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SOCIAL TENSIONS WITHIN FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY HISPANO-JEWISH COMMUNITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the relations between certain social groups within the xvth century Hispano-Jewish communities.

The main emphasis is on the analysis of the leadership strata, local and supralocal, as targets of criticism and, at the same time, as a centralizing force.

The configurations of social tension are examined and attention is drawn to the recurrence of conflict between various groups on socio-economic issues.

Some exponents of literary expressions of this tension, in the form of criticism of the leadership and its ideals are investigated and seen within both their literary and historical backgrounds.

Part I deals with the expressions of social thought in the works of Jewish thinkers writing in Hebrew and voicing social grievances.

Chapter 1 deals with social criticism in the "Iggeret Musar" by Solomon Alami setting it against its historical and literary context.

Chapter 2 is devoted to a study of ideas of social criticism to be found in a group of poems by the Saragossan poet Solomon Bonafed and to an analysis of the forms of social conflict in his community on the basis of archival records collected from the works of Serrano y Sanz

and Fritz Baer et al (where they are published in different contexts).

Part 2 is devoted to a study of conflict in the Hispano-Jewish communities of the xvth century and to the centralizing role of one of the social groups in these conflicts: the leadership stratum.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a study of social tension within the Jewish communities of the Crown of Aragon and the existence of a trend towards centralization which is denied in modern historiography.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the forms of social conflict amongst groups in the Castilian-Jewish communities of the xvth century.

Chapter 5 deals with Abraham Seneor, Chief Rabbi of Castille, under the Catholic Monarchs, as a representative of central Jewish supralocal institutions and as a target of social criticism and conflict.

The evidence adduced leads to the conclusion that fiscal, socio-economic and administrative issues, and not only religious ones, were at the root of much of xvth century Hispano-Jewish social tensions forming the background to xvth century Hebrew authors who have been dismissed as exaggerated, isolated or embittered.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Periodization

The years 1391-1492 have generally been seen as a historical unit in Hispano-Jewish history. As is often the case, this clear periodization might be said to obey reasons of convenience rather than to deny the possibility of alternative interpretation. Thus, if the massacres of 1391 were the effect of a general deterioration in Jewish-Christian relations, it might be argued that this trend, as opposed to the putative previous attitude of 'convivencia' or 'tolerance' is characteristic, as Valdeon Baroque<sup>1</sup> has observed, of the xivth century and is accentuated with the accession of the Trastamaras in Castile. It would be consistent with this view to speak of the late xivth and xvth centuries, or at least the years from 1368 to 1492, as the natural last period of the Jews in Christian Spain.

Then again, if one related, as has been done by Vicens Vives<sup>2</sup> and Wolff,<sup>3</sup> the economic trends to the massacres and particularly to their virulence in Catalonia, it might be useful to begin the period in the 1380's, the decade of economic crisis in Catalonia. That the 1380's was a crucial decade for the understanding of the events of 1391 can hardly be doubted. Most accounts of the massacres begin in 1378 with the activities of the Archdeacon of Ecija.<sup>4</sup> There is also the view of Cantera which tends to minimize the extent of the massacres, especially 'de Madrid para arriba'.<sup>5</sup> And yet, historians continue to speak in terms

of this periodization and for the purposes of this study the years 1391 and 1492 have been adopted as limits for reasons which follow.

### Historiography of the problem

The xvth century has been considered a unit by those historians who have dealt with social tensions and conflicts within the Jewish communities.

These historians might be considered in two categories, those who deny the existence of significant tensions and those who use ideological or religious dualistic models.

The first attitude might be said to be implied in E. Mitre Fernandez' analysis of the effects of the 1391 massacres:

"Las matanzas de judios de 1391 han llevado a la poblacion semita a optar por una de las dos soluciones que se les ofrecian: apretar filas o convertirse al cristianismo. El primer aspecto de la dualidad no ha sido muy estudiado. Sin embargo, es digno de mencionar que ha corrido parejas con un proceso semejante en la poblacion mudejar: la formacion de hermandades."<sup>6</sup>

Leaving aside the question of the usefulness of the term 'poblacion semita' or the evidence for hermandades amongst the Jews, one might infer that Mitre is implying cohesiveness as the consequence of the massacres and not taking into consideration the importance of tensions and conflicts for the understanding of Jewish communal life of the period.

Ben-Sason, on the basis of quite different methods arrives at the conclusion that:

התפיסה החברתית של מגורשי ספרד ואבותיהם אינה של דיפורמה ומרדנות, לא כלפי פנים ולא כלפי  
 אין בהם חולק על הריבוד החברתי בקהלותיהם. מדבריהם עלתה אידיאולוגיה שנחגשה בחוגי חסידים שבו  
 המעריכה ביותר את החצרנות. היא מנוסחת בעקביות מימי ר' יוסף ק' שושאן ועד ר' יוסף קארו.

## 7

Ben-Sason's, essentially polemic, study of social thought is based on sources from the late xivth to the early xvth centuries and draws conclusions on the thought of the exiles from Spain 'and their forefathers'.

The second attitude, that of explaining the social tensions as centered mainly around ideological or religious issues, might be seen in Graetz. Writing of Arama, he affirms:

"He, as all the rabbis and preachers of the time, was zealous for the faith against philosophic and scientific investigation ..."<sup>8</sup>

This tension, for Graetz, was accompanied by a decline in philosophic creativity, itself the product of a social decline.

Other historians have accepted this scheme. Husik, for example, concludes his history of Medieval Jewish Philosophy by stating that:

"...the political and economic conditions of the Jews in the xivth and xvth centuries deteriorated and freedom and toleration were succeeded by persecution and expulsion, the Jews became more zealous for their own spiritual heritage as distinguished from foreign importations; philosophy and rationalism began to be regarded askance particularly as experience showed that scientific training was not favourable to Jewish steadfastness and loyalty. In suffering and persecution those who stuck to their posts were as a rule not the so called enlightened who played with foreign learning, but the simple folk who believed in Torah and



tradition in the good old style ... Thus it was that mysticism and obscurantism took the place of enlightenment as a measure of self defence."<sup>10</sup>

For Husik then, the tensions exist between 'simple folk-obscurantists-tradition' on the one hand and 'philosophers-rationalists' on the other.

Simon Dubnow's views do not differ substantially from those of the previous writers:

"these conciliatory tendencies of the epoch of restoration were supplanted, towards the end of the xvth century by tendencies to conflict, at the time when the outer situation of the Spanish Jews was worsening, on the eve of the Inquisition and the expulsion.." "At the decline of Jewish culture in Spain the flames of past conflagrations (i.e. Maimonidean controversies between rationalists and their opponents) reappeared".<sup>11</sup>

Baer's model of tensions deserves, because of its more extensive documentation and broader implications, an analysis of its own. But for our purpose it may suffice to quote his views on the origins of the tensions which he sees as characteristic of the History of the Jews in Spain from the Moslem period onwards:

"The cultural activity fostered by the courtiers was allowed to flourish only through the neglect and the religious and moral laxity of the rulers and not as a result of the definite policy of tolerance and individual freedom. In the south and in the north, both in Islam and Christianity, nationalist and religious movements, primitive in character, were forming, which were due to make an end of the existing laxity. Nevertheless the patterns of life developed in the small Moslem states already laid the foundations for Jewish existence in Spain under Christian rule."<sup>12</sup>

His views for the xvth century are fully consistent with his general model of tensions for the preceding centuries:

"Most of them (the Jews in xvth century Christian Spain) lived a life of poverty and piety which restricted their horizons and aspirations, while many of those Jews who did attain to wealth and political power held aloof from their brethren and from the traditional religious and popular institutions. Beginning with the middle of the fifteenth century, we hear new complaints about the undermining effects of philosophical study and Averroism upon religion and morality. In the fifteenth century, as in previous ages, religious Averroism existed as a historical force undermining the foundations of Jewish and national and religious unity."<sup>13</sup>

Similar in intent are the phrases used by Barzilai to describe the social tensions current within the xvth century Hispano-Jewish communities. The model is again mainly ideological neglecting the social and economic issues:

"...rationalism, when driven to its logical conclusions may even become a socially disruptive force ... it is aristocratic, serving minority needs contrary to the democratic and popular character of Judaism ... say the anti-rationalists ... rationalism tended to undermine the integrity of religious practice and preservation of national hopes and aspirations, it evokes in the people centrifugal tendencies of dissolution and religious decline ..."<sup>14</sup>

This model of tensions, which takes the moral literature of the period as its main source and at face value is highly problematic. One of the problems is the relative neglect of other issues which had their importance in the creation of tensions and conflicts within the Jewish communities of Spain in the xvth century.

### Purpose

It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze the issues, outside the previously mentioned ideological models, at stake in the tensions within the community.

In order to do this the following chapters will analyze the elements of social criticism in two literary sources: the *Iggeret Musar* of Solomon Alami and a group of poems by Solomon Bonafed.

It will also seek to demonstrate coherence in a series of incidents and complaints which have hitherto been seen in isolation, if at all, and to show the recurrence of conflict on issues of government, taxation and interference by the 'alemim' or 'powerful individuals'.

Finally, this thesis will try to show that the characterization of the group of courtiers as 'centrifugal forces' or 'undermining forces' is not entirely useful just as the characterization of the rabbinical group as champions of 'the simple folk' is of limited validity.

### Sources

The problem, therefore, is suggested not only by xvth century sources themselves, but also by the historiography of the subject. The sources used here are sometimes those which have been used in a different manner by previous historians.

#### 1) Literary sources

- (a) Solomon Alami's treatise, the so-called *Iggeret Musar*,<sup>15</sup> a moralistic epistle or tract, has been chosen because it is dated and because its date, Spanish origin and concerns are undoubted and because social issues are prominent and central to its purpose.

- (b) Solomon Bonafed's poems of invective against the 'honoured individuals of the community of Saragossa',<sup>16</sup> offer criticisms which often recall those of Alami and are motivated by a well dated and placed historical incident. They present the problem of the validity of poems of invective and satire as documents for social history.

## 2) Documentary sources

The history of social tensions and conflict in Castile and Aragon is documented mainly by recourse to documents published by:

- (a) Serrano y Sanz mainly from notarial archives in Saragossa.<sup>17</sup>
- (b) the collection of documents by Baer from various sources and archives. Some of these have been used by Baer and Neuman in their respective works, but not essentially for the purpose of this thesis and often with a different interpretation.
- (c) the collection of documents by Suarez Fernandez<sup>18</sup> which contains some previously unpublished records.
- (d) to these should be added the various documents used for background information taken mainly from those published in Sefarad.

The remaining part of this introduction will try to give a brief survey of the social economic and political conditions of the Jews which formed the background to this study.

### Demography

One of the more obvious effects of the pogroms of 1391 was the reduction in the number of Jews through death, conversion and emigration.

That can be said with certainty. Less uncontroversial is the number of the dead, the converts and the emigrants. Llorente, Bedarride and Amador<sup>19</sup> (the last with caution) have suggested 50,000 dead for the Crown of Aragon while others have suggested 100,000 for Castile.<sup>20</sup> With the exception of Netanyahu<sup>21</sup> most modern historians think these are exaggerated. For the converts, the number given for the xvth century by Vicens Vives<sup>22</sup> is 100,000 converts between 1391 and 1415 (i.e. taking into consideration those who converted as a result of the disputation at Tortosa and the legislation of Valladolid in 1412).

Netanyahu arrives at a figure of 600,000 to 700,000 for the 1480's which seems exaggerated. Of contemporary sources, he quotes Reuben b. Nissim Gerondi's assertion of 140,000 converts during 1391; he also quotes Zacuto and other chroniclers of the late xvth century who claim that there were 200,000 converts in 1391 and the same number for the period 1412-1415.<sup>23</sup>

As for emigration there are no figures. One can point, however, to the main directions of the movement, such as to Portugal (e.g. the Abravanel) to North Africa (e.g. Barfat, R.S. b.Z. Duran) to Italy (e.g. Asarja b. Joseph b. Abba Mari Bonafoux, translator of Boethius' De Consolatione, Zarqo grammarian).

For the number of Jewish families at the time of the expulsion probably the most reliable figure is that of Bernaldez (or Seneor) confirmed by Baer, of 35,000 casas in Castile and 6,000 in Aragon.<sup>24</sup> From tax assessments, Suarez Fernandez arrives at a figure of 100,000 people for Castile dispersed among 216 aljamas or local communities. Most Castilian aljamas, Suarez points out, were small, consisting of 30 to 40 vecinos. There were, however, ten (Segovia, Toledo, Trujillo, Guadalajara, Ocana, Almazan, Soria, Avila, Zamora, Murcia) which had an approximate population of 300 families.<sup>25</sup>

### Occupations

According to Vicens Vives, after the end of the xivth century, the role of the Jews as usurers or money lenders expanded and 'they obtained control of most of the money in circulation'.<sup>26</sup>

Some confusion arises from his next statement that 'During the xvth century conversos took the place of Jews in loaning money to kings and aristocrats, churches and town councils'.<sup>27</sup>

This generalization, undocumented, has been made both before and after<sup>Vicens</sup> Vives.

While the Jews did indeed engage in money lending, a correct assessment of their role can be made only on the basis of comparative studies which would estimate the relation of lending by Jews to that by Genoese, conversos and Christians in general, as well as take into account the Jews' role as intermediaries for other 'capitalists' or sources of capital, e.g. the nobility for whom they often acted as stewards.

Sometimes these generalizations are made on the basis of overinterpretation, on aprioristic lines, of sources which are bound to be of a financial nature. Thus Serrano y Sans seems to have exaggerated the part played by the Jews in Saragossan money lending using documents which, as Baer points out, show the Jews, more often than not, as debtors rather than creditors.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, J. Rodriguez Fernandez<sup>29</sup> asserts that 'la ocupacion predominante de los hebreos leoneses estuvo en el orden practico de los prestamos y usuras' although there seems to be amongst his documents from the xvth century (taken in any case only from sources in Leon) a preponderance of tax-collectors rather than simply usurers and quite a few physicians. It is similarly doubtful whether a single mention of a debt is enough to show that an individual is a full-time money lender.<sup>30</sup>

The collection of taxes, on the other hand, was a very frequent occupation of xvth century Jewry. Names of tax-collectors for the Crown in Castile and even of families or dynasties of tax-collectors are known from various sources, especially the documents published by

Baer<sup>31</sup> and McKay,<sup>32</sup> Local monographs such as those of Rodriguez Fernandez for Leon,<sup>33</sup> those of Cantera for Burgos,<sup>34</sup> or Leon Tello for Palencia<sup>35</sup> show them collecting taxes for municipalities. They also collected taxes for the nobility and Church.

It is hard to determine what percentage of the Jewish communities these tax collectors represented, but it is quite safe to assume that they were in a minority. Nevertheless, their connections with influential Christians made them, if they were not members of the ruling elites, a group to be reckoned with in their communities.

They formed part of an upper class in their communities. Of similar standing were, perhaps, the physicians. One can compile a long and by no means exhaustive list of them for Aragon from Baer's collection and perhaps shorter ones for Castile, including some famous ones such as Rabi Mair, physician to Enrique III, Maestre Shemaya, physician to Enrique IV and Rabbi Abraham, physician under Isabel.

Similar contacts with the nobility were also enjoyed by translators, e.g. Jacob of Ucles or R. Moses Arragel who worked for the masters of Santiago and Calatrava respectively.<sup>36</sup>

In this privileged category one might include astronomers such as Honorato de Bona / <sup>-fide</sup> or Abraham Zacuto.<sup>37</sup>

Next in the social scale were the numerous 'artisans' many of whom were engaged in the manufacture of clothing, shoemaking, harnessing, jewellery, etc. There were also small pedlars, small merchants, some of whom



bought textiles, e.g. at Bilbao, in order to resell them and sometimes acted as agents for converso or Christian merchants of Burgos.<sup>38</sup>

A small but not unimportant category was composed of those engaged in what Dinur<sup>39</sup> has described as "services", the communal employees such as the shamash, the hazan, teachers of children, etc.

At the bottom of the scale were the paupers catered for by the numerous charitable institutions.

### Autonomy

These various groups were grouped in local units with varying degrees of autonomy. They elected (at times) a council formed mainly of laymen which had various powers. These covered very diverse areas and had the right to tax both for internal and external purposes; also, they had legislative rights concerning these taxes and forms of election, religious behaviour, the right to pass regulations concerning meat and wine sales, seating arrangements in the synagogue, administration of communal funds and estate, education, etc.

There were autonomous judicial courts, both lay and rabbinical, with a probable majority of lay ones in our period. There were also officers, sometimes Jews, with executive powers such as the 'alguacil' or 'vedin'.

These institutions had originated in Mishnaic and Talmudic thought and had adapted to their local environment by which they were often influenced in forms of legislation, government, commercial law and practice, etc.<sup>40</sup>

There is then, ample justification for considering these aljamas as units and observing the social relationships within them.

Nevertheless, these inner social relationships were affected by external political circumstances such as the relative strength of the Crown pledged to its protection or the towns.

### Political background

Two major tendencies in the politics of the Crown may be said to be relevant to communal history in this period.

The one is the relative strength of the Crown at different times. Two important periods of anti-Jewish activity, 1391 and 1412-15, coincide with minority situations in the Crown of Castile. Later on, the strength achieved by the concurrence of Crown, towns and nobility would enable the Catholic Monarchs to expel the Jews.

The other is the policy of centralization discernible throughout the century. One of its effects on the Jewish community was the gradual erosion of autonomy. This can be noticed in the increased frequency of internal statutes being promulgated by the monarchs, their frequent appointments of communal officers or annulments of internal appointments and perhaps in the legislation for the abolition of criminal jurisdiction; and later on, by the replacement of the Jewish judge by the corregidor, e.g. in Avila.<sup>41</sup> Tensions might flare into conflict with more ease in circumstances of weaker self-government.

Relations between town council and aljama affected, similarly, the life of the community. These relations varied to a great degree. Nevertheless historians have seen various patterns governing them while agreeing on a general deterioration of relations.

The background to attitudes of towns might be seen in the general European accentuation of their monopolistic tendencies, as well as in their general intention to extend their jurisdiction and their ability to do so.

More explicit would seem to be theories such as that of, amongst others, Netanyahu,<sup>42</sup> which maintains that the Church, 'spearhead of the drive against the Jews of Spain', derived its force from the burgher class, which, when called upon to help the monarchs in their determination to 'crush the power of the feudal lords' put demands concerning the Jews which led to their exile. This neat pattern which explains the expulsions of England, France and Spain might have to be qualified in view of recent research, but it agrees with most other descriptions of the period in stressing the antagonism between town and aljama.

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More particularly Spanish is Haliczzer's hypothesis that the conversos who had gained control of the town councils were responsible for the expulsion, done in self defence against the Jews.

The religious element in Jewish Christian relations throughout the century should not go unmentioned. It is an important factor in the long term enmities between Jews and Christians and it also served to define the targets of attack and formulate the expressions of hostility from the

1391 pogroms to the expulsion of 1492. Throughout the century the fear of Jewish influence on the conversos and the wish to induce the Jews to accept Christianity form the basis of discriminatory and adverse legislation.

### Social tensions and social conflict

Finally some words on the terminology of the problem might be in order. It would seem that the terms 'social tension' and 'social conflict' have certain specific connotations in modern sociology. So much so that L. Coser finds them as indicative of different and indeed contradictory views of the functions of social conflict:

Both "tensions" and "strains" connote injury due to overexertion, overtasking or excessive pressure, thus connoting some form of sickness in the system.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the use of the term social tensions would seem to imply a 'Durkheimian quest for social cohesion in the face of threatening anomie' rather than 'the Weberian insistence that conflict cannot be excluded from social life'.<sup>45</sup>

In other words the use of the concept social conflict is held to mirror a positive attitude to its role in society while the use of the term social tensions seems to show a negative attitude based on an analogy to disease which should be studied in order to be eliminated.

These problems are, of course, significant even for the xvth century. But given the state of research on the question at present, it seemed more useful to collect the evidence and try to identify the issues at stake.

The term social tension is, therefore, used as potential conflict including criticism, grievances voiced in literature and general hostility leading to conflict.

Conflict is used to cover medieval concepts such as 'zizanies', 'discords', 'querellas', 'mahloqet', and includes accusations to Christians (i.e. external and armed) authorities, physically violent encounters between groups.

Nevertheless it should be pointed out that xvth century Hispano-Jewish thinkers who mention discord, hostility or conflict do not see these as either endemic or creative social phenomena but, on the contrary, as causes of decline and catastrophe. Therefore in xvth century terms communal conflict per se plays a negative role.

FOOTNOTES

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4. Cf.e.g. Amador de los Rios, Historia Social, Politica y Religiosa de los judios de Espana y Portugal, Madrid (reimpresion Aguilar), 1973, p.449, BH2, p.95.
5. Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios Sefardies (ed. Hasan) Madrid 1970, p.366.
6. Los Judios y la corona de Castilla en el transito al siglo xv, in Cuadernos de Historia (Anexos de la Revista Hispania), 3, Madrid 1969, p.365.
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8. Graetz-S.P.R. History of the Jews (Hebrew) Warsaw 1968, Vol.VI, pp.246-8.
9. Ibid.
10. History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, NY 1969, p.429.
11. Historia Universal del pueblo judio (transl.L. Dujovne) Buenos Aires 1951, V, p.316-7.
12. BH1, p. 38; cf. also idem, Galut, Berlin 1936, p.39.
13. BH2, pp. 253, 258.
14. Barzilay, Between Faith and Reason, The Hague-Paris 1967, pp.11, 12, 76.
15. Ed. Haberman, Jerus.1946; ed. Jellinek Vienna 1872.
16. Ed. Schirman, Kobez-al-Jad, Minora Manuscripts Hebraica, tom, iv, Jerus. 1946.
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18. Documentos acerca de la Expulsion de los Judios, Valladolid, 1964.
19. Amador, op.cit., p.473, n.2.

20. Mitre Fernandez, op.cit., p.351.
21. Op.cit., p.239.
22. Approaches to the History of Spain (transl. and ed. J.C. Ullman) London, 1970, p.77.
23. Netanyahu, op.cit., p.239 ff.
24. BH2, pp. 510/11.
25. Op.cit., p.56ff.
26. The economies of Catalonia and Castile (cf.n.2) p.50.
27. ibid., p.51.
28. Cf. Serrano y Sanz, op.cit., p.44 and 252, and Baer, Besprechungen Zur Geschichte der Juden in Christlichen Spanien, MGWJ, lxxviii, 1924, p.58, n.3.
29. La Juderia de la ciudad de Leon, Leon 1969, p.135.
30. Ibid., document No.92, p.229.
31. IIB, index, sv. Staatsverwaltung und Hofdienst.
32. A McKay, Popular movements and pogroms in xvth century Castile, Past and Present, 55, 1972, pp.41-44.
33. Op.cit., pp.236/48.
34. F. Cantera Burgos, Alvar Garcia de Sta. Maria y su familia de conversos, Historia de la juderia de Burgos y de sus conversos mas egregios, Madrid 1952, p.28. ('Solomon aben Cahula, representante del arrendatario de las alcabalas de Burgos y su Merindad').
35. Los Judios de Palencia, Publicaciones Institucion 'Tello Tellez de Meneses', No.25, 1967.
36. For Jacob of Ucles v. IB No.475 (1402); for Arragel v. bibliography in Carl Otto Nordstrom, The Duke of Alba's Castilian Bible, Uppsala, 1967, pp.236/41; cf. also added bibliography in J. Gutman's review in The Art Bulletin, Vol.LI, 1969, p.95.
37. For bibliography cf. E.J.s.v. Duran, Profayt and Abraham Zacuto.
38. Cf. e.g. SF, No.205 and p.53, n.22 and pp.20/1.
39. Cf. B. Dinur, Israel Ba-Golah, Vol.2, Book 2, Tel Aviv, 1966, p.204/5.
40. Cf. Baer, The beginnings of the organization of Jewish communities in the Middle Ages, Zion, 15, 1950, pp.1-41.

41. P. Leon Tello, Los Judios de Avila, Avila, 1963, pp.60/1, No.xiii.
42. Don Isaac Abravanel, Phila. 1953 p.41 cf. also Baron's explanation in Social and Religious History of the Jews, Vol. X, pp.<sup>207/8</sup> Baer's view in BH2, pp. 433-443, especially p.423 and p.435.
43. The Castilian urban patriciate and the Jews, AHR, 78, 1973, pp. 35-62.
44. Lewis Coser, The functions of social conflict, London 1956 (reprint 1972) p.22 and Ch.1 passim.
45. Ibid., p.21 on Talcott Parsons. Many of the observations on tensions and conflict in Kurt Lewin's essays in Resolving Social Conflicts, ed.G. Weiss Lewin, London 1973 (1st ed. 1948) coincide with modern historical thinking on the problem in medieval Spanish Jewry. His concept of 'the leader from the periphery' is not entirely unsimilar to Baer's view of the Spanish court Jew (ibid. p.196 ff.) For Valdeon Baroque, Los conflictos sociales en el reino de Castilla en los siglos xiv y xv, Madrid 1975, p.5, social conflict in Castile reflects the basic contradiction of society. The principal antagonism, for him, exists between 'senores y campesinos'. Similar is the view of Reyna Pastor de Tognèri, Conflictos Sociales y Estancamiento Economico en la Espana Medieval, Barcel.1974, p.8: 'es la clase productora, el campesinado, la verdaderamente antagonica del poder feudal'.



## CHAPTER I

### SOCIAL CRITICISM AND PROTEST IN SOLOMON ALAMI'S WORK (1415)

Few historians would attempt to discuss problems of Hispano-Jewish society at the beginning of the xvth century without mentioning Solomon Alami. Not that his importance is apparent at first glance. He is known through only one book of modest proportions and unimpressive title. Indeed the name 'Iggeret Musar'<sup>1</sup> is not original and the book might pass for yet another exponent of medieval Musar literature. And yet Alami is one of the fiercest and most consistent social critics of his time. It is in this light that this chapter shall deal with him. Not as a thinker concerned with man's relationship with God (though he is of course concerned with that throughout the work) but as a social critic firmly rooted in his historical context and an acute observer of contemporary social circumstances. Although scanty and, to a degree, hypothetical, his biographical data may be set out for the light it may throw on his writing.

#### Biography

Active during the 1391-1415 period, he emigrated to Portugal<sup>2</sup> after the 1391 massacres. This might point to a Castilian, rather than Aragonese, origin. Geographic proximity would support this assumption. Historically it would be improbable that an Aragonese Jew would flee the

massacres by travelling through the kingdom of Castile in which they had originated. Moreover most figures of the Crown of Aragon known to us emigrated to North Africa or Italy. R. Simon b. Zemach Duran and R. Isaac b. Sheshet ~~Barfat~~ are two of the better known of them.

In his account of the decrees of persecution there is a possible additional clue to his Castilian origins. When he speaks of Castile he uses the first person plural including himself:<sup>3</sup>

"ונועה אלינו בדורנו החלאה וקראה ארתנו הרעה. באחרית הימים  
בגלילות קסטיליא לארקה ולרחבה ובמלכות קטלוניא בכוח  
הלנ"א".

When he speaks of Catalonia and Aragon he uses the third person plural, excluding himself:<sup>4</sup>

"וכזה קרה במלכות אראגון לקהילות הנשארות בקום עליהם  
מלך חדש לחדש עליהם גזירות".

As far as his own social position is concerned there is little direct evidence. Some inferences may, however, be made.

His name, *ibn-Lachmish* or *Alami*, does not figure among the oligarchy of tax gatherers and communal leaders known to us. On the other hand, his style is too polished to permit an identification with the humbler classes of Jewish artisans. Indeed the simplicity of its rhymed prose bears the unmistakable stamp of thorough premeditation, conviction and literary experience. His literary allusions are more often Biblical than Talmudic, though his thought seems to be indebted to previous medieval moralists as well. On the whole his Hebrew usage contrasts

sharply with the elaborate preciousness and intentional obscurity and technicality of his contemporaries.

There may be some indication of his position in the community in the various references to life in the Synagogue. His admonitions often concentrate on behaviour at the Synagogue. He reveals a more than usual interest in aspects of Jewish life directly connected with it such as seating arrangements, order of precedence at the calling up to the Reading of the Law, the music of the liturgy, the habits of the intellectual elite during the service,<sup>5</sup> the problems of collecting the charity promised at the Synagogue, and finally the most explicit autobiographical reference in the book concerns his activity in Synagogal politics.

His detailed description of behaviour during preaching at the Synagogue and his identification with the problems of the preacher<sup>6</sup> would lead us to assume that he belonged to this class at least until a more satisfactory way of explaining the above-mentioned peculiarities of his thought is found.

The Iggeret was not composed only in answer to perennial and suprahistorical moral problems, but responded to a concrete historical circumstance. Alami himself formulates the question:<sup>7</sup>

"כהנבתי זה על המנוכה אשר הייתי נבון זה כ"ד שנים כי כלתה  
אלינו הרעה בשנת הקנ"א לאמר מה זאת עשה ה' לנו בכל דור  
ודור להכהידנו..."

This question was not unique. The medieval Jew usually had an answer to the questions posed by the 1391 pogroms which was an elaboration on theodicy.

And yet, individual writers give, within this framework, very revealing and different answers. Duran<sup>8</sup> had said that the neglect of the study of the Bible was a cause of God's wrath. Zacuto records a (probably late) tradition which maintained that the massacres were caused by the neglect of marriage laws.<sup>9</sup> A letter attributed to the circle of Botarel sees the events of 1391 as Messianic portents caused by blasphemy, dishonesty in commerce (or cupidity) and neglect of the Torah.

"רגזה ארץ על שלשה פשעי ישראל בעון ה.ש.בועים ליידי  
שבועת אל עולם ובעון בעל הגזל ובטול ירה כנגד  
כולם".

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The answer of Alami to the question is the *Iggeret Iusan*.

The purpose of the following lines is to analyse his attitudes to certain specific social problems.

#### Alami's attitude to the poor and the artisans

The structure of the book consists in grouping a series of moral admonitions under the heading of different organs mentioned in a Biblical verse.<sup>11</sup>

Alami's tenderness and concern for the poor is evident throughout these sections.

He manages to include an admonition concerning

the poor for every organ.

The eyes: "Open your eyes to the poor of your people".<sup>12</sup>

Under ears: "do not close your ears to the lamentations of the poor".<sup>13</sup>

The mouth should not boast of worldly possessions.<sup>14</sup>

Under hands: "Open your hands to your poor and miserable in secret to satisfy the soul of the afflicted and let your commerce be honest for the Lord does not want charity from theft".<sup>15</sup>

The legs should be used to visit the poor: "Visit the sick and the fettered even if they are poor just as you visit the rich and the noble. For the main point in visiting is to see the poor and feel sympathy for them."<sup>16</sup>

Under sexual organs he admonishes the reader not to marry for wealth.<sup>17</sup>

Under heart he exhorts the reader not to honour men because of their wealth.<sup>18</sup>

Alami takes an unambiguous stance of sympathy to the poor. His admonitions are specific and allow the reader glimpses into the social life of relatively small communities characterised by face to face relationships. His practical advice is reminiscent of some ideas of R. Jonah.<sup>19</sup>

The same sentiments inform the author of the Zohar: "The poor are closer to God ..."<sup>20</sup> R. Jonah admonishes his readers to avoid social differentiations

on the basis of wealth. He gives concrete examples of how to treat the poor and criticises the expressions of social inequality.

Alami is thus firmly embedded in the medieval tradition of social criticism and there is little reason to consider this aspect of his Iggeret as an isolated unrepresentative expression.

Equally sympathetic is his attitude to the artisan. As we know the artisan was the 'typical' Spanish Jew. The anonymous chronicle published by Marx describes the majority of Spanish exiles as artisans.<sup>21</sup>

A study of the occupations of the 'judaisers' tried by the Inquisition of Toledo also reveals a majority of artisans.<sup>22</sup>

It would be tempting to see Alami as part of a tradition of sympathy to the artisan or craftsman expressed by halakhic exponents of the pietistic trend such as Adret, R. Asher, or the Ribash.

The positive attitude to the artisan of R. Asher is evinced in his ruling on workers' (or artisans, craftsmen) guilds. In his Halakhot on Baba Batra he gives a juridical basis and legal status to these associations allowing them to pass regulations and impose fines.<sup>23</sup>

Adret gives an equally positive ruling on the subject:

"אם יסכימו כל בני מלאכה אחת שבעיר כגון הטבחים והצבעים והספנים וכו"כ בענין מלאכתם בהסכמה אחת שכל החבורה שהם בני ענין אחד הרי הם כעיר בפני עצמה ואף על פי שלא הסכימו מדעת שאר בני העיר ובלבד שיהיה בהסכמה אילו חלמיד חכם שבעיר אם ישנו בעיר או אדם חשוב שנחמנה פרוס על העיר..."

The question is complicated, however, by the legal consideration that enactments made by these guilds need ratification by 'an important person'. Adret and Ribash say that this is needed for the validity of the enactment.<sup>25</sup>

Less problematic as antecedent for a positive attitude to the artisan is the trend in favour of the artisan and labour to be found in the Talmud. There are numerous exponents of this trend and they have been studied by various historians.<sup>26</sup>

This should not, however, imply that his attitude is commonplace and merely the usual expression of 'the Jewish attitude to manual labour'. Although Marquez Villanueva<sup>27</sup> has postulated 'the Jewish notion of the dignity of manual labour' on the basis of evidence at second hand, there is an equally Jewish and well documented trend of contempt for the artisan.

This trend has been studied in detail elsewhere but mention can be made of Bonafed's<sup>28</sup> sarcastic remarks on the artisans and Abarbanel's inclusion of the artisan and workers of the land among the 'animal class'.<sup>29</sup> Alami<sup>30</sup> gives us an indication of the social source of this trend of contempt.

"... רוב גדולי דציבור, אציליהם וגאוניהם ורועיהם  
העוכדים לפני דכלכים בטירותם ובחצריהם... וימאסו  
בתורה ודענוה ופלאכה אוכנוה...."

He stands in full contrast to this attitude. He upholds the notion of the dignity of manual labour:<sup>31</sup>

"למד מלאכה להחפרנס מעמלך יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך  
וכוב לך ואל תשאל משואל אכלך השלך על ה" יהבך והוא  
יכלכלך כי כבוד בני אדם וגם בני איש להחפרנס מיגיעם  
ועמלם לא כאשר חשבו הגאים בכסלם יטוב בראשם עמלם  
טוב ארוחת ירק משור אבוס בשלחן בלעדריך רב עתה חרף  
ידך".

32

His views on the desirability of work are reminiscent of those of oriental Wisdom literature especially of the author of Proverbs.<sup>33</sup> The context is however totally different. According to Gordis<sup>34</sup> this literature is explicitly intended for the education of the ruling class. Alami's purpose is not utilitarian and he is not concerned with advice on social success. He is faced with a communal situation in which artisans form the majority but come low in the social scale. Alami is (if the term can be used) non-conformist in relation to his contemporary values rather than one who elaborates an ideology for the ruling class. It may be submitted that this attitude to the artisans informs his view of history as well.

There is an unmistakable difference in his narrative of the conversions of the tax-collectors, i.e. the higher economic strata, on the one hand, and that of



the artisans on the other.

The tax-collectors converted, according to Alami, not because they were forced, nor is there any mention of their suffering:<sup>35</sup>

"רב המוכסים החומסים יצאו מכם בהמונע מהם ...  
דהכירות והכנסים כי לא למדו אומנות  
להיות מתפרנסים".

The artisans however, converted because:

"מפני החרבה והדוחל והמסגר יצאו מעלי אומנויות  
בראות אלה הקורות וההלאות דוחו ולא יכלו קום  
באלה הנסיונות והתמורות".

36

This seems to be a highly selective view of events.

The rioters of 1391 made no subtle distinctions between Jewish tax-collectors and Jewish artisans, they attacked both groups with equal fierceness.<sup>37</sup> Both groups were 'tried' and saw קורות והלאות.

The difference lies in Alami's attitude of sympathy to the artisan and his critical attitude to the tax-collectors oligarchy.

This critical attitude to the wealthy and the leadership deserves to be examined separately. We shall proceed to isolate themes related to the life style of the judio de la corte, the 'talmudist' or rabbinical leadership, the communal leadership.

#### Criticism of the lifestyle of the judio de la corte

There is an intimate connection between Alami's

views on the artisans and his views on the court Jews. This in two ways. Firstly, for Alami manual work is the opposite of idleness. This conceptual polarity has a social dimension as well. The 'idle' are identified with the leadership, and more precisely with the court Jews.<sup>38</sup>

Alami formulates his idea in Mishnaic phraseology:

"אהב את המלאכה ודחייצות ושנא חרבנות והבטלה והקצלות"

and gives it a narrower, historical character when stating that:

"רוב גדולי הציבור אציליהם וגאוניהם ורועיהם  
העומדים לפני המלכים בסירותם ובחצריהם...  
ימאסו... מלאכת אומנות. אהבו הבטלה גאה  
וגאון".

Thus it can be affirmed that the social tension between artisans and 'court Jews' manifests itself in contempt for the artisan on the part of the court Jew on the one hand, and criticism of the court Jew by Alami who identifies himself with the interests of the artisans and sympathizes with them on the other.

Secondly, the element of idleness is not chosen at random nor is it merely a literary antithesis taken from Wisdom literature.

Maravall<sup>39</sup> has noticed that in the Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea (written towards the end of the century by the converso Fernando de Rojas) idleness is a notable element of the lifestyle of its urban-burgher characters.

He has explained this by correctly pointing out that:

"In the eyes of the xvth century the reputation of the idle class depends on their power over things and persons ... this capacity is shown by abstention from productive labour and lavish expenditure."

Thus, in common with his non-Jewish counterpart (i.e. the urban patriciate), the Jewish courtier was characterized by his 'idleness'. Of course this is only one element of the lifestyle of this class.

Alami singles out for criticism other characteristic elements of this social group.

One such characteristic is the building of opulent mansions in the city. Sobreques has drawn attention to this feature when describing the xvth century urban non-Jewish patriciate:

"The wealth of this patriciate manifested itself in the construction of magnificent dwellings, much superior, of course, to those of the lower nobility and aping those of the noble magnates (ricosombres)." <sup>40</sup>

The Jewish courtiers are criticised by Alami for this:

"התה בנותיננו בגלותנו על הרוב בית ידשנו בחי מידה ועליות כדונות ויפות גורשנו והשכנו על בני דעה ובחיר האספות יוב גדולי הציבור וכו' ... ויבן היכלות".

41

It may be pointed out that this class was criticised, in the xiiiith century (or beginning of the xivth) <sup>42</sup> for building Synagogues and houses of study to increase their personal fame by the author of the Tiqune Fazohar. <sup>43</sup> Later in the xvth century Abraham Saba would express similarly negative sentiments when rebuking his contemporaries for building palatial mansions. <sup>44</sup>

The criticism of this feature of the urban patriciate appears also in contemporary Castilian poetry of social protest. Juan de Mena (1411-1456) uses the theme of the impermanent nature of wealth to voice his criticism in the

"Coplas contra los pecados mortales":

"No aprovechan ...  
grandes casas ...  
pues que todo ha de quedar  
salvo el solo bien obrar  
Muerte, cuando tu vinieres."<sup>45</sup>

More concrete is the allusion to the mansion of Diego Arias in Gomez Manrique's (1412-1490) "Coplas para el senor Diego Arias Davila ..."

"Que fartos te vienen dias  
de congojas tan sobradas  
que las tus ricas moradas  
por las chozas o ramadas  
de los pobres trocarias  
que so los techos polidos  
y dorados  
se dan los vuelcos mezclados  
con gemidos."<sup>46</sup>

Another element singled out for criticism is the ostentation in clothes and feminine luxury.

Again we have here an element of xvth century urban life which is depicted in the *Celestina* and which has been related by Maravall to the point that in relation to the rural population the urban one uses a larger part of its income in conspicuous consumption. The element of feminine luxury in that work is seen in terms of the connection between the development of luxury and urban culture.<sup>47</sup>

Alami alludes to these elements as part of the distinguishing features of the

רוב גדולי הציבור, אצילותם, ובאונותם ורוקיהם

העומדים לפני המלכים בסירותם ובהצריהם".

which he<sup>49</sup> describes and attacks:

"... ויהנו בידיהם מפתח סגולה אוצרוחיהם  
וילבשו בגדי מלכות המחלצות והמעטפות  
והלבשנה נשותיהם ובנותיהם כסדרה וגבירות  
והבאנה בעדי עדיים זהב וכסף ופנינים  
ואבנים יקרות".

He sees the discriminatory legislation of 1412-1415 (its clauses containing restrictions and distinctions on Jewish clothes) as a divine retribution for:

"תחת היותנו לבושים מלבושים הלבישונו בגדים  
כוננים להיות ניכרים בחרפה ובוז וכל העם רואים  
ותחת השחתת פאה זקונינו ופאת ראשינו נגזר  
עלינו לגדל שער ראשינו וזקנינו כאבליים".

50

Alami is not alone in his concern for avoiding this form of conspicuous consumption. At the close of the xiiiith century the Raya Mehemna had contrasted the wealthy "who are resplendent in their outer attire but are rotten within" with those who "are beautiful within though their dress is shabby."<sup>51</sup>

Closer in time and sentiment to Alami, the author of the Sefer Ha-Qanah (written in the second half of the xivth c. by an anonymous cabalist and being copied in the year 1415) exclaims:

"We unto those who joyfully and pridefully flaunt their colorful garments, forgetting that they are exiles among the nations, far away from their homeland. They should wear black and groan and weep, and not beautiful clothes which they may have to doff in disgrace tomorrow..."<sup>52</sup>

Alami does not limit himself, like the Raya Mehemna to pointing to the moral contrasts and undesirability

of ostentatious garments. He is closer to the Ha-Qanah who alludes to the possible political consequences of the practice but unambiguously points to the social stratum he is addressing and blames it for discriminatory legislation (amongst other things).

The situation was one which caused concern not only to moralists but to a certain type of Jewish political leader as well.

In 1432, envoys of the Castilian communities gathered at Valladolid for an assembly presided over by Abraham Benveniste, chief Rabbi of Castile. They thought this issue of enough importance to include it among others such as taxation, informers, judicial administration. The text of the fifth 'gate' of the ordinances of Valladolid is devoted to sumptuary laws. The motivations given in the text are of particular interest in our context even if they are seventeen years later than the composition of the Iggeret because they show the currency of Alami's ideas at this date.

"Since in many communities there are dishonest and damaging rules (of behaviour) and customs concerning attire and the clothes of women and their jewells which are extravagant. Also they wear dresses of great value and ostentation (de gran muestra) because they are made of costly rich materials and because they employ great quantities of materials as in the trains (and they wear) jewells of gold or silver and alchofar and rich forradores ( lining ) and many other things.

And these are causes of evils such as the great expenses and debts incurred in by the householders as well as the increase of the envy and jealousy of the Christians because of it and they also think that it is from their poverty that great riches are (gathered?)(text difficult, and from this it follows that they pass evil decrees on us from time to time. And

we have not yet recovered from the earlier ones and therefore it is fitting to pass ordinances and be stringent on this matter ..."<sup>53</sup>

We are clearly dealing with a pietistic trend but one which in the late xivth and xvth centuries was accompanied if not superceded by political considerations on the effect it might have on Christian society. The political dimensions of the criticism of luxurious attire are emphasized in a story of the Shevet Judah which reflects mental attitudes of the Jewish Castilian leaders. Briefly (in ch.8) the imaginary 'great King Alfonso' asks a series of questions of Jewish envoys. Amongst them one is to the effect that the Jews wore garments like Christian nobles and did not follow the laws forbidding them the use of silk and that this was not fit for a nation of exiles and serfs. The point to be noted is that this is one of the 'sins of the Jews' against the Christians in the narrative. Feminine luxury is also mentioned by ibn Verga in this connection.

The background to this feature of the wealthy Castilian Jew is what Vicens Vives and Sanchez Albornoz agree in describing as "the immoderate desire for luxury and ostentation which characterized their (xvth century Castilian) society and was ... one of its chief vices. The nobility, the clergy and the bourgeoisie ruined themselves because of their desire to dazzle others with jewels, clothes and ornaments."<sup>54</sup> Bianco Gonzalez, in his study of the xvth century Castilian courtier presents a series of contemporary texts from chronicles which enumerate to the point of tedium the luxury of ornament and attire.<sup>55</sup> This is the case with the festivities described in the

'Cronica de Alvaro de Luna'<sup>56</sup> or the "Chronicle of Miguel Lucas de Iranzo ..." of which latter he remarks: "The first thing which draws the attention in the chronicle is the importance given to the decorative aspect of life: attire and dress ..."<sup>57</sup>

This aspect did not escape the attention of xvth century Castilian poets of social protest. Gonzalo Martinez de Medina (1402), exclaims:

"... el diablo .....  
muestranos ...  
mujeres fermosas e ropas, mantones  
... e joyas preciosas e otras maravillas ..."<sup>58</sup>

Gomez Manrique elaborates on the theme of the transitory character of these:

"...Que las vestiduras netas  
y ricamente bordadas  
sabe que son enforradas  
de congojas extremadas  
e de pasiones secretas ..."<sup>59</sup>

Fray Inigo de Mendoza (1425-1507(?) speaks against the 'grandes':

"Oh brocados malgastados  
en las faldas de las duenas  
cuando los descomulgados  
van al infierno danados  
por unas deudas pequenas ..."<sup>60</sup>

But of all these texts the closest in time to Alami's Iggeret is a page of Juan Rodriguez's 'Triunfo de las doñas' (dedicated to the Queen Doña Maria) which describes in great detail the luxury of masculine attire.<sup>61</sup>

The status conferred by luxurious attire was connected with that conferred by the use of horses. So much so that a (later) law was passed in Castile to the effect that only those who owned a horse could wear silk.<sup>62</sup>



Alami includes . . . means of transport in his list of elements of the lifestyle of the Jewish courtier:<sup>63</sup>

"ויקהו להם פרדות גדולות וטובות  
למרכבוה".

