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**The Secret Jews of Spain, Portugal, and Southern Italy:
Past and Present Effects of the Inquisition**

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Jews, Catholics, and Converts: Reassessing the Resilience of Convivencia in Fifteenth Century Plasencia, Spain

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A systematic reappraisal of fifteenth century Jewish and Christian convivencia, or coexistence, is long overdue because within it resides a hidden history of cooperation among Old Christians, *conversos*, and Jews. Utilizing a historiographical lens to evaluate interfaith relations in several Castilian and Aragonese communities, one finds a broader range of communal outcomes than is traditionally acknowledged. New findings pertaining to the cohesive collaboration and intertwined relations of Jews, *conversos*, and Old Christians in the Extremaduran city of Plasencia refute the long-held assumption that Jews and Christians were routinely segregated from one another and corrects the misguided belief that the converso Santa María family persecuted former co-religionists. This study reveals the previously unknown strategic partnership of the converso Santa María and Old Christian Carvajal family in Plasencia and its role in maintaining medieval norms of interreligious cooperation.

Introduction

Since the publication of the seminal works of José Amador de los Ríos (1876a), Henry Charles Lea (1922), and Yitzhak Baer (1961), to name a few, the history of Jewish and Christian interrelations in Spain during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries has remained largely unchallenged.



**Roger Louis
Martinez**

These fathers of Sephardic historiography critically evaluated the devastation inflicted upon Jewish communities (*juderías* or *aljamas*) during the notorious anti-Jewish riots of the 1390s, which first formed in Sevilla and then gusted across Spain over the course of several years. These historians contributed immeasurably to our understanding of how Jews were systematically targeted for persecution and murder, and their *juderías* for eventual dismantlement, during the fifteenth century. De los Ríos argued that “the horrid butchering that occurred in the Spanish *juderías* during the year 1391 was a vast conspiracy that had as its objective their total annihilation; however it was a conspiracy made in the light of day and proposed with vehement desire” (pp. 349-350).

After the Christians’ attacks transpired in Sevilla, Henry Charles Lea (1922) assessed that, “In the paralysis of public authority...one city after another followed

the example; the *Juderías* [sic] were sacked, the Jews that would not submit to baptism were slain and fanaticism and cupidity held their orgies unchecked" (p. 107). It is estimated that as many as 100,000 Jews were killed, 100,000 converted to Christianity, and another 100,000 fled to Muslim territories or went into hiding (Gerber, 1992, p. 113; Roth, 2002, p. 33). Perhaps due to the incontrovertible historical evidence of the particular horrors exacted upon Jews such as those who resided in the cities of Sevilla, Córdoba, and Valencia, as well as the distastefulness of the issues, this difficult era in Spanish history continues to be victimized by uniformly negative assumptions about Jewish and Christian coexistence (Baer, 1961, pp. 97, 100-101). For example, Benzion Netanyahu (1995) reduces and summarizes the era by writing that the losses of Spain's Jews in 1391:

...far surpassed those the Jews had borne elsewhere [in Europe]... Within two or three years from 1391, Spain's Jewish community, the largest in the world, was reduced by nearly one third—in both geographic and numerical terms, the greatest catastrophe that had hitherto befallen European Jewry (p. 127).

In short, such authoritative statements have all too often subjugated the granularity, richness, and complexity of interreligious relations in the first half of the fifteenth century to these universalistic tendencies in Sephardic historiography. While David Nirenberg's influential work, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (1996), contributed to the study of intolerance and interreligious competition, it does so for an earlier era—the 1300s—and almost exclusively for the Kingdom of Aragón and with a unitary emphasis on "violence." In truth, a systematic reappraisal of fifteenth century Jewish and Christian *convivencia*, or coexistence, is long overdue because within it resides a hidden history of cooperation and collaboration of Old Christians (*cristianos viejos*), Jewish converts to Christianity (*conversos*), and Jews. The idea of *convivencia*, a term coined by the Spanish historian Américo Castro in *Spain and Its History*, characterizes the cooperative and competitive tension bred by the commingling of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian peoples on the Iberian Peninsula. Castro's discussion of *convivencia* was an attempt to explain the nature of intercultural life in medieval Christian and Islamic Spain. For Castro, *convivencia* was more than the physical coexistence of these faith groups and included the productive tension, cooperation, and conflict produced by their interaction (Hillgarth, 1985, p. 33). *Convivencia* began to unravel in the Kingdoms of Castile and León and of Aragón during the riots of the 1390s.

It is more evident than ever that the past groundbreaking Sephardic historiographies of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries are overdue for recalibration in light of accumulating scholarly evidence that more comprehensively describes Jewish and Christian *convivencia* in individual Spanish communities during and after the 1390s. To address this endeavor, this article first presents a historiographical overview of the academic literature pertaining to Jews, *conversos*, and Old Christians in several Castilian and Aragónese communities.

Subsequently, this study uncovers new information and proposes new findings about Christian and Jewish communal relations in the Extremaduran city of



Map 1: Key Iberian cities of interest during the 1390s-1450s

Plasencia from the 1390s until the 1450s. It addresses and refutes two long-held historical assumptions pertaining to the physical separation of Jewish and Christian populations and the role of the converso Santa Maria family in the persecution of their former co-religionists. Further, this investigation reveals the previously undocumented strategic partnership of the converso Santa Maria and Old Christian Carvajal family in the city of Plasencia and the role it played in maintaining medieval norms of interreligious cooperation. Lastly, the evidence presented here identifies the likely origin of the long-held suspicion that the Carvajal family itself hailed from a hidden mixed Jewish and Christian lineage. Collectively this analysis of the Placentino community demonstrates that *convivencia* in the early fifteenth century was far more nuanced than acknowledged in the broader realm of Sephardic historiography.

Historiography of Jewish and Converso Communities: 1390-1450

A review of the scholarship pertaining to Jews and *conversos* in the cities of Astorga, Ávila, Cea, Córdoba, León, Lérída, Murcia, Salamanca, Sevilla, Toledo, and Valencia demonstrates there were multiple distinct and divergent communal outcomes from the 1390s through the 1450s (Map 1).

At one end of the continuum of destruction and survival of Jewish communi-

ties, Christians first segregated the Jewish population from themselves and subsequently murdered most of them in the riots of the 1390s. This was the fateful outcome of the Jewish quarters in cities such as Valencia and Salamanca. Francisco Danvila (1886) explains that as early as 1370 the Jews of Valencia were physically enclosed in their respective quarter of the city with the construction of stone walls so as to limit their interaction with Christians (p. 364). These barriers cut artificially through the city and carved up city blocks that housed Christian and Jewish families. Those inside the walls found themselves behind steel-reinforced wood gates that controlled the flow of people into and out of the *juderia* (p. 365).

