiel, *Sefer Avne Ha-Shoham*, v.8, p. 12; Brann, 'The Poetic Universe', p. 81, n.30.

<sup>56</sup> ועשיתי בזמן שהיה הוכוח לר' יהושוע עם ר' אבנר, כי באותו הזמן גדלו הצרות ורבה העבודה בקרב הארץ Chamiel, *Avne ha-shoham*, v.7, p.10:

1.12 Who is like R. Isaac, who dwells high in the clouds, who is so beloved, known as ben Polgar.<sup>57</sup>

Ibn Sasson refers here to the correspondence that Polgar had with a man who had once been his friend and teacher.<sup>58</sup> Polgar's *Tshuvat epikoros* (Reply to the Apostate), was incorporated in his later work, *Ezer ha-Dat* (Guide to Faith), a comprehensive rebuttal of Abner's teachings.<sup>59</sup>

Upon my soul, I once befriended a man, quick and knowledgeable in religion and also philosophy who towards his end, to fulfil his desire, turned from the path of Torah. His name had previously been R. Abner. He argued with me saying: Do you believe in the ancient words of the Talmud sages and their beautiful sayings? I replied, Yes, I believe the sages ..... He replied, ask for the faith of the wise, do not pervert their paths, I shall show you through their works, I will instruct you from their devices.<sup>60</sup>

Polgar's polemic was founded on philosophy and reason.<sup>61</sup> In this he was at odds with orthodox opinion, already referred to, of most rabbinical leaders in Iberia and southern France. Yet he was not alone in opposition. In his *Ma'amar ha-behira* (Treatise on Free Will, 1360), the Provençal scholar Moses Narboni not only questioned Abner/Alfonso's wisdom and sincerity, but also implied that his conversion was motivated by base considerations:

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, v.67: מי רב כרב יצחק, שדר ברום שחק, מי הוא מאוד יקר, נחקר כבן פלקאר

<sup>58</sup> Polgar's dates are unknown, but the correspondence must have been 1330-1347, before or just after Abner/Alfonso's death in 1347, George Belasco, 'Isaac Pulgar's "Support of the Religion"', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 17/1 (1904), pp. 25-56, at p. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Carlos del Valle, 'La contradicción del hereje de Isaac ben Polgar', in Judit Targarona, Angel Sáenz-Badillos (eds.), *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress, Toledo, July 1998* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 552-560.

<sup>60</sup> Isaac Polgar, in George Belasco (ed.), *Ezer ha-dat al pi Ketav yad Halbershtam* (London: J. Jacobs, 1906): פעם אחד נתחברתי עם איש אחד חי נפשי, מהיר ויודע בדרכי הדת וגם בפלוסופיא ובא עד קצו, למלאות חפצו, ונטה לבו לשוב מדרכי תורתנו, היה שמו מקודם ר' אבנר, ויומר לי בהתוכחו אצלי התאמין בדברי חכמי התלמוד הקדומה, ודבריהם הנעימים, ואומר הן בחכמים אני מאמין.....ויומר לי אמנות חכמים תבקש, ואורחותיהם אל תעשק, אנוכי אראה אותך מדבריהם, ואאלפך ממועצותיהם, p. 25, 24a.

<sup>61</sup> Belasco, Isaac Pulgar's "Support of the Religion", p. 38.

This man Abner, may (God's) light be upon his head, he is amongst the wisest among us, so I do not believe that he erred in this, but he was deceived\* since seeing the oppression of our time, and that he received rejection rather than support from his co-religionists, to (his) alienation and distancing from wisdom and transgression and hatred, he turned to arrogance and a lying apostasy.<sup>62</sup>

He was not amongst those sages of sound opinion for whom meagre fare was sufficient and who turn to material things only from dire necessity.<sup>63</sup>

As Polgar had done, Narboni challenged Abner's belief in predestination. He saw this claim as a mere excuse for conversion.<sup>64</sup>

The voluntary acceptance of baptism by Jews required an acceptance of the principal doctrines of Christianity that included the Trinity, the Incarnation and Transubstantiation. These elements, especially the Trinity and Incarnation, were subjects that were raised repeatedly from both Jewish and Christian sides of the polemical divide. Abner/Alfonso aimed to persuade Jews that an acceptance of the Trinity was consistent with biblical and post-biblical Judaism:

For in the verse of the Psalms (50:1) the name of God is given in three ways in order to show that with these three names God created his world.<sup>65</sup>

The way in which some Jews wrestled with these matters, so foreign to their own concept of the deity, is seen from a consideration of the works of two late fourteenth-

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<sup>62</sup> Moses of Narbonne, *Ma'amar ha-Behira*, in Eli'ezer Ben Solomon Ashkenazi, (eds.), *Sefer Divre Hahamim*, (Mets: Imprimerie J.M. Samuel, 1849): 'וזה האיש המכונה אבנר, נהלו גרו עלי ראשו, הנה הוא אצלנו ' כי כאשר ראה העקות העת ושלא יגיע לו המשתתפים עמו בדת עזר מהחוכמה שעור גדול ולא אחשוב שטעה בזה אבל הטעה\*', f.40. \* I believe this word has been misunderstood by Baer (*JCS*, vol. 1, p. 332) and should be read as הִטְעָה, 'deceived', not 'that his intent was to deceive or mislead others' (*sic*).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 'כי לא היה מהחכמים שלמי הדעה אשר די להם בקב הרובן מע"ש לע"ש כי אין לפנות אל המוחש רק בהחרכי ' ובהחרכי מספיק מאוד

<sup>64</sup> Maurice Hayoun, 'L'epître du Libre Arbitre de Moïse de Narbonne (ca. 1300-1362)', *Revue des études juives*, 141 (1982), pp. 139-167, 140-142.

<sup>65</sup> Szpiech, *From Testimonia to Testimony*, p. 158; Jeff Diamond, 'El Tema de la Trinidad en el "Libro de la Ley" de Alfonso de Valladolid', *Sefarad*, 57/1 (1997), pp. 33-49, 44: 'por que nonbra el viesso en el Salterio el nombre de Dios tres vegadas departidas, por mostrar que con estos tres nombres crio Dios su mundo'.

century scholarly converts. The conclusions that they reached could hardly have been more different.

*The resolution of converso doubt: Profiat Duran and Joshua Halorki/ Hieronymus de Sancta Fide*

Following the mass conversions of 1391, the exchanges between converts and Jews intensified. Profiat Duran (known also as the 'Efodi') exemplifies the spiritual turmoil of a highly articulate convert, who simultaneously expressed guilt over his own conversion, and anger at others who had willingly abandoned their faith.

Duran was a native of Perpignan who probably converted between February 1391 and May 1392, becoming Honoratus de Bonafide, and was soon appointed as the court astrologer of King Juan I of Aragon.<sup>66</sup> Amongst his works, the tract *Al Tehi ka-avoteha* (Be Not Like Thy Fathers) written in 1396, exhibits subtle mockery of those articles of Christianity professed by recent Jewish converts. His literary tone varied from the ironic in *Al Tehi* to the forthright critique of Christianity in his *Klimat ha-goyim* (Shame of the Gentiles) of 1397.

There are at least 18 manuscripts of *Al tehi* dating from the fifteenth century, so it must have been fairly widely read.<sup>67</sup> It is an epistolary text in which Duran addressed an old friend, Bonet Bonjorn, who had converted under the influence of the newly baptized Pablo de Santa Maria, possibly in Avignon:

To David ..... 'who said to his father and his mother, I have not seen him' (Deut. 33:9) .... I called him my brother, David Bonet the Christian, formerly in Israel called David Bonet Bonjorn.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Richard Emery, 'New Light on Profayt Duran "The Efodi"', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 58/4 (1968), pp. 328-37. Baer, because of Duran's anti-Christian polemics, found his conversion 'inconceivable', in Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, p. 152; Emery cites archival evidence for this (p. 331) and it has been accepted more recently by Yossi Yisraeli, 'Constructing and Undermining Converso Jewishness: Profiat Duran and Pablo de Santa Maria', in Ira Katznelson, Miri Rubin (eds.), *Religious Conversion: History, Experience and Meaning* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 185-216, 191-192; Maud Kozodoy, 'The Hebrew Bible as Weapon of Faith in Late Medieval Iberia: Irony, Satire, and Scriptural Allusion in Profiat Duran's 'Al Tehi Ka-Avotekha'', *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 18/2 (2011), pp. 185-201, 201.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>68</sup> לדוד ..... 'האמר לאביו ולאמו לא ראיתיו' ..... אליו קראתי אחי מאישטרי דוד בוניט המשיחי שמו לפנים בישראל דוד בוניט בונגורן, Frank Talmage, *The Polemical Writings of Profiat Duran* (Hebrew, The Zalman Shazar Centre and The Dinur Centre, Jerusalem, 1981), p. 73.

Throughout the letter, Duran admonished his old friend not to follow in the faith of his fathers, but the tone appears to be ironic. And so, on the Trinity:

Be not like your fathers who believed in the simple unity of God and rejected altogether any plurality in him and they mistook the sentence 'Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One' ..... But you are not like that! You believe He is one and three, the three is one and the one is three....<sup>69</sup>

His emphatic rejection of any Jewish conception of Trinity or Incarnation illustrates the centrality of this question for him as it would be for others. At the end of *Al tehi*, Duran allowed his ironic mask to slip as he castigated Bonjorn for disloyalty to his honoured father.

I beseech you that henceforth you shall not sign any book in the name of your honoured father, of blessed memory. Your soul shall not come into his secret (Gen. 49:6) and you shall not be honoured by his memory, for were he to be alive he would have chosen to banish such a son as you from his sight, and even now in his eternal rest his soul mourns him.<sup>70</sup>

This final flourish makes it unlikely that Duran intended the treatise to be misunderstood as a paean of praise for Christianity, but rather that it was a truly aggressive assertion of the superiority of Judaism.

Duran understood his 'brother' Bonjorn to have been converted through the influence of a teacher. Although the apostate Pablo de Santa María (formerly Shlomo ha-Levi) was not named he is clearly the teacher cited here:

You further wrote, my brother, how you marvelled and boasted of the perfection of your exalted teacher, all honour to his greatness, you told of his creation in the image of God, you make of him a Pope (I do not

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75: אל תהי כאבותך אשר האמינו באלוה האחדות הפשוטה לבד ושללו ממנו הריבוי לגמרי וטעו במאמר 'שמע ישראל יי אלוהנו יי אחד' .... ואתה לא כן! האמינהו אחד ושלושה, והשלושה אחד והאחד שלושה

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83: אבקש אשר מכאן ואליך לא תעלה על ספר בחתימתך שם הנכבד אביך ז"ל. בסודו אל תבא נפשך ואל תתכבד בזכירתו, כי לו הייתה בחיים חיותו, בוחר היה העדר בן כמוך ממצאיאותו, גם עתה נפשו עליו תאבל באשר הוא שם בבית מנוחתו



know if he will finally go to Rome or to Avignon). I too, my brother, knew of his great works.<sup>71</sup>

Duran's comment on Rome and Avignon show his contempt for a Christian faith riven by schism. The hubris of the New Christians was mocked by Profiat Duran in his *Al tehi* epistle to Pablo's disciple, Bonet Bonjorn:

You are naïve in your messianic faith; 'in his light shall we see light' (Psalms XXXVI:9), you will succeed in all that you do. Do not worry about the humiliation, poverty, and disgrace that clings to your soul and the degradation that lies before you. Your enemies will vilify you, your folly will melt before them as a snail (Psalms LVIII:8), saying to you daily: 'impure', 'infidel', or 'circumcised'. It is enough for you that you remain forever in eternal pleasure no matter the cost, for you will see the face of the King and the concubine seated at his side.<sup>72</sup>

Modern scholars accept the putative dating of both *Al tehi* and *Kelimat* to after Duran's conversion. The puzzling ability of a convert to compose such challenging polemic has been addressed by Kozodoy, who notes that *Kelimat* was unsigned and may not even have been widely disseminated. *Al tehi* was indeed signed with his Hebrew name, however its sarcastic tone may have resulted in its misinterpretation by Christian authorities.<sup>73</sup> Despite his conversion, Duran opposed the abandonment of Judaism; his sense of his own identity remained problematic and unresolved. In one way or another, this lack of a complete resolution of individual identity characterised some of even the most committed New Christians.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81: ואשר כתבת עוד, אחי, והפלאות והגדלות סיפור מעלת מלמדך להועיל ושלמותו, את כל כבודו ואת יקר תפארת, את גדולתו, ואמרת שנברא בצלם אלוהים ודמותו, ועשית אותו אפיפיור במאמר (לא הבנתי אם ילך לרומא או באוויניון תהיה עשה ידעתי כמוך את כל הגדולות אשר עשה. גם אני, אחי, מנוחתו). see also Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos: Historia de la judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios* (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1952), p. 319.

<sup>72</sup> Talmage, *The Polemical Writings*, *Al tehi*, p. 81: תמים אתה בדרכי אמונתך, אמונת המשיח; באורו תראה אור וכל אשר תעשה תצליח. לא תדאוג על הכניעה והדלות והבזיון הדבק בנפש והשפלות אשר על פנך. יחרפוך צורריך ותמס תהלונך לפניהם כמו שבלול, באמרם אליך כל היום: טבול יום, כופר, או מהול. רב לך בהישאר נפשך לעד בתענוג נצחי לא תשווער איכותו, כי תראה פני המלך והשגל יושבת אלצו במחיצתו

<sup>73</sup> Maud Kozodoy, *The Secret Faith of Maestre Honoratus Profyat Duran and Jewish Identity in Late Medieval Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 32.

<sup>74</sup> Duran provides an example of the instability of group boundaries as postulated by Nirenberg, 'Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities', p. 12. The problem of unresolved *converso* identity is considered in chapter VI of this dissertation; it would be a factor that would threaten the full integration of converts into Christian society.

We know that Joshua Halorki of Alcañiz arrived at his decision to convert following a tortured struggle with his conscience. However, in contrast to Duran, Halorki adopted his new faith with relish. A physician and scientist, he embodied the dangers of secular learning of which rabbis had so often warned. Following his conversion Halorki became Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, the major Christian protagonist at the Tortosa Disputation of 1413.

The extent of Halorki's scientific scholarship is apparent from his treatise in Arabic on medicinal plants soon translated into Hebrew as *Gerem ha-ma'a lot* (The Staircase).<sup>75</sup> His 'Greek learning' and his theological disquiet are apparent from a letter to his recently converted friend, Shlomo ha-Levi of Burgos (Pablo de Santa Maria). Halorki had read ha-Levi's recent letter to the rabbi of Navarre, Joseph Orabuena:

Your letter has come into my hands... sent to R. Joseph Orabuena in Navarre, I see therein that you have come to believe of the man who came at the end of the second Temple, that he was the Messiah awaited by our people.<sup>76</sup>

This coy reference to Christ is from the man who later converted and who became a most detested source of anti-Jewish rhetoric.<sup>77</sup> After a respectful introduction, Halorki turned to discussion of the Christological interpretations of scripture that led ha-Levi to conversion. Wrestling with what he perceived as the irrationality of his friend's acceptance of the Trinity and Incarnation, he commented:

Also about the Trinity, according to the opinions of the theologians in this wondrous matter of divine attributions, it must be said that it is an ancient concept of the time of the prophets who believed this and as I have seen also in the Aristotelian text of *The Heavens and the World* (*De Caelo et Mundo*) and this is the weakness of his argument,<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin: Friedlaender, 1852), col. 1559.

<sup>76</sup> L. Landau, *Das Apologetische Schreiben des Josua Lorki an den Abtrünnigen Don Salomon ha-Lewi-Paulus de Santa Maria* (Antwerpen: 1906): טופס כתב ידך שלוח לנאברא ליוסף אוראבונינה וראיתי: p. 3. בו היותך מאמין ענין האיש אשר בא בסוף בית שני שהוא המשיח אשר קוותה אומתנו

<sup>77</sup> Francisco Cantera Burgos, *La conversión del célebre Talmudista Salomón Levi – Pablo de Burgos* (Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1933), p. 8; Baer, *JCS* vol.2, p. 143.

<sup>78</sup> Landau, *Das Apologetische Schreiben*, p. 15: גם על ענין השלוש כפי מה שלוקחן אותו חכמי האלהות באותו הענין: הנפלא והצירוף באלהי יש לומר שהוא דעת קדמון נמצא גם בזמן הנביאים מי שהאמינוהו ובפרט שראיתי גוסס אריסטו בתחילת השמים והעולם וזה תורף דבריו

But what do you think, that He really is the Messiah of flesh and blood, who eats and drinks, who dies yet lives, that he himself is the true God ..... The truth is that intelligence (*sehel*) cannot comprehend this and cannot remove doubt or confusion from the heart.<sup>79</sup>

Halorki finally resolved his doubts. According to the sixteenth-century historian Fr. Francisco Diago, it was the Dominican, Vicente Ferrer, who baptised him in 1412 just before the Tortosa disputation.<sup>80</sup> As Hieronymus, he played a central role in the disputation, as the Latin sources attest. These and fragmentary Hebrew sources were used by Baer in his treatment of the events that spanned the years 1413 to 1414.<sup>81</sup> Ferrer may not have been present at Tortosa, although the eighteenth-century historian, Serafín Miguel, cited the *Vita Sancti Vincentii* by the Italian Dominican, Petrum Ransanum, a text commissioned by Pope Calixtus III in the 1450s:

San Vincente was very delighted to observe and to speak with his disciple Geronimo; he also was pleased to see the vigour and erudition with which he convinced the rabbis and even brought them to our sainted faith.<sup>82</sup>

Halorki was unique amongst the Jewish converts of that period in that he left detailed accounts on his state of mind before conversion. Clearly, his internal debate, visible in his letter to Pablo, was a reflection of a personal experience which we cannot assume all other converts shared. Yet some elements of his issues of faith and identity must have troubled others who were influenced by his preaching and his example.

#### *Shlomo ha-Levi/Pablo de Santa María (1350-1435)*

The record of Shlomo ha-Levi's spiritual quest before his conversion is less well documented than that of his friend Halorki, yet his progression to the heights of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was rapid. Father to a dynasty of prominent and scholarly churchmen and religious women, some of his writings nevertheless portray elements of

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, אבל מה תאמר נפשך על אמרם שהוא הוא המשיח בשר ודם יאכל וישתה ימות ויחיה והוא הוא עצמו האלה האמתי, ..... והאמת כי זה הוא ענין לא יכילהו השכל ולא יעלה על לב לשומו מסופק ולהיות נבוך בו

<sup>80</sup> Francisco Diago, *Historia de la vida, milagros, muerte y discípulos del bienaventurado predicador apostólico valenciano San Vicente Ferrer de la orden de predicadores* (Barcelona: 1600), p. 326.

<sup>81</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol. 2, pp. 170-243.

<sup>82</sup> Serafín Miguel, Francisco Vidal y Micó, *Historia de la portentosa vida y milagros del valenciano apostol de europa S. Vicente Ferrer* (Valencia: 1735), lib II, p. 222a: 'Holgóse mucho San Vicente de ver, y comunicar con su Dicipulo Geronimo; y gustava de ver la viveza, y la erudición con que convencia a los Rabinos, y aun los reducía a nuestra Santa Fé'.

a dual identity. The pride he expressed in his Jewish lineage, together with confidence in a new-found Christian faith are to be found also in the writings of scholarly *conversos* later in the fifteenth century.

Shlomo/Pablo's baptism is thought to have taken place in Burgos in 1391, just before the violence, though a sixteenth-century source placed it a year earlier.<sup>83</sup> Henceforth known as Pablo de Santa María, he and all his family, except his father and his wife, underwent baptism at the same time. They took the family name of García and the coat of arms of Don García Alonso de Covarrubias, the chaplain who administered the sacrament.<sup>84</sup> The earlier date for the baptism seems the most likely, and there is no evidence that it was accompanied by or was the direct result of any violence or of compulsion.<sup>85</sup> Unlike Abner/Alfonso or Joshua/Hieronymus, ha-Levi was already a notable member of the Castilian court elite before his conversion. Yet, like the Jewish *privados* earlier in the century, Shlomo's social position encompassed devout scholars of his own community as well as the members of Juan I's court.

That Shlomo ha-Levi was close to Jewish scholarly circles before his conversion, is indicated by the respectful address to him by R. Isaac ben Sheshet Perfet (the RIBaSH), in a discussion of the minutiae of ritual law:

§189 To the scholarly Don Shlomo ha-Levi of Burgos (God's light be upon his head)

How wonderful and splendid today that you remembered me so I am ready to renew perfect friendship and love, ..... behold you came to me to ask for my exposition and my utterances shall be heard.<sup>86</sup>

The considerable biographical detail about ha-Levi/Pablo relies largely on contemporary and later encomia of his noble Hebrew lineage and great scholarship.<sup>87</sup> An opinion of him, after his death, was given in 1450 by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán:

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<sup>83</sup> *Vita Pauli*, a biographical introduction by Cristóbal de Santotis to Pablo de Santa María, in *Scrutinium Scripturarum* (Burgis: Apud Philippum Iuntam, 1591), p. 24, col.2.

<sup>84</sup> Manuel Martínez Añibarro y Rives, *Intento de un diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de autores de la provincia de Burgos* (Madrid: M. Tello, 1889), p. 471.

<sup>85</sup> Cantera Burgos, *La conversión*, p. 10.

<sup>86</sup> Isaac ben Sheshet Perfet, *She'elot u-teshuvot bar Sheshet*, I. Daiches (ed.), 3rd edn. (Vilna: 1878), responsum #189, p. 89: אל החכם דון שלמה הלוי דבורגוש גר"ו, מה נכבד היום מה טוב ומה נעים בא זכרוני לפניך ואהיה: שעשועים ולחדש ידידות ואהבה כלולות.... והנה באת במגלת ספר היום החלות לשאול לי אחוה דעי ודברי יהיו נשמעים

<sup>87</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, pp. 130-150; Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García*; Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos d. Pablo de Santa María y d. Alfonso de Cartagena: obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y*

A Hebrew native of Burgos, a great sage and worthy man of science... he was very learned in both Scriptures before his conversion. He was a great philosopher and theologian.<sup>88</sup>

The writings of the new convert, Pablo, reveal little doubt about his conversion. They do, however, incorporate his theological justifications and an intemperate condemnation of Judaism. They further reveal something of the mental process whereby he reconciled himself with his new Christian identity, based upon genealogy and faith. There is a striking contrast between Pablo's pride as a New Christian and the guilty yet tenacious adherence of another convert, Profiat Duran, to what he still perceived as Judaism's immutable truths.

Whether Vincent Ferrer baptised Pablo, as claimed by the sixteenth-century Fr. Diago, remains speculative. So too, Pablo's assertion that he was helped in his new understanding of his faith by the *De legibus* of Thomas Aquinas:

Before this, Saint Vincent had also converted another very learned Jew called Pablo in Castile ..... He stated that to achieve conversion, he had been much helped reading *De legibus* in the *prima secunde* of Saint Thomas. Seeing how learned was his treatment of the Old Testament therein, he said: This Fr. Thomas understood the Old Law better than I myself, I who am regarded as very learned by my own people: because of all this I do not wish to remain a Jew.<sup>89</sup>

Pablo's major works of scholarship included the *Additiones*, a supplement to Nicholas de Lyra's commentary on the Bible (1429), and the *Scrutinium scripturarum*, a polemical dialogue between a Christian and a Jew (1430s). A comment in Guzmán's *Semblanzas* is especially interesting as a rebuttal of charges of insincerity in

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*escritores* (Madrid: Bermejo, 1942); Yisraeli, 'Constructing and Undermining Converso Jewishness', pp. 198-215.

<sup>88</sup> Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, 'Generaciones y semblanzas del noble caballero Fernán Pérez de Guzmán', in Fernan Gómez de Ciudad Real (ed.), *Centon Epistolario del bachiller Fernán Gómez de Cibdareal* (Madrid, Imprenta Real de la Gazeta, 1775), p. 249: 'fué un gran sabio e valiente hombre en sciencia. Fué natural de Burgos, e fué Hebréo, de gran linaje de aquella nación .....que fue gran letrado en ambas las leyes ante de su conversión. Era gran filósofo y teólogo'.

<sup>89</sup> Diago, *Historia de la vida*, p. 327: 'Antes de esto avia san Vincente convertido también en Castilla otro judío muy letrado, llamado Pablo ..... se afirma que para acabarse de convertir le ayudo mucho leer la materia de legibus en la prima secunde de Santo Thomas. Que viendo quan doctamente declaro en ella todas la leyes del viejo testamento, dixo: Este fray Thomas entendio mejor le vieja ley que yo mesmo que soy tenido por muy letrado entre mi gente: y con todo esso no quiso ser Iudio'.

conversion, often made against New Christians. Pablo's proof of Christ's corporeality in the *Scrutinium* was seen as an indication of sincere belief:

In this work (*Scrutinium*), with strong and vivid arguments he proves the coming of the Messiah and that He is both God and Man; in this way he contradicted the opinions of some, who without good reason, totally condemn and vehemently charge this nation of New Christians, with unfaithful and useless conversion.<sup>90</sup>

Here too, the emphasis on Pablo's genuine acceptance of Incarnation reflects a view that converts might pick and choose what they believed. Guzmán claimed that great respect is due to converts who had been reared in 'that Law', yet chose the 'new Law' freely, without exhortation or threat. He was writing at a time, in 1449, when the rebels in Toledo had accused the *conversos* of insincerity and judaizing.<sup>91</sup> His comment shows that the conversion, even of so prominent a convert as Pablo, might not have been above suspicion.

Pablo's understanding of his own conversion and the spiritual transformation effected by baptism was included by him in the *Additiones*. The prologue takes the form of an address to his son Alfonso (*venerabili viro Alphonso legum doctore*), probably written in 1429:

But I was born in the perfidious blindness of the Jews, I was not taught the sacred scripture by holy scholars; I received an erroneous way of thinking from mistaken teachers, rashly I was busy with literature and wrong-thinking sophistry and the rest of those treacherous works. Truly, when it pleased those whose mercy is limitless, to rescue me from darkness into light, from swirling mists to fresh air: somehow the scales fell from my eyes..... Thus it is that the desire for the catholic faith grew ever warmer within me, until I finally managed publicly, to profess that faith .... I received the sacrament of baptism in the holy font of this church, taking the name of Paul, at that time with you in

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<sup>90</sup> Guzmán, 'Generaciones y semblanzas', p. 250: 'en el qual por fuertes e vivas razones prueba ser venido el Mexias, e aquel ser Dios e Hombre: y en este lugar acordó de engerir algunas razones contra la opinión de algunos, que sin discreción e diferencia, absoluta e sueltamente condenan e afean en gran extremo esta nación de los Christianos nuevos en nuestro tiempo convertidos, afirmando no ser Christianos, ni fue buena ni útil su conversion'.

<sup>91</sup> See p. 235 in chapter VI of this dissertation.

joyful childhood innocence, following me at that tender age cleansed from original sin by the sacred water.<sup>92</sup>

In his pride of descent from the ‘tribe of Levi’, Pablo further expressed faith in his personal transition from respected Jewish scholar to Christian prelate. He had achieved this change, he implies, without sacrificing his Jewish identity:

Only I cannot be enjoined to silence, it has been clearly shown to us that we are descended from the line of Levites, wherefore many generations earlier it is written: ‘No possessions were given to the tribe of Levi, for the Lord is their possession’ (Deut. 10:9); so the Lord is our possession Christ is our inheritance, who shall cleanse the sons of Levi, so they might be presented to the Lord as a righteous offering.<sup>93</sup>

Pablo’s cultural transition indicates an identity grafted onto his former existence as a Jew. A similar resolution was achieved and described by his son, Alonso de Cartagena as well as by other New Christians in the aftermath of the anti-*converso* violence of 1449.<sup>94</sup>

## Death, martyrdom and a widening circle of conversion

Although the riots of 1391 started in Seville, detailed records for Castile are deficient compared to documentation from Valencia and Aragon.<sup>95</sup> There is even less certainty about the numbers of deaths than there is of the numbers who converted during the riots that spread rapidly throughout the Peninsula. Yet records show that many Jews died rather than receive baptism, some even by their own hand.

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<sup>92</sup> *Additiones*, in Jaques Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus* (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey Inc., 1852), vol. CXIII, col. 35 (*Prolegomena*): ‘sed sub Judaicae caecitatis perfidia natus, sacras litteras non a sacris doctoribus didicissem; ab erroneis magistris erroneos sensus trahebam, litteram rectam non rectis cavillationibus, ut caeteri illius perfidiae duces, temerarie involvere satagens. Cum vero placuit illi cujus misericordia mensuram non habet, me a tenebris ad lucem, a caliginosa turbine ad serenum aerem revocare: ceciderunt quodammodo squamae de oculis mentis meae..... Sicque factum est ut catholicae fidei desiderium in mente mea de die in diem fortius incandesceret; quoad ipsam fidem, quam corde gerebam, publice profiterer: et ea fere aetate qua tu nunc es, baptismi sacramentum in hujus ecclesiae sacro fonte suscepi, Pauli nomen asumens, te tunc infantiae innocentia gaudente, qui post me in aetate illa tenera sacro lavacro ab originale culpa mundatus es’.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, col.36: ‘Unum est quod silentio committere non possum, nobis ex Levitico sanguine descentibus aliquantulum demonstratum fuisse, quod ante tot saecula scriptum est : ‘Tribui Levi non fuisse datam possessionem, quia Dominus est possessio ejus ‘ ; Deus enim est possessio nostra, Christus haereditas nostra, qui purgaturus filios Levi, ut sacrificia Domino in justitia offerrent’.

<sup>94</sup> See p. 244 in chapter VI of this dissertation.

<sup>95</sup> See Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots*.

The practice of *kiddush ha-Shem*, dying for the sanctification of God's name, was a form of martyrdom depicted already in the chronicles of the Ashkenazi Jewish communities of the First Crusade.<sup>96</sup> These depictions of suicide alongside the killing of families by parents described in these narratives became less common in later assaults on the Jews in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>97</sup> In these most extreme examples of martyrdom, individuals chose to kill themselves, their neighbours, wives and children rather than to convert. However, the term *kiddush ha-Shem* was also applied at the time and later by historians to denote all those who allowed themselves to be slaughtered rather than choose salvation through conversion.

Martyrdom by self-immolation was still evident in Christian chronicles of the Shepherds' Crusades of the 1320s. A Latin report from fourteenth-century Aquitaine, documented the deeds of the Pastoreaux and the response of the Jews in their path, who 'killed themselves rather than be killed by the uncircumcised'.<sup>98</sup>

Reports of *kiddush ha-Shem* through suicide are found in contemporary or later accounts of the riots of 1391, but these are scanty and mainly come from Hebrew sources that extoll the example set by religious leaders. An exception is a letter of Juan I of Aragon to his bailiffs on 22 September 1391, issued in Zaragoza. This requested information about the possessions (synagogues, shops, dwellings, jewellery) that had belonged to the *aljamas* of his kingdom. Specifically, he wished to be notified of the assets of those who died by their own hand and who had no heirs:

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Chazan, 'The Hebrew First Crusade Chronicles: Further Reflections', *AJS Review*, 3 (1978), pp. 79-98; Soloveitchik, *Religious Law and Change*, pp. 205-221; Ivan Marcus, 'From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusade Riots', *Prooftexts*, 2/1 (1982), pp. 40-52; Simha Goldin, 'The Socialisation for Kiddush Ha-Shem among Medieval Jews', *Journal of Medieval History*, 23/2 (1997), pp. 117-38. According to Goldin, Ashkenazi Jews lived in the 'shadow of a martyrological reality' that dated from the Crusades, pp. 120-121; he believes the nature of the external pressures and of the socialisation of communities, moulded individuals to such a behavioural norm.

<sup>97</sup> A notable exception was the mass suicide at York in 1190.

<sup>98</sup> 'malentes se occidere quam ab incircumcisis sibi mors inferretur', see 'Excerpta e Memoriali Historiarum Auctor Johanne Parisiensi Sancti Victoris Parisiensis', in M. Guigniaut et de Wailly (eds.), *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol 21 (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1855), pp. 630-676, at p. 672, [1320].



Also I desire information about all the assets of the dead Jews, be they movable or fixed, especially those who remain without heirs or those who killed themselves, in order not to be forced to become Christians.<sup>99</sup>

The seventeenth-century account by Zúñiga of the eruption of violence in Seville on 6 June 1391, admitted that the figure of over four thousand Jewish deaths may have been excessive. He believed only a few fearful Jews remained, most of whom became insincere converts, their feigned Christianity becoming apparent later on.<sup>100</sup> In his chronicle, Ayala was more circumspect and less specific:

He (Enrique III) had news of how the people of Seville had robbed the *judería*, and that most of the Jews there had turned Christian, and many of them died.<sup>101</sup>

A contemporary Hebrew account of deaths and conversions in both Castile and Aragon is found in a letter of R. Hasdai Crescas to the Jews of Avignon. The letter was included in ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah*, and made reference to martyrdom as well as to conversions in Seville, Toledo, Valencia and Barcelona:

On the bitter and fateful New Moon of Tammuz 5151, the Lord directed the enemy's bow on the community of Seville which comprised some six or seven thousand households, setting their gates on fire and slaying many people though most of them changed their faith and of these children and women were sold to the Ishmaelites and the paths of the Jews lay desolate and many died by *kiddushat ha-Shem* and many betrayed the covenant.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Baer, *Die Juden*, vol.1: doc.434, p. 687: 'Aximateix volem haver informacio de tots los bens dels juheus morts, axi seents com movents, en special daquells, qui son romases sens hereters o ells mateixs se mataren, per que no fossan forçats de esser cristians'. A.C.A. Reg. 1949 f.16v.

<sup>100</sup> Zúñiga, *Annales eclesiásticos*, 'que dió muerte el pueblo enfurecido á mas de quatro mil, numero que aunque parece excesivo, refieren muchos memoriales.....pocos quedaron y de esos temerosos los mas se fingieron convertidos, ocasión de prevaricar después', Libro IX, 1391, p. 252.

<sup>101</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Enrique Tercero*, 1391, XX, p. 177: 'ovo nuevos como el pueblo de la ciudad de Sevilla avia robado la Juderia e que eran tornados Christianos los mas Judios que y eran, e muchos de ellos muertos'.

<sup>102</sup> Solomon ibn Verga, M. Wiener (ed.) *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*, Meir Wiener (Hannover: Rümpler, 1855), p.128: 'יום ר"ח תמוז קנ"א המר והנמרד דרך ה' קשתות האויב על קהלת סביליאה רבתי עם שהיו בה כמו ששה או שבעה אלפים בעלי בתים הציתו באש שעריה והרג בה עם רב אך רובם המירו ומהם מכרו לישמעאלים מהטף ומהגשים והיו מסילות היהודים יושבים בדד ורבים מתו על קדושת השם ורבים חללו ברית קודש'. See also p. 129 for Crescas's reports of massacres and martyrdoms in the other Jewish communities.

Crescas (1340-1411) was a scholar and philosopher and author of *Or Adonai* which refuted Averroistic interpretations of the Torah.<sup>103</sup> Prominent in public affairs, he lost his only son in the riots in Barcelona. A passage from his letter refers to this event but is open to more than one interpretation:

The Lord cast the fire of his wrath upon ....the community of Barcelona which was stormed that day and the dead numbered about 250..... Many sanctified God's name among them my only son, a groom, an unblemished lamb, my sacrifice of him I grant as righteous judgement ... Of those many slew themselves and those hurled themselves from the tower.<sup>104</sup>

Crescas was probably absent from Barcelona on that day and his 'righteous sacrifice' of his son must surely be an expression of survivor guilt. The alternative, that he actually killed his son was considered by Saperstein, who found it to be unlikely.<sup>105</sup>

Crescas's description of the massacre of rabbis in Toledo is confirmed by a fifteenth-century elegy (*kinah*) by a Sephardi poet, ibn Albeneh, found in a book of prayers for the fast of the Ninth of Av.<sup>106</sup> Eight scholarly Jews and their families died as martyrs, some identifiable as descendants of R. Asher ben Yehiel of Toledo, the RASh.

§15 First was R. Yehuda  
Who was a man of renown  
He slew his wife as sacrifice  
And his sons in Israel.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, p. 162.

<sup>104</sup> Wiener, *Shevet Yehudah*, p.129: שפך ה' כאש חמתו.....היא קהלת ברצ"לונה אשר הובקעה ביום ההוא ובא מספר ... ההרוגים כמו מאתים וחמשים נפשות..... רבים קדשו ה' בתוכם בני יחידי חתן שה תמים העליתיו לעולה אצדיק עלי הדין ... ומהם רבים ששחטו עצמם ומהם הפילו עצמם מהמגדל

<sup>105</sup> Marc Saperstein, 'A Sermon on the Akedah from the Generation of the Expulsion and its Implications for 1391', in Aharon Mirsky, Avraham Grossman, Yosef Kaplan (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1991), pp. 103-124, at p. 112.

<sup>106</sup> Cecil Roth, 'A Hebrew Elegy on the Martyrs of Toledo, 1391', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 39/2 (1948), pp. 123-50.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137: ורב יהודה תחלה, אשר היה איש תהלה, הקריב אשתו לעלה, ובניו בקרב ישראל

The exiled Castilian historian, Abraham Zacuto, referred in the *Sefer Yuhasin* (1504) to the martyrdom of R. Yehuda, the great-grandson of the RASh, and the slaughter by him of his own family:

All this family were holy for in all the massacres they sanctified God's name..... especially the holy R. Yehuda was killed sanctifying God's name, he and his mother-in-law, his wife and all his children and they killed each other.<sup>108</sup>

These few examples show that the practice of *kiddush ha-Shem* was followed by some of the victims of 1391. The mindset that engendered such self-sacrifice has been discussed by Saperstein. He argues that there may not have been the communal awareness of the Crusade massacres in Iberia, since they received scant mention in late medieval Sephardi commentaries.<sup>109</sup> However the biblical example of the 'binding of Isaac' in Genesis 22:1-19, the *Akedah*, may have been the inspiration for these sacrifices in all communities and throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>110</sup> An anonymous sermon of fifteenth-century Castile made this plain:

All who wish to be of the seed of Abraham must be prepared to offer their lives for the sanctification of God's Name when the proper time comes .... That is why all the righteous and virtuous Jews martyred themselves: to demonstrate that they were from the seed of Abraham and Isaac.<sup>111</sup>

They should be prepared to take the lives of their children and the children prepared to be bound by their fathers and to bind them as Abraham did to perform the will of Heaven.<sup>112</sup>

The polemicist of Perpignan, Profiat Duran, provided an alternative martyrological narrative and insight into the ambiguity of Sephardi converts over their new identity.

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<sup>108</sup> Abraham Zacuto, *Sefer Yuhasin ha-Shalem*, Herschell Filiposki (ed.) (London: Societatis Antiquitatem Hebraicum, 1857), p. 222b: "וכל זאת המשפחה נקראו קדושים כי בכל שמדות קדשו השם וב"ש ר' יהודה הקדוש .... נהרג על קדוש השם הוא וחמתו ואשתו וכל בניו והרגו זה לזה

<sup>109</sup> Saperstein, 'A Sermon', p. 109.

<sup>110</sup> David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc. 1979), p. 70 and appendices thereof p. 258; Marcus, *Rituals*, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Saperstein, 'A Sermon', pp. 111, 121 (l.113): "וכאלו הורה לנו ג"כ כי כל הרוצה להיות מזרע אברהם ראוי שיפרד: נפשו לתתה ועל ידי קדושת הש"י כשיבוא עת וזמן..... ולכן כל הצדיקים ואנשי המעלה נתנו עצמם ע"י קדושת השם להורות כי הם מזרע אברהם ויצחק

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, l.118: "שיכין האב להרוג את הבן והבן יהיה נעקד ועוקד את אביו כמו שעשה אברהם לעשות רצון אביו שבשמים

In his Letter of Lamentation (*Iggereth kinah*) of 1393, he consoled a friend, whose father (R. Avraham Yitzhak ha-Levi), had been martyred in Girona:

For the righteous slaughtered sanctifying God's Name handing themselves over to death by his Holy Name ..... the pious rabbis, the three Shepherds of Girona, the city of your fathers' graves and of the rest of those holy ones as well as those others from around and about who died by the sword and the fire.<sup>113</sup>

He also revealed his own anguish, as a recently converted Jew who hoped for salvation. He argued that those who changed faith under duress, still remained of the seed of Abraham and would be redeemed:

So shall it continue in this great exile, for though a portion of the people fail through absolute compulsion and fear of persecution, not because of this shall they be excluded from God's people and the seed of Abraham who loved Him. For He knows the hidden places of their hearts and the future will be like that of their brothers, to be redeemed, raised up and forgiven to the end of days.<sup>114</sup>

Duran went still further in defining the loyalty of the converted Jew. With vivid imagery, he portrayed those, like himself, who changed only their external appearance (the husk) whilst retaining in their hearts the perfection of God's true Law:

Surely the case for ourselves, the heirs of the Perfect Law, is that nothing has truly changed for us, only that which resembles the husk and the superficial, but yet the heart and virtue\* and the divine matter is preserved in the strength of the people.<sup>115</sup>

In the colophon to his letter, Duran indicated his Levite origins, his kinship with his correspondent, En Yosef Avraham ha-Levi and his sorrow for his flawed elegy:

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<sup>113</sup> Profiat Duran, in Jonathan Friedlander, Jakob Kohn (eds.), *Sefer Ma'asei Efod* (Wien, 1865), p. 194: לצדיקים הנהרגים על קדושת ה' ואשר מסרו עצמם למיתה על קדושת שמו..... החכמים הרבנים החסידים שלושת הרועים אשר בגירונה העיר קברות אבותיך ויתר הקדושים אשר היו שם וזולתם מן המקומות אשר מתו בחרב ובלהבה

כן ראוי שימשך בגלות הגדול הזה כי עם שחלק מן העם נכשל בכיוצא בו על צד האונס הגמור מפחד <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195: הגזירות לא מפני זה יצאו מכלל עם ה' וזרע אברהם אוהבו כי יודע הוא ית' מצפוני לבם ועתיד הוא כשאר אחיהם לגאלם ומנטלם ומנשאם כל ימי עולם

וכן הענין בנו אנחנו יורשי הורה השלמה בשוה שלא נשתנה ממנו לזוליתנו השתנות אמתו רק מה שהוא <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196: \*The interpretation of *s'gulah* here may also be 'the elected' or 'chosen ones'.

I am your brother, ha-Levi, whose elegy is flawed,

This is his name for ever, his memorial, Efod.<sup>116</sup>

This sorrowful pride in belonging to the tribe of Levi served a different purpose to that exhibited by Shlomo ha-Levi/Pablo. For Pablo, his Levite origin had confirmed his family's spiritual inheritance of service to Christ.

*Elite converts of convenience: Juan Sánchez de Sevilla and Los Marmolejos*

The many forced conversions which took place during the violence of 1391, including those of rabbis and scholars, were only a part of a wider phenomenon. Jews converted both before and after the massacres for a variety of reasons. We know of elite *converso* families, from the commentaries of later authors. Lope de Barrientos, though not himself a *converso*, named numerous individuals and families of Jewish origin in 1449 in his *Contra algunos zizañadores de la nación de los convertidos del pueblo de Israel* (Against those who Disparage Converts of the People of Israel).<sup>117</sup> Written at the time of the Toledo uprising against the New Christians, his purpose was to extol their virtues and confound the mounting resentment to them in Castilian towns. Historians find here a guide to *converso* families, the identity of which would otherwise be unknown. Detailed accounts are available for only a few and the circumstances of their conversion are generally lacking. However, the assimilation of the individual and his family into Christian society shows what material gain could be achieved by an enterprising individual, who voluntarily crossed the cultural divide.

The case of the Jewish *arrendador*, Samuel Abravaniel, is exceptionally well documented in both Hebrew and Castilian documents.<sup>118</sup> His conversion preceded the 1391 riots, and his baptism was presumably a matter of choice and of convenience. Abravaniel's name appeared several times as a tax farmer in the *cuaderno de cuentas* of 1379 prepared for Enrique II in 1378. That record shows him to have been in some

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197: אפד, זה שמו לעולם וזה זכרו, אפד. One may compare Duran's pride in identifying himself with his people as a Levite with Shlomo ha-Levi/Pablo de Santa Maria's comments in the *Additiones*, in which this descent fortified his claim to Christian virtue (see p. 183, and n.93). For interpretations of these passages of Duran, see also Saperstein, 'A Sermon', p. 113; Yisraeli, 'Constructing and Undermining Converso Jewishness', p. 190; Kozodoy, *The Secret Faith*, p.5 and *passim*.

<sup>117</sup> Lope de Barrientos, [1449] 'Contra algunos zizañadores de la nación de los convertidos del pueblo de Israel', in Luis G. Getino (ed.), *Vida y obras de fr. Lope de Barrientos* (Salamanca: Anales Salmantinos, 1927), vol.1, pp. 181-204.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

financial difficulties in meeting his commitments to the Crown.<sup>119</sup> As a *converso*, now Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, he was also mentioned in the chronicles of Lope de Ayala. In 1391, a dispute arose within the regency council of the young King Enrique III, between his uncle D. Fadrique and the Archbishop of Santiago, over the appointment of a certain *contador mayor*:

D. Fadrique, Duke of Benavente, then demanded that they award the office of *contador mayor* (chief treasurer) to a man called Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, who was a *converso* who knew a great deal about the accounts ..... and was so employed in the revenues of the kingdom in the time of King D. Enrique (II) and the King D. Juan (I).<sup>120</sup>

The chronicle further relates that the Archbishop questioned some financial irregularity in the *converso*'s accounts, stating that an honest man was needed in these matters. The dispute led to an armed confrontation between the two parties.<sup>121</sup>

One text unequivocally links this servant of the Crown with his former Jewish self. It is found in the ritual book *Zehar Tsaddik* by Joseph ben Tsaddiq of Arévalo, written fifty years after the death of Juan Sánchez:

R. Menaḥem ben Zeraḥ the son of the holy R. Aaron of France who wrote *Tseda l'dereḥ*, in honour of Don Samuel Abravaniel whose name was changed to Juan Sánchez de Sevilla.<sup>122</sup>

Ben Zeraḥ dedicated his work of religious instruction, the *Tsedah la-dereḥ*, to Abravaniel.<sup>123</sup> Abravaniel was neither a rabbi nor a scholar, but must have been close to intellectual circles.

Opinions about Abravaniel and the fate of his descendants have altered; the earlier view that his conversion was precipitated by the violence of 1391 is clearly

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<sup>119</sup> See this dissertation chapter III, p. 99, n.92 and IV, p. 166.

<sup>120</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Enrique Tercero*, VII [1391], p. 168: 'E Don Fadrique, Duque de Benavente, demandó estonce que le diesen el oficio de Contaduría mayor del Rey para un ome que decían Juan Sanchez de Sevilla, que era converso é sabia mucho en fecho de cuentas, é usado en las rentas del Regno en tiempo del Rey Don Enrique é del Rey Don Juan'.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* The *Contador* is mentioned again in 1392 in the King's service in Segovia, XII, pp. 198-199.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph b. Tsaddiq de Arévalo, 'K'tsur zehar tsaddiq l'ra'v Yosef b. Tsaddiq' (ca.1470), in Adolf Neubauer, [1887], *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970), pp. 85-100, at p. 98: והר מנחם בן זרח בן הרב הקדוש ר' אהרן מצרפת שחבר צדה לדרך לכבוד דון שמואל [א]בראבניל שהושם שמו גואן שאנגיש ד' שביליא

<sup>123</sup> See chapter IV of this thesis, p. 166.

contradicted by the contemporary record. A transaction is documented between the *converso* and the wife of the *alcalde* of Toledo in 1387:

Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, *tesorero mayor* of the queen, informs D. Yuçaf Abudarham of Toledo that he received 9,000 mrs. from Doña Inés de Ayala wife of Diego Gómez, previously *alcalde mayor* of Toledo.<sup>124</sup>

Although Baer claimed that Abravaniel converted because of his premonition of impending disaster, other motives have been proposed.<sup>125</sup> Netanyahu suggested that his close association with Enrique II's *contador mayor*, Yosef Pichón, influenced his decision to convert. The well documented murder of Pichón by Jews jealous of his success at court has been described in an earlier chapter. Netanyahu's view was that the affair led to Abravaniel's disillusionment with his co-religionists and to his subsequent severing of his ties to them. Entirely speculative, this is not supported by any documentary evidence.<sup>126</sup>

The rapid improvement in his social standing following conversion is consistent with material motives for his decision. Juan Sánchez soon married a Christian woman and made substantial land acquisitions. With other family members he purchased houses near the walls of the San Bartolomé Nuevo district of the *judería* of Seville, earning it the name '*adarve de Abrabaniel*' (battlements of Abravaniel); in 1396 he also acquired lands in Aljarafe, in the Sevillian countryside.<sup>127</sup> Montes Romero concluded that many of the family's possessions were sold and that their wealth and social status declined after the death of King Enrique III in 1406. Yet this is

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<sup>124</sup> Pilar León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2, doc.613, p. 176, 6 February 1387: 'Juan Sanchez de Sevilla, tesorero mayor de la reina, comunica a don Yuçaf Abudarham de Toledo, que reciba de doña Inés de Ayala, mujer de Diego Gómez, alcalde mayor que fue de Toledo, nueve mil mrs'. Further testimony to his pre-1391 conversion is from a 1388 ordinance of Juan I: 'a su tesorero mayor en Andalucía, Juan Sanchez', cited in Carande, 'Sevilla fortaleza y mercado', p. 386.

<sup>125</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, p. 93.

<sup>126</sup> Benzion Netanyahu, *Toward the Inquisition: Essays on Jewish and Converso History in Late Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 99-125. See also chapter IV of this dissertation, p. 154, for a discussion of the 'Pichon affair'.

<sup>127</sup> Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho, 'Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, antes Samuel Abravanel, un modelo de converso sevillano anterior al asalto de la judería de 1391. Datos para una biografía', in María Falcón Pérez, Carmen Orcástegui Gros (eds.), *Aragón en la Edad Media, XIV-XV: homenaje a la profesora Carmen Orcástegui* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1999), 2: pp. 1099-1113, at p. 1111.

not supported by genealogical detail provided by Juan II's secretary the *relator*, Fernán Díaz de Toledo, in his *Instrucción* of 1449:

Similarly, Juan Sánchez de Sevilla, who was of that descent (i.e. Jewish), who was the king's *contador mayor*, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren are today those of Arauzo, of Porras, of Valdez, of Anaya, of Ocampo, of Monroy, of Solís de Sosa, of Villaquirán and of Bobadilla.<sup>128</sup>

The marriages of his children brought further titles and lands (Figure 6). Juan Sánchez married Juana Rodríguez de Monroy, and their son Fernán Rodríguez became Señor de Arauzo. Fernán married Isabel Ordóñez de Villaquirán and Salazar y Castro (1660) documented three generations of Sánchez's descendants, as far as a marriage in 1487 of his great-granddaughter, Isabel Ordóñez de Guzmán, to Bernardo Manrique de Lara. The recording of the *contador*'s distinguished lineage and of his founding of a family sepulchre in the monastery of San Francisco in Salamanca suggest that the family continued to flourish after conversion. There is no hint of a return to Judaism, as a nineteenth-century historian has suggested.<sup>129</sup>

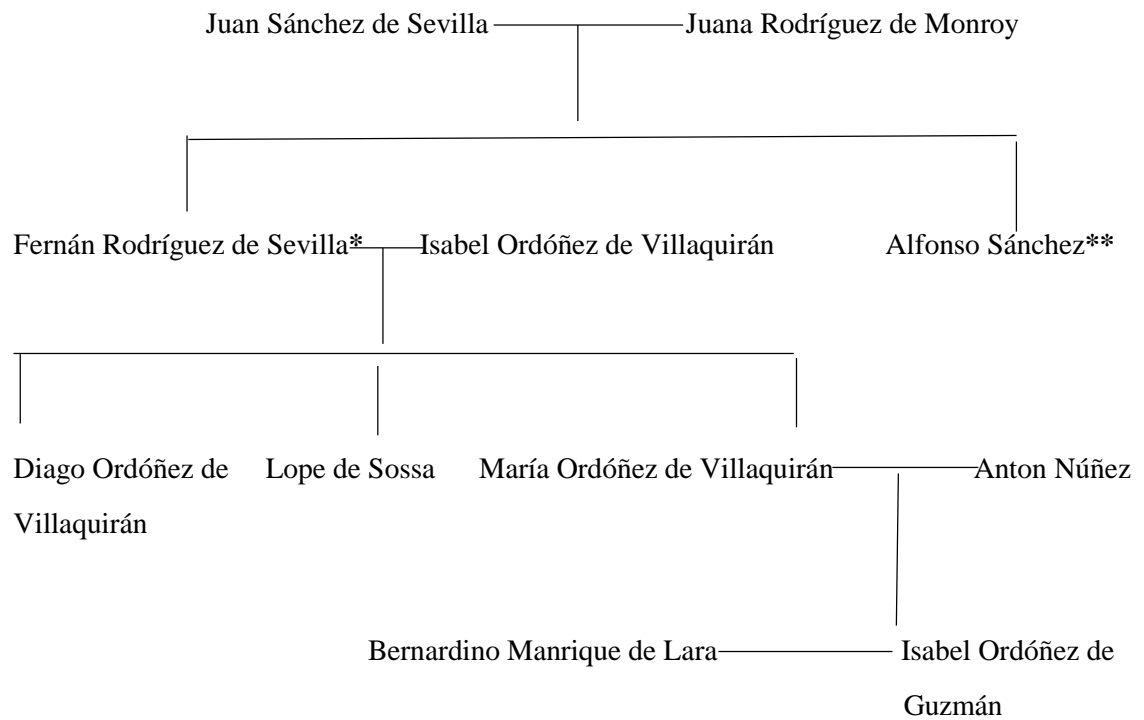
Both Roth and Kayserling claimed the direct descent of the eminent late fifteenth-century scholar and court official, Isaac Abravanel, from Juan Sánchez's son Judah. This is difficult to confirm as is also the assertion that Isaac's father, Judah, was one of the converso's sons who had fled to Portugal in 1391.

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<sup>128</sup> Fernán Díaz de Toledo, 'Instrucción del relator', in Fermin Caballero, *Conquenses ilustres, III Doctor Montalvo* (Madrid: 1873), appendix III, pp. 243-254, at p. 250. Barrientos gave an identical genealogy for the *converso*, see earlier n.118.

<sup>129</sup> Luis de Salazar y Castro, *Historia genealógica de la Casa de Lara justificada con instrumentos y escritores de inviolable fe*, (Madrid: 1696), pp. 673, 677: 'Falleció Doña Maria Ordóñez de Villaquirán el año 1502 ... mandase sepultar en la Capilla que en el monasterio de S. Francisco de Salamanca hizo Juan Sánchez de Sevilla'. See also Cristoval Solis i Enriquez, *Memorial de la calidad i servicios de don C. A. de Solis i Enriquez*, (Madrid: 1670) fol.19v. Num.19. Yet according to Meyer Kayserling, *Geschichte der Juden in Portugal* (Leipzig, Leiner, 1867), p. 73: 'derselbe, der in folge der verfolgungen des jahres 1391 sich der taufe unterziehen und seinen altehrwürdigen namen mit dem des Juan de Sevilla, freilich auf kurze zeit vertauschen musste'.





\* Señor de Arauzo y Terrados, Regidor de Salamanca \*\*in 1418, ‘veinticuatro (councillor) y contador de Sevilla’<sup>130</sup>

Figure 6. Lineage of Juan Sánchez de Sevilla (Samuel Abravaniel) according to Luis de Salazar y Castro (1696), *Historia genealogica de la Casa de Lara*.<sup>129</sup>

Not all of the conversions within the wider Abravaniel family of Seville endured. In 1396, a plea before the justice questioned illegal possession of houses in the aforementioned district of San Bartolomé Nuevo:

In the *adarve de Abrabaniel*, that belonged to Yusal Abrabaniel, later on a *converso* by the name of Pedro González, who had taken himself off to the land of the Moors and ‘lived there as a Jew’.<sup>131</sup>

If one or more members of his family had fled to Portugal or to Muslim lands with the intention of returning to Judaism, Juan Sánchez may have wished to distance himself

<sup>130</sup> Romero-Camacho, ‘Juan Sánchez’, p. 1112, n.36.

<sup>131</sup> Antonio Collantes de Terán Sánchez, ‘Un pleito sobre bienes de conversos Sevillanos en 1396’, *Historia. Instituciones, Documentos*, 3 (1976), pp. 169-185, 177, Arch. Munic. de Sevilla, Ia, carp.107, no.1, doc.7 [1396, abril]: ‘en el adarve de Abrabaniel, que pertenecieron a Yusal Abrabaniel, luego converso con el nombre de Pedro González, quien de había marchado a tierra de moros “e usa allá como judío”’.

from them. This would explain the sale of his houses in the *judería* of Seville, and the retention of rural lands acquired through purchase or matrimonial alliances.<sup>132</sup>

A further, though less securely documented conversion of a prominent Jewish family took place many years before 1391. The certainty with which both Barrientos and Fernán Díaz claimed Jewish ancestry for the Marmolejos family is not matched by the evidence of the record. According to Díaz:

Juan Manuel de Olanda should take heed, for he is the grandson of Francisco Fernández Marmolejo, previously *contador mayor* of the King, who was of that lineage (i.e. *converso*) of which there are today in Seville many *regidores* and *caballeros*, as well as officials.<sup>133</sup>

Unlike Abravaniel/Juan Sánchez, there is not even the slightest indication of the date of conversion of any of the Marmolejo ancestors. A detailed genealogy of the family was recorded by Ortiz de Zúñiga in the seventeenth century, and by Rivarola y Pineda in the eighteenth. According to the latter, Fernán Fernández Marmolejo was an *alguacil* (justice) of King Sancho IV in the thirteenth century, and took the name of Marmolejo after a locality in newly conquered Cordoba. Without any mention of Jewish antecedents, his descendants are named in these sources as *jurados*, *contadores mayores* or *veinticuatro*s (councillors) throughout the fifteenth century.<sup>134</sup>

Recent studies have questioned the likelihood of a conversion in the thirteenth century, and have even suggested that the lineages of Sancho's *alguacil*, and that of the *converso* family named by Díaz, were quite separate.<sup>135</sup> Francisco Ferrández del Marmolejo was cited as *tesorero* of Pedro the Cruel in a *pleito* (legal action) of 1377,

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1110. Moreover, some of these houses had belonged to Yosef Pichon whose murder in 1379 had so angered the King, see previously p. 155.

<sup>133</sup> Díaz, 'Instrucción', p. 250: 'Y que cuidado tiene Juan Manuel de Olanda, porque es nieto de Francisco Fernández Marmolejo, Contador del Rey N.S. que fue, el que venia de este Linage, de el qual esto mesmo están hoy en Sevilla muchos regidores é caballeros, é oficiales de ella'. Also in Barrientos, 'Contra algunos zizañadores', p. 198; there is explicit reference to Marmolejo's service with the King Alonso and to his origins: 'contador que fue del Rey don Alonso, el qual venia de la israelítica gente' (descended from the people of Israel). Alfonso XI may have been intended here.

<sup>134</sup> Juan Rivarola y Pineda, *Monarquía Española blasón de su nobleza* (Madrid: 1736), vol.2, p. 414; Zúñiga, *Annales eclesiásticos*, vol.2, p. 342 and *passim*.

<sup>135</sup> Rafael Sánchez Saus, *Linajes sevillanos medievales* (Sevilla: Ediciones Guadalquivir 1991), vol 1, p. 162; *Las élites políticas bajo los Trastámara: poder y sociedad en la Sevilla del siglo XIV* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2009), pp. 81-84. See also Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho, 'El ascenso de un linaje protoconverso en la Sevilla Trastámara', *Los Marmolejo, eHumanista/Conversos* 4 (2016), pp. 256-310.

brought by the dean and chapter of Seville cathedral over outstanding Jewish debt.<sup>136</sup> There is little doubt of Francisco's relationship to his cousin Alonso Marmolejo, or of their successive marriages and offspring, all of which are well documented. Generations of Marmolejos served the court of Kings Enrique II, Juan I, and their successors in financial and other administrative functions, marrying into both Christian and *converso* families well into the sixteenth century.<sup>137</sup>

Three final possibilities should be considered. The *Instrucción* was written very quickly as a response to the Toledo rebellion of 1449.<sup>138</sup> It might be that Díaz erred in his lists of the oldest *converso* families, an error then copied by Barrientos in his *Zizañadores*. Or, the apparent longevity of the Marmolejo lineage was a deliberate deception. Before the growing antipathy to the New Christians erupted into the violence of the Toledo riots of 1449, successful *converso* families expressed pride in their lineage and success and the family might have adopted the name of the illustrious *alguacil* in order to enhance social standing. Alternatively, as Romero-Comacho has suggested, the confusion arose out of a desire to hide their *converso* roots altogether.<sup>139</sup>

#### *Artisan conversos in Toledo*

Many thousands of Jewish artisans, shopkeepers or labourers must have been among those who converted to Christianity in the wake of the 1391 violence. Yet we have little detail to illuminate particular cases. The converts appear often to have retained their previous occupations after conversion, and some continued to reside within the *juderías*, close to their Jewish neighbours. Where this can be shown, this co-habitation contrasts with the campaign of 1411-12 by the Dominican, Vincent Ferrer aimed at segregating the *conversos* and Christians from Jews and Muslims within the urban environment.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Julio Valdeón Baroque, 'Un pleito cristiano-judío en la Sevilla del siglo XIV', *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos*, 1 (1974): pp. 221-238, at p. 233, Sevilla 16 January 1377, A.C.S, Cajón 1, legajo 7, no.180.

<sup>137</sup> Sánchez Saus, *Linajes sevillanos*, vol.1, p. 162, and vol.2, xlvi and see *Las élites políticas*, 81.

<sup>138</sup> See chapter VI of this dissertation, p. 240.

<sup>139</sup> Montes Romero, personal communication, 26 March 2017: 'It seems that perhaps there were two lineages, one Christian and one Jewish, of unknown origin and which early on, and with the intention to hide those origins, adopted the name of the Christian family of the renowned Fernán Fernández Alguacil'.

<sup>140</sup> See later in this chapter, pp. 223-224.

Two sets of records, from Jerez and from Toledo, illustrate aspects of the occupations and dwellings of those Jews who converted at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth centuries. A deed of 20 August 1391 in the *Recopilación de privilegios del Real Convento de Santo Domingo de Xerez*, mentions forty-nine *conversos* of Jerez, just two months after the onset of the attacks in neighbouring Seville. These *conversos* were signatories of a donation of *dos aranzadas* (three acres) of land, constituting a part of their own Jewish cemetery and purchased by the *aljama* only 8 years earlier. The beneficiary was the Dominican Fr. Pedro Sánchez, who received it in gratitude and in return for the instruction of the *conversos* in their new faith:

Since we have become Christian, recognising the Holy Catholic faith of our saviour Jesus Christ, for the well-being and health of our souls and for the many benefits we have received and continue daily to receive, instructing us and revealing to us that said Catholic faith.<sup>141</sup>

The forty-nine included one saddler, five tailors, three weavers, four silk traders or weavers, one dyer, two button-makers, a broker, a clog maker, a bodice-maker, a blacksmith and two minors (*chiquillos*). Being so close in time to the violence, one might wonder how freely given the gift really was. Taken at face value, however, the instruction by the friars shows how the converts were assisted – and supervised in the process of becoming Christians.<sup>142</sup>

Each of the *conversos* named in the Jerez donation had adopted a Christian name. In registers from late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Toledo, however, those recently converted are seen to have adopted hybrids of their old Hebrew and the new Christian names. The houses of the *judería* belonged to the cathedral chapter (*cabildo*), and many converts are seen to have continued to dwell there and to continue in their previous occupations.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Hipólito Sancho de Sopranis, 'Contribución a la historia de la judería de Jerez de la frontera', *Sefarad* 11/2 (1951), pp. 349-370: 'por quanto nos somos tornados christianos conociendo a la santa fee catholica de nuestro salvador ihesucristo e por pro e salud de nuestras ánimas e por muchos beneficios que avemos rescebido e rescibimos de cada día informándonos e declarándonos la dicha fee cathólica', p. 370.

<sup>142</sup> See Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*, p. 76, for the practice of holding neophytes as 'catechumens' for a prescribed period, in order to validate their faith.

<sup>143</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.1, p. 180.

Already in an ordinance of 1302, the Archbishop of Toledo had granted Muslim and Jewish converts security of their possessions:

They ordered that should any Jew or Muslim turn to the Catholic faith, they should not on that account lose those possessions they had before when they were Jew or Muslim.<sup>144</sup>

This privilege needs to be seen in the light of frequent opposition by both the Crown and the *aljamas* themselves to the retention of their assets by *conversos*. The Crown feared the loss of those revenues paid by Jews, and the Jews wished to discourage conversion by denying inheritance rights to converts.<sup>145</sup> By 1392, Enrique III's revenues from the Jews of Toledo had substantially dropped. Many Jews had died in the riots, and the wealth of the *aljama* had already been depleted by the huge ransoms collected by Enrique II during the civil war.<sup>146</sup> But a royal ordinance indicates that the extent of conversion had changed the economic relations between Jews and Crown irreversibly:

Enrique III ordains that his *recaudador* of the archbishopric of Toledo ...exchanges the 40,000 mrs annually that had been conceded to doña Juana de Espina during her lifetime, from the head-tax of the *aljama* of the Jews of Toledo, for the same amount from whatever income from that same archbishopric, 'since the Jews of the *aljama* of that city ... were catholic.'<sup>147</sup>

The boundaries of the *judería* of Toledo in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries are shown in Figure 7. Most Jews lived in the *judería mayor* (B), fewer in the *judería*

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.2, Inventario cronológico de documentos, doc.302, 1 April 1302, p. 91: 'Ordenaron que si algún judío et moro se tornare a la fé católica, que por esta razón non pierda los bienes que había antes quando era judío o moro', Escorial, C, IV 2.

<sup>145</sup> For the rights of converts and the attitude of the Church, see Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews: History* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1991), p. 248; for Jewish laws of inheritance see Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 72.

<sup>146</sup> See chapter III p. 99 of this dissertation.

<sup>147</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2, doc.628, 1392, Segovia: 'Enrique III ordena a su recaudador del arzobispado de Toledo..... que cambie los 40,000 mrs. anuales que él había concedido a doña Juana de Espina durante su vida, en la cabeza del pecho de la aljama de los judíos de la ciudad de Toledo, por la misma cantidad situada en cualquier renta del mismo arzobispado, 'por quanto los judíos de la aljama de la dicha cibdat..... fue qtolica', p. 181. This sum presumably was not the totality of the Jewish taxes which had been 115,100 mrs according to the *cuaderno* of 1378 (see chapter 3, p. 92 of this dissertation).

*menor* (A), also known as the Alcaná, the *judería vieja* or *arrabal*.<sup>148</sup> The Alcaná was near the cathedral; it had a market and many Jewish shops rented from the *cabildo*. Less easily defended than the *judería mayor*, the Alcaná suffered many deaths of its Jewish inhabitants in both Trastámaran assault in 1355 and in 1391.<sup>149</sup> After 1391 it all but disappeared, though some Jewish and *converso* residences continued to be recorded there.

The records of the cathedral chapter's *refitores* (rent-collectors), have been compiled by León Tello. They help us to reconstruct the lives and residences of Toledo's Jews and *conversos* before and after 1391. They list residents by neighbourhood, the rents, charges, and sometimes mention occupations, too.<sup>150</sup> The retention of their dwellings in the *juderías* by *conversos* became a major issue throughout Iberia after the statutes ordering the separation of Jews and Moslems from their Christian neighbours in 1411-1412. It remains unclear whether Toledo was an exception, or a more general example of failure to implement the royal ordinances in both Aragon and Castile.<sup>151</sup>

The Jew Mosé Abzardiel and his wife and children were living close to the old bath-houses of the *judería mayor* (Haman Zait, later Hamanzeit) in 1380.<sup>152</sup> He was still listed there in 1394, and repeatedly until 1417.<sup>153</sup> In this district, well within the *judería*, a number of *conversos* were also listed. The tailor (*alfayate*), Ferrand Pérez Obadías, formerly known as Çuleman, son of Abadias, had several residences in the *judería*. He was in Hamanzeit in 1422, but had previously been living by the soap shop in the *alacava* district in 1394. Other *conversos* lived in the *barrio de alacava* (today, Cuesta de la Cava): the silk weaver Alonso González Aben Halas and Fernand Lopes Aben Nomen the spice dealer (*especiario*), alongside the Jews Çuleman, Simuel Asabanaque and Davi Alaneque.<sup>154</sup> In 1380, still as a Jew, Çuleman fijo de Abadias

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, p. 185; Julio Porres Martin-Cleto, 'Los barrios Judíos de Toledo', in *Simposio Toledo Judaico* (Toledo: Universidad Complutense, 1973), pp. 45-76, 47.

<sup>149</sup> See chapter 4 p. 148 of this dissertation.

<sup>150</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2.

<sup>151</sup> See later in this chapter.

<sup>152</sup> Jean Passini, 'La Juiverie de Toledo: Bains et Impasses de Quartier de Hamanzeit', in Ana López Álvarez, Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (eds.), *El legado material hispanojudío. VII curso de cultura Hispanojudía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1998), pp. 301-307.

<sup>153</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2, docs.588, 634, 679, 700, 714, 732.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, docs.634 (1394): 'Ferrand Péres converso, alfayate, que solian desir Çuleman fijo de Abadias', also see docs. 732, 753.

(later Ferrand Pérez Obadías) was living by the slaughter house (*degolladero*) close to the Puente de San Martín.<sup>155</sup> Also in Hamanzeite in 1408, lived the Jew Abraham *candelero*, next to the *vaño de Hamanzeyte* and the *converso*, Pedro Ferrández el Romo.<sup>156</sup>

In the Santo Tomé neighbourhood of the *judería* there was a bakery (*el forno*) rented by *converso* Pero Alonso in 1401 and still occupied by him in 1417. By that date, Pero was paying rent to another *converso*, Gil Ferrández, ‘*que solia llamarse don Çag Aben Sánchez de Sevilla*’.<sup>157</sup> Also in Santo Tomé in 1422 lived Jacob the tanner, once a Jew and now called Pascual Garcia.<sup>158</sup> The smaller of the *juderías*, the Alcaná, was particularly vulnerable to attack in 1391.<sup>159</sup> Although it had lost most of its Jewish traders by the end of the fourteenth century, a few continued to live and trade there together with *conversos* and Muslim shopkeepers close to the district of Cuatro Calles. In 1408, the silversmith (*platero*) Aben Nino and two silk weavers (*sederos*), Pedro González Abentoui and Çag Abençara, together with other Jews and *conversos* had their workplaces in the silk market (*alcaceria*). This was close to one of the gates, *la Puerta de los altares*.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, doc.588.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, doc.700.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, docs.641, 679, 732. The bakery is referred to in the *libros de cuenta* as ‘*el forno de la judería*’, although held by a *converso*. It is unclear whether it still functioned as such in the fifteenth century.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, doc.753: ‘*entonces judio, que llaman agora Pascual Garcia*’.

<sup>159</sup> Martin-Cleto, ‘Los barrios Judíos de Toledo’, p. 52.

<sup>160</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2, doc.700 and vol.1, p.187.

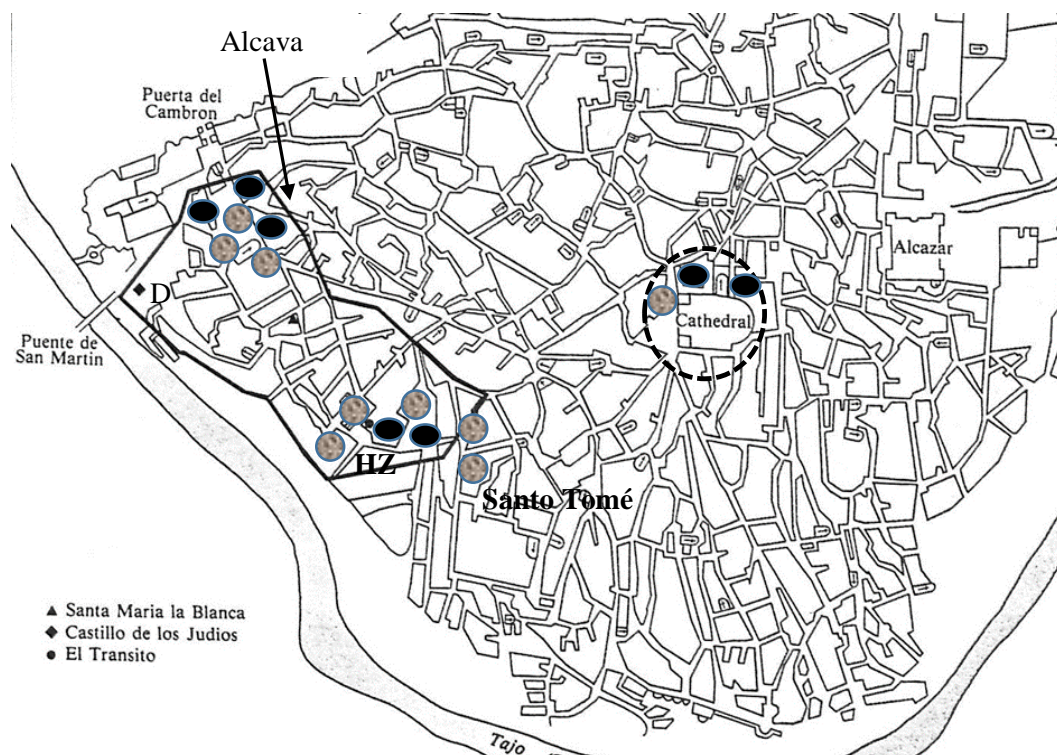


Figure 7. Toledo *juderías* 1380-1422.<sup>161</sup>  *judería mayor*  Alcaná (*judería menor*). D: *degolladero* (abattoir) HZ: *hamanzeite* (baths) Households: Jewish   
*converso*

The record also provides evidence for ownership of agricultural land by Jews and *conversos* in the Toledo hinterland, lands owned by ecclesiastical institutions. Johan Ferrández was a resident of Torrijos, 10 kilometres outside the city. As Çag Abzaradiel, he leased a vineyard in 1380 which he continued to hold as Johan Ferrández Abzaradiel in the *libro del refitor* in 1394 and still in 1408.<sup>162</sup> In Ponzcaras (possibly near Torrijos), Ferrán Rodríguez Izrael and Gudiel Alonso Izrael – whose names speak loudly for their previous identity – together with Alonso Gómez (*carpintero*) obtained a vineyard, wine cellar and olive press from the *cabildo* on a ten-year lease.<sup>163</sup>

We cannot ascertain whether the individual *conversos* wished still to be known by the hybrid names listed by the *refitor*, or whether these were ascribed to them as a

<sup>161</sup> Adapted from town plan of Norman Roth, 'New Light on the Jews of Mozarabic Toledo'. *AJS Review*, 11(2) 1986, pp. 189-220, p. 192. I have only marked on the plan those households, the locations of which are clear from the *cuenta del refitor*. The boundaries of the *juderías* are those suggested by Roth and also by Martin-Cleto, 'Los barrios Judíos de Toledo', laminas II and V, pp. 53, 71.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, docs.588, 634, 700.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, doc.700.



bureaucratic convenience. It may have been a stratagem for successive recorders of the ecclesiastical rentals, to ensure continuity at a time of changing identities by creating hybrid appellations. Three almost identical entries in the *libro del refitor* for 1408, 1411 and 1422, are particularly puzzling:

Fuentealtamia: This inheritance, the children of Juan Sánchez de Ocaña, Mosé Abravalla, Sisa Abravalla, and Yuçaf Abravalla, received in perpetuity that he had previously held in the year 1400, 400 mrs.<sup>164</sup>

Juan Sánchez de Ocaña appears to have had three children with Jewish names. The record sheds no further light but it is hard to imagine that we are dealing here with a return to Judaism.

The records of rents, sales and leases made by the *cabildo* in Toledo provide strong evidence that life after 1391, for both Jews and converts, went on much as before. Yet these arrangements, convenient as they must have been for the residents who could continue to live in the familiar *judería*, would not last. Just as the gathering storm of Christian anger and jealousy would be directed against wealthy and powerful *converso* families, so too the neighbourliness exemplified by Toledo's *judería* was soon found to be unsustainable.

### Vincent Ferrer and the undoing of *convivencia*

The emergence in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century both of a *converso* elite and of whole neighbourhoods of New Christian families cannot be attributed entirely to the violence of the mob or to the polemic of the friars. However, at the time, much of the wave of these conversions were attributed to the preaching of one Dominican friar, Vincent Ferrer. The number of conversions that he achieved was probably exaggerated by those who later promoted his canonisation. Yet the unique character of his mission and his baleful influence on the Crowns of Aragon and Castile seem to have had more influence in bringing Jews to baptism than any earlier missionizing by preacher or apostate.

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, doc.700, 714, 753: 'Esta heredad tomaron perpetuamente Mosé Abravalla, Sisa Abravalla, y Yuçaf Abravalla, hijos de Juan Sánchez de Ocaña, que la antes tenia en el 1400 años, 400 mrs'. The entries of 1408 and of 1422 are virtually identical though Sisa is missing in the latter.

Serafín Miguel's eighteenth century-history of Ferrer, relied upon Ransanum's account to the Pope in the 1450s:<sup>165</sup>

According to the *Processo* one reads, in thirteen months in Castile twenty thousand converted ..... also one reads that in Aragon more than thirty thousand Hebrews were baptised through his preaching, ..... if we add to this the thirteen thousand, who in 1391 converted in the City and Kingdom of Valencia, the numbers converted by the Saint surpasses seventy thousand.<sup>166</sup>

The evidence that Ferrer was present at the massacres or influenced the conversions in 1391 is flimsy. It is also notable that two recent studies, of Ferrer himself and of the 1391 riots, make no mention of his preaching in Iberia at that time.<sup>167</sup> According to Daileader, Ferrer only returned to Iberia in 1409 from his mission in Fribourg, Switzerland. He preached firstly in Girona in 1409 and then in Murcia and Castile in 1411-1412.<sup>168</sup>

That his preaching may have been accompanied by violence, such as a putative massacre in Toledo, has been considered apocryphal.<sup>169</sup> However, two Hebrew accounts conflated Ferrer's later missionizing with the violence of 1391. In 1558, Joseph ha-Cohen, the son of Jews exiled from Cuenca, wrote:

Massacres multiplied in Sepharad in those days, because there arose Fr. Vincent, his name be cursed, the monk from the city of Valencia, hammer of the Dominicans, adversary of the Jews. He set the people upon them, they rose up to destroy their lives, many were smitten by the

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<sup>165</sup> See earlier p. 195.

<sup>166</sup> Miguel, *Historia de la portentosa vida*, p. 90: 'Porque según se lee en el *Processo*, en el preciso espacio de trece meses, convirtió en Castilla veinte mil..... También se lee, que en otra vereda, que hizo por Aragón, se bautizaron por su predicación pasados de treinta mil Hebreos..... Y si a estos añadimos los trece mil, que el año 1391, convirtió en la Ciudad, y Reino de Valencia pasan los Judíos convertidos por el Santo de setenta mil '.

<sup>167</sup> Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots*; Philip Daileader, *Saint Vincent Ferrer, His World and Life: Religion and Society in Late Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>169</sup> Rosa Vidal Doval, 'Predicación y persuasión: Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411-1412)', *Revista de Poética Medieval*, (2010) 24, pp. 225-43, at p. 227.

sword, many consumed by fire, many of them turned from the God of Israel, and Israel was much diminished.<sup>170</sup>

The sixteenth-century Portuguese Jew, Samuel Usque, believed that 15,000 were converted by Ferrer. The depiction of the preacher and his followers in his *Consolacam as tribulacoens de Ysrael* (1553), also implied that the threat of violence was used to obtain converts:

At that time there was a Dominican friar called Fr Vicente the greatest persecutor and enemy of Israel ..... He was accompanied by many followers proceeding through the towns, with a crucifix in his hand and holding a *sefer torah* aloft calling to the Jews in loud and frightening voice to come and gather beneath the cross of Christianity and become Christians, and threatening those that refused with death from his company armed with spears and swords. Others for fear of death delivered themselves to become Christians.....

Thus, throughout Spain, more than fifteen thousand Jewish souls left their religion.<sup>171</sup>

Whether Ferrer was truly involved in forced baptisms remains doubtful. However, accounts indicate that violence was sometimes a consequence of his preaching, even if not advocated directly by him.<sup>172</sup> At the time, and in later hagiography and historiography, these non-violent conversions were attributed entirely to the charismatic nature of Ferrer's preaching. Even though true, this is only a part of the story. The visits that he and his followers made to towns and cities throughout Iberia were spectacles, attended by large and fervent audiences drawn from the wider

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<sup>170</sup> Joseph Ha-Kohen, *Sefer Emeq Ha-Baha* in Karin Almbladh (ed.), *Sefer ÉMeq Ha-Baha: The Vale of Tears: With the Chronicle of the Anonymous Corrector* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1981), p. 51: וירבו השמדות בספרד בימים ההם, כי קם פרי ויצניטי הכמר ישו מעיר ואלינציאה, מכת דומיניקו, על היהודים לשטן. ויסת עליהם את יושבי הארץ ויקומו לבלעם חיים: ויכו רבים לפי הרב ורבים שרפו באש, ורבים הדיחו מעל ה' אלהי ישראל, וידל ישראל מאוד

<sup>171</sup> Samuel Usque, *Consolacam as Tribulacoens de Ysrael* (Ferrara, 1553): 'Neste tempo ouue hum frade da ordendos Domenicos chamado frei vicente o mayor perseguidor e enemigo de Israel ..... e a mutinando hum grande numero de gente sahio com ella tras si pelas cidades, com hum crucifixo nas manos e hum cefer da ley em braços chamando aos judeos em altas temerosas vozes que se viesem rrecolher debaixo a cruz da cristandade e se fizesem cristanos, e arremetendo a elles por que o rrefusauam com a companhia que leuaua armada de lanças e espadas os maateou, e a outros que com temor da morte se entregauam aelle fazia cristanos. Desta maneira foi correndo quasi toda Espanha, e fez a mais de quinze mil almas judaicas trocar sua ley', f.188r-188v.

<sup>172</sup> See Vidal Doval, 'Predicación y persuasión', p. 229.

locality.<sup>173</sup> As will be shown, too, his reputation was so great that he came to wield considerable influence upon the Crown and its policies towards the religious minorities in Castile.

Ferrer's sermons were delivered in his native Valencian or in Catalan and were written down, often in Latin, by attendant scribes.<sup>174</sup> His attitude to unbelievers, particularly to Jews, wavered between benevolence and a vicious stereotyping that may be viewed as prefiguring the racial antagonism of the later fifteenth century. Believing that the Antichrist had been born in 1403, he was convinced Jews would welcome him as the true Messiah. This fear and his vision of an approaching apocalypse, prompted the urgency of his mission of conversion.<sup>175</sup> A sermon preached in Castile (1411-1412) must have imbued his listeners with his own misgivings:

The commandment 'Sanctify Christ in your hearts' (1 Peter 3, 115) may be specified particularly to the Jews, since the Jews do not believe in the coming of the Messiah, when the Antichrist arrives they will receive him as Messiah, thus they believe he is their Messiah.<sup>176</sup>

In his preaching placatory injunctions to both Jews and converts appeared alongside venomous denunciations. In sermons in Valladolid and in Ciudad Real, he urged forbearance:

None shall harm the Jews, on the contrary you may please them if you so wish, and bring them to the faith in a good way and not with violence.

So you shall not despise nor vilify the converts, calling them *marranos*, but hold them close to you and instruct them in the faith, otherwise you

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Salomon Mitrani-Samaritan, 'Un Sermon Valencien de Saint Vincent Ferrer', *Revue des études juives*, 54 (1907), pp. 241-45, 241, n.2 and see also figure 2 in Josep Sanchis Sivera, *Quaresma de Sant Vicent Ferrer predicada a València l'any 1413* (Barcelona: Institutió Patxot, 1927).

<sup>175</sup> Daileader, *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, pp. 130, 137-159.

<sup>176</sup> Pedro Cátedra, 'Fray Vicente Ferrer y la predicacion antijudaica en la campaña castellana (1411-1412)', in Jeanne Pelegrin (ed.), *Qu'un Sang Impur... : les conversos et le pouvoir en Espagne à la fin du moyen âge: actes du 2ème*, Colloque d'Aix-en-Provence (Université de Provence, 1997), pp. 19-46, 29: 'quod verbum propositum 'Dominum Christum sanctificate in cordibus vestris' sit locutus judeis specialiter, nam judei qui non credunt meisam venire, cum venient Antichristum recipient eum pro mesia, ita credunt modo quod mesias suus est', *Corpus Christi* (CC) 98, f.36.

do great injury to Christ and the blessed Mary who, firstly, were Jews.<sup>177</sup>

Yet his saintly purity of intent towards the Jews was less in evidence elsewhere in his sermon preached in December 1411 in Valladolid:

For it is the plan of the Jewish magicians that they wish devilish evil upon us Christians. I know this well and I go about the world preaching that a certain Jewish physician as he faces death, says weeping: ‘Do not cry, it does not pain me that I am dying, for I have killed more than 500 Christians with my treatments’ ..... They must be avoided in business, neither should they be allowed to sell anything to Christians ..... but if they give you chickens ..... or any living things you certainly may accept that, because as living things they cannot be poisoned. Thus you should not accept anything that is not alive from them, not even baked bread, as they wish much harm to Christians even if they do not seem to, for they are in bondage.<sup>178</sup>

Christian towns-folk were well accustomed to public portrayals of Jews as tools of Satan.<sup>179</sup> The images he conjured, of Jewish plots against Christians in Valladolid, would have strengthened anti-Jewish sentiment. Furthermore, the malign nature that Ferrer attributed to the Jews, would also surely have tainted the *conversos* in the minds of his receptive listeners.<sup>180</sup> In a sermon delivered in Valencia, although Ferrer

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31: ‘Nullus debet facere malum judeis, ymo potest facere placitum si vultis, et adducere eos ad fidem bono modo et non per vim’, CC139, f.113, and p. 34: ‘Item non debet contempnere et vilipendere conversos, dicendo eos marranos, sed acostare eos vobis, et eos instruere in fide, nam alias magnam injuriam facitis Christo et beate Marie, qui fuerunt judei primo’, CC72, f.61r.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30: ‘Et es ratio nam magis malum volunt judei christianis quam nos diabolum, ut ego bene scio qui vado per mundum predicando, nam quidam medicus judeus, stando ad mortem dixit flentibus, ‘Non fleatis, nam non dolere mihi quod moriar, quia plus quam quingentos christianos feci mori per meam medicinam’ .....Et ... debent evitari in negociis, nam non debent vendere aliquid christianis, ..... sed si vobis mitant unus par gallinarum, vel picium, vel multonum vivorum bene potest recipere, quia non potest esse venenum in re viva, et ideo aliquid mortuum non recipiatis ab ipsis, nec panem coctum, nan multa mala volunt christianis si bene non apareat in eis, quia sunt in captivitate’, CC139, f.113.

<sup>179</sup> See Chapter IV of this dissertation, p. 128.

<sup>180</sup> Yet Millás Vallicrosa refuted Baer’s portrayal of the friar as anti-Semitic (Baer, *JCS*, vol 2, p. 166), see José Millás Vallicrosa, ‘San Vicente Ferrer y el antisemitismo’, *Sefarad*, 10/1 (1950), pp. 182-84. For the appropriateness or otherwise of the concept of medieval Iberian anti-Semitism, see Yosef Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: The Iberian and the German Models* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1982); David Nirenberg, ‘Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of ‘Jewish’ Blood in Late Medieval Spain’, in *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 232-264.

rejected violence in favour of the power of persuasion, this did not preclude the use of force or the imposition of a hefty fine for absence from his sermons:

Christians should not kill Jews with the knife but with the word .....  
for the riots against the Jews are against God .... rather, they should  
come to baptism of themselves.

You others, you Jews, for this you should come to the sermons. For  
this, a fine of 1000 florins is imposed.<sup>181</sup>

The King's statute commands your attendance at the sermons, it is for  
your salvation even though you are forced to come with goading and  
against your will ..... for you never did anything except with force.<sup>182</sup>

Most of Ferrer's sermons were delivered at dusk, so as to ensure the presence of those returning from their day's labour.<sup>183</sup> The spectacle of his flagellant followers, carrying fiery brands through the darkened streets of the town, must have been a terrifying spectacle. In the Aragonese town of Teruel, the municipality bore the expenses of the procession:

Forty *solidos* and seven *dineros jaccensis* for the wax that was  
consumed in the torches that were carried by the company of the  
reverend Master Vincent Ferrer whilst they mortified themselves  
proceeding by night through that city.<sup>184</sup>

So great was the terror that Jews fled from the town of Ainsa in anticipation of the arrival of the preacher with his entourage. This is exemplified in a letter of Fernando I

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<sup>181</sup> Samaritan, 'Un Sermon Valencien', p. 244 : 'los christians no deven matar los juheus ab coltell mas ab paraules et per ço lo avalot que fon contra los juheus fo fet contra deu, ..... mas per si matex deven venir al babtisme .....E veus, per ço vosaltres juheus venin a la preycacio. Hoc, importune ab pena de mil florines'.

<sup>182</sup> Pedro Ctedra, *Sermn, sociedad y literatura en la Edad Media: San Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411-1412): Estudio bibliogrfico, literario y edicin de los textos inditos* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y Len, 1994), p. 384, Sermn Onceno, f.70v-72r: 'Ca la ordenacin que el rey ha fecha que vengades a la predicacin, por vuestra salvacin es fecha, aunque venides por fuerça e con aguyjones e a mal de vuestro grado ..... ca nunca jams fezistes algn bien sinon por fuerça'.

<sup>183</sup> Francisca Vendrell, 'La actividad proselitista de San Vicente Ferrer durante el reinado de Fernando I de Aragn', *Sefarad*, 13/1 (1953), pp. 87-104, at p. 89.

<sup>184</sup> Antonio Floriano, 'San Vicente Ferrer y las aljamas Turolenses', *BRAH*, 84 (1924), pp. 551-80, p. 570, doc.VII, 6 June 1412: 'quatorze solidos siete dineros jaccenses por razn de la cera que se crem de los brandones que levaron los de la compana del Reuerent padre Maestre Vicent Ferrer quando se deziplinauan, de nochi, por la ciudat'.

of Aragon to his son the Infante Alfonso (1414). Following representations to him from three Jews of the *aljama*, the King expressed his concern:

When recently Fr. Vincent Ferrer came to that town in order to preach the Word of God, the Jews, uncertain whether his preaching against the Jews would be followed by violence, fled from that town of Ainsa with the express intention of returning to it once Fr. Vincent had left.<sup>185</sup>

It is telling that the King went on to command the town's officials to allow the Jews to return peacefully and regain their possessions. Granted a separate and reasonable quarter within the town (*terminum congruum de quo vobis videatur*), they would then be converted to the Catholic faith.

The spectacle, the sermons and the ever-present threat of violence and intimidation, would have had considerable impact upon the Jews and Muslims who were the target of his invective. Ultimately, however, the most damaging aspects of Ferrer's mission for the Jews were his condemnations of trade, and of intimacy between Jews and Christians. He was remarkably successful in having his rhetoric translated into royal statutes and able to persuade the rulers of both Aragon and Castile to separate the *conversos* and the three faith communities in Iberia.

The chronicle of Juan II for the year 1411 relates how aged 60 years, Ferrer was invited by the court of the young King who was accompanied by his tutors, the Infante Fernando and the Queen Catalina of Lancaster, widow of Enrique III. The royals had been so impressed by the tales of Ferrer's preaching in Toledo, that they wanted to hear his sermons in person:

Among many notable things about which the sainted friar cautioned them in his sermons, he petitioned the King and Queen and the Infante, that they separate the Jews and Moors within the towns and villages

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<sup>185</sup> Vendrell, 'La actividad proselitista', p. 100, doc.VI: 'Quod cum dudum Frater Vincensius Ferrarii venisset ad dictam villam ad predicandum verbum Dei, ipsi judei dubitantes ne propter ipsius Fratris predicacionem contra judeos ipsos sequeretur insultus, recesserunt de villa de Aynsa predicta cum intencione et propósito redendi ad eam cum ab ipsa dictus Frater Vincensius excessisset'. A.C.A Reg 2372, f.90r, 24 October 1414.

because their continued intercourse with Christians led to great harm, especially to those newly converted to the sacred faith.<sup>186</sup>

This was to be accomplished physically by segregation of their dwellings and culturally and materially by depriving them of their livelihoods and of their social contacts with their Christian neighbours. An early indication is given in an ordinance of the municipality of Murcia in March 1411. Issued in the name of Juan II, the conditions were noted to be in accordance with the saintly recommendations of Ferrer:

In consideration of the saintly words preached in his sermons in this city by the very reverend Fr. Vincent ..... who has illuminated the error in which we lived, especially the usages and meetings we had and continue to have with Jews and Moors so that we commit mortal sin daily against God....<sup>187</sup>

Neither Jew nor Muslim was to live outside the confines of *judería* or *morería*. Fears of miscegenation were paramount in this and in subsequent documents. No unaccompanied young Christian woman was to cross into the Moslem or Jewish quarters because of the dangers of pimping and adultery that this presented (*por quanto y se hazen muchas alcagueterias e adulterios con cristianos e judios*).<sup>188</sup> Nirenberg identified a sexual panic among Ferrer's listeners, for whom violation of Christian women by Jews or Moslems was a blasphemy, a transgression of religious as well as social borders.<sup>189</sup>

The many restrictions cited in the ordinance were to be communicated to the population by public announcement in the market place. This was timed to coincide

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<sup>186</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Juan Segundo* (Madrid: BAE, 1923), 1411, p. 340, cap XXII: 'Y entre muchas notables cosas que este Santo Frayle amonestó en sus predicaciones, suplicó al Rey a a la Reyna e al Infante que en todas las cibdades e villas de sus Reynos mandasen apartar los Judíos e los Moros, porque por su continúa conversación con los Christianos se seguían grandos daños, especialmente aquellos que nuevamente eran convertidos a nuestra Sancta Fe'.

<sup>187</sup> Juan Torres Fontes, 'Moros, judíos y conversos bajo Fernando de Antequera', in *Cuadernos de historia de España*, 31-32 (Buenos Aires, 1960), pp. 60-97, 93: 'por razón de las santas palabras dichas e predicadas en los sermónes fechos en esta cibdat por el muy reverendo señor fray Vicent ..... nos ha ylluminado de los yerros en que beviarnos, en especial de las usanças e congregaciones que continuadamente faziamos e fazemos con los judíos e moros por lo qual pecavamos de cada dia mortalmente contra Dios', *Actas Capitulares Murcia* (A.C.M), 24 marzo 1411.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>189</sup> Nirenberg, 'Conversion, Sex, and Segregation', p. 1082.



with Ferrer's preaching, so that municipal and royal will and the theological message of his sermons would all converge in the consciousness of the townsfolk.<sup>190</sup>

The conditions appeared more formally in a letter to Murcia's officials later that year from the Infante Fernando, and Catalina de Lancaster, the young King's mother, both acting as regents for the young Juan II. Now, only Jews and not Muslims were mentioned. Statutes not only advocated segregation of Jews from Christians but also constrained new converts from living within the *judería*:

The Jews should not live among the Christians nor the Christians among the Jews, so the Jews live separately in their *judería*.

If any Jew be baptised willingly or in any other way, and should come from elsewhere to live in this city with the Jews, and goes around as a Jew, then the Jews must send him away and not allow him to live amongst them or have dealings with them.<sup>191</sup>

It was the social contact that trade entailed, not just the dangers to Christians of Jewish foodstuffs or medicines that lay behind these prohibitions. Thus the bans that Ferrer had demanded in 1411 extended beyond edible provisions and medicinal herbs to the sale of spices, cloth and 'other merchandise'.<sup>192</sup> This did not, however, apply to the sale of these items amongst the Jews themselves.

That genuine social intercourse, even friendship, was common between Jews and Christians is clear from both royal and municipal documents. Christians were forbidden to attend circumcision ceremonies, weddings or celebratory meals. Jews and Muslims were forbidden to serve as god-fathers at Christian baptisms or to attend Christian burials. The offer by Christians to light the lamps or prepare food on the Sabbath for Jewish households was not to be tolerated. So intent was the Crown to ensure compliance with its code of segregation that of the monetary fines imposed for

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<sup>190</sup> Torres Fontes, 'Moros, judíos y conversos', p. 95, A.C.M., 24 marzo 1411.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96: 'que non moren los dichos judíos entre los cristianos, nin los cristianos entre los judíos, salvo que moren apartadamente los judíos en su judería', and p.95: 'sy algund judío oviese sido bautizado por su grado o en otra manera, que viniese de otras partes a bevir a esa cibdat entre los judíos e andudiese ay por judío, que los judíos lo aparten e lançen luego de entre sy, e que le non consientan morar entre ellos nin participen con el continuamente, Valladolid, 29 abril, 1411, *Arch. Mun. Murcia*, f.147v-148v.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*: 'que non tengan tiendas de espeçeria, nin de paños nin de botequeria nin de otras mercadorias entre los cristianos porque ayan de conversar con ellos continuo, pero que las puedan en su judería para las vender los unos judíos a los otros'.

contraventions, a third was to be awarded to informers (*la tercia parte para el acusaador*).<sup>193</sup>

The queen-regent of Castile, Doña Catalina, issued her own comprehensive version of these ordinances in January 1412 to officials in the bishopric of León.<sup>194</sup> Ten occupations and trades were specified as forbidden to both Muslims and Jews in commerce with Christians. Tax farming and rent collection were prohibited as were certain items of clothing while the wearing of the red badge (*sennales vermejas*) by Jews was to be re-enforced. However, Catalina's co-regent, Fernando de Antequera, later issued a partial retraction of the harsh constraints on Jewish traders. He stated this to be in response to the pleas of Murcia's Jews, that they were unable to survive these measures. Furthermore, echoing the anxiety of many previous monarchs, Fernando complained that this harmed the revenues of the Crown.<sup>195</sup>

Ferrer's mission to achieve segregation of Jews, Muslims and Christians was in direct opposition to the *convivencia* that had prevailed for centuries. The measures intended to terminate these social and commercial interactions in Murcia were promoted by the preacher in other towns too. In Teruel in Aragon twenty-eight documents from the municipal archive record the preacher's visits there between 1412 and 1413. The peaceable relations of Jews living among Christian neighbourhoods there must have disturbed him considerably. This is evident from a record of February 1413 in which the *concejo* granted a monetary stipend to their envoy for his mission to the King at Barcelona:

The honourable Johan Munyoz, citizen of this town who travelled as envoy to the King at Barcelona, about the separation that should have been made of the houses of the Jews and Moors, living among the Christians, according to the requests and admonishments of the Reverend Father Master Vincent Ferrer, made in this town in his notable sermons.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94, 24 marzo 1411.

<sup>194</sup> Ríos, *Historia*, doc. XIX, *Archivo Municipal de León, Biblioteca Nacional, sala de MSS*, p. 618.

<sup>195</sup> Torres Fontes, Moros, 'Judíos y conversos', p. 97, *Arch. Mun. Murcia*, f.147v-148v: Buytrago, 15 noviembre, 1411.

<sup>196</sup> Floriano, 'San Vicente Ferrer', doc. XXVII, p. 579: 'el honorable Johan Munyoz, ciudadano de la dita ciudat, del caminó que fue como mandadero de la dita ciudat al Senyor Rey a Barchinona, sobre la

Ferrer's zeal in unmaking the pre-existing *convivencia* in Iberia appears to have had three main objectives: to prevent the sacrilege of miscegenation, to protect Christians from evil intentions of the Jews, and most importantly, to so impair the survival of Jewish households that they would seek relief through conversion. The suppression of Jewish commerce would have chimed with the ambitions of the townsfolk, who thereby would stand to benefit from the loss of competition. This consequence of royal decrees seems to be reflected in the dispute over the new boundaries of the *aljama* of Alba de Tormes in Castile. Representing the *aljama* were Rabbi Yacó and Yuçef Çarafati: the latter protested to the *concejo* that:

They (the *aljama*) did not agree regarding the boundary, insofar as it was not done according to the King's ordinance.

R. Yacó requested a copy of the King's letter of 1412 about the establishment of separate neighbourhood for the Jews. The *concejo* claimed that the Jews' existing dwellings around the synagogue were in the best part of the town. Furthermore, they stated:

That place is more valued and used for the trade of the Christians than any other part of town. If that were to be the quarter of the Jews, they said it would be a great scandal and prejudicial to Christian commerce which, they said, would not be to the benefit of the King of Aragon (*sic*) or of the Archbishop.<sup>197</sup>

The Hebrew scholar, Solomon Alami, describes vividly in his Moral Epistle (*Igeret Musar*) the consequences of these restrictions, which he attributed to the preacher. Written in Portugal in 1415, his Hebrew account lacks clarity and his

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segregación et apartamiento que fazerse devia de los domicilios de Judíos e moros, destar e habitar entre los christianos justa las solicitaciones i amonestaciones por el Reuerent Padre Maestre Vicent Ferrer fetas a la dita ciudat en sus notables sermones'.

<sup>197</sup> Carlos Carrete Parrondo, *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1981), vol.1, p. 30, doc.56, 7 March 1413: 'Yuçef Çarafati judío ..... dixo que non consentia en quanto atañe a la dimitacion (*sic*) por quanto dixo que la non fesieran como deuieran segund la ordenança del rey' ..... On 22 March 1413, the *concejo* replied: 'E otro si, el dicho lugar es mas seguido e usado para conversación de los christianos que otro lugar de la villa. E si en el dicho lugar les fuera fecho el ... çírculo e apartamiento a los .. judíos dixeron que seria en grand escándalo e perjuicio e conversación de los christianos lo qual dixeron que non seria servicio del ...rey de Aragon ni del... obispo.' Archivo Municipal de Alba de Tormes.

meaning is clouded by his oblique literary style. Following the destruction of communities in 1391, he continued:

Twenty-two years later (1412) those that remained in Castile were a byword and an example, and because of one iniquity after another, I know not how many left\* . . . . they were compelled to change their dress, to refrain from trade, from rent-collection and artisanship . . . . . so most of the tax-collectors left there\* because of their inability to farm and collect taxes, since they had learned no craft to earn their living. In the face of ruin and oppression, many artisans also left\*, seeing what happened and the hardship, they repudiated<sup>§</sup> and were unable to withstand the experiences and the changes. The same thing occurred amongst the remnant in the kingdom of Aragon.<sup>198</sup>

The word יצאו (they left), used by Alami in this passage, may be interpreted also as ‘they left their religion’. This would be the most reasonable interpretation and is supported by the word used later, דוחו (they repudiated), which indicates that they abandoned their faith.<sup>199</sup> There is no mention here of Ferrer or of his influence upon the events of 1412. Alami linked the conversions, first of the wealthy tax officials then of the humbly artisans, to the economic deprivation that followed the 1412 edicts.

Rather than explicitly attributing this misfortune to Ferrer or to the Crown, Alami believed that the Jews had brought it upon themselves, through the hubris of their wealthy court officials and the slander of the apostates:

If you question your hearts why all this happened to us, know and understand it was our fault it came upon us, through our sins

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<sup>198</sup> Solomon Alami, *Igeret Musar*, Adolph Jellinek (ed.) (Leipzig, 1854), p. 23: ואחרי כן בשתים ועשרים שנה, הנשארים בקסטיליי"א היו למשל ולשנינה. ומרעה אל רעה יצאו\* לא ידעתי ספורות . . . . . ויגזרו עליהם שנוי המלבושים וימנעו מהם המסחר והחכיות והאומניות . . . . יצאו\* משם בהמנע מהם החכירות והמכסים, כי לא למדו אומנות להיות מתפרנסים. ועוד מפני החרב והדוחק והמסגר יצאו\* מבעלי אומניות, בראות אלה הקורות והתלאות דוחו<sup>§</sup> ולא יכלו קום באלה הנסיונות והתמורות. וכזה קרה במלכות אראגו"ן לקהלות הנשארות.

<sup>199</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, p. 240. This was Baer's understanding.

Most of our recent misfortunes are because of our own rebels who uncovered our secrets and our misconduct towards the idolaters whose captives we are.<sup>200</sup>

As in most of the Jewish historical writing of the late medieval and early modern period, misfortune was commonly attributed to spiritual failings of the people and frequently portrayed in biblical terms.<sup>201</sup> Whilst Alami's correlation of economic hardship with submission to baptism is readily understandable, he could make no concession to the charismatic preaching of a man like Ferrer. On the other hand, his fatalistic view of contemporary events may have reflected a deep apathy, one that undermined the ability of many Jews to continue to adhere to the faith of their fathers.

Alami's account confirms that the restrictive edicts of 1411-1412 had real and devastating effects on the communities. Nevertheless, the demography of Jewish and *converso* settlement in Toledo already described suggests an uneven implementation of royal policy.<sup>202</sup> The juxtaposition of Jews with their *converso* neighbours there, continued at least until 1420, according to the registers of the *refitores*. It is notable that the cathedral chapter of Toledo, to whom the Jews paid rent, did not receive Ferrer's visit there in 1411 with enthusiasm. An account rendered to the Infante, Fernando de Antequera, suggests they may have been equally disdainful of his passion for segregation in the city:

The lords of the Church did not receive him with any sort of pomp, because he was not an acceptable preacher or holy man nor one who had the right to be so received.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Alami, *Igeret Musar*, pp. 23, וכי תאמר בלבבך מדוע קראונו אלה, דע והאמן כי במידינו היתה זאת אלינו ברוב עונינו..... כי רוב הגזרות והצרות אשר נתחדשו עלינו היו בסיבת פריצי עמנו אשר גלו מסתרנו ורוע התנהגותינו עם העכו"ם עם היותנו עבדים נכבשים להם and see Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, pp. 239-243.

<sup>201</sup> See Elukin, *Living Together*, pp. 1-10; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 33 and in this dissertation chapter II, p. 64.

<sup>202</sup> See earlier in this chapter, p. 212.

<sup>203</sup> Cátedra, 'Sermón', p. 665: 'los señores de la Iglesia.... non lo reçebieron con proçesion nin en otra manera, por quanto non era perlado nin santo aprovado, nin tal para que segúnd derecho deviesen reçebir'. See also his p. 21 and Daileader, *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, p. 224, n.104.

The *cabildo*'s attitude conflicted with the popular clamour and seems to have been related to internal church politics or to a fear that Ferrer would excite riot as Ferrand Martínez had done twenty years earlier.

The statutes were rescinded only five to seven years later in both Aragon and Castile, as was the papal bull of 1415, *Etsi doctoris gentium*, which Benedict XIII had issued and which had incorporated similar conditions.<sup>204</sup> But by then, the combined effects of the forced baptisms of 1391, the economic and social hardships of the royal statutes and Ferrer's campaign of preaching had taken their toll of the Jewish communities throughout Iberia. Also, the long drawn out disputation at Tortosa, unlike that at Barcelona in 1263, had been a failure for the Jews.<sup>205</sup> That the disputation resulted in many conversions was recorded in the Vatican protocols for 1413-1414. More than one thousand may have converted over the period, many in public baptisms:

Everyone of the *aljama* of the Jews of the towns of Alcañiz, Caspe and Maella, all of them were converted to the orthodox faith, which was up to 500 persons or more; afterwards the *aljama* of Lérida, and the Jews of Tamarit, Fraga and of Alcoleja and most of Barbastro and of Daroca more than 1,000 souls.<sup>206</sup>

The result of the conversions and deaths proved catastrophic for the *aljamas* in the second decade of the fifteenth century. By 1419, according to one estimate, the Jewish population of the Kingdom of Aragon had been reduced to eight thousand persons, a reduction of fifty percent of its pre-1391 numbers.<sup>207</sup> No similar figure is available for Castile.

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>205</sup> Baer, *JCS*, vol.2, pp. 170-243.

<sup>206</sup> Franz Ehrle (ed.), *Martin de Alpartils Chronica actitatorum temporibus Domini Benedicti XIII*, (Paderborn: F.Schöningh, 1906): 'omnes aliame Iudeorum villarum Alcanici et Caspi et Maellie omnes generaliter ad fidem orthodoxam sunt conversi, qui fuere usque ad numerum quingentarum personarum et ultra; et deinde aliama Ilerdensis et Iudei ville de Tamarit et de Fraga et de Alcoleja et magna pars ville Barbastri et maior pars ville Daroce ultra numerum mille animarum', p. 601, f.187, May 1414.

<sup>207</sup> Jaume Riera i Sans, 'Judíos y conversos en los reinos de la Corona de Aragon durante el siglo XV', in Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (ed.), *La expulsión de los judíos de España: conferencias pronunciadas en el II Curso de Cultura Hispano-Judía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, celebrado en Toledo del 16 al 19 de septiembre de 1992* (Toledo: Caja de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993), pp. 71-90, at p. 78.

## Conclusion

There was no single cause for the conversions of many thousands of Jews at the end of the fourteenth and into the early fifteenth century. We have shown that submission to forced baptism was not the only path taken in the face of violence. Though this has sometimes been overlooked by modern historians, martyrdom by Jews and the sacrifice of their families occurred in Sepharad as they had in Ashkenaz.

The documentation of a few voluntary conversions prior to the riots shows how possible it was for enterprising *conversos* to integrate successfully into Castilian society; one may speculate that such individuals provided an example for others to follow, as the social and economic pressures on their communities increased in the early decades of the fifteenth century. Not just the sermons, but the remarkable influence that Vincent Ferrer had upon the Crown and on the administration of the kingdom, persuaded many Jews that conversion was an acceptable alternative to poverty or exile.

Yet, before Ferrer's mission, a century of preaching by the friars seems to have persuaded only a few Jews to cross the cultural boundary and to choose baptism. Their sceptical view of the friars and of their way of life, apparent from the Hebrew record, must largely account for their reluctance. How that scepticism and communal solidarity were to be overcome is understood from the writings both of a few energetic and prolific apostates and from the responses of their Jewish opponents. The struggles of conscience of Joshua Halorki, Shlomo ha-Levi and Profiat Duran, who underwent more or less sincere conversions, is illuminated by their written works. They show how these men made their different choices and the means by which they attempted to reconcile their new *converso* with their old Jewish identities. Their internal conflicts prefigured the wider social struggle between the New and the Old Christians in 1449, which will be discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation.

## Chapter VI

### Contested Identity: The Toledo Rebellion of 1449

The uprising against the *conversos* in Toledo in 1449 was a transformative moment for New Christians, for Castilian society and ultimately also for the Jews. The events of 1449-51 have been extensively studied, and so will not be examined in detail here.<sup>1</sup> My purpose is rather to explore why the rebellion, with its anti-*converso* rhetoric and violence, erupted where and when it did.

The rebellion's social relevance went beyond that which it held for its immediate protagonists. For the individual Jew, conversion marked a final assimilation into Christian society, whether that had occurred willingly or under the threat of violence. This was even truer of the descendants of converts, so that the explosion of anti-*converso* sentiment in the rebellion marked a new development in the interactions between Christians and Jews. New Christians found themselves compelled by the violence and by the virulent rhetoric that underpinned the rebellion to defend themselves. Although this defence was partly through armed resistance, the more pivotal aspect from a cultural perspective was their polemical response, an attempt to define their unique identity in a hostile Christian world.

Although it started in January of that year as a riot in protest against a tax considered unfair, the violence soon developed into a full-scale rebellion against the Crown that was not fully resolved until 1451.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the anti-Jewish riots of the urban mobs in 1391, violence was contained locally. While it did not spread across Iberia, it had consequences for Castilian society at many levels. The rebels' challenge to the authority of the Crown and the King's chief minister, the Constable Álvaro de

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Round, 'La rebelión Toledana de 1449: aspectos ideológicos', *Archivum*, 16 (1966), pp. 385-446; Angus MacKay, 'Popular Movements and Pogroms in Fifteenth Century Castile', in *Society, Economy and Religion in Late Medieval Castile*, X (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987); Eloy Benito Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso* (Barcelona: Ediciones El Albir, 1976); Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (2nd edn. New York: New York Review of Books, 2001); Rosa Vidal Doval, 'La matriz medieval de la disidencia en Castilla en el siglo XVI: la herejía judaizante y la controversia sobre los conversos', in Ignacio García Pinilla (ed.), *Disidencia religiosa en Castilla la Nueva en el siglo XVI* (Toledo: Almud, Ediciones de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013), pp. 13-28; Oscar López Gómez, 'El impacto de las revueltas urbanas en el siglo XV a propósito de la rebelión de 1449 en Toledo', *Edad Media: Revista de Historia*, 15 (2014), pp. 175-91.

<sup>2</sup> Though the distinction between riot, revolt and rebellion was not made at that time, the later marshalling of organised protest and of forces by the municipality led by Pero Sarmiento, qualifies the uprising as a rebellion. For discussion of this distinction see Samuel Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 4.



Luna, was clearly treasonous and constituted *lèse majesté*. But in justifying their treachery, the rebels also vilified those instruments of central authority, the *converso* officials, alleging the falseness of their new faith and demanding that they be disqualified from public office.

The rebellion started in January 1449 as a result of urban discontent caused by the imposition of a forced loan (*emprestido*) of one million *maravedís* on the city. This had been demanded by Álvaro de Luna, Master of Santiago and chief-minister (*condestable*) of Juan II. In response to the protest of the *hombres honrados de la cibdad* of Toledo, Luna retorted that: ‘This is a loan that may not be avoided, because of the great needs of the King’.<sup>3</sup> Almost immediately, upon hearing the ‘peal of the great bell of the church of Santa Maria’, the indignant population arose to attack and burn down the house of *tesorero* Alonso Cota, the man charged with collecting the tax. They further seized strategic parts of the city that had been held by Luna.<sup>4</sup> Alonso Cota, according to the chronicle, was ‘a very rich and honourable merchant and citizen of Toledo’. Though not so specified in the chronicle, Cota must have been a New Christian. An ancestor, Sancho Ferrández Cota was recorded as a *converso*, living in the *judería* in Toledo in 1394.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, though Alonso Cota survived the riot, dying in 1461, a number of his descendants were either reconciled or burned by the Inquisition as judaizers in 1486.<sup>6</sup>

Such an urban uprising was not particularly unusual, viewed in the context of European popular revolts in the fourteenth century which had also often originated in protests at royal taxation.<sup>7</sup> As has already been shown, in Castile between 1300 and 1350 the targets of the rebellious townsfolk were the *caballeros villanos* and the *regidores*, leaders of the municipalities in Segovia, Cordoba, Toro and Seville. Their resentment was fuelled by taxation and the privileges of wealthy officers appointed by the Crown. There is evidence, too, that famine had caused a ten-fold rise in the price of wheat and that the oppression of the urban *pecheros* was therefore compounded by

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<sup>3</sup> ‘que esta emprestido no se podia escusar, según las grandes necesesidades en que el Rey estaba’, in Cayetano Rosell, *Crónica de Don Juan Segundo*, 1449, II, p. 661.

<sup>4</sup> Contemporary accounts of the rebellion are found in two chronicles: *Ibid.* and in Juan de Mata Carriazo (ed.), *Crónica del halconero de Juan II*, [1454] (Madrid: 1946), pp. 518-527.

<sup>5</sup> León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, vol.2, doc.634 (1394/5), p. 184.

<sup>6</sup> Emilio Cotarelo, ‘Algunas noticias nuevas acerca de Rodrigo Cota’, *BRAH*, XIII (1926), pp. 11-17.

<sup>7</sup> Cohn, *Lust for Liberty*, Cohn cites the example of the Tuscan tax revolts of 1309-1343 amongst many others, p. 22 and *passim*. For urban revolts in fourteenth-century Castile, see also chapter IV of this dissertation.

hunger and deprivation. The absence of reports of assaults upon the Jews during these riots has already been noted, even though the foreign element in Seville, the Genoese merchants, had suffered from the anger of the mob.

In Mackay's opinion, the soaring price of grain due to crop failures was partly responsible for popular movements of the mid-fifteenth century, just as they had been in the fourteenth.<sup>8</sup> In common with the earlier revolts, the resentment of the Toledans was directed against those who wielded authority over the city in the King's name. Yet unlike the revolts of the earlier century, the anger of the people was not directed at the *caballeros villanos*. Instead, these men appear in records as allies of the rebels and not as despised and cosseted agents of the Crown. The *converso* officials, closely associated with the ambitions of the King's *condestable*, are seen as having replaced the *caballeros* as scape-goats for anger at the royal demand:

Those conversos are living and dealing without fear of God and shown they are enemies of that city and its Old Christian inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>

Awareness of their Jewish background and their newly privileged position in Christian society accentuated their image as interlopers in local affairs.

The following months saw the violence spread with the murder, looting or ejection from the city of wealthy and honourable merchants: '*mandó prender ciertos cibdadanos, hombres honrados e ricos mercaderes*'.<sup>10</sup> Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, who wrote this section of the chronicle of Juan II, does not mention that these men were *conversos*.<sup>11</sup> That this was the case, however, is confirmed in the anonymous chronicle of Álvaro de Luna, written between 1453 and 1460:

Truly, the underlying cause of it all was the persecution and destruction of the *conversos* ..... in opposition to their being heretics and non-believers in the holy Catholic faith.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Mackay, 'Popular Movements', p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> 'los dichos conversos viven y tratan sin temor de Dios, e otrosí han mostrado e muestran ser enemigos de la dicha ciudad y vecinos christianos viejos de ella'; from the most recent edition of the *Sentencia* by Tomás González, Rolán, Pilar Saquero Suárez-Somonte (eds.), 'Traslado de la Sentencia de Pedro Sarmiento', in *De la Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento a la Instrucción del Relator* (Madrid: Alcobendas, 2012), pp. 20-31, at p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Rosell, *Crónica de Don Juan Segundo*, p. 664.

<sup>11</sup> Guzmán was a nephew of the chronicler Lope de Ayala, for whom see chapter IV of this dissertation.

<sup>12</sup> 'es verdad que al comienzo de la cabsa dél se descia ser la persecución e destruímiento de los conversos ..... oponiéndoles ser herejes, e non creer á derechas en la sancta Fé cathólica', in Juan de

The leadership of the popular revolt in Toledo soon passed into the hands of Pero Sarmiento, the King's steward (*repostero*). There is no evidence that the initial fury of the population was inflamed by hatred of New Christians though antipathy to Cota as a *converso* and to other *converso* officials was very likely. The *repostero*'s opportunistic exploitation of this situation changed the complexion of the protest. His personal aim was to wrest back power in Toledo from Luna.<sup>13</sup> In May 1449, his conflation of the role of the *conversos* with the ambitions of the *condestable* was plainly proclaimed in his petition to Juan II:

It is notorious that the aforementioned Álvaro de Luna, your chief-minister, publically defended and accepted converts of Jewish descent of your domains and kingdoms, who in large part are found to be infidels and heretics and have judaized and are judaizing.<sup>14</sup>

The letter was an ultimatum, issued in the name of all the municipal officers, and it ended with a threat; should the King fail to rid himself of his minister and of the *converso* officials, then they would transfer their fealty from him to his son, the Infante Enrique.<sup>15</sup>

The following month, when the King had ignored the ultimatum, Sarmiento issued the *Sentencia-Estatuto* (judgement and statute) supported by all classes from the judges and knights to the common people (*alcaldes, alguaciles, caballeros y escuderos, común, y pueblo*).<sup>16</sup> The first mention of the quasi-legalistic support for the rebels' case against the *conversos* appeared here. Having repeated the accusations of heresy against them found in Sarmiento's earlier letter, the signatories also named the

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Mata Carriazo (ed.), *Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, Condestable de Castilla, Maestre de Santiago* (Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1940), LXXXIII, p. 244.

<sup>13</sup> The abrogation of Sarmiento's power in the city and his desire to retrieve it were factors in his rebellion against the King. He also acquired vast wealth through his looting of *converso* property, much of which he retained even after his disgrace and expulsion, for which see the Carriazo, *Crónica del halconero*, p. 518 and Rosell, *Crónica de Don Juan Segundo*, p. 671a.

<sup>14</sup> Eloy Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV: vida política* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1961), p. 186, doc.15: 'es notorio que el dicho don Álvaro de Luna, vuestro condestable, públicamente a defendido e recebtado e defiende e rrecebtta a los conversos de linaje de los judíos de vuestros señoríos e rreynos, los quales por la mayor parte son fallados ser infieles e erejes e han judaizado e judaizan', May 1449.

<sup>15</sup> The intrigue of Castilian nobles with Juan of Navarre and Juan's potential alliance with the Infante Enrique against his father were exploited by Sarmiento. He invited Enrique to enter Toledo in place of the King. For detail of the political background to the rebellion, see Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition*, pp. 333-336

<sup>16</sup> Rolán, 'Traslado de la Sentencia', p. 20.

fourteen who were to be deprived of their offices (two of them of the family of Alonso Cota). The *conversos*' heresy had been proven, they stated, by a clerical inquisition (*pesquisa*) that sentenced some of them to the stake. No record of the *pesquisa* has survived, but the rejection of *converso* rights to office was also based by the rebels on a privilege awarded to the city by Don Alfonso, an earlier but unspecified King of Castile. The privilege had stated, according to the *Sentencia*, that:

No-one of Jewish lineage should have or hold any office or benefice in the city of Toledo or its surrounds, being suspect in the faith of our Lord and Redeemer.<sup>17</sup>

The hostility towards the New Christians in Toledo was not a new phenomenon; there had been precedents in both Burgos and Seville. Just one year after the forced conversions of 1391, antagonism to the newly baptised Jews in the *judería* of Santa María la Blanca in Burgos received condemnation from Enrique III in a letter to the *concejo*:

Your citizens (in the quarter of Santa María la Blanca) complained to me saying that some dare to wish evil upon them and proceed against their honour, injuring them without reason ..... you well know that these people in that quarter are Christians and newcomers to the Catholic faith, whom you must treat as brothers and who must enjoy our privileges, liberties usages and customs.<sup>18</sup>

A chronicle also relates attacks against *conversos* in Seville in 1434, during the revolt of the Aragonese noble, Fadrique de Luna, against Juan II.<sup>19</sup> In 1437, a petition on behalf of Aragonese *conversos* to Pope Eugene IV showed the bitterness New Christians felt about the obstacles to their advancement:

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22: 'ordenó y mandó que ningun confeso del linaje de los judios no pudiese haber ni tener ningun oficio ni beneficio en la dicha ciudad de Toledo, ni en su tierra, término y jurisdicción, por ser sospechosos en la fe de nuestro Señor e Redemptor'.

<sup>18</sup> 'vuestrros vezinos se me enviaron querellar e dizen que algunos atrevida miente por los querer mal e yr contra sus onrras que les fazen algunas injurias e sin razones ..... vos bien sabedes que pues los dicho vezinos de la dicha colacion son christianos e venidos a la fe católica que les deveades tractar asy como a hermanos e deven gozar de nuestros prevellejos e buenos usos e costumbres', Segovia, 14 octubre 1392, in Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García*, p. 27 and p. 50, n.52, Arch.Mun..Burgos Histórica, num.3702.

<sup>19</sup> Carriazo, *Crónica del Halconero*, CLX, p. 151. However, the attack by Fadrique in Seville against the *conversos* may have been primarily for the purposes of looting rather than, as is suggested by the case of Burgos, hostility to them as a group.

Other Christians do not wish to admit them to public office or to councils and governance of the communities; and even they do not want to marry them or to raise a family, and they are so disparaged that it is worse than if they were still Jews.<sup>20</sup>

The conversion since 1391 of so many Jews had clearly resulted in a complex social dynamic. In Burgos, animosity worked in yet another direction, when *conversos* acted against those Jews who wanted to return to their old *judería* from their displacement in other parts of the city. New Christians in Santa María la Blanca rejected Jews wishing to return to their old homes. Enrique III (1392) wrote to the *concejo*:

They dare not enter in to live in their houses in that *judería* for fear that some Jews now turned Christian oppress them and do them much harm, furthermore that they force them to go to their sermons, so that they are frightened to go, fearing an uprising of people against them.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps feelings of guilt, or fear of accusations of judaizing by Christian neighbours inspired this uneasy, even hostile relationship between *conversos* and Jews. Many first-generation Christians, who had adopted their new faith under duress, may have regretted their action and still held allegiance to Judaism. Yet others, whether in polemical works, or in armed resistance to persecution, displayed an assertive new identity as New Christians.

The localised character of the Toledo rebellion prompts us to ask why the hatred of *conversos* fomented by the rebels' leaders did not spread more widely in Castile as had that preached against the Jews by Martínez fifty years earlier in 1391? One reason is apparent: unlike the religious invective that roused the *gente menuda* to murder and pillage in 1391, the later rebellion rose against the Crown, led and controlled by a municipal elite. Another factor, largely overlooked by historians, may

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<sup>20</sup> 'Et alios christianos, nolentes ipsos admittere ad officia publica vel ad consilia et regimen universitatum; et super hoc faciunt aliqua statuta et ordinationes, volentes dictos sic conversos et ipsorum posteritatem tractare sicut infideles, nec volunt contrahere matrimonia cum eis, nec etiam compaternitatem, in tantumque vituperium sunt deducti quod sunt pejoris conditionis quam si adhuc essent in judaismo': petition to Eugene IV Bologna, 31 de enero 1437, in Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, 'Las bulas de Nicolás V acerca de los conversos de Castilla', *Sefarad*, 21(1), (1961), pp. 22-47, at p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> 'non osan entrar a morar a sus casas en la dicha judería por reçelo que algunos judios que agora se tornaron christianos los persiguen e les fassen muchos males, otrosi que los apremian que vayan a sus pedricaçiones, de lo qual reçelan de yr oyr por reçelo de llevamiento de gente contra ellos', in Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García*, p. 25.

also have served to limit the spread of the violence. This was the assertiveness of the New Christians, strengthened by familial ties and loyalties. Unlike the largely defenceless Jews in 1391, the *conversos* were willing to take up arms to protect themselves and their interests. So, in Toledo:

Others (*conversos*) died in gangs that dared to confront the pure Christians. The captain of the *conversos* in Toledo, was one called Juan de Cibdad, who was a great tax-farmer and wealthy, a defiant *converso*; but certainly a low-life; for later on some of his lineage left for foreign lands and turned from Christians into Jews. This Juan de Cibdad had a bad death at the hands of the mob who claimed his Jewish descent so that after death he was hung upside-down by the feet.<sup>22</sup>

A further example of this resistance was seen in Ciudad Real, seventy miles south of Toledo. There, an armed confrontation on 18 June 1449 appears to have been initiated by bands of *conversos* led by those with prominent positions in the municipality (*alcaldía*), who feared a repetition there of the persecution in Toledo. We know of this from a petition of September 1449 in which the *concejo* pleaded pardon from King Juan II for the serious rioting resulting in many deaths and extensive looting. Three hundred *conversos* armed themselves, and having spread the rumour that they were about to be robbed, threatened to set fire in the city and kill Old Christians and even innocent *conversos* sleeping peacefully in their beds.

Juan González (tax-farmer) with others of his lineage of *conversos* spread rumours saying they knew they were about to be robbed..... going about most of the night ... thus armed....saying that rather than be robbed they would set fire with tar to many places .....so that all the Old Christians and even others of *converso* lineage would be burned in their houses.. and most of them in their sleep.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Carriazo, *Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna* LXXXIII, p. 244: 'E otros morieron en vandos que se atrevieron á sostener contra los Christianos lindos. E el capitán de los conversos era en Toledo uno que se llamaba Juan de Cibdad, era un grand recabrador e rico, e atrevido converso; pero por cierto piertega de mala vid; ca después ovo algunos de su linaje que se fueron á tierras estrañas, e se tornaron de Christianos Judios. Este Juan de Cibdad morió mala muerte en ruido del vando que quiso sustentar de si judiego linaje, e después de muerto fue colgado por los pies'.

<sup>23</sup> 'Juan Gonzalez (recabrador) e otros del linaje de conversos derramando fama e diciendo que sabían que en este tiempo habían de ser robados ..... andovieron la mayor parte de la noche .... asi

Close family links between the leaders of the *converso* bands are evident from the petition and such ties were common in New Christian society.<sup>24</sup>

Following the murder by *conversos* of Fray Gonzalo, Commander of the Order of Calatrava, reinforcements were called to Ciudad Real and, after a battle, they prevailed. It is notable that less than sixty years after their parents or grand-parents had been the passive victims of religious violence, such a strong sense of *converso* identity was displayed in armed resistance both in Toledo and in Ciudad Real. So remarkable was their willingness to bear arms that the rebels' advocate, the lawyer Bachiller Marcos García de Mora, could mock this as being uncharacteristic of those of Jewish descent. The *converso* resistance was not typical of cowardly Jews, more used to victory through tricks and deceit'

All of the *conversos* ... armed themselves saying how they would kill that Pero Sarmiento.

After the execution of their leader, they lost heart:

All the rest, fearful just like those of their wretched lineage, used more to winning through tricks and deceit rather than by fighting.<sup>25</sup>

The Toledo rebellion displayed many dimensions common to urban disturbances in the Middle Ages: economic depression, resistance to royal control of local affairs, political intrigue and simple greed and personal ambition.<sup>26</sup> Two novel aspects, however, distinguished the 1449 rebellion from earlier events of a similar nature. First, the overt challenge to royal authority expressed in Sarmiento's ultimatum to the King and in the *Sentencia*. Second, the purported legal and historical justification for discrimination against the New Christians, first mentioned in the *Sentencia*, was presented in detail

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armados.... diciendo que antes que les robasen que avian de lanzar fuego de alquitran (*tar*) en muchas partes... para la quemar estando toda la gente de Christianos viejos e aun otros de linaje de conversos en sus casas ..... e la mas de la gente durmiendo', in Luis Delgado Merchán, *Historia documentada de Ciudad Real: la Judería, la Inquisición y la Santa Hermandad* (Ciudad Real: E. Pérez, 1907), apéndice doce, Arch. Mun. pp. 399-406, at p. 400.

<sup>24</sup> For which see Linda Martz, *A Network of Converso families in Early Modern Toledo: Assimilating a Minority* (University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> 'todos los confesos ... se armaron ... fablando e tratando como matarían al dicho Pero Sarmiento', and: 'todos los otros espantados, como aquellos que eran e son de ruin linaxe y acostunbaron mas vencer por logros e engaños que no por armas', in Eloy Benito Ruano, 'El Memorial contra los conversos del bachiller Marcos García de Mora ("Marquillos de Mazarambroz")', *Sefarad*, 17 (2) (1957), pp. 314-351, at p.330; Rolán, 'Apelación e suplicación de Bachiller Marcos', in *De la Sentencia*, p. 213.

<sup>26</sup> Gómez, 'El impacto de las revueltas urbanas', p. 178.

and with even greater venom by the rebellion's advocate, the lawyer Bachiller Marcos García de Mora.<sup>27</sup>

The *Memorial* was written quickly, as a response to the rebuttals of the accusations of the *Sentencia* made by Fernán Díaz de Toledo, secretary (*relator*) to Juan II.<sup>28</sup> In his treatise of October 1449, *La Instrucción del Relator*, Díaz did not hide his *converso* origin. He referred to Sarmiento as the 'Second Haman':

The great persecutions of the evil Haman against those of our line in the time of King Ahasuerus, is well known, and the punishment it brought: I hope that the second Haman will receive the same.<sup>29</sup>

His biblical allusion to the Esther story betrays the *Relator's* Jewish mind-set, and in his treatise he referred repeatedly and disparagingly to García de Mora.<sup>30</sup> The *Instrucción* was written for the Bishop of Cuenca, Lope de Barrientos, in October 1449 and the *Memorial* just one month later.<sup>31</sup>

Díaz de Toledo complained, as had the *conversos* of Aragon twelve years earlier, that the persecution of New Christians now made them worse off than Jews and that some would flee to other kingdoms in order to return to Judaism. He refuted Mora's argument that the *Fuero Juzgo* (Fernando III's translation of the Visigothic *Liber iudiciorum*) had denied the right of 'baptised Jews' to hold honours or offices.

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<sup>27</sup> Ruano, 'Memorial'.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Round, 'Politics, Style and Group Attitudes in the "Instrucción del Relator"', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 46 (4) (1969), pp. 289-319, at p. 301.

<sup>29</sup> Fernán Díaz, 'Instrucción', p 243; 'ya sabe las grandes persecuciones, que el malo Amán fizo contra nuestro linaje en tiempo del Rey Azuero, y la pena que por ello reportó: que esas mismas espero, que recibirá el Segundo Amán'; see also Rolán, 'Instrucción del Relator para don Lope de Barrientos', in *De la Sentencia*, p. 96.

<sup>30</sup> Biblical allusions were particularly common in Jewish historiography, especially in relation to the Esther story and to its celebration on the festival of Purim; see this dissertation chapter II and ibn Verga's depiction of the fall of the fourteenth century *privado* Juçaf de Écija at the hands of 'Haman' (Gonzalo Martín), see p. 68. Deyermond believed Mora's contemptuous name for Díaz, 'Mose Hamomo' to equate to Haman, but I believe this is questionable, Alan Deyermond, 'Non veni pacem mittere, sed gladum': La biblia como recurso polèmico en el 'Memoria contra los conversos', in William López (ed.), *Morada de la palabra: homenaje a Luce y Mercedes López-Baralt* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002), pp. 608-619, at p. 612.

<sup>31</sup> There is an unexplained inconsistency in dates, since Díaz's work made repeated mention of de Mora's anti-*converso* rhetoric even before the promulgation of the *Memorial*.



The sainted King Recceswinth...ordained that baptised Jews may not testify against the Old Christians nor hold offices or public benefices amongst the said Christians

The Visigothic law of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) to which Mora had indirectly referred, had stated that those ‘who are of the Jews (*aut hii qui ex Iudeis sunt*)’ should not hold office since they might thereby harm Christians.<sup>32</sup> Díaz de Toledo, however, described this as blasphemy and quoted many later edicts, including the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X. This had specified the rights of *conversos* to be equal to that of Old Christians.<sup>33</sup>

Díaz de Toledo did not address the cryptic reference in the *Sentencia* to an Alfonsine edict that stated the exact opposite.<sup>34</sup> Netanyahu, however, has shown that this prohibition occurred in the twelfth-century *Fuero de Toledo* of Alfonso VII (1118). Later confirmed by Alfonso VIII in 1176 it stated: ‘No Jew nor neophyte shall have dominion over Christians in Toledo, or in its neighbourhood’.<sup>35</sup> It is perhaps because Alfonso’s prohibition had applied only to new *conversos* (*nuper renatus*) and not their descendants, that reference to it in the *Sentencia* was left deliberately vague.

The papal response to the rebellion and to the *Sentencia* was swift. Nicholas V issued a series of bulls that included the *Humani generis inimicus* of 24 September 1449, which was unequivocal in its assertion of equal privileges to New and Old Christians:

We command that each and every one who converts or will in future convert to the Christian faith ..... is eligible for all dignities, honours,

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<sup>32</sup> Mora claimed: ‘el santo Rey Recissundo..... mandó que los judíos baptizados no valan por testigos contra los christianos viejos ni ayan oficios ni beneficios publicos entre los dichos christianos’ in Ruano, ‘Memorial’, p. 335. I am grateful to Rosa Vidal Doval for reference to her unpublished: (2018), ‘Qui ex Iudei sunt: Visigothic Law and the Discrimination of *Conversos* in Late Medieval Spain’.

<sup>33</sup> Fernán Díaz, ‘Instrucción’, p. 245 and see *Las siete Partidas del Rey Don Alfonso el Sabio*, (Madrid: RAH, 1807), tomo III: Partida VII, Ley VI, p. 673.

<sup>34</sup> Ruano, *Los orígenes*, apéndice, p. 87. Which King Alfonso was not specified.

<sup>35</sup> ‘ut nullus Judeus, nullus nuper renatus habeat mandamentum super christianum in Toletto, aut in circuitu eius’, in Tomás Muñoz y Romero, *Coleccion de fueros municipales y cartas pueblas de las reinos de Castilla, Leon, Corona de Aragon y Navarra* (Madrid: 1847), p. 380. See also Benzion Netanyahu, ‘Did the Toledans in 1449 Rely on a Real Royal Privilege?’, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 44 (1977), pp. 93-125.

notarial offices, testimonies and all other things for which all other Christians of whatever antiquity are eligible.<sup>36</sup>

Mora accused the pope of closing his ears to ‘the scared deeds and the upheaval of that sainted city of Toledo’.<sup>37</sup> The *Memorial* portrayed all *conversos* as baptised Jews or their descendants, and as supporters of the *malo tirano*, Álvaro de Luna. They were guilty of heresy and were heirs to all the detestable failings of Jews:

Hated, damned and detested class of baptised Jews and those descended from that damned lineage, adulterers, sons of disbelief and infidelity, fathers of all greed, sowers of dissent and division.<sup>38</sup>

His image of *conversos*, ‘sucking up the sweat and blood of poor Christians through deceit and usury’ (*sorviendo por logros y usuras la sangre y sudor del pobre xénero christiano*), resembles the characterisation of Jewish tax-farmers that appeared in Ayala’s *Rimado de Palacio* sixty years earlier.<sup>39</sup> Mora alluded to forty years of subjugation of the kingdom to tyranny and to the Jewish yoke, *los dichos Reynos han sido súbditos e sujetos e usurpados so el tirano e judaico iugo suso dicho de quarenta años a este parte*. His reference was surely to the years since the mass baptisms of 1391; now, he asserted, continued toleration would be a mortal sin. Canon law, he says, justifies seizure of their assets as heretics and evil doers: *la ley canónica permite ocuparles sus bienes por sus heregias e maldades*.<sup>40</sup>

It can be seen that by likening *conversos* to Jews, Mora added a new component of racially inspired venom to the political, economic and legalistic arguments of Sarmiento’s *Sentencia*. All of the perceived vile qualities of the Crown’s

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<sup>36</sup> ‘mandamus ut omnes et singulus ad christianam fidem conversos aut in futurum covertendos .... ad omnes dignitates, honores, officia tabellionatus, testium depositione et ad omnia alia quae alii christiani quantumcumque antique admitti solent admittant’, Arch. Vatic. tomo 410, fols.130-132, in Beltrán, *Las bulas de Nicolás V*, p. 42. Nicholas’s bull reinforced the edict of the Council of Basle (1434): ‘in quibus sacro baptismate regenerantur, privilegiis, libertatibus et immunitatibus gaudeant’ (whoever is regenerated by holy baptism may rejoice in privilege, liberty and freedom), in Jean Hardouin, *Acta conciliorum et epistolae decretale: ac Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum*, vol VIII (Paris: 1714), Concilium Basileense, p. 1192.

<sup>37</sup> ‘El Santo Padre Nicolao ... cerró los oydos e no quiso oyr los santos echos y movimientos de la dicha santa ciudad de Toledo’, Ruano, ‘Memorial’, p. 325.

<sup>38</sup> ‘el aborrecido, dañado, detestado quarto género e estado de judíos baptiçados e los procedentes de su línea dañada, adúlteros, fijos de incredulidad e infidelidad, padres de toda cobdiçia, sembradores de toda çaçana e division’, *Ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323 and see this dissertation chapter IV p. 163: ‘Alli vienen judíos ... para beuer la sangre de los pobres cuitados’, Orduna, *Rimado de Palacio*, N§244.

<sup>40</sup> Ruano, ‘Memorial’, p. 333.

Jewish *privados* and tax-farmers and the greed of the money-lenders were now projected on to the New Christians. Whereas in earlier times a few Jews in high office had the patronage of the King, now a whole class was perceived not only as the recipient of the patronage of King and Church, but also as enjoying equal status with Old Christians. Its power and arrogance extended even to the bearing of arms in their own defence.

Mora used the term *nobleça natural* to describe his own pure Christianity identity (*gesto de limpio*) in contrast to that of his opponent, Fernán Díaz de Toledo, whom he mockingly called Mose Hamomo. His opponent's character was that of a wretched Jew, bereft of the natural nobility that pertained to 'a pure Old Christian' (*la otra nobleça es natural de la qual el dicho Mose Hamomo es desnudo, ca tiene gesto de judio ruin e yo de christiano e christiano viexo, limpio*).<sup>41</sup> The equation of Mora's own purity of faith with nobility is noteworthy. Together with honour, courage and martial skill, nobility was a preoccupation for New and Old Christian alike. New Christians could claim, and sometimes did, the superiority of a faith chosen by them or their ancestor at baptism, whilst the Old Christians such as Mora proclaimed a genealogical purity that exclusively conferred nobility of character.

Díaz de Toledo's outrage at the accusations levelled by Mora was expressed in contempt for the lowly origins and inaptitude of the Bachiller Mora. An argument in defence of *conversos*, adopted by the *relator*, would later be taken up by Barrientos. In his enumeration of the many distinguished figures throughout Spain who were of *converso* descent, he pointed to the futility of the mission of Mora and the rebels to defame New Christians:

It is impossible to know who is descended from whom ... all are mixed up with each other in this lineage: indeed it was thus commanded in the Conciliar Decree of Basle, that it should be so until the World's end.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ruano, 'Memorial', p. 347.

<sup>42</sup> 'que no se sabe de donde descende cada uno ... todos están bueltos unos con otros en este linage: e aun ansi lo amonesta e manda por sus Decretos el Concilio de Basilea, que se faga ansi, e ansi se continuará hasta la fin de el Mundo', Fernán Díaz, 'Instrucción', pp. 250, 252. For the Conciliar decree of Basel, see Hardouin, *Acta conciliorum*, p.1192.

Lope de Barrientos transcribed much of the *Instrucción* into his own *Zizañadores* completed in 1449.<sup>43</sup> He went further and took issue with the very term *converso* for New Christians of Jewish origin:

I am astonished when I reflect what reason there may be to call those who are children of grandchildren of converts, *conversos*; for those who were born Christian know nothing of Jewish customs, in themselves they are as diverse as we are.<sup>44</sup>

Barrientos was drawing a significant distinction between the neophyte and those families who had been Christian for generations. His argument, therefore, invalidated the rebels' reliance on the twelfth-century Alfonsine edicts for their exclusion of New Christians from office. He further concluded that Jews could not truly be termed *conversos* since, thanks to their traditional observance of the Law, only 'baptism and a belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, promised in the Law and by the Prophets', were necessary to become true Christians: *no les era necesario otra cosa, salvo baptizarse e creer que Nuestro Señor Jesucristo era el Mesías prometido en la ley e en los profetas*.<sup>45</sup>

The forging of a new identity acquired through baptism was a concept that Pablo de Santa María had conveyed to his son by in the *Additiones* twenty years earlier.<sup>46</sup> That son was now the bishop of Burgos, Alonso de Cartagena. He responded to the rebellion and to Mora, elaborating on the same theme of latent nobility of spirit in his *Defensorium unitatis christianae* of 1450:

Those descending from the Israelites, having through baptism removed the handicap caused by the stain of infidelity ..... we see how often and without being forced, they go on to bear arms and to behave with military boldness in war-like actions. This is exceptional, since before

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<sup>43</sup> See this dissertation chapter V, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> 'e cuando yo pienso en mi que razón hay para poder llamar conversos aquellos que son hijos de nietos de convertidos, quedo espantado; porque aquellos que nacieron cristianos no saben cosa alguna de los judáicos usos, son en si tan diversos como nos' in Barrientos, 'Contra algunos zizañadores', p. 191. For a modern edition see Rolán, in *De la Sentencia*, pp. 122-141.

<sup>45</sup> Barrientos, 'Contra algunos zizañadores', p. 191.

<sup>46</sup> See chapter V of this dissertation, p. 199.

the suppression of the handicap, they were considered to be, and were, so cowardly.<sup>47</sup>

Cartagena here conflated the change of faith with the acquisition of a new character, more in line with the norms of the majority culture. His expression may be considered symptomatic of the aspirations of the *converso* writer in general, described by Aronson-Friedman and Kaplan as a ‘socio-religious outsider, at an historical juncture when nationhood and religion were inseparable in Europe’.<sup>48</sup> Rosenstock has argued that in the *Defensorium*, Cartagena provides an answer to the continuing debate among historians as to whether there was foundation to charges of judaizing by the New Christians. Cartagena’s scholarly defense of sincere Christian faith revealed a pride in his Jewish ancestry. It implied a covenantal continuity attributable to the *conversos* that would bring salvation to all humankind. They were not judaizers as claimed by the rebels, but professed a new sort of Christianity and a unity of faith that was denied by ‘paganising’ anti-*converso* rhetoric.<sup>49</sup>

Barrientos, bishop of Cuenca, was not of *converso* origin. Both he and the Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, who did have Jewish ancestors, were scorned by Mora: Barrientos for his disparagement of the rebels’ cause to the Infante Enrique and Torquemada for his denial of an audience of the rebels with Nicholas V.<sup>50</sup> In Torquemada’s *Tractatus contra Madianitas et Ismaelita* of 1450, he quoted the privilege awarded to the *conversos* by Juan II. This was a confirmation of one granted

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<sup>47</sup> In a Spanish translation of the Latin, Guillermo Verdín-Díaz (transl.), *Alonso de Cartagena y el Defensorium unitatis christianae*, transl. (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1992): ‘aquellos que proceden de los israelitas, eliminado por el bautismo el impedimento que tenían por la mancha de la infidelidad . . . . . vemos a muchos en número, que por iniciativa propia y sin que nadie les fuerce, de continuo tienden al ejercicio de las armas, y con apropiado arrojamiento militar en las actividades guerreras, cosa tanto más singular como que antes de la supresión del impedimento se les consideraba, y lo eran, un tanto cobardes’, part II, theorem IV, p. 283.

<sup>48</sup> In the Introduction to Gregory Kaplan, *Marginal Voices: Studies in Converso Literature of Medieval and Golden Age Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> Rosenstock, *New Men*, pp. 16-21, 69-73. See also the review of this work in David Nirenberg, ‘Review: New Men: “Conversos,” Christian Theology, and Society in Fifteenth-Century Castile’ by Bruce Rosenstock’, *Speculum* 80(1) (2005), pp. 315-317 and John Edwards, ‘Was the Spanish Inquisition Truthful?’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 87(3/4) (1997), pp. 351-366, at p. 365: the modern characterisation of a ‘complete dichotomy’ between Judaism and Christianity takes no account of the complexities of medieval religious belief.

<sup>50</sup> Ruano, ‘Memorial’: ‘the cunning of the Cardinal (*la astucia del Cardenal de San Sixto*)’ i.e. Torquemada, p. 325, and the deceptions of ‘the wicked friar (*vos engaño el mal fraile*)’, i.e. Barrientos, p. 342. For biographies of Cartagena and Torquemada, see John Edwards, ‘Conversion: New Light on the Converso Debate: the Jewish Christianity of Alfonso de Cartagena and Juan de Torquemada’ in Simon Barton, Peter Linehan (eds.), *Cross, Crescent and Conversion: Studies on Medieval Spain and Christendom in Memory of Richard Fletcher* (Leiden: 2008), pp. 311-326, 312-314.

by his father, Enrique III in 1412, and it cited the *Siete Partidas* just as Díaz had done. It provided a contemporary royal legitimization of the rights of the *conversos* and their descendants.<sup>51</sup>

The counter-attack by scholarly defenders of the *conversos* took many forms: a personal attack on García Mora's background and integrity, legal justifications for the equal rights of the *conversos* and their descendants and proof of the acquisition of a pure and noble Christian identity through baptism. The argument for the beneficial effects of baptism on the inherent nature of the Jewish (or Muslim) convert to Christianity was a denial of Mora's incendiary portrayal of the faithless, heretical, baptised Jew.<sup>52</sup>

Alonso de Cartagena's explanation of how personal transformation was achieved through baptism, postulated that Jews throughout the centuries had possessed an ember of nobility (*algún rescoldo de nobleza*), that could burst into the flame once disbelief was banished.<sup>53</sup> An analogous explanation was given by Mosén Diego de Valera in his work, *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* (A Mirror of True Nobility).

It is uncertain whether Mosen Diego's *Espejo* was written before or after the rebellion, in either 1441 or 1451.<sup>54</sup> If Jews possessed noble qualities before conversion, he claimed, this grew after baptism as theological nobility was added to their innate civil nobility. True knowledge restored them, as though released from captivity and from the yoke of servitude owing to their rejection of Christ.

Truly.... Because of the terrible sin they committed... they are denied honour and dignity...placed under a yoke of servitude.

These converts to the true understanding are restored and returned to what they had formerly... been<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Nicholas López Martínez, Vicente Proaño Gil (eds.), Juan de Torquemada, [1450], *Tractatus contra Madianitas et Ismaelitas* (Seminario Metropolitano de Burgos:, 1957), p. 128.

<sup>52</sup> See earlier n.38.

<sup>53</sup> Verdín-Díaz, *Defensorium*, p. 285.

<sup>54</sup> Netanyahu, *Origins of the Inquisition*, p. 1266, n.2; Adeline Rucquoi, 'Noblesse des conversos?', in Pelegrin, *Qu'un sang impur*, pp. 89-108, 91.

<sup>55</sup> Mosen Diego de Valera, 'Espejo de verdadera nobleza', in Mario Penna (ed.), *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV* (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1959), IX, pp. 101-105: 'sea verdad ...por el grandissimo pecado por ellos cometido, .. ser de honrras e dignidades desterrados, metidos en yugo de servidumbre'. 'estos convertidos al verdadero consocimiento son restituidos e retornados en el grado que en su principio, .. fueron', p. 103b.

It should be no wonder, Diego reflected, that honour, dignity and strength might not be restored immediately after one thousand years of captivity. Yet, he states, ‘we see many to whom the Lord restored these qualities after their conversion’ (*fallaremos muchos de aquellos a quien nuestro Señor restituyóen la mayor de sus dignidades non mucho tiempo pasado después de la conversión*).<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion

This final chapter of the dissertation describes a critical way-point in Jewish fortunes. The Toledo rebellion was not just against the *conversos*. It was also symptomatic of a social conflict between the urban population, mostly unskilled workers and artisans, and the ruling mercantile and professional oligarchy. According to Márquez Villanueva, it was around the wealthy merchants and the urban oligarchy that there ‘crystallised an emerging anti-*converso* sentiment’.<sup>57</sup> The centuries-long antagonism to the Jewish appointees of the Castilian Crown, seen in the repeated petitions by the *procuradores* in the Cortes, had been transformed following the mass conversion of Jews and the adoption of these same roles by the New Christians. It has been argued by Márquez Villanueva that the element of stability that the *conversos* introduced to municipal administration was welcomed by the Crown.<sup>58</sup> Yet, the strong family ties and the clannish nature of New Christian society, apparent from the record, would have further strengthened Old Christian perception of them as an alien oligarchy.<sup>59</sup>

The violence and the public rhetoric unleashed by the rebellion may be seen as a consequence of what had gone before as well as a portent of what was still to come. As we have seen, two new cultural encounters resulted from the widespread conversion; that between the New and the Old Christians and that between the New Christians and the Jews. Confrontations were recorded in both instances, however the former proved to be of far greater import. As the antagonism grew, it finally erupted in severity in the storm of anti-*converso* violence and rhetoric of Toledo in 1449.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104b.

<sup>57</sup> Francisco Márquez Villanueva, ‘The Converso Problem: An Assessment’, in Marcel Hornik (ed.), *Collected Studies in Honour of Américo Castro's Eightieth Year* (Oxford: Lincombe Lodge Research Library, 1963), pp. 317-333, at p. 318.

<sup>58</sup> Francisco Márquez Villanueva, ‘Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV’, *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 63 (1957), pp. 503-40, p. 504.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

From the standpoint of this study 1449 holds a special interest. The confrontation appeared to be all about fierce rejection of the *conversos* by the rebels on account of their avarice, infidelity and enmity to true Christians. It attempted to resurrect canonical injunctions against them holding office, even in the face of papal denial of their veracity. The polemical response was defensive, laying claim to the redemptive power of the baptism of their ancestors. But it is clear from the protestations of Alonso de Cartagena and Mosén Diego, that they went further in believing conversion to have transformed not just their belief, but their temperament and natural disposition too.

New Christians had assimilated but their assimilation was not acceptable to their Old Christian opponents. From a modern perspective it is not difficult to see why, by continuing in the social role their forebears had adopted so successfully, their protestations of pure faith would fall on deaf ears. The image they projected in the early *converso* polemics is telling. In its conviction of change, of having surmounted the barriers that separated Jew from Christian, the authors say more about their perception of self than about how they may have been seen by the wider Christian population. On that account alone, the assimilation, even by the most sincere of New Christians, must be deemed to have been incomplete.



## Conclusion

The transition in Jewish society in Castile that followed the thirteenth-century reconquest is characterised by three principal themes outlined in this study: economic reliance, permeability of social boundaries and instability of individual and of group identities. I have attempted to show that none of these factors should be viewed in isolation but that they were indissolubly linked in the evolution of the Jewish, and later of the *converso* communities, through the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. *Convivencia*, the social context in which this evolution occurred, has been discussed earlier and is open to differing modern interpretations. Yet it was unique to Iberia and, though its influence on the lives of minorities waxed and waned, it was responsible for the socially and culturally permissive environment that enabled the social changes described here.

The economic reliance of the kingdom on its Jewish subjects was two-fold in nature. This study has shown, for the first time, quite how extensive were the revenues exacted from the *aljamas* of Castile, so great that they constituted an indispensable resource for the Crown. Furthermore, their correlation with estimates of population helps to place in perspective the size of the communities at the end of the thirteenth century. The prominence of Jews as *privados* and tax-farmers in the royal administration has been well documented in the literature, but is argued here to have had dual significance for the lives of the communities. Together with the revenues of the *pecheros*, it accounted for the protection that the Crown afforded to the Jews in the face of opposition from the municipalities. However, beyond this, the lives of these men provide examples of ‘inward acculturation’, as defined by Marcus.<sup>1</sup> They demonstrated an ability to cross, with relative impunity, the cultural boundary between the closed life of their own community and the life at court. Though this endangered their identity as Jews, it did not erase it altogether.

The records of urban disturbances in the early fourteenth century contradict the view that latent hostility to Jews erupted as a consequence of economic hardship or of

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood*, p. 11, see p. 15 of the Introduction to this dissertation.

failure of central authority. If, as this suggests, the Jewish communities were relatively unaffected by popular resentment at this time it is a subject worthy of further study. Hostility of the townsfolk was directed not at their Jewish neighbours, with whom there was close and daily contact, but against royally appointed officials who were the agents of central authority and financial oppression. Money-lending, afforded almost exclusively by Jews, was always a contentious issue both for the debtors themselves and for the municipalities. Yet the activity was an essential resource for the Christian population, and as has been shown, had additional value to the exchequer through the *entregas*. Perhaps on account of its mainly small scale, there is little evidence that it was a cause of hostility or violence until the end of the century.

As the century progressed, however, the communities faced two major threats to their existence, outlined in chapters IV and V of this dissertation. The civil war wrought destruction on all the populations of Castile. The Jews, being wealthier than their neighbours, suffered disproportionately but no-one was left unaffected by the hardship and deprivation. I have attempted to dispel the view put forward by some modern Spanish historians that this was a concerted anti-Jewish campaign by the Trastámaran victor, Enrique, in the war. When the conflict is understood as a surrogate struggle in the Hundred Years War between France and England, the anti-Jewish tone of the French chroniclers and the pillage of the communities, principally by English and French mercenaries, provide a different perspective.

The other threat was to the moral integrity of the *aljamas* and to the religious identity of the individuals they comprised. A consideration of the permeability of social boundaries cannot be confined just to the administrative elite of *privados* and tax officials. It affected all communities, as we know from the anxious commentaries of the rabbis who voiced their concerns about the laxity of the young and the threat of their apostasy.<sup>2</sup> This threat was far more serious than that posed by the acculturation of the court Jews, and came principally from the conversion and the missionizing polemic of a few zealous Jewish converts. The expression of their doubts and their eventual reconciliation with the tenets of Christianity have been identified here from their own works. These reveal how they acquired their new, hybrid identity and their eagerness to persuade others of the rightness of their position. When juxtaposed with the

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter V, p. 179, n.15.

responses of the faithful, these sources highlight issues not only of faith but, as in the case of the reluctant *converso* Profiat Duran, a consciousness of betrayal of their inner kernel of Jewish identity.

It is unlikely that, of the thousands of *conversos* created around 1391, many underwent such soul-searching. How various were the routes to baptism is illustrated in this study, which has provided examples of conversions of convenience where coercion or a theological epiphany almost certainly played no role. The remarkable success of integration and the rapidity with which it was accomplished in a few documented instances, is a true indicator of the ease with which an individual could pass from one community to another. As the numbers of *conversos* mounted, the blurring of social divisions was evident and became a source of confusion and mistrust. The hybrid names of some neophytes is well illustrated in the Toledo census. It surely reflected a similar hybridity of identity that led, in some instances, to hostility between Jew and *converso* and between the *conversos* and the Old Christians alongside whom they were to live.

This study has also addressed the difficult theme of resistance to conversion and of martyrdom, which had been thought at one time to have been almost exclusive to the Ashkenazi Jewish population. A small but significant body of records show this was not the case. In relation to the numbers who accepted baptism under threat of violence, the numbers may have been smaller than was the case in Ashkenaz, but Christian and Hebrew records provide stark testimony to sacrifice in the sanctification of God's name (*kidush ha'shem*).

The confusion over individual identities in this 'new society' that emerged in the first decades of the fifteenth century was fertile ground for the preaching of Vincent Ferrer. The undoubted efficacy of his mission contrasts strongly with the inefficacy of the friar-preachers of the preceding century. Ferrer was preaching in a very different environment to that of the earlier friars; fear and the example of so many already baptised must have worked in his favour. Moreover, as has been acknowledged and further outlined in chapter V, he had recruited the Crown and the municipalities to his cause. Physical separation, they all agreed, was the way to resolve the confused social outcome of the mass conversions. The Hebrew sources bore witness to the

malign effect of segregation on the remaining Jewish communities for many of whom flight or baptism must have seemed the only available options.

The opinions that individual Christians or Jews held about themselves and about each other must have shaped actions and the events documented in the historical record. They are hard to determine, yet some clue to this can be found in legends and in ballads, many of which would have been recited or performed at public gatherings. As has been outlined in chapter IV, it is possible to detect a transition in the nature of the narrative and the images projected over the fourteenth century. The *topoi* of the demonic Jew, his hostility to the Virgin and to all of Christendom, were dominant themes that continued throughout the thirteenth-century. Redemption for those who converted was to be accompanied by physical and spiritual transformation of the neophyte.

The scepticism of the poetry of the *Cancionero de Baena*, the anthology of late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century verse cited in chapter IV, reflects a very different view of conversion. Men who passed themselves off as Christians were crudely mocked for displaying a caricature of their Jewish origins. These images may have been innocent literary devices and may even have been written by poets who were themselves *conversos* in many instances.<sup>3</sup> Yet from the perspective of the anti-*converso* rebellion that followed in 1449, they acquire a more sinister connotation. The implication was that the assimilation that the *conversos* or their ancestors had undergone was incomplete.<sup>4</sup>

As though lancing a poisonous abscess, the 1449 rebellion and the rhetoric of the Bachiller Marcus García de Mora released both violence and invective against the faithless *conversos*. No longer mocked with the lubricious poetry of the *Cancionero*, the *converso* instruments of the Crown's financial hold over Toledo's population were viciously accused of sucking the blood of the poor Christian citizenry. Redemption was not to be theirs; the 'Jews, ready and prepared, to drink the blood of the wretched citizens' of Ayala's poem, *Rimado de Palacio* were in fact now Christians, whose new

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<sup>3</sup> Nirenberg, 'Figures of Thought', p. 415.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417; Nirenberg sees further evidence here of a 'destabilization of social and religious distinctions' caused by the 'migration of thousands of Jews into Christianity'.

identity was rejected as fraudulent by the rebels.<sup>5</sup> The conflation of the image of the avaricious Jewish enemy of Christendom with the deicidal deniers of Christ was a denial that the *conversos* had in fact crossed the final boundary of complete assimilation.

The counter-attack, physical as well as polemical, by the New Christians was the first blow in what would be a long and painful struggle to finally establish themselves in Castilian society. The issues of identity that emerged during the rebellion would be those that would form the basis of the long interrogation by the Holy Office in the Inquisition that continued, in one shape or another, for centuries to come.

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter IV, p. 163.

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