Before closing this section on Alami's criticism of the wealthy court Jews it may be pointed out that a Castilian xvth century poet includes these elements (palatial mansions, ostentatious attire, feminine luxury, jewells, . . . etc.) in a list of the attributes of 'senores de villas e de alcarias':

"Honrados servidos e acompanados  
costosas moradas hermosas mujeres  
fijos e fijas con muchos placeres  
de muy ricas joyas son bien jaezados  
caballos e mulas, montes e dehesas  
....."<sup>64</sup>

For Alami these were some of the causes of the downfall of the Jewish courtiers<sup>65</sup>

"וגרשוב מחצרות הכלכים והשרים סחוב והשלך  
וקיקלון לפנייהם".

But it would be wrong to assume that Alami's criticism is limited to the wealthy court Jews. Other groups of the upper stratum and leadership are singled out for attack and it is to these that the following lines will turn their attention.

#### Alami's criticism of leadership strata

One of the strongest social grievances voiced by xvth century Jews concerned the issue of taxation. The minority of tax-collectors was a very visible target for attack from both Jews and non-Jews. The increase in

taxation in the Late Middle Ages was also resented by both Jews and non-Jews.

The Jews had been involved in tax-collection since Moslem rule and expressions of protest against them were voiced at various times throughout the Middle Ages. Baer has devoted ample space in his work to the pietistic ideas of the author of the *Raya Mehemna*. Amongst these remarks some refer to the issue of taxation.

For him the Jewish leaders 'evade their full share of the tax burden'.<sup>66</sup>

Another expression of criticism is to be found in the poems of Todros b. Judah Halevi, specially those which Baer has attributed to the later (post-1281) period.

As an example the following lines may be quoted:<sup>67</sup>

"על מה שדורשים מהעניים כמה ראשים שבו רשים  
ועשירים נצו וגם נצו רש אין לנגוש."

Or we might mention the verses of invective directed against Abu Salim b. Abudarham and Abu Saliman b. Shoshan.<sup>68</sup>

It was during that period that Abner of Burgos "saw the poverty of the Jews, my people ... who have been oppressed and broken and heavily burdened by taxes throughout their long captivity ..." and converted. (1295)<sup>69</sup>

Amongst these critics we might include the author of the *Ha-Qana* of whom Baer<sup>70</sup> has said that "he is in accord with the Christian zealots who thought to dislodge the Jewish tax-farmers from government service."

Alami follows in their footsteps but is perhaps more direct and explicit. For him the tax collectors are:

"המכובים הדוככים."

Of the leaders it is said:

"הוי חשבי אוון ופועלי רע על מסכנות להביא  
עצות מרחוק להקים חוקים לא טובים לפרוק עול  
המס מעליהם ולהטילו על ענייהם..."

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Such criticisms would continue to be voiced throughout the century. Indeed some of the ordinances passed at the assembly of Valladolid respond to such complaints. These criticisms were acted upon.

They are informed by the same tension which would cause, later in the century, the complaints brought by the lower classes of the *aljama* against the upper stratum as is shown in detail elsewhere.

The point to be emphasized is that there is a continuity of criticism and conflict on this issue throughout the century. In this respect Alami is certainly not 'isolated' or a lone figure as has been maintained.

There is yet another group of the leadership which is singled out for attack by Alami. This is composed of the talmudists.

These are dealt with by Alami in a long paragraph which contains various strands:

"תעו במדבר שגו ברואה קצת הכמי אחרונינו בשנאתם  
זה את זה בגנותם ומכרם דתורה במתנותם לא שהו  
לבם רק לדדק בקריאתה ולרחיב זידושים ופסלים  
ופירושים בתלמוד כשנרוב והיבורים מזיבורים  
כונים לא יועילו ולא יצילו ליינו הדעות ודכברות  
יל כל כוץ וכרץ הלי הלכס כל הלכות ויחליכו אררי  
גוים ענוות צדיקה ופרישותה וקדושתה כה שזה מגלה  
זר מסחיר..."

73

The first element is the lack of cohesion amongst the Talmudic leadership. Profayt Duran had implied this of the leadership in general.<sup>74</sup> Indeed there were xivth century antecedents of conflict amongst the leadership, some of which might have been embedded in the traditions which Alami drew on. The case of Joseph Pichon had had a notoriety which transcended communal barriers and was recorded in Ayala's chronicle.<sup>75</sup> Another case of conflict, which Baer dates as posterior to 1391 shows us the Spanish leadership divided on the question of whether Judah Halevi deserved to be buried honourably or not. He had been a courtier (probably in Navarre) and rumour had it that he had 'become a Sadoquite'. R. Joseph Orabuena refused to authorise an honourable burial, while Don Benveniste b. Lavi (probably supported by Don Meir Alguades, Chief Rabbi of Castile) insisted on it.<sup>76</sup>

Also of this period is the quite intense conflict between lay and rabbinical leadership in Saragossa mainly centering around Crescas on the one hand and Don Shelomo b. Lavi on the other.<sup>77</sup> But Alami is referring probably to a more general sentiment of dissatisfaction with the lack of unanimity and prevalent discord and dissension which characterised the rabbinical leadership.

There is also the grievance of the simple householder who could not see the social significance of some aspects of the Talmudic academy and its products and which has its parallels in non-Jewish European and Spanish thought.

In Castile, roughly half a century before the composition of the Iggeret, the Libro de Buen Amor included

amongst its stories a biting parody of academic disputations and exegetical method.<sup>78</sup>

Akin to the criticism of the Talmudist's characteristics is the trend of criticism, in Spanish literature, of the lawyers. One must remember that the analogy between talmudic studies and law studies is medieval. Abner of Burgos<sup>79</sup> had compared them and a contemporary of Alami, Joshua Halorqui, had described the studies at the Talmudic Academy by using such analogies as the Decretals or Canon Law.<sup>80</sup>

The franciscan Eiximenis (1340-1409) in his 'Regiment de la cosa publica',<sup>81</sup> for example, fulminates against the jurists. Interestingly enough he uses the metaphor of the spider: "fan de la llei tela d'aranya, que no pot retenir res que sia fort, mas rete mosquits e coses sens forca." Similarly Alami says "they draw spiders' nets with their squabblings ... they were not impartial in enforcing the law..."<sup>82</sup> Both are products of an age of discontent with the growing complexity of legal or halakhic studies which often lost their social significance. There was a yearning for simpler forms of piety which in Spain crystallised into currents of thought which may be termed pre-erasmic<sup>83</sup> and also into the beginnings of inner reform amongst the religious orders. As Beltran de Heredia has pointed out: "Aspiration to the life of observance made itself felt in some of our Castilian friars beginning in the early decades of the fifteenth century."<sup>84</sup>

The alternatives to the contemporary Talmudism are not unanimous. For Efodi, Biblical studies could and should be pre-eminent. Da Piera, in the introduction to his 'Imre Noash'<sup>85</sup> refers unblushingly and without any sense of guilt to his lack of proficiency in Talmudic terminology and criticises the use of Arameisms which is a distinguishing feature of the Talmudist's prose.

Another grievance of Alami's is the oft repeated accusation against the Talmudists of "buying and selling the Torah for gifts." The same accusation occurs in the writings of the author of the Ha-Qana and Ha-Pelia<sup>86</sup> to whom Alami may be indebted in his formulation of the paragraph. This is an important and problematic passage. In Late Medieval Europe, the upper and the lower clergy was being strongly criticised for its greed and luxury.<sup>87</sup> Are we confronted here with a Jewish counterpart of this criticism? It would seem that this question has been obscured by the formulation of the problem since Graetz. Graetz<sup>88</sup> had referred to R. Simon b. Zemach Duran as 'the first Rabbi to obtain a salary from the community'. To this Rapoport retorted that there are antecedents of Rabbis receiving salaries before Zemach Duran. Baer,<sup>89</sup> discussing the disapproval of the Ha-Qana, presents the author as arguing against an established custom of the Jews of Spain "where it had long been the practice to assign Rabbis and teachers a fixed salary". One may, of course, argue that it had also been the practice for long to deny Rabbis the halakhic right to receive salaries. Maimonides' ruling on the subject is well known. Evidence of discontent with this practice is to be found in T.S.b.Z as well.<sup>90</sup>

But the criticism of those 'hakhamim' who 'trade their Torah for gifts' is not necessarily a narrow precise criticism of one practice (salary). Economic advantages other than salaries for Rabbis are amply documented. The Rabbi was exempt from taxes according to rulings of Maimonides and Jacob b. Asher.<sup>91</sup> Documents of the xivth century attest to the existence of trusts or 'foundations' giving these 'talmide hakhamim' incomes, houses, etc.<sup>92</sup> If the Alilat Devarim is considered (as it is by most authorities) a Spanish document of the xvth century we might include amongst the economic advantages the possibilities open to the 'talmid hakham', of marrying into the wealthy stratum.<sup>93</sup>

It might conceivably be argued that for those moralists who, like Alami, identified themselves with the poor and the humbler artisans, there was not that much difference between the wealthy and the upper echelons of the rabbinate. Not only because both were of the idle class, but because of their economic advantages and position of power.

Although not much trust can be placed on individual Rabbis' biographies since the problem centers around a social group rather than isolated individual instances, one might point to Adret, Crescas, Simon b. Zemach Duran, Solomon Halevi, as examples of wealthy Rabbis. But the criticisms were not directed against these particular individuals.

For the socio-economic classification of the rabbinical leadership (specially in important positions) it might be more useful to turn to the descriptions of Ha-Qana or Alami or Efodi than to study individual biographies.

If, however, one leaves aside these hypothetical considerations there can be no doubt that there is a feeling of discontent with the features of Rabbinical groups expressed by writers who identify themselves with different social groups.

What unites these criticisms is a feeling of dissatisfaction with the current leadership.

The interesting feature of this criticism is that it bears a dialectical relationship to history. It is caused by historical events but it also colours the view of history of the individual critic.

A modern historian of xvith century historiography, A.A. Neuman,<sup>94</sup> postulated a 'sudden rise of Jewish history' in the xvith century. A rise which 'signals a new awareness on the author's part of the value of history, knowledge and appreciation of its importance in the life of a people and an earnest attempt to apply the lessons of history to problems of their time'.<sup>95</sup>

But, of course, this awareness existed in the early xvth century as well. Efodi, for example, can seriously put forward a view of Jewish history in which the study of the Bible is related to political vicissitudes.<sup>96</sup> We might argue with the view but not with the fact that he has a view of history with which he intends to 'apply the lessons of history to the problems of his time'. Similarly Alami has his own view of history intended to serve as a lesson for the problems of his time.

This view is probably the most controversial of his ideas but must be seen against his immediate historical



background. A Hispano-Jewish thinker writing in 1415 cannot be understood without reference to the events of Tortosa and the legislation and conversion of 1412-14. The Tortosa disputation and related events were foremost considerations of writers of this period such as Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov and Joseph Albo, a point which Baer has rightly stressed.<sup>97</sup> To these one might add Bonastruc Desmaestre whose epistle to the community of Gerona<sup>98</sup> is included in the Shevet Judah.

These authors reacted theologically to the disputation, Albo trying to explain the reasons for his belief and Shem Tov saw the conversions as caused by lack of faith. Alami, while not neglecting the theological aspect, reacted to the events by formulating a view of history which stressed social behaviour.

Christian propaganda made much of the fact that amongst those converted at Tortosa there were some important Aragonese Jews. This fact impressed itself upon the minds of Jewish contemporaries as well. Alami, then presents a view of the past which responds partly to this.

For Alami

"Most of the decrees and calamities which have lately befallen us have been brought about by the rebellious sons of our people who revealed to the heathen whose bonded slaves we are all our secrets and evil ways towards them. Verily we have desecrated God's holy name in their midst, for we have dealt with them guilefully and deceitfully and shrewdly misled them with unfit laws, so that they now despise us and look upon us as thieves, swindlers and adulterers, even as a band of traitors and everything that is vile and refuse they say is of the Jews".<sup>99</sup>

Alami here relates social criticism to a view of the past intended to explain the persecution.

Others had explained the persecution in different ways. As has been mentioned, Efodi had seen them as a punishment for the neglect of biblical studies, Zacuto's tradition as a punishment for non-observance of sexual-laws.<sup>100</sup> The author of the Sefer Alilat Devarim saw the persecutions as a retribution for the evil ways of the Talmudic leadership.

These views of the past are, of course, of little value to ascertain the actual causes of the persecutions. No modern historian can content himself with explaining the causes of the unrest and massacres of 1391 or related xvth century events by accepting uncritically motivations such as the neglect of the Bible.

But on the other hand these views of history may be useful for another purpose. That is, not to elucidate the author's past, but to inform us as to the author's contemporary world view. Thus in the same manner as Efodi's view of the past can inform us as to the tension against the Talmudic leadership of his own period, Alami's view of the past reveals his thoughts on his contemporary leadership. Alami is no historian in the modern sense nor is he a chronicler of events in the medieval one. He is not interested in the fact that the massacres occur not at the height of Jewish courtiers' influence at court, but precisely at their decline. He is not interested in the fact that taxes are imposed by and for the Crown rather than by and for the tax-collectors or that the tax-collector's only remuneration for very real risks is the amount he exacts over and above the tax. Nor is it fair to expect of him to ask whether the Non-Jewish population acted

according to his pietistic norms in their dealings with the Jews. Alami never intended his moral tract to be an objective reconstruction of events. He did intend, however, to criticise his contemporary leadership and his view of history is part of this criticism. They bear evidence to social discontent perhaps amongst the class with whose interests Alami identifies. Besides his view of history there is another element of criticism which serves to emphasize his affinity with xvth century thinkers responding to the events of 1412-1414.

As has been pointed out above, Alami criticises the discord prevalent amongst the rabbinical leadership.

This element of criticism may be said to be analagous to the sentiments which inform some passages of the epistle of Bonastruc Desmaestre. And Demaestre seems to view the inner dissension with a critical attitude.

Before coming to see Benedict, the envoys at Tortosa:

"הסכימו שלא ידוה ענינם כמדת היהודים דמלומדים  
 בשיבותיהם לכנס כל אחד בדברי חברו ולחרף  
 באשר לא ירדה לו כדי שלא יזיה לברו בכני  
 דאכיפירר."

101

Again one day when they come back from the disputation the following scene occurs:

"וביתנו נבשכו לטכר קצומה בינינו הר' בהיהיהו  
 והר' טודרוש כי לא שכרו ולא שכו כהכנס לפירכב."

102

Then at some points in the epistle he describes the Rabbis as 'jumping and saying'. Thus: "R. Albo jumped and said", or "then Rabbi Astruc jumped and said". It would seem that

to xvth century thinkers dissension and squabbling were negative characteristics of the rabbinic leadership.

These are echoes of problems of wide national significance. But Alami is concerned also with the problems of his own community (unknown to us) and, by extension, of every other community as community (rather than as a national unit).

His criticisms of communal social mores is more significant than has been allowed in recent historiography.

Baer, speaking of Alami (amongst others) says that:

"in these little books there is no trace of a purposeful programme for improvement. Even the best men of the age thought only in terms of safeguarding the status quo. Thus when fortune took a turn for the better and the Jewish community was no longer threatened with destruction from the outside, the world returned to its old ways."<sup>103</sup>

Similarly, Ben-Sasson says:

"ההפיסה החברתית של מגורשי ספרד ואבותיהם אינה של ריפורמה ומרדנות לא כלפי פנים ולא כלפי חוץ... אין טוען לנזירת על התצרנות."

104

We shall deal separately with the 'real' attempts at reform in the various assemblies of the xvth century elsewhere and with Alami's influence on reform activity in the conclusion but one point should be stressed now. These considerations imply that there was an option, within medieval thought, of some sort of political revolution, an

option which was not followed. It would seem that this is a somewhat anachronistic consideration. Ben-Sasson's alternative is that the Jewish social critics should have advocated the abolition of courtiership, since they did not they are not to be considered as real attackers of their society.<sup>105</sup> These are not the alternatives open to the medieval Spanish Jew. The alternatives which are open are more modest in aspiration. These are the fight against their society's forms of stratification, the change of communal or synagogal officers, the destruction of former traditions of loyalty (to the court Jew), the establishment of certain ideas (which may vaguely be described as pietistic) at the expense of others (the propaganda of the court Jews on the main).

These alternatives were followed by Alami. The purpose of the following lines is to describe how he does this.

#### Criticism of stratification.

In order to avoid anachronisms it might be useful to abandon modern ideas of social differentiation and accept the seriousness attributed by the medieval Spanish Jew to his forms of stratification. One of these is the seating arrangements at the Synagogue.

This was serious enough to create many documents drafted by notaries concerned with proprietorship of seats.<sup>106</sup>

In Burgos at the end of the xivth century it had been the cause of communal conflict. This can be seen

from a responsum of the Ribash:

"קהל בורגה ישצ"ו הסכימו להלק ליחידה הקהל  
מקומה ישיבה של בית הכנסת שבנו מחדש, ועל  
זה כל הקהל בהסכמה אחת בררו להם שלשה מטובי  
הקהל לחלק המקומות ההם...וכל הקהל נתפייסו  
מאותה חלוקה, זולתי שניים או שלשה שלא  
נתפייסו בה ולא רצו לשבת במקום שבררו ונתנו  
להם המחלקים..."

107

This form of stratification has a long list of antecedents. In Babylonian Academies students were defined by their place in the seating arrangements giving rise to the famous labels of 'dara kama' and 'dara batra' (front and back-benchers).<sup>108</sup> But what had been a form of differentiation in one of the Jewish institutions of Babylon became a sign of social standing in the central institution of Jewish life (the Synagogue) and moreover, one which was an important preoccupation for the medieval communal authorities who had to pass ordinances relating to seating.<sup>109</sup>

Alami's attitude to this form of stratification can only be described as critical:

"כי תבוא בית דרפילד או אל מוטב אנשים  
אל הבתר מוטב לייבוק ושב באשר יזדמן  
ואם הוא בקפל דמלומות כי דוא לתפארתך."

110

Equally critical is his attitude to another expression of social inequality present in his own community. The order of precedence at the Reading of the Law on the Sabbath was the Jewish counterpart to the concern with precedence in late medieval Christian society which was noted by Huizinga<sup>111</sup> amongst the expressions of the quest

for 'a beautiful life'. If one passes over Huizinga's own explanation, we are left with evidence for a great preoccupation with the expressions of hierarchy in outward ceremonial. Thus we can point to the fact that "noble families disputed fiercely for that same precedence in church by which they courteously pretended to set little store".<sup>112</sup>

In public worship there is great significance in who will be the first to place alms on the altar; to kiss the pax after the Agnus Dei, etc. At the 'lying-in' chamber there was 'ample opportunity for fine ceremonial and differentiation according to rank'.<sup>113</sup>

These are elements of life in the xvth century reconstructed on the basis of French and Burgundian documents. But Spain was also imbued with this late medieval preoccupation with precedence. At the Council of Basel, in 1434, Alonso de Cartagena (of the family of the ex-Rabbi Solomon Halevi of Burgos) Dean of Santiago, wrote a discourse to justify the precedence of the Castilian envoy over that of England.<sup>114</sup> In literature there is an interest in heraldry and 'nobiliarios' which can be seen in Juan Rodriguez del Padron's 'Cadeira del Honor' (1430's).<sup>115</sup>

The social significance of the Reading of the Law is by no means a product of the Late Middle Ages. Nathan Hababli has left a vivid account of the part of the Reading of the Law in the ceremony of investiture of the Exilarch.<sup>116</sup> Maimonides' ruling on the order of precedence tries to give more importance to intellectual values.<sup>117</sup> This was to no avail. In the xivth century in Aragon Pedro IV, tried to

obtain the right of precedence for his physician. The lengths to which the physician would go in trying to obtain this privilege, and the fact that a Spanish ruling monarch would try to assert his right to assign such honours are most significant phenomena when trying to assess the significance of this custom. It may be useful to quote part of the letter of 16/8/1385:<sup>118</sup>

"Nos don Pedro ... Junez, al qual semblant honor que aquesta e mayor en la dita sinoga se pertenesce, havido encara esguard a los servicios por tu a nos e a nuestra cort feytos, con tenor dela present ... atorgamos e a tu e a los de tu linatge e adaquellos, que tu querras, con tu a perpetuo dela dita solempnidat e honor de una fiesta de las vacantes o quida (qui?) adelant vagaran por defallimiento delos ditos linatges provehimos, yes saber, daquela fiesta, que daquellas vacantes tu esleyras e querras, dando licencia a pleno poder a tu, dito Junez, e a los de tu linatge e a los, que tu querras, de purar a la trahuna dela dita sinoga e leyr en la ley de Moysen en el rotulo o atora en e por la forma e manera, que acostumbrado yes por los otros semblantes honores havientes ...

This preoccupation with ceremonial expressing social divisions is criticised by Alami:<sup>119</sup>

"כאשר חלקה לידות בתורה עלה בכלל הקוללים  
ואל הפנה אל האליקים להיות מתחיל או  
כסלים."

Later on in the century Abraham Saba of Zamora would also complain about the fact that individuals wished to be called up only third or sixth (the most coveted turns) and quarreling would go on while the scroll was on the desk.<sup>120</sup>

It would seem that there is some justification for postulating a special emphasis on expressions of hierarchical divisions at the end of the Middle Ages as was the case in Christian society. The date of Trigo's petition is 1385. In the 1460's one of the litigants in a Saragossan law-suit



between the Cohen and Sarfati families would try to deprive the Cohen family of its right to go up first to the Torah.<sup>121</sup> Both Alami's and Saba's criticisms belong to the xvth century. The cumulative value of this evidence would incline us to characterise the increase of preoccupation with precedence as a feature of Jewish life at the end of the Middle Ages.

### Charity.

One of the justifications for the honour of the wealthy in the Jewish community was their philanthropic activity. The importance of charity in communal life, the institutionalisation of philanthropy have been amply documented by Neuman in his chapter on Charities.<sup>122</sup> Spanish Jews 'could well be proud of the number of its philanthropic institutions and the wide scope of their activities!<sup>123</sup> And yet, it would seem that in Alami's community there was reason to attack the upper stratum on this issue.

As he himself says:<sup>124</sup>

"בהחנודב עם טוב מעט בצדקתם אז תשמע המתנדבים בעם  
 ברכים... והגבאים מחזרין בכל יום עשרת מונים לך  
 ושוב ומחר אתן עונים... ויהיו מוכשלים בבני אדם  
 שאינם מהוגנים... והדול בכמי המצפה לנדבתם בראותו  
 הפוכותם תכפל עליו המצוקה."

Again we can see clearly the social group with which Alami identifies. In this case it does not seem an exaggeration to affirm that Alami identifies with the poor and attacks the wealthy upper stratum, the 'good people'

But there is also another social stratum

with which he closely identifies; the poor 'hakhamim', those who are dependent on the 'gabai', the treasurer of Synagogal charity for their living:

"חכמים אוכלי לחם עצנים בדאבון נפשות."

Again the responsible are the wealthy and the communal leaders:<sup>125</sup>

"עשירי היהודים ורועיהם אוכלים כבני  
מלכים ולובשים כנסיכים."

They have no intention of making a living of the Torah:

"כי הרועים והגדולים לא יקוו ולא יארו  
להכניס בניהם בברית מלאכת התורה להיות  
ממנה מחייתם."

126

For Alami the Christians could be a model for the Jews in their relation to their 'teachers' (by which he probably means preachers or priests). They bring their tithes and offerings and their attitude is one of honour while the Jews treat their 'hakhamim' with contempt:

"ועשירי היהודים ורועיהם מנהלים הכניהם  
בלחם צר ומים לחץ לבשתם ולחרפתם הם  
אוכלים כבני מלכים ולובשים כנסיכים  
והחכמים אוכלי לחם העצבים בדאבון  
נפשות ודמעט הניתן לפרנסתם בחרפה  
ובז מהזרים על הגבאים לתת להם את  
מנתם."

127a

The hakhamim Alami refers to are not the judges or learned Rabbis who 'spend their days ... writing novellae'. Those are also members of the leadership Alami criticises. He

refers rather to the preachers, the teachers of infants schools (melamdin). There might even be an echo of personal experience in his description of:

"חרפה חכמים דלוותם ונבולותם ...  
 בחרפה ובוז מחזירים על הגבאים  
 לחת להם את מנתם."

127b

There seems to be no reason to doubt Alami's influence on the thought of the circles from which the ordinances of Valladolid stemmed. They too are concerned with the economic situation of this stratum. Moreover, in response to criticisms of the irresponsibility of communal leaders there is an unprecedented attempt to centralise the disposal of taxation funds for this purpose.<sup>128</sup> Alami's criticisms were 'real' and had 'real' influences on concerted action by the communities of Castile. In xvth century terms this is a 'purposeful program'.

Affiliated to his criticism of the attitude to the hakham is his criticism of the attitude of the leadership to the preacher.

#### The preacher.

Alami's attack on the leading upper stratum extends to their treatment of the preacher. Here too he compares their behaviour to that of the Christians to the latter's advantage. The Christians:

"דנוצרים בזהאסא דאנשים ודנשים לידוע  
 דברי דדורש יעמדו יחד באימים וירפאו  
 מגדלתו לא ינום ולא יישן אהד כים  
 ויילינו דכיה בלחרו."

Such comparisons led Geiger<sup>130</sup> to the conclusion that Alami was highly influenced by Christianity and that it was his admiration for Christianity that is his characteristic feature. But the comparisons to Christianity by Jewish writers were far from being new or surprising by Alami's time. XVth century introductions to translations often state that the Christians should serve as a model to the Jews because they use philosophy to strengthen their beliefs and even such pious individuals as Isaac of Corbeil made these comparisons in relation to decorum in the Synagogue.<sup>131</sup>

What characterises Alami is his emphasis on social aspects of communal life. This can be seen in his description of the communal attitude to the preacher:

"בהחאסף יחד קהילה נקהילוח הגולה לשמוע  
מפי חכם חורה אז הפול בעיני קציניהם  
חודמה ואחרים ישיתו סיתה בסלה והדורש  
ישתומם לסיחת האנשים והמיית הנשים  
העומדות אחרי בית-התפילה."

132

What is of interest here is that Alami does not criticise his contemporaries for not paying attention to the doctrinal content of the sermon. He does not lament the fact that they have missed an opportunity to be morally improved. He simply criticises their attitude to a person or a social type rather than their views on ethics.

Alami attacks the expressions of the social supremacy of the upper stratum and leadership (e.g. hierarchical seat arrangements, precedence at Reading of the Law) and the motivations for it (philanthropic activities,

representation at court). His attacks are a product of observation of social life in his community.

What informs the peculiar coherence and fierceness of his social criticism is partly, of course, a trend of social criticism which is well documented in earlier centuries. The reigning social tension in his community is a major cause of this criticism. But there is also a personal incident which goes some way to explaining his singlemindedness.

Towards the end of his *Iggeret Alami* describes the incident:

"גם קדש מצאתי אני הכותב ממזנה בראש  
 כנסיותיהם ויעזרני אלהים לבקר הקדש  
 ההוא מן הבית ויחשבו עלי רעה תחת  
 טובה בנכליהם שנים שלשה מיציניהם  
 בפחזותם ובשקריהם כי אורותו לשבת  
 ביניהם להכניס בברית את בניהם..."

But the hazan represents for Alami more than a mere personal enemy. There seems to be a trend of criticism of the hazan in pietistic literature,<sup>133</sup> which is fed by a feeling that he introduces alien and non-religious values. R. Asher had criticised the practice of choosing the hazan for his voice. Aesthetic values were, for R. Asher as for Alami, in danger of occupying the place of religious ones. We know from external sources that Jews did in fact adopt non-Jewish musical themes.

The author of the *Libro de Buen Amor* (c.1343) says:

(1513 ab) 'despues muchas cantigas fiz de danca e troteras  
 para judias e moras ....." (or judios e moros in  
 another MS).<sup>134</sup>

Although Efodi is less critical than Alami he also refers to the practice of singing some prayers under Christian musical influence emphasising the liturgical undesirability of the practice:

"והנה בקצח פירוטים ומאמרים שקולים נהגו  
 ישראל המנהג הזה כי התערבו בגוים  
 וילמדו מעשיהם והם מפסידים בנעימות  
 והלחנים צודת המאמרים."

135

The conflict between Alami and the leadership is undoubtedly a factor which explains Alami's criticism of the leadership in his *Iggeret*. In a way there is a certain similarity with the case of Solomon Bonafed. (Cf. Chapter 2). Both seem to have been motivated to write criticism of their society because of personal circumstances. This conflict gives them a sharper vision of social ills which they do not invent. . These ills are documents by independent sources. But they use different media. Bonafed's use of verse restricts the space devoted to real social problems and puts him within a tradition of invective in which the formulation of abuse is more important than the description of social grievances (though these indeed exist as shown elsewhere).

Alami used rhymed prose and the structure of a moral tract, the social criticism is the underlying theme of a work concerned with explaining the decline of his period.

A modern historian of Late Medieval Hispano-Jewish thought, H.H.B. Sason, in an article on the thought of the Jewish exiles,<sup>136</sup> devotes a section to their attitudes to the Jewish courtiers.

He comes to the conclusion that Hispano-Jewish thought attitudes of the xivth and xvth centuries, inherited by the Hispano-Jewish exiles, contain no criticism of the institution of the 'judio de la corte' or of their way of life:

"פועל חברתי זה של החצרנים נראה להם  
למגורשי ספרד משובח. אין במסורתם  
גינוי החצרנות כחופעה חברתית לא  
בשל אורח החיים המתחייב ממנה ולא  
בשל תביעתה למנהיגות ולזכות בפני  
שמים. התפיסה החברתית של מגורשי  
ספרד ואבותיהם אינה של ריפורמה  
ומרדנות, לא כלפי פנים ולא כלפי  
הוץ. אין בהם הולק על הריבוד  
החברתי בקהילותיהם. מדבריהם עלתה  
אידיאולוגיה שנתגבשה בחוגי חסידים  
שבספרד, המעריכה ביותר את החצרנות."

Two points made by B. Sason have direct relevance to our analysis of Alami's thought.

The first is the contention that there was no 'real' social criticism of the 'judios de la corte', there was 'merely ethical admonition'.<sup>137</sup> The second is the statement that Alami 'was an exception' within a body of social thought which values highly the institution of the courtier.<sup>138</sup>

A discussion of Ben Sason's sources would fall outside the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say that they are mostly by courtiers and members of their circles and that they are mostly the product of a period which is not included within the time limits of our study: 1391-1492. Ben Sason is mentioned because he is, with Baer, one of the few historians who try to analyse xvth century Jewish social thought within its historical context.

The views of Ben Sason compel us to formulate the

following questions:

First: How useful is the distinction between 'mere ethical admonition' and 'real social criticism'?

Second: Is Alami an isolated instance of social criticism in an otherwise unanimously favourable corpus of thought on the courtier?

Third: Can one really separate the attitudes to courtiers from those to the leadership in general?

The distinction is probably based on a difference between 'ideal views' and 'real views' with a use of 'real' as in 'realpolitik'.

Ethical admonition, it is implied, is supra-historical and applies to all men at all times. Real social criticism applies to historical phenomena, observable in and circumscribed by limits of time and space. This distinction, it may be submitted is of doubtful usefulness in analysing medieval Jewish ethical literature in general and Alami's thought in particular.

Certain historical trends are discernable and at work in most major medieval ethical works. They respond to historical circumstances of the Middle Ages. The anti-thesis between medieval beliefs and early Hebrew ethics exists even if it is minimised or even resolved. Baer has often used these works (Zohar, Raya Mehemna, Haqana, etc.) to complete the historical picture given by other documents with very useful results.

Is Alami's a suprahistorical treatise?

Within a century of writing the Iggeret, Jaabes (d. 1507) thought of it as a historical document on the spiritual state of pre-expulsion Jewry. An examination of



the passages which were<sup>139</sup> traced to Alami in the "Or Hahayim" shows that Jaabes uses Alami as trustworthy evidence for documenting grievances against the intellectuals within the leadership. Of course Jaabes, who maintained that philosophical 'rationalism' was to blame for the conversions used such writings as would support his view. The point is that Alami had not yet been classified as a 'mere moral tract'. Somewhat later, in the second half of the xvith century, Menahem Lonzano, poet and grammarian, sees him as being mainly a critic of philosophy.<sup>140</sup> The social dimension of his Iggeret is forgotten. Lonzano (1550-before 1621), a writer of moral poetry and a kabbalist, saw in Alami a precedent for his criticism of philosophy:

"הרב מפורסמוגאל הר' שלמה אלעמי באגור  
מוסר אכר לו קם כגיבור עריץ לדלחם  
עם מהפלספי בני עמנו וידים פיו חרה  
ולשונו כהער כלוטס..."

By the late xviith and xviiiith centuries Alami had lost his specificity. The Iggeret was considered one of the many expositions of Musar literature.<sup>141</sup>

This suprahistorical view of Alami was to an extent maintained in the xixth century. Zunz thought of Alami, on one occasion as a moralist who was relevant to xixth century problematics.<sup>142</sup>

In his introduction to the Iggeret, Jellinek seems to emphasise non-historical aspects of the Iggeret as well.

Of course it would be unfair to think that the xixth century was totally oblivious to the historical character of the Iggeret.

As early as 1851, Dukes, in his 'Zur rabbinischen Spruchkunde' remarked that "Es enthalt dieses Werkchen manche historische Notiz die nicht zu verachten ist ..." <sup>143</sup> But with the exception of a brief allusion to it in a review of Munk's book on *הנהגות אבותינו* he <sup>144</sup> did not come back to the subject. Graetz <sup>145</sup> is probably the first to place him in a firm historical context. He saw Alami's work as an additional document on the state of the leadership in Barfat's generation. Although, as we have seen, he is dealing with problems of the post-Tortosa generation, Graetz's initiative in ascribing historical importance to the Iggeret has been followed by Baron <sup>146</sup> and Baer. <sup>147</sup>

Alami is said to be an isolated instance in a period whose mentality was favourably disposed to the courtiers. The courtiers 'and their brethren' are said to have viewed the institution with admiration and as a manifestation of God's Providence. Alami obviously does not, therefore he is 'isolated'. <sup>148</sup> That the supracommunal leadership of 'judios de la corte' was not unanimously accepted or viewed in these terms will be shown elsewhere in a chapter on the social conflicts in xvth century Castile. But as far as Alami is concerned there is no reason to see him as isolated. In fact he too made reference to an ideal state of affairs in which the courtier has access to court by Divine Providence in order to be a spokesman for the communities. <sup>149</sup> But this is done in order to emphasize criticism of real events by reference to an ideal which has not been followed.

A comparison with late xiiiith century and xivth century social criticism shows that Alami was acting within

a well established tradition of criticism of the leadership and their way of life.

That is not to say that he is a mere collector of medieval commonplaces. His criticisms are direct and refer to concrete aspects of the leadership. His contemporaries are attacked not by reference to a kabbalistic or philosophic ideal (there is no mention of Kabbalah in the *Iggeret* and philosophy only comes under attack) which would probably be more unreal to the simple artisan than to the courtier, but by reference to concrete political developments such as the legislation of Valladolid of 1412.

These comparisons emphasize rather than annul the social concern of his work.

The social aspect may be obscured by formulating the question in terms of what was the attitude to the courtiers as if the medieval social critic saw the courtier in isolation from the rest of the leadership. For Alami the distinctions between Jewish courtiers, communal leaders and Rabbinical leadership are not as clear cut as one might suppose. These spheres often coincided socially. Alami speaks of קצינים, חכמים אחרונים . His criticisms may be seen in the light of the ideas of spokesmen for the humbler classes of artisans and others vis-a-vis the Jewish urban patriciate as well as in terms of the attitude of communities to supra-communal leadership. Alami is firmly embedded in his communal ground.

The Jewish courtiers who 'roast chickens on the Sabbath' or 'intrigue against one another in the courts and palaces' are included amongst this stratum, but the rest of the leadership is not excluded.

In a sense, then, the Iggeret is an inducement to social non-conformity. The unwritten social codes of precedence, of acceptance of the leadership and its standards, of leniency towards religious laxity in the leadership and admiration for the intellectual display of the Rabbinic leadership are undermined, implicitly by the presentation of an alternative code based on simple piety, and explicitly by overt criticism.

A different question concerns the effectiveness of Alami's criticism. Baer paid attention to this question and came to the conclusion that

"in these books there is no trace of a purposeful program for improvement. Even the best men of the age thought only in terms of safeguarding the status quo. Thus when fortune took a turn for the better and the Jewish community was no longer threatened with destruction from the outside, the world returned to its old ways."<sup>150</sup>

An examination of the effectiveness of the Iggeret in social terms must exclude certain ideas presented in the Iggeret. It is not the province of the historian to inquire whether the Jews in Spain loved God more or less after the writing of the Iggeret.

But one might enquire whether his criticisms of, say, ostentation in dress, denouncing the situation of the teachers or preachers, the evasion of taxes, conduced to some form of action against these abuses. For this purpose it is useful to look at the Ordinances of Valladolid of 1432.<sup>151</sup>

A textual comparison is not very useful in this case. The Iggeret is written in Hebrew, the Ordinances

are not. The Iggeret is written in rhymed prose, the Ordinances follow the legal form of such documents ultimately traceable to a non-Jewish model in their form. The concern of the Iggeret is criticism, the concern of the Ordinances is legislation. Having these qualifications in mind, one can observe that these elements of Alami's criticisms are considerations in the mind of the legislators of Valladolid. They legislate against 'mesirut', they pass sumptuary laws, they try to centralise the funds for payment of the teachers and preachers, they try to avoid unjust taxation and tax-evasion.

The objectives of legislation in these cases coincide with Alami's criticisms. Thus one cannot really maintain that Alami is either 'isolated' or an ineffective but zealous preacher. This is all the more so if we have in mind that there are further examples of literature of social criticism which modern scholarship has dated to this period.

The ultimate irony lies in the fact that the measures for reform drew their backing power not from the circles of social critics such as Alami but from the ones which were a target of their attack.

### Conclusion.

I have tried to show that there is social criticism in the IM of S. Alami. This criticism is made by an author who strongly identifies with the poor and the artisans.

The elements of his critique, while being consistent with older traditions, reflect contemporary attitudes. The grievances are directed against a life style which has its non-Jewish counterpart in the urban oligarchies of the xvth century and there are coincidences in the criticism of both. Some of the complaints are made in response to the Valladolid statutes of 1412 and are in accord with the mood of the post-Tortosa generation.

The religious element of piety and criticism of the intellectual elite, has at times, social connotations which are accompanied by a rejection of the expressions of stratification in the communities.

If one sees the various targets of his attack (rabbis, court-Jews, communal oligarchies) as a group whose coherence lies in their power over other members of the community, one may suggest that Alami's criticisms are directed against those in power and are therefore consistent with those grievances which inform conflicts throughout the century.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Iggeret also appeared as 'Iggeret Tokhaha we'muna'. This is the title in the edition which accompanies the Mahzor 'Shaar Bat Rabim' of 1711, according to Steinschneider, CB, 2529, p. 387. The same name is used in the collection of selihot 'Tiqun Shovavim' of 1712, *ibid.* 2933. cf. also *ibid.* vol.2, col.2275/6. The name Iggeret Musar (henceforward IM) is used by Jellinek in his edition, Wien 1872, and will be used here. Steinschneider, in his Jewish Literature, London 1857, p.102, translates the title as 'paranetic epistle'. Iggeret, however, may refer to any short treatise rather than to a specific letter (cf. EJ sv 'Ethical Literature'). Habberman, in the introduction to his edition of the Iggeret, Jerusalem 1946, p. 8 suggests that it is not necessarily a letter to a specific pupil. Amongst other exponents of this form one may mention, Kalonimos b. Kalonimos, Shem Tov Falquera, ibn Tibbon, Maimonides, cf. Steinschneider, *ibid.* I have compared the text of Jellinek with the text of the Iggeret in a photocopy of Codex De Rossi 1367 (now MS Parmense 2245). I could find no important variants. The text is incomplete.
2. The earliest reference to Portugal seems to be the one made by Menahem Lonzano in his Shte Yadot:
 

"... הרב מפורטוגאל הר' שלמה אלעמי באגרת מוסר אשר לו..."

 cf. Haberman, *op.cit.*, p. 63.
3. IMp.22 (the Jellinek edition is used throughout unless there are important alternative readings in which case attention is drawn to the fact).
4. IMp.23.
5. IMp.10, and further in this chapter.
 

"... בני דורינו העורכים בעת התכילה שירותם בן המסכילים יכלול להביא אל בית חפילתם ספרי הנונתם להתכבד נגד זקני עם בקרב עצתם.."
6. cf. the section on the preacher in this chapter. Also IMp.28:
 

"...למוכיה בער יקוּבון בשוט לקונותידם..."

"... שְׁאוּ בַעַר מוֹכִיחַ..."
7. IMp.7.
8. Ma'ase Efod. ed. Friedlander and Cohn, Vienna 1865, p.14.
 

"ועדיין אולי היה מה שהיה מסור להקטנה ידם ודסתרת פנים ודין הגרושין ודגזרות ודשכודים המבורסמים. ועוד בזמנינו נחפזת החולי בספרד לסבד שנזכרה (ז"א התעללה מעם במרא...) "

גם כן."

9. Yuhasin, London 1857, ed.H. Filipowski, p.225a.  
 "ונחנו סימן אל קנא כי קבלנו שלקחו הגויות בביהם עד  
 שמחעברות והיו בניהם גוים והם עצמם הרגו לאבותיהם  
 ואע"פ שהיו בניהם צדיקים אנחנו ערבים זה לזה כ"ס  
 בדבר זמה מי שמקרב ומתחתן לע"ז השי"ת מקנא קנאתו  
 וצדיק ה' ואין מי יאמר לו מה העשה..."
10. IBpp. 719/720.
11. This structure had been used before. Cf. the introduction of J.J. Preil to his edition of the Iggeret, Wilna 1878, where he mentions the Sepher Haredim as an antecedent. Haberman suggests that this obeys to mnemotechnic reasons, op.cit., p. 7, n.3.
12. IMp. 8.
13. IMp. 9.
14. IM p. 11.
15. IM p. 13.
16. IM p. 16
17. IM p. 17.
18. IM p. 21
19. See T. Schrok, R. Jonah, London, 1948, pp. 155/6:  
 Iggeret Hateshubah, p.6.  
 "רבים חוסבים כי לא האבד הנפש בהמנע מן הטוב ובחשון מן היורש  
 ולא ידעו ולא יבינו כי המעלים עיניו למן הצדקה רעהו רבה  
 והטאתו כבדה מאד."  
 Commentary on Proverbs, iii, 27.  
 "...לא הדע כמה יתקיים העושר בידך."  
 Sepher Hairah, p. 4.  
 "...ואם יבאו אורחים לביתו יבניטם לביתו בספר פנים יכות ומיד  
 בבואם ישים לפנים לחם לאכל כי פעמים בא דיני ולא אכל והוא  
 בוש לקאל..."
- p. 6a. "אם אחת רובה לכבוד פועלים ומצאת עניים והיו בני  
 ביתך ואך אל הבזה אותם."
20. Cf. e.g. BH1, pp. 263/266.
21. A Marx, Studies in Jewish History and Booklore, N.Y. 1944, p. 85:  
 "ורובם בעלי מלאכה."
22. F. Cantera Burgos and P. Leon Tello, Judaizantes del arzobispado de Toledo rehabilitados en 1495 y 1498, Madrid, 1969. I assume continuity of occupations.
23. Halakhot to Baba Batra, 9a: "from this we infer that all artisans ( בעלי אומנות ) can make agreements amongst themselves and with relation to their work they are called "בני דקיר" .



24. Rashba, Responsa, vol.iv, 185.
25. According to Ribash craftsmen need the agreement of an important man in the town. (Responsa No.399). R. Simon b. Zemah Duran, maintains that without the approval of אדם חשוב enactments of the בני - העיר are not valid (Responsa vol.iv, 15).
26. I am not referring to the attitude to labor in the Talmud, a complex problem studied by Baron, Heinenan (JJS, vol.1, p. 178; HUCA 25, 1954, ע"פ. 253 ff) and others, but to a series of Talmudic texts which could be adduced by xvth century thinkers in order to justify their attitudes to the artisans. An example of a series of such texts might be found in Simon b. Zemah Duran's Magen Avot, commentary on Avot 1/10, p. 5b/6. Livorno 1762.
27. Investigaciones sobre Juan Alvarez Gato, Madrid, 1970, p. 291: "la nocion judia de la dignidad del trabajo manual elogiado por el Talmud cuyos maximos exegetas se ganaban la vida haciendo agujas or remendando zapatos ...".
28. cf. Solomon Bonafed's poem 'Olam Aphuh', in H. Schirman, Hashira Ha'ivrit be-Sepharad Wbe Provence, Jerusalem-Tel-Aviv, 1956, vol.2, p. 628/9, lines 8/15.
29. Abarbanel on Genesis, Hanau 1710, p. 30a.  
 "ללל ה' מבלש המלאכות ודברים מזריים... דקנינים  
 מכלי הכבוד הם כבת כל הפחיתות."
30. IM pp. 26/27.
31. IM p. 14 also p. 20.  
 "אחב את המלאכה והתריצות וינא את הרבנות ודבולה  
 והעצלות."
32. The dictum that one should not ask food from others is taken from R. Hai's Musar Haskel, cf. S. Asaf, Meqorot Le Toldot Hakhinukh be-Israel, Tel-Aviv 1930, vol2. p. 66, n.2.
33. e.g. Prov. 6/6-9; 22/29; 13/14.
34. R. Gordis, The social background to Wisdom Literature, HUCA, vol.xviii, 1943/4.
35. IM p. 23. This passage is omitted in the Venice edition. Jellinek's ed. reads יחוסים המכתיים . The Prague and Berlin editions הכינותים. The emendation proposed in Kerem Hemed, vol.9, p. 45 has been followed, as does Haberman. cf. The Castilian Dance of Death, where Death says to the tax-collector "vuestra vida fue en trabajar como robariades al ome cuitaco ..." Rodriguez Puertolas, Poesia de Protesta en la Edad Media Castellana, Madrid 1968, p. 285, where he dates it 1393-1406, text from ibid, p. 121.