In July of 1391 a massive wave of persecution and attacks visited the Jews of Valencia (p. 371). At this time, Danvila states “in order to inspire terror in the Hebrew people, Christians erected gallows in the plazas and streets near the *juderia*” (p. 371). Following these acts of intimidation, the Christians’ attacks began and Jews sought refuge in blockaded homes and in synagogues that were ultimately overwhelmed by the onslaught. As if “possessed by a satanic fury,” the Christians looted what they could and destroyed what they could not carry off (p. 374). Further, the Christians’ aggression turned into a murderous assault and within a short period hundreds of bodies of Jewish men, women, and children littered Valencia’s streets. Those Jews that survived the riots sought refuge in the close-by community of Morvedre. By 1394, Valencia’s Jewish quarter was deserted and its synagogues converted to churches (Meyerson, 2004, pp. 65, 109; Danvila, 1886, p. 379).

In other cities, such as Salamanca, tragedy arrived much later. Although the Salamanican Jews survived the anti-Jewish attacks of the 1390s, they were unable to escape Friar Vicente Ferrer’s aggressive proselytizing in the Kingdom of Castile and León in 1411 (Garganta and Forcada, 1956, pp. 172-173). Ferrer’s initiative brought about the dismantlement of the *juderia*, the conversion of most Jews, and the expulsion of those who would not convert (Roth, 2002, p. 67). Thus, cities such as Salamanca and Valencia represent the extreme negative in outcomes for Jewish communities.

In many ways, the Salamanican Jewry’s experience mimicked what transpired in Sevilla after 1391. Sevilla, the first town rocked by anti-Jewish violence, experienced extensive bloodshed and destruction. By 1412, most Jews there had converted to Christianity and the remaining numbers were initially confined to a neighborhood adjacent to the city’s Gate of Córdoba (Collantes de Teran Sanchez, 1977, p. 89). Additionally, city leaders moved *conversos* to other sections of the city to prevent them from routinely interacting with Jews. Subsequently in 1437, due to overcrowding, King Juan II granted some Jewish families permission to reside in other zones in the city (Collantes de Teran Sanchez, 1977, p. 90). Cumulatively, those outcomes signaled that the Jewish *aljama* was in severe distress after the 1430s.

After evaluating these findings for Sevilla, Valencia, and Salamanca, it is important to note that Jose Amador de los Ríos (1876a) states that Ferrer’s mission to convert Jews closely corresponded with Castile’s implementation of the anti-Jewish *Ordinances of Valladolid*, which Queen Mother Catalina and Prince Fernando of Antequera proposed in 1412 to regulate Jews (pp. 493-495). Ama-

dor de los Ríos argues that Bishop and Senior Chancellor Pablo de Santa María developed these policies as means to attack his former Jewish co-religionists; the ordinances focused primarily on limiting Jews' social and economic interaction with Christians and *conversos*, as well as moving Jews to separate neighborhoods (pp. 496-502). According to Yitzhak Baer (1961), Castilians implemented only two of the laws' provisions, "namely, the removal of Jews to separate quarters, and their exclusion from tax farming and from the service of the State and the court" (p. 169). Amador de los Ríos (1876b) proposes that both Pablo and his son, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María, were intent on "squeezing and reducing to sterility" the Jewish community in all parts of Castile" (pp. 12, 42). However, as the historical record in fifteenth century Plasencia demonstrates, Gonzalo and his family did not persecute their former Jewish brethren, but actively protected them in certain instances. Thus, the extent to which the Santa Marías were accomplices to Ferrer's ecclesiastical pursuit of the Jews must be re-evaluated. Likewise, Baer's certainty on the implementation of the *Ordinances of Valladolid* pertaining to the segregation of Jews into separate quarters appears to be inaccurate.

Another outcome of *juderías* is discernable from the city of Murcia. The Murcian Jews found themselves at first protected by their communities' leaders; however, they later were increasingly isolated from their Christian neighbors and under duress to convert. While Murcia did have a distinct Jewish quarter by 1266, Juan Torres Fontes (1981) argues that the boundaries of the community were difficult to ascertain because gates and walls did not enclose all of its sections (pp. 64-65). Further, Jews in Murcia reportedly "did not suffer any injuries" during the calamitous riots of the 1390s due to the intervention of Bishop Pedrosa who prevented an attack on the *juderia* (pp. 57-58, 68). Rather, the city was an "oasis of peace" and the city council actively pursued reclamations for Jews injured in the neighboring communities, such as Orihuela (p. 58). However, in 1392, the city council did express its concern about Jews' influence on Murcian *conversos* by ordering that no converso should live in or near the *aljama* and that no converso could enter it after nightfall (p. 75). Similar municipal laws were enacted in Lérida (Roth, 2002, p. 78). By 1411, most Murcian Jews converted to Christianity, but Juan Torres Fontes (1981) states that the reasons for these conversions "are difficult to evaluate" (p. 77).

An additional variation in the outcomes of Jewish quarters after the 1390s was evident after evaluating the historical records of Astorga, Ávila, Cea, Córdoba, León, and Toledo. In each of these towns, Jewish *aljamas* survived, perhaps even thrived despite various inconsistently imposed constraints. Francisco Cantera (1974) argues that in the late fourteenth century Astorgan Jews resided in two *juderías*; however, these areas were not encapsulated with walls (p. 92). While the Jewish quarter that housed the city's only synagogue (near the Gate of the Sun) appears to have been solely a Jewish residential zone, as did the other Jewish neighborhood (near the Church of Holy Mary), on the whole Jewish families resided in many different places in the town. In fact, Jews "lived in different central points in the city, mixed in with other residents, which demonstrates the great tolerance afforded to them" (Cantera, 1974, pp. 92-93).

However, after 1412, the Astorga historian M. Rodríguez notes that Jews were subjugated to significant persecution (Cantera, 1974, pp. 92-93). Yet, there is no historical record to support this claim (p. 94). What is evident is that the Jewish community continued to exist in Astorga, but in smaller numbers. Likewise, Astorga's neighboring cities of León and Cea housed their own discrete Jewish quarters in the early fifteenth century. However, Jews resided among Christians (pp. 103-104, 119).

In Ávila, according to Pilar León Tello (1963), during the later part of the fourteenth century Jews congregated residentially with Christians in the city's principal commercial zones, but after 1412, Jews began to be relocated to the city's *judería* (pp. 12-13). Evidence of this residential change in Ávila became apparent in 1416, when Bishop Juan de Guzmán ordered his canons to no longer lease cathedral-owned homes to Jews and Muslims and to instead move these minorities to their respective quarters (p. 13). Interestingly, this cathedral policy in Ávila was not mirrored in the close-by city of Plasencia. As will be explored shortly, the cathedral of Plasencia rapidly expanded housing opportunities to Jews and Muslims, which was in direct contradiction to the restrictive *Ordinances of Valladolid*. While the cathedral of Ávila did not "rigorously" implement Bishop Guzmán's instructions, a distinct and delimited Jewish *aljama* was in place in the city by 1425 (p. 13). Therefore, León Tello's scholarship reveals that as the early fifteenth century unfolded in Ávila, life for its Jewish community became increasingly restrictive as compared to their living arrangements in the previous century.

Somewhat similar to the experiences of Ávila, the Jews of Córdoba also found their lives transformed after the explosion of anti-Jewish animosities in the 1390s. Manuel Nieto Cumplido and Carlos Luca de Tena y Alvear (1980) suggest that prior to the 1390s' riots, Córdoba's delineated *judería* housed both Jews and Christians (pp. 240, 243). Within the Jewish quarter of Córdoba there was also a fortified structure (described as a castle) where Jewish and Christian families lived (Nieto Cumplido and de Tena y Alvear, 1980, p. 244). Yet, after this period Christians began leaving Córdoba's *judería* and relocating to other sectors of the city. Curiously, while Christians abandoned Córdoba's Jewish quarter at the opening of the fifteenth century, in other communities, like Toledo, Christians and *conversos* continued to reside in the cities' Jewish neighborhoods throughout the fifteenth century (Martz, 2000, pp. 222-224).

While Córdoba experienced the same violent acts that other cities endured during the 1390s, the authors suggest they were "far less bloody than acknowledged up until now" and the goal of the Christians' attack seemed more focused on pillaging Jewish goods than murder (p. 243). Conversion by Jews also whittled away at the community's vitality. By 1410, many *conversos* moved to a new neighborhood near the king's castle (the *Alcazar Viejo*) that had undergone depopulation after the reconquest of the city from the Muslims (p. 247). The creation of this converso zone was similar to what had occurred in Sevilla and thus they mirrored the *Ordinances of Valladolid's* intent to socially, economically, and religiously isolate Jewish communities.

It is within the diverse range of Castilian and Aragónese outcomes—from the complete annihilation of *juderías* to the persistent survival of Jewish com-

munities alongside separate converso neighborhoods—that this present study of the city of Plasencia adds yet another complicating portrait of *convivencia*. In short, the Placentino experience diverged in a fundamental manner from the approach of other communities to Jewish populations and *conversos*. Not only Old Christians but also converso families (namely the Carvajals and Santa Marías) guided and implemented local governing policies relating to tolerance of Jews.

Through their efforts as a united family confederation, the Carvajals and Santa Marías utilized their domination of the cathedral of Plasencia and influence on the city council to actively guard the Jewish community. Further, these two critical families maintained and promoted the city's traditional residential pattern that was characterized by both Jews and Christians living side-by-side in the city as well as in the Jewish quarter itself. Cumulatively, it appears that the Carvajals and Santa Marías highly valued cooperation and collaboration with Placentino Jews due to historical city norms, as well as the tangible economic and political benefits it afforded them.

Masters of Plasencia: The Carvajal, Santa María and Estúñiga Familias

During the first fifty years of the fifteenth century, three Spanish families—the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Estúñigas—politically dominated and directed the historical trajectory of Plasencia. Key to understanding the history of the city's Jewish *aljama* is the previously undocumented collaborative family confederation and patronage network operated by the Carvajals and Santa Marías. This confederation, which formed in the early 1420s and endured into the early sixteenth century, allowed the two clans to capture and dominate the ecclesiastical leadership of the cathedral of Plasencia. Thus, they could collectively impose their political will upon the greater Diocese of Plasencia as well as enjoy the political and economic benefits associated with their church jurisdictional authority. Often the Carvajals and Santa Marías utilized their local power to act as paternalistic guardians and supporters of the Placentino Jewish community; however, at other times the two clans employed the Jews as foils against their collective enemy, the Estúñigas.

Native to the city was the Old Christian Carvajal clan. Spanish nobility genealogies argue that the Carvajal family of Plasencia was descended from the line of King Bermudo II of León (982-999) and through these noble origins they entered into knightly service (Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Historia [BRAH], n.d., folio 204v). Archival records at the cathedral of Plasencia demonstrate that the Carvajals resided in the city as early as the end of the fourteenth century (Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia [ACP], 1406, no folio). However, according to Friar Alonso Fernández, a sixteenth century local historian of Plasencia, the Carvajals arrived in the early thirteenth century. Specifically, Diego González de Carvajal and his father resided in Plasencia and were in the service of King Ferdinand III (1217-1252). The two men participated in the king's military campaigns against the Iberian Muslims and reportedly attended

to the king's mother, Doña Berenguela, as her stewards (*mayordomos*) (Fernández, 1627, pp. 37-38; García Carraffa, 1926, pp. 268-269). Further, after the reconquest of Sevilla (1248), Diego González de Carvajal and his father retired to Plasencia where the family continued to reside as a minor noble clan of modest means up through the fourteenth century (Sánchez Loro, 1982, pp. 37-38).

During the fifteenth century, the Carvajals transformed themselves from lesser knights (*caballeros*) into influential church leaders and royal advisers, first serving Castilian King Juan II (ruled 1406-1454) and later the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella (ruled 1474-1504) (BRAH, 1630, folio 1; BRAH, n.d., folios 212-212v). The Carvajal family implemented their radical clan restructuring in pursuit of enhanced status in the Castilian world by successfully utilizing the tools of family confederations, religious endowments, wealth preservation, and occupational patronage. Prominent members of the Plasencia family during this era of change (1400s to 1450s) were Diego González de Carvajal, a local knight and city councilman; Gonzalo García de Carvajal, the first clansman to join the church and later serve as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar; and Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, who served as both a judge in King Juan II's royal courts and a local city councilman.

Close associates of the Carvajals were the converso Santa Marías, a family of ecclesiastical leaders originally from Burgos. The chain of events that brought the Santa Marías from their ancestral lands in Burgos to Plasencia commenced as early as 1390, the year Rabbi Solomon Ha-Levi converted to Catholicism and became Pablo de Santa María (Serrano, 1942, p. 52, 62; Cantera Burgos, 1952, p. 304). Therefore, the Santa Marías converted in the midst of the intensive deterioration of life for Jews during the 1390s.

Throughout the early fifteenth century, Pablo was an ever-present force in the court of King Juan II. First, he was the young king's tutor and subsequently was his Senior Chancellor. The king also named him the Bishop of Cartagena (1403-1415) and the Bishop of Burgos (1415-1435). Pablo's siblings, children, and relatives assumed various Castilian surnames including Santa María, Burgos, Cartagena, Rodríguez de Maluenda, and Gutiérrez de la Calleja (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 29-29v). While many clansmen elected to stay in Burgos, others routinely traveled to Plasencia, with some settling there permanently. The most prominent of the Santa Marías to spend time in Plasencia were Gonzalo García de Santa María, who served as bishop from 1424 to 1446; Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja, who held multiple cathedral positions; and Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, the cathedral's treasurer (ACP, 1406, no folio; ACP, 1399-1453, folios 46-46v, 99-100v, 105, 116, and 161).

Lastly, the third prominent family in Plasencia was the Estúñiga. They were not natives of the region but instead originally hailed from the Kingdom of Aragón and later enjoyed success as royal bureaucrats in the Kingdoms of Navarra and Castilla (Paredes y Guillén, 1903, pp. 5, 9-10). In the late fourteenth century, the clan found solid footing in Castilla when Diego López de Estúñiga, the founder of the *Condes de Béjar*, was part of a new generation of powerful elites that surrounded adolescent King Enrique III (*Archivo Historico Nacional Seccion Nobleza* [AHNSN], 1397-1401, folios 253-259, 347). King

Enrique III facilitated the entry of the Estúñiga family into Plasencia when he granted Diego López de Estúñiga permission to found a family *mayorazgo*, or entailed lands, in the close-by village of Béjar in 1397 (AHNSN, 1397-1401, folios 239-259; Villalobos y Martínez-Pontremuli, 1975, pp. 331-333). Tensions between the Estúñigas and the city and Cathedral of Plasencia took full form in 1441 when King Juan II granted Pedro de Estúñiga the title of *Conde de Plasencia*, as well as regional seigniorial authority over Plasencia in exchange for the village of Trujillo (Paredes y Guillén, 1903, p. 44). Collectively, the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and the Estúñigas were the dominant noble families in fifteenth century Plasencia and, therefore, controlled the destiny and survival of the city's Jewish community.

Throughout the early and mid 1400s, the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation demonstrated an uncommon respect and appreciation of religious coexistence with Jews and Muslims (*convivencia*). Although the anti-Jewish disturbances of the 1390s cast a dark shadow on the acceptance of Jews, these events created an opening for some elite Jews who converted to Christianity to access new opportunities. Among the most successful of these converts were the Santa Marías.

Protecting Their Interests: The Engagement of the Carvajal and Santa María Families with the Placentino Jewish Community

It is believed that the majority of the violence against Jews concluded at the end of the fourteenth century after Castilian King Enrique III (1390-1406) repeatedly demanded his subjects cease their harassment of both Jews and new converts to Christianity (López de Ayala, 1992, p. 24). In a July 30, 1392, royal *cedula* sent from the city of Segovia, he mandated to all persons living in the kingdom:

No person shall obligate Jews to become Christians by force, nor make them listen to a sermon against their will, nor mistreat them, because it is counter to Christian charity (*Archivo Historico Municipal de Burgos* [AHMB], 1392a, no folio).

As the king was still three years from the age of majority, his royal advisers and tutors likely had a profound impact on the king's decision to call an end to the violence (Lea, 1896, p. 216; Cantera Burgos, 1952, pp. 24-25). Among those advisers were the Estúñigas as well as Santa Marías. In other specific cases, King Enrique III sent communiqués that enhanced these basic religious protections. Not only would the youthful king not tolerate the forced conversions, but he directed *Regidor* Alvar García de Santa María to enforce his decision to allow forced converts to return to Judaism. On this issue, the king's pronouncement stated:

Many [Jews] had converted and now wanted to return [to their faith]...Not one person should harass them, and if some amount of them were to return [to Judaism], no one should seize them (AHMB, 1392b, no folio).

Although the monarch's concern harkened back to traditional norms of *convivencia*, the call to protect Jews also explicitly acknowledged their vital role in the economy. For instance, the crown used a religious poll tax (*cabeza de pecho*) levied on Jews to pay for its wars against Islamic Granada, as well as to fund other royal initiatives (*Archivo Historico de la Catedral de Burgos* [AHCB], 1318a, folio 250; AHCB, 1318b, folio 424; AHCB, 1318c, folios 51-51v). In this way, the *aljamas* in each community contributed to the royal coffers. For example, in the early 1400s, the Jewish *aljama* of Plasencia paid the king 10,250 maravedis annually in *cabeza de pecho* taxes (AHNSN, 1489, no folio; AHNSN, 1478, no folio; AHNSN, 1442, no folio; AHNSN, 1491b, no folio; Santos Canalejo, 1981, p. 79; Hervás, 2001, p. 174-180). Thus, the Placentino Jewish community was a financially valuable asset that necessitated royal protection on economic grounds. This same economic argument appears to have been on the minds of Christian Placentinos as well.

Plasencia's sizeable Jewish community was key to the city's economic vitality. Although an exact population census for the city and Diocese of Plasencia is not available for the first half of the fifteenth century, tax records from the year 1400 indicate only 119 adult men and their families—40 Christians (34%), 50 Jews (42%), and 29 Muslims (24%)—resided in the city (Paredes y Guillén, 1903, pp. 66-67; Santos Canalejo, 1981, p. 105-107). Thus, Jews were a key component of the population base throughout the fifteenth century and one that became increasingly important to the local economy, as well as the Cathedral of Plasencia, and noble land-owning families such as the Carvajals. While the Castilian king and seigniorial lords enjoyed the unique financial rewards of a poll tax imposed on Jewish (and Muslim) subjects, local communities benefited from the leasing of homes and property to Jews. Even though Plasencia's Muslim population was much smaller than its Jewish community, Muslim residents also rented homes from the cathedral and local Christian families. While some Jewish and Muslim families, such as the Cohens and Serranos, owned homes and property in Plasencia, many others leased their residences (ACP, 1477-1488, folio 1; ACP, 1497, folio 1). Although there are no records that reveal why Jews and Muslims chose to rent properties from the church and nobility, it seems likely that both groups did so to avoid Christian harassment and violence.

During Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's term (1424-1446), a period when the Carvajal-Santa María confederation dominated the cathedral chapter, the church departed from prior local church policies by increasing access to housing leases for Jewish and Muslim families. While the prior cathedral leadership only leased four percent (4%) of church houses to religious minorities, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation actively directed twenty-two percent (22%) of all leases to Jewish and Muslim families (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v). This amounted to an almost six-fold increase in access for Jewish and Muslim tenants. See Table 1. Thus, we see that the Catholic-converso confederation displayed a higher acceptance in providing housing leases to Jews and Muslims as compared to their church predecessors, Bishops Arias de Balboa and Gonzalo de Estúñiga.

Perhaps, the Carvajals and Santa Marías' openness to renting properties to religious minorities related to their own unique relationship. That is, in spite of the intense societal and religious animosities directed at *conversos* and Jews after the 1390s, the Old Christian Carvajal family readily collaborated with the

converso Santa María clan. For reasons unknown, the Carvajals viewed the Santa Marías as ideal professional and business partners, as evidenced by their intensive collaborations in the church. The Carvajals did not appear to espouse or subscribe to Castilians' negative perceptions of *conversos*. During the fifteenth century, Castilian society considered all *conversos*, even those like the Santa María clan of royal and religious administrators, to be of a lesser social and religious stature based purely on their *converso* identity. Therefore, the Carvajals demonstrated an unusual openness toward *conversos* and Jews. Likewise, the Santa Marías showed that they harbored no ill will toward their former coreligionists, and in some cases, even rose to their defense. In sum, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation's decision to lease property in great numbers to Jews and Muslims in Plasencia indicates they were inclined to support the traditional approach of peaceful coexistence of the three faiths.

When the Santa Marías and Carvajals gained control over the cathedral chapter in the mid-1420s, they inherited a collection of housing lease agreements with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim families. In the period before the family confederation's administration, from 1401 to 1423, Christian tenants on average paid 55 maravedis each year for a cathedral-owned home, whereas Jewish and Muslim tenants paid on average 150 maravedis per year. Thus, during this era, religious minorities paid almost three times more than Christians did for housing agreements. However, after the Carvajal-Santa María confederation garnered control of the cathedral chapter in 1424, the governing body changed their leasing practices. Under the families' management of the chapter, all new home agreements increased in price. However, Christians experienced a 98 percent increase in their rates, while Jewish and Muslim residents experienced only a 27 percent increase. From 1424 to 1446, Jewish and Muslim tenants on average paid 191 maravedis for a housing contract, whereas Christians paid 109 maravedis. Thus, even though religious minorities paid more than their Christian counterparts, the chapter raised lease rates more aggressively for Christians than they did for Jews and Muslims.

Typically, the cathedral's Jewish and Muslim tenants were tradesmen, as opposed to religious leaders like Plasencia's rabbis who tended to live in Jewish-owned homes.

The cathedral's clients included a Muslim family of tailors (the Chicalas), as well as Jewish shoemakers (the Arusos), clothing-shearers (the Caces/González), blacksmiths (the Arrañons), and military arms makers (the Capas) (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v; Hervas, 2001, pp. 86-92, 100-102). See Table 2.

The Carvajals' and Santa Marías' cathedral leasing policies suggest that interfaith cooperation was especially healthy at this time. As illustrated in Table 2, the cathedral signed seven church leases with Jews and Muslims during this decade. Church administrators were also open-minded to leasing houses to families of mixed faith. For instance, the Caces and González family was a household

Table 1: Cathedral Housing Leases, 1401 to 1446

Years	Cathedral Leadership	House Leases to Christians	House Leases to Christians	House Leases to Jews/Muslims	House Leases to Jews/Muslims
		Number and Percent of Total	Average Lease Rate	Number and Percent of Total	Average Lease Rate
1401-1423	Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa, Bishop Gonzalo de Estuniga, and the Fernandez Family	27 houses (96%)	55 maravedis	1 house (4%)	150 maravedis
1424-1446	Bishop Gonzalo Garcia de Santa Maria and the Carvajal-Santa Maria Family Confederation	25 houses (78%)	109 maravedis	7 houses (22%)	191 maravedis
	Percent Change from 1401-1423 and 1424-1446 (%)	7% decrease in Christian Leases	98% increase in Christian Lease Rates	600% increase in Minority Leases	27% increase in Minority Lease Rates

where Pedro González, a converso, lived with his son, Yuda Caces, who practiced his mother's Jewish faith (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 319-323). Unlike other cities in Spain, Placentino Jews and *conversos* not only lived in the same neighborhoods, but under the same roofs.

Particularly interesting is a 1442 lease to Zanfines Capa, a maker of chain-mail, because of the multiple economic, social, and religious interconnections revealed by the transaction (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 340-345). First, it is apparent that Zanfines was most likely a recent arrival to the city because the cathedral required him to have a co-signer for his housing lease. By the 1430s, the practice of requiring a co-signer was limited to cases involving new residents and first-time renters. In this 1442 agreement, Zanfines Capa produced Rabbi Abraham as his co-signer, which indicates that the cathedral recognized Jewish leaders as good character witnesses and reliable financial agents. Zanfines' trade, that of an arms

maker, also illustrates how Placentino Jews were integrated into the war machine of Castilla and its provisioning of local knights, like the Carvajals, Estúñigas, Álvaro de Toledos, Amarazes, Camargos, and Monroys. See Figure 1.

**Table 2: Cathedral Housing Leases to Jews and Muslims,
1430s to 1440s**

Year	Lessee	Religious Faith	Annual Lease	Locations
1434	Abraen Chicala and Amat (“the tailor”)	Muslim	320 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Plaza Mayor at Calle de Panaderia
1436	Yusefe Champus Arranon; his son, Abraham Arranon (“the blacksmith”) and Yefada Daza	Jewish	110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Calle de Zapateria – behind homes owned by Diego Gonzalez de Carvajal
1438	Simuel Aruso and Abraham (“the shoemakers”)	Jewish	400 maravedis and 3 pairs of chickens	Plaza Mayor – next to the house of Don Arrodamen (Muslim carpenter) and the house of the heirs of Gonzalo Jimenez del Barco
1441	Abraham Arranon (“the blacksmith”)	Jewish	110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Calle de Rua
1441	Yusefe Champus Arranon (Lease transfer from his brother, Abraham)	Jewish	110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Calle de Run
1442	Zanfines Capa (“the chainmail maker”)	Jewish	120 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Calle de Rua – next to the houses of Yusef Molio (“the shoemaker”) and the houses of the Clergy Chapter of the University of Plasencia
1444	Yuda Caces, son of Pedro Gonzalez (“the clothing shearer”)	Jewish/ <i>Converse</i>	170 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens	Plaza Mayor

Church homes leased to the Jewish Capas and other religious minorities also expose the significant residential intermixing of the three faiths. (Figure 1.) Although the Capas’ homes were located on *Calle de Rua* in the Jewish *aljama*, they were also adjacent to venues that were significant to the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Estúñigas. (Figure 1, the Jewish home adjacent to “Univ.†”) The Church of Saint Nicholas was of tremendous familial importance for the Carvajals because it held the remains of both the family’s progenitors as well as their recently deceased (ACP, 1455, no folio; ACP, 1485, no folio; ACP, 1588a, no folio; ACP, 1406, no folio; ACP, 1691, no folio). Therefore, Old Christians found themselves, in life and death, among Jewish neighbors. This church was also especially vital to the resolution of local interfaith disputes (Benavides Checa, 1999, p. 139 n. 1). (Figure 1, item labeled “S. Nicolás †”) Specifically, in “extraordinary circumstances,” a Jewish judge and a Christian judge stood on the church’s steps and adjudicated cases that involved individuals of different

faiths (Benavides Checa, 1999, p. 139 n. 1).

For the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, this city quarter was equally critical as it housed the leadership chapter for the cathedral's University of Plasencia (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 340-345). (Figure 1, item labeled "Univ.†".) Also positioned at this location was the heart of the Jewish community, the synagogue, as well as the houses of the Jewish Brotherhood (*Cofradía de los Judíos*), and a collection of Jewish homes known as La Mota (ACP, 1461, no folio; ACP, 1488, no folio). (Figure 1, items labeled "Synagogue", "Cofr." and "La Mota".) This co-location of Jewish and Christian institutions reveals that Plasencia's religious, intellectual, and social institutions co-existed, literally, across the street from one another.

During the late 1420s, important Christian nobles also established their homes in this diverse section of the *judería*. The Estúñigas, the future Counts of Béjar and Plasencia, positioned their first homes and palace (*Palacio de los Marqueses de Mirabel*) in a part of *La Mota* (ACP, 1461, no folio; AHNSN, 1426, no folio; Hervas, 1999b, pp. 100-102). (See Figure 1, item labeled "Estúñiga.") Similarly, the *Señores de Oropesa* (the Álvarez de Toledo family) and the Almarez clan owned homes in this area. (See Figure 1, items labeled "Álvarez" and "Almarez".) The Álvarez de Toledo's housing complex, an elaborate structure with a "tower," was later purchased by the Carvajals or transferred to the Carvajals by the middle of the fifteenth century (ACP, 1399-1453, folio 77; ACP, 1588b, no folio; AHNSN, 1421, no folio; AHNSN, 1449-1500, no folio). Thus, from the 1420s through the 1440s, in an area clearly described as the Jewish quarter by the sixteenth century historian Friar Alonso Fernández, the three faiths worshipped, labored, and resided together (Fernández, 1627, pp. 153-155; Benavides Checa, 1999, p. 147; Santos Canalejo, 1981, p. 58).

The diversity of the *aljama* is further evidenced when one considers that many cathedral-owned homes that were occupied by Jewish clans were adjacent to homes occupied by the Carvajals and Santa Marías. This suggests that there were no rigid social norms enforcing the physical separation of Jews and Christians in the city, as required by the *Ordinances of Valladolid*. The Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Jewish clans all lived in a collection of closely clustered homes near the Plaza Mayor, in between *Calle de Rua/Zapatería* and *Calle de Trujillo*. This included the knight, Diego González de Carvajal; Cathedral Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja and his sons (a Santa María family); and Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 112-113, 116, 174, 197v, 223v-225v; ACP, 1455, no folio; ACP, 1461, no folio; ACP, 1406, no folio; Hervas, 1999a, pp. 96-97).

Additionally, a Muslim family—the Barros—lived in the immediate vicinity. (Figure 1, items labeled "DGC," "RC," "Mus," solid boxes labeled "S.M.," and the Jewish homes on the *Plaza Mayor*.) Deeper into the *judería* and along *Calle de Rua/Zapatería*, several Santa Marías resided in another three structures. This zone included a large housing complex rented by Diego Jiménez de Burgos, the nephew of Bishop Santa María, and two other housing contracts transferred from Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja to his kinsman, Ruy García de Salamanca, another Santa María relative (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 391v-392v, 393-394, 394-395v). See Figure 1, two-tone boxes labeled "S.M." along *Calle de Rua/Zapatería*.

The remaining members of the Santa María and Carvajal families resided at

the periphery of the Jewish *aljama* and in close proximity to the cathedral. Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, the royal judge and city councilman, owned several residences in the vicinity and Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María leased others on *Calle de Iglesia* (ACP, 1399-1453, Folios 208v-209, 217v-219, 252-256, 284v-297). (See Figure 1, items labeled “GLC” and two-tone boxes labeled “S.M.”). The bonds between the Carvajals and Santa Marías were so secure that during the 1430s, Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal resided in a home with Alfonso García.

In addition, the Carvajal family also rented their own private property holdings to religious minorities. Like his first cousins in the cathedral, Diego González de Carvajal earned valuable income from Jewish tenants (ACP, 1455, no folio). Just behind Diego’s personal residence on the *Plaza Mayor*, Diego let out three homes to Yaco Zafia, Eza Harruso, and Yuce Pando. See Figure 1, two-tone diagonal boxes.

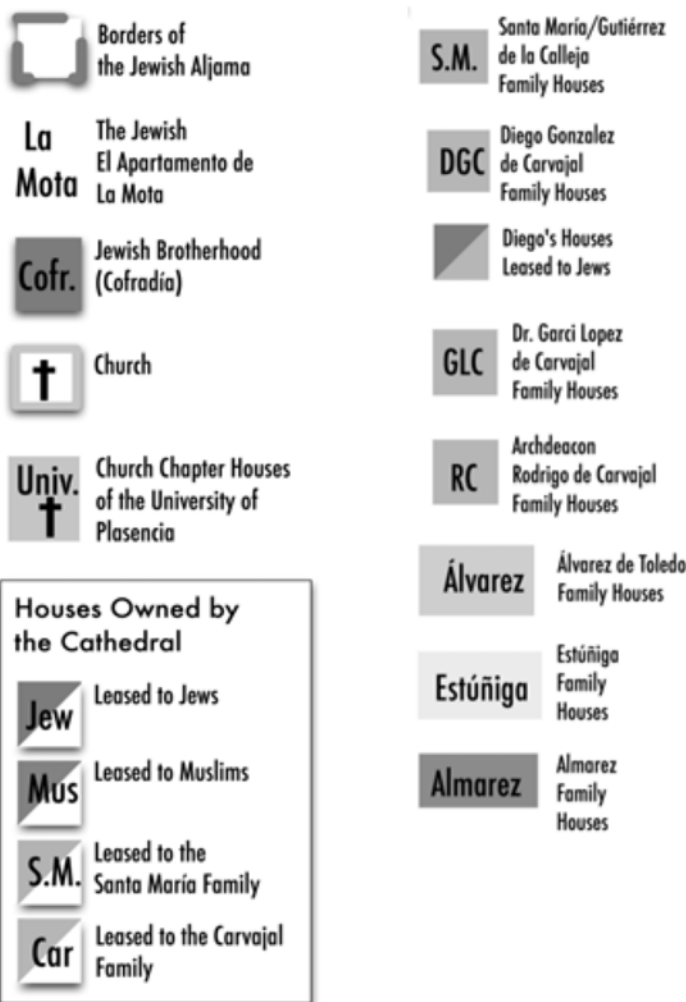
For Jews, a likely benefit of leasing housing from the cathedral or a Christian knight was the knowledge that they might enjoy better protection from Christian religious harassment because they, as tenants, provided a steady income stream to Christian property owners. Therefore, a property contract purchased more than shelter—it also shielded residents from anti-Jewish animosities. In sum, the Carvajals had a vested economic interest in making certain that the local Jewish population had access to safe and secure housing.

Disruption to a Tradition of Intermixed Jewish and Christian Housing

Nonetheless, Plasencia was not free of anti-Jewish sentiment as there was a brief, but significant, disruption to the traditional residential intermixing of Jewish and Christian families in the early 1400s. Ever since the violence of the 1390s, Spanish Jewry resided in a religiously charged environment that jeopardized their economic well-being, religious practices, and physical safety. Sometime before 1416, several Placentino Jewish families could be found living in a fortified and gated collection of homes known as the *Apartamiento de La Mota* (AHNSN, 1416, no folio; Hervas, 1999b, pp. 86-92, 100-102). Perhaps, *La Mota* came into existence in response to the housing restrictions outlined in the *Ordinances of Valladolid*, although this seems unlikely because Jews still resided in other parts of Plasencia. The contemporaneous militant Christian evangelization of Vicente Ferrer in the nearby cities of Salamanca and Zamora may have also been the impetus for the creation of *La Mota* (Garganta and Forcada, 1956, pp. 172-173).

La Mota was secured with stone walls surrounding both homes and the syna-

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gogue (AHNSN, 1416, 42v). Its large wooden doors were likely festooned with bronze or steel hardware and at night they could be closed and locked from within by a large metal bar. In 1416, there were two zones within the *apartamento*—one area contained the synagogue and multiple Jewish homes, and the other area included the dwellings of Tel de Vega, a local Christian city councilman. Why Tel Díaz was the sole Christian property owner inside *La Mota* is not clear, but it does suggest that he was a converso. When the city council forced

Tel Díaz to forfeit his properties inside of *La Mota* to Álvaro de Sande, due to unpaid debts, many details about the *apartamento* and its inhabitants emerged (AHNSN, 1416, folios 45-46v, 77v-78; Hervas, 1999a, p. 42). The mayor's accounting of properties revealed that Tel Díaz owned approximately five homes, which were occupied by Rabbi Abraham Deloya, Yucef Castaño, Simuel Abenabibe, Yuce Abencur, Cag Pardo, and Hayn and Simuel Daza. To settle Tel Díaz's debts, the city sold these houses to Fernando de la Mota, who allowed these Jewish clans to continue to live in them.

Unfortunately for these families, less than eight months later Fernando sold the properties to Iñigo de Camudio, the shield bearer of Alonso de Sande, for 100,000 maravedis (folio 91). It is not clear why Fernando sold the properties. By 1426, the new owner forced all of the Jewish clans from their homes in this section of *La Mota* (AHNSN, 1426, no folio; Hervas, 1999b, pp. 100-102). Their displacement appeared to be the product of a regional competition, brewing between the Estúñigas and the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation.

Specifically, Iñigo's purchase of these homes in *La Mota* appears to have been part of a secret plan for the Estúñigas to acquire property in Plasencia. Iñigo had served a critical role, some might say a deceptive one, when he executed the purchase of this section of *La Mota* not for himself or his lord, Alonso de Sande, but for Alonso's superior—Pedro de Estúñiga. At that time, Pedro, the Count of Béjar, was positioning himself to extend his political influence over the local region. After the mid-1420s, the Estúñigas would quickly consolidate their land holdings in this section of the *aljama*, which would in turn lead to an enduring sixty-year political and economic conflict with the Carvajals and Santa Marías.

As this conflict unfolded, Plasencia's Jews found themselves caught in between these competing families. In 1441, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation suffered a debilitating and strategic political and economic loss when the king named Pedro the Count of Plasencia. Prior to the count's arrival, the Carvajal and Santa María families used their dominant membership on the city council to oversee Plasencia's Jewish population. Now, to protect themselves and some Jewish families from the Estúñigas, the allied clans transferred ownership of strategically located Jewish real estate in the *judería* to the Carvajals. In a transaction conducted in March of 1442, Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal facilitated his cousin's (Diego González de Carvajal) purchase of multiple Jewish properties owned by Juan de Bergara, Dana de Cerjo, Alenatar de Cerjo, and Abraham Almale (AMP, 1815, no folio). These structures were located precisely where the Estúñigas had begun to establish a presence in the 1420s. Specifically, the Cerjo and Bergara homes were located in *La Mota*—adjacent to the synagogue and the Estúñiga's new palace (ACP, 1461, no folio; ACP, 1497, folio 1; AHNSN, 1426, no folio). Although Diego purchased these houses, he also elected to lease the same properties back to the Jewish families. Perhaps the most questionable aspect of the property transactions was that the archdeacon noted that the actual sale of the properties allegedly occurred in 1430 and 1436; however, the sales agreements were not documented until 1442, a year after the Estúñiga's assumption of the city.

This event is striking in terms of how it addressed both the multilayered goals of the confederated families, as well as the needs of these Jewish families. The credibility of the agreements appear dubious, especially in terms of the recorded sales dates. It suggests that both the buyers and sellers shared a common

interest—perhaps agreeing to lie about the transaction dates—in order to prevent these Jewish families and homes from falling under the complete control of the Estúñigas.

By executing the contract under the cathedral's aegis, the Carvajals and Santa Marías established a competing jurisdictional oversight over some Placentino Jews, as well as partially blocked the Estúñigas' expansion in the *aljama*. If the Estúñigas challenged or attempted to nullify the agreements, which was likely because they were actively consolidating parcels in *La Mota*, then the cathedral could threaten them with financial and religious penalties, including excommunication. Existing local church precedent, first established in 1396 and later reinforced in 1410, had clarified the supremacy of the cathedral over local lords in affairs relating to ecclesiastical transactions and taxation (ACP, 1410, no folio; ACP, n.d.a., no folio; ACP, n.d.c., no folio).

In fact, before the Carvajal-Santa María confederation had garnered control of the cathedral chapter, the church temporarily excommunicated Diego García de Béjarano (a Carvajal family knight) for failure to pay taxes (*diezmos*) to the church for earnings produced from his lands. Thus, it appears likely that any party that challenged cathedral transaction, such as Diego González's purchase of the Jewish homes in the *aljama*, would have been subject to similar church penalties. Furthermore, the Jewish residents that rented homes directly from the cathedral—such as the Arrañons, Dazas, Arusos, Capas, and Caces—arguably benefited from church protections as well (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v). Since the count's jurisdiction was purely secular, the cathedral could utilize its countervailing ecclesiastical authority to limit the count's control over Jews.

Not only did the cathedral realize tangible political benefits from these property contracts, but so did Diego González (the buyer) as well as the Jewish sellers. For Diego, the transactions accomplished three goals: (1) they enhanced his family's property holdings that were later incorporated into his son's entailed lands (*mayorazgo*), (2) they created a physical Carvajal presence next to the Estúñiga's housing compound, and (3) they provided Diego with the church's jurisdictional protection (ACP, n.d.b., no folio; ACP, 1482, no folio; ACP, 1497, folio 1; ACP, 1485, no folio). For the Jewish parties, while the property sales were problematic because they were forced to surrender their homes, the contracts appear to indicate Jews preferred the Carvajals as landlords over the Estúñigas. If the Cerjos and Almales had not sold their houses to the Carvajals, then it is likely they faced eviction by the Estúñigas who were amassing real estate for their local palace and a future monastery.

A communiqué, sent by King Juan II to Count Pedro de Estúñiga just two months before the cathedral recorded the Carvajal-Jewish sales contracts, provides some indication of why these Jewish families sold their homes to the Carvajals. In January 1442, the king informed the count that he could collect only 3,500 maravedis in annual poll taxes (*cabeza de pecho*) from Placentino Jews and not the 10,200 maravedis that the count desired (*Archivo General de Simancas* [AGS], 1439, folio 173v-174; AHNSN, 1453, Folio 58v; Hervás, 1999b, pp. 158-159, 181-182; Santos Canalejo, 1981, p. 111; Ladero, 1971, p. 254). This royal notice exposes the Estúñigas' predatory behavior in respect to Placentino Jews. Although existing agreements entitled the king to a higher tax,

after 1438 Juan II levied a lesser tax of 3,500 maravedis on Jewish residents because, as he noted, “they are poor.” Therefore, the king’s note to the count appears to indicate Pedro intended to pursue heavy taxation of Placentino Jews and without regard for their economic condition. Thus, it seems likely that the Bergara, Cerjo, and Almale families had much to fear from the Estúñigas as potential landlords, as opposed to Diego González de Carvajal, a well-known landlord to many Jewish families.

The Limits of Tolerance: A Stable Converso-Old Christian Partnership Within a Changing World

At the close of the 1440s, even though the Placentino partnership of the Carvajal and Santa María families remained stable, the Castilian kingdom itself was undergoing radical political and cultural changes. As Christian tolerance for Jews diminished in the mid-fifteenth century, so did Old Christians’ acceptance of their co-religionists, the *conversos*. Specifically, Castilian societal attitudes toward elite *conversos*, such as the Santa Marías, began to change fundamentally because Castilians perceived *conversos* as insincere converts to Christianity and as having too much influence in royal affairs. Old Christians attacked *conversos* in Toledo (in 1448), Valladolid (in 1473), Córdoba (in 1473) and Segovia (in 1474), just as they did in the 1390s (Friedman, 1987, p. 11). Furthermore, from the mid-to-late 1400s, *conversos* became the focus of new forms of institutionalized discrimination. In the aftermath of the events in Toledo, the local city council implemented new blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) ordinances to exclude *conversos* from prominent and profitable offices (Roth, 2002, p. 89; Gerber, 1992, p. 127).

In the build up to these radical transformations in the political and social landscape in the Kingdom of Castilla and León, the Carvajal family in Plasencia began to assume more authority in the Carvajal-Santa María confederation during the late 1440s. In 1446, an elderly Gonzalo García de Santa María stepped down as the Bishop of Plasencia (Cantera Burgos, 1952, p. 208). In his place, King Juan II nominated Juan de Carvajal for the Plasencia post. At the time, Carvajal was heavily involved in papal affairs serving as an Auditor of the Vatican’s *Rota*, the church’s court system, and as a papal legate. These responsibilities, along with his appointment by Pope Eugene IV to the Council of Cardinals, kept him from actively governing the Diocese of Plasencia (ACP, 1766, folio 18). Instead, he left the administration of the bishopric to the cathedral chapter, which the Carvajals and the Santa Marías managed exclusively throughout his tenure. Rather than disrupt the smooth functioning of the cathedral and its leadership chapter, Juan de Carvajal continued to support the intensive involvement of the Santa María family throughout his administration (1446-1469). While the cardinal’s brother, Rodrigo de Carvajal, served as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar from the 1440s until 1470, the Santa Marías continued to staff a significant number of chapter posts (ACP, 1399-1453, folios 368v-372v, 424-426).

It is also apparent that by the mid-fifteenth century, the partnership of the Old Christian Carvajals and the converso Santa Marías evolved to shared extended blood relations—in spite of the broadening Old Christian attacks on *conversos* (Martínez, 2008, pp. 91, 203, 228; ACP, 1438, no folio; ACP, 1491,

no folio; AHNSN, 1509-1562, no folio; AHNSN, n.d., no folio; Cordero Alvarado, 1997, pp. 148-151). Specifically, the Villalva, Trejo, Carvajal, and Santa María clans inter-linked themselves together through intermarriage and ecclesiastical relationships. Thus, the Carvajal-Santa María-sponsored convivencia in Plasencia was not only vibrant and particularly robust for Jews and Christians, but also for these two families in spite of their radically transforming world.

Through the magnifying lens of the Carvajals and Santa Marías in Plasencia, much more than Old Christian and converso family relations can be surmised. By evaluating these families' strategic management of the cathedral of Plasencia for political and economic gain, a more complicated and complex perspective of Jewish and Christian co-existence came into view. Not only were Jews' and Christians' robust economic, social, religious, and political communal relations exposed, but also Sephardic historiography's imposing formulaic walls were ever so slightly shaken. Plasencia's record indicates that local Christian and Jewish clans maintained productive associations through everyday transactions such as residential leases and purchases, often at the political and financial expense of powerful Christian families that were considered outsiders. Further, Plasencia's late fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century history, when placed alongside of comparative evidence from other cities, indicates that *convivencia* in Spain continued to persist well after the tragic and murderous anti-Jewish riots of the 1390s. In closing, if Spain's twilight history of religious and cultural co-existence is to be fully understood for the fifteenth century, scholars must engage and challenge long held assumptions that continue to uphold the misguided perception that convivencia was in precipitous decline after the 1390s.

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