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The Difficulties of Integrating and Assimilating Converted Jews (*conversos*) in Medieval Castile and León

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ABSTRACT

The relations between Jews, Muslims and Christians in Castile and Leon passed through a number of different phases throughout the Middle Ages. For this reason, recent historiography rejects the thesis that there was peaceful co-existence and exemplary tolerance between the three cultures.

The economic and political hardships suffered in Castile from the middle of 14th century led to social conflict, culminating in the pogroms of 1391. This resulted in a definitive rupture in the relations between Jews and Christians, and consequently, many Jews decided to become Christians in order to find the protection and acceptance that they would not otherwise obtain.

For the Crown, the large number of New Christians or *conversos* meant disorder and internal fighting, which escalated during 15th century. The converted Jews, who were now integrated into Christian society, managed to free themselves from the restrictions that had prevented them from acquiring full rights, and were able to rapidly progress in society through their economic activities. They soon occupied the most important positions in the cities, Church and general administration of the kingdom. However, the Old Christians were suspicious, perceiving the New Christians as dangerous rivals.

The distrust intensified, erupting in Toledo in 1449, when a Statute prohibiting the *conversos* from occupying any kind of public office was approved. Although the idea that there was no difference between Jews and converted Jews was gradually gaining ground, there was at the same time a growing anti-Semitism, leading to rejection. From that moment, the New Christians started to be attacked and became the target of doctrinal propaganda aiming to prevent their assimilation into the society that they had voluntarily chosen to belong to. The Inquisition and the Purity of Blood Statutes, which included a racist element, were the most important measures for ensuring their total exclusion.

Las relaciones entre judíos, musulmanes y cristianos en Castilla y León atravesaron momentos y situaciones muy diferentes a lo largo de la Edad Media, por lo que la historiografía más reciente rechaza ya el tópico de la convivencia pacífica entre las tres culturas, ejemplo de tolerancia.

Las dificultades económicas y políticas que se produjeron en la Corona de Castilla desde mediados del siglo XIV se tradujeron en conflictos sociales, y desembocaron en los pogromos de 1391, que significaron una fractura definitiva en las relaciones entre judíos y cristianos. Muchos judíos se pasaron entonces al cristianismo buscando un amparo y una aceptación que no iban a conseguir.

El elevado número de cristianos nuevos o conversos significaba, para la Corona, desorden y luchas internas, que se hicieron patentes a lo largo del siglo XV. Los conversos, al integrarse en la sociedad cristiana, se vieron libres de las trabas que les impedían el tener una plenitud de derechos, y consiguieron una rápida promoción a través de sus actividades económicas, ocupando cargos en las ciudades, en la Iglesia y en la administración general del reino. Este hecho despertó enormes recelos entre los cristianos viejos, que les vieron como peligrosos competidores.

La desconfianza fue creciendo y estalló de forma violenta en Toledo en 1449, momento en que se promulga un Estatuto para impedir a los conversos ocupar cualquier cargo en la administración. Se empezó a generalizar la idea de que judíos y conversos eran iguales, al mismo tiempo que el rechazo empezó a tener connotaciones antisemitas. A partir de ese momento los conversos sufrieron una ofensiva unida a una fuerte propaganda doctrinal para evitar su asimilación a esa sociedad a la que voluntariamente habían escogido pertenecer. La Inquisición y los estatutos de limpieza de sangre, que tenían un componente racista, fueron las medidas más importantes para conseguir su exclusión total.

INTRODUCTION

The co-existence within the same geographical space and for the best part of eight centuries of three communities with different religions and ways of life and varying relative populations is one of the defining characteristics of the Spanish Middle Ages. The study of the mutual relations between these three communities began to attract attention with the publication of Américo Castro's famous book, *España en su Historia* ('Spain in its History') (Buenos Aires 1948); its subtitle, *Cristianos, moros y judíos* ('Christians, Moors and Jews'), became a formula applied to any kind of study of "the historical reality of Spain", alluding as it did to the religious facets of the three components of that reality. In the wake of Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz's no less well-known work, *España, un enigma histórico* ('Spain, a historical enigma') (Buenos Aires 1952), which opposed Castro's theses, a controversy arose which spawned an abundant and thought-provoking series of publications and extended the scope of the inquiry from the conventionally historical to the literary, religious, anthropological and political.

Spanish and Hispanic medieval historiography boomed in the last quarter of the 20th century thanks to interest in identity politics and relations between the "Three Communities", "Three Ethnic Groups" and "Three Cultures"¹ (a concept which, in fact, may only be truly applied to European societies in later centuries, as analysed in Iwan-Michelangelo D'Aprile's chapter in this volume). Different studies highlighted the religious basis of each community, and were soon followed by other studies that

took as their starting point social history or the history of mentalities. The latter approach was particularly warmly welcomed by experts in the field and soon became something of a historical commonplace, together with the commonplace regarding the tolerance shown by the Christian majority towards the ethno-religious minorities living at its side². However, more recent historiography has undermined the twin myths of the Three Cultures and Tolerance. It is undeniable that there was communication between the three communities living together in the Iberian Peninsula, but it is also true that such communication did not necessarily indicate a continuous state of peace and harmony. For it was to be the destiny of the Jewish and Muslim communities in the Christian states of the Reconquest to oscillate between uneventful coexistence and bitter conflict and persecution in a see-sawing motion whose endless ups and downs exemplify the contradictions which are the hallmark of Spain's long Middle Ages³.

The study of Christian-Jewish relations is of particular interest to those wishing to learn about Iberian societies during the High Middle Ages. The attitude of the Christian majority underwent gradual change, passing from a stage of radical doctrinal difference, though with dialogue, to another of open conflict, which came to a head in the final expulsion of the Jews (cf. Rita Ríos's contribution to this volume). This second stage was also marked by the close surveillance and marginalisation of those who had abandoned the Hebrew faith and undergone Christian baptism, that is to say, the New Christians or *conversos*.

In Castile and Leon, the impact of the Black Death (1348) and the Civil War (1366-1369), together with the mounting economic crisis, led to an explosion of anti-Jewish feeling in 1391. Many Jews turned to Christianity in search of refuge and acceptance, both of which would be refused them. The Christian community found itself confronted with the new and intractable problem of the large number of New Christians or *conversos*, which for the Crown represented disorder and internal strife that would flare up continually throughout the 15th century⁴. The New Christians rose rapidly to eminence in municipal office, the Church and civil service, and formed the bulk of the legal professionals. Their ever-increasing influence during the first half of the 15th century deeply irritated the Old Christians⁵. Nevertheless, the backlash was slow in coming, and it was not until 1449 that Old Christian hostility towards the recent converts came to a head in an outpouring of violence that would continue until the end of the century.

The community of the newly baptized and their descendants inevitably turned into an increasingly mixed bag of pseudo-converts, apostates, crypto-Jews, etc., which became rich tilling ground for the new Inquisition of 1474. Under duress, one becomes what one is, as is clearly explained in the Hebrew word for *converso* – *ausim*, which means "the forced man". This group hovered permanently close to the borderline separating orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

The *conversos* made their influence felt in the confusion generated by the political infighting for power that characterised the history of the Crown of Castile in the 15th

century. But they were soon to be excluded from the Christian society they had decided to embrace by the drafting and implementation of discriminatory measures restricting their individual rights. Measures like the Statute of Pero Sarmiento (1449) or the Purity of Blood Statutes barred *conversos* from the universities and posts in the administration.

The Catholic monarchs developed a new conception of the state that was intimately bound up with orthodoxy, and all the measures adopted against the New Christians, who were regarded as a permanent threat to the unity of the kingdoms, should be interpreted in the light of this. Of all these measures the most repressive was of course the Inquisition.

According to Jaime Contreras, the problem that most affected the subsequent history of the Hispanic Kingdoms and their projection in America was neither the Jewish minority and its expulsion, nor those persecuted by the Inquisition; it was rather the problem “posed by the *conversos* in their attempts to forget their origins and gain a foothold within the cultural horizon of the Old Christian majority. This titanic effort was all the more remarkable the more setbacks it suffered⁶.”

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how the New Christians came into being in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon in the period extending from the persecution and discrimination of the Jews in the High Middle Ages (more precisely, from the second half of the 14th century onwards when the *converso* problem first surfaced) to the end of the 15th century. It will also illustrate the fraught and contradictory relations between the New Christians and the monarchy, and the obstacles that they encountered in the predominantly Christian society they had opted to join but which remained inimical to their aspiration to integration. In order to clarify this situation, I have analysed the anti-*converso* propaganda which, throughout the 15th century, fostered a climate of growing hostility towards the New Christians, and the formulation and implementation of measures that were both discriminatory in limiting individual rights (the Purity of Blood Statutes) and manifestly repressive, the creation of the Inquisition being of course the outstanding example. The analysis lays bare the discrimination endured by these “second class” Christians towards the end of the Middle Ages in Castile and Leon.

THE TERMS “JEW”, “JUDAISER” AND “CONVERSO”

These three terms, which are still often confused today, have different meanings in the history of the Hispanic kingdoms, as the groups they refer to came to prominence at different moments in the historical reality of their time. In the latter part of the Middle Ages, three major historical problems beset those of Jewish stock: the problem of the Jewish minority (in the strictest sense); the problem of heresy, which affected the Judaisers; and the essentially cultural problem which affected the *conversos*.

The Jewish minority was the main player in Castile and Leon during High Middle Ages, whose influence finally dwindled to nothing in 1492, when the Expulsion brought to

an end a century of continuous tension between them and the Christian majority. The term “Judaizer”, on the other hand, refers to Christian converts that refused to observe the new religious faith in their private or family life, continuing instead to observe the teachings of the old; these were heretics, from the point of view of the Church, and needed to be eradicated⁷. As for *converso* or ‘New Christian’, these synonymous terms were initially applied to those who were born Jews but converted to Christianity at some point in their lives. From the 15th century, they were used indiscriminately to refer to any person of Jewish descent, however distant; while historiography, for its part, tends to assimilate them to the ‘Judaizers’ when considering the existence of heresy amongst the whole group of converts. The *conversos* did not, therefore, comprise a well-defined social group, as their only common ground was their Hebrew ancestry⁸.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CONVERSO PROBLEM

The intensification in anti-Jewish sentiment over the course of the 14th century and the progressive discrimination and persecution of the *conversos* in the 15th century may be traced step by step to their violent conclusion. Given that intolerance and discrimination towards both groups grew proportionately over time, my analysis of the uphill battle for integration and assimilation fought by the *conversos* in Castile and Leon will likewise unfold in chronological order.

Historiographical interest in the *conversos* is a relatively recent phenomenon with its origins in the early studies of A. Domínguez Ortiz and Américo Castro, which date back to the 1940s. There can be no understanding the *conversos* in isolation from the Jews and the Judaizers, for the three groups formed part of a single collective characterised by the rejection and marginalisation they suffered at the hands of the Christian community (cf. Rita Ríos’s chapter on various questions relating to Castilian Jews). What is more, they converted as a direct consequence of persecution and their numbers rose in direct proportion to the fall in the number of Jews, while the arguments employed by the Christian community in order to hamper their integration even after baptism were the same as those they used against the Jews.

The 13th century marked the final rupture between Christianity and Judaism in medieval Europe and the start of a process that would lead to the total exclusion of the Jewish community. Under the influence of the mendicant orders, the Church began to regard as imperative the urgent conversion of the Jews to Christianity, a context that is described by Alexey Klemeshov in his contribution to this volume. Meanwhile, a new political attitude was developing (a precursor of modern monarchy) that refused to tolerate religious difference or anything else that might hinder full political and social unity, and this also conditioned the Christian stance towards the Jews. The figure of the medieval Jew began to figure in the anti-Jewish arguments put forward in legal texts and texts of doctrine and canon law⁹. As far as the High Middle Ages in Castile are concerned, Julio Caro Baroja has identified four broad arguments used to justify hatred of the Jews and together configured the stereotype of them. As we shall see be-

low, these arguments were the same as those used later against the *conversos*. There were religious arguments which accused the Jews of murdering Jesus and committing ritual crimes; psychological arguments which branded them as proud and arrogant; arguments of an economic nature, which focused on usury, avarice and the fleecing of the poor, and finally arguments which drew attention to particular physical features such as long beards, hooked noses and evil miens¹⁰.

From the mid-13th century, with plague and incipient economic crisis looming, the combination of political strife and conflict, dynastic change, cultural and religious turmoil, and internal division caused a deterioration in relations between Christians and Jews in Castile and León, ultimately leading (once the fragile balance between them had been upset) to the marginalisation of the latter. All too familiar also are the devastating effects of the internal divisions within the Jewish communities, the result of progressive Averroist materialism, which left them more vulnerable to external attack¹¹. Thenceforth, anti-Jewish feelings began to be clearly reflected in the fields of law, legislation and doctrine, before finally taking shape in the measures adopted in Parliament (cf. Rita Ríos' chapter). It is at this point too that the Castilian monarchs, who had previously been staunch defenders of the Jews, started to yield before the anti-Jewish fervour that had taken hold of the populace and introduced measures to exclude them¹². One consequence of anti-Jewish propaganda was to exacerbate their marginality, a marginality that at first entailed exclusion but would soon lead to elimination, either through conversion or expulsion¹³.

By now the idea had taken root that the solution to the Jewish problem lay in prohibiting their religious observance. The Franciscan Ramón Llull (1233-1316), in his sermons and other writings, argued that Christianity was the only true religion and proposed expelling those Jews who refused to convert on the grounds that they were a risk for the Christian faith¹⁴. Meanwhile, the Dominican Ramón Martí (1220-1286) introduced an argument that would become a commonplace in the 15th century, namely that ongoing contact between Jews and *conversos*, their erstwhile coreligionists, would only favour the propagation of the formers' misguided doctrines; Martí's conclusion was that since tolerance of Judaism would lead to its proliferation, it had to be stamped out altogether¹⁵.

All sectors of Christian society tried to impose the idea that the solution to the Jewish problem was not tolerance but conversion. But many of the Jews who had to endure this process of increasing marginalization opted under severe pressure for baptism, only to meet with rejection once they belonged to very Christian society that had forced them to convert. The intensifying anti-Jewish climate began to take a violent turn as the 14th century unfolded, and when Pedro I, regarded as pro-Jewish, ascended to the throne of Castile, the stage was set for conflict with a broad sector of the anti-Jewish nobility, who had his stepbrother, Enrique de Trastámara at their head. The ensuing civil war (1366-1369) was a key factor in consolidating the anti-Jewish current, since it forged a dangerous connection between the anti-Jewish hostility that had for a long time remained dormant in whole swathes of the popular classes and the pronouncements is-

sued by the numerous members of the nobility who rose up against the king¹⁶. For the first time, anti-Jewish propaganda was used actively and openly as an instrument of war, a practice that was to continue throughout the High Middle Ages in Castile as first the Jewish question and then the *converso* question was exploited by those fighting on both sides in the political conflicts.

The triumph of Enrique II in the civil war also meant the triumph of the anti-Jewish faction, and this seemed to be confirmed by reprisals against the Toledo Jews in 1369. As a consequence, the Cortes of Toro of 1369 and 1371 saw a violent backlash against the Jews on the part of the popular classes. But then the monarch, Enrique Trastámara, radically changed his attitude. Anti-Semitism had been a useful weapon of propaganda against King Pedro, but once installed on the throne, he attempted to return to the traditional policy of royal tolerance towards the Jews who, in Castile, comprised a significant, deeply-rooted group that was valued for its contributions to the royal exchequer and was indispensable to the Crown on account of the numerous moneylenders, tax collectors and doctors that came from their ranks.

In the aftermath of the civil war, the monarchy was unable to discontinue its protection of the Jews or dispense with their services. For their part, the Jews realised that friendship with the monarchs was their best defence against popular anti-Semitism. That is why some Jewish intellectuals were so passionate in defence of the new king, who was feared by the Jewish community as a whole. Henceforth, royal ambivalence towards the Jews and, later, the *conversos*, was to be a constant in the centuries to come¹⁷.

But violent anti-Judaism now had wind in its sails and was unstoppable, even if it did not have royal approval. Popular sentiment could not stomach the Jewish return to privileged posts in the circle of the very monarch who had commenced his rebellion with an anti-Jewish rallying cry. Therefore, the Cortes were once again the scene of fierce attacks on the Jews on the part of the popular classes, attacks that led in many cases to the bankruptcy of leading Jewish financiers¹⁸. Economic extortion and legal and judicial discrimination were complemented by assaults on the Jewish quarters of diverse Castilian cities, anticipating the fateful pogroms that would take place towards the end of the 14th century.

At the same time, there was an increase in anti-Jewish sermonizing, which tended to promulgate one or the other of two differing attitudes. The most outstanding representative of the first attitude was the Dominican, Vicente Ferrer, who, condemning the use of violence, advocated catechising in the synagogues and restricting the rights of Jews, goading them into baptism. The other attitude was epitomised by Ferrán Martínez, archdeacon of Écija, and other fanatical preachers, who urged that Jews be compelled to choose between baptism, emigration or death¹⁹. This was the background to the violent persecutions of 1391, which began with the assault on the Jewish quarter of Seville after a sermon from Ferrán Martínez and soon spread throughout all the Hispanic kingdoms²⁰. The intervention of the King Enrique III, a boy of barely thirteen years, was unable to stop the avalanche. As the chronicler López de Ayala pointed out

in his *Rimado de Palacio*, public opinion was manifestly hostile to the Jewish population²¹; moreover, social conflict offered a safety valve for a society submerged in an economic and spiritual crisis²².

Various scholars agree that the events of 1391 marked a watershed in the evolution of the Jewish problem. The number of Jews declined; much of the Jews' flourishing activity in trade and industry was wiped out; there was a geographical shift in the Jewish population, and cracks began to appear in the hitherto strongly nuclear Jewish families, as some of their members converted to Christianity²³. It was at this juncture that the Jewish problem became the *converso* problem, as Eloy Benito Ruano argues in his stimulating monograph on the subject²⁴.

Until 1391, *conversos* in Castile had been few and far between. Those few conversions had occurred spasmodically and out of genuine religious conviction, and many of the converts devoted their lives to serving the Church. But the disturbances of 1391 led to a clear increase in the number of *conversos*, for many Jews were forced to choose between baptism and death. A highly significant number of them opted for conversion to Christianity. Therein lie the roots of the *converso* problem, since many of the new converts, who had switched to Christianity under the pressure of popular hostility accompanied by the animosity of the dominant social classes, rather than through religious conviction, continued secretly to perform the rituals and observe the precepts of Judaism. The fall in the number of Jews was matched by the rise in the number of New Christians (the *conversos*), who from this point take centre stage²⁵.

THE 15TH CENTURY: THE ROAD TO EXCLUSION

As the 15th century got under way, the Jewish question slipped into the background while the *converso* question acquired such pre-eminence that it became a key factor in the historical evolution of the Crown of Castile. During the final years of the 14th century and the first few decades of the 15th, many Jews followed in the steps of the converts of 1391. This was due partly to the pressure exerted on them by the Old Christians, who were determined to rid Spanish soil of any Jewish presence as fast as possible, and partly to the desire of many Jews to disencumber themselves of the inconveniences that continued fidelity to Judaism inevitably entailed²⁶. The period brought violent persecutions, superseded by a kind of "non-violent" persecution manifested in the number of increasingly segregationist legal and political provisions (see Rita Ríos' chapter), the preaching of the mendicant friars (of whom Vicente Ferrer was the most prominent example)²⁷, who physically took over the synagogues, and through Crown-sponsored disputes or controversies between Christians and Jews, organised for the purpose of indoctrination (the most famous of which was the *Disputa de Tortosa* of 1413-1414)²⁸. The outcome of the action on all these fronts was a huge rise in the number of converts.

The road from ghettoisation to full membership of the Christian majority was, for the Jews, long and arduous. Assimilation had been the dream of the pioneering groups of

conversos and continued to be so for their successors. But it was a dream that always met with obstacles and rejection on the part of the Christian majority. This interaction, at once dynamic and contradictory, is the proper context of the *converso* problem²⁹. It is true that the great majority of the 1391 conversions were not genuine, which is why those New Christians were accused of continuing to practise the Jewish religion. But it is no less true that many had taken the step of conversion through conviction; however their maintenance of a lifestyle and customs more appropriate to the community they had previously belonged to laid them open to the charge of judaising too. This state of affairs was worsened by the almost complete lack of instruction in the Christian faith received by the *conversos*, which was in stark contrast to their sound knowledge of the Jewish religion. No doubt this also drove more than one convert to cling fast to his original religion and turn his back on the one he had officially embraced³⁰.

Indeed, conversion merely exacerbated the difficulties attached to assimilation. A Jew deciding on baptism was not only caught up in a personal drama but was also generating conflict within his family unit. Conversion was hardly ever a decision taken by a family as whole; its effect was rather to sunder the traditionally sturdy bonds of family solidarity³¹. Conversion depended on one's personal circumstances; parents were more reluctant to convert than their children, women more reluctant than men, and the poor more than the rich³². Whatever the reasons for conversion to Christianity, once baptised, the Jew acknowledged the dogmas and moral and social rules of Christian society, turned his back on his own tradition and accepted what had once been quite alien to him. All that meant constant and painful soul-searching, both individually and collectively, which helps to explain why the process of assimilation was so long and arduous, dragging out for generations.

M. P. Rábade has distinguished between crypto-Jews (some of whom even joined the ranks of the clergy), genuine Christians, sceptics, those who occupied an intermediate position between one or another of these groups, and those who simply did not know³³. What is certain is that through the *conversos* there ran deep a latent undercurrent of "sociological Judaism", which should not be confused with strictly religious Judaism. Baptism did not automatically entail the abandonment of the habits of a Jewish lifetime, whether culinary, sartorial and so on; neither did the *conversos* cease to have relatives and friends who remained faithful to Judaism. It was as difficult to break off relations with one's friends and acquaintances, as it was to give up one's language³⁴. Many *conversos* had to answer for their "Jewish customs" to the Inquisition³⁵. According to their statements, when they wore clean clothes on Saturdays, lit candles on Friday nights, removed the fat from meat or ate unleavened bread, they were following a tradition that they had seen in their homes since childhood, and were repeating what their mothers had taught them. Home was therefore the bastion of the cultural resistance, where the women played a fundamental role³⁶.

With the aid of the accusations and proceedings of the Courts of the Inquisition, it is possible to trace the *conversos'* long journey towards integration and assimilation. Generally, the first to opt for integration into Christian society were the male offspring

of Jewish families. Their decision was not so much a matter of belief as survival, owing to the social and economic pressures they were subjected to, as mentioned above. Once converted, they would put all their energy into the attainment of wealth, either by adopting a trade or craft, or by occupying middle-ranking posts as notaries or scribes in civic institutions³⁷, posts which opened up to them the prospect of securing positions of influence. Once their sons had met with success, the parents would often decided to convert, more with a view to supporting their offspring than out of any voluntary wish to change religion. In such cases assimilation was difficult because conversion had been undertaken for social reasons at the request of their male offspring³⁸.

Netanyahu provides an excellent account of the situation encountered by those who “crossed the [religious] divide under false pretences” insofar as “by doing so they also crossed other frontiers: those of society and of culture... conversion acted as a passport to Christian society in Spain, and once inside they did not want to leave... they wished to remain inside. That wish, together with despair over the future of Jewry and the religious crisis generated by all that had happened, combined to produce the particularly odd outcome of the collapse of Jewish resistance on all fronts, including the religious one”³⁹.

The toughest question of all was how to achieve assimilation, for it is true that the general tendency of the convert was to become integrated in the majority even if that jeopardised his original identity. There can be no denying the fact that, from the outset, despite being fraught with difficulties, the fusion of the New Christians with the Old got under way slowly but surely⁴⁰ and that the manifold economic activities of the *conversos* secured their integration into the Christian society of the Crown of Castile. Indeed, those Jews who converted to Christianity soon discovered that their new religious condition opened countless doors that had previously been closed to them.

Antonio Collantes has demonstrated how, in 1396, the most buoyant sector for *converso* activity in Seville was that of the artisans, although there were also New Christian municipal tax-collectors or moneychangers⁴¹; in his study of various cities under the Crown of Castile, particularly cities in Andalusia, Miguel Ángel Ladero concludes that most New Christians were artisans, followed by tradesmen, moneychangers, tax-collectors and civil servants,⁴² and in Cuenca, as well as being weavers and tradesmen of note, they monopolised the occupations of moneychanger⁴³ and tax-collector⁴⁴. María Pilar Rábade has reached similar conclusions in connection with *conversos* during the reign of the Catholic Kings: there were many artisans, working above all in textiles, tradesmen, financiers, health professionals and clergymen⁴⁵.

The story is also familiar of how certain groups of first-wave *conversos*, who were the best educated and wealthiest, rubbed shoulders with the influential elites of many cities. The families of the old *regidores* (aldermen) of the cities of Castile were soon accompanied by *converso* families seeking integration within Old Christian clans with a view to building up a renewed power base that would be much more adroit and effective than before. In many of these cities, in addition to making up the main core of the ur-

ban patrician class, the *conversos* managed to ascend to the lower ranks of knighthood, a case in point being mid-15th-century Cuenca⁴⁶. Not only that, many New Christians also achieved important posts at the kingdom-wide level, both in the royal court and in the Catholic Church. Diego Arias Dávila, for example, member of an important *converso* family from Segovia, ended up as Enrique IV of Castile's *contador mayor* (Keeper of the Purse), while *converso* Pablo de Santa María became Bishop of Burgos⁴⁷.

The successful integration of so many New Christians and their rapid rise to prosperity provoked the ire of the Old Christians who, otherwise unable to account for such good fortune, attributed it to the black arts. Under these circumstances, hostility grew. The mounting spirit of rejection in the second half of the 15th century was justified on the pretext of religious zeal. The Old Christians concealed their hatred of the New beneath claims that their antagonism was solely the result of outrage at the religious attitudes displayed by the *conversos*, who in many cases practised their ancestral religion openly, thus becoming crypto-Jews or Judaisers⁴⁸.

THE VIOLENCE BEGINS

The first anti-*converso* uprising occurred in Toledo in 1449. When King Juan II's all-powerful favourite, Álvaro de Luna, introduced a new tax, the New Christian tax-collectors became the target for violence. The commander of the city's *Alcázar* and royal steward, Pero Sarmiento, led the protest and took advantage of the situation to confront the city's New Christians, who had risen to positions of prominence in the city at the expense of many Old Christian families⁴⁹. These serious events in Toledo ushered in a qualitative change in the relations between Old and New Christians. The rift opened up between the two groups signalled the start of a process which would lead to the exclusion of those Jews who, after baptism, had enjoyed the same rights as the other members of Christian society and had sought to merge into that society. It also anticipated the sort of violence, coloured by social and political protest, that the *conversos* would be subjected to throughout the 15th century⁵⁰. As Carrete Parrondo has shown, after the revolt in Toledo, tension increased on three levels: a) between Jews and *conversos*; b) between first-wave New Christians and the more recent converts; and c) between the bulk of the Old Christians and those who had converted from Judaism⁵¹. Whichever level we are concerned with, the basic problem was undoubtedly the difficulties of inserting the New Christians into the mechanisms of Christian society. The hardest question of all was still how to achieve assimilation.

Representing the local governing Old Christian aristocracy, Pero Sarmiento had taken advantage of the social unrest among the popular classes to organise the revolt; as he himself explained in a missive to the king, it had been sparked by the decision to entrust the *conversos* with the job of collecting the royal taxes, a job which brought them huge economic benefits. But what really lay behind the revolt was the New Christian challenge to the traditional local oligarchies, as is clear from the famous *Sentencia-Estatuto* promulgated by Sarmiento in 1449⁵². This Sentence-Statute decreed the removal of

conversos from public office, and as such served as a precedent for the Purity of Blood Statutes. It was also a major step in the transformation of traditional anti-Judaism into anti-Semitism, as questions of ethnicity rather than religion became the criterion for segregation. Despite conversion, New Christians were still regarded as Jews in all their perversity. This radical change in attitude was grounded in the suspicion that the Jews remained faithful to their former religion and tradition, thus ruling out any possibility of proper integration into Christian society; they were guilty of heresy, and heresy was becoming the catchword⁵³. The same *Sentencia* also attributed the traditional Jewish strategies of astuteness and trickery to the New Christians: the *conversos*, asserted the *Sentencia*, “have taken over, oppressed, robbed, and strangled all the age-old houses and properties of the Old Christians in this city [Toledo] and their land and jurisdiction, and all the kingdoms of Castile”⁵⁴. Another text of the same date written by Marcos García Mora accused the New Christians of “sucking the blood and sweat of the poor Christian race through usury”⁵⁵.

From this point on, in an atmosphere charged at best with ambivalence, at worst with aggression, the *conversos* were painted in colours that bore little resemblance to their social reality. The Crown had been the ultimate target of the anger that had precipitated the revolt in Toledo and, fearful of the accusations of heresy that were being flung about on all sides, refrained from demanding explanations for the uprising. Thenceforth, the urban milieu was at the mercy of its own contradictions with attitudes towards the “*converso* problem” serving to express the differences between families and factions in conflict with each other for municipal power⁵⁶.

The mid-century outbreak of violence directed by Old Christians at the New highlighted the problem of integration, the central topic of the anti-*converso* propaganda campaign, which became increasingly intense in its attempts to justify the exclusion measures. The propaganda machine had been set in motion in the wake of the massive spate of conversions after the 1391 pogroms, but it really got into gear after the events in Toledo in 1449; and in the difficult context of Castile, where the search for a scapegoat was exacerbated by severe economic hardship that affected broad sectors of the population, it was soon to go into overdrive. The *converso* question was not a problem of law but of opinion, and the arguments deployed were the same as had been used in preceding centuries against the Jews. In 1449, Marcos García Mora wrote of the *conversos* in the so-called *Memorial de Marquillos*:

They were found to *judaise* and to observe all the Jewish ceremonies, fasting on all the fast days prescribed by Mosaic law, respecting the Sabbath and working on Sundays and holy days, eating meat when they ought not during Lent and on other days set aside by the Church... saying and doing many foul, heretical things, to the great detriment of our Catholic faith.

The same author argued against tolerance on the grounds that it “corrupts” and that “whoever shows patience towards the criminals [*conversos*] by tolerating them or omitting to punish them, is guilty of mortal sin because he leads into sin not only the good but also the evil”⁵⁷. The polemic reached its most virulent pitch in Fray Alonso de la Espina’s *Fortalitium fidei* (1459), which compiled all the arguments that had been for-

mulated in earlier centuries to prove the perversity of the Jews. As the propagators of heretical doctrines which could infiltrate Christian society and prevent the *conversos* from fully espousing Christian doctrine, the Jews should be expelled, he argued. Following in the same track as the Italian Franciscan Bernadino da Feltré⁵⁸, de la Espina's narration of dark happenings in Germany and Italy struck a chord in Castile, where accusations of ritual crimes and the profanation of hosts were rife. Enrique IV's reaction in the face of such arguments was to ask the Pope to appoint inquisitors to monitor the orthodoxy of the New Christians⁵⁹. However, Rome refused the petition, deeming any such request the prerogative of the Pontiff himself. Thus Enrique IV's initiative proved abortive and the "*converso* problem" remained unsolved⁶⁰. But the king's ideas were later to provide the starting-point for those who wished to create the Inquisitorial Courts at the end of the 15th century.

The arguments that sustained anti-*converso* propaganda reflected a state of opinion that was widespread among Old Christians and had its origins in the repulsion they felt towards the New Christians. As Rábade has demonstrated, these virulent arguments hinged on a series of topics and prejudices that had been present in earlier texts from the mid-century, such as Pero Sarmiento's *Sentencia*. These commonplaces included, amongst other things, the accusation that the *conversos* were guilty of crypto-Judaism, the image of the Jews as the cunning rivals of the Old Christians, the denunciation of the close and often illicit relationships they maintained with their former co-religionists, the Jews, and the corruption that inevitably derived from the Jewish blood coursing through their veins.

The counter-attack from those aiming to legitimise New Christian integration within Christian society was not long in coming⁶¹. From the mid-15th century, pro-*converso* propaganda devised its own arguments in rebuttal. Here, too, the central theme was the problem of integration. The charge of crypto-Judaism was brushed aside and the slur on Jewish blood dismissed, while Old Christian animosity towards the *conversos* was criticised and the discriminatory measures implemented against them rejected⁶². In this regard, there was a particularly heated doctrinal debate over the moral justification and convenience or otherwise of socially segregating the New Christians. In relation to the discriminatory attitudes of some Old Christians towards the *conversos*, Alonso de Cartagena, in his *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, stated, "I cannot understand why anyone who has converted and become a Christian should therefore have so erred or committed sin that he must receive such punishment as to be abused and scorned by God and, more precisely, this [Catholic] faith"⁶³. Lope Barrientos criticised the discriminatory measures and argued that the *converso* should "be treated more honourably, be more frequently applied to and accepted, and awarded both civil and ecclesiastical office, including all positions that he is ready and willing to do"⁶⁴. As for Juan de Torquemada, in his *Tratado* opposing anti-*converso* discrimination, he declared that "the invention of differences among the faithful is to be condemned" on the grounds that "even when there are found among Christians those who are not thinking about Christ but about the race of birth or the time of conversion, they are more similar to

those whom the Apostle represented as disintegrators of the body of Christ⁶⁵. The arguments of Fray Hernando de Talavera ran along similar lines⁶⁶.

The *converso* problem was not only conceived in doctrinal terms, although, as Netanyahu has pointed out, when used as weapons of destruction, the laws of religion promised the best chance of success⁶⁷. Domínguez Ortiz believes that the conflict between New and Old Christians stemmed from the two interrelated problems – what was undeniably a religious confrontation on the one hand and an equally significant social struggle on the other⁶⁸. For this reason the socio-economic motives are fundamental to any understanding of the conflict.

Equated as they were with the former Jewish minority on account of their involvement in tax-collecting and usury, the *conversos* were tarred with the same brush as the Jews and regarded as the economic oppressors of the Christian population; the only difference was that, from the time of their integration, they now competed on an equal footing. This was why their exclusion had to be achieved at any cost. Many texts in the 15th-century *Crónicas* of Castile shed light on this point⁶⁹. Writing of the outbreak of violence against the converted Jews of Córdoba in 1473, Diego de Valera (*Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*) ascribed Old Christian animosity towards the New to the fact that the latter “were very rich and were often seen to buy official positions which they then flaunted with exceeding pride”⁷⁰. Alonso de Palencia (*Crónica de Enrique IV*) described the *conversos* as individuals who have “made themselves extraordinarily rich by strange arts, who are very proud, and who have the arrogance to aspire to public office once they have attained the order of gentlemen thanks to their money, which they have acquired quite illegally, even though they are of lowly extraction and accustomed to the meanest duties”⁷¹. Andrés Bernáldez, the priest of Los Palacios (*Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*), claimed that, “in a short period [the *conversos*] had accumulated great wealth and property because they had no qualms about lending at interest and usury”. According to the same chronicler, because “some mixed with the sons and daughters of Old Christian gentlemen”, they managed to remove all trace of their Jewish past, even if it was an alleged *converso* trait to boast of their great wealth. Elsewhere, Bernáldez mentions that the converted Jews were all merchants, salesmen, moneylenders, pawnbrokers, silversmiths, weavers, or practised other craft occupations, before permitting himself the jibe that none of them were labourers, builders, or carpenters, but that they only sought jobs which enabled them to earn a lot of money in exchange for little work⁷².

The opinions of the chroniclers reflect hostility towards the *conversos*, which was widespread among the popular classes of urban Christians. More particularly, they show us the problems encountered by the newly baptised when it came to assimilation in a Christian society torn apart by conflicting interests. The accusations of unfair competition and the barring of the *conversos* from entry into the brotherhoods and guilds on the grounds of alleged *judaising* largely resulted from the Old Christian desire to protect their own interests against the incoming New Christians.

The acts of aggression perpetrated against the *conversos*, which were the order of the day in the 1460s and 70s, were frequently associated with the confrontations organised by different factions of the nobility and the monarchy, or with the struggle between rival parties for political control in the cities, for hatred of the New Christians was used as a weapon in these skirmishes⁷³. But, as Valdeón has pointed out, the terrain had been prepared by the difficult years from 1465 to 1473, which were blighted by plague, shortages and price rises following a series of poor harvests⁷⁴. Alonso de Palencia's *Crónica de Enrique IV* describes the 1467 stand-off in Toledo between "Old Christians", under the captaincy of the Ayalas, and the "New Christians", led by the Silvas. The same chronicle also gathers together various reports about anti-*converso* disturbances in Andalusia in 1473, particularly violent in Carmona and Córdoba⁷⁵, and about "Old Christian" aggressions towards the *conversos* in Ciudad Real in 1474. When a group of nobles rose up against Enrique IV, one of their chief recriminations was his failure to find a solution to the question of the *conversos*⁷⁶. Ladero explains this problem well:

In the long-term, this use of the *converso* issue as a political tool helped transform it into a matter of public order, whereby everyone had to respect the sovereign capacity of the crown to perform justice with the aid of the instruments of law and there was to be no tolerance of any disturbances which might damage the image of regal authority. The influence of this idea on the birth of the Inquisition should not be overlooked⁷⁷.

Thus assimilation was not an easy process, since it depended on a heterogeneous group of factors. Regardless of the more or less traumatic personal experiences of the Jews when it came to deciding on conversion, the *converso* communities were prey to countless tensions born of the mistrust and suspicion of the Old Christian majority, which became most virulent when dealing with the religious problem⁷⁸.

THE SEARCH FOR A TOTAL SOLUTION

All the circumstances and events that had taken place in Castile and Leon since 1391 led inexorably to the measures adopted in the last third of the 15th century, which totally excluded the *conversos*. On their accession to the throne after a new civil war in Castile, the Catholic monarchs enjoyed the backing of some of the leading figures in the Castilian Jewish and New Christian communities, who thought that they represented the best hopes for social peace. They believed that a strong monarchy could stamp out the violence that had been unleashed against them⁷⁹, while in fact, royal protection of the Jews was due to firm political resolution rather than to any sympathy towards them. The monarchs actually regarded the Jews as constituting a threat to the Christian faith, especially to that of the *conversos*, so, while the Jews were officially *tolerated*, rigorous measures were implemented to ensure their progressive isolation⁸⁰.

Indeed, it would not be long before things took a turn for the worse for the New Christians. The spectre of heresy had appeared in the midst of the anti-*converso* furore and it cast an increasingly long shadow. After an inspection of the Ciudad Real diocese in 1475, the Archbishop of Toledo, Alonso de Carrillo, came to the conclusion that the

conversos were clandestine Judaisers and that arguments in favour of harsh measures to contain them were justified. However, the Archbishop's findings were also politically motivated, for many of Ciudad Real's New Christians had taken sides against Isabel of Castile in the civil war that had ushered in the reign of the Catholic monarchs⁸¹.

On their journey around Andalusia, undertaken in order to set the seal on its pacification, the monarchs came to realise the full extent of crypto-Judaism and the degree to which it had taken root among the *conversos*. At the same time, they became aware of crypto-Judaism's capacity to cause major breakdowns in public order, with all the political consequences that that implied⁸². The monarchs faced the problem with their usual energy and adopted the solution of establishing in their domains a new Inquisition adapted to the new times and new needs⁸³. In 1478 Pope Sixtus IV issued a bull consenting to the establishment of the Inquisition, and in 1480 the Catholic monarchs ordered it to be put into practice. It commenced activities in Seville⁸⁴. Thus the most intransigent postures had finally triumphed, and heresy, the principal crime against the Catholic faith, became a weapon which would complicate even more the social and political conflict that surrounded and hindered the full integration of the *conversos*⁸⁵.

The Spanish Inquisition has received a great deal of attention from historians, and there have been many views regarding its origin and nature. All interpretations have attempted to explain what really drove the Catholic monarchs to this extreme, whether social pressure, the stimulus of doctrinal debate, or the birth of the "modern state"⁸⁶. The Inquisition that was set in motion by the Catholic monarchs was somewhat different from its namesake, which had been functioning in various countries of Christian Europe throughout the Middle Ages⁸⁷. In its new form in Castile and León, it was now under direct royal command and dependent solely on the State, despite being created by the Pope. Accordingly, some scholars identify the Inquisition with the Spanish monarchy and regard it as an instrument of political power wielded by Isabel and Ferdinand⁸⁸, who made Christianity their distinguishing mark and source of legitimacy. Thus the Crown identified itself with the Christian creed and the Inquisition was a defence against whoever attacked that identity or attempted to disrupt the uniformity that the Crown sought to impose on its kingdoms⁸⁹. As for the Church, it had decided upon the strategy of supporting the strictest orthodoxy in Castile and León. The political class, for its part, deferred to the ecclesiastical hierarchy in this regard and agreed to act as executor of the sentences passed by the courts of the Inquisition⁹⁰.

Doctrinal debate regarding the *conversos* had reached the conclusion that an inquisition was necessary. The anti-*conversos*, who insisted on regarding *conversos* and Jews as one and the same thing, aimed to wipe out the *converso* community with the best available weapons; the pro-*conversos*, who advocated non-discrimination on the grounds of their ancestry, nevertheless accepted that judaising Christians had to be punished in order to safeguard those who had embraced their new faith with sincerity and to keep them from the pernicious influence of the Jews, their erstwhile co-religionists. As a result, both anti- and pro-*conversos* viewed the Inquisition as a suitable instrument for cleansing the Christian community⁹¹.

The Inquisition had no authority over the Jews; only those Christians who failed to comply righteously with their beliefs lay within its reach. But in the context of radical anti-Judaism, which had seen its birth, the Inquisition was nonetheless a threat for the Jews. For Maurice Kreigel, the Inquisition was an instrument of the “new anti-Semitism”, the response of Old Christians to the rapid rise and integration of the *conversos* in society, which in its turn was all part of “a plan hatched by [*conversos*] and Jews to overrun Spain or destroy her from within”. The anti-Semites were not content with marginalizing Jews and *conversos* but desired their complete annihilation. The Inquisition, too, “hoped at one and the same time to destroy the *conversos* and eliminate the Jews”⁹².

Netanyahu has written of the Inquisition’s racist component: “the fight against the *Jewish race*”, he tells us, “was considered a fight against a foreign *nation* which had usurped the place of the true sons of the nation and had therefore to be defeated or wiped out”. In his opinion, therefore, the Holy Office was not created to eradicate heresy (since by this time the *conversos* had practically assimilated the Christian religion), but to “uproot the New Christians from the midst of the Spanish people”. Thus, for Netanyahu, the charges of judaizing, which the Inquisition brought against the *conversos*, were fabrications and calumnies⁹³.

The Inquisition was the last stage in the process of implementing discriminatory measures to impede the assimilation of those who had opted for integration. And it was enacted with great severity; in Seville, between 1481 and 1488, some seven hundred “heretics” were burnt to death⁹⁴. The Inquisitors collected countless testimonies regarding crypto-Judaism among the *conversos* and decided that the only effective measure to solve the problem was to avoid contact between New Christians and Jews. The drastic step taken in the 1480s of shutting up Jews and *Mudéjares* (Muslim people living under Christian rule) in separate neighbourhoods to keep them apart from the Christians, and other discriminatory measures, had not had the desired effect, so, after the Inquisition had ordered partial expulsions of the Jews from Andalusia, on 31 March 1492, the Catholic monarchs approved the decree expelling all those who did not convert to Christianity from their Spanish kingdoms⁹⁵ (cf. Rita Ríos and Luisa Trindade’s contributions in this volume).

The main purpose of the Expulsion Order was to sever communication between New Christians and Jews in order to weaken the pro-Jewish sympathies of many *conversos*, and it was an idea that convinced many who did not share the anti-Semitic opinions of the inquisitors⁹⁶. The aim was not to exterminate an ethno-religious community but to coerce its members into accepting baptism as a means of facilitating absorption and the merger of two communities, which would have equal rights and duties within the dominant religion. Thus the Decree’s homogenising ambition was a quest for the assimilation that had not yet been achieved⁹⁷. And it was to be frustrated. If anything, the Expulsion Order only worsened relations between Old and New Christians. The number of *conversos* increased in hitherto unknown proportions, since the Jews preferred conversion to Christianity to emigration with all the associated difficulties of

adaptation to the political, social and economic realities of the territory of their destination (even if this might make their future return possible once baptised)⁹⁸. By the start of the 16th century, when the reign of the Catholic monarchs was drawing to a close, there were more than 300,000 *conversos* in Spain, equivalent to between five and six percent of the total population⁹⁹. These rocketing conversions in the wake of the Expulsion Order fuelled suspicion regarding the New Christians' religious orthodoxy. As a result, the Inquisition's ongoing labours seemed more necessary than ever¹⁰⁰. At the same time, the Old Christians stepped up their hostility and strengthened measures to exclude the New. Just when it looked as though the Jewish question had been solved once and for all in Spain, the *converso* problem ensured that the foundations were laid for its ongoing survival into the modern age¹⁰¹.

A further stage on the road to total exclusion was the Purity of Blood Statutes, which arose out of the anti-Semitism that had been mounting since the mid-15th century. These Statutes, conceived at the end of 15th century but not generally extended until the 16th century, made membership of a family which had never mixed with members of other religions a requisite for admission to civil service and ecclesiastical positions, military orders and higher education¹⁰². This requisite appeared in the Constitutions of the University of Alcalá, founded by Cardinal Cisneros in 1499¹⁰³. Taken together, the Inquisition and the Purity of Blood Statutes constituted the most restrictive measure to which the Old Christians resorted in order to hinder *converso* integration in Christian society; ultimately, they paved the way for the complete elimination of the New Christians¹⁰⁴.

In contrast to events in other countries such as Portugal, where the *conversos* established themselves as a socio-religious group, in the period between the accession of the Catholic monarchs and the *Guerra de las Comunidades*, the Castilian New Christians "crumbled" under the Inquisition's attacks¹⁰⁵. After the death of Isabel in 1504, a sizeable group of *conversos* tried to secure the collaboration of Philip of Hapsburg and his followers with a view to limiting the discriminatory Purity of Blood Statutes and modifying the Inquisition, which was receiving increasing criticism from a large sector of the population¹⁰⁶. But the failure of the *Revolución Comunera* in 1520 dashed all their hopes. Charles V himself adopted measures against the *conversos* in his milieu, accusing them of all the heresies that were rampant in Europe, and Cortes requested their exclusion from municipal office. As a consequence the *conversos* followed the strategy that had been worked out in the closing decades of the previous century; that is to say, they eluded the Inquisition by renouncing their Jewish customs, changing their occupation, address and surnames, and marrying into Old Christian families. The result was that their identity faded gradually away¹⁰⁷.

CONCLUSIONS

Related to the topic of this chapter – conversion, assimilation and discrimination – I have described the path to conversion taken, sometimes forcibly, by the Jewish minority

in Castile and Leon during Middle Ages, the process of integration and their desire to assimilate into Christian society. While many Jews became sincere Christians, others agreed to be baptised out of fear, and continued to practise their old religion in private. The exclusion measures imposed upon the Jews from 14th century stimulated the number of conversions.

In the Castile of the 15th century, the problem was that of *conversos*. The events that unfolded during this period show the difficulties that they faced in being accepted by the Christian majority. Their economic and social successes provoked resentment from the Old Christians, who considered them rivals, while the conflict between the two groups focused on religious issues. In order to restrict their access to public office, the New Christians were accused of practising their old religion. At the same time, the anti-*conversos* propagandists accused them of heresy. The idea took root that the Jews had to be separated from *conversos* in order to prevent unwanted influences. The process of rejection of the converted Jews can be divided into different chronological stages, related to the economic crisis, social problems, dynastic changes and the struggle for power in the cities of Castile during 15th century.

I have analysed the efforts of the *conversos* to assimilate to their new religious partners, and the numerous obstacles that stood in their way, the most radical of which were the Inquisition and the Purity of Blood Statutes.

NOTES

- ¹ See the Clioh's Workshop publication, C. Lévai, V. Vese (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Historical Perspective*, Pisa 2003.
- ² E. Benito Ruano, *El mito histórico de las "Tres Culturas"*, in "Tópicos y realidades de la Edad Media", 2004, III, pp. 11-25.
- ³ F. García Fitz, *Las minorías religiosas y la tolerancia en la Edad Media hispánica: ¿Mito o realidad?*, in A. García Sanjuán (ed.), *III Jornadas de cultura islámica sobre Tolerancia y convivencia en la península ibérica durante la Edad Media*, Huelva 2003, p.23.
- ⁴ E. Benito Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, Barcelona 1976.
- ⁵ J. Valdeón Baroque, *Judíos y conversos en la Castilla Medieval*, Valladolid 2000, pp. 100-103.
- ⁶ J. Contreras, *Judíos, judaizantes y conversos en la Península ibérica en tiempos de la Expulsión*, in A. Alcalá (ed.), *Judíos, sefarditas, conversos. La expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias*, Valladolid 1995, p.458.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.457-459.
- ⁸ M.P. Rábade Obradó, *Judeoconversos e Inquisición*, in J.M. Nieto Soria (ed.), *Orígenes de la monarquía hispánica: propaganda y legitimación*, Madrid 1999, pp. 239-240.
- ⁹ E. Cantera Montenegro, *Judíos medievales. Convivencia y persecución*, in E. Benito Ruano (ed.), *Tópicos y realidades de la Edad Media I*, Madrid 2000, pp. 203-204.
- ¹⁰ J. Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, I, Madrid 1978, p. 104.
- ¹¹ J. Valdeón Baroque, *Cristianos, musulmanes y judíos en la España medieval. De la aceptación al rechazo*, Valladolid 2004.
- ¹² Cantera, *Judíos cit.*, pp. 209-217.
- ¹³ J.M. Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución de un conflicto social: el antisemitismo en la Corona de Castilla*

- en la *Baja Edad Media*, Madrid 1985.
- ¹⁴ R. Llull, *Liber predicationis contra judeos*, ed. J. Ma Millás Vallicrosa, Madrid 1957.
- ¹⁵ Cantera, *Judíos medievales* cit., p. 215.
- ¹⁶ J. Valdeón Baroque, *Los judíos de Castilla y la revolución Trastámara*, Valladolid 1968.
- ¹⁷ Valdeón Baroque, *Judíos y conversos* cit., pp. 67-69.
- ¹⁸ F. Suárez Bilbao, *Cristianos contra judíos y conversos*, in *Conflictos sociales, políticos e intelectuales en la España de los siglos XIV y XV*, "XIV Semana de Estudios Medievales", 4-8 agosto 2003, Nájera 2004, pp. 452-454.
- ¹⁹ Cantera, *Judíos medievales* cit., p. 225.
- ²⁰ E. Mitre, *Los judíos de Castilla en tiempo de Enrique III. El pogrom de 1391*, Valladolid 1994.
- ²¹ Valdeón Baroque, *Judíos y conversos* cit., pp. 70-75.
- ²² M. Antón, *Teoría y evolución de un conflicto social* cit., pp. 256-258.
- ²³ Mitre, *Los judíos de Castilla* cit., p. 95 and 50-63.
- ²⁴ Benito Ruano, *Los orígenes* cit.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- ²⁶ Valdeón Baroque, *Judíos y conversos*, cit., pp. 85-90.
- ²⁷ P. Cátedra, *Sermones, sociedad y literatura. San Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411-1412)*, Salamanca 1994.
- ²⁸ Dispute of Tortosa in A. Pacios (ed.), *La Disputa de Tortosa*, 2 v., Madrid - Barcelona 1957.
- ²⁹ Contreras, *Judíos* cit., p. 461.
- ³⁰ M.P. Rábade Obradó, *Religiosidad y práctica religiosa entre los conversos castellanos (1483-1507)*, in "Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia", CXCIV-1, 1997, p. 86.
- ³¹ Contreras, *Judíos* cit., p. 467.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 469-470.
- ³³ Rábade Obradó, *Religiosidad y práctica religiosa* cit., pp. 89-96.
- ³⁴ Valdeón Baroque, *Judíos y conversos* cit., pp. 98-99.
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- ³⁶ M.J. de la Fuente, *Velos y desvelos. Cristianas, musulmanas y judías en la España medieval*, Madrid 2006, pp. 13-15.
- ³⁷ F. Márquez Villanueva, *Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV*, in "Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos", 1957, 63, pp. 503-540.
- ³⁸ Contreras, *Judíos* cit., pp.467-468.
- ³⁹ B. Netanyahu, *¿Motivos o pretextos? La razón de la Inquisición*, in A. Alcalá (ed.), *Inquisición española y mentalidad social*, Barcelona 1984, pp. 32-44.
- ⁴⁰ Márquez Villanueva, *Conversos y cargos concejiles* cit., p. 535.
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- ⁴² M.A. Ladero Quesada, *Judeoconversos andaluces en el siglo XV*, in *Actas del III Coloquio de Historia Medieval Andaluza*, 1984, pp. 27-55.
- ⁴³ M.D.Cabañas González, *Notas sobre los monederos de Cuenca en el siglo XV*, in "En la España medieval. Revista de la Universidad Complutense", 1982, 2, pp. 183-210.
- ⁴⁴ M.D. Cabañas González, *Ciudad, mercado y municipio en Cuenca durante la Edad Media*, in "En la España medieval. Revista de la Universidad Complutense", 1985, 7, pp. 1701-1728.
- ⁴⁵ M.P. Rábade Obradó, *Los judeoconversos en la corte y la época de los Reyes Católicos*, Madrid 1990.

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SOURCES

Sentence-Statute by Pero Sarmiento. Toledo, 5 June 1449 (E. Benito Ruano, *Los orígenes del problema converso*, Barcelona 1976. Appendix pp. 87 and 89-90).

E por quanto muy gran parte de conversos de esta cibdad, descendientes del linaje de los judíos de ella se prueba e pareció e parece evidente, ser personas muy sospechosas en la santa fe cathólica de tener e creer grandísimos errores contra los artículos de la santa fe cathólica, guardando los ritos e ceremonias de la ley vieja....debemos declarar e declaramos pronunciar e pronunciamos e constituimos e ordenamos e mandamos que todos los dichos conversos descendientes del perverso linaje de los judíos, en cualquier guisa que sea, así por virtud del derecho canónico y civil que contra ellos determina sobre las cosas suso declaradas...como por razón de las herejías e otros delitos, insultos, sediciones e crímenes por ellos fasta hoy cometidos e perpetrados, de que suso se hace mención, sean habidos e tenidos por inhábiles, incapaces e indignos para haber todo oficio público e privado en la ciudad de Toledo, y en su tierra, término y jurisdicción, con el cual puedan tener señorío en los cristianos viejos en la santa fe católica de nuestro Señor Jesucristo creyentes, facerles daños e injurias, e así mismo ser infames, inhábiles, incapaces para dar testimonio e fe como escribanos públicos o como testigos, y especialmente en esta ciudad.

[Because it is proved and evident that a great part of the converted people of this city, who come from the Jewish lineage, are found very suspicious by the Catholic faith for having and believing in very big religious errors against the rules of the Catholic faith, and they keep the rites and ceremonies of the old law ... we must declare, and pass sentence, and order, and prescribe that all of the so named converted people coming from the wicked Jewish lineage will be in any way considered incapacitated and unworthy for working in all kind of

public and private employment in the city of Toledo, and in its land, county and jurisdiction, if these employments mean to rule the old Christian people, who are believers in the Catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, or to damage or insult the Christians, according to the canon and civil laws, which legislate against them about the things above explained ... and also due to the heresies and other offences, insults, seditions and crimes that they have committed and perpetrated until now, so it is mentioned above. They will be also considered wicked, inept and incapacitated for testifying and certifying as notaries or witnesses, and especially in this city.]