36. IM p. 23.
37. This point is stressed in P. Wolf, *The 1391 Pogrom in Spain, Past and Present* 50, 1971, pp. 4ff.
38. Cf. n. 30 and 31.
39. J.A. Maraval, *El mundo social de La Celestina*, Madrid 1964, pp. 62/68, 31, 29.
40. ed. Vicens Vives, *Historia Social y Economica de Espana y America*, Barcelona 1972, vol.2, p. 137.
41. IM, pp. 23/4.
42. For the date of the Tiquene Hazohar cf. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, NY 1972, p. 188.
43. Y. Baer, *Todros b. Judah Halevi Uzemano*, *Zion* 2, 1936, p. 45, n.83 on Gen.  
 "גבורים דאמרי בהון הבה נבנה לנו עיר ונעשה לנו  
 עם ובינויין בחי כנסיות ומדרשות..."
44. 'Abraham Saba' in E.J.S.V. and cf. Ben-Sason, op.cit., p. 25a, n.9. The Jews in Castile according to Saba, "built themselves houses panelled with cedar wood and delightful images similar to the palaces of kings leading them to idolatry". They "desecrated the Sabbath and were full of strife and contention". "Strife and contention "are amongst the reasons given for the exile from Spain in Shevet Judah, ch.63 No.6. ed. Shochat, Jerusalem 1947, p. 128. For the criticism of the building of mansions see the Haqana passage quoted in BHI p. 371, "Woe unto those who build themselves large homes and dwell in comfort in the land of strangers will consume their means ...How can they rest in comfort, they who have been driven from their father's board and whose mother was divorced because of their sins ...". The specifications for a house in Huesca in 1471 have been found by R. del Arco (*La aljama judia de Huesca*, *Sefarad*, 7, 1947, pp.297 ff.) and although it was obviously comfortable for that age there is no mention of cedarwood panellings or images. In fact the owner, Azaria Xuen (Shoaib?) orders the construction of a room which seems to be a prayer or study-room: a "scribtorio ... todo blanco que no parezca fusta inguna e un portal con maconeria e so puerta con so aro e faxa ..."
45. Cf. Rodríguez Puertolas, op.cit., p. 173, written near 1456.
46. Ibid., p. 196.
47. As in N. 39.
48. IM p. 26/7.

49. Ibid. Cf. also Is. 3/22 and Zec 3/4. Gesenius translates <sup>מקטפיה</sup> as official dress. Maimonides in Deot 5/9 criticizes the wearing of gold and purple, but also criticizes clothes worn by the poor. Chapter XV of I. Abrahams, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages: "Costume in Law and Fashion" (N.Y. 1919, pp. 273-290 and 291-307) is still of interest.
50. IM p. 23. For Baer (IIB p.271) this is 'der deutlichste literarische widerhall' of the edict of 2/1/1412. Its paragraphs 13-15 deal with restrictions on clothing. Paragraph 18 deals with the prohibition of cutting one's hair. Baron's point (Social and Religious history of the Jews, vol.x, p. 186) that Alami described the effects of the legislation of Valladolid 'particularly in the area under Catalina's direct control ...' reinforces our suspicion that Alami was from Castile.

On the prohibition of cutting hair, one should point out that it was a social symbol of status and that this prohibition is in line with those on the use of 'Don' and wearing silk. It was part of the tendency to luxury in male attire ridiculed by Juan del Padron at the time (cf. M. Menendez y Pelayo, Poetas de la corte de Don Juan II, Austral, Buenos Aires 1946, p. 208/9). Rabbi Moses Arragel, writing in 1422/33 remarks in his commentary to the Biblical prohibition of wearing clothes of the opposite sex: "de aqui se surge que el varon que se afeitare el rostro o truxere las barvas e cabeza de qualquier tintura a fin de cana o sus semejantes de qualquier afeyte que el baruero le adova las cejas, que cae en este pecado ..." (A. Paz y Melia, La Biblia de la Casa de Alba, in Homenaje ... Menendez y Pelayo, Madrid 1889, vol.2, p. 68, f.153v.)

51. BH1, p. 272.
52. BH1, p. 371
53. IIB, No.287, pp. 296/7.
54. Vicens Vives, The Economies of Catalonia and Castile, in ed. Highfield. Spain in the xvth century, London 1972, p. 51.
55. Blanco Gonzalez, Del cortesano al discreto, Madrid 1962.
56. Ibid, p. 282.
57. Ibid., p. 349.
58. Rodriguez Puertolas, op.cit. No.15, p. 145.
59. Ibid, p. 194.
60. Ibid, p. 226.
61. Menendez y Pelayo, op.cit., p. 208.

62. Marquez Villanueva, op.cit. Appendix XVIII "Garcia Dalcocer quando sus Altezas mandaron que no truxiesen seda syno los que tuviesen cavallos" cf. also on the social significance of dress and horses the sections in Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, Oxford 1976, vol.1, pp. 48/9.
63. IM, p. 26/7.
64. Rodriguez Puertolas, op.cit., p. 149, Fernan Sanchez de Calavera (active under Enrique III and Juan II).
65. IM, p. 27.
66. BH1, p. 272.
67. Baer, Todros, b. Judah Halevi, loc.cit., p.47.
68. Ibid.
69. BH1, p. 328.
70. BH1, p. 371.
71. P. 23 and cf. n.35.
72. Ibid, p. 27.
73. Ibid, p. 24.
74. Maase Efod, ed.cit. appx. p. 193/4.  
 "והסבות האלו שלעתם הן הנה היו לבוני ישראל בגלות  
 הנה סבות להרבה מצרותיהם . . . . מנאת ראשיה לצאתם  
 אל קצתם."
75. Cf. Ayala's account in BAE v.68, p.66 (Juan I,1379). For factionalism amongst the local leadership in Tarrazona (Aragon) in the 1380's between the groups supporting the ibn Snaprut family and those supporting Frances cf. J.M. Sanz Artibucilla, *Nuevos datos biograficos relativos a Sen Tob. b. Ishaq Saprut*, Sefarad, V, 1945, pp. 337 ff. and especially pp. 342-345 and appendices. Cf. also the same author's 'Guillen y Juan de Levi pintores de retablos', Sefarad iv, 1944, p. 82. For factionalism in Mallorca between Faquim and Natjar families in the late seventies and eighties of the xivth century cf. J.M. Millas Vallicrosa y J. Busavets Mulet 'Albarranes Mallorquines en aljamiado hebraicoarabe', Sefarad, iv, 1944, p. 275 ff. and the documents in IB mentioned there.
76. IB No. 602.
77. Cf. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan MSS in the British Museum*, vol.3 for a description of MS add. 27168 f. 105.

78. A.Deyermond, Some Aspects of Parody in the LBA, Libro de Buen Amor Studies, ed. G.B. Gibbon-Monypenny, London 1970, pp. 61, 59.
79. BH1, p. 350 "He was the first to contrast Talmudic Law with European jurisprudence."
80. Poznansky, Le Colloque de Tortosa et San Mateo, REJ 74, 1922, especially pp. 163/4, where he gives a summary of Halorqui's Sopher Hapiqurim, ch.12 (from an Epstein MS).
81. Rodriguez Puertolas, Eiximenes y Mendoza, in De la Edad Media a la Edad Conflictiva, Madrid 1972, p. 38. The image has a long history in medieval literature. It occurs in Seneca according to A. Terry, Catalan Literature, London 1973, p. 31 and p. 58, n.41; also in Juan Manuel's Libro de los Estados, cf. the edition by Tate, MacPherson, Oxon. 1974, p. 302, n.149. Alami's image is taken from Is. 59/4-5 where justice and spiders are associated. For similar criticisms of the lawyers cf. also Tarsicio de Azcona, Isabel la Catolica, Madrid 1964, p. 330/1.
82. IM, p. 24.
83. Asensio, El erasmismo y las corrientas espirituales afines, RFE 36 (1952) pp. 31-99.
84. Beltran de Heredia, The beginnings of dominican reform in Castile, in ed. Highfield, op.cit., p. 227.
85. Cf. ed. Tauber, Sopher Imre Noash, Kiryath Sopher, vol.1, 1924, p. 65 ff: "הערור בקיאוח"  
For Da Piera most talmudic words are  
"נעוררי הקרבות והצרות במליצה..."  
For criticism of the talmudists by the translator of Boethius into Hebrew Abba Mari Bonafoux (originally from Catalonia, but finished his work in Italy 1423).  
cf. Neubauer, Documents inedits. REJ, V, 1882, p. 42:  
"ידעתי כי יאשימוני וילעיגוני סכל המון דעם דרבונים באשר  
העקחתי אכנס אם עמי הארץ המתיהדים ומתחסדים בחסידות דל שעות..."
86. BH1, p. 372/3.
87. Cf. John A. Yunck, The lineage of Lady Meed, The development of medieval venality satire, Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1963, pp. 128-131, 274-323; Ruth Mohl, The three estates in medieval and Renaissance literature, NY 1962, index, s.v. clergy-defections; J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (Pelican) 1955, p. 28; M. Ashton, The Fifteenth Century, London 1968. Ch.IV, F.Lecoy, Recherches sur le Libro de Buen Amor, 1974, p.229/236 & introd. p.xvi.
88. S.P. Rabinowicz transl. and ed. H. Graetz, Divre Yeme Israel, vol.vi, p. 106, 107, n.3, Warsaw 1898.
89. BH1, p. 372, n.61.

90. Cf. Responsa, I, 142, p.71a:  
 "לפי שראיתי בני אדם מגמגמים על מה שנהגו בכל קהילות ישראל  
 בכל הדורות (!) לתת פרס לחכמיהם..."
91. A. Neuman, The Jews in Spain, Vol.I, p.102, n.95.
92. Asaf, op.cit., Nos 45/51.
93. Graetz, op.cit. appx. 9, p.445, cf. also Netanyahu, The Marranos in Spain, NY 1973, 2nd ed. appx.D: "The book of complaints", pp. 226-237 (the date is 1468). The passage in question seems to refer in part to a situation before the 60's:

"...עוסקים בו... זולתי מהי מעט מנערי בני ישראל ורובם  
 מהדלים אשר אין להם דרך למצוא פרנסתם בדרך אחרת... מי  
 שמקוה מהם להגיע אל שיהיה מראשי המדברים או על מנת  
 לגבל פרס... ויקח לו בת יורשת נחלה וישליך אדרתו ממנו."

One should mention at this point the anonymous commentary on Proverbs (Sassoon, Ohel Dawid, Oxford 1932, No.559) attributed to the mid-xvth century (Prof.C. Abramsky, Sotheby's Catalogue, 5/11/75)(Fourth Lot, p.89). It is not consistently anti-rabbinic, but it contains quite fierce critical comments on the rabbinate of his time. Amongst the elements of invective one might point out (a) his criticism of the lust for power: On Prov.13/23

"רב אוכל ניר ראשים ויש נספה בלא משפט"  
 " זה הרב שהרביץ תורה בישראל אוכל המלכות והשררד  
 אכר היו לראשי העם אכר לא הדריכו העם בדרך דתורה  
 כי אם לאכול וזכויותם נאכלים על ידי הרבנים."

(b) his criticism of miscarriage of justice by the Rabbis. On the same verse:

"ויש נספה בלא משפט. זה הרב שלא עשה משפט אולי כי נוגע  
 לו ידבר או אל אהובו העלים עיניו מן המשפט דאמת."

(c) his criticism of the arrogance of the Talmudists

"לדירות הכל כבר בא במשפט לאיש כסיל זה שהוא חכם בעיניו  
 וכפגאה בדברי תורה אל תהיה מנוגד עמו במשא ומתן  
 בדברי תורה מפני שהוא כסיל..."

94. 'The Shevet Yehuda and xvith century history' in L. Ginzberg Jubilee Volume, English section, NY 1945, p. 257.
95. Ibid., p.258.
96. cf. N.8.
97. BH2, pp.232-243. On the disputation and its effects cf. ibid., ch.xi, A. Pacios Lopez, La disputa de Tortosa, Madrid-Barcelona 1957, especially vol.1. I have not been able to consult Jaume Riera i Sans, La cronica en Hebreu de la Disputa de Tortosa, Barcelona 1974.

98. BH2, p. 177 and Shevet Judah, ed. Shochat, Jerusalem 1947, p. 94 ff.
99. Transl. in BH2, p. 242.
100. Cf. n. 9.
101. Shevet Judah, p. 95. These might be additions by ibn Verga. In any case they reflect sentiments analogous to Alami's.
102. Ibid, p. 161.
103. BH2, p. 243.
104. Ben Sason, The generation of exiles from Spain on their fate, Zion 26, 1961, pp. 60/61.
105. Ibid.
106. Cf. e.g. Cabezudo Astrain, 'Noticias y documentos sobre los judios de Zaragoza en el s.xv', Sefarad, xiv, p.572ff and appx, documents No.12-14 (1421 and 1484).
107. Ribash, Responsa No.249, cf. Asaf, op.cit. p.74 and Neuman, The Jews in Spain, vol.2, Philadelphia 1944, p.148.
108. Differentiations (though not gradations) in seating are recorded even earlier: e.g. Tosefta Megila, iv.21 "The elders sat facing the congregation with their backs towards the sanctuary and the congregation sat facing the sanctuary." Ancient Synagogues (Hamat, Chorazim, Delos) have ornate thrones by the Ark. cf. also Mathew 23/2: "The scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat", cf. also Schrok, op.cit. p. 132 and Epstein, The responsa of R.S. b. Adret, London 1925, pp.61/2, B. Kam.117a.
109. Cf. n.107.
110. IM, p. 14.
111. Op.cit., p.39.
112. Op.cit., p. 48.
113. Ibid, pp. 46, 53.
114. Cf. F. Cantera Burgos, Alvar Garcia de Sta. Maria, Madrid 1952, pp. 420/1 and p. 451. Cf. also RABM, 3a. epoca, vol.1 (1897) ed. Paz y Melia,'Carta Dirigida al rey por los embajadores de Espana en el concilio de Basilea', p.72: "sobre el lugar de la sesion se comienza entre nos e los ingleses debate ca ellos quieren tener el grado primero de la banca siniestra ..."
115. Menendez y Pelayo, op.cit. p. 192, Cf. also A, Prieto's Introduction to Siervo Libre de Amor, Madrid 1976, pp.15/16.

116. Cf. A. Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, Amsterdam 1970 (reprint of Oxon. ed. 1887-95) 2, p. 80ff.
117. *Yad Hahazaqa*, *Hilkhot Tephila*, 12, 18  
"כל מי שהוא גדול מחברו בחכמה קודם לקרות."
118. IB, 571.
119. IM, p. 14.
120. *Seror Hamor on Pequde*, Venice, 1545, p. 89b.
121. J. Lacave, *Pleito judio por una herencia*, *Sef.* 30, 1970, pp. 325, 337.
122. *Op.cit.*, p. 161-181.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
124. IM, p. 30.
125. IM, p. 29.
126. Im, p. 29.
127. a) & b), p. 29.
128. IIB, p. 282.
129. IM, p. 31.
130. As quoted in *Kerem Hemed*, vol.9, p. 45 by Rosenthal.
131. Cf. Bibago's justification for translating Middle Commentary of Averroes on the *Metaphysics* (Huesca, Second Half of the XVth century) in his introd. published by Steinschneider as appx.L to his '*Abraham Bibago's Schriften*', *MGWJ*, xxxii, 1883, p. 139.

"וביחתי עשו לקש יתקוששו וקושו, להם לבדם ארץ נהנה, קרית חנה השכל והחבונה מי מנה מספר בחי עיונם וחכמתם ... לה משפט הבכורה שמה ישבו כסאות ההכנה."

cf. also G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue*, vol.iii, p. 184 b and 185a, for Eli b. Joseph Habillio's comments (*Monzon*, 1472),

"והנה חכמי הנוצרים בעיונם בנמצאות הטיבו החקירה לאמת השרשים ההם בטענות אמיתיות ... מי שירצה להחלמד בחכמות האלה הנה יעיין בספרים ההם אשר כל ראשיהם מיוסדים על שרשים נאותים לאמונה האמיתית."

also Abrham Nachmias b. Joseph (act. Ocana, 1490); *Sachs*, *Kerem Hemed*, viii, 110)

"...חכמי אדום דלו דלה מים מימי בורה, להם היתה אורה מים מתוקים המים דמאוררים למרי נפש שם נפתחו לאיש אחר נהפכו ...לא כן מתי מספר מן היהודים..."

Isaac Corbeil in his *Sepher Mizwot Katan* (1227) says (*Ed. Kopyts*, 1820, p. 710, No.11).

"יש לנו לכשוה ק"ו בע צ"נו מעובדי אלילים אשר אינם



"מאמינים עומדים כאלמים בבית חרפותם כל שכן  
אנו העומדים לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה."

132. IM, p. 30/1.
133. IM, p. 31. The Responsa of R. Isaac Afasi (1013-1103) for example, contains a question on whether one should remove a hazan who sings Arabic songs. Adret (1235-1310) in a responsum to Huesca, seems to criticize their custom of choosing the hazan for his voice. Asher b. Yehiel (beg. xivth century) criticizes the attitudes of communities who care only for the voice of the hazan, cf. Zimmels, 'The contributions of the Sephardim to Responsa Literature till the beginning of the xvth century', in Sephardi Heritage, ed. R. Barnett, London 1971, pp. 371, 374, 379, 380. The Mishna (Taanit, II, 2) does not include a pleasant voice amongst the attributes necessary to the hazan. The Gemara does (Taanit, 16a) cf. also Steinschneider, Jewish Literature, London 1857, pp. 155, 338, n.56 for further examples.
134. Juan Ruiz, Libro de Buen Amor, ed. J. Corominas, Madrid, 1967, pp. 564/5.
135. Maase Efod, ed.cit. Introduction.
136. Ben Sason, art.cit., p. 60a, p. 31.
137. Ibid, pp. 31, 60.
138. Ibid., p. 29.
139. Kerem Hemed, 9, pp. 46/7.
140. Apud Haberman, op.cit. (From Lonzano's Derekh Hayim, p.14) p. 14/5.
141. Ibid., quotations from the editors of the liturgies.
142. Eine Alte Stimme, Gesammelte Schriften, II, Berlin 1876, p. 177ff. used by M. Braun in 'Present day Jewry in the light of the xivth and xvth centuries' Jewish Review, May 1912, pp. 51ff.
143. p. 83. He was preceded by Moses Sofer (the 'Hatham Sofer') who, in his letter against the reform movement of 9/Shevat/5579 to the Hamburg Beth Din (Hamburg Beth-Din, Eleh divrei ha-berit, Altona 1819, p. 43) quotes the IM as historical 'proof' that the persecutions in Spain (he mistakenly speaks of expulsions) were caused by  
"קרבונו אל האומות ורחוקם מהכמי ישראל ומנהיגיהם".  
a statement which could be made only by ignoring much of the Iggeret's text.

144. Literarische Analekten, Literaturblatt 1843, p. 139  
where he correctly points out Azulai's mistake
145. Op.cit., p. 39-42.
146. Social and Religious History of the Jews, Vol.x, p.186.
147. BH2, pp. 239-243.
148. Ben-Sason, op.cit., passim.
149. IM, p. 27.
150. BH2, pp. 242/243.
151. IIB No. 287.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIAL CRITICISM IN BONAFED'S INVECTIVE

#### AND ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The poems which form the "quntres" of Bonafed were written c. 1445 as a result of Bonafed's resentment against the Saragossan aljama authorities, who, instigated by Rabbi Joshua Galuf ibn Joseph had expelled him from his community.

The poems,--surviving in various manuscripts were published in a critical edition by Schirman in 1946.<sup>1</sup>

The most noticeable aspect of the poems consists of blistering forays against individuals. Thus, Steinschneider, in the paragraphs he devotes to them, refers to 'den fürchterlich behandelten Jeshua' while characterising Bonafed's style as 'kurzen und beissenden Epigramm'.<sup>2</sup>

The English edition of Baer's History seems to emphasize this aspect rather than the historical value of Bonafed's criticism:

"Bonafed spared none of the unfortunates who remained in Saragossa after the Tortosa dispute ... in his old age, this satirical poet forgot that it was thanks to just these simple men and not to the notables of the community, that the flame of Jewish faith was not quenched ... it may be doubted whether all the estimable artisans who still headed the community were really only ignoramuses and malefactors, as Bonafed portrayed them..."<sup>3</sup>

Somewhat different was Baer's first remark on the poems in a note written in 1924:

"Von der unerfreulichen Zustandem in der Gemeinde während dieser Zeit zeugeh die Satiren aus der Mitte des 15 Jahrhunderts die sich unter den Gedichten des Salomon Bonafed finden."<sup>4</sup>

The problem raised by the historical interpretation of SB's poems is similar to that of medieval satire in general.<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand one may take them at their word and build a ridiculous image of a community of boorish artisans led by an allegedly sodomite Rabbi engaged in stealing from and defrauding one another in the intervals between orgies. On the other hand one may ignore them totally as products of an embittered mind as if they had been written in a historical vacuum without roots in reality and by an isolated non-entity rather than by a member of the leading circles of Saragossan and Aragonese Jewry and, moreover, one who had taken part, in his own way, in some of the most important historical events of the first half of the xvth century.

The problem can be partly resolved by treating them as a literary document and relating it to its historical background. This in two ways: firstly, by paying attention to the personal circumstances under which they were written. In other words by asking the questions: what were SB's intentions and how does he go about achieving them?

Secondly it may be useful to see whether the phenomena mentioned in his poems were really historical impossibilities or whether in fact they were not entirely uncommon occurrences of Saragossan Jewish history.

Thus one can divide SB's sallies into common literary weapons of invective, such as value judgments, which may or may not be valid evidence, but which in any case do not contribute much to an understanding of communal

social history, on the one hand, and on the other hand, those which form part and parcel of the history of social tension and conflict of the aljama.

To this effect the following lines will try to:

- a) isolate themes of socio-historical interest
- b) to set them within the context of medieval social criticism, European, Spanish and Hebrew.
- c) to provide the historical background of conflict from which they emerged.

Solomon Bonafed.

This section will be concerned with the personal background of the poems in as much as it affects them. This is partly described in the poems themselves as well as in some other documents studied by Schirman in the introduction to his critical edition, Though this section will not be circumscribed by it.

Although the date of his birth is unknown, there is a reference to him as belonging to the 'generation of the Ribash' which would indicate sometime in the second half of the xivth century and it may be added that there is a correspondent of Ribash who bears a similar name.<sup>6</sup>

Related by family to Profayt Duran,<sup>7</sup> the 'Efodi' from Perpignan, he belonged socially to the leading circles of Aragonese Jewry as well as to the circle which Steinschneider characterised as 'Northern Spanish poets and polemicists' of c. 1400 which included Solomon da Piera, Vidal de la Cavalleria, Moses ibn Abez and others.<sup>8</sup>

His poems to Vidal de la Cavalleria (wr.9 or 10-1413) and to Da Piera (wr.1414) show his close ties to them. Of the 'scholars who were precious beyond words ...', i.e. the intellectual elite of Aragonese Jewry, he remarks: "I remember them in their company, I recall them not in parting ...", "...their names are engraved on my forehead ..."<sup>9</sup> Also amongst this circle was Moses Avenavez, the adelantado for the upper estate (mano mayor) of the community in the years following the 1391 massacres.<sup>10</sup> Nor was his circle circumscribed to Saragossa. He corresponded and was friendly with, amongst others, Envidal Bonsenyor of Solsona (described as 'mituvei ha'ares')<sup>11</sup>, Yehasel Hakaslari of Bel Puig (Catalonia).<sup>12</sup> His correspondents and friends are physicians,<sup>13</sup> philosophers and communal leaders. In other words, even if he was economically dependent on the good offices of a patron, there were levels at which he dealt with the leadership on equal terms. The picture of an embittered poetaster whose horizons extend only as far as his next source of income is too partial to be a useful explanation. This should be borne in mind when assessing the descriptions of corruption at administrative level. There is every likelihood that SB had inside knowledge of these matters.

Nor can an explanation of tension along ideological lines wholly explain the issues at stake. True, Bonafed's attack has been seen as directed against the exponents of simple religious observance; the "artisans" who were the "mainstay" of the community. It is also true that, from what one can gather from the poems themselves, his opponent, R. Joshua, does exhibit some traits of the pietist and he

may be seen almost as a religious revivalist. The poems show him trying to impose more rigorous measures concerning the purity of cooking utensils,<sup>14</sup> trying to implant a different style of preaching which concentrated on halakha rather than philosophy,<sup>15</sup> as was the custom<sup>16</sup> (though not one that passed without criticism from xvth century Rabbis with a pietist orientation)<sup>17</sup> in other Spanish communities. His dress also seems to have aroused comment by its unusualness,<sup>18</sup> perhaps by being different to the common dress of the Saragossan Jews probably barely distinguishable from that of their Christian neighbours.<sup>19</sup>

It is also possible to make a partial case for SB as fitting the type of Averroist or sceptic, who, against the injunctions of Rabbis such as Ribash<sup>20</sup> and Shem Tob ibn Shem Tob, studied philosophy rather than Talmud or Kabbalah and who was not loathe to study 'secular' subjects. He himself says that he wrote a poem in the vernacular<sup>21</sup> (probably in Hebrew characters intermingled with Hebrew words; of the sort known to us from documents by the community's 'romanzador').<sup>22</sup> A poem of his shows him acquainted with astronomical terminology,<sup>23</sup> while, if the superscription to poem No.47 of his Diwan is correct, he studied Logic in Latin under a Christian teacher.<sup>24</sup> This is hardly surprising for a member of his circle. Bonafed was proud of having read the Nicomachean Ethics in Latin.<sup>25</sup> Vidal de la Cavalleria wrote in the preface to one of his poems that he had modelled it on a Latin one.<sup>26</sup> For later years one could mention Eli Habillio translator of Latin scholastics into Hebrew in Monzon.<sup>27</sup> Of the same generation

as Bonafed was Azariah b. Joseph b. Abba Mari Bonafoux Astruc of Catalonia who translated Boethius' "De Consolatione" from Latin into Hebrew.<sup>28</sup> If one adds to these examples the fact that unconverted Jews such as Da Levi painted for the Church<sup>29</sup> and that Don Jacob Cadique de Ucles was commissioned a translation from Catalan into Castilian<sup>30</sup> one can see that this degree of cultural interpenetration was not all that uncommon.

At the same time one cannot accept this rather simplistic division into 'secularist' and 'pietist' because of various data which make the picture more complex.

First of all, Bonafed himself was the author of a poem, directed to En Saltiel Gracian (wr.c.1414)<sup>31</sup> written because he was concerned by the fact that "many of those living in the Diaspora ... bring ideas from non-Jewish sources to destroy the fundamentals of religion and the 'pious' of this generation believe that speculation rather than religious observance is the most important thing, so much so that their idiocy has brought them to believe that the Torah was necessary only for the masses who believe in faith and tradition (kabbalah) ... but in truth the pious man who serves his Lord with love and observes his commandments with all his heart and possessions even if he has not studied natural philosophy and theology ... he will succeed in all he turns to and he in his righteousness is most exalted ... and wiser than Aristotle and all the philosophers for he is destined for the world to come ..." <sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Joshua himself studied and taught philosophy and medicine.<sup>33</sup> Even Bonafed sees no



contradiction in the fact that Joshua considers himself an expert in halakha, philosophy and practical Kabbalah.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, a tension between the two men did exist, mounting till one Saturday in 1444 or 1445, Joshua, who had obtained the support of a group of communal leaders publicly excommunicated Bonafed in the Synagogue.<sup>35</sup> SB then proceeded to emigrate to Belchite, S.E. of Saragossa. The town counted with a Jewish community whose known members had financial ties with those of Saragossa.<sup>36</sup> In it he found a patron: Mosses, b. Elazar. He then dedicated himself to write satires to be circulated amongst his friends. He kept in touch with events in Saragossa through them. The recipients are individuals who are not only cultured and wealthy but also probably influential in the inner politics of Saragossa.

The poems were, of course, vindictive and insulting. But the invectives, it may be submitted, were not chosen at random. Although there is a sense of immediacy rarely found in his other more serious poems, the attacks embodied in his verses have a definite purpose, that is, to justify his opposition to R. Joshua and the communal leaders in terms of the ideas of social criticism of the leadership current in the Jewish community of Saragossa of the forties.

In other words, no matter what SB's real ideas about 'the masses' were, he used the arguments which might have been levelled at the leadership by them in order to attack Joshua and his circle.

We may credit SB with enough insight into the sort of argument that would convince his readers to treat

the 'quntres' as a repository of the themes of social criticism that were present in the thought of his time.

The fact that the content of the poems is geared more towards the sort of social protest he knew would be approved by his readers rather than a mere outburst of personal emotion is all the more apparent if we notice how his style and the content of his poems changes with the recipient.

When he addresses the aristocratic Gonzalo ibn Lavi<sup>37</sup> he uses a measured metre and writes imitating ibn Gabirol, an erudite private allusion that would be recognised only by another member of the select group of lovers of Hebrew poetry. He does not use coarse obscenities in these verses. But when he writes verses to the 'leaders of the community of Saragossa' (probably with the intention of them being circulated widely in the community, as a sort of lampoon) he uses every weapon to win popular appeal: obscene allusions, facile parodies of communal enactments, easy rhyme etc. If, moreover, these themes are isolated and set within the context of European and Spanish criticism of the leadership and social protest of the Late Middle Ages, the conclusion can be reached that these are not the random ravings of an embittered old man, but an attack calculated to coincide with ideas of resentment against the leadership present in his community at that time, as indeed they were throughout Europe in one form or another.

The polarity between leaders and community:

For Bonafed, Joshua is a hypocrite and moreover a demagogue.<sup>38</sup> The interest of some of his invective lies in the basic assumption of a polarity between Joshua and the communal leaders on the one hand, and the mass of the community on the other. The reader gets a feeling of two clearly defined groups the נכבדים and the המון.

There is also the implication that if disharmony is avoided it is only because the המון is deceived. The relation between R. Joshua and the המון is described as one of deception on R. Joshua's part and one of foolish acceptance out of ignorance on the part of the המון at times, while of opposition at others.  
(p.19, line 97)

"ובהמון העלוב יביטו אל פניו כאלו ראשו כחם פז  
... ומצא ... מחט בין הכוסות ... העם בחידות  
לנסות."

(p.24, line 3/4)

"... ועניי הצאן לא ראו כי בנפשותם הוא  
להתעולל בהם עלילות..."

(p.27, line 69)

"וההמון העלוב בשמעם את דברי האלה והקול הולך  
וחזק ילבשו חרדות..."

The same relation of deceit characterises leaders like Afia and the המון

(p.24, line 14/5).

"משה עפיה המחנשא לכל לראש רוע וחלאה/  
משתרר גם השתרר על הני יהודאי טפשאי."

At times, there is, mixed with the invective against the leaders, an unambiguous contempt for the **חסידים** who support Joshua (p.39, line 49)

"ההמון הסכל נסך מלכו ואחריו יהים ולרשע אמר  
אלהים ... ובחורי ישראל כורעים ומשתחווים  
להמך."

The support was by no means constant. In SB's letter<sup>39</sup> to Solomon Haninay he mentions the latter's letter and the news contained in it. According to them, the group who supported R. Joshua had turned against him and opposed him.

#### Accusations of Maladministration, fraud and dishonesty.

XVth century European social satire and criticism often exploits the resentment against maladministration and corruption of municipal government officers.

In England, for example, as Scattergood has pointed out,<sup>40</sup> the break-up of old feudal relationships in the late xivth and xvth centuries helped to destroy traditional loyalties (between lord and vassal) and gave rise to a situation of abuses which are strongly criticised in sermons or verses such as Hoccleve's (e.g. "Lawe is nye flemed out of this cuntre").<sup>41</sup> Ballads, such as Gest of Robyn Hode, invariably show the sheriffs and their hirelings as 'treacherous, cruel and corrupt', they are the 'most hated individuals in the ballads'.<sup>42</sup>

In Castile, Gonzalo Martinez de Medina (first half of the xvth century) strongly criticizes the corruption of royal and municipal officers in his "Decir que fue fecho sobre la justicia e pleitos e de la gran vanidad deste mundo".

Tax-collectors, lawyers, notaries all "rob this reign" by "strange means."<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Bonafed makes use of the existing grievances against the leadership's maladministration and uses them as weapons of invective.

For him, when Joshua came to Saragossa, honesty disappeared:

(p.53, line 18-20).

"מיום בואך חדלו ארחות נכוחות וחהי  
מטרה עקרה."

Malpractice in administration and dishonesty in general are alluded to in the parodies of communal ordinances which are formulated by means of an inversion of the ideal statutes: e.g.

(p.28, line 6-8).

"עוד הסכימו ... כי יקום עד חמס שיהיה  
פסור מן המס / וכי יכרח בריח איש עם  
רעהו וחם השמש ונמס."

(ibid. line 11)

"עוד הסכימו ... כל דין שיטה אר הדין  
ושחד על נקי יקח שיהן דנסא לצדקה וישקוהו  
מיין הרקח ... וכל הגונב תפוחי ספר חורה  
או הסיר המצנפת והרום העטרה, יעטרוהו ...  
לצפירת תפארה."

Joshua is openly accused of taking the money from charity funds

(p.18, line 79)

"ולא הטבע כסף וזהב וכעמים יקח מן הצדקה  
והתמחוי למלא בטנו יין..."

The leaders are accused of passing unjust ordinances against the individual rights of members of the community: (p.24, line 1)

"בהתאסף ראשי עם ... לחקן תקנות ... ולגזל  
בחירתם אשר לא צוה אותם יושב תהלות."

Bonafed implies that the adelantado Moses Afia, denounces Jews (p.24, line 14).

"הולך רכיל ואוכל קורצי הון דיהודאי."

44

he accuses him of dishonesty in commerce (line 16, *ibid.*)

"עושה עשר ולא ביושר."

45

Moses Benjamin, another communal officer, who had been adelantado in previous years is accused of usury (*ibid.* line 29).

"בנשך ובמרביה כל עמו אוכל ..."

The communal notary, Vidal Abulfeda is accused of mal-practices in the fulfillment of his office (p.25, lines 34, 39/40)

"הסופר הכופר כלו חנף ומרע ... קולמוסו כנשוא  
יערף כמטר שוא ודבר כזב ... ויהי כמצחק ...  
כי יניף היטר ויגדים זמנו."

Bonastruc de Salinas, a communal officer, probably the treasurer is accused of fraudulent practices when giving the accounts: (p.26, line 52)

"כפיו מלאות חמס וגוזל קהלו בעת יושב בחשבון."

Abraham Shoaib is accused of accepting bribes (*ibid.* line 62)

"כלו רודף שלכוניכ ואוהב שחד."

In the late Middle Ages social criticism seems to have been seen as a subject worthy of poetical treatment. This assumption is shared by Bonafed. His detailed and concrete examples of dishonesty in communal rule and administration are, as will be shown further, neither isolated expressions of personal bitterness nor imaginary elaborations of a literary theme. SB relates invective to contemporary social problems and, in this respect, shares in the merit of Hebrew poets who used the genre of polemic verse and, as pointed out by Mirsky,<sup>46</sup> thus introduced real social 'problematics' into poetry.

One of the vehicles for expressing social denunciations is the theme of 'the world upside down'.

The world upside down.

In common with Catalan and Castilian vernacular poets of the xvth century,<sup>47</sup> Bonafed makes use of the theme 'the world upside down' adapting it to the circumstances of his period and community.

Bonafed's values are mainly those of the upper classes of the pre-1391 communities: lineage, knowledge of philosophy, above all excellence in poetry are his standards. Naturally he regrets to see these replaced by wealth and the rise of a new leadership which he exaggerates. (His circle is composed precisely of the old families he pretends had disappeared, though admittedly neither the Chinielos nor the Cavallerias, nor the Alazars are mentioned as being communal officers in the forties).

Some references to this theme are to be found  
in the "quntres"

(p.35, line 11/12)

"אבוי נא לעדה / בחכמה ענודה / ונדשם  
/ המונה / טהר לב ורחמן / והיום הפוכה  
לבעלי מלאכה."

(p.15, line 11)

"הדיוטות ראשי המטות / החיטים שופטים  
ורצענים דינים."

(p.17, line 63)

"הוי קריה עליזה ועיר תהילה מאז היחה לעם  
סגולה והיום נהפך ענינה לחור ובהו."

The theme is more fully developed in his poem: (Schirman,  
vol.2, p.268) "עולם הפוך"

It may be useful to emphasise the similarities  
between Bonafed's עולם הפוך and the theme of  
'mundo al revés' in Castilian and Catalan poetry. Ramon  
Savall (councillor of the Barcelona government in the  
second half of the xivth century and friend of Bernat Metge,  
who in his turn had relations with Hasdai Crescas), in his  
poem "De mal saber ab verinos coratge", complains that  
everything has been turned upside down and that those 'from  
below' want to be equal to those 'from above'.<sup>48</sup> Bonafed  
begins his poem with a maritime metaphor (more suited,  
perhaps, to the Mediterranean port of Barcelona than to  
Saragossa): (Schirman, vol.2, p. 628, line 1).

"ראה פוסים בלב ים כבורקים ירוצון; ואניות בשוקים."

The theme of the breakdown of social hierarchy is  
represented by a description of the arrogance of the



'artisans', e.g. line 8.

"ההיט בעה יוצא במחטו ידם לנפול ילידי  
הענקים."

According to Bonafed:

"אל חמה בשוב עולם הפכפך ועתים מנחייב  
טבעם רחוקים."

The Castilian poet Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino (1370?-1424) has a poem which expresses similar sentiments: e.g. 'muere el ques bueno e bive el ruyn' the good man dies and the wicked lives. For Villasandino these are the signs of the end of the world. The ignorant discuss the text and glosses of St. Augustin and the villagers speak Latin: "Ya los inorantes andan disputando/ las glosas e testos de Santo Agostin/ E los aldeanos fablan buen latyn".<sup>49</sup> Bonafed declares: (Schirman ibid., line 6)

"והחכמה כמה מלב זנוחה ובה יחעללו  
עוללים ויונקים."

or (ibid. p.629, line 12)

"ואורג יחשב ... מסכה כמסכה נזיקים."

Parallel to Villasandino's line: "non prescian al bueno sy non al malsin" is Bonafed's line 7:

"נהפך ללעונה מפט הימים כי פחותי הזמן  
ככוכבים רמים ובעמק שלה ברגליו כל  
גבר תמים."

One should also mention Scattergood's comment on this type of poem referring to their vogue in England in the xvth century:

"This topic of the world upside down would have been familiar enough to a medieval audience. It was frequently used from classical times as a framework for denunciations."<sup>50</sup>

The second part of Bonafed's poem consists of a lyrical idealisation of the country which is, according to

Huizinga,<sup>51</sup> typical of the late Middle Ages. Bonafed exclaims: (ibid. line 15)

"לכה דוד צח ונלכה על פני חרץ למרחקים...  
ונקיף אהלנו מערוגות חבצלת... ולא נראה  
בחהפוכות הזמנים."

The contrast in these verses is between the life of the city with its disorder and materialism and the rural landscape which could serve as an ideal background for intellectual discourse. French and Burgundian poets studied by Huizinga express an aristocratic and affected ideal of flight from luxury and honour at court.<sup>52</sup> The theme of the 'tribulations of the life at court' is not unknown, in one form or another, in Hebrew writings.<sup>53</sup> But Bonafed has more in common with certain later poems of the Marques de Santillana<sup>53a</sup> with their disdain of city smells and occupations. It is, however, totally in accord with his own communal background.

He adapts two medieval themes to the particular occasion which gave rise to the poem, the impoverishment of his friend Bonsenyor. The coherence of the poem lies in the unity of aristocratic sentiment both in its contempt for the artisan and his 'idyllic vision'. As Huizinga points out:

"Strongest and most lasting of all is the illusion of a return to nature and its innocent charms by an imitation of the shepherd's life ..." but "... without leisure or wealth one does not succeed in giving life an epic or idyllic colour. The aspiration to realize a dream of beauty in the forms of social life bears as a 'vitium originis', the stamp of aristocratic exclusiveness."<sup>54</sup>

The raven image.

The raven-dove set of metaphors is often used by SB. On one level it is a simple juxtaposition of contrasting symbols meaning whiteness-purity-innocence-goodness (dove) and blackness-impurity evil (raven). Thus in one of his poems, SB compares the fair beloved maiden to a dove who treats her suitor as if he were ugly as a raven: (Schirman, vol.2, p. 627, line 9)

"אהה יונה ידיד ערב כעורב מאסתהו."

But this was not the only layer of meaning in SB's use of the metaphor. The raven image had a long history in Hebrew literature. Though Gen.8/7 was to be the basis for important homiletic elaborations in midrashic and patristic literature, the verses themselves can hardly be said to present a clear cut imagery in which the raven represents 'evil'.

In Lev.11/15, however, the raven (the genus 'corvus' of which four species are known in Israel) is listed amongst the impure fowl. Of all the impure birds listed, the raven seems to have attracted particular attention in the Aggadic sections of the Talmud. In them the raven is archetypally cruel to its offspring and members of its household (Erubim 22a); it is a symbol of sexual incontinence because it had intercourse in the Ark (Sanhedrin 108b); the croaking of the raven was considered an ill omen (Shabbat 67b). The raven as a metaphor for the negative became so common that the expression 'urba parah' (a raven flew by) was used to denote dissatisfaction. (Though Jastrow interprets it as meaning an evasive answer)(Beah 21a).

It is also characterised as a thief (Sanhedrin 100). The image was carried over into medieval literature. The Arukh ( d. 1110 ) on Beah 26, interprets the expression 'black as a raven' as denoting worthlessness, shame and inferiority.

In medieval Hebrew poetry in Spain it was often used simply to denote blackness. Thus Moses ibn Ezra (1055-1140).

"הבעל שער כנוף ערב / הושב פתע כנוף יונה."

(Tarshish, 5-37/8)

or ibn Shabtai (1168-1225)

"אשה כעורב שחורה."

(Schirman, vol.2, p. 80, line 56/7).

"כשה בנימיץ דומה לעורב וכושל":

In the xiii<sup>th</sup> century an extra layer of meaning seems to have been added to the metaphor.<sup>55</sup>

In the Raya Mehemna the set of metaphors is used and endowed with symbolic meaning. Graetz and Jellinek understood them as concrete historical references to the author of the Zohar, Moses de Leon, and the prophet of Avila respectively.

Even if one agrees with them there is still significance in the fact that this particular set of metaphors is used. Baer sees the set as having wider significance. But according to him, the raven image is a later development while the dove image is the basic one.

The dove has a Messianic task, it symbolises Knesset Israel, "she'erit hanig'elet". It is a symbol for the Divine presence which did not find rest for the plant of its feet in Exile; it has no friend or partner in its mission.

The raven is associated to the wealthy and the ignorant. It did not cause the repentance of the true just.

According to Baer, the raven metaphor seems to have been taken from Christian Pseudo-Joachimite literature. In one of the works of this corpus, the Pseudo-Joachimite commentary on Jeremiah, the raven stands for the order of the Dominicans who became pillars of established hierarchy, close to the wealthy and excessively engaged in the pursuit of Aristotelian philosophy. The Jewish authors of the *Raya Mehemna* and the *Tiqune Hazohar* "had no doubt read or heard these works and wanted to assimilate them to their reality but were not successful or did not dare explain the insinuations and left them unexplained ..." says Baer. There is, in these texts a Jewish raven who became like the Dominicans, dealt with the wealthy etc.

In short, in these texts the raven acquires a new layer of meaning as a metaphor of social criticism directed against the wealthy and the established. Since Baer's first article appeared, Marjorie Reeves<sup>56</sup> studied Pseudo-Joachimite and prophetic literature of the Middle Ages and it would appear that the raven metaphor was far more common than one would have suspected and certainly not limited to the Pseudo-Joachimite commentary on Jeremiah. The crow or raven is a frequent motif of the illuminations of prophecies, the purpose of which is to criticise the established Church hierarchy. Reeves<sup>57</sup> refers to the 'bitter opposition of the clergy and the *ordo corvinus* to the *ordo colombinus* ...' to explain a Pseudo-Joachimite prophecy.

Although SB was no Kabbalist, he does use some metaphors other than the raven, which were also used in

kabbalistic texts such as the Raya Mehemna specially metaphors of criticism of the rabbinical leadership. For example (Zohar Hadash 121b) the Talmudists who 'learn and bark day and night in the Oral Law' are compared to dogs who bark: 'hau' 'hau'. SB refers to Joshua as a dog (p.18, line 74) and has him barking (p.18, line 78).

Another image used in the RM is the 'rav hahobel' רב החובל also used by Todros b. Yehuda Halevi (Toledo, 1280's) in his attacks against the rabbinical leadership.<sup>58</sup> It is used by SB against Abraham Shoaib (p.26, line 59).

These are metaphors which were sure to arouse popular attention and which had an unmistakeable dimension of social protest. The raven was also a common symbol for greediness. In English the verb 'to raven' meaning prowl for prey and eat voraciously, or the adjective 'ravenous' for rapacious (as the Old French raviner, ravineus) testify to this connotation of the image. In Castilian there is a line in the Libro del Buen Amor which also refers to this aspect: (though associating it with the raven as symbol of impending death)

Ally estan (the monks) esperando qual avra mas  
rico tuero como los cuervos al asno, cuando le  
tiran el cuero, cras nos lo levaremos, ca nuestro  
es ya por fuero non es muerto e ya dizen pater  
noster mal a guero.<sup>59</sup>

In Bonafed the raven image is used more often than any other animal metaphor, though these indeed exist. Joshua is a barking dog (p.18, line 74), a leech or vampire (ibid. line 78), an ass (p.20, line 115), his pupils are: a fox (p.20, ) Joshua himself is a pig (p.39, line 54) a copper serpent (p.39, line 58). All of these are animal metaphors of

biblical stock but they may be seen within the medieval tradition of making moral analogies using animals, an example of which is the genre of moralised bestiaries.<sup>60</sup> In the lines (p.17, line 53/54).

"אם דרך איש לך נסתרה הבט עם מי עושה  
חברה כי כל עורב מינו ערב."

the comparison follows Bonafed's comments on Joshua's supporters, the image serves to bring out the negative aspects of his associations with them.

Bonafed sees himself as the innocent dove who finds no rest in his community while Joshua, the raven does: (ibid., lines 61/2).

"הוי עיר הזונה העורב ובה היענה מצאו בה  
מנוח ולא מצאה היונה."

The image is repeated elsewhere in the poems: (p.24, line 7; p.22, line 162)

"והם חשבו לכתב על קצת יחידים שטנה  
ויפל הגורל על יונה."

While the images are skilfully interwoven into the general pattern of invective, the frequency of their use and the choice of this particular set (other animal images applied to Joshua have no counterpart in Bonafed) should be explained by the connotations of social criticism it had acquired in the xiii<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Criticism of the 'sisa'.

The above mentioned evidence has aimed at showing that the poems are more than personal invective and emphasising their socio-political character and importance

as evidence to the state of social thought in the Saragossan aljama of the 40's.

But there is, apart from the accusations of maladministration, dishonesty and greed, a concrete issue which informs the resentment against the communal leaders to which the poems are appealing.

This aspect of social tension in the community is related to the taxation system. This issue has a long history as a cause of social conflict in Aragonese communities. D. Romano,<sup>61</sup> who has studied the conflict caused by taxation in the 1290's has rightly underlined its importance.

Bonafed exploits the resentment of the members of the community against the (p.54, line 11)

"עשרה שליטי הרשע גלמי כלי עץ ועמי ארצות."

He narrows down his attack to their activities as legislators (p.55, line 12-13)

"לא ידעו...חכמים ואם דנים בה"ל דיני קנסות."

and of these to those involving fiscal dues.

"וישם דמי מלחמה בשלום...לא ישקיפו...כבוד משאם."

The more immediate and visible target of resentment is the tax-collector (lines 17-18)

"שרי מסים נושאים אצים."

These do not limit themselves to taxing those who are liable but also those who are exempt: (line 19)

"רעבים גם צמאים נפשם בהם החעטף."

They tax their wood, their wine and their meat (lines 19-20)

"עציהם בכחיר יבאו וכי ישיגו להבעיר המדורה  
ואש אוכלה הנה האש והעצים ואיה השם לעולד."



Equal resentment was caused by the prohibitions on importing wine from outside Saragossa (line 21)

"והמביא מן החוץ כד יין לא שופתו עיין."

It may be useful to point to the similarity between the Jewish Saragossan resentment against tax-collectors and the non-Jewish resentment against Jewish tax-collectors which informs the "Rimado" of Ayala.

Ayala (b.1332, d.1407) originally bred for the Church, became a courtier reaching the apex of his career in 1399 as Chancellor of Enrique III of Castile. The Rimado del Palacio,<sup>62</sup> written during a long period, from 1378 to his death, contains much social criticism including some sections which attack the small group of Jewish financiers, though, as common in Christian literature, without making a distinction between this rather small minority and the rest of the Jewish population.

The poem of Ayala refers to the Jewish tax-collectors employed by the 'privados'. In one passage he emphasises their 'cleverness' and the outcry of the poor tax-payers:

"tienen para esto judios muy sabidos, para sacar los pechos e los nuevos pedidos, non lo dejan por lagrimas quo oyan ni gemidos ..."

Bonafed also refers to these two points: (line 22)

"הקיפה הזעקה כל העם...הנוגז והמקדם...ימהרו  
עצות נמרצות."

Both refer to the bad quality of the wine as a result of the tax-collector's exorbitant exactions:

"el vino agro turbio muy malo baladi."

Bonafed says: (line 21)

"יין ענושים יטהר יין הרקלה."

Bonafed refers to bringing wine from outside:

"דמביא מן החוץ כד יין".

So does Ayala:

"Maguer non tienen vinas siempre suelen  
comprar muchos vinos de fuera e i los encubar ..."

The circumstances of the Castilian Jews whom Ayala has in mind are clearly different. In Saragossa, wine cannot be imported from outside because of communal regulations.

Also noteworthy is Ayala's ignorance of the fact that Jews did have vineyards as shown by various documents.<sup>62</sup> Either Ayala is referring to a definite group of Jews who did not or he is simply ignorant of the fact.

Still, the ideas of resentment against the tax-collectors and the effect of the tax on wine and meat are strikingly similar (Such parallellisms between Jewish and Christian critics are by no means unusual).

Ayala also speaks of the poor quality of the meat as a result of the tax-collectors activities:

"Asi como es del vino, en carne es otro tal,  
si el senor tiene algun buey muy cutral  
conviene que lo coman con bien o con mal".

SB similarly, complains of the poor quality of the meat as a result of the tax-collectors activities:

(line 26/27)

"בערבי פסחים ... דנשברה וההולה חכיד להם לאכלה  
כספה במשקלה."

Bonafed expatiates on the limits which the members of the community reach because of the taxation (line 27)

"ואם על דרך ימצאו טה בריה עליה יעלו ויכרעו  
ודמים בודמים נועו."

SB concludes his picture of the burden of life under the communal leaders with a description of the banns of ex-communication which were read at the Sabbath at the Synagogue (line 30).

The significance of Bonafed's poems for the social history of his community can best be seen within the context of xvth century Saragossan Jewish history. Was this community a defunct remnant of a previously important aljama? Were there only 'estimable artisans' at the aljama government? Was there no social stratification? And, most important for our purpose, was there a background of social tension and conflict to the criticism of the leadership which emerges from SB's poems?

The aljama of Saragossa.

The aljama of Saragossa was situated within a walled precinct in what is now the area between the Corso and the Calle Mayor. Though the area had been progressively contracting by the expansion of neighbouring parishes it occupied an extensive and important perimeter as late as 1494.

Its most notable feature was the 'castle of the juderia' with its seven towers. It was known as the jail of the Jews and was also used for safekeeping.<sup>63</sup> The population has been estimated at 200 families by Serrano y Sanz which would give a total of 1200 individuals for that author on the basis of documentation of 7/9/1472.<sup>64</sup> Baer has accepted Serrano's estimate. A more recent evaluation gives the population for the xvth century as between 1500 and 2000 individuals.<sup>65</sup>

The community's vitality was expressed in a varied and well developed institutional life.

The community had its own hospital, butchers shops, baths, four synagogues<sup>66</sup> and many hevrot or 'confrarias'. Amongst these, those which have left a documentary trace for this period include the 'cofraria de malvisar' (hevra malvishe arumim) in charge of clothing the poor;<sup>67</sup> the 'hevra l'ashmurot',<sup>68</sup> hevra 'kevarim', hevra 'ose hesed' (occe ece in the documents).

An official recognition of one of these 'fraternities' given by Alfonso V in 1425 has been preserved.<sup>69</sup> According to the letter, the individuals mentioned in it

"...deseades fazer de nuevo confraria e caritativa dileccion ... por mantener los pobres vergonyantes a casar e fazer aiutorio a casar guerfanos miserables ..."

The letter gives them powers to form the fraternity. Such letters were probably held by other fraternities as well.

As Baer has pointed out,<sup>70</sup> it had become, after the destruction of the community of Barcelona and the massacres of 1391, a center of rehabilitation for Aragonese Jewry. An important part in these activities was taken by Crescas and the dela Cavalleria family. The community in its statutes states that it incurred in expenses in the service of the Holy Torah and for saving the lives and property of their community and all the other communities in Spain (1397).<sup>71</sup>

Similar expressions of the pivotal role of this aljama exist at a later date as well, showing that the community had not lost its relative importance amongst Aragonese aljamas.

An interesting trace of the intense intercommunal activities carried out with Saragossa as their center may be

found in the letter formularies which survived from that period.<sup>72</sup> The letters of recommendation, circulars, etc. give us a picture of individuals from all over Aragon seeking the help of the Saragossan community and of the other communities attaching great value to the instructions emanating from Saragossa. For our purpose, it should be emphasised that such letters were issued in the middle years of the century as well, after the disputations and conversions, as is clearly shown by the Prague Ms. quoted by Schirman in a different context.<sup>73</sup>

The central role of the community does not seem to have changed as drastically as might have been thought. On the contrary, the extraordinary concentration of some of the most famous figures of xvth century Hispano-Jewish history towards the end of the century would almost point to a renaissance of its former importance during the 70's and 80's. Among these figures one can mention ibn Zayat, De Leon, ibn Shoaib, Bibago, the Aramas (father and son), Levi ibn Shem Tov.<sup>74</sup>

After 1391 and before the conversions of 1413, it was a cultural center renowned for its creativity. Poets such as Moses aben Avez, Solomon da Piera, Solomon Bonafed, Vidal b. Levi corresponded with individuals throughout Aragon and sometimes with Castile and Navarre.<sup>75</sup>

Polemical treatises reflecting the latest theological trends were commissioned and written in Saragossa during this period.<sup>76</sup> The intellectual elite included patrons who commissioned the copy and translation of works in Arabic,<sup>77</sup> who read philosophical works in Latin (mainly logics and medicine) and studied under Christian theologians

in Latin. Even after the conversions these activities did not cease entirely. Saragossan Jews continued to copy and read philosophical works.<sup>78</sup> They had books on philosophy and science in their libraries.<sup>79</sup> The local Yeshiva (?) had classes in Aristotelian metaphysics, astronomy, etc.<sup>80</sup> The Jews were aware of the curriculum at the local 'studium'<sup>81</sup> and they may have attended lectures there. Halakhic discussions were carried on between learned scholars in which the whole community took part.<sup>82</sup>

Jewish-Christian relations at certain levels seem to have been as close as before. Jews and Christians had, of course, commercial relations. Jewish and Christian guilds of textile workers (coatmakers=*pelliceros*) had agreements amongst themselves.<sup>83</sup> Jews and Christians lived, sometimes, in the same houses.<sup>84</sup> Christian notaries came in and out of the Synagogues as a matter of course to witness the various agreements and contracts drawn up there. They used Hebrew words in their documents.<sup>85</sup> Christians used Jews as arbitrators and vice-versa.<sup>86</sup> Some Jews had relations with various courts where they offered their services as book-binders, textile merchants, '*corredores d'orella*' etc.<sup>87</sup>

#### Socio-economic make up and stratification.

An analysis of the Jewish individuals whose names and professions are mentioned in the documents of a Saragossan notary in the years 1457 and 1466 made by Serrano y Sanz shows a preponderance of what is usually termed 'artisans'.<sup>88</sup> Probably most members of the Saragossan community were involved in one form or another in the various

branches of the clothing manufacture.

Not all of these, however, fit the image of the 'poor humble artisan'. Some 'traperos' had relatively important textile firms, such as Judah Trigo, who invested 14,000 sueldos in an enterprise with Mosse Adax in 1479.<sup>89</sup> Others had dealings with the courts which must have been moderately profitable.<sup>90</sup>

Not all the members of these families converted. Nor were most of the converts of the following period members of the wealthy oligarchy.

Members of the Alazar and de la Cavalleria family appear in documents posterior to 1415.<sup>91</sup> Neither had all the members of the Constantini family converted.<sup>92</sup> Names of communal leaders of the period 1391-1415 continue to appear throughout the xvth century.<sup>92</sup> In other words, the ruling class had not entirely changed. The same families continued to occupy prominent positions throughout the century.

Cabezudo Astrain, who has studied notarial documents for the period 1420/1430, maintains that most converts who appear at that period are engaged in "humble professions".<sup>93</sup> Not all the converts were Najaries or Cavallerias.

Socially, then, the community consisted of an elite of a few families of 'francos', i.e. those exempt of taxes by privilege; the Alazars, the Cavalleries, the Constantinis. Although these families (with the exception of the de la Cavalleria family) do not seem to have taken official part in the government of the aljama, they probably had some influence on it. As for the Cavallerias, even after the conversions there remained members who played a

leading role in political organisation of the aljama government.<sup>94</sup>

The next group may be said to consist of the more prosperous individuals engaged in the textile industry and commerce as well as money lenders and physicians. Serrano y Sanz seems to have exaggerated the importance of the Jews as money lenders in xvth century Saragossa. Baer has<sup>96</sup> pointed out that the documents used by Serrano would lead to the opposite conclusion, and Serrano seems to have underestimated lending activities by Christian agencies (Genoese, municipal banks, etc.)<sup>97</sup>

But some individuals of the ruling Saragossan group were engaged in money lending. One should also mention the numerous physicians which are mentioned in the documents published by Baer, specially rich for the xvth century.

Next comes the 'mass' of the community engaged in the various aspects of the clothing manufacture. Serrano y Sanz labelled the economic activities of the Saragossan Jews as 'professions not requiring violent physical effort'. This categorisation, borrowed from the antisemitic literature of the late xvth century (especially Bernaldez) explains little about them. The other term used to describe their activities: 'artisans' can more usefully be narrowed down to a preponderance of those engaged in the clothing industry.

The lowest economic stratum was that of the many paupers depending on the charitable activities of such organisations as the Hevra Ose Hased.



### Stratification.

It may be useful to see the tensions present in the community which was the recipient of SB's poems against the background of its social stratification. Most social groupings are in some measure stratified and whatever the ideas of social equality, democracy and communal living of the Second Commonwealth (the period in which the ideological basis of the Kahal seems to have originated) may have been, there can be no doubt that in reality the Saragossan community of the xvth century had some well defined lines of division among its members.

This inequality manifested itself in various areas. At Synagogue, the central institution of the community, the seat arrangement was a symbolic expression of the community's status structure with the eastern wall containing the seats of communal officers as its apex. This explains the careful documentation of seat transference before Christian notaries.<sup>98</sup> The place of interment was equally determined by social evaluation. This can be ascertained from the results of archeological excavations in Teruel and in the Montjuich of Barcelona cemetery, which show remains of jewels in some areas but not others. There is no reason to doubt that Saragossa followed this pattern. R. Samuel Franco of Saragossa takes pains to make dispositions on the exact place of his interment. He wishes to be buried near Solomon Constantin (whom we know to have been a physician and franco, thus of the higher strata and lived near the castle) and if this is not possible near the

tomb of the Abnarrabi family. The order of precedence in calling up to the reading of the Law was similarly important from this point of view.<sup>99</sup>

It would seem that these groupings, in as much as they were related to wealth, corresponded roughly to the three divisions, 'estates' or 'manos' which existed in the aljama. The aljama was divided into three 'estates' according to the amount of tax paid.

These divisions carried certain political connotations as well. One of the issues of xvth century Saragossan Jewish politics was whether they should all be represented in the ruling Council of the aljama. This was a division which must have had social implications as well.

Although the evidence does not allow for a complete identification of the various forms of stratification, it is reasonable to assume that there existed some correspondence. To be concrete: it cannot be asserted that all those individuals who belonged to the 'mano mayor' were the same who had the best seats at the Synagogue, the preferential location at the cemetery, were always called up first at the Reading of the Law, had the best houses at the 'juderia' etc. And yet, a close correspondence is supported to an extent by the evidence.

But a description of the leading class must include individuals who are, by definition, excluded from the 'mano mayor'. These are the 'francos', i.e. those exempt from taxes by outside exemptions, and the class of 'talmide hakhamim', who were exempted from taxes by Jewish law. The inclusion of the latter within the leading class

is necessary if one is to understand the literature of social criticism, sometimes 'anticlerical' or 'antirabbinical' in tone, directed against them. This inclusion has been challenged, for an earlier period, by Albeck,<sup>100</sup> for example. In his study of the juridical basis of communal law (relying on earlier sources) he comes to the conclusion that the juridical definition of the 'talmid hakham' is too loose to permit their classification as a separate 'estate' comparable to the clergy in Christian society.

Still, the literature of social criticism does single them out for attack as a clearly defined group, and does so often on economic grounds ('selling the Torah for gifts' and similar phrases). This should be borne in mind when reading SB's criticism of Rabbi Joshua. True, it is essentially a criticism stemming from personal motives, but it appeals to certain ideas of resentment against the rabbinical leadership which were common of his age and it fits within the genre of social protest of xvth century Hispano-Jewish literature.

The most relevant aspect of Saragossan Jewish history for the reader of SB's 'quntres' is the recurrence of conflict within the community. The conflict was carried on in three major areas:

- a) government
- b) tension between 'francos' (tax-exempt) and 'pecheros' (tax payers) 'poderosos'
- c) 'sisa' meat and wine tax.

An idea of the conflicts concerning communal government may be gathered from the frequency of change of communal statutes responding to complaints by groups in the community.

The first set of statutes one would like to analyse would be those promulgated by Hasdai Crescas, Rabbi of the community, in 1396. These, however, have been lost. Something of their contents may however be gathered from a redrafting of the 'taqanot' by Queen Violante.<sup>101</sup> From them one gathers an idea of the autocratic and 'undemocratic' tendency of Crescas' legislation. Crescas was, of course, more concerned with an efficient reorganisation of the community, which had assumed an important role after 1391. But this tendency was opposed by a group within the community,<sup>102</sup> which probably identified itself with the 'lower estate'. The Queen's statutes of 2/1399 responded to communal conflict and complaints of the 'democratic' elements. There were political issues at stake, such as the measure of representation of the lower estate at the Council, the relative degree of autonomy and authority of it and how far did it have to render account of its activities. They respond to certain specific complaints about the maladministration of communal funds:

"...sea cierto a nos que muytas quantyas se despienden ...por favor de algunos singulares sin sabuda e querer dela dita aljama e consello dequella e sin algun mandamiento precedent ..."

Thus Queen Violante's preface to one of her statutes. A letter of the same, written on 28/4/1400, again mentions conflict arising between the aljama's officers and some individuals concerning the accounts:

"...algunos singulares dela dita aljama no contrastant seyer diffididos los ditos contes juxta el dito capitol ensayavan de empetrar letras e mandamientos nuestros impugnando nel feyto determenado por los oydores siquiere recibidores delos ditos contos ..."104

Further evidence of conflicts over government exists for a later date. The brief of Alfonso V, empowering Vidal de la Cavalleria to reorganise the aljama (29/3/1417) makes mention of the reigning situation at the time following the period of conversions and restrictive measures of previous years:

"...a Vidal de la Cavalleria ...los menestrales e delos menores ... havian tomado ... carga de regir e ordenar la cosa publica dela dita aljama por la qual razon toda la dita aljama yes en tanto desorden ... en los dias dela tribulacion y angustias dela dita aljama son algunos qui han regidos e administrados dineros e otros bienes dela dita aljama de que no han dado compto ni razon alguna, antes yes incierto si han bien administrado o no e si en poder suyo ha restas de quantias o bienes del publico daquela aljama o no ..."105

Two aspects should be stressed: First, there was obviously discontent with those who had been rulers of the aljama during the period of 'tribulations' (roughly concurrent with Ferdinand I reign (1412-1415); there were complaints about misappropriation of communal funds, and it is to these that Alfonso's decision to reorganise the aljama partly responds.

Secondly, there was a group which opposed the government of the 'menestrales' or artisans, and their opposition can be felt in Alfonso's description of the situation as well as in the new statutes.

The duration of the 'popular' government of the aljama by the 'menestrales' is unknown

Whatever its features, the legislation of 1417 did away with it. But signs of conflict can be detected even after the reorganisation of that year.

The 'cedula' of 1438 (27-xi) given by Alfonso V, concerning the appointment of communal officers, can give us added information as to social conflict closer to the time of composition of SB's 'quntres'.<sup>106</sup>

The cause for the new legislation on the appointment of communal officers is described in the preface to the cedula. According to it, there was "great tyranny and abuses and confusions in the government of the aljama of the Jews of Saragossa ... if we do not remedy it ... there will follow irreparable damage ..."<sup>107</sup>

The new ordinances respond to the complaints of: "those who are oppressed, injured and mistreated because of the said tyranny..." The 'tyranny' is described:

"gabellando e tirannizando la eleccyon de los oficiales de la dita aljama por forma que vienga en sus complices e sequaces de manera que en los partimientos e tallas fazederas en cada un anyo por suplir a las necesidades ... fazen pagar quantidades insoportables a los que no son de su partida e a los que se quieren dius meter a su dapnada tirania aleviar indevidamente a las ditas tallas."

Again here we have a case of discontent with the aljama rulers. The specific charge is that the ruling faction tries to perpetuate its government by illegal means and unjust distribution of taxes.

Complaints follow and they are taken seriously enough to draft a new set of ordinances for the election of officers. This is to be done by lot, that is to say, by adopting the medieval solution to self-perpetuating oligarchies. Members of the council are explicitly excluded

from re-election. The procedure is tightened and an outside officer is to supervise it and oaths to be administered.

But the statutes of 1438 did not stop discontent with certain communal officers. Abuses in the collection of taxes or in the financial administration after 1438 are not unknown.<sup>108</sup>

In 1452, Jento Abencanyas, who had been the treasurer of the community for four years, was accused (by Abraham Levi) of not having given the accounts and of planning to run away.<sup>109</sup>

In 1466, Creixcas Aninay, treasurer of the community is mentioned as being detained in the prison of the castle of the juderia. He confesses to having had received a certain amount of money from Rabbi Nicim Muriel, collector of the meat tax.<sup>110</sup>

Testimonies drawn up before Saragossan notaries in 1457 and 1460 are evidence of irregularities in the election system. On 17/10/1457, a testimony was drawn up to the effect that Don Ramon Palomar, 'consellero' of the King went to the Synagoga Mayor and, in the room where the Torahs are kept, saw a box with the 'teruelos' (i.e. the lots by which the communal officers were elected) which had been opened without the key, forcing the lock.<sup>111</sup>

On 31/8/1460 while the aljama of the Jews was congregating in the Synoga Mayor, the box (where the offices are kept) was locked with three keys, one in the possession of Creixcas, the other one in the possession of Leon and the other one in the possession of the treasurer and the key of Leon did not open the lock.<sup>112</sup>

These testimonies refer to enquiries on the irregularities of communal elections obviously responding to complaints. Such problems continued to exist right to the end of the community.

In 1480 the community again thought it necessary to change its statutes and modify the system of election of its officers. Ferdinand refused to approve them because:

"No serian utiles al servicio mestro e buen regimiento de la dicha aljama e que dicha insulacion seria stada fecha en grant prejuicio de algunos singulares quitando aquellos de las bolsas delos officios ... efaciendo ordinaciones con imposiciones penas pecuniarias y corporales y encara con excomunicaciones que ninguno pudiese recorrer ni quejarse a Nos ... de lo qual se esperan seguir entre los singulares de la dicha aljama muchas altercaciones questiones y debates ..."

113

Besides being an example of Ferdinand's tendency to 'absolutism' that is, to the exclusion of jurisdictions and powers other than those of the state, the fact that the aljama saw fit (as can be seen from the document) to exclude certain individuals from election and that it included an ordinance on the possibility of complaints against it would seem to point to the reigning tension. This situation recalls to mind the remarks on the unsatisfactory social and administrative situation in the aljama. An adelantado of these years says:

"...Mirat sennor los malsines que tenemos en esta aljama que alla fuera los christianos son judios y aca dentro son christianos ..." 114

Alfonso de la Cavalleria exclaims:

"O corpus mey judios como sois locos y perdidos, tu eres adelantado, Arto mal tiene la aljama. Perdidos sois no sabeis negociar ..." 115



To summarise: a trend of communal conflict over misadministration representation, taxation is noticeable throughout the xvth century. Bonafed's poems cannot be totally dissociated from the reality from which they sprang.

Another point of conflict was the existence of individuals who, in one form or another, took advantage of their relation with important Christians to exercise their influence on the aljama disregarding its rights and privileges and their responsibility.

The existence of Jews who obtained tax-exemptions in this form had been a cause of tension in the xivth century. Such individuals were resented and when the aljama felt it could do so, it threatened them with excommunication.

In other occasions it had, though probably with reluctance, to acquiesce to their privileges.

Sometimes, as in the case of the Cavalleria family, it had its own arrangement with them. The conversions of the second decade of the xvth century did not do away with these families. The Alazars, Constantini, Cavallerias, had individual members who remained Jewish and left traces of their existence in the period following the conversions.<sup>116</sup>

The resentment against these families did not stop after the events of 1391. The Alazars, for example, are accused of taking advantage of their status as 'francos' for raising the rent. In 1409 a letter of King Martin mentions: "aliquas fraudes, que, ut fertur per nonullos judeos vocatos 'los francos' in sisis et aliis reeditibus et juribus ..."<sup>117</sup>

In 1413, when the Saragossan aljama was undergoing a difficult period trying desperately to raise money to cover expenses (such as those occasioned by the Coronation in 1412 and by the Tortosa dispute), the Alazars refusal to share in the communal burden caused complaints. These resulted in a letter of Ferdinand de Antequera to reprimand them for their refusal: (27/6/1413):

"segun havemos entendido los judios del linatge de los Alatazares ... no hayan querido pagar alguna cosa, en danyo e preiudicio dela dita aljama deque somos maravelados mayorment como los ditos afferes toquen assin en proveyto edeffension delos ditos Alatazares ..."<sup>118</sup>

As for the Jews who had converted, they seized the opportunity of evading the common financial obligations, as is shown by amongst other documents a 'guiaje' granted to the converted Jewish physician Tomas Garcia in 1413. By this document he is exempted of whatever obligation he might have had towards the aljama in concept of taxes or debts to which he was a guarantor.<sup>119</sup>

One should not fail to mention in this context the attention paid to 'gracias o levas', i.e. tax-exemptions obtained as a favour from outside authorities, in the communal statutes of 1399.<sup>120</sup>

Equally telling is the fact that the community thought it necessary to obtain a letter from King Martin (7/1/1409) guaranteeing its right to appoint its own officers without outside interference.<sup>121</sup> This may be quoted as an example of the tension between the powerful members of the aljama who, because of their influence and outside interference could obtain appointments to communal offices and the rest of the community.

While it is true that the letter follows the text of a similar one given by Peter IV in 1340, if the situation had changed drastically, there would have been no need to obtain its renewal. The aljama rulers who did so were proved right by subsequent events. As Serrano y Sanz pointed out,<sup>122</sup> one such case was that of Solomon Cogumbriel, who, infringing communal rights obtained the office of almotacaf of the community on 3/7/1429, from the archbishop of Saragossa.

To summarise: The resentment against the privileged few who used their influence in their favour and to the detriment of the aljama was one of the causes which served to accentuate the background of social conflict from which SB's poems emerge.

### The Sisa.

The sisa tax (=assize-excise) on wine and meat, with which SB is concerned in his parody of the communal statutes was, by 1445, an institution of long standing. Under James II, the aljamas had been granted the right to levy the sisa.<sup>123</sup> It yielded an important revenue (e.g. 18,000 solidos jaqueses in 1434).<sup>124</sup> The tax was farmed out to tax-gatherers who collected it in a 'corral' or yard on which there was a special 'tavla' (table) for that purpose. The corral was adjacent to the community's butcher shop.<sup>125</sup> Ordinances concerning the sisa were constantly being renewed. Their opening paragraphs emphasise the importance of its collection to the community.

The imposition of the tax was enforced by the Herem, and, in some ordinances stronger measures are allowed.

The ordinances passed on 11/4/1397 by the adelantados are an example of the importance of the sisa and the problems entailed in its collection:

"...como la sisa del vino e de la carne sia el sostenimiento de la aljama de los judios de la ciudad de Saragoca e menos de aquella manera de sisa seri imposible que la dita aliama pudiesse sostener las grandes cargas que sostiene ...126

Those who evade the tax are threatened with the herem (alatma e nitduy).<sup>127</sup>

In order to emphasise the importance of the sisa one may mention a letter of the Infante Alfonso to King Ferdinand written on 9/8/1414. At that date, with the dispute at its height, the Pope, through King Ferdinand, had ordered that more than twenty Jews of Saragossa should present themselves at the papal court. The Infante Alfonso asking for a revocation of the order, uses the sisa as a decisive argument. As his letter states:

"Vostra gran senyoria ... ha manat ... que certs juheus de questa aliama los quals lo sant pere manave anar a sa sanctidat ... On senyor molt alt com la anada dels dits juheus apresent redundas en destruccio total dela dita aliama la qual deu present fer arrendament deles sises de carns e de vi ..."128

The collection of the sisa is seen as important enough for the King to revoke his order.

The ordinances of 1434 show some of the problems inherent in the collection of the sisa of wine and meat.

Individuals try to evade the payment of the tax, butchers associated in buying or selling the meat creating a monopoly which was detrimental to the collection of the

sisas, communal officers and rulers would take advantage of their position and commit frauds when farming the tax, etc.

"por quanto la disa deminuece de cada dia e justa la verdat si todos los singulares de la aljama e abitantes en aquella ... pagasen la sisa segun deven la suma de la sisa aumentarya ... ordenamos ... el arrendador ... ffagan jura en la ley ... a fagan fazer jura al collidor..."<sup>129</sup>

Against the 'monopolies' or associations of butchers, the following ordinance was passed:

"porquanto algunos carniceros se agabellean e se ligan en ffazer conpanya en el conparar de la carne e en el vender de lo qual se sigue danyo a la sisa e a la provision communa ..."130

The frauds committed by communal officers are explicitly mentioned in another paragraph of the ordinances:

"algunos avian seydo arrendadores e oficiales e por el officio ffazian algunas cosas no devidas ni onestas en la sisa en gran danyo de la aljama..."<sup>131</sup>

The power of the tax collectors of the sisa is shown by the text of the ordinances of 1464/1465, which allow the tax collector to use the excommunication text and to proclaim it four times during the year in the Sinoga Mayor, all the other Sinagogues being closed, against all those who would commit fraud in the matter of tax or drink wine which was not taxed. And if any Jew who is supposed to pay the tax commit fraud the tax collector is allowed to conduct an enquiry in the house of the individual as many times as he sees fit.<sup>132</sup> The privilege of the Alazar family is respected. The ordinances of 1477 authorise the tax-collector to enter the houses of the tax-payers.<sup>133</sup>

In short: the sisa was one of the burning issues of Saragossan Jewish life. To the ordinary Saragossan Jew the frauds committed by officers, the powers given to the tax-collector, the amount of tax to be paid, were causes of grievance against the communal authorities and others.

### Conclusion

This chapter has tried to point out the existence of social criticisms in the poems of Solomon Bonafed. These criticisms concord with the grievances against those in power which exist in contemporary literature and in xvth century Saragossan documents. This background of communal division and conflict throughout the century on economic and administrative issues leads one to see no reason for doubting that it is complaints such as these which are exploited for his own purpose by Solomon Bonafed.

APPENDIX I

The appended table is a list (by no means exhaustive) of aljama officers taken from various sources published in a different context.

One of its most noticeable aspects is the recurrence of certain families in the aljama government. This would seem to support the contention that there was a leading group of families (some of which are explicitly attacked by Bonafed in the poems as shown by Baer in MGWJ, art.cit.) of 'nekhbadim' against whom the 'hamon' could direct its grievances.

For the abbreviations see List of Abbreviations.

27/1/1397 - (SyS p. 452)

Communal tax collectors

Jehuda Alfrangil  
Salamon Calahorrano  
Abraham Trigo  
Abraham Alcolumbre  
Jehuda Abenvidas  
Zaadias Zabarra

31/1/1397 (SyS appx. iv)

adelantados (for 1396)

Juce Almali  
Simuel Abnarrabi  
Salamon Trigo  
Gento Amato

new adelantados

mano mayor  
Mose Abenavez  
mano mediana  
Mosse Abnardut  
Abraham Aletenci  
mano menor  
Acach Gallur

clavario

Abraham Aletenci

consello (IB, p.727)

Juce Almali  
Juce Benvenist  
Simuel Abnarrabi  
Simuel Cresqas  
Juce de Granada  
Acach Almachuqui  
R. Avon Alhoqui  
Juce Abenerguas  
Avadias Behor  
Jento Caracaniel  
Mose Franciscuel  
Facen Chiniello

29/11/1399 (SyS appx.ix)

adelantados

Simuel Crexcas  
Jehuda Almali  
Juce Avenarguaz  
Mosse Franciscuel

clavario

Abadias Behor

1399 (IB 741)

rav de la aljama

Azday Cresques

18/1/1400 (Sys appx.xi)

adelantadosJehuda Almali  
Juce Aveniarguaz  
Mose Franciscuelclavario

Abadias Behor

30/1/1400 (SyS appx.xii)

adelantadosmano mayor  
R, Mosse Abenabez  
mano mediana  
Acach Almachuqui  
mano menor  
Mosse Abnardutclavario

Jehuda Golluf

26/7/1402 (SyS p.xvi)

adelantadosJuce Benyarguaz  
(Jaffuda Avendavid)  
Samuel Abnarrabi  
(Salamon Abnarrabi)  
Juce Benvenist  
Gento TartavielconsollerosJaffuda Golluf  
Salamon Trigo  
Bienvenist Albolai  
Facor Chiniello  
Juce de Granada  
Abraham Abensaneb  
R. Abraham Falleva  
Gento Amato  
Acach Gallur  
Caton Taboch  
Jacob Alcoxisi (clavario)  
Vidal Caldos  
Salamon Abenardut (fillo Alazar)

9/12/1403 (SyS xiv)

adelantadosMosse Abenavez  
Mose b. R. Jucef Ahenardut  
Azmel Feduchiel

5/1404 (Sef.10, p.112)

Acach Gallur (clavario)

6/8/1404 (SyS xv)

adelantadosJehuda Golluf  
Abraham Abenjacob  
Abadias Beor  
(R. Abraham Abenxueu)clavario

Juce Bienvenist

1405 (Sef.10, p.114)

clavario

Simuel Bienveniste

8/12/1411 (SyS xvi)

adelantadosJehuda Goluf  
Ebraym Alitienci  
Bitas Adich  
(Jehuda Abendavit)clavario

Mosse Abenardut

10/1/1413 (IB 788)

nuntiorum aliamarumMosse Abenabez  
Bonafos de la Cavalleria

6/2/1413 (SyS p.xv)

adelantadosSamuel Abnarrabi  
Juce Bienvenist  
Rabbi Avenavez  
Jehuda Goluf



clavario

Vitas Addich

27/6/1413 (IB 791)

comisionados a taxarBonafos de la Cavalleria  
Mose Abenavez  
Todros Abencabra

25/6/1414 (SyS, p.32)

adelantadosAbraham Alicienci  
Abraham Avenpesat  
Jehuda Abenardut  
(Jucef Abraham Levi)  
Simuel Bienvenisteclavario

Jacob Abrayn

consellersSimuel Abnarrabi  
Juce de Granada  
Juce Abenaiguaz  
Jacob Gallur  
Jehuda Abenafia  
Abraham Trigo  
Saten Taboch  
Jehuda Bivais  
Bitas Adich  
Jaco Cogombriel

20/6/1419 (IB 835)

representativesVidal de la Cavalleria  
Mosse Benardut

21/3/1419 (IB 841)

general envoys of Aragonese  
aljarasJuce Abenafia  
Vidal de la Cavalleria

11/9/1420 (SyS xxii)

adelantadosVidal Abnarrabi  
Jacob AbiaynBonastruch de Salinas  
Sacon Tabochclavario

Juce Abenabez

consellersSimuel de Granada  
Bitas Adich  
Cetri Gallur  
Juce Amato  
Gento Darfan  
Cetri Alcaranuey  
Gento CabezprocuradoresJohan de Miranda  
Diago de Molina  
Salamon Abenardut  
Mosse Corriz  
Jehuda Sentor  
Jehuda Alfrangil  
Gento Chiniello  
Mayl de Palencia  
Acach de la Rabica

29/6/1432 (SyS xxv)

adelantadosBitas Addich  
Acach Abnarrabi  
Salamo Affia  
Acach Abenarguazclavario

Barzellai Darsan

consellersAbram Trigo  
Jaco Frances  
Bonastruc de Salinas  
Juce Benrabi  
Abraham Jaba  
David Alcoqui  
Acach de la Rabica

7/2/1434 (SyS p.175, n.1)

clavario

Juce Felcha

21/2/1434 (SyS xxvi)

adelantados

Simuel Algranati  
 Mosse Afia  
 Bonastruch de Salinas  
 Abraham Addich

clavario & consellers

Juce Ibrayn  
 Simuel Girman  
 Jehuda Seneor  
 Juce Galaf  
 Jaco Abencanyas  
 Junez Aziz  
 Mose Abembitas

11/8/1434 (SyS xxvii)

adelantados

R. Abraham Abenxueu  
 Acach Avenarguaz  
 Gento Gallur  
 Bitas Adich  
 (Juce Darfan)

consellers

Gento Abnsaya  
 Nahanien Gotina  
 Abraham Abiayn  
 Simuel Pati  
 Juce Zumana  
 (Jehuda Senior)  
 (Simuel Zayet)

12/12/1438 (SyS p.154, n.1)

adelantados

Azay Alazar  
 Ibraym Imanuel  
 Simuel Algranati  
 Judas Abenarduc

7/8/1439 (SyS, p.47, n.2)

adelantados

Juce de Arsan  
 Mose Abengamin

2/2/1442 (SyS, p.48)

clavario

Samuel Trigo

24/8/1444 (Sef.14, doc.I)

adelantados

Juda Abenlopiel  
 Vidal Abnarrabi  
 Simuel Rabuat  
 (Jussias Abennamin)  
 Abraham Gotina  
 (Bonastruch de Salinas  
 for clavario)

consellers

Gento Levi  
 Juzez Aziz  
 Jacob Nagir  
 Juzez Pazagon

16/8/1447 (SyS 32)

adelantados

Mosse Afia  
 Mose Abeniamin  
 Simuel Trigo  
 Bonafos Abnarrabi

clavario & consellers

Juce de Vexa  
 Junez Aziz  
 Adret Aninay  
 Jaco Galaf  
 Jaco Altexifi  
 Jaco Abendada

23/12/1449 (SyS, p.23, n.2)

clavario

Mose Aninay

25/1/1460 (SyS, p.48)

clavario

Abraham Abian

31/8/1460 (SyS, p.18, n.1)

adelantados

Leon Mastaron  
 Crescas

clavario

Jaco Abian

28/8/1464 (SyS, p.24, n.1)

adelantados

Jaco Senyor  
Juce Azamel  
Jaco Abencanya

clavario

Juce Eli

consellero

(Adret Aninay)  
Cecri Abenbitas  
Abraham Adder  
Jaco Carruch  
Juce Zayet  
(Acach Trigo)  
David Rodrich  
Salamon Muriel  
Mosse Albelli

26/9/65 (SyS, p.24, n.1)

adelantados

(Vidal Abnarrabi)  
Abraham Abrayn  
Juce Anardut  
Juce Trigo

19/1/1466 (SyS, p.ix, n.1)

procuradores

Mosse Silton  
Salamon Frances alias Cohen  
Abraham Arrueti

30/6/1466 (SyS, p.xiv, n.3)

adelantados

Abraham Aniyayu  
Juce Bernadut  
Juce Trigo

procuradores

Abraham Oneix  
Acach Zayet alias Chilon  
Abraham Atrix

18/8/1466 (SyS 35)

procurador

Juce Algranati

8/10/1466 (SyS, p.xiv,n.3)

adelantados

Simuel Abenlopiel  
Jaco Galan  
Juce Abenvitas

clavero

Abram Aniyayu

10/6/1467 (SyS, p.xv-xvi)

adelantados

Simuel Abenlopiel  
Jaco Galaf  
Juce Abenbites

clavario

Abram Abrayn

consellersos

Noha Chiniello  
Jaco Carruch  
Jento Abencanyas  
Leon Bilforat  
Simuel Nazir  
Mosse Silton  
(Juce Benardut)  
Ezmel Abnarrabi

23/4/69 (SyS, p.xvnl)

adelantados

(Jaco Aniyayu)  
Abraham Aniyayu  
Benvenis Azday  
Abraham Trigo

7/9/72 (SyS 37)

adelantados

Crexcas Aninay  
Jaco Halan  
Jento de Corti

clavario

Abram Eli

procurador

Samuel Aberlopiel

20/12/72 (SyS 38)

adelantadosCrexcas Haninay  
Jaco HalanconsellersosJuce Benardut  
R. Necim Muriel  
Jehuda Benvitas  
Leon Bilforat  
Joan Gallur  
Abram Abenabez  
Jeuda bengatiel  
Salamon Orabuena

4/7/73 (SyS, p.154, n.1)

adelantadosCrexcas Haninay  
Jento de Cortiprocurador

Samuel Abenlopiel

9/5/1475 (SyS, p.xvi)

adelantadosJuce Eli  
Acach Levi  
(Juce Aberbitas)

23/6/1476 (SyS 40)

adelantadosAbram Adder  
Acach Levi  
Salamon MurielconsellersosJuce Eli  
maestre Bonjua  
Juce Galan  
Benevist Profet  
Acach Cedosiello  
Leon Bilforat  
Gento de Tori  
Jeudah Bengatiel  
Jeuda Mayor  
Mosse Adat

24/2/1480 (SyS 42)

adelantado

Crecas Aninay

26/7/1485 (SyS, p.xvii)

adelantadosAbram Abraym  
Simuel Abenlopiel  
Juce AbuzmelconsellersosJuan del Portal  
Juce Eli  
Acachs Levi  
Juce Belforat  
Juce Saltay  
(Leon Manyent)  
Natan Cedosiello  
Leon Gallur  
Vidal Borgi  
Abraham de la Rabicaclavario

Astruch Aninay

21/5/1486 (SyS 193)

clavario

Mose Cedosiello

18/1/1490 (SyS, p.23, n.2)

clavario

Samuel Rabinat

4/7/1491 (SyS p.xvi)

adelantadosDolz Abnarrani  
Abram Eli  
Salamon Abenlopielclavario

Juce Abuzmel

consellers

Jaco Seneor  
Salamon de Farizo  
Leon Bilforat  
Mose Bencanyes  
Simuel Baco  
Haym Calana

15/1/1492 (SyS 43)

adelantados

Jaco Acan  
(Abram Abenabel)  
Acagen Gotina  
Bonafos Abnarrabi

clavario

Juce Abuzmel alias rajoerro

FOOTNOTES

1. H. Schirman, "Hapulmus shel Shelomo Bonafed binekhbade Saragossa" in Kabez al Jad, Minora Manuscripts Hebraica, Tom.iv (xiv) Jerusalem, 1946.
2. M. Steinschneider, "Poeten und Polemiker in Nordspanien um 1400" Hebraische Bibliographie xiv, 1874, p.95-97.
3. BH2, p.248-9.
4. F. Baer, "Besprechungen zur Geschichte der Juden im Christlichen Spanien", MGWJ, LXVIII, p.59.
5. A brief but relevant discussion in John A. Yunck, "The lineage of Lady Meed", University of Notre Dame Press, 1963, pp.184-7. A similar problem is dealt with by J. Shatzmiller, "Tumultus et Rumor in Sinagoga", AJS Review, Vol.2, 1977, pp.233/35 in relation to Kalonymos b. Kalonymos even Bohan.
6. Steinschneider, op.cit., p.97, but doubts the identity, as does Baer.
7. Cf. his poem to Isaac b. Moses Duran headed: "to my relative maestre Profiat ..." author of the Efod ... Ed. A. Kaminka, Hazofeh, Vol.12 Budapest 1928, p.38/39, or Neubauer, Catalogue .... Ms.1984, No.32, col.672.
8. Steinschneider, op.cit.
9. BH2, pp.216-7.
10. Cf. Appendix
11. Cf. Schirman, Hashira Ha'ivrit B Sefarad Wbe Provence, Tel Aviv, 1957, Vol.12, p.628.
12. Neubauer, op.cit. Diwan No.40, 7, Kaminka, Mimizrah Umemaarav 1895, p.121. (ממזרח וממערב)
13. Such as Enshaltiel Bonafos (Diwan, 14,15) son-in-law of the Ribash (BH2, p.219); Dolz Solomon (Diwan, No.27); Astruc Bonsenyor (Diwan 38) physician in 1428; Saltiel Icach Bonafos of Agranunt, physician in 1429, Jacob Albalag of Oliet (IB, p.861)
14. Schirman, Hapulmus, p.19, line 88-90 and his notes to lines 90-91.
15. Cf. ibid. lines 95-98.
16. That sermons concentrated on philosophy and used philosophic terminology and quoted philosophers as authorities can be seen from a variety of sources. For example: the letter of Hayim ibn Musa (ed. Weiss, Beth Hatalmud, 1882, pp.117-8) speaks of the

"דרשנים חדשים מקרב באו עולים להיבה...לדרוש ורוב דרשתם  
בהקשי הגיון ובדברי הפילוסופים."

- 16 (contd) and mentions three cases of preachers with a philosophical orientation, and quotes a fragment of a sermon in Castilian: "las mis cosas baldias ..."  
Also Inquisition records (IIB, No.422) make mention of "...Rabi Simuel physician of the Duke of Cuellar ..." (p.523) who, c.1473, used to preach "...great things of philosophy and grammar and other things..." his sermons were attended by the Duchess of Albuquerque, the alcaide old and new Christians. The sermons of Joseph ibn Shem-Tob (Ms.Jews' College, No.61) are also couched in typical philosopher's terminology.
17. Such as ibn Musa (cf. supra, note 16) or the Chief Rabbi Abraham Benveniste, *ibid.*, p.118.
18. Schirman, *ed.cit.*p.17, lines 43 ff.
19. If one accepts as evidence the legislation of "Benedict XIII" ordering them to wear a red and yellow badge so as to recognise them and the identical legislation of Fernando I (IB No.513) dated 23/7/1415. For Benedict's bull cf. Amador de los Rios, *Historia social, politica y religiosa de los judios de Espana y Portugal*, Madrid, 1973, appx.20, section 8, which refers to the 'antiqua jura' which orders that the Jews "ab aliis fielium populis distingui mandarunt" (given at Valencia, May 1415).
20. Cf. e.g. Responsa No.45 (Const.ed.1546) cf. L. Jacobs, *Theology in the responsa*, London 1975, pp.84-5.
21. Cf. Schirman, *ed.cit.*, p.12. The letter to Nahum Chinillo in Ms. Sason 590, f.190, mentions verses in יבב  
i.e. the vernacular. *ibid.*
22. Cf. J.L. Lacave, *Pleito judio por una herencia*, Sef. 1971 (31) pp. 325 ff. In the fifties R. Joseph Albar-geloni was "romanzador official" of the Saragossan community. The article contains photocopies of the papers of the litigation written in Aragonese in Hebrew characters.
23. Cf. Schirman, *Hashira*, vol.2, p.623-4, No.450, also pp. 20-22 of the quntres are concerned with refuting and questioning Joshua's proficiency in the sciences. Bonafed does so exhibiting his own erudition (c.f. also the note by Prof. Gutman, *ibid.*, p.57.)
24. Neubauer, *Catalogue*, col.673.  
  
The continuation, however, shows his true, perfectly orthodox position.
25. Cf. Kaminka in *Memizran Umemaarav*, 1895, P. 110.
26. Cf. S. Bernstein, *Poems of Don Vidal Joseph ibn Lavi*, *Tarbiz* (vol.viii) Jerusalem 1937, No.4, p.355 and Bernstein's note *ad.loc.*

27. G. Margoliouth, Catalogue of Hebrew and Samaritan Mss.1965 part III, cols. 184b-185a.  
"הסיחתי און למשוע לשון הנוצרים"  
written in 1472.
28. Cf. Steinschneider, H.Ub.p.466, No.278 who maintains that he is from Perpignan. The translation was written in Italy, but there is no reason to assume that he learnt Latin only when leaving Spain. Steinschneider does not mention his Catalonian origin. Cf. Chapter I, n. 85.
29. Cf. the altarpiece (?) depicting St. Catherine C.1400 in illustration No.33 of Schirman, Hashira ..., Vol.2. But Sanz Artibucilla maintains he is a convert, Sef. 10, p.73 ff.
30. IB No.475, Cadique was the physician of Don Lorenzo Suarez de Figueroa, Master of the Order of Santiago. Baer's identification with the brother of King Martin of Aragon's 'domestico e familiar', the Jew Rahiz, is extremely probable otherwise one would have to postulate two individuals both with the name of Cadique, both of Ucles, both active in 1402, both with connections in the Crown of Aragon (one knows Catalan and the other has a brother at the court of King Martin).
31. Gracian, a member of Da Piera's circle was originally from Barcelona (IB No.450).
32. Ed. Kaminka, Hazofeh, Vol.12, Budapest, 1928, p.40.
33. As can be seen from p.2, line 144, and letter No.6.
34. Besides the references in the poems there is an allusion, in the Inquisition process of Alfonso de Cavalleria (IIB, p.455) to "essa nomina que me dio el rav viejo siciliano ... rabi qui tenis des en esta aljana fecha a mi nombre y contra enemigos ..."  
Schirman accepts the identification.
35. Cf. p.22-23, Lines 161 ff.
36. Cf. for example, the 'casas en la parroquia de San Lorenzo (in Saragossa) que lindaban con otras de Acach Abendino, jodio de Belchit ...' (SyS, p.187, N.4) also the documents on the family Avendino quoted in SyS, p.153, no.1 and 2. The family had branches in Saragossa and Calatyud.
37. Poem No.4.
38. P.22, line 158 ff.
39. No.9, p.50, line 37.



40. Scattergood, "Politics and Poetry in the XVth century"  
London 1971, p.308.
41. Ibid., p.317.
42. Ibid., p.365.
43. Rodriquez Puertolas, "Poesia de protesta en la edad media castellana", Madrid 1968, p.41, No.15, p.295, active in 1402 perhaps a converso. Cancionero de Baena, No.340. In Catalonia social criticism is mainly anticlerical, but criticism of the bureaucratic administration of justice does exist, c.f. Rodriquez Puertolas, De la edad media a la edad conflictiva, Madrid 1972, p.38. where he quotes a sermon of Eiximenes against the 'juristas'.
44. That is implied by the biblical source from which the quotation is taken, Daniel 3/8.
45. Cf. also the criticism of the dishonesty of merchants in Aragonese literature; Scholberg, 'Satira e invectiva en la España medieval', Madrid 1971, p.224 for Valencia.
46. A, Mirsky, 'The principles of Hebrew poetry in Spain' in ed. R. Barnet, The Sephardi Heritage, London 1971, p.195. According to J. Dishon (Bigoret W. Parshanut (Bar-Ilan University ) March 1974, p.52) his debt to ibn Shabtai is so great that 'he must have had ibn Shabtai's "Words of the curse and the bann" before him at the time of writing'.
47. On the theme of European literature cf. E.R. Curtius, 'European literature and the Later Middle Ages', London 1953, pp. 94-98. K.R. Schollberg, op.cit., p.229. For its later Castilian and European history, specially in its visual aspect, cf. H.F. Grant, 'El mundo al revés' in ed. Atkinson and Clarke, Hispanic Studies in honour of Joseph Manson, Cxon. 1972.
48. Cf. Schollberg, op.cit., p.225.
49. Gancionero de Baena, ed. Pidal, Bs.As. 1949, No.97.
50. Op.cit., p.302.
51. Huizinga, 'The waning of the Middle Ages'(Penguin,) London 1955, p.131-2.
52. Ibid.
53. The theme occurs frequently in European literature of the Middle Ages, cf. P.Lewis's article in ed. Smalley, Highfield Hale, Europe in the Late Middle Ages, London 1965, pp.285-9; in xvth century France "to deplore the nervous strain of being a courtier was an established literary tradition..." The theme can be said to exist,

- 53 (contd).  
 in a way in Hebrew literature. Meir Alguadez's introduction to his translation of Nicomachean Ethics, paraphrased in Steinschneider's H.Ub. says (p.210) "er müsse ruhig an einem Orte arbeiten können...diese bedingungen haben ihm gefehlt..."
- 53a. Sef. 34, 1974, p.384.
54. Op.cit., pp 38/9.
55. For what follows cf. Baer, "The historical background to the Raya Mehemna", Zion,V, 1-44, and BHL, p.274, and p.438, n.25.
56. Cf. Marjorie Reeves, Some popular prophecies from the xivth to the xviiith century in Studies in Church History, ed. Cuming and Baker (Vol.viii) pp.109, 110, n.1, 112.
57. The influence of Prophecy in the later Middle Ages, Oxon.1969, p.182. Prophecy by a xivthc.Franciscan.For the influence on Vicente Ferrer, cf. p.171/2. For further mentions of the dove-raven symbol, pp. 143, 147, 178, 137.
58. Baer, Todros b. Yehuda Halevi and his age (Zion 2, 1937) p.47, n.62.
59. Juan Ruiz, Libro de Buen Amor, ed. J. Corominas, Madrid 1967, p.231 and p.210 (507).
60. Lecoy, Recherches sur le Libro de Buen Amor, Gregg International 1974, p.207 and n.1.
61. El reparto del subsidio de 1282 entre las aljamas catalanas, Sef.13, p.73 "El pago de los impuestos fue siempre el caballo de batalla de las discusiones ..."
62. Cf. Rodriguez Puertolas, Poesia de protesta, ed.cit., p. 86/87.
63. Ricardo del Arco, Las juderias de Jaca y Zaragoza, Sef. 14, pp.87-88 and 97.
64. SyS, p.10.
65. Vicens Vives (ed.) Historia de Espana e America, Barcelona 1974, Vol.2, Sobreques, pp.48/9.
66. SyS, p.9.
67. Cantera Burgos, La cofradia de malvisar de Zaragoza y su censal de Oliete (Sef.7, p.147-151).
68. Baer, Explanation on a comment, Zion 1936, p.257.
69. IB, p.855/6.
70. B2, p.13C, 126.

71. IB, p. 278.
72. Beinart, 'Igron ivri Misefarad', Sefunot, V, p.77, p.79, n.19.
73. Schirman, Hapulmus, ed.cit., p.11.
74. Ibn Zayat in IIB 453, on 14/7/66 he is mentioned as notary of the aljama (SyS, p.210); for Joel ibn Shoaib cf. E.J.s.v. "Shoaib, Joel"; for Bibago cf. BH2, p.489, n.34; for Arama, cf.S. Heller Wilenski, R. Isaac Arama u' mishnato, Tel-Aviv, 1956, p.28.
75. Neubauer, Catalogue No.1984.
76. Such as Bitul Iqare Hanosrim, or Efodi's Klimat Hagoym.
77. E.g. Don Benveniste, b. Lavi (Yehuda b. Shlomo b. Lavi de la Cavalleria) had had copied for himself the middle commentary of Averroes on various Aristotelian tracts in Arabic in Hebrew characters in 1402 (cf. Baer's remark in IB 1052) cf. Comité de Paleographie Hebraique Mss. Medievax en caracteres hebraiques, Vol.1, Jerusalem Paris 1972, I, 76.
78. E.g. Isaac b. Judah Souikhat copied the philosophical commentary of Gersonides (Averroes on Aristoteles Physics, etc.) in Saragossa in 1452 (ibid. I, 104). In 1474 a commentary of Averroes on Aristotelian Physics and Alfarabi's commentary was copied by Samuel de Torrutiell in Saragossa, I, 136.
79. E.g. Jehuda Benardut of Saragossa had in his possession the library of Rabbi Seneor of Almunia de Dona Godina. Amongst them the Christian notary, D. Augustin listed, in 1439, the following books: Anidotari de Nicholau, Avicena 'nombres de las species', the Almajac (Almagesto), etc. cf. SyS, p.49; also 'Otro Libro ...letra Moriega'.
80. As can be seen from the poems p.21, lines 144-145; also pp.21-22 passim, also poem No.6, specially the superscription.
81. Cf., ibid., p.40, lines 70-73.
82. Cf. IIB, p.453 and n.1.
83. SyS, p.12 and p. 42, where a document is quoted which is an agreement between Jewish and Christian guilds of pelliceros or coat makers.
84. Jose Cabezudo Astrain, Nuevos documentos sobre judios Zaragozanos, Sef.20, doc.9 of 22/2/1424; Yzdra Bercosa, a Jewish shoemaker, was hit by a stone on the way to the butcher shop, he signs a document to the effect that he forgives 'all those who live in the house where I live, be they Christians or Jews ..."

85. E.g. 'homash (humash), maston (mashkon), Cabezudo Astrain, 'Noticias y documentos sobre los judios Zaragozanos en el siglo XV, Sef.14, p.372, ff, doc.No.21, p.377; Maston, p.378, Quinyan, p.383, Mitra (Migra).
86. Cf. SyS, p.32, n.1 and 2; p.23, n.1.
87. Cf.e.g., Millas Vallicrosa, 'Los judios barceloneses y las artes del libro' (Sef.16, p.134) "Salomon de Calves, ligador de libres, judio de la ciudad de Zaragoza..."; or the appendix to Vicens Vives, Fernando II de Aragon Zaragoza 1962, p.657; Samuel Chamo on 29/2/1462, p.656; Gento Siltan, judio de Zaragoza corredor d'orella 27/8/71; Also at the court of the prince of Viana (Hispania, 1961, Vol.21) p.212, 29/12/1466; Salamon Abnacay, judio de Zaragoza, por alquiler de camas (also Millas Vallicrosa, art.cit., p.129, 9/1412).
88. SyS, p.37.
89. J. Cabezudo,Astrain, art.cit., p.407.
90. Cf. n.87.
91. Cf. IB, No.539 notes; also: Juce Alazar in 1428, Juce Alazar fillio de Mose Alazar (Moses ibn Alazar? cf. SyS, appx,1 and BH2, Ch.1) in 1424 Benvenist Abenvenist and Solomon Alazar and Mira Levi Abenvenist his mother in 1483, in Cabezudo Astrain, Noticias y documentos ... (cf. n.85). The documents are undertakings to avoid gambling (which incidentally shows that this was not a purely Italian trait). On 2 /1/1466 Solomon Constantin physician, franco, names Samuel Alazar his 'procurador' cf. SyS, p.19. There are various documents for the Trigo, Benardut Galluf, Chinillo families in SyS, but one can ascertain their remaining members from the Table at the end of the chapter.
92. Cf. the Table at end of chapter
93. Noticias y Documentos sobre judios Zaragozanos en el siglo xv (Sef.14, p.374).
94. E.g. IB, No.523 and No.531 (for 1417 and 1419)
95. SyS, p.37.
96. Besprechungen zur Geschichte der Juden im Christlichen Spanien, MGWJ-LXVIII (1924) p.58.
97. Cf. ibid. For Italian merchants in the Crown of Aragon, cf.e.g. Iris Origo, The Merchant of Prato, London, pp. 96-98.

98. On notarial documents concerning seats cf. Cabezodo Astrain, 'Noticias y documentos sobre los judios zaragozanos en el siglo~~XV~~XV', Sef. 14 (1954) 372-384, no. 12-14, also II N p 148/9. The responsum of Ribash mentioned above (p.30 n.107) mentioned the fact that documents on the seats were written by a notary.
99. For the archeological evidence cf. Novella Mateo, Tervel, X, 1953, pp. 1-5, For Franco's will cf. Cabezodo, Sef. 16, 1956, 137.
100. Cf. Albeck, Zion. 25, 1960, pp.57-61.
101. IB, No.467.
102. Ibid., p.741 (por querella de diversas personas ...), cf. also B2, p.127.
103. IB, No.467, paragraph No.6, cf. also paragraph 8, also p.748.
104. IB, p.751.
105. IB No.523, p.839, cf. also Piles Ros, Situacion economica ..., p.114. Sef. 10, 1950.
106. SyS, appx.XXX
107. Ibid., p.475.
108. The paucity of documents in Baer for this year is explained in introduction to IB.
109. P.19, n.1.
110. SyS, p.23.
111. SyS, p.18, n.1.
112. Ibid.

113. SyS, p.37.
114. IIB, p.451.
115. IIB, p.451.
116. Cf. n.91 for the Cavallerias, cf. SyS, p.186, n.1. (11/8/1450 Puria de la Cavalleria, judia) (n.2, Reyna de la Cavalleria 12/7/1433)(ibid.p.183, n.4 (Gonzalo de la Cavalleria, Vidal de la Cavalleria y Reyna de la Cavalleria judios; 9/10/1429).
117. SyS, p.35.
118. IB, No.486.
119. On the Alazars, cf. the document (IB 79 n.) which shows that even in 1393 (1/8) they ask for their exemptions to be renewed by King Juan I. The document is a confirmation of franchise to Mosse Izdra and Salamon Abnalazar Jews of Saragossa, cf. also SyS, pp.12/13, the family Alazar had, in 1425, obtained a royal privilege of exemption from sisas on wine and meat. The aljama excommunicated them.
120. IB, p.745.
121. SyS, p.34.
122. Ibid., p.20, n.3.
123. BH2, p.21.
124. SyS, p.464.
125. Cf. the document quoted by Ricardo del Arco of 1493 (Sef. 14, p.89).
126. IB, No.463.
127. IB, p.730.
128. IB, p.804.
129. SyS, appx, No.29.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. SyS, p.23.
133. SyS, appx, No.40

### CHAPTER III

#### SOCIAL TENSIONS AND CENTRALIZATION IN ARAGONESE ALJAMAS

There is a view among modern historians which sees the Jewish communities of Spain as essentially localist. Living among a 'population noted to this day for its rampant separatism and individualism' they remained apart constitutionally.<sup>1</sup> There were no centralising forces to speak of according to this view. Briefly 'each city was a kingdom unto itself'.<sup>2</sup>

On a different plane, it has been maintained<sup>3</sup> that rationalism, 'an essentially aristocratic trend of thought' when driven to its logical conclusion becomes a socially disruptive force, which 'evokes in the people centrifugal tendencies of dissolution and religious decline'. This tendency is responsible for the 'national and religious decline' of the Spanish Jews in the XVth century.<sup>4</sup>

Both views reveal part of a complex historical reality. The following lines are an attempt to test these generalisations by presenting the development of the efforts against localism and towards centralisation which occur in the first half of the century following the 1391 massacres in Aragon.

It will be shown that during this period, it is impossible to maintain that 'each city was a kingdom unto itself' and moreover, that the tendency to break away from regionalism and to co-ordinate the efforts of all the aljamas of Aragon for a common purpose can be traced to the

aristocratic circles of 'court Jews' and precisely to the circles in which the frequent incidence of conversion is best documented.<sup>5</sup> It will also be shown that there was tension in the communities on issues of government and taxation and not only on philosophical issues such as 'rationalism'.

### Hasdai Crescas

The leading figure in the history of the attempts to achieve a centralised system of internal government is Hasdai Crescas. By birth he belonged to a wealthy family of the Jewish Aragonese aristocracy, with a tradition of leadership going back for at least three generations.<sup>6</sup> He was a familiar figure at court, and was on friendly terms with the upper clergy of Barcelona, the Queen's physician, diplomats etc. As a member of the group of disciples of R. Nisim of Gerona and as one who was deeply influenced by him, he had probably absorbed the currents of thought in favour of centralisation, of which R. Nisim was an exponent in the XIVth century.<sup>7</sup> Indeed the most comprehensive attempts at creating a unified structure of internal government among the Aragonese Jews are indebted in no small measure to R. Nisim according to Baer. Like R. Nisim, Crescas' idea of unity grew out of a crisis. The events of 1391 brought alive a feeling which may be termed 'negative solidarity' and which is expressed in his letter written after the pogroms to the community of Avignon.<sup>8</sup> The tone of the letter suggests a picture of Spanish Jewry united in its suffering and of Crescas as a spokesman vis-a-vis the



Avignon community, an impression which is strengthened by the fact that, as Baer points out, he uses information gathered from official sources.<sup>9</sup> In other words, far from being merely 'a Jew of Zaragoza' as he is called in some official documents,<sup>9a</sup> he sees it as his responsibility to collect information concerning all the Jewish communities affected and to act accordingly.<sup>10</sup>

And there is no doubt that he was a leading figure, not only as regards assembling information, but also in co-ordinating efforts towards defense at first and reconstruction after the 1391 pogroms. As early as August 1391 he is involved in the collection of funds for the defence of the Aljamas of Aragon. This collection of money had been ordered by Queen Yolante and King John I who were

"moguts per certes justes e rahanables causes toquants grans utilitat e be e evident interes dela cosa publica dels juheus del regne de Arago".<sup>11</sup>

His participation in the collection is shown by the following document of 16/8/1391:<sup>12</sup>

"Collidors. Entes havem, que vosaltres recusats pagar al feell nostre en P. ça Cortada, lo qual per aquesta raho vos havem trames, los VIM flor dor d'arago, que per ordinacio de mossen Francesch d'Aranda havets collits, allegants, que sperats apoca dell a den Azday Cresques, als quals havets fet sagrament de respondre daquells."

There is moreover an order to the treasurers from the monarchs, to pay Crescas, 'Jew of Zaragoza' the sum of three hundred florins dated 12/9/1391, which, as Baer points out, is related to his task of collecting the necessary funds for defense; they are given for the hard work carried out by him in certain public business touching his

commission to collect money.<sup>13</sup> While Crescas was carrying out an all-Aragonese effort to organise and defend Aragonese Jewry the communities were by no means isolated.

A letter, probably from 1391, shows how the community of Fraga asks for help from its neighbouring community of Monzon.

"ישראל ערבים זה לזה ... איש את רעהו יעזורו ... אחינו  
 ורזנינו ... אחם ידעתם אשר עברנו בין הגזרים ... המון  
 העם לא שב אפרו ממנו ועוד ידו נטויה, והוכרתנו ...  
 לתת לאיש כדרכיו מתנה ראויה, ולהיות הכסף אזל מכלנו  
 ... חפשנו אמתחות מאהבינו להנצל מיד כצבי למלאח נדר  
 או נדבה ... ועל כלם נשאנו יד אל דביר קדשכם בבשח  
 פנים כי לא נסינו ללכת באלה לפי רוב השנים, יהי נא  
 מחסדכם להנחן לנו נפשנו בשאלתנו וסמנו בבקשתנו ואל  
 חביאנו לידי נסיון בנערינו ובזקנינו..."

14

Such letters or appeals for help must have been sent by various communities who knew that they could rely on other aljamas in times of stress.

In 1393 it is the community of Tarragona which seeks help from other communities of the kingdom. It intends to send various emissaries to collect money throughout the kingdom. The Queen, Violante, issued a document of approval on 27/10/1393:

"Circa reparacionem aliame judeorum Terracone intendentes et quia ipsa aliama scola sive sinagoga, libris, rotulis et aliis necessariis judeis eisdem indigent, pro recuperandoque fossatum sive turula mortuorum; que vendita extiterunt, oportant judeos ipsos diversas missiones facere peccuniasque habere, ad quas sufficere modo aliquo non possunt, attenta paupertate et devastacione secuta diebus preteritis in eisdem, cumque expediat ipsos judeus querere elemosinarie, ut habeant supradicta: Tenore presentis concedimus..., quod a quibuscumque aliamis et singularibus personis judeorum possint petere pro dono sive gracia speciali..."<sup>15</sup>

Reconstruction of the aljamas

By 1393, the 'avalot' had ceased. The leaders of the aljamas with Crescas at their head were trying to restore some of the destroyed communities. A letter from Juan and Violante, dated 28/5/1393, orders Crescas to take steps towards the reconstruction of the aljamas of Barcelona and Valencia.<sup>16</sup> The letter empowers Crescas and a committee of four associates (chosen by the aljamas of Saragossa and Calatayud) to collect 1500 florins from all the aljamas of Aragon, to choose sixty families and resettle them in the two aljamas as he and his committee see fit, authorising them to compel them by fines and other means. This letter, which has been termed 'a political document unparalleled in all Jewish history' is an important source for the history of the attempts at centralisation. The order envisages a hierarchical structure at the basis of which are all the aljamas of Aragon, of which Zaragoza and Calatayud are especially important, and over which there is a committee of four Jews with Crescas towering above them as it were. They have powers of taxation, fines and (a unique feature) of geographic relocation. A document of 1396,<sup>17</sup> in which Crescas is called 'judeum domus nostre' and which concerns his petition for reimbursement of expenses and troubles incurred while he was engaged in rebuilding the aljama of Barcelona and

"etiam circa alia plura concernencia comodum et honorem totius communitatis judeorum terre nostre"

throws additional light on the reconstruction efforts. The document mentions that Crescas was empowered to assume the

representation of the aljamas not only by royal command but by

"voluntate et assensu maiorum et notabilium aliamarum judeorum nostri domini".

It would not be too far fetched to assume a meeting or junta (of the sort familiar in Castile) of the leaders of the communities of Aragon with the purpose of reconstruction soon after the massacres. Such assemblies are known in Jewish history from the time of the Crusades and one was to take place at the time of Benedict XIII's conversion campaign. Besides it would be hard to account for the statement that Crescas' efforts were made by 'the will and approval of the leaders of the Jewish communities of our domain' without having recourse to such an assumption. In any case, two points seem to emerge from the above: first, that Hasdai Crescas in his role of supra-communal leader and representative was not only, as was the case with other court Jews, a representative by appointment of the monarchs only, but he embodied an internal centralised institution. In the same manner as he was the natural choice of litigant French rabbis in search for an arbiter,<sup>18</sup> he is the natural choice of the monarchs in the task of co-ordinating efforts during the 1391 massacres, and he is approved by the Aragonese Jewish leadership for the task of rebuilding the two major aljamas of the kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

He is not called 'chief Rabbi' or 'rav de la corte' in this document but there is some evidence that he fulfilled a similar office,<sup>20</sup> and there is also evidence for a successor who fills this office in a judicial capacity. But it is his activity as a leader of all the aljamas of Aragon during its

crisis rather than his judicial work alone that should be stressed in any assessment of his role as supra-kehilic leader. Secondly it is clear that the leaders of the communities, the 'maiores et notabiles aliamarum', were not only affected by 'centrifugal forces' but were involved in the efforts towards reconstruction as well.

### Crescas' political orientation

By 1396 Crescas was the official Rabbi of the aljama of Zaragoza. It is in that capacity that he issued a series of statutes.<sup>21</sup> While issuing statutes is not, in Aragon, normally a function of the Rabbi but rather of the adelantados,<sup>22</sup> there are previous examples of Rabbis who extend their jurisdiction. What is more noteworthy is the extent to which a reconstruction of the 'takanot' (on the basis of the surviving 'counterstatutes' by the Queen) reveal Crescas' almost autocratic attitude to internal Jewish administration in blatant contradiction to the democratic trends of the end of the century<sup>23</sup> and indeed to those for which the Queen herself expresses sympathy.

In the statutes of 1399, the Queen objects firstly to the concentration of power in a small group, as wished by Crescas, and commands that the four adelantados and the treasurer should be selected from the three estates or 'ranos' into which the community was divided.<sup>24</sup>

Crescas in his takanot<sup>25</sup> had given power to the adelantados to dispose of sums up to 50 florins without having to account for them. He had empowered three people

'more or less'<sup>25</sup> to use money (apparently as secret bribes to 'stop scandals and to obtain favours for the aljamas or certain people in them') without having to justify their expenditure. The Queen disagrees and orders the formation of a council in which the three manos are represented.<sup>26</sup> The Queen also objects to the spending of communal funds, by those with access to them, without consulting or informing the council.<sup>27</sup> The power of the adelantados to appoint and remove 'andadores' and 'scrivanos' is restricted.<sup>28</sup> Against Crescas' provision, which ensured under threat of the ban that no one would try to change his ordinances, the Queen allows such changes if they are made by a council representing the three 'manos'.<sup>29</sup>

The implications are obvious. Crescas emerges as a personality whose policy is consistently to concentrate and centralise internal Jewish government as far as possible. He is in favour of diminishing the amount of power of the middle and lower estates in his community. He fights against localism in as much as he tries to unite the various local autonomous aljamas for purposes of combating the crisis and also tries to extend his jurisdiction over other aljamas.

### Zaragoza's role

Another example of the trend towards centralisation is the existence of a geographical focal point in Zaragoza. Zaragoza was, after the destruction of the communities (as has been mentioned above, Ch.2) the natural centre of the Aragonese aljamas. It was indeed one of the most densely populated ones. It had not been affected as much as other

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communities and there was a considerable number of influential and wealthy families living there. Baer called it the 'rallying point and bulwark of Spanish Jewry' and attributes its pre-eminence to Crescas' presence.<sup>30</sup> That the community was conscious of its role is revealed by the terminology used in official documents and in poetry. The preamble to a series of statutes (1397) speaks of

"restauracion e deffension de nuestra santa ley a de lures personas e bienes e de todo el plus de los aliamas de Spanya que por la restauracion de aquèsta aliama (i.e. Saragossa) son ellas restauradas".<sup>31</sup>

The idea is repeated in a letter of Alfonso V (1438). The letter is concerned with setting right certain administrative problems

"... la aljama de los jodios de la ciudad de Caragoca al qual si con curossa sollicitut e remedios suficientes no socorriamos no solamente la dita aljama la qual reputamos nuestros cofres e propio tressoro venra muy bien en perdicion irreparable mas encara sera causa de traher a total destruccion las otras aljamas nuestras de los jodios del Reyno de Aragon a las quales la dita aljama por la copiosidad e calidat de sus singulares es como exemplo e spiello."<sup>32</sup>

Bonafed, in one of his parodies, asks

UPSIDE DOWN ... UNUM UAL MAL UALI TU XRA. U, A.A. DIO DLAUU /

/ UQ LIX.U UHQ AQ.UO X.AUU

33

Zaragoza is for him 'a joyous city, a unique town'.<sup>34</sup>

Zaragoza's importance was more than a literary matter. Its leaders go so far as to intervene in purely administrative matters of other communities. An example would be the intervention of Zaragoza's leadership in Teruel's fiscal administration. It is shown in a letter written not long after 1391 from the community of Saragossa to that of Teruel



which was, according to Baer, inspired by Crescas.<sup>35</sup> The letter (cf. *infra*) assumes that the communal leaders of Saragossa have a right to decide on the right form of tax-collection in Teruel and even threatens to help one faction against the other. From another document (dated 12/1394) we learn that Benveniste de la Cavalleria had taken an active part in fiscal matters in Teruel during that year.<sup>36</sup> He also appears as arbiter, perhaps between the factions mentioned in the letter, in matters concerning taxation during that year.<sup>37</sup>

In 1403 he is asked to inform himself as to the causes of the strife reigning in the community of Daroca and to try and remedy it.<sup>38</sup> The strife concerned the method of electing communal officers and assessing taxes. Benveniste de la Cavalleria is given jurisdiction over a community which has its own Rabbi, R. Joseph Albo.<sup>39</sup>

These are examples of efforts to minimize localism by extending the power of a 'central' leadership. These are based on Zaragoza and are carried out by leaders close to court circles but who enjoy the recognition of the Jews as well.

It is against this background that one should see the various letters issued by the community of Zaragoza to the other communities at this period. These letters, many of which have survived, ask for help from individuals, give recommendations, certify the purity of descent of individuals.<sup>40</sup> An example would be a letter (beginning of the XVth century) sent by 'the elders of the community of Zaragoza to the other communities of Aragon'.<sup>41</sup> The letter

asks the other communities to help a certain inquisitor who intended to go to Avignon in order to further his studies. The person in question asked the Saragossa community to write to the other communities. Another letter concerns a converso who, by royal command, was on his way to the south to preach in the war against the Saracens.<sup>42</sup> He approached the community of Zaragoza which gives a letter addressed to the other communities recommending them to help and obey him (c.1407-1410).<sup>42</sup> The fact that these letters are written by the community of Saragossa is hardly accidental. A letter written by an inconsequential community would not carry the same weight as one originating from the 'capital', as it were, of Aragonese Jewry. These and the many other letters sent by the community seem to have as their underlying assumption the pre-eminence of Zaragoza and its central role in Aragon during the decades following 1391.

#### The disputation at Tortosa.

The campaign to reduce the status of the Jews in Spain, carried out by Benedict XIII and his circle, and the response to it by the Jewish communities provides another example of the unity of the Aragonese aljamas. This is clear, especially if the version of Benedict XIII concerning the origin of the disputation is accepted. According to him the disputation was to be a small, local one in Alcaniz.<sup>43</sup> It was the Alcaniz aljama which asked for the help of the other aljamas of Aragon and therefore the 'invitation' was

issued to the other aljamas of Aragon, In other words it is not only the Pope who sees the Aragonese aljamas as a unity, but the community of Alcaniz considers itself part of one entity which is not a whole merely in theoretical and religious sense, but also in practical political terms. And this to the point of expecting other communities to incur expenses, time loss and personal danger for its sake. This attitude is hardly consistent with a view characterised by 'rampant individualism and separatism'.

Probably in connection with the dispute the King empowers Bonafos de la Cavalleria, Moses Abenavez and Todros Abencabra to tax the communities of Aragon for their collective protection.<sup>44</sup> One must note first that these are, again, members of Saragossa's ruling oligarchy. According to the letter they were commissioned because of 'humili expositione nuntiorum aliamarum judeorum regni Aragonum'. Who these emissaries are is not specified but here we have another reference to a central institution, namely, that of the collective emissaries of the aljamas before the court.

After the dispute there are references to local representatives at court. But this should by no means be interpreted as the end of central collective representatives. There was at this time a figure mediating between all the aljamas and representing them at court on occasions. He was, according to Baer, 'das wort fuhrer des glaubentreues Judentums'. Bonafed addresses him as 'the prince Don Vidal ben Lavi the pious'. Also from Bonafed we can see that he travelled throughout Aragon in an endeavour to re-establish the communities.<sup>45</sup> He represented not only the aljama of

of Zaragoza but the whole Jewish community of Aragon with Juce Abenafia (3/1419).<sup>46</sup> He was also involved in obtaining bulls from the papal court. In 1422 the Queen orders the aljamas of Aragon to pay Vidal de la Cavalleria for the expenses incurred in obtaining Papal bulls:

"Com ... a instancia de las ditas aljamas e per conservacion proveyto e utilitat daquellas en el anyo present fueron obtenidas ciertas bullas apostolicales concernientes proveyto utilitat e conservacion de las ditas aljamas e singulares de aquellas a por haver e obtener las ditas bullas se fizieron pagaron asi por dreyto de siello como en otramanera grandes expensas e misiones las quales assi como es de justicia e razon fueron compartidas e tatxadas por la mayor partida de las aliamas del dito regno asi de realenco como de baronias congregadas en la ciudad de Saragoca ..."<sup>47</sup>

There is here, an explicit reference to an assembly or 'junta' of the leader of the aljamas at Zaragoza as well as mention of Vidal de la Cavalleria as their emissary.

To conclude: in the same manner as the roots of the unified state of the end of the XVth century in Spain are to be sought in the institutions and policies of the XVth century,<sup>48</sup> so can one discern various institutions which point to centralising tendencies within the Jewish communities of Aragon. Firstly, there is a central leader or group of leaders. Their jurisdiction extends beyond their local communities. Their powers embrace taxation, geographic re-location, arbitration and, on occasions, they voice their opinion on local matters with weight. There is a geographical focus, an important feature of centralisation, to be found, at this period in Zaragoza. There is the concept of 'negative solidarity' by which any one community feels entitled to appeal to the others for help; financial,

moral, support from individuals, etc. The communities feel united in their common suffering. There are assemblies of leaders of the communities. These do not necessarily have an official character and may consist of no more than the meeting of the court Jews.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless their importance should not be under-estimated, particularly since joint actions of Aragonese Jewry seem to stem from such meetings. The absence of a generic official designation should not, in view of medieval fluidity of terminology and in view of their practical importance, blind one to their existence as an institution.

Perhaps one of the deterrents to the process of centralisation was the social tension reigning among Aragonese Jewry. The basic social unit was the local community. The aljama was by no means isolated from the rest of the city, and it is no surprise therefore, to find that social tension was not absent in 17th century Aragonese municipalities in general. So much so that the monarchs try to free the cities from the perpetuation of the oligarchies which dominated them. This was done by introducing new systems of election. Under the old system of co-optation a powerful oligarchy, composed of the 'upper bourgeoisie' had flourished everywhere. An example would be the 'disorders and immorality' afflicting municipal life in Castellon de la Plana and the attempts by Don John in 1446 to end them by introducing balloting.<sup>50</sup> This plan of reform was obviously needed and followed in Vich, Barbastro, Gerona, etc. This was done in order to introduce new elements into the councils governing the municipalities. Among the Jews this aspect of social conflict was aggravated

by others as well. The central problems concerned representation and taxes. In this respect it is useful to look at the various communal ordinances or 'takanot' drawn up by the communal secretary for royal approval. Many of these concern representation.

If we take Zaragoza 'a mirror of the communities',<sup>51</sup> as an example, it can be seen that for example attempts by the above-mentioned Crescas<sup>52</sup> were to concentrate power in the hands of few people; in other words, his concern was more with efficiency than with equal or fair representation of all classes. The Queen, on the other hand tries to give the three estates a say in communal government. It is significant that this was done by a petition from members of the community. In other words, Crescas' measures encountered resistance within the community. Behind the two different sets of ordinances there is a reality of social conflict between two groups; the elitist one, which tries to limit the number of members in the council and the more democratic one, which favours representation of all classes. This sort of conflict was by no means restricted to Zaragoza. The same situation affected the community of Daroca. Famous for its Rabbi, Joseph Albo, the community numbered 27 families after the 1391 massacres.<sup>53</sup> As other communities, it was trying to readjust its administration to the new circumstances of the XVth century. Despite the fact that it had its own Rabbi, when conflict arose over communal administration, an outsider, Benveniste de la Cavalleria had to be called in by the King. Martin I in a letter of 23/6/1403, describes the situation. There is acute tension

concerning the election of the judges, the adelantados, tax assessors, the manner in which taxes should be exacted, collected and distributed.<sup>54</sup>

In Lerida, the same preoccupation with re-organising the community can be observed. The community, which had suffered persecution in 1348 during the Black Death, and in the 1380's because of a blood libel had all but disappeared in 1391 when 78 Jews were killed and several were converted.<sup>55</sup> When in the process of reconstruction it drew up new statutes (1401),<sup>56</sup> it chose a system of self-government which was the most conducive to the self-perpetuation of a ruling minority, that of co-option. According to the statutes, the rulers (regidors) or secretaries were to appoint new secretaries after their term of office (one year) had run out.

Perhaps not unconnected with this, one can observe a certain amount of discontent or opposition within the community. This can be discerned, for example, by examining the strong pre-occupation of the secretaries with the problem of the 'malsin' in particular, and with those who disobey the council's ordinances<sup>57</sup> in general. Preoccupation with the malsin is generally a sign of social tension, but it would seem that in the case of Lerida there is stronger evidence that the ordinances, far from dealing with theoretical eventualities, were the effect of a reality of opposition within the community and the efforts of the council to strengthen its authority. This would explain why the community authorities were not content with the power given to them (by the statutes of 1400) in dealing with the malsin, namely the power to execute him, upon

payment of 1000 sueldos, but thought it necessary to ask, in 1404, for the right to fine, imprison and punish members of the community. This was done because

"com alscons juheus habitants en la dita ciutat  
a vegades no serven ne tenen la ley ebraica ne  
les ordinaciones del consell dela dita aljama ...57a

But even these powers were not thought to be sufficient, since in 1402 the secretary of the aljama again petitions the King for an extension of its power of punishment. The King ratified the petition enabling them to exercise capital punishment upon payment of a lesser sum than before then.<sup>58</sup>

It would seem that a similar reality of discontent lies behind the ordinances of the aljama of Zaragoza ratified by the Infante Alfonso in 1415.<sup>59</sup> The new ordinances are drafted because 'the aljama is on the way to complete destruction, both because of bad government and because of persecution'. In order to remedy this, Alfonso ratifies, among others, an ordinance to the effect that 'there should not be among the councillors two of the same lineage or two who cannot give testimony according to Jewish law'. It is very probably that this clause results from the 'modernising tendencies'<sup>60</sup> discerned by Vendrell in the ordinances. The effect of such a statute would obviously be to limit the power of the families in whose hands lay the government of the aljama by bringing in new elements into the council. Shortly after this, in 1417, there are echoes of new conflict in a letter from the King to Vidal de la Cavalleria.<sup>61</sup> The events leading to this letter and the conflicts it mentions have been examined above.<sup>62</sup>



The 'modernising tendencies' in opposition to an exclusively oligarchic government which are discernible in the ordinances of Zaragoza in 1417 seem to be at work in Tarazona as well. According to the ordinances passed by Dona Maria for the aljama (9/1420) the 3 adelantados and the 9 councillors would be chosen in a public assembly. They would avoid having relatives in first or second degree among the officials, and they were to belong equally to the three estates into which the aljama was divided.<sup>63</sup>

The discontent over representation in the internal government of the aljamas continued in the second half of the century.

In 1459 John II<sup>64</sup> sees it necessary to change the system of election in the community of Gerona. He instituted the ballot system. He was following a policy which he had applied to various municipalities. It was aimed at curbing a situation in which 'municipal councils were riddled with corruption, dominated by persons who trafficked in municipal offices, which were bought and sold, leased, not only in the city where the dealer lived but in cities far afield where his activities extended.'<sup>65</sup> The problems in the councils of the aljamas may have been different, but the measures taken are a sign of dissatisfaction with existing leadership nonetheless. This seems to be confirmed by the reasons given in the ordinances. These are enacted

"volents entendre en la conservacio e donar via e causa a la augmentacio de la nostra aljama de jueus dela ciutat de Gerona, en la qual per esser lo regiment de officials en la manera, que ara hi es, segons veridicament som informats, comencen naxer entrels officials e singulars dela dita aljama e naxen defet de tots dies moltes zizanies, rumors e dicordies, per occasio deles quals, segons experiencia ha mostrat, se son seguits dans e despeses".<sup>66</sup>

Similar was the case of the aljama of Lerida in 1477.<sup>67</sup> The community was divided into two factions, the one headed by the Vidal family, the other by the Bonin family. Such factions existed elsewhere as well and seem to be a typical feature of Mediterranean town life. But in this case it would seem that the animosity was not unconnected with the wider issues of representation in the aljama council and the forms of election and government. The form of election had been fixed in 1471 by approval of the 'governador' of Catalonia. It stipulated that the secretaries were to be chosen<sup>by</sup> 25 householders who were not allowed to vote for people related to them. In May 1477, however, Bonafos Vidal and Salamo Cohen (a member of the Vidal family) adducing a reduction of the members of the community because of pestilence and drought managed to obtain approval for a different form of election. The voting was to be done by 12 householders appointed by the Secretaries (Vidal and Cohen held the office at the time) without restriction as to the people they could choose (in other words there was no limitation on the numbers of members of one family who could occupy office). This was obviously aimed at the self-perpetuation of a certain group in the community government. In October, Belshom Deulosal appeals to the King who agrees that if this system continues, it would follow that the government of the aljama would always be in the hands of certain individuals because they would only choose their friends. Moreover, the 'said alteration ... does not proceed from the wish of the community'. The King therefore orders the return to the previous system. One may mention at this point a conflict

over another form of leadership.

In Juan II's letter to the aljama of Huesca (10/9/1460) there is evidence for the conflict over the appointment of the communal rabbi. The King favours R. Isaac Arundi. The aljama itself is divided on the matter. The letter speaks of 'algunas diferencias que entre vosotros son stadas'. This to such an extent that they had not obeyed a previous command of the King and still had a 'jodio stranjero' occupying the office.<sup>67a</sup>

### Taxation

Taxation was not, in the medieval world, a simple and uncomplicated matter. Within the Jewish aljamas tension arose frequently as a result of problems connected with it. In the XVth century these were exacerbated by different causes. The communities had been impoverished as a result of destruction. The number of tax payers had been reduced by conversion and there is some evidence that communal property and incomes were being transferred to converso hands, especially until the end of Benedict XIII and Ferrer's activities (1416).<sup>68</sup> One of the reasons for conflict was the discrepancy between the two methods of tax assessment which were favoured by different socio-economic groups. The one (p'saq or qisva) tallage and quota appealed to the wealthier members of the community, particularly because it offered them secrecy. The other method, self-declaration (hoda'a) appealed to the other sections of the community. As Neuman has pointed out the 'communities were threatened with internal dissension and factionalism, the rich

advocating the quota system and the lower classes fighting for the method of self-declaration'. Such strife had before led to revolt within the community.<sup>69</sup> Such conflict seems to have arisen in the communities of Jaca and Teruel as can be seen from a letter sent by the Rabbi of the Zaragoza community (probably Crescas) shortly after 1391.<sup>70</sup>

"בשם אדוננו הרב והאדון אדני נר' לקהל טירואיל. אלופים לראש, הוגד לנו ושמענו מפי סופרים מגידי אמת, נההדשו בינותיכם דברי ריבות ואיבות על דבר ברירת דרך ישר לפרעון המסים המוטלים עליכם ונמצאו בכם אנשים בוחרים דרך ההודאות לחשבם בחחלת המחשבה כי בזה הדרך יחלק אור ההישרה והשווי לפרוע איש כמתנת ידו המעט הוא אם רב, וכאשר שמענו את שמעם היטב חרה לנו יען וביען הנסיון והחוס עדים נאמנים, כי זאת לא כבשוה רק בויערים בעם וכסילים ועצת נפתלים לבבם למרע וכשלו בה רבים ונוקשו ונלכדו בעלות ומקרים מחוייביכ ממנו חייוב הכרחי בעיני אלהים ואדם אין חכלית למספרם ואין צורך לזכרם, וגם עתה מקרוב אשר על כיוצא בזה נפלה אש המחלוקת בקהל ג' אקה ועבר עליהם רוח עוועים לבחור בזה הדרך ולא היו ימיכ מועטים מצאו בדרכם צנים פחים ומהמורות וחשך וחלקלקות, עד אשר נתעוררנו אנחנו אלה פה בראותנו הנזקים העצומים המוכנים להתילד ולהתחדש מזה, כי בראו משחית לחבל והמטאח החלה להבעיר מגדיש ועד קמה, ויצאנו לישעם לעזרת יי' בגבורים להסיר מכשול ומוקשים ממסלחם ולהטות אטורם מני הדרך ההוא ושמעו לקולנו. לזאת עתה באנו לשחר פניכם להתישב בענין ההתישבות הראוי כדי שיגלה אחריה הדבר מראשיתו וראיתם ויש לבכם כי סרתם מן הדרך. כי זאת לפניכם בישראל אש המסים קודה אש יוקדת הלהט מוסדי דור ודור ולהב חנייה וברק חרב לדחריב הררי עד וגבעות, מני שים בקרבכם רשת פרושה ומשטוח לחרמים ומוקשות פועלי און, ומה גם עתה לעת כזאת בהתרגש עלינו צרות רבות ואויבנו פלילים, אלינו יגיהו ויתיעצו על צפוננו לעת המוט רגלנו, והיה היוצא מדלתי בית נאמן ומפתח אופני אהלי המיסור אפילו ככלא נימא כסגגה שיוצא יחשב לו עון ופיע וחטאה. לכן שמעו שמעו כל העדה כלם קדושים היטנים עב הגדולים, סורו סורו מני דרך, הטו מני אורח אשר כזה. הנו לה' כבוד והדר, בטרם יחשיך מאורי אור עיני רעיוניכם ובטרם יתגפן רגלי מועצותיכם בדרך הזה ובשבעה דרכים תנוכו מלפניו. אם תוכלו ויהי מה ברו לכם מסלול ודרך מסוקל מאבן נגף לא תכשלו בו. ואם הלילה וחס יש בכם שורש פורה ראש מקטון ועד גדול יחזק במעוזו ולא יחפץ לשוב מדרכו הרעה, אם מצד רצוהו להועיל לעצמו או לגרום הזק לזולתו, הנה אנחנו לאהבת הטוב כצד מה שהוא טוב נחלץ חוריים והמושים נעלה על שן סלע הנצות לעזר הכה שכנגדו לדפד את עצמו דנבערה בכל מאמצי כחנו ועוצם ידנו, פן תפסה המככתה, לדוריד אשר ארחותיהם עקשים לבאר שהת, ונקומה ונעלה להושיע כל ענוי ארץ דהולכים לאט כטובה ונחת."

From the tone of the letter it can be gathered that the matter was thought to be of great importance. Moreover it would seem that the problem was not restricted to the communities of Teruel and Jaca; as the writer says: 'Many have stumbled upon this matter, there is no end to their number ...'.

In connection with this problem in the community of Teruel there exists a document which shows that the matter reached the Queen who sent the following letter:-<sup>71</sup>

"Nos Yolans etc. Plurimorum veridica comperimus asercione, quod pretextu, discordie inter judeos manus majoris, minoris aut mediocris ratione sisarum, que in aliama nostra civitatis Turolii pro solvendis censualibus violariis et aliis oneribus atque debitis eidem aliame continue occurrentibus, exorte eedem sise minime fuerunt vendite, obstante quadam arbitrari sententia per Benvenist dela Cavalleria, judeum Cesarauguste, lata vigore potestatis per judeos aliame remorate super huiusmodi negocio sibi attribute, qua obiciente ac metu penarum in dicta arbitrari sententia contentarum, vos clavarii, adelantati et alii singulares aliame ipsius dictas sisas vendere minime ausi fuistis, ex quo sequuntur ipsi aliame non modicum detrimentum et per consequens venire de facili posset ipsa aliama ad finale excidium."

In the community of Daroca in 1403 there is 'damna plurima, scandala et seditiones' because of, among other things, 'modo et forma servandis in exactione et collectione dictarum peytarum et distributione earum'.<sup>72</sup>

Another perhaps more recurrent problem affecting the communities in the XVth century is the evasion of taxes. There had always been two important groups which were exempt from paying taxes. The learned class (talmide hakhamin) and the Jewish 'courtiers'. The attitude of the communities to the exemption granted to this last group has been defined by Neuman as one of resentment. It was 'continually a cause

of contention and litigation between King, courtier and community'. The problem was not only fiscal, because it infringed upon the autonomous rule of the aljamas.<sup>73</sup> In Zaragoza, the problem had existed before 1391 in an acute form.<sup>74</sup> But it would seem that even after the events of 1391 there were still people who tried to evade sharing in the common burden.<sup>75</sup>

It has been shown in a previous chapter that the tax and its evasion were important issues in the community of Saragossa,<sup>76</sup> and how much attention is paid to this problem in the statutes of 1397.<sup>77</sup> Mention might be made here of the grievances against the tax-exempt (francho) family of the Alazars. The family, noted for its wealth and high positions had received its privilege in 1212 if not earlier.<sup>78</sup> In 1397, a letter from King Martin describes the activities of certain tax-exempt Jews who had been acquiring real estate and movable goods through agents, from 'peyteros' (non-exempt) and had been able to raise the rent prices so that Jews could find no houses to live in and some were therefore being forced to emigrate to Castile. According to Serrano y Sanz it was the Alazar family who was responsible for this.<sup>79</sup> This 'cornering' of the real estate market was, it seems, being carried out in various juderias, but the effect was particularly felt in Saragossa. Mention has been made above of the resentment against the Alazars when they refused to share in the burden of the taxes as shown in Ferdinand's letter of 27/6/1413.<sup>80</sup>

This problem was by no means restricted to Saragossa. This issue seems to form the background to an

ordinance of the Lerida community in 1400:<sup>81</sup>

"...com algun juheu a vegades demman alguna gracia del dit senyor rey, en asaber franquesa que no hage a contribuir e pagar ab la dita aljama e aco redunda en dampnatge e perjudici no poch gran dela dita aljama ..."

The same problem exists in Teruel at a later date.

In 1453, the Infante Don Juan allows the communal officers of Teruel to tax the Jews of neighbouring villages. In his letters he mentions that

"muchos judios de la aljama por relevarse de todos cargos e expensas que les podrian ser tachados ...algunos se desabsintan de la dicha ciudad e por alguna o mayor parte del anyo habitan en las aldeas ... e otros allegantes figalguias e otros modos exquisitos dizen seyer exemptos e no devar contribuir en cargos algunos ..."<sup>82</sup>

In Calatayud the community protests against the privilege given by Juan II (8/1458) to Salamon Lopiel, his physician, to be tax exempt. The community maintained that these exemptions were in contradiction to the privileges of the aljama and protests accordingly in 1459 and 1461.<sup>83</sup> The pattern which emerges from these incidents seems to be that of the upper socio-economic groups, those close to court, who try to evade their share of the tax burden therefore increasing it on the rest of the community and causing their resentment.

#### The conflict in Majorca.

The conflict in the aljama of Majorca in 1435 has been mentioned briefly by Kayserling<sup>84</sup> and Epstein<sup>85</sup> but it may be useful to analyse it in our context.

The Majorcan aljama had a history of conflict which became particularly acute in the 1380's. Documents published by Baer<sup>86</sup> and Millas<sup>87</sup> show the leadership and as a consequence the whole aljama, deeply divided to the point of armed fighting. These fights were connected with the factionalism between the two leading families of the aljama, the Faquim<sup>87a</sup> and the Natjar. The Bayle and the King intervened in 1379 and in 1380 and the documents of the case take up many folios in the register of the Cancilleria of the Crown of Aragon.

In 1389 a different conflict related to the opposition to a ruling group is attested to by documents published in Pons.<sup>88</sup> Aron Abdalhaf, Jucef Alatzar and Struc Duran are accused in letters of King Juan of having made 'unio ab scriptura de lur propia mano escrita, per ensenyorirse d'aqueixa aljama'.

These pre-1391 conflicts are of some relevance to the conflicts of 1435 not only because the Astruc Duran mentioned in 1389 has been tentatively identified with Simeon b. Zerah Duran's father by Baer.<sup>89</sup> Simeon b. Zerah Duran, whose responsum is the only evidence for the conflict of 1435, mentions the conflicts in the Majorcan aljama just before 1391 as events from which the community should take a lesson.<sup>90</sup> In other words, he sees the conflicts of 1391 as not entirely dissimilar to those of 1435.

What the precise occurrence was is not explained in S. b.Z. Duran's responsum to the community of Majorca, but some data might be gleaned from the text.

First of all the date is some time close to May 1435. The letter finishes by saying that, a few days after



its writing, news came concerning the total conversion of the Majorcan aljama.<sup>91</sup> From J. Mut's account we know that this happened around May 1435.<sup>92</sup>

R.S. b. Zerah Duran describes the conflict as שונאת חנם. He is afraid that it might have similar consequences to the conflicts before 1391 (according to him, the destruction of the aljama).<sup>93</sup> His recommendation is that the leadership should unite<sup>94</sup> and that the 'smaller ones' הקטנים should obey the 'great ones' הגדולים and that the 'great ones' should pay attention to the 'smaller ones'.<sup>94a</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that the conflict concerned precisely these issues; the factionalism amongst the leadership and the discontent with the rulers.

What aggravated this conflict for Duran, and he is quite explicit on this point, is the presence of conversos who are well informed on the conflict and who, Duran obviously fears, might cause the conflict to flare beyond a merely internal dispute.<sup>95</sup>

When news of the blood libel and consequent conversion of all the aljama reached him he saw this as a confirmation of his fears.

### Conclusion

It may be concluded that the 'aristocratic elite' of Aragonese Jewry can be characterized by their centralising mentality rather than be defined as 'centrifugal forces' which cause 'religious and national decline'. If there was tension, as indeed there was, it was not only over

the elite's rationalism'.

The above mentioned documentation seems to reveal a reality of division along social lines between the community and its leadership, between community and influential individuals, over issues of communal rule and taxation. The significance of this phenomenon lies in that it may lead to a reassessment of the problems of XVth century Aragonese Jewry. Until now historians have concentrated on the tension between Jews and conversos or among the Jews themselves on theological rather than socio-political issues. A picture of Spanish Jewry (of which only a minority was highly literate) divided solely over such esoteric issues as the relative merits of the philosophy of Aristotle, Averroes or others surely misses the significance of the daily realities of communal life. It would seem that the social tension which characterised Spanish Jewry in the XIVth and earlier centuries continued during the XVth.

FOOTNOTES

1. & A. Neuman, *The Jews in Spain*, Philadelphia, 1944,  
2. pp.19, 32, 60.
3. & I.E. Barzilay, *Between reason and faith*, The Hague -  
4. Paris, 1967, pp.11, 12, 76.
5. BH2, pp.468/9, n.4 & 5; pp.139, 142, Crescas is  
called by the monarch our 'servidor et familiar';  
1B, p.669.
6. BH2, pp.37, 38, 469, n.7.
7. *Ibid.*, pp.25-6f for A. Nissim's influence on the  
taqanot of 1354.
8. Ed. Wiener, *Shevet Jehuda*, Hanover, 1855, p.129ff,  
notice specially the use of the first person plural.
9. BH2, p.115.
10. In 'Bitul 'ikare Hanosrim' (written 1397 according to  
Netanyahu, the marranos of Spain, pp.87, n.12, p.4) he  
mentions that he was asked to write it by 'the notables  
and courtiers' this seems another indication of Crescas'  
central leadership. On the pogroms, cf. Wolf, *art.cit.*
11. IB, p. 672, 4.
12. IB, p.671, 2.
13. IB, p.673.
14. IB, p.694, 440.
15. IB, p.715, 455, 2.
16. IB, pp.712-3, 453; BH2, p.126.
17. IB, 462, pp.726/7.
18. Graetz-Rabinowicz, *History of the Jews (Hebrew) Vol.6.*,  
p.35, n.2.
19. He was also in charge of public charities such as the  
one in Gercna, cf. IB, p.793.
20. ...ut puta rabi Hazday, qui fuit rabi vel magister  
omniux vestrum ...; Pacios Lopez, *La disputa de  
Tortosa*, Madrid 1957, vol.2, p.544. There is a letter  
of 1411 from Bonastruc Desmaestre to Zerahia Halevi, in  
which Bonastruc says that he heard that Zerahia had  
been appointed rabbi of the Jews of Aragon after  
Crescas' death and asks him to be judge in a certain  
litigation (contd over).

## 20.(contd.)

- This would be added evidence to the existence of the institution of Chief Rabbi in Aragon. The letter was included in ff.19b to 20b of the MS 3 of the Alliance bought from Rabinowicz and mentioned by Loeb in his 'Joseph Hacothen et les chroniqueurs juifs', REJ, 16, (1888) p.34. Soon after the article was written that MS disappeared. It is not mentioned in Schwabb's Catalogue. The Alliance librarian informed me that he ignores its whereabouts.
21. 1B, 467, pp.740-751; BH 2, p. 127 ff.
  22. Baer, Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in Koenigreich Aragonien, Berlin 1913, p.117.
  23. BH2, e.g. p.42.
  24. IB, p. 742, 1.
  25. IB, p. 742, 2.
  26. IB, p.743, 3.
  27. IB, p. 745-6, 6.
  28. IB, p. 746, 7; IB, p. 747, 9.
  29. IB, p. 747, 10.
  30. SyS, p. 6; BH2, pp. 119, 126, 130.
  31. IB, p. 728.
  32. SyS, op.cit., Appendix XXX,
  33. Kobes 'al Yad, Vol.IV (XIV), Jerusalem, 1946, p. 54, lines 6 & 7.
  34. Ibid., p. 17, line 62 (from Isiah).
  35. IB, pp. 753-4, 469.
  36. IB, p. 754.
  37. IB, p. 755 (11/5/1394).
  38. IB, pp. 777-8, 477.
  39. IB, p. 778.
  40. H. Beinart, art.cit., in Ch.2. Also II B, p.212.
  41. IB, p. 755-6, 470.
  42. IB, p. 757-8, 471.

43. Quomodo ab inicio fieri inceperat informacionum solum cum illis de loco Alcaniciei demum ad illorum instanciam cum ceteris iudeis prefati regni Aragonum, Pacios Lopez, La disputa de Tortosa, Madrid-Barcelona 1957, Vol.2., p.403.
44. IB, p. 788, 482.
45. IB, p. 839-842, 523.
46. IB, p. 841.
47. IB, p. 853-4, 531.
48. Jose Maria Font y Rius, 'The Institutions of the Crown of Aragon' in 'Spain in the XVth century', ed. R. Highfield, London 1972, p. 173 'constitutional harmony ... was breaking up in favour of the growing power of the sovereign which was to assert itself in the form of a monarchy which, though not absolutist, was certainly authoritarian'.
49. Cf. n.16, 17, 44, 47. Also weddings were meeting points of the leadership, cf. BH2, p.72. For a wedding at which Judah b. Asher Solomon Halevi, and the Cavalleria family were present, cf. IB, p.486.
50. Font y Rius, op.cit., p. 181-4.
51. The phrase is used by Alfonso V in 1438, Sys op.cit. Appendix XXX.
52. Cf. n.21.
53. IB 778, in 1398 there are 28 families but c.1412 there are forty BH 11, p.230.
54. IB, 477.
55. BH2, pp. 25, 91, 108, 115.
56. IB 472 & 480.
57. IB, pp. 783, 4; p.768, 4. (10/12/1404), 57a) IB, p.768, 4.
58. IB, 480, 4; p.783.
59. F. Vendrell de Millas, "Al margen de la organizacion de la aljama de Zaragoza", Sefarad, 1964, pp. 81, 84, 87.
60. Ibid., p. 81.
61. IB, p. 839.

62. Cf. Chapter 2. See also A. Ryder's point that Alfonso "intended ... to turn to account the rising discontent of town and countryside by directing it against feudal and urban aristocracies and making concessions at their expense", *The Kingdom of Naples Under Alfonso the Magnanimous*, Oxford, 1976, p.30.
63. Sys, op.cit., p.13.
64. IB, No.543.
65. J.M. Batista i Roca, in *New Cambridge Modern History* (CUP, 1964), Vol.1, p.331.
66. Sys, IB, p.864.
67. IB, 552, pp. 889-893, 67a, IB 547.  
67a. IB, 547, p.877
68. Cf. e.g. n.19 & BH2, p.271.
69. Neuman, op.cit., pp.91, 92, 100; Baer, *Studien ...* p.96.
70. Letter probably written by Da Piera, ordered by Crescas, cf. Baer, *Studien*, p.193, notes 19-22, published in IB, p. 753-4.
71. IB, p. 754-5, 16/12/1394. ,
72. IB 477, pp.77-8.
73. Neuman, op.cit., pp. 102-3.
74. Sys, P.12.
75. Sys, op. cit., p.12; in 1425 the Alatsar family is declared exempt from wine and meat tax, the aljama excommunicates them and forces them to pay.
76. Ch. 2 above.
77. IB, 463, pp. 727/32, especially preamble and first and fourth clauses.
78. IB, pp. 75/80.
79. Sys, appendix 5.
80. Above, Ch.2 and IB 486, pp. 791/2.
81. IB 472, p. 764.
82. IB, pp. 859/60. The order had to be renewed in 1458.
83. IB, pp. 861/2.
84. *Die Juden in Navarra, den Baskenlaendern und auf den Balearn*, Berlin 1861, p.172.

85. The responsa of R.S. b. Zerah Duran, London, 1930, pp. 42/3.
86. IB, pp. 484/5 and 489/91.
87. J. Millas Vallicrosa y J. Busquets Mulet 'Albaranes Mallorquines en aljamiado hebraicoarabe', Sefarad, iv, 1944, pp. 275 ff. For Faquim as representative of a 'democratic' trend, cf. BH2, p.50.
88. A. Pons, Los Judios del reino de Mallorca durante los siglos xiii-xiv, Hispania, XX, 1960, No.135, pp. 522/4. Cf. also BH2, pp. 52/53 for Moses Faquim's 'Averroism' and the ensuing clash.
89. IB 445/6. He is a respected member of the community as can be seen by his appointment as arbiter in a monetary lawsuit of 1371 and representative of the community before the King in 1375. Ibid., notes.
90. T.S. b. Z, III, 227, p.48.  
 "סבת חרבן הקהלה הקודמת אשר היתה במקומכם  
 היתה מפני המחלוקת."
91. Ibid.  
 "אהר שכתבתי זה לא שמעו בקולי וחרון ימים  
 מועטים פגעה בהם מדת הדין ונשתמדו כלם  
 בשביל הכחלוקת."
92. Historia General del Reino de Mallorca, 2nd ed. Palma, 1841, Vol.3, p. 385, ff.
93. Loc.cit.  
 "זאת הארץ ארכלה יושביה היא ולא תוכל להאכיל  
 בעלי הכחלוקת והקייאה אותם כאשר לאה את הקהל  
 אשר לפנינו."
94. Ibid.  
 "אין ביטורון מלכו של עולם כי אם בהתאסף  
 ראשי עם יחד ... ואם אהם הברי' כקטיבים  
 זה לזה אומרת שכינה השמיעני."
- 94a. Ibid.  
 "אשרי הדור שהגדולים נדמעים לגטנים וכ"ס  
 שילמדו כוסר דגטנים להמוע על הגדולים."
95. Ibid.  
 "נא את חנם שביניכם אשר על זה דבריכם נדמעים  
 בין הנכבדים האנוכיים כי הצא מכם אש ומצאת  
 קוצים בינידם וסוף דבר נאכל דגדיש ... יעשו  
 גדר בדבר הרם ובאלה שלא יכניס אדב בינו  
 לחברו אחד מהאנוסים..."

CHAPTER 4SOCIAL CONFLICT WITHIN THE CASTILIANALJAMAS IN THE XVTH CENTURY

The Jewish population of Spain was divided into local communities or 'aljamas'.<sup>1</sup> These communities had a great deal of autonomy. As Neuman defines it: "Autonomy - the right to the regulation of all the affairs of life by the dictates of their own law, the submission of all suits of litigation to Jewish judges who were to render decisions according to the principles of rabbinic jurisprudence...".<sup>2</sup>

In a sense, these aljamas constituted one of the political units or 'orders' into which medieval society was divided.<sup>3</sup> As a rule, the relations among these groups were marked by, sometimes intense, rivalry. This applies to Medieval Spanish society as well. Conflicts between towns and Crown, between nobility and Crown, etc. form a large theme of xvth century Spanish history. These conflicts between rival 'power aggregates' were aggravated in the xvth century/<sup>by</sup>the lack of a strong central government.<sup>4</sup>

The Jews could well be described as one of these 'power groups' despite the 'political passivity'<sup>5</sup> by which the medieval Jewish communities have been defined. True, the Jews had no economic and religious influence comparable to the various groups within the Church (e.g. religious orders, princes of the Church, monasteries, etc.), nor military power such as the nobility had, and ~~they~~ had no voice in the Cortes (Parliament). But they had privileges



gained at a time when their role as a colonising force had been indispensable, which provided them with a certain amount of legal protection.<sup>6</sup> It had a certain economic power by virtue of its being a secure source of income for the Crown and it was quite conscious of this.<sup>7</sup> Jewish 'procuradores' at Court invoked this argument and the documents issued by the Crown repeat it.<sup>8</sup> The community could use the argument of impoverishment or that of possible emigration to seigniorial lands to obtain certain concessions. This argument of emigration could also be used in their dealings with towns.<sup>9</sup>

It could use a form of 'boycott' by virtue of internal discipline.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, Jewish 'courtiers' could exercise some measure of influence on behalf of the communities.

The reorganization of the Treasury and Council in the xivth century<sup>11</sup> and the pressure of the Cortes (who in their petitions in the late xivth and xvth centuries constantly complain against Jews in public office)<sup>12</sup> undermined to a great extent the influence of the Jews at Court. The decline of the office of 'almoxarife' (from arabic al-mushrif-inspector), a position often occupied by Jews, changed the role of the Jews at Court. And so did the conversions, in 1391, of many members of the administrative class. There were no Jews in the Councils of xvth century Castilian (or Aragonese for that matter) monarchs. The 'contador mayor' was an office often occupied by conversos but not by Jews. As tax-farmers and financiers they were

involved in the Crown's finances but, as MacKay has emphasized, these were private enterprises and not public offices.<sup>13</sup>

The Jewish population suffered great losses in 1391, and it is possible that it did not keep pace with the demographic upsurge noticeable among the rest of the population.<sup>14</sup> The geographic distribution had altered and created a large rural population,<sup>15</sup> with consequent loss of influence in important towns.<sup>16</sup> The communal property had changed hands during the riots of 1391 and during the period of influence of Benedict XIII and Vicente Ferrer.<sup>17</sup> All these factors naturally contributed to a loss of influence and security.

At the same time the rival power aggregates were becoming stronger. The towns<sup>18</sup> (with their monopolising tendencies which excluded the Jews), the religious orders (and particularly the 'Observance' religious movement with anti-Jewish tendencies) the anti-Jewish conversos, were all increasing their power. At the same time the Jews failed (or rather were not allowed) to become involved in a significant aspect of Castilian economic life: the great commercial enterprises by which Castilians, conversos and Italians were thriving and becoming a group to be reckoned with.<sup>19</sup>

The weakness of their economic and political position made the autonomy which had characterised the communities particularly vulnerable. This fiscal and judicial autonomy was being constantly undermined.<sup>20</sup> One important factor in this process was the tendency of towns

to extend their jurisdiction at the expense of the weak central government. Town authorities, on innumerable occasions try to tax or force impositions upon the communities against their privileges.<sup>21</sup> They try to exclude Jews from commerce and boycott them.<sup>22</sup> They infringe on judicial autonomy.<sup>20</sup> The Cortes abolish their right to judge criminal cases.<sup>20</sup> This last step must have had, as a logical outcome the weakening of the civil courts as well. The towns, towards the end of the century segregate, limit the stay permissions, and finally expel the Jews.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, as opposed to previous centuries, when they were accountable to the King and had to contend with relatively weak towns, and were ruled by old powerful aristocratic families with public positions, combined with highly charismatic and powerful Rabbinic authorities, the communities found themselves in a different position. The fact that the population could, in 1391, attack the Jewish communities with little and ineffective repression from the central government was probably never forgotten. The Synagogues converted into Churches were a good reminder. This increased their vulnerability. Parallel to this was the break in the continuity of the leadership.

The migration and dislocations following 1391 may have affected traditions of respect for local communal authority.

In short: there is a weakening of communal leadership caused by external as well as internal factors.

As a result of this situation, the one with which this chapter is concerned, is the phenomenon of social

tension, conflict and factionalism within the Jewish communities.

It has been implied that such tension did not exist after 1391.<sup>24</sup> Such tension as has been accepted concerns mainly ideological debates.

Ben-Sason, on the other hand, accepts the views of a select group of thinkers from the xivth to the xvith centuries as evidence for lack of concern with issues of social tension and stratification<sup>25</sup> and of general great appreciation of the leading class. It will be maintained in the following lines that:

- 1) There is a constant reality of social tension often leading to inner conflict within the communities over social and economic issues such as
  - a) taxation
  - b) representation and power sharing in communal government
  - c) the activities of the so-called 'ome poderoso' or 'alim'<sup>26</sup>, i.e. the individuals who, because of their power acquired by their connection with influential non-Jewish figures, engage in behaviour which threatens the fabric or social and political relationships within the communities.
- 2) that the leadership failed in its task of moderating and controlling these conflicts, partly because it was itself involved in these, partly because the 'spiritual' leadership did not fulfil the social functions it had in the past and because its secular backing power was gone.

The evidence for these conflicts may be assembled, for the sake of convenience, under the following headings:

- a) taxation
- b) government
- c) disruption of autonomy
  - a) by 'powerful men'
  - b) opposition to centralisation
  - c) use of non-Jewish courts of law.

Two aspects of this phenomenon should be mentioned at this point. First, the various headings under which the evidence for communal discord is assembled do not reflect a total isolation of the causes of conflict. Issues such as taxes are often related to the others. Complaints about taxation are often associated with the irresponsibility of those in communal office. On the other hand, the 'powerful men' often try to evade taxes by appointing their own tax-collectors. Disruption of centralisation is sometimes caused by the efforts of powerful men to avoid the authority of central institutions. Thus, all these occurrences are in fact inter-related.

Secondly, it has been maintained that the model of class tension can not be applied to explain inner communal conflicts because of the great social mobility which characterises Jewish society.<sup>27</sup>

Although it is true that the 'constitutional' division into classes which was common in Aragon (specially in Majorca) does not appear mentioned as frequently in

Castile, there was nevertheless a very real division according to wealth. In fact there are complaints about the unjust taxation of the poor and the tax-evasion of the rich. Conflict over these issues reaches such proportions that the communal and supra-communal Jewish authorities are by-passed, in flagrant contravention of communal statutes and Jewish law, and complaints are made to the Christian authorities. These cases are obviously examples of tension between different socio-economic classes, but they are not the only cases of conflict nor do they represent the major issue of the period. Violent conflicts between the same socio-economic class are equally common and lead to disruption of autonomy. The common feature they present is the failure of the Jewish leaders to resolve these conflicts. While in the xivth century these existed they would be resolved, mainly, internally or by appeal to the great rabbinical authorities, Asher, Adret, Barfat, Nissim, etc. The rabbinical authorities (with the exception of Benveniste and Crescas in Aragon) rarely appear as moderators in communal conflict. It is perhaps characteristic that a survey of the xvth century Spanish sources of the Beth Joseph reveals a preponderance of these in 'turim' other than the Hoshen Mishpat.<sup>28</sup> The kabbalists, who in earlier centuries were in the forefront of social criticism are mainly engaged in purely theological speculations.

The first major piece of evidence to be considered in an account of the tension prevailing in the communities is the set of ordinances passed by the assembly of delegates

of communities in the lands under royal control in Castile at Valladolid.<sup>20</sup>

The assembly was neither the first nor the last of the xvth century but it does represent a major attempt to come to grips with some of the most difficult problems besetting the aljamas. It is not by coincidence that this happened in 1432.

The key figure behind the statutes seems to have been the Rav dela Corte, Abraham Benveniste. In the tradition preserved in the Shevet Yehuda (Ch.8) he is associated with Joseph Naci, a tradition which is corroborated by the documents which show their joint activity in providing money and grain for the Castilian army in the late 'twenties.<sup>30</sup> As a member of the Cavalleria family<sup>31</sup> he had a tradition of leadership behind him which stretched back for centuries. In the chronicle of Juan II, written by his relative,<sup>32</sup> (Pablo of Burgos' brother) Don Abraham Benveniste is described as one of the three men who ruled Castile under Juan II. The infante Enrique, leading a revolt against Juan II's government, gives as a pretext the fact that Abraham Benveniste ruled Castile through Mendoza whom he advised.<sup>33</sup> Mendoza was related to Alvaro de Luna through his wife Maria de Luna, Alvaro's cousin.

Thus there may be said to have been two formative influences on the tone of the statutes: 1) the authoritarian centralising influences of the Cavalleria family, and 2) the centralising tendencies, characteristic of the court circles to which Abraham Benveniste belonged and from which he gained his great influence. One should not forget that while

Juan II is usually portrayed as a 'weak monarch', Alvaro de Luna has been said 'to have instituted the efficiency of authoritarian monarchy!'<sup>34</sup>

By 1432, both Alvaro de Luna and Benveniste were at a 'peak' of their careers and influence. Alvaro de Luna had just won a military victory which had gained him great prestige. In 1429, Abraham Benveniste had made a loan of 150,000 maravedies to pay for urgently needed troops.<sup>35</sup> During 1429 and 1430 he had, in conjunction with Joseph Naci, organized naval and military supplies and payments necessary for Castilian resistance of an invasion from Aragon. Beneveniste's circle has been called 'outstanding for its administrative ability'. As McKay has pointed out, they used bills of exchange, and a member of the Naci family wrote a treatise on fiscal reform.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, in 1432, Benveniste and his circle, at the height of their power, were prepared to tackle the most serious problems confronting the communities.

Taxes, Frauds, exemptions, evasion, unjust collection

Like any other government, communal authorities had to tax their members to maintain communal institutions. Moreover, the communities were taxed by the Crown, who collected a lump sum.

It was the responsibility of the 'repartidor mayor de las aljamas' to assess, collect and deliver these taxes. (the office was combined with that of the Chief Rabbi in the xvth century.)



It has been said that 'to tax their subjects was one of the most difficult things for medieval governments'.<sup>37</sup> Taxation created problems inherent in the nature of the systems of collection, and these were aggravated by circumstances of the xvth century both within and outside the aljamas. One should see the problem against the background of urban unrest in the Europe of the late Middle Ages (studied by Wolf)<sup>38</sup> one of the principal manifestations of which was the conflict over the method of tax assessment and collection.

There were two systems of appointing tax-collectors.<sup>39</sup> One was the appointment of collectors by communal officers. The other one was the 'farming' method. The right to collect the tax was sold to the highest bidder at the auction. The farmer would pay a sum to the authorities and collect the taxes.

The first system had as its disadvantage the possibility that communal officers might appoint collectors who would not be too strict in their collection of taxes from them. From the community's point of view there was the added disadvantage that the income would be less secure and subject to delays.

The second system, 'farming' in use in many countries of Europe in one form or another, had as its disadvantage that the farmer, naturally anxious to recover the capital he invested and make a profit, would not be too scrupulous about the methods he used for his exactions. These were faults inherent in the system, but there were other problems as well. A common one was caused by the

exemptions obtained by individuals or aljamas from Crown or nobility. Another is the reluctance to pay taxes. Historians have too often accepted the complaints of tax-payers against tax-collectors or imposition of taxes at their face value. But the political factor should be considered as well. When the taxing body is powerful the tax-payers do not rebel. It is almost a concomitant of weak governments to face difficulties in the collection of taxes. These difficulties assumed different forms, such as rebellions of towns in Germany, or in Toledo (1449), or a simply strong complaints at the sessions of the Cortes. But the underlying political weakness of the taxing body is probably the major factor in the lack of efficient fiscal administration.

In 1432 Benveniste must have felt that his position was strong enough to curb these problems. To us, the chief interest lies in his detailed enumeration of these.

The problem of individuals who obtained exemptions was felt all the more acutely within a system by which all the communities were taxed a lump sum. That is to say that every individual or communal exemption meant an increase in the burden of the others.

An example is furnished by the ordinances concerning taxes and 'services':

"... by our sins, the 'mosrim' and those who threaten through the nobles have increased, so that those who are legally obliged to pay taxes (pecheros) avoid the obligation transferring the onus unto the other Jews."<sup>40</sup>

The paragraph introduces us to the issue. It should be noted that the individuals who obtain the exemptions are

designated by the term 'moser', a term which has larger connotations than the usual English translation 'informer'. The type of individual who 'threatens' the communities, taking advantage of his influential non-Jewish connections, is a constant concern of the drafters of the statutes. The paragraph goes on to give a more precise and actual description of the contemporary state of affairs.

"...Thus, some Jews, inhabitants of the said Kingdom of Castile, have by their 'mesirut' deprived the communities where they live of the taxes of the said Lord the King and of the services which are their obligation. And they make efforts to be exempt from the taxes they are obliged to pay."<sup>41</sup>

There was also a lack of efficient control of the extent of royal privileges and exemptions from which unscrupulous tax-payers and communities profited:

"...some Jews, who live in Valderas (Leon) and in Badajoz, and outside these places, say that by right they are exempted from paying taxes to the King because, they claim, everybody who lives in those places has, he and his descendance, an exemption from all taxes."<sup>42</sup>

The problem was not restricted to these towns:

"...some Jews, who live in Astorga, and outside it, say that they are exempt from the said taxes by privilege of the King, who donated them to the Church and Bishop of the said city. But up to now the matter has not been clear, specially concerning the privilege of Valderas and concerning who are the exempted ones. As a result of this many claim to be privileged ..."<sup>43</sup>

The conflict over taxes in this locality can be traced right up to 1484, when the localities of Bembibre and Barrios refuse to pay with Ponferrada the 'castellanos' tax for the war against Granada, claiming that they belong to Astorga and causing complaints to be voiced before the

Council.<sup>43a</sup>

The ordinances reflect not only Benveniste's program of rectifying abuses, but also the tension between the tax-payers, 'pecheros' and those exempt.

Another form of tax-evasion was intimidation by the so-called 'powerful men' ('alim'-'poderosos' in the statutes). One of the recurring concerns of the ordinances is the problem brought about by the individuals who use 'threats and persuasion' (pius wehagzama) to obtain exemptions and disrupt communal discipline and autonomy. Thus, at the opening paragraph of the ordinances concerning taxes, the situation is described:

"some individuals obtain grants from the said lord the King, and letters confirming certain privileges which they hold. Others bring in 'persuaders and threateners' to exempt them or to pay the amount they want, or to obtain grants from the communities where they reside...."<sup>44</sup>

The problem is clearly spelt out in another paragraph in which the following justification is given for a certain ordinance:

"...since some Jews, be they 'poderosos' or any other sort of 'powerful individuals' (ilem) threaten the commons and poor individuals of the communities as well as the tax-assessors, forcing them to assess their taxes at the sum they want, which thing they do because they are frightened of them, and they also contrive to have the individuals they want appointed as tax-assessors, and they designate the ones they want for the office, and this is a great evil, and is theft ..."<sup>45</sup>

A particular source of dissension concerned the sales tax 'alcabala' on wine which was an important source of communal revenue. The ordinances mention 'those who purify the wine of the gentiles and powerful men'. They

increase the price of the wine artificially by threats and use of influence and 'avoid paying the Jewish alcabalas which the communities impose on the said wine'. The communities pass a statute accordingly:

"We ordain that any Jew who purifies the non-Jewish wine should do so in such a manner that it should be subject to all taxes, rights. .. which Jewish wine is usually subject to and let him not bring the said non-Jew to threaten and persuade ..."<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the communal authorities come under criticism as well. The statutes allude to the existence of communities in which the ordinances concerning taxes did not recognise the rights of those who were to be exempt by law:

"...some communities pass ordinances which are very stringent, to the effect that all taxes which are assessed on every individual must be paid by everyone whether he is obliged or not. And they do not take into account everyone's right, sometimes taxing those who are lawfully exempt. And the assessors make some errors which are common knowledge ..."<sup>47</sup>

Some communities, moreover, forbade their members to voice any complaints about unjust taxation. The statutes, accordingly, try to limit the power of the local *aljama* by allowing such complaints to be brought before impartial judges.

One may conclude that the ordinances present evidence of the difficulties inherent in the taxation systems under xvth century circumstances and the dissatisfaction and tension produced by this in the Jewish communities of Castile. The ordinances represent the complaints of the tax-payers who are bearing more than their share

because of the exemptions obtained by those with outside influence. They demonstrate the opposition of local communities which are too weak to offer any resistance to the 'poderosos' or 'ilemim'. They also reflect the grievances of the poor and those, such as widows and orphans, against the tax-collectors and tax-assessors and communal authorities who ignore their claims. The only hope for a solution lay in action taken by a strong supra-local authority which could stop abuses. It took the most influential Jew of the kingdom at the height of his powers to draft ordinances in order to remedy the situation. The obvious question is whether they succeeded or not and, if so, why. The ordinances were to be valid for ten years. Within those ten years there are cases of individuals petitioning for and obtaining grants of exemption from taxes.

Abraham Silvan, the King's physician, resident of Leon is an example.<sup>48</sup>

In 1434 and 1439 various aljamas plead poverty in order to get a reduction in taxes.<sup>49</sup> After that period many individuals obtain exemptions through the mediation of nobles and by grant of the monarch. Aljamas like Soria were completely exempt from taxes. In other words, as far as the problem of exemptions is concerned, the ordinances do not seem to have been effective. Later evidence will show that the same problems and causes of conflict over taxes continue right to the latter part of the century.

### Tension in Avila

The community of Avila provides a good example of the conflict between factions concerning taxes.

The community of Avila was, in the last quarter of the xvth century, one of the most populated and prosperous aljamas of Castile. The Jews are said to have formed the majority of the population of Avila. P. Leon Tello estimates c. 3000 exiles from Avila in 1492. The community was the one which paid the highest proportion of taxes in the 1474 tax-assessment.<sup>50</sup>

There seems, however, to have been great diversity in the economic make-up of the community. On the one hand, there were a few wealthy money-lenders resented both by the community and the non-Jews (especially by those in debt to them) and on the other hand artisans, and poor individuals such as the poor widow of Isaac Honen or the poor pedlar woman Masalton.<sup>51</sup>

The community had resented its officers for the years c. 1464-1475. They had grievances against the 'veedores and mayordomos', i.e. officers in charge of administration, as well as against the tax-collectors of the communal taxes (such as taxes for charity, etc.).

They had not given account of the finances for that period. The names of various tax-collectors of the period have been preserved but the document does not mention explicitly the names of those who were responsible for these particular taxes during the period 1464-1475. The collectors 'excused one another' causing the aljama great

damage. The 'good-men' or elders of the aljama seem to have been powerless to do anything in response to the complaints against these tax-collectors and, instead of imposing communal or judicial disciplinary measures, had to recur to the Crown's Council in order to force the collectors to present their accounts.

The monarchs, accordingly sent a letter from Madrid on 25/3/1475 to their 'corregidor' (representing the Crown in the town) licenciado Juan del Campo.<sup>52</sup>

"Sepades que por parte del aljama e omnes buenos de los judios de la dicha cibdad nos fue fecha relacion ... que los veedores e mayordomos de la dicha aljama que han tenido cargo de la fasenda della de 10 e 11 annos e mas tro a esta parte nunca han dado ni dieron cuenta ni rason de todo quanto han recebido e gastado por la dicha aljama, e quasy mismo otros judios de la dicha aljama que han tenido otros cargos asy como cogedores de padrones e fijuelas e otras cojechas de repartimientos que se han fecho entre los omnes buenos de la dicha aljama, disen que desde el dicho tiempo aca nunca han dado cuenta de los dichos cargos, escusando los unos con los otros, a fin de non dar las dichas cuentas, en lo qual la dicha aljama e judios della disen que han seydo muy dannificados e reciben grand agravamiento e danno ..."

One can see clearly that the elders, the 'good men' mentioned in the letter, represent the interests of the majority of the community and are opposed to the faction of powerful individuals who had had in their hands the fiscal administration of the aljama. These are individuals of standing in the community and difficulties in excluding them from the new committee, to be formed to remedy the situation, are foreseen in the continuation of the letter.

"que ... fagades juntar a los dichos judios de la dicha aljama en su junta e despues de asy juntados les apremiedes que nombren de entre sy quatro personas dellos que non sean de las



personas que han tenido cargo de las dichas mayordomias e repartimientos ..., las quales dichas quatro personas ... les den poder e facultad, para que tomen las dichas cuentas ..."

The incident is the product of more than ten years of discontent with an obviously powerful group within the aljama. The tension here occurs between the 'omes buenos' who represent the interests of the less powerful members of the aljama and a group of communal officers who try to further their own interests and successfully resist any measures the community might take, forcing the elders to appeal to the Crown for a purely internal affair. Even then measures have to be taken to avoid their interference.

#### Tension in Cuellar

Echoes of conflict brought about by taxation can be discerned in Roa from remarks made before the Inquisition during the trial of the licenciado Diego de Alva, corregidor of Cuellar.

Cuellar was a small town near Segovia with a community which had, according to the same source, grown from 50 to 200 Jews. The records of the trial mention members of the communal hierarchy such as the Rabbi, the shamash, the preacher, a teacher with pupils from Segovia, etc. The 'corregidor' was accused of judaizing. One of the witnesses for the prosecution was Rabbi Joseph Halaban, a Jewish physician, probably a man of some influence as he attended the nobleman don Pedro de Luna. In his testimony Rabbi Joseph Halaban related how

"biviendo en Roa, puede aver diez meses, fue allí el dicho bachiller alcalde que agora es licenciado, y dixo e este testigo delante del corregidor el bachiller Pero Ruyz: Vos, por que no quereys pechar con los otros judios y llamays a la synoga pajar? Yo lo castigare, sy fallo ques verdad. Y este testigo le respondio que el no llamava a la synoga pajar, sy no por que los judios dezian que sy no pechase este testigo que non le dexarian entrar en la synoga. Y este testigo dixo que non se le daria mas estar en la synoga que estar en un pajar, por que los dichos judios eran los descomulgados y no el..."<sup>53</sup>

More information about the incident is not available, but it is an example of the friction that must have been common in the aljamas who had to contend with individuals who, because of their influential position or because of other reasons, could refuse to share in the common burden or heed communal discipline.

### Trujillo

Against a background of intense factionalism, the same conflict over taxes between those representing the interests of 'the poor and the indigent' and the elders of the aljama can be discerned in a letter sent by the Council to the aljama of Trujillo in 1485. If the taxation conflict is taken first, it shows that there are two main causes of complaint. Firstly the letter mentions the fact that the communal authorities, the 'good men', collect more money than is lawful and, according to the source of the complaint, 'share them according to their own interests'.

Secondly, the collections are unfair on the poorer sections of the community, so much so that some have to leave

the community because of their inability to meet the demands of the tax-collectors.

This conflict between those representing the interests of the 'poor and indigent' and the elders of the community, cannot be resolved internally and recourse must be had to the Crown's justice. The Council accordingly sends the following letter (13/9/1485):

"a vos el aljama e omes buenos judios de la cibdad de Trogillo e a las personas que avedes e tovierdes cargo de repartir asy los castellanos que nos mandamos repartir por las aljamas de los judios destos nuestros reynos como los otros qualesquier pechos e servicios que en la dicha aljama se han echado .... por parte de ciertos judios vesinos desa dicha cibdad nos es fecha relacion disiendo que a vueltas del repartimiento do los dichos castellanos e de los otros servicios e pechos ... repartis otras contias de mrs demas e allende de lo que asy por nuestro mandado e por vuestros rab mayores es repartydo, e que lo gastays e distribuys en vuestros propios intereses. E que asi mismo en los dichos repartimientos aveys agraviado e agraviays a los pobres e miserables personas cargandoles tanto e ellos como a los mas ricos e hasendados de todos, por manera que lo no pueden comportar e que por cabsa dellos se van a bevir e morar a otros logares e senorios, de que a nos se sigue deservicio. E nos suplicaron e pidieron por merced cerca dello con remedio de justicia les mandasemos proveher e remediar como la nuestra merced fuese." 54

Coming, as it does, one year after the assembly of envoys of the aljamas in Maqueda in 1484, the complaint should be seen against the background of the decisions concerning the 'castellanos' tax taken at that assembly. The assembly, presided over by Abraham Seneor, had decided to apportion the taxes thus: two thirds by wealth, and one third by head. The poor resented the introduction, even if incomplete, of a kind of poll tax, the wealthy seem to have resented the taxation by wealth assessments.

Added to this, there may be some connection with the litigation conducted by Juan de Talavera against Abraham Seneor, where he was also accused of over-taxing the aljamas and using the money for his own interest. The identity of both complaints and the simultaneity of dates (both occur in 1485) may not be coincidental.

### Guadalajara

Guadalajara, the seat of Aboab's Yeshiva, and a centre of Jewish scholars, was not without its conflicts concerning taxation. An incident which occurred in 1489 gives us an idea of the tension reigning in the community.

In December of that year, as we learn from an ejecutoria in the Archivo Chancilleria of Valladolid,<sup>55</sup> Yuce Caballero was in the square between Sta. Clara and San Andres speaking about the sisa of the aljama saying that he thought that non-weighted meat should be taxed. Abraham aben Namias then slapped him in the face. Abraham was imprisoned and later exiled from Guadalajara for half a year. The litigation between Aben Nahmias and Joseph Caballero becomes more meaningful if it is borne in mind that he probably belonged to the family of Caballero who represented the 'minor tax-payers' of the city.

In 1491, Mose Caballero and Samuel Mayren and don Cag Aburrabe and don Joseph Halevi, 'procuradores' of the minor tax-payers of the community of Guadalajara complained to the Council about the unjust distribution of taxes among the 'poor and very miserable Jews who hardly

have anything to eat'. The council orders that taxes should be levied according to wealth assessments. The pertinent portions of the letter read as follows:

"A vos el aljama de los judios de la cibdad de Guadalajara e a los repartidores de los pechos e derramas que se echan e reparten por los judios vesinos e moradores de la dicha cibdad .... por parte de Mose Caballero e Symuel Mayren e de don Cague Aburrabe e don Yuca Levi, judios vesinos de la dicha cibdad, por sy e en nombre e como procuradores que se dixeron de los judios pecheros menores de la dicha cibdad, nos fue fecha relacion por su peticion que ante nos en el nuestro Concejo fue presentada distendo que en esta dicha aljama ay muchos judios ricos e cabdalosos, e otros muy pobres e miserables que escasamente tienen que comer e cada uno de los quales dis que se cobra e reparte por vos los dichos repartidores de los dichos pechos otra tanta contia de maravedis como a cada uno de los judios ricos e cabdalosos de la dicha aljama en todos los pechos e tributos que en la dicha aljama se han de echar e repartir e se echan e reparten. E diz que como quier que vos la dicha aljama e repartidores de los dichos pechos e tributos della aveys sydo requeridos que quando los dichos pechos ovierdes de echar a repartir e echasedes e repartiesedes a cada uno do los vesinos de la dicha aljama lo que por la fasienda que cada uno tiene devia pagar, dis que non lo aveys querido nin quereys faser, en lo qual dis que a ellos an rescebido e resciben gran agravio e dano...."

56

Again here the conflict erupts over taxes. The tension between the 'minor tax-payers' and the wealthy members of the community is not resolved by internal discipline even in this city of scholars and spiritual leaders. The 'minor tax-payers' have to have recourse to the justice of the Crown.

### Segovia

Not entirely disimilar is the case of Segovia.

The middle and lower classes of the Jewish community, composed of the poor, widows and 'other indigent persons who have nothing to eat', resented the wealthier members of the community and those relatives and associates of the tax-collectors who were not taxed because of their association with them. Abraham Albohen, who represents their cause before the Council complains accordingly:

"Sepades que Abrahan Alboer, judio vesino desa dicha cibdad nos fizo relacion e cetera, diziendo que en los repartimientos que se fazen en el aljama de la juderia de la dicha cibdad para los pechos e derramas en que an de contribuir, se fazen grandes fraudes e enganos porque diz que los judios ricos non pagan casi nada e que asi mismo esimen que non pechan los parientes de los repartidores que cada ano eligen e nombran e a otros judios a quien ellos quieren faser plazer e que lo que aquellos han de pagar carga sobre los medianos e biudas e pobres e otras miserables personas que no tienen que comer." 57

The evidence assembled, both from the text of the ordinances of Valladolid of 1432 and from later complaints on the issue of taxation show a reality of intense tension between different economic groups in the aljamas over this problem.

It must be borne in mind that the description of social ills in the text of the ordinances can only be informed by complaints made at the assembly or to Benveniste during his various travels throughout the communities. This accords with the institutional context of the ordinances: an assembly of envoys of the communities.

Furthermore, the similarity between complaints made in 1432 and those made in the last quarter of the century show a continuity of tension which was not inter-

rupted by the ordinances themselves.

The tension is due to various factors: communal officers tax individuals unfairly; influential members obtain exemptions or use their influence to avoid their full share of communal burden; tax-collectors overtax the members of the community for their own profit.

The common denominator is the failure to resolve these problems by internal discipline.

Even Benveniste, at the height of his power can only proclaim ordinances which are not kept. It seems that not only is there no evidence that they are not kept but if the sources can be said to show anything at all it is a lack of compliance.

Exemptions or a lowering of assessments are sought and obtained by individuals and communities within the period of ten years. After that period, the evidence for the fact that individuals seek and obtain tax exemptions is so numerous that it hardly needs discussion. Moreover, it shows that the failure of the statutes of 1432 acted almost as an incentive to avoid sharing in taxation. Other portions of the statutes were equally disregarded. The sumptuary laws which were passed by the Cortes,<sup>58</sup> and the complaints as to the non-compliance of these by the Jews seem to be sufficient evidence for the lack of effectiveness of the ordinances in this respect.

The report, by the 'visitador' (inspector) of the archbishopric of Toledo, dated 13/8/1436 may throw some light on the non-compliance with another section of the statutes. According to this document, published by

F. Cantera Burgos in his study of the community of Brihuega, the Jews of that locality, had in their houses Christian male and female servants with whom they continually partook of their Jewish food and drink, etc.<sup>59</sup>

The problem of the 'poderosos'

In the xvth century there is ample evidence for the rise of a class of Jewish financiers who were employed by the nobility or towns in various capacities, but mainly as stewards and tax-collectors.<sup>60</sup> It would seem reasonable to assume that some of these individuals, with the influence gained through their non-Jewish connections, are to be identified with the 'poderosos' or 'alim' of the ordinances.

It was inevitable that some of these individuals should take advantage of their influence at a time when the communities were weak. One aspect of this misuse of influence was the obtaining of exemptions dealt with above. Connected with taxes as well was the practice of appointing or causing the appointment of favourable tax-collectors. Typical of the misuse of influence is the situation which forces the aljamas in 1432 to pass the following ordinance:

"we order that no Jew or Jewess should engage in the practice of forcing another Jew or Jewess to engage or marry another by brief or command from the said King or Queen or any other lord or lady or any other powerful person. Neither should he bring a 'persuader' or a 'threatener', so that no Jew should be intimidated into marrying ...and whosoever transgresses this ordinance should be banned and excommunicated and let his bread and his wine be unfit for consumption, and let him not be buried among the Jews and let him pay 5,000 maravedies to whomever the Rav de la Corte should command ..."<sup>64</sup>



Another, perhaps more dangerous, aspect of the disruptive activities of the poderoso was the interference in the appointment of communal officers. This meant that the community, in theory representing the interests of a majority was in fact in the hands of a clique of influential individuals who were able, thus, to interfere in the running of communal government when it was in their interest to do so. The problem is explicitly mentioned in one of the ordinances:

"...since some Jews obtain briefs from our lord the King as well as from our lady the Queen, as well as from other lords and ladies to gain certain communal offices and appointments in the communities, which thing is a sin, if they are obtained without the permission of the communities; and many damages arise out of this, for the said offices are sometimes given to individuals who are unfit for them, and this is a great cause of damage to the communities, therefore we order that: no Jew should take advantage of brief or grant or privilege or any other form of commandment, whether oral or written, given by the King or the Queen in order that he should be appointed Talmid Hakham with a contract of salary or any other salary ..."<sup>62</sup>

But not only the most important communal offices were obtained by intimidation or outside influence, as the ordinance clearly spells out:

"...since some individuals appoint officers without the permission of the community, such as the ritual slaughterer, the notary and other such offices, we ordain that the person in question should not be allowed to make use of the said office without the communal licence or that the majority of the community, so that they should know whom they appoint, or likewise with the permission of the said Rav da la Corte ..."<sup>63</sup>

Another cause of complaints and tension within the community concerned malpractices by the ruling communal officers. The ordinances for the election of judges and other communal

offices show concern with the problem of ruling cliques which seek to perpetuate themselves in government by illegal means:

"...and let them proclaim a bann to the effect that the electors should have righteous intentions, without any plots and without any frauds, and without any factionalism (banderias)..."<sup>64</sup>

The same concern can be discerned in the ordinances forbidding and annulling any appointment of officials by co-optation of the preceding officer. The ordinances concerning taxes and service refer to malpractices in the decision process:

"...in many communities of the kingdom some officials, 'meaynim', those in charge of communal needs, as well as other persons, make proclamations by means of fraudulent devices, so that the communal meetings should not be attended but by the individuals they want to be present and they make whatever statutes they desire, and great damages arise from this ..." <sup>65</sup>

Another aspect of the interference of powerful individuals which disrupted the running of autonomous government was the use of non-Jewish courts and on the other hand the refusal to recognise the autonomous judicial courts. It would seem that this is the problem the following paragraph of the ordinances concerning 'mosrim' is trying to solve:

"...but if a Jew or Jewess is a powerful, influential man who does not obey the laws, and he is summoned two or three times before the Jewish judges and he refuses, let the sage and the judges give the other plaintiff the right to summon him before the non-Jewish tribunals..."

Again the ordinances reflect the causes of social tension within the communities as seen through the complaints of the

envoys of the communities as well as the experience of Benveniste. It must be borne in mind that among the effects of 1391 was the break in the continuity of the leadership caused by migrations, deaths and conversions. The communities were open to attack from powerful individuals who were becoming so through their financial functions and other roles which gained them influence with important non-Jews. The tension may be said to have a more local character than in previous periods. The problems are not those caused by individuals so powerful that they can threaten or seek to extend their influence over all the communities as was the case in earlier periods, e.g. Pichon or the Al-Constantinis in Aragon. But this is no reason to postulate that there was no social tension within the communities. The problem subsisted, perhaps on a different scale, but was nevertheless widespread.

It is noteworthy that among those present at the assembly were 'some Jews who are about the court of our lord the King'. In other words, some court Jews were involved, as far as the evidence goes, in the attempts to curb the causes of conflict within the communities. The causes of conflict are related to individuals within the communities or small 'cliques' of a local character trying to impose their will on the rest of the community. It would seem that the problem was transferred from the 'malsin courtier' to the 'local poderoso or 'alim'.

In some cases, however, a local conflict could undermine the autonomy on a wide scale by interfering with

central institutions. Three cases can be mentioned to show how local incidents, arising in one community, can have a bearing on the centralised institutions and create opposition to its authority.

The first case is that of the conflict between the ritual slaughterer of Ocaña and the Chief-Rabbi, don Abraham Benveniste.<sup>67</sup>

The account was preserved in a 'quntres' (note-book) written by Rabbi Moses Aburrabia (first half of the xvth century) a fragment of which was quoted by Haym G'anin in his book 'Ets-Hahaym'. Aburaby relates how when he was a student in Alcala, R. Abraham Bienveniste and a group of sages were at the court which was sojourning there. We learn from his account that someone informed him of a ritual custom followed in Ocaña which incensed him. He proceeded to imprison the ritual slaughterer of Ocaña exercising his right as a central authority. He intended to declare him an 'avarian' (literally: sinner) and flog him. So far this is an example of the central office of the Chief Rabbi functioning in a local case caused presumably by discontent with the slaughterer's custom. The slaughterer, however, must have had some influence at court because the account proceeds to narrate how some important persons, officers of the King 'pleaded' about the matter causing Bienveniste to desist. Thus we have here a case in which central authority is challenged by local custom. And, while the incident concerns a ritual point it is nevertheless an example of the way in which outside pressure could be brought to bear upon the communities, interfering with the authority of the representative of a centralised institution.

Another example which illustrates the tendency of some local conflicts to create opposition to central authorities and institutions is the case of the factionalism in Segovia<sup>68</sup> instigated by Juan de Talavera.<sup>69</sup> The case also serves to illustrate the inner tension reigning in a local community. The case is dealt with extensively in the chapter on Abraham Seneor.<sup>70</sup> Some points, however, are of relevance here.

Juan de Talavera was a converso<sup>71</sup> who had wished to be appointed to a central office of the Jewish administration: the 'escribania mayor de juzgado y repartimiento de rentas'.<sup>72</sup> He was denied access to it by Abraham Seneor on the grounds of his Christianity.<sup>73</sup> Juan de Talavera then proceeded to accuse him of various charges connected with Abraham Seneor's and Jaco Cachopo's central officer of Jewish tax-collection.<sup>74</sup> The documents for these charges and the beginning of the litigation are of January 1485.<sup>75</sup> From documents of the same litigation but of September of that year we learn of the social conflict in Segovia between a faction supporting Juan de Talavera and another composed of wealthy and influential Jews which was probably at the root of the matter.<sup>76</sup> We have, thus, a case in which local factionalism can produce results which threaten the functioning of central institutions.

#### Communal tension and strife in Trujillo

The community of Trujillo was another of the ten most populous aljamas of Castile. If Suarez's computations

are correct, it had c.300 families in the last quarter of the xvth century.<sup>77</sup> This puts it on a demographic footing with aljamas such as Segovia, Toledo, Guadalajara, Avila etc. It paid sums of c. 100,000 maravedies in taxes. The tension between rival factions was closely connected with a series of incidents relating to the wealthy Cohen family of textile merchants.

In 1484, the 'procurador fiscal' of the Crown accused some Jews of Trujillo of clipping the coinage. The letter by which the monarchs order an enquiry to be made mentions that the community 'han puesto sobre ello cierto ascensario para labrar la synoga de la dicha ciudad'.<sup>78</sup>

After an enquiry, Abraham and Joseph Cohen and Rabbi Samuel Negro inhabitants of Trujillo were apprehended and taken to the Council. They protested that the witnesses accepted were their enemies and a new enquiry was ordered.<sup>79</sup> In February 1483<sup>80</sup> the Cohen family asks for a 'safety' document (salvaguardia) because they are afraid that the city or the Jewish community might take hold of their possessions. Soon afterwards they were released. This seems to have been the beginning of a series of incidents between the family and the community, at times reaching quite violent proportions. In the same year, some Jewish inhabitants of the city make a complaint against the aljama authorities accusing them of fraud and injustice in the collection of taxes. Whether this accusation emanated from the circle of the Cohen faction is not said, but it shows that the tension existed and could rise into the open.

In September 1491, a letter was sent, by the Council, in which there is an account of the strife within the community:

"...puede aver un mes ... en le cibdad de Trogillo entre los judios della estando dentro en la synoga cuo cierta question eruydo ... bolvieron a pelear unos con otros con piedras e espadas de manera si el dicho alcalde e el alguazil de la dicha cibdad alli non se acertaran oviera en la dicha cibdad grand escandalo e alboroto, por que todos o la mayor parte de los cavalleros de la dicha cibdad entendieran e ayudaran en ello, los unos favoreciendo a los unos e los otros a los otros, e que para los ayudar e favorecer se armaron muchos de los omes a criados de los dichos cavalleros de donde a nos se siguiera deservicio e a los vesinos de la dicha cibdad grand dapno ..."81

The factionalism was connected with the tension between the Cohen family and the communal authorities and seems to have come to a clash over a seemingly minor incident: the building of some steps in the Synagogue of the city:

"Sepades quel bachiller Pero Diaz de la Torre, nuestro procurador fiscal e promotor de la nuestra justicia nos fiso relacion por su petition diziendo que don Mayr Barchillon e Frayme Barchillon suchfijo, e Rabi Mose Alfandary e Bueno Machorro e Barzilay Filo-fiquinos su hermano e don Culeman Abenaex e don Davi Alfandary e otros sus debdos e parientes e secaces fisieron e hadificaron nuevamente una escalera dentro de la synoga de la dicha cibdad de Truxillo a la parte de donde se pone el sol diziendo que para sobir a decir por ella la Atora. Sobre lo qual don Ca Cohen e Abrayn Cohen e Yuce Cohen, e los otros sus debdos e parientes judios moradores en la dicha cibdad de Truxillo lo ovieron notificado e querellado a don Abrahen Seneor, juez mayor de las aljamas de los judios ... e por virtud de los poderes que para ello tienen de nos dis que dio un su mandamiento contro todos aquellos judios que avian seydo en faser e mandar faser la dicha escalera para que non descendiesen nin subiesen por ella la Tora salvo por la escalera por donde antes solian sobir e decir. Io qual les mando so pena a cada uno de seys mill mrs. la tercia parte para la guerra de los moros e la tercia parte para el arca de la

Hermandad. El qual dicho mandamiento los susodichos dis que obedescieron nin cunplieron como quier que con el fueron requeridos, antes fisieron el contrario de lo en el contenido, por lo qual yncurrieron e cayeron en la dicha pena, e traspasando mas el dicho mandamiento inpusieron pena de excomunion ..."

82

This incident shows that the conflict between the Cohen faction and the other group had developed into something more than a feud between two families. The faction opposing the Cohen family was in charge of communal government, it could impose the ban. The Cohens, on the other hand, appeal to the central authority whose orders go unheeded and have to be enforced by the monarchs. There is a consistent opposition by the communal authorities to the Cohen family and the central authority throughout the incidents.

The resentment had another source as well. The Cohen family was opposed by the communal government, but at the same time it was one of the largest contributors to local taxes. This is made clear by their complaints against the local communal authorities to the Crown's council.

"a vos el aljama de los judios de la cibdad de Trugillo..Yuce Cohen y Ca Cohen e Abrahen Cohen e Jaco Cohen su hermano e Davi su sobrino, judios vesinos desa dicha aljama nos fisieron relacion por su peticion disiendo que en cada uno ano se reparte a todos los judios de las aljamas desos nuestros reynos a cada uno un castellano e asi mismo a cada cient vecinos una lanca de la Hermandad e asi mismo de la lieva otros ciertos maravedis, los quales dichos castellanos dis que nos mandamos cobrar luego de los judios que mas tienen en cada una aljama e que los otros menudos los paguendentro de tres meses. E que porque los judios que algo tienen non se perdiesen e los pobres non rescibiesen mucha fatyga



dis que don Abrahen Sennor, juez mayor de las dichas aljamas dis que mando que se pagase el tercio por cabezas e los otros dos tercios por pecho repartido con juramento que sobrello fisiesen los dichos cogedores. E que los judios desa dicha cibdad non quieren que se reparta salvo que cada uno jure lo que tiene e que de aquello pague, a cabsa de loqual diz que les cabe a ellos cerca de XL mil mrs, el quinto de lo que monta si se fisiese el dicho repartimiento lo qual dis que en ningunas aljamas destos nuestros reynos non se fase lo tal, salvo para repartimiento e ninguno non jura la fasienda que tiene." 83

The Queen discussed it with the Council, the letter goes on to say and decided to form a committee to levy the taxes. An important remark is made which shows the relation of the complaints about taxes to the violent occurrences of August 1491: that the members of the committee should not be chosen 'from those who had taken part in the divisions which existed in the past between the members of the aljama'. On the same date, a letter is sent to the 'corregidor' in Trujillo where there is mention of the fact that exactions of taxes had been made directly from the Cohen family instead of being made from the stewards of the aljama. The Cohens, a family of 'vendedores de panos', was one of the most important sources of revenue for the community but was resented by the communal hierarchy of which it formed no part. 83a

This is another example of the conflict within local aljamas having as a consequence the disruption of supracommunal authority.

The most widespread form of conflict and disruption of the autonomous communal government caused by the poderosos was probably of a more local nature.

An example might be the activities of an influential Jew of Avila who ignores communal authorities and can only be checked by appealing to the Crown.

Moses Tamano, the individual in question, was one of the wealthiest Jews of Avila.<sup>84</sup> Isaac Tamano, probably his relative, was tax-collector of alcabalas for the town's council and was naturally resented as were most members of his profession.<sup>86</sup> Moses Tamano himself was a money lender with his own rent and debt collector, Abraham Melamed. He makes loans to the town council, peasants, poor Jews and others.<sup>87</sup> In 1481, the Jews were restricted to a certain quarter of the city, the 'juderia', in accordance with the laws of segregation passed at the Cortes of Toledo in 1480.<sup>88</sup>

Moses Tamano owned some houses within the juderia and built some 'puntales'<sup>89</sup> coming out of the houses to the detriment of the users of the Synagogue.

The community was powerless to do anything because of the 'ruegos y amenazas' of Tamano. The community had to send an envoy to court to redress communal grievances. Isaac Bechacho obtained a letter from the Council which describes the incident. Bechacho still needed a 'letter of surety' to guarantee his safety against any attempts on the part of the influential Tamano.<sup>90</sup> During the same day, Benchacho complains to the Council of frauds in the collection of taxes.

## Leadership

Despite the paucity of sources emanating from rabbinical circles concerning the local leadership, some of its characteristics can be discerned from surviving documents.

The second 'gate' of the ordinances of Valladolid declares in unambiguous terms that:

"the sages and masters of the Law have dwindled ... there are very few communities in which there can be found a court of justice of three men who can give decisions according to the laws of the Talmud ..."<sup>91</sup>

A responsum of uncertain date (it is directed to don Hayim de Yavne, perhaps last quarter of the xvth century) by Simon Maimi of Segovia may indicate something of the standards of local judiciaries. The significant fact is that after having arrived at his decision and stated it in Hebrew as is usual in responsa, at the end of his letter he repeats the verdict in Castilian (written in Hebrew characters) 'porque todo sea entendido', so that everything will be understood.<sup>92</sup> It is doubtful whether Adret or Asheri would have to repeat their verdict in the vernacular for fear of not being understood in Hebrew.

In a responsum of Aboab the fact is stated very clearly that 'the courts which exist nowadays in every city are accepted by us ...' although they are not experts in the Law.<sup>93</sup> The remark is doubly significant because it has no connotations of moralising or humility towards learned predecessors.

A certain decline in the quality of local leadership was paralleled by intense tension and factionalism.

Perhaps it might be useful to begin by referring to a (probably) unhistorical passage in Zacuto's chronicle.<sup>94</sup>

The edition of Shulam (1566) included a story of unknown origin to the effect that R. Isaac Campanton denounced Samuel Carca, author of the Meqor Hayim because of a difference in opinions and that the latter was burnt as a result. This tradition may, perhaps, have preserved the memory of the intensity of conflict amongst the Jewish leadership of the xvth century. An example might be the case of tension between leading figures of the community of Zamora.

Zamora was another one of the ten most populous aljamas of Castile. We have Suarez Fernandez's estimate of c. 300 families making up the communal population. The birthplace of Isaac Arama, it counted among its leading members the Saba family and Rabbi Samuel Valenci.

Samuel Valenci is a well known figure in halakhic literature. He wrote a treatise on 'Kelale KalWahomer' and

halakhic decisions (in which he is associated with Aboab, the Gaon of Castile) are recorded in his name. He belonged to a family famous for its learning, was a pupil of Isaac Campanton and a teacher of R. Jacob ibn Habib, author of the *En Jacob*. He was related to Zacuto, and, through him, to Abraham b. Eliezer Halevi the Kabbalist and Messianic visionary. R. Abraham Saba, author of various homilies on the Pentateuch, the scrolls, and of a mystical commentary on the prayers (in which there are reminiscences of his life in Zamora) is equally well known as one of the members of the circle of pietists centering around the figure of the Segovian Rabbi Simon Maimi who were imprisoned in Portugal after 1492.

As judge of the community of Zamora, Samuel Valenci was responsible (1485) for the imprisonment, by the Christian authorities, of two members of the Saba family. One of them was condemned to death. Complete records of the case do not survive. There are however letters responding to appeals and complaints by the Saba family for their imprisonment by the local authorities.

Another document (1485) shows that Rabbi Saul denounced R. Samuel Valenci for imparting instruction in Jewish religion to a convert. Despite the incompleteness of the evidence, it is clear that we have here a case of intense and violent conflict among members of the local leadership. One should add that the 'pueblo' (probably meaning the mass of the community) was against R. Samuel Valenci. So much so that he had to ask for letters of protection against 'alborotos de pueblo' (riots or tumult by the people).<sup>95</sup>

Another incident, which shows both the danger to communal officers from 'poderosos' and the division between the 'upper classes' of the community occurred in Miranda del Ebro (near Burgos) in 1485. The judge of the local Beth-Din, Rabbi Ospyna, had excommunicated a Jew of the city (for some unspecified reason). The Jew in question, Abraham Habillio, seems to have belonged to a not unimportant family of the community. His father is designated with the honorific title 'don' Ca Habillio.

Abraham Habillio is accused of having tried to kill the dayan and having stabbed him in the face, from behind, by treason, at night. The wound was serious but the judge recovered and accused him to the local alcalde who passed a death sentence against him. The sentence was ratified by the Royal Council on 6/11/1483.<sup>96</sup>

Cases could be multiplied. The strong disagreements between R. Isaac de Leon and R. Isaac Zayat receive a new dimension when it is borne in mind that each had recourse to the Christian authorities to carry out their opposing wishes. Although the case occurred in Zaragoza, there is nothing distinctively 'Aragonese' about tension within the leadership.

To conclude, the above mentioned evidence seems to indicate a reality of social conflict within the communities of xvth century Castile. The causes of tension, as shown by the text of the statutes of 1432, in the first part of the century do not differ greatly from those of the last quarter of it. This tension seems to

have been aggravated by the lack of a strong communal autonomous government and leadership, an effect of the political situation after 1391.

ABBREVIATIONS

- IB = Fritz Baer, Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien, Erster Teil, Urkunden und Regesten (Berlin 1929/1936). With an introduction by the author and a select additional bibliography by H. Beinart, I Aragonien und Navarra, 1970, Gregg International Publishers Ltd.
- IIB = Vol.II, Kastilien/Inquisitionsakten.
- BH1 = Yitzhak Baer, A History of the Jews in Christian Spain, Vol.1, translated from the Hebrew by Louis Schoffman, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1961-5722.
- BH2 = idem, Vol.2, 1966-5726.
- RGS = Registro General del Sello, Valladolid 1950 and onwards.
- SF = Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Patronato 'Menendez Pelayo', Biblioteca 'Reyes Catolicos', Documentos y Textos, Numero XI, Luis Suarez Fernandez, 'Documentos acerca de la Expulsion de los Judios', Valladolid, 1964.
- IN = Abraham A. Neuman, The Jews in Spain, Vol.1. A political-Economic Study, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 5705-1944.
- IIN = Abraham A. Neuman, The Jews in Spain, Vol.II, A Social Cultural study, Philadelphia, 1944.



FOOTNOTES

1. c. 400 localities with Jews, according to the study (based on tax-assessments) of M.A. Ladero Quesada "Los judios de Castilla segun servicios fiscales", Sefarad, Vol.31 (1971), pp.250ff., the estimate is for the third quarter of the xvth century, though Ladero remarks on the extreme dispersion and oscillation of the number. Suarez (SF, p.56) basing himself on the contribution (of taxes) of the 'servicio y medio servicio' tax of 1474 and 1482, and on the assessments for the 'castellanos' tax for the Granada war, gives a figure of 216 aljamas.
2. IN, p.22. On autonomy, cf. BH1, p.86. "The aljama enjoyed administrative and judicial autonomy", cf. also Rabbi Simha Assaf, 'Bate Hadin Wesidreihem', Jerusalem 1924, pp.11-25, though he admits (p.24, n.3) that non-Jewish courts were being used for 'contracts' (starot) and debt instruments. In general he emphasizes the strength of Hispano-Jewish autonomy.
3. In the legal theory underlying the 'Fuero' of Teruel they were 'servi regis' V.SF, p.17 (1176), (BH1, p.85 and BH1, p.395, n.16 & 19) a theory accepted by the Jews until the time of the Expulsion as seen by the comments of Abarabanel and Arama, but in fact they were 'a political unit': "The Jewish community is a separate political body distinct from the Christian burgher and peasant estates" (BH1, p.87) or "separate political bodies" (BH1, p.115), in other words a political unit with its own interests sometimes conflicting with those of other political units and dependent on the strength of its supporter (generally the Crown) and weakness of its competitors or rivals (in our period groups in the towns and certain groups within the Church).
4. Cf. e.g. J. Vicens Vives, Approaches to the History of Spain (transl. and ed. by J.C. Ullman) UCP, London 1970, p.76, and in general ch.14 'The crisis of the xvth century', "...social conflicts between peasants and lords, artisans and patricians nobles and monarchs ... the lower classes accused their superiors of oppression and misgovernment ..." cf. also J. Valdeon, Los Conflictos sociales en el reino de Castilla en los s. xiv y xv, Madrid, 1975
5. From a lecture by Liebshutz at the Institute of Jewish Studies (1971).
6. For the 'privileges' embodied in the 'fueros', cf. BH1, p.78 and 87. XVth century privileges usually make allusion to previous custom as justification for granting them.
7. Cf. IN, pp.4-6.

8. Cf.e.g. Jose Amador de los Rios, Historia Social Poltica y Religiosa de los Judios de Espana y Portugal, Madrid, 1960, p.443, n.546, for the argument of impoverishment at the Cortes of Valladolid (1385) or document No.7 of SF (15/2/1476) where the envoy of the aljama of Soria tells the Crown that it cannot make a loan to the Crown unless the Crown settles their litigation with the city, or IIB, p.250.
9. The argument of emigration is used, e.g. in SF No.96 or IN, p.5, n.3.
10. As it did in Haro, in 1453, IIB, p.325, No.313.
11. Cf. e.g. Valdeavellano , Instituciones de la Espana Medieval Cristiana, Madrid 1970, p.592, The almojarife had the function of collecting the income and Royal revenue and held it, the office was often held by Jews. Alfonso XI, in 1327 changed the office to that of 'tesorero' or treasurer. Beginning with the second half of the xivth century a new system is introduced in the financial administrative structure. The functions of the 'Mayordomo' were assumed, under Enrique III by new officials: the Contadores mayores, c.f. also Alfonso Garcia Gallo, Curso de Historia del Derecho Espanol, Madrid 1956, on the functions of the mayordomo, p.293 and on the reorganisation of the Council in 1385, p.295.
12. Cf. e.g. Cortes (ed. Colmeiro, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia,(1883-1903) Vol.II, p.325/326 (1385) "que no sean almoxarifes ni oficiales"; cf. legis-lation of Valladolid, 1408 (IIB, p.273) forbidding Jews to be tax-collectors, also ordinances of Valladolid 1412 (IIB, p.275) that the Jews should not be 'nin almoxarifes, nin mayordomos, nin recabadores de las mis rentas min de otro sennor ...", also complaints at the Cortes of Ocana in 1469: ...we see that the principal offices in the administration and collection of your rents and taxes are held by Jews ... also Cortes of Burgos 1430 where it is demanded that Jews be eliminated from tax-collection (Cortes III, 88) also Papal ordinances of Pope Eugene of 1442 and of Nicholas V, 1451, forbidding Jews to exact taxes from Christians, etc., ibid. All these pieces of legislation show the marked opposition to the Jewish tax-collectors and, while they show that these ordinances were not kept strictly, there can be little doubt of the loss of influence at Court at certain periods of the xvth century because of this opposition.
13. Cf. A. MacKay 'Popular movements and pogroms in xvth century Castille', Past and Present, 55 (1972), p.42.

14. While Baer (2, p.246) maintains that the Jewish population began to rise in the xvth century, it is doubtful whether it had doubled as did the Castilian population. Suarez Fernandez (p.56) suggests that Baer's figures (30,000 families expelled from Castile) should be reduced to c. 100,000 individuals and so does Ladero Quesada, op.cit.. Netanyahu, op.cit. appx. E suggests on the other hand that the figures should be increased but does not use the available fiscal documentation.
15. BH2, p.247.
16. R. Joseph ibn Hayah, of the second generation of exiles gives this explanation for the failure of opposition to the decree of expulsion: that the Jews in Spain (at the time of the Expulsion) lived in small villages without fulfilling important economic tasks of populating and defending these places. This observation is quoted by Ben Sason, "Exile and Redemption in the eyes of the Hispano-Jewish Exiles", Sepher Baer, Jerusalem 1961, pp.216/27.
17. The communities usually owned land and property. This property included butchers' shops and hospital, school building, etc. The conversion of synagogues into churches is well known, but other classes of property were also changing hands, e.g. (IIB, No.249) a document of 2/8/1391 shows that the city of Seville gave as a donation to the church of Sta. Cruz and to that of Sta. Maria a number of properties. Also IIB, No.270 for Villarea also IIB, No.280 for communal property in Salamanca, granted to the University in 1413.
18. Cf. BH2, p.249 "In general the official relationships between the municipalities and the aljamas could not be considered satisfactory."
19. Cf. Maria del Carmen Carle, Cuadernos de Historia de Espana (Buenos-Aires 1954) Vol.XXI-XXII; pp.146-328; Mercaderes en Castilla (1252-1512). In it the author minimises the role of the Jews in xvth century Castilian commerce. While it is true that conversos were playing a much more important part the author is not acquainted with the available evidence for the participation of Jews in xvth century Spanish commerce. For the importance of the conversos in the commercial enterprises of Burgos and Medina del Campo, cf. Vicens Vives, An economic history of Spain, Princeton, 1969 p. 288. Also, information on the trade between Spain and N. Africa carried by conversos in I. Epstein, "The responsa of R. Simon b. Zemah Duran, OUP, 1930, pp.14,47. The Observance movement had as its aim religious reform and tried to gain control of the convents. But it is no coincidence that among its members were some of the leading anti-Jewish figures of the century, e.g. Pablo of Burgos, Alfonso de Espina, Oropesa, Torquemada, Fernando de Talavera etc. (cf. Tarsicio de Azcona, Isabel la Catolica, Madrid, 1964, p.379, n.35, on Oropesa.)

20. There are many instances of the tendency to undermine autonomy, for example a) Cortes of Soria, 3/9/1380, petition 2, eliminates Jewish criminal jurisdiction (IIB, No.227, p.221), b) In 1395 Don Pedro, Archbishop of Toledo, appoints Maestre Pedro, his physician, 'alcalde e juez mayor' of all the aljamas of the archbishopric of Toledo against the protests of the Jewish community (cf. Amador de los Rios, op.cit. appx. xvi; IIB, No.258, BH2, p.118), c) from a document of 1401, we learn that don Anton, abbot of the monastery of Sant Fagund, was usurping the jurisdiction of the Jewish judges against their will (IIB, No.264), d) the statutes of Valladolid 1412, in pghps.7-9 try to eliminate fiscal and judicial autonomy. They try to transfer the jurisdiction over Jewish cases (civil and criminal) to the local alcalde (cf. IIB, No.275, p.267) and also Juan Torres Fontes, "Moros, Judios y conversos en la regencia de don Fernando de Antequera" Cuadernos de Historia de Espana, vol.31-2 (Buenos Aires 1960) pp. 60-98, Though Torres sees Ferrer as the inspiration for the statutes, and sees no evidence for the participation of the Santa Marias in their drafting, pghps. 7-9 are not to be found in the statutes of Murcia which were inspired by Ferrer. According to Baer, *ibid.*, these respond to the interests of the burghers, e) Alfonso de Espina, in his *Fortalitium Fidei*, with obvious intentions, quotes the above mentioned statutes, Baer, *ibid.* f) in 1476 The Cortes of Madrigal petition that Jewish autonomy should be limited (cf. IIB, No.330), g) in 1476, the elders of the aljama of Trujillo complain against the newly instituted officer 'alcalde de moros y judios' who infringes on their judicial autonomy, against their privileges (SF No.10), h) in 1479, the envoy of the aljama of Avila complains that the alcaldes of the town interfere in their judicial autonomy and punish them for having judges in their 'hevrot' (cofradias) (SF No.48), i) Gonzalo Chacon, in the same year alleges that he had been judging the Jews for the last ten years. The King orders that Abraham Seneor's 'lieutenant' should not be allowed to judge cases and that litigations between Jews should be brought to Gonzalo Chacon. P. Leon Tello, *Los judios de Avila*, Avila 1963, pp.60/61, No. xiii.
21. As Suarez Fernandez points out, the Jews' privileges and exemptions from municipal taxes caused frequent conflict with the towns (SF, p.18). A series of documents are included in SF to show the attitude of the monarchs, who usually try to defend the Jews against the infringement of their fiscal autonomy. The frequency of these attempts shows clearly that the towns try to extend their fiscal jurisdiction, e.g. Alfaro and Avila try to impose contributions for 'velas' (lighting) on their Jewish communities in 1477 and 1480 (*ibid.* n.33) (*ibid.* No.16, p.110), in 1477 Abraham Sevillano complains that the Avila council imposes 'linen requisitions' on the Jews, against their

- 21 (contd). privileges; in the same year the envoy of the aljamas has to ask for a renewal of the privilege exempting Jews from paying taxes to the towns (SF,23). A document of 1480 shows that the town of Leon did not respect the exemptions from having to offer 'hospitality' against their will (SF,49). In Zamora the same problem occurs (SF, 50). In 1482, Segovia tries to tax its aljama for the supplies for the war against Granada (SF, 60). In 1480, the Jews of Victoria complain that the council members take their mules without reason (SF,117) cf., also SF, p.18, n.31. For the lack of concern with royal privileges shown by the town councils when the Crown was weak, cf. the example of Jerez de la Frontera in H. Sopranis, Historia dela Juderia de Jerez de la Frontera, Sefarad Vol.11 (1951), especially pp.356-359.
22. Cf. for example, the various ordinances of 1412-15, IIB, No.275 (Neuman's assertion to the same effect in op.cit., Vol.I, p.184 has evidence for Aragon) and for the last quarter of the century, SF, pp.14-16, p.21, n.44, p.40, n.13, n.14 & n.15 & BH2, p.249.
23. For segregation, cf. BH2, p.249; SF, pp.31-36.
24. E.g., BH2, p.269: in the statutes of Valladolid of 1432 there is no 'trace of real class antagonism in the Jewish communities' "some of these statutes were nothing but vestiges from the days of ascent and growth". But when old statutes are being re-enacted, the text makes this perfectly clear. Moreover when the text refers to present social ill using the present tense there is no reason to assume that it is referring to some hypothetical social condition of the 'days of ascent and growth'. According to Baer 'a similar situation (i.e. of communities governed by the 'simple men') prevailed undoubtedly in Castile until the emergence of a new aristocracy, at which point the conflict between the wealthy and the humbler folk broke out again, though on a smaller scale than in olden days'. There are however no studies of the composition of the local leadership in Castile, nor does Baer give a date for the 'emergence of a new aristocracy'.
25. H.H.B. Sason, "The exiles of Spain on themselves", Zion, 1961, p.60.
26. The statutes use the term 'alim' and 'poderoso' as interchangeable. The term used in the Talmud to denote powerful men who defy the law (Hulin 39). Mendele's Takif comes to mind as a modern parallel.
27. "...in so far as we are at all entitled to apply this term (classes) to Jewish society where the social mobility of individuals and the frequency of changes of fortune were hardly conducive to the consolidation of classes ..."G. Scholem, 'Sabbetai Zevi', London 1973 (English) p.8 and Jackson, The making of medieval Spain, London 1972, p. 101.

28. On the xvth century Spanish sources (mostly Castilian) of the Beth Joseph, cf. Zimmels 'R. Joseph Caro and his attitude towards the later Sephardi and Ashkenasi schools', in 'Papers, 4th World Congress of Jewish Studies', Jerusalem 1967, Weiss (J.H. 'Dor Dor Wedorshaw', V. Wilno, 1911, p.234 et passim.
29. On the assembly, cf. Fernandez y Gonzalez, Boletin de la Real Academia de la Historia, vol.7 & 8, Madrid, 1885-6; Kayserling, Jahrbuch fur die Geschichte der Juden und des Judentums, Vol.IV, 1869, pp.265 ff.; Loeb, Reglement des Juifs de Castille, REJ, Vol.XIII, pp.187 ff; Neuman, Vol.1, pp.60-62, IIB, No.287, Baron, Social ... Vol.X, p.190; BH2, pp.259-270, Toledano, in Sinai Jubilee Volume, gives some information on the abbreviations and mentions a manuscript in his private collection. (ed.J.L. Maimon, Jerus. 1958, pp. 147-149.)
30. Cf. IIB, No.286, p.280 & BH2, pp.259-61 and Mackay, op.cit.
31. IIB, No.292, p.305, n.1.
32. The mother of Pablo of Burgos (Saul Halevi) was a Caballeria, cf. the evidence in Rodriguez Puertolas, Fr. Inigo de Mendoza, Madrid, 1968, p.14 n.4 from a Ms. at the Biblioteca Nacional; cf. Cantera Burgos, A. Garcia de Santa Maria, Madrid 1952, p. 54, n.48.
33. Amadaor de los Rios, op.cit., pp.567-568, p.531, n.2, Graetz-SPR, op.cit., vol.vi, 146/50.
34. Vicens Vives, Approaches ... p.82.
35. MacKay, art.cit., pp.41/42.
36. Ibid.
37. Cf. ed. Postan, Rich, Miller, Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol.III, Economic policies in the Middle Ages (CUP, 1965), p.433.
38. In the towns of Europe, in the Late Middle Ages, "the financial side of the problem (of social conflict in the urban population) was fundamental: the control of expenditure, and still more the amount to be raised by taxation. In a general way the rich preferred indirect taxes levied in proportion to what the tax-payer bought rather than to his needs and, even more than to his needs ... the poor rebelled on many occasions to obtain this system (direct taxes); M. Mollat and P. Wolff, The popular revolutions of the late Middle Ages, London 1973, pp.281/4.
39. Neuman, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.91/92/100; Baer, Studien etc. p.96.
40. IIB, p.292.

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p.294.
43. Ibid.,
- 43a. SF, 72.
44. Ibid., p.292.
45. Ibid., 295, n.6.
46. P. 290.
47. p. 293.
48. IIB, p.309.
49. IIB, p.306/307.
50. P. Leon Tello, Los Judios de Avila, Avila 1963, p.16/31.
51. Ibid., pp.21/22.
52. Cf. IIB, No.325.
53. IIB, No.422, p.522.
54. SF, No.92; p.42, n.18.
55. Cf. Cantera Burgos, Juderias Medievales en la provincia de Guadalajara, Sefarad 34 (1974), p.67/8.
56. SF, No.165.
57. SF, No.143.
58. Cf. Suarez, p.24, n.3; the laws of Madrigal (1476) were not new.
59. Cantera Burgos, Identificacion de nuevas sinagogas, Sefarad 22 (1962), p.7.
60. MacKay, op.cit., p.41 passim.
61. IIB, No.287, p.289, No.3.
62. IIB, p.291, 7.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p.285.
65. Ibid., p.295.
66. Ibid.

67. Cf. Toledano, *Ner Hamarav*, Jerusalem 1911, p.52, 67 ff; BH2, p.260, The incident may perhaps be dated to 1435/1436. Juan II was in Alcala de Henares between 12/1435 and 10/5/1436. cf. ed. Mata Carriazo, *Cronica del Halconero de Juan II*, Madrid 1946, pp.221-228.
68. For the Jewish population of Segovia, cf. SF, p.56 and *ibid.*, appendix 1.
69. On Juan de Talavera, cf. RGS, Vol.3, 29/9/1480: "al corregidor y alcalde de Talavera, sobre los bienes de la herencia de un judio vecino de esa villa tomados a Juan de Talavera su criado y universal heredero".
70. Cf. below.
71. SF, p.248.
72. Cf., SF No.81, pp.247/8.
73. SF, *ibid.*
74. SF, No.80 and 81.
75. *Ibid.*
76. IIB, No.352.
77. SF, p.56.
78. SF, No.70.
79. Doc.77, 16/10/1484.
80. Doc.82.
81. Doc.166.
82. Doc. 167.
83. Doc. 171.
- 83a. SF, No.171 and 172.
84. Leon Tello, *op.cit.*, pp. 22 & 15.
85. *Ibid.*, p.19.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*, p.20, p.15C, *Inventario*, No.332, 333.
88. *Ibid.*, p.23.
89. *Ibid.*, doc. LIII, 3/1486 (ap.RGS). Puntales are protruding pieces of architecture.



90. Leon Tello, *op.cit.*, Inventario, No.365/366, p.153, 13/3/1486.
91. IIB, p.284.
92. A. Anakawa, Kerem Hemed, Leghorn, 1871, Part 2, No.96.
93. Shiva Einayim, Leghorn, 1745, p.58a.
94. Ed. Philipowski, London, p.2, cf. also the comments of S.P. Rabinowicz on Graetz in Graetz-SPR, vol.vi, pp. 26-27, n.4 and BH1, p. 449.
95. Cf., IIB, No.351 and BH2, 342-343.
96. Cf. IIB, No.338.

CHAPTER 5ABRAHAM SENEORSOCIAL TENSIONS AND THE COURT-JEW

The phenomenon of the 'court-Jew' has often been seen as an important element of Hispano-Jewish history. This despite the fact that contemporary historians would not necessarily equate the condition of the court-Jews with that of the rest of the Jewish population, as was sometimes done by sixteenth century historians such as Graetz.<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, the 'court-Jew' occupies a crucial position in Baer's view of Hispano Jewish history. For him, they were a recognizable social type, imbued by 'an Averroistic outlook',<sup>2</sup> which was 'gnawing away at the conscience of the courtier group'.<sup>3</sup> This outlook, criticized by the moralists, was, for Baer, a central issue in the tensions between court-Jews and the rest of the community.

There are few court-Jews about whom more facts are known than Abraham Seneor (henceforward AS). The obvious question for the student of sixteenth century social tensions amongst the Jews, is whether the centrality of the 'Averroist-vs-moralist' or 'court-Jews-vs-national Jewish unity'<sup>4</sup> model of tensions is borne out by the evidence concerning AS.

The first problem encountered is that, although there is no lack of generalizations about court-Jews, Chief Rabbis<sup>5</sup> and AS, there is no monograph exclusively

dedicated to his activities. Even the fullest and most penetrating of accounts concerning AS (in Baer's History) can now be greatly supplemented by published and unpublished evidence which has come to light in the last decades.<sup>6</sup>

The following is an attempt to deal with the problems suggested by this evidence within the context of AS's relation to the Jewish population. This relationship was defined not only by the mutual interests of AS and the whole of Jewry, but also by specific features of AS's political and financial activities which made him stand apart from his co-religionists. Therefore the first section of this chapter will be a survey of his activities in the fiscal field as a tool of centralization which is in fact crucial to understanding how he became Chief Rabbi and compliments his role as such.

In contrast, the second section will deal with AS against his Segovian background paying attention to the distinguishing characteristics of his circle and indeed to those which were likely to cause the tension between them and other factions sometimes erupting into open conflict.

The third section will be devoted to the problems of the relations between AS and the rest of the Jewish population, namely with

- (a) his role as a centralizing force rather than one 'undermining religious and national unity',
- (b) his role as a 'spokesman' for the rest of the communities.

As is often the case in medieval Jewish biography<sup>7</sup> little is known of AS's origins. Graetz asserted categorically

that his family originated from Aragon.<sup>8</sup> He did not, however, give any evidence for his statement. It is not improbable that he was led to this conclusion by the name 'Seneor'. The name does indeed occur in Aragon. Unpublished writings by a 'Seneor' were known in Graetz's time through e.g. Steinschneider's "Fischl Catalogue".<sup>9</sup> Although the 'Seneor' mentioned by Bonafed in his poems has been vocalized as 'Shneor' by Neubauer,<sup>10</sup> notarial and other records of xvth century Saragossa leave no doubt that the transcription in Latin characters was 'Seneor' or 'Senior' rather than 'Shneor'.<sup>11</sup>

The problem is, however, complicated further by the existence of documents, unknown to Graetz, which have come to light in this century and which plainly attest to the existence of a Seneor family in Castile. Deeds of sale published by Baer, from the years 1392 and 1401, make mention of 'houses of Don Sennor in the street Maca of Onna' or 'Yuce and Salamon sons of don Sennor of Onna'; or 'Don Sennor Corcos and other Jews of Briviesca'.<sup>12</sup> Again there is mention of a Mosen Seneor in the Puebla de Montalban in the 1480's.<sup>13</sup> It would be tempting to speculate on a possible current of immigration from Saragossa to Segovia of certain members of leading Jewish families. The Caragoci family of Segovia seems to originate from Saragossa.<sup>14</sup> Shemaya Lubel of Segovia (admittedly via Avila) bears a name which is common amongst the Saragossan leadership.<sup>15</sup> The Benvenistes family, some of whose members lived in Segovia,<sup>16</sup> had family relations in Saragossa.<sup>17</sup> Both were centers of textile manufacture.<sup>18</sup>

But given the present state of the evidence, such currents, though possible, must await further documentation.

The anonymous chronicle published by Marx,<sup>19</sup> which is quite well and accurately informed in many respects, gives the age of AS, at the time of his conversion in 1492, as eighty years old. In other words, he was born c. 1412. But there is no mention of him in the available documents until the age of fifty-four.

The first documentary mention of Abraham Seneor shows him as an important financier who, in 1466, makes a much needed loan to Henry IV, King of Castille.<sup>20</sup>

The practice of borrowing capital on the security of future income from tax-collections was widespread throughout European kingdoms.<sup>21</sup> Various XVth century instances of Jews making such loans to the Castillian Crown are listed by Baer and MacKay.<sup>22</sup> Two questions bear direct relevance to this first known episode of Seneor's life; how did he become a 'court-Jew' (or 'judio que anda en la corte') and important tax-farmer and collector and, secondly, what was the position of Jewish tax-collectors in the administrative structure. It might be convenient to answer the second, perhaps simpler, question first.

Throughout Europe the Late Middle Ages saw the rise of regular (relatively) centralized taxation (as opposed to the old feudal 'services') as an increasingly important Crown revenue.<sup>23</sup> In Castile, at this period, the distinction between private royal income and state patrimony ceased. Throughout the XVth century legislation was passed to rationalize the state finances system.<sup>24</sup>

The 'Mayordomo de la Corte', had been, till the XIVth century, responsible for royal income and expenditure and was aided by a 'mayordomo menor'. Under the former's authority there was an officer known as 'almojarife mayor' (often a Jew) who administered royal rents and who, after having paid debts, was in charge of the income. By legislation of 1327, the attributes of the office were transferred to the 'tesorero'. The trend towards specialization can be seen in the creation of new offices, such as the 'tomador de cuentas' (mentioned 1312) the 'contadores' (1351), and 'contadores mayores' (1388).<sup>25</sup>

The 'mayordomo mayor's functions were assumed by "contadores mayores de cuentas" and "contadores mayores de hacienda" under Henry II. Under Juan II (1406-1454), the 'Mayordomo Mayor's functions seem to have been restricted to the administration of the King's household and there were various treasurers keeping the funds from royal income.<sup>26</sup>

The 'contadores mayores de hacienda' had under their charge the administration of ordinary income, the collection of taxes, and the distribution of taxes. They were also in charge of the farming of tax-collections, the payment of debts, etc. The 'contadores mayores de cuentas' audited the accounts of all tax farmers. Underneath the structure of the 'contaduria' (itself subservient to a 'mayordomo' and member of the Council) came the actual system of collection based on local tax-farmers or 'arrendadores'. These were private individuals who bid for the right to collect taxes at auctions or 'pujas'. The highest bidder would obtain the right and make a profit out

of the difference between the amount expected (and inscribed by royal officials in a notebook for that purpose) and the actual amount collected.<sup>27</sup> This might result, sometimes, in a loss for the farmer. The farmer would usually (specially if he had bid for a large area) have 'recaudadores' who would do the actual collection for a fraction of the amount.<sup>28</sup> Then, again, as in the case of Seneor, he might be both, an 'arrendador' and a 'recaudador'.<sup>29</sup> Official documents also designate him as a 'receptor'.<sup>30</sup> This meant that the tax-collectors and tax-farmers were at the bottom of what had become, by the XVth century an increasingly complex administrative structure. It also meant that they were the ones to have closest contact with the resentful tax-payers. This had obvious social consequences. Tax-collectors all over Europe were 'bearing the odium' of the tax-payers in the Late Middle Ages.<sup>31</sup> This at a time when fiscal grievances were often precipitants of urban social discontent.<sup>32</sup>

The answer to the first question, i.e. how did he become a court-Jew is less simple. It is true that, as pointed out by various historians of institutions there was a tradition of Jews collecting taxes which could be traced back to the Moslem period. Even Colmeiro, for example, following Conde, pointed out that under the Moors, at the beginning of the XIIth century 'the collectors of taxes were usually Jews ... they also collected, at this time, the taxes of Castille and had an equally bad reputation in the court of Toledo ...'<sup>33</sup> The actual means of approaching the court are less clear. Beinart favours a theory which connects their activities as tax-collectors

in general with their functions as communal officers. The Jewish communal envoy at court would find his way into finances or the post of physician, ambassador, interpreter, astronomer, etc. With the decline of the communal role of this class in the XVth century, there was also a consequent decline in the institution of the Jewish courtier.<sup>34</sup> According to Blanco-Gonzalez (in as much as he can be said to have a theory on the subject in his "Del Cortesano al discreto"), it is their role as 'stewards' (mayordomos) for the nobility which was pivotal to their 'courtly' functions:-

"... the fiscal duties assumed by the Jews in this form must have attracted the resentment of the villain by their very nature, but behind 'don Abrahen e don Simuel' very frequently, can be found the great capitalists of the time (prelates, high nobility, cattle owners of the Mesta, and great businessmen, above all those from Burgos) who have money which must be invested and whose administrators and agents are very often Jews, as Ayala himself says ..."<sup>35</sup>

Better documented and more pertinent to the XVth century is McKay's view that 'the chief financial officers at court were often conversos and they farmed the taxes to Jews and other financiers...though not the result of concerted action by Jews and conversos'.<sup>36</sup>

In view of the above mentioned theories of the channels of 'career' ascent of the Jews at court, it may be useful to point to the variety of possibilities<sup>of</sup> entering such 'careers'.

Though Vicens Vives has seen the XVth century Jews as the element of the Spanish population with ready money,<sup>37</sup> not all Jews had available capital at the beginning



of their financial transactions. An example might be the case of Mayor aben Arroyo of Guadalajara who wanted to sell a house to the conversa Juana Garcia in order to obtain 30,000 maravedies 'para sacar el arrendamiento de las alcabalas de esta ciuda ...'<sup>38</sup>

Different is the case of maestro Shemaya who, in the first documented mention is associated with Cabrera (at the time 'mayordomo' of the palace)<sup>39</sup> and generally in charge of the health of the court and only later is in charge of tax-collections and assessments as Chief tax-collector of the aljamas' taxes.<sup>40</sup> Abraham Benveniste, and Vidal Benveniste, sons of Yuce Benveniste of Segovia, and grandsons of Abraham Benveniste<sup>41</sup> probably started out working with their family,<sup>42</sup> another possible form of entering the fiscal field. Joseph ibn Shem-Tob, son of the famous pietist and kabbalist, according to Palencia, 'had worked hard in order to obtain a post under Diego Arias (Segovian converso) in the administration of the income of Prince Henry.'<sup>42</sup> Since Seneor was not, as far as is known, a physician, one may point to his associates as the possible medium of his achieving the position at which we meet him in 1466. The list of his associates throughout his career and particularly during the seventies contains suggestive names. Andres de Cabrera, one of his friends, had the keeping of the royal treasure, was administrator of Seneor's town (Segovia) for the king and had been 'mayordomo' of the Court.<sup>44</sup> Another name which figures frequently alongside Seneor's in these years is that of an interesting member of the Jewish oligarchy of tax-gatherers. Abraham Benveniste, grandson of Don Abraham Benveniste, had been

born in Soria and at his circumcision (1433) the sermon was preached by Rabbi JOSEPH Albo, the author of the 'Iqarim', as Zacuto informs us in his chronicle. Also from Zacuto comes the notice of his efforts on behalf of the re-establishment of the Yeshivot in Castille.<sup>45</sup> This member of pietist circles was born into a family which had been engaged in the collection of taxes for at least three generations. His grandfather had been an important financier in the 20's and 30's.<sup>46</sup> His father, don Yucaf Benveniste, appears as collector and farmer in the 50's and 60's.<sup>47</sup> In the 70's and 80's, Abraham Beneveniste is associated with Seneor on repeated occasions in the collection of 'servicio y montazgo' taxes.<sup>48</sup> Given the state of the evidence on Seneor at present, the possibility of his having started as an associate of the Benvenistes (of Segovia at one time) should be left open, especially since the association dates from before 1475.<sup>48</sup>

The first piece of evidence concerning AS, as pointed out above, are the references to Seneor in 1466 discovered by McKay in the EMR one of which is an assignment of the collection of the 'servicio and montazgo' tax.<sup>49</sup> It is significant that this happened one year after the promulgation of the 'sentencia' of Medina del Camp on 16/1/1465. The nobles had presented a series of grievances against the monarch on 28/9/1464. Amongst them there was one to the effect that Henry IV 'paying no attention to justice used to give public offices and the rule to "low people" without merits who extorted the people with their taxes'. Probably in response to this, the accord arrived at between the nobility and the Crown, with Alfonso de Cropesa as

arbitrator, contains a clause concerning Jewish tax-collectors. The clause, like the other 26 clauses of discriminatory anti-Jewish measures seems to reflect the policy of the nobility trying to assert its superiority before the Crown by restricting the 'royal treasure', i.e. the Jews. The clause forbids the Jews to be given positions of 'facedores', 'almojarifes', 'tax-gatherers', 'contadores', 'mayordomos'.<sup>50</sup> Though Amador seems to incline towards the view that the legislation was effective,<sup>51</sup> Seneor's obtention of the lease of the 'servicio y montazgo' would seem to point to a different conclusion.

Not that obtaining a loan on advance of the tax-revenue was an unusual practice in the XVth century. Monarchs throughout Europe indulged in this. In Castille, however, the minority of Jewish financiers did play a more important role than in other kingdoms at the time. McKay has shown that there was a number of important loans made to the Crown by Jewish financiers who were also 'outstanding for their administrative capacity'.<sup>52</sup> Vicens Vies has maintained that nowhere else in Europe were Jewish financiers as numerous as in Castille in the XVth century.<sup>53</sup>

Two years later, on 12/2/1468, Abraham Seneor and Solomon Seneor were granted the privilege of tax-exemption as can be learnt from a 'traslado' (transcript) made in Bejar on the 25/3/68 by the king's notary, Diego Gonzalez de Cuenca, of a letter of tax-exemption given in Ejar 12/2/68. According to Baer, the same 'legajo' contains 'shenkungen por juro de heredad' to Seneor and his son Solomon Seneor.<sup>54</sup> The 'juros' were originally rights of perpetual ownership granted by medieval kings

to nobles for lands conquered from the Moors. Later the 'juro' became an annuity paid from state revenue granted in perpetuity by a king to a noble.<sup>55</sup> Seneor was not a nobleman and, while tax-exemptions to individual Jews or Jewish communities were not unknown,<sup>56</sup> the grant of 'juros de heredad' to him is unusual.<sup>57</sup>

By November of 1468, Abraham Seneor is designated as 'mi recaudador mayor',<sup>58</sup> in a letter of Henry IV.<sup>59</sup> Spanish historians of institutions refer only summarily to the 'recaudador' or tax-collector. Colmeiro, Garcia Gallo, Valdeavellanos,<sup>60</sup> make no mention of the institution of the recaudador mayor. The recaudador seems to have been, according to Moxo, a public official as opposed to the arrendador.<sup>60a</sup>

There are three main instances of AS's involvement in court politics, one of them probably apocryphal, the others have not been dated with precision.

The first one is AS's role as intermediary between Ferdinand and Isabella for their marriage. This has been maintained by Graetz, Kayserling, Neuman and Baron.<sup>61</sup> Their source, indeed the only explicit one on Seneor's role as 'a strong partisan of Ferdinand's courtship' is the late chronicle of the Can dian Rabbi Elijah b. Elkhana Capsali.<sup>62</sup> His chronicle 'Seder Eliahu Zuta' written during the plague of 1523, is a survey of the history of the Ottoman empire with special reference to the Jews and includes accounts allegedly based on reports of Jewish exiles from Spain.

But the account of Seneor as an intermediary in the royal matrimony bears all the marks of legendary fiction

and cannot stand up to the most cursory critical examination.

The story begins with a meeting of the council of all the 'barons' and great ones of the kingdom who were to decide who should marry Isabella. Although undated by Capsali such a meeting would have taken place sometime between the death of the 'King' Alfonso, her brother, in 5/7/1468 which made her alliance of crucial political importance and January 1469 by which time she and Ferdinand had already decided on the marriage.<sup>63</sup> Capsali describes Seneor at the time as 'appointed by the King over the Jews to do with them as seemed fit to him ....'<sup>64</sup> The description is obviously meant to allude to Seneor's position as Chief Rabbi. But Seneor became Chief Rabbi only around 1477 from which time onwards documents allude to him in that capacity. Earlier documents, and indeed documents of 1468<sup>66</sup> call him chief tax-collector or 'vedin' of the Segovian aljama, but not Chief Rabbi or Chief Judge or even Chief tax-collector of Jewish taxes. We know the names of two Chief Rabbis under Henry IV: Maestre Shemaya Lubei and Rabbi Jaco aben Nunez.<sup>67</sup> Throughout the narrative of these events prior to the decision concerning the matrimony, Capsali uses the title 're d'Aragon', King of Aragon, for Ferdinand. There is hardly need to point out that Ferdinand did not become King of Aragon until the death of his father, Juan II, on 19/1/1479.<sup>68</sup> Capsali uses the 'oratio recta' for the speech of 'an old baron', another sign of fictitious invention. He makes the baron call Isabella 'the daughter of the king of Spain' when she was in fact

the sister of the King of Spain. He shows no acquaintance with dates, localities, names of the nobles, something which is highly suspicious in someone who pretends to derive his knowledge from a Spanish Jew who knew what was being said at the meetings of the council of the 'grandes'. He does not show any knowledge of the names of the alternative suitors nor their position. Capsali's narrative gives the impression that Ferdinand waited at the house of the Spanish Jew, R. Jacob, while the latter went to see Seneor at 'the city of the kingdom'. We know in fact the itinerary of Ferdinand in the first journey to Castile before his marriage, in October 1469, and not only is there no mention of staying at a Jew's house, but there was simply no period at which he stayed at one place for the amount of time it would have taken Don Jacob to go to Segovia and see Seneor, and come back and go again.<sup>69</sup> The narrative is interspersed with biblical literary motifs and little episodes which point more to folklore than to the political reality of the negotiations for the marriage. Of equal importance is the fact that the documents and narrative sources for the events leading to the matrimony, critically analysed by Vicens Vives makes no mention of Seneor. Neither does the document, published by Don Luis Felipe de Penalosa and ignored by most historians, in which Isabella lists the activities of Seneor on her behalf.<sup>70</sup>

The chronicler Palencia who was involved in the negotiations for the marriage and who, in all probability, knew As personally<sup>72</sup> makes no mention of Seneor in his

narrative of these events. This despite the fact that he does mention AS' role in Cabrera's decision to keep the treasure.

All we know of AS in 1468, the year in which his role as intermediary must be placed, points to the improbability of the role assigned him by historians who follow Capsali. The question of Isabella's marriage was a political source of conflict between parties. One headed by Henry IV's favourite (and representing Henry's wishes) favoured a Portuguese alliance and the other, contrary to Henry, favoured an Aragonese alliance. The documents concerning AS in 1468 show him as a faithful follower of Henry IV who was consolidating his position thanks to his services to the Crown.

Following the important loan of 1466 and his activities as collector of 'servicio y montazgo' he was granted in February 1468 a tax exemption and, more conclusive for our argument, in October, i.e. at a time when the problem of the alliance was very much in the fore, he was granted the 'alguacilazgo' of the aljama in Segovia.<sup>73</sup> In the document of the grant explicit mention is made of "your skill and faithfulness and the many and good services you have done and do every day for me ..."<sup>74</sup> All these documented facts would make it hard to accept the theory of his involvement with the Aragonese party contrary to Henry.

Seneor, though a follower of Henry in 1468, did go over to the Isabeline camp by the time of the anti-converso riots of 1473. This and Seneor's role in the events concerning the royal treasury which eventually led

to Isabel's victory in the form of the 'concord' are facts documented by the account of Palencia in his Decades:<sup>75</sup>

"... Cabrera was debating whether it was more advantageous for him and his wife to submit to the tyranny of Pacheco (and hand over to him the control of the castle and treasure) or whether to keep for himself what was convenient and disregard the monarch ... the most intimate of his friends was Abraham Seneor, a Jew of Segovia man of great experience and faithful observer of the laws of friendship ... inspired by his rectitude Seneor advised Cabrera to despise the repellent affection of Don Henry who lacked all energy and was deprived of the freedom of choice common to all other men for he who does not know how to love or hate is justly reputed to be inhuman or foolish ..."

The political situation described in this passage, i.e. Andres Cabrera debating whether to give the treasure to Pacheco (Don Henry's favourite) or keep it himself and the decision to do so, seem to indicate a point reached sometime between the Sunday in May 1473 when the Segovian anti-converso riot ended in success for Cabrera and the converso faction, and the time (15/7/1473) when he proclaimed "la tendria libremente sin hacer iguala nin convenencia nin trato con el dicho sennor rey nin con el maestre de Santiago nin con otra persona ...."<sup>76</sup> The deliberation was not possible before 8/5/1473 when the decision to give the alcazar over to Pacheco was made public because before that date he had no reason to think of giving the alcazar over,<sup>77</sup> and not after 15/7 when he decided to follow Seneor's advice. In other words, this occurrence of Seneor's involvement in court politics should be dated to 1473 between May and June.<sup>78</sup>



This 'concord' between Isabella and Henry IV of 12/1473 and 1/1474 resulted in the recognition of Isabella's succession rights. Vicens Vives and others have correctly emphasized the role of Seneor's friend, Cabrera, in bringing the meeting about.<sup>79</sup> But from the preamble of a letter granting him hidalguia in which Isabella lists Seneor's services we learn that he was involved in the events as well:

"...aviendo memoria errespeto a los muy grandes y senalados servicios que vos Hernan Perez Coronel<sup>80</sup> del nr<sup>a</sup>. consejo<sup>81</sup> y vecino y regidor de la ciudad de Segovia nos aveis fecho e faceis cada dia senaladamente aviendo acatamiento a los muy grandes trabajos que sufristes en el tiemp de nro. Principado por nos igualar e concertar con el Rey Dn. Enrique nro. hermano que Santa Gloria haya y finalmente mediante vros. trabajos e solicitud e industria enos concertamos con el y entramos en la dha. Ciudad de Segovia donde fezimos nros. fechos e tratamientos e asentamos los negocios que pertenecian a nra sucesion lexitima destos nuestros Reinos e Senorios y estuvimos en la dha. ciudad todo el tiempo que nos plugo hasta que en ellas fuimos alzados y sublimados e intitulos por Rey y Reyna de estos dhos nuestros Reynos e alli trabajastes e procurastes por nuestro servicio e con los mayores y mas principales de los grandes de nuestros reynos ansi eccliasticos como cavalleros<sup>82</sup> e nos truxistes y entregastes sus firmas e sellos por donde nos prometieron e juraron de haver por su rey y reyna despues de la fin e muerte del dho. Sr. Rey Dn. Enrique nr. hermano lo cual cumplieron e pusieron por obra e nos dieron e prestaron aquella ordenanza e fidelidad que segun derecho elas leyes de nuestros Reinos heran obligados lo qual vos el dicho Fernan Perez facistes e trabajastes con limpio animo e voluntad poniendo buestra persona e hacienda a todo riesgo e peligro, e tragando muchas veces la muerte que vos era amenazada e prometida por algunos grandes y otras personas poderosas que no deseavan nuestro servicio ...."<sup>83</sup>

The reasons for AS's allegiance to the party opposed to the reigning monarch and to the succession of the legitimate heir,<sup>84</sup> Juana, 'La Beltraneja' are as obscure as the general motivations of other supporters of the Catholic Monarchs.

Baer has maintained that:

"There was good reason for the mutual understanding that existed between the young rulers and their helpers of Jewish descent. Both Jews and conversos were inclined to support a strong regime that would maintain law and order in the country and to overlook at first the possible consequences from their religious viewpoint."<sup>85</sup>

There were, however, in the early years of the civil war, Jews and conversos who sided with the factions opposing Ferdinand and Isabella.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, Vicens Vives has recently maintained that it is erroneous to see the factionalism as occurring between the advocates and adversaries of authoritarian monarchy. Had the faction of Juana and Alfonso won the civil war the result would no doubt have been an equally authoritarian regime.<sup>87</sup> If, however, one sees the problem in more local terms and points to AS's Segovian associations; the friendship and trust which characterised his relations with the Bobadilla (Isabella's lady-in waiting)<sup>88</sup> his role as advisor to Cabrera,<sup>89</sup> the coincidence of professional interests with Alfonso de Quintanilla,<sup>90</sup> the sympathy he inspired in Falencia;<sup>91</sup> it is easier to understand the coincidence of political allegiance with the Segovian Isabeline faction. This seems more plausible than lumping Seneor together with figures of quite a different calibre such as Pedro de la Caballeria<sup>92</sup> and ascribing him elaborate political convictions which, though possible in the case of the Aragonese converso jurist, are undocumented for the Segovian tax-collector.

While the issue of centralisation may not have been at the core of AS's allegiance to the monarchs, his whole career shows him as an efficient tool in carrying out

the policies of the Catholic Monarchs which aimed at establishing a higher degree of crown control and centralisation. In this respect AS's roles as a tax collector and as a Chief Rabbi complimented themselves. In both roles he had to overcome traditions of localism in order to implant centralised control.

His career in service of the Crown may indeed be seen as an example of the instruments used to concentrate power in the Crown (in this case in the field of fiscal policy) by the use of trusted officials who, because of their non-noble status, would not present a threat to their policies.

It may be, therefore, useful to present a brief survey of AS's activities in this field, describing his functions on the basis of the RGS entries as well as others not used before in this context.

#### Seneor's Career under the Catholic Monarchs

After Henry IV's demise on 12/74, the Monarchs resided in Segovia during January and February.<sup>93</sup> In February they signed an 'alvala' granting him a sum of maravedies of yearly rent in 'ervaje' and 'heredamientos' so that it should be secure for him and his successors for ever. This grant was accompanied by a grant of a juro of 150,000 maravedies: "and while we gave him the said rent in ervaje and heredamientos we agreed to make and did make a grant of 150,000 maravedies as a juro de heredad ..."<sup>94</sup> It should be noted that Andres de Cabrera and his wife Bovadilla were in possession of the Alcazar where the

Monarchs resided in January a few weeks before the grant was signed. Both were friends of Seneor. Cabrera's wife, according to a document of 1480: "did and does enjoy the trust of the said don Abraham Seneor ...."<sup>95</sup>

Seneor's career kept advancing and in 1476 the monarchs thank him for his services and assign him as a merced or grant the alcavalas and tercias of Jerez de la Frontera and give him all the rights of a tax-collector. He had an agent for this purpose: Judah ben Ataben of Seville.<sup>96</sup> They also confirm a pension of 6000 mrs. (17/10/1476).

The alcabalas were a tax consisting of a percentage on commercial transactions in the market place, a tax which though at first local and temporary, became permanent throughout the kingdom.<sup>97</sup> The tercias consisted of three tenths of the tax which belonged to the church.<sup>98</sup> It may be added that Seneor's connection with the southern area and Jerez de la Frontera continued for many years. Fita asserts that he handled contracts signed by the very hand of Abraham Seneor in Jerez, without, however, giving precision as to date and location.<sup>99</sup> During these years of war with Portugal, Seneor continued his activities as a tax-collector and farmer. During these years he seems to have worked in Jerez de la Frontera collecting the 'servicio and montazgo' taxes. The RGS contains a letter dated Jerez de la Frontera 10/10/1477<sup>100</sup> which is a petition, by the Council of the Nesta, ordering that Abraham Seneor and Abraham Benveniste should be permitted to collect the dues of the 'servicio y montazgo'. A further letter of the 19th<sup>101</sup> is directed to the shepherds

and owners of cattle ordering them to give Abraham Seneor and Abraham Benveniste whatever they are obliged to pay as 'servicio y montazgo'.

It is natural to assume that the letters were motivated by the difficulties which Seneor (as indeed tax-collectors in general) encountered in the collection of taxes. This collection was not, in the Late Middle Ages a simple collection but rather a painful and difficult process of 'extraction'. Attacks on tax-collectors are well known and documented throughout Europe.<sup>102</sup> In Spain, the story about Diego Arias, who, at the beginning of his career, had to run after collecting his taxes<sup>103</sup> or the Toledan riots of (1449) in which a tax-collector was killed are only some of the expressions of the violent tenor of this profession and its inherent difficulties. The month itself may not be totally irrelevant. October 1477 was precisely the month in which the Marques de Cadiz (who had Jerez under his rule) changed a policy which had hitherto inclined towards Portugal and against Isabel.<sup>104</sup>

A further letter concerning the servicio y montazgo was sent in December to don Alvaro de Zuniga, prior of San Juan, ordering him to give over 200,000 maravedies to Abraham Seneor and Abraham Benveniste 'receptores del servicio y montazgo' for the 1200 sheep that had been taken under their orders.<sup>105</sup> Again, an example of the Crown having to intervene in order that Abraham Seneor should be able to overcome the obstacles inherent in the collection. These difficulties were the legacy of the two previous reigns. One can see at this early stage of their reign both the determination to carry

out a policy of recovery of state revenue as well as the daily problems which they tried to solve at the Cortes of 1480.

In 1479, Abraham Seneor is mentioned in conjunction with Vidal Benveniste as 'recaudador mayor' of the archbishopric of Toledo.<sup>106</sup> The ecclesiastical province of the archbishopric of Toledo was the most extensive one of Castile.

It may be mentioned at this point that it was probably during these years that Torquemada presented a 'memorial' in which he attacks, among other things, the use of Jews as public officers (and tax-collectors are undoubtedly meant) and advocates their removal from office.<sup>107</sup>

His associate, Vidal Benveniste, is known in Jewish history as a strong supporter of the 'renaissance' of Jewish higher education in the second half of the XVth century. The praise accorded him for supporting the institution which educated Seneor's strongest critics may not be entirely irrelevant to an assessment of the historical validity of these criticisms.

Seneor was aided by a network of collectors which worked for him. A 'provision' of 1478 allows him to name two people who should be in charge of collecting the 'servicio y montazgo' dues.<sup>108</sup> The RGS documentation shows Seneor as being constantly engaged in the collection of 'servicio y montazgo' taxes. This must have put him into contact with the shepherds and sheepowners of the livestock owners syndicate, the Mesta. The first decade of the Catholic Monarchs' reign was a period of change in the relations between Crown and Mesta which, at times, is

reflected in Seneor's activity. Tarsicio de Azcona's calculations, for example, show that the income from 'montazgo' had increased a hundred fold between 1453 and 1503.<sup>109</sup> According to Klein, under Henry IV "royal profligacy had fostered the most unbridled abuses and maladministration of the financial affairs of Crown, nobles and ecclesiastical".

The Cortes of 1476 annulled local tax privileges and those of 1480 regulated the collection of the royal 'servicio y montazgo', tax privileges and tollrights were to be presented.<sup>110</sup> Unauthorised 'collectors' would demand taxes from the sheep owners. This practice may form the background tax of letters emphasising that taxes should be paid to Seneor 'only'.<sup>111</sup> Seneor is, on the whole, a 'royal' tax-collector. That is to say that he is concerned with the collection of central rather than local taxes. The Mesta's enmity was generally reserved in this period to local rather than royal tax-collectors. Klein's observations as to the 'enmity' which had been brewing for centuries between these 'unbeliever' tax-gatherers and the sheep owners<sup>112</sup> applies more to Seneor's relationships with individual shepherds or sheepowners than to his relations with the Mesta. As we have seen, the Mesta council itself asks shepherds to pay their taxes to Seneor.<sup>113</sup> During the years 1478-1480 Seneor seems to have been farming taxes in the Serena region and neighbouring villages (in Extremadura) belonging to the Order of Alcantara.<sup>114</sup> The Serena region had been, from very early on, one of the chief grazing grounds for the migratory flocks from the uplands of Leon and Castille.<sup>115</sup>

The taxes he farmed seemed to be related to pasturing. Yerbas, medio diezmo, Montazgo, servicio y montazgo, diezmos, etc.<sup>116</sup> Seneor seems to have encountered resistance in this traditionally grazing region as well. (In some ways his position is reminiscent of that of the XIIIth century tax-collector, Isaac de la Maleha. The latter too had been used by the king to enact a new anti-localist policy (vis-a-vis the unauthorised montazgos). He too 'complained to his royal patron regarding the difficulties he encountered in the enforcement of royal policy'.)<sup>117</sup> The letters, signed by Ferdinand and Isabella, directed to the councils and villages of La Serena, ordering them not to impede that the tax-payers should bring Seneor the sum due<sup>118</sup> seems to be sufficient evidence for the existence of such impediments. But in some cases the Crown relies on town officers to co-operate with Seneor and its policies. An example might be the letter of the Queen to the 'alcaide' bachiller Diego de Caceres of Talavera ordering him to make certain people pay their dues to Abraham Seneor and Abraham Benveniste 'chief receivers of the taxes of the archbishopric of Toledo'.<sup>119</sup>

An example of the difficulties inherent in tax-collection within the framework of tension between localist and centralising tendencies in the 80's can be seen in the case of the 'alcavalas' of Utrera.

Seneor had been the arrendador mayor of the taxes alcabalas and almojarifazgo of Jerez de la Frontera and its district in 1482. His agent or sublessee Frayme Abensorero of Alcala de Guadaira on that district, had died without paying over to AS the revenue from the taxes. Those who



had owed him money delayed and refused the payments. They could do so because they were related to the alcaides of the towns. AS asks the Crown for a judge. The Monarchs commission the alcaide of Seville to adjudicate in the case on 28/7/1483.<sup>120</sup> Than again on 29/8/1483 the Crown has to respond to a petition of AS concerning the taxes of Utrera. He was again unable to collect the taxes because the alcaides of Utrera are related to those who owe them. The Crown has to send Silvestre de Montemayor of Alcala de Guadaira to adjudicate.<sup>121</sup>

As has been mentioned above, AS had a juro de heredad of 150,000 which had been granted him in 1475. This put him on a footing with the 100 or more noblemen who enjoyed state incomes of between 100,000 and 500,000 maravedies.<sup>122</sup> This was not the lowest such income (amongst the juros listed in the declaratorias) but one should mention the 18 nobles who had incomes amounting to more than 500,000 mvs. each.<sup>123</sup> Still, his was the highest juro held by any of the three Jews mentioned in the declaratorias.<sup>124</sup>

Before 1475 'it was doubted whether the said don Abraham Seneor could have the said maravedies as juro', therefore part of his income was transferred to Beatriz de Bobadilla, Isabella's lady-in-waiting and old friend of AS.<sup>125</sup>

In 1480, in order to curtail the outflow of state income caused by the proliferation of rents, the Cortes of Toledo began an operation of recovery. By it AS's juro was cut by one third.<sup>126</sup> AS was not only affected by the Declaratorias as a 'rentier'. He also was instrumental

in carrying out the policy of the Crown. He was responsible for holding the incomes which were being reverted to the Crown in certain cases. Thus, e.g. he was ordered to hold the income from the 'servicio y montazgo' of the cattle passing through Arroyo Castano, which would usually go to Beltran de la Cueva, by a letter of 30/4/1480.<sup>127</sup> In short, the common assertion that AS was benefitted by the policy of the Cortes<sup>128</sup> which is usually taken as a sign of the favour enjoyed by AS at that time has no basis. On the other hand, he was affected both as a rentier and as a tax-collector by this policy.

#### Hermandad.

At the Cortes of 1476 a new Hermandad was formally established. This 'brotherhood' incorporated local police forces under a more or less centralised structure. It was called the Santa Hermandad and its purpose was to keep the peace though it would become a militia. The Hermandad was financed out of taxes levied on municipalities and Jewish and Moorish communities.<sup>129</sup>

According to Suarez Fernandez,<sup>130</sup> Seneor began to serve the Hermandad in a financial capacity. This is apparently derived from an exemption for Abraham Seneor of anti jewish legislation passed at the Junta of the Hermandades (1479).<sup>131</sup> But this 1479 letter of exemption makes no mention of Seneor's activities in the service of the Hermandad.<sup>132</sup> Still it would not be surprising to find that Seneor did, in fact, serve, in one form or

another the financial aspect of the Hermandad. It should be pointed out that one of the most impassionate advocates of its creation, Alfonso de Quintanilla,<sup>133</sup> who would later become its chief administrator and universal delegate, belonged, with Seneor, to the faithful circle of bureaucrats who supported Isabel's succession in the last years of Henry IV's reign.

As Lunenfeld remarks, the danger inherent in giving over the Hermandad, a military force, to a council was circumvented by staffing the Council with trustworthy loyal officers.<sup>134</sup> Seneor's inclusion in its staff is another mark of the monarchs' trust. In 1483 (18/3) Seneor is designated General treasurer of the Hermandad 'of all our kingdoms and realms', with the ability to collect and receive contributions to it (beginning from 15/4/1488) as well as paying the salaries and other expenditures. The document also commands "let the honours and favours and exemptions owed to other treasurers be observed".<sup>135</sup> It must, however, be remembered that Seneor's tenure was of a very short duration - 2 years.<sup>136</sup>

Baer seems to see these high Jewish officers as tools of administrative reform.<sup>137</sup> Lunenfeld, on the other hand, emphasizes, in accord with his general purpose of qualifying the degree of centralisation and modernity of the institution, the imperfection of the fiscal system. In his words: "no better method was devised than continued reliance upon extra-governmental tax-farmers who come from the Jewish communities".<sup>138</sup> For Lunenfeld, the service payment for the Jewish tax-gatherers, "was a continuous tax-outflow".<sup>139</sup> The financial 'drain' for the farmers

was 45 maravedies for every 1000 collected (15 for themselves, 15 for their assistants and 15 for the local councils). The farmers were personally enriched by over 4 million maravedies a year at the height of the war.<sup>140</sup>

Lunenfeld, however, does not take into consideration the risks, difficulties and expenses inherent in the collection nor does he compare the efficiency of 'extra-governmental' tax-farmers with their 'governmental' counterpart.<sup>141</sup>

Although it is often asserted (usually referring back to Amador de los Rios)<sup>142</sup> that AS had a special position as supplier of the army during the war against Granada this was probably one of his functions as tax-collector. Thus, e.g. a document of 23/7/1485, mentions the 600,000 mvs. which Fernando de Torres 'nuestro capitan e alcaide de la villa de Stenyl' was to be given by Abraham Seneor and Benveniste 'recabdadores del partido de Jerez'.<sup>143</sup> Another, of 1490, the 9 cuentos of mvs. he had to pay Pedro Zapata and Juan Alvarez de Toledo 'para la paga de los castillos fronteros'.<sup>144</sup> One of his functions as treasurer was to administer expenditure. This expenditure was not always directly related to the Hermandad. Thus, letters of 29/10/1489 mention the money he had to pay to Alfonso de Quintanilla, the contador mayor de cuentas as 'ayuda de costa'.<sup>145</sup>

To conclude: The evidence assembled seems to indicate a picture of AS as one of those individuals who tries to implement the centralising policies of the Crown.

Though his role may be less readily visible than that of a Quintanilla or a Talavera he may be said to have been as necessary in the managing of fiscal revenue. His

career's difficulties are the difficulties of imposing a more rigorous fiscal system and give the lie to the picture of a smooth and ready acceptance of fiscal reform imposed single-handedly by the Queen.

For our purposes, two points should be emphasized:

- (a) AS's role as a tool of centralization carries over into his activities as Chief Rabbi;
- (b) The differences in social stratum and pre-occupations between, on the one hand, a man whose functions bring him into contact with the Crown, the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and nobility and, on the other hand, the rest of the community.

Abraham Seneor is described in most documents as 'Judío vecino de Segovia'. It may be asserted that Seneor's Segovian background helps us to understand much of his activities, especially in the second half of the century. It may, therefore, be useful to briefly survey the aljama in the xvth century in as far as it is relevant to Seneor's background.

### Location.

There was a nucleus of Jews in the centre of town coinciding with today's 'parroquia of San Andres'.<sup>146</sup> This nucleus lived for the most part on land rented from the Cathedral.<sup>147</sup> This neighbourhood was considered a unit and named 'juderia'.<sup>148</sup> And yet there is evidence that Jews lived outside the limits of the 'juderia'.<sup>149</sup> There are also mentions of Jews in the 'collacion de San'

Millan' which corresponded to the moorish section.<sup>151</sup>

The Synagogue was, of course, the central Jewish landmark.<sup>152</sup> But it was not the only one. When a Jewish inquisition witness wants to specify what he means by 'speaking in public', he mentions the butchershop and the square.<sup>153</sup> The community also owned a cemetery, more remains of which were discovered in 1961.<sup>154</sup>

The juderia, then, was a quarter formed by the Jews' voluntary cohesion (and by the grant of permission to live there in the xiith century)<sup>155</sup> rather than a ghetto in the precise sense of the term with its implications of enforced isolation. This description must, however, be qualified to a certain extent. A document of October 1412 shows that the ordinances of Valladolid were carried out for Segovia.<sup>156</sup> And again in 1480, the Cortes passed a similar decree segregating the Jews. The segregation in Segovia was to be carried out by Alvares Maldonado, 'regidor of Salamanca' as we learn from a letter of 24/4/1481.<sup>157</sup>

### Demography.

The population estimate of Baer for Segovia is of 'fifty to a hundred families'.<sup>158</sup> This would put it on a demographic level with Cuenca, Avila, Medina del Campo.<sup>159</sup> Suarez Fernandez comes to an estimate of 300 families. This was, according to Suarez Fernandez,<sup>160</sup> the population of aljamas such as Toledo, Trujillo, Guadalajara, Soria, Avila, etc. This differs from the view of McKay (and Baer) that the aljama was halved in

the xvth century.<sup>161</sup> If we accept Ladero Quesada's statement about the demographic instability of xvth century Castilian Jewish aljamas on the basis of the differences in tax-assessments in different years,<sup>162</sup> we should qualify it with respect to Segovia's aljama. In the second half of the century, the tax-assessments show no great variation. Beinart, however, asserts an influx of Andalusian Jews in the 80's.<sup>163</sup>

### Occupations.

Segovia, located as it was on the route of the shepherds, had textiles as one of its main industries.<sup>164</sup> Relevant to Jewish occupations is its character as a centre of financial activity for a big part of the century. In 1437 Juan II ordered the records of the contaduria to be sent there.<sup>165</sup> Diego Arias, contador mayor, resided there to his death in 1466.<sup>166</sup>

Most xvth century Segovian Jews, the occupation of whom can be ascertained, are connected with tax- and rents collection. This would lead one to assume a certain change in the community's occupational structure since the pre-1391 period. In 1390 the list of 55 Jewish home owners has 23 artisans which is an important percentage (c.41 per cent).<sup>167</sup> There are, however, various artisans and occupations other than tax-collecting mentioned in documents posterior to 1391.<sup>168</sup>

Those Segovian Jews who were engaged in the collection of rents and debts were often agents for the Church and nobility. Thus, for example, Yuce Meme was

an agent for the Duquesa de Albuquerque and is mentioned in that capacity in her will of 1479.<sup>169</sup>

A complaint by Juan Vasques, made in 1492 against the 'provisor de la iglesia de Segovia' because 'many simple peasants are bothered by you...', mentions the fact that before the expulsion these church revenues were being collected by Jews.<sup>170</sup>

The areas of occupation, with the exception of tax-collection, were clothing, small peddling and medicine. We have mentioned the circle of tax-collectors and some observations might be added. The published lists of tax-collectors for 1439 and 1440 contain no mention of Jews from Segovia.<sup>171</sup> In the fifties Segovian Jewish names began to make their appearance. Thus we have Joseph ibn Shem Tov in 1450;<sup>172</sup> Maestre Shemaya by 1456.<sup>173</sup> In 1453 the Jewish tax-collectors list includes Segovians such as Yucef Benveniste, Simuel Vidas fijo de Frayme de Vidas, Don Culema Abenxuxen, Mose Pex. In 1455 there is mention of Salamon Benveniste.<sup>174</sup> If we exclude the mention of Seneor and Melamed, there are mentions for 1487: Don Yuce Molho, Rabi Mose aben Symon, don ca Caro; for 1488 Don Culema aben Sancho and for 1491 Rabi Abraham del Sobrado.<sup>177</sup>

#### Jewish-Christian Relations.

There is not much evidence for Jewish-Christian relations at a popular level. Our information about the 1391 riots comes from an elegy of uncertain date.<sup>178</sup> The narratives of occurrences of 1410, which are said to have



led to the death of Meir Alguadez and the conversion of the Synagogue are late, contradictory and therefore suspect.<sup>179</sup> At most, one might infer something about the influence of the anti-Jewish tendencies at the court of Catalina of Lancaster (residing in Segovia at the time) on Segovian Jewish-Christian relations.

According to Colmenares, in 1411 Vicente Ferrer arrived in Segovia and 'he baptized so many that the event was made into a painting in the Church of San Martin'.<sup>180</sup> For the riot of 1452 we have Joseph ibn Shem Tov's account in the proemium to his ms sermon of Nisan 1452.<sup>181</sup> A document of 1492 mentions Juan de Castillo who took over the debts of the Jews 'por amistad que tenian', 'out of friendship'.<sup>182</sup>

#### Municipality and the Jews.

The 'monopolist' tendencies of the towns and the attempts to extend their jurisdiction at the expense of other 'corporations' (Crown, Mesta, etc.) are among the major themes of xvth century Castilian history. The Jews are affected by this throughout the century. Segovian examples are not lacking.

In 1407, and for the following two years, tax collectors of Segovia and its bishopric were imposing sales taxes (alcabalas) on the Jews' meat and wine. This was against the communities' privileges.<sup>183</sup> In 1412 the town council carried out the ordinances of Valladolid and moved the Jews to land belonging to the monastery of Sta. Maria de la Merced. (One of the few documented instances of

the town council carrying out this segregation).<sup>184</sup> We have mentioned Joseph ibn Shem Tov's account of the failure of the town council to check the popular riot against the Jews in 1452. The restrictive tendencies at work in the relations between Jews and municipalities are strongly manifest in Segovia during the '80's. In 1482 the town council tries to impose the 'repartimiento' of flour and 'peones' on the Jews against their privileges.<sup>185</sup> In 1485 the council forbade the Jews to use ovens for baking their unleavened bread.<sup>186</sup> In 1488 statutes are passed forbidding the Jews to sell their wares on Fridays (market days). The community's awareness of this deterioration in municipal attitudes is evinced in the petition of its representatives to the Crown in 1484: "they (the community of Segovia) ... fear that the tax collectors will impose their taxes on them even though they are exempt ..." or again, in the same year: 'they fear that some might contravene (their privileges) ... and take over their Synagogues and cemeteries ...'.<sup>186a</sup>

#### Church and the Jews.

The Segovian Church had a peculiar relationship with the Jews. The Cathedral received the traditional 30 pieces, a custom which is not as fully documented elsewhere in xvth century Castille.<sup>187</sup> Jews rented its lands and collected its debts.

From the fifties onwards, the relations between Jews and Christians seems to have been particularly affected by the ideas of a group of anti-Jewish theologians connected

with the Observance movement and the monastery of Sta. Cruz. These were disseminated through preaching and tracts such as the *Fortalitium Fidei*.<sup>188</sup> One should remember that it was at this monastery that the codex, now in Paris, containing the *Censura et Confutatio* was written and then copied in the eighties, after 1483.<sup>189</sup> The bishop Juan Arias Davila was responsible for the death, in 1471, of eight Jews accused of the blood libel.<sup>190</sup> In private conversations and chronicles the Jews see him as someone who 'facia mucho mal a los judios'.<sup>191</sup>

### Intellectual Orientations.

Little information is extant on the 'intellectual landscape' of Segovian Jewry at the time of Seneor, and yet there is enough evidence to show that it was not entirely barren.

According to Fita,<sup>192</sup> Joseph ibn Sadiq of Arevalo, chronicler, commentator of the liturgy, reader of Christian chronicles,<sup>193</sup> lived in 1460 in Segovia in the houses of Lope carretero near the Synagogue.

The community had a 'primary' school with its 'rabi de mocos' who, in the fifties was 'rabise cacon'. (R. Isaac Sason). He is mentioned, in Inquisition records, as collecting alms from a converso.<sup>194</sup>

In the field of halakha, the best known figure is Simon Meme.<sup>195</sup> He is the author of an undated responsum sent to the community of Talavera de la Reina.<sup>196</sup> This shows how his reputation extended beyond Segovia. The responsum also shows that he based his verdict on earlier

decisions of R. Asher whom he quotes extensively and whose responsa he must have had in his library.<sup>197</sup> A later chronicle would describe him as the head of the Yeshiva of Segovia at the time of the expulsion.<sup>198</sup> He is also identified with the Simeon Meme who was at the head of a group of pietists who when exiled went over to Portugal.<sup>199</sup> In any case the only documented Segovian Yeshiva student I have been able to find goes to the 'estudio' in Cuellar and comes home to Segovia only for the holy days (1470's).<sup>200</sup>

The diversity of intellectual orientations in Segovia may be shown by mentioning two other little known figures. The one is the otherwise unknown Elia Amarillo who, on 22/12/1478, finished copying a Hebrew translation of the 'Intentions of the Philosophers' of Al-Ghazzali in Segovia.<sup>201</sup> The other is Solomon Seneor, brother of Abraham Seneor. In Abraham b. R. Solomon's chronicle, he is described as 'the elderly scholar Don Solomon Seneor' and associated with Abarbanel.<sup>202</sup> Harkavi's remark:<sup>203</sup> 'nothing is known about this don Solomon from elsewhere' might now be qualified by reference to the remarks of Abraham Seneor in his testimony before the Inquisition on 21/4/1486. He remembers how 'a sermon which his brother was preaching in the chief Synagogue (and was attended by) some Christians and he remembers that one of them was the canon Anton Basquez and the other was the Licenciado, physician ... he does not remember and another the canon Alonso Albares ... the sermon was on natural and moral philosophy ...' (filosofia natural e moral).<sup>204</sup>

Communal Self-Government.

Like other Jewish communities the Segovian had its own governmental structure with its judicial, fiscal, legislative and educational institutions. Mention of the head of the community Don Moses Arroyo is made in 1401.<sup>205</sup> The phrase 'rosh shel hakahal' may be seen as a technical term.

The aljama had the power to impose internal taxes 'to help pay the cabeza de pecho and the other taxes which the aljama has to pay every year ... since a long time ago all the Jews of the said aljama had agreed to impose a tax on the meat and wine which should be sold amongst them ...'.<sup>206</sup>

The officer which appears most frequently in letters from the council is the procurador or 'envoy')<sup>207</sup> Loeb has drawn attention to the 12 'neemanim' and 2 'vedores' mentioned in Fita's documents.<sup>208</sup> Unless Segovia was an exceptional case, the procurador was paid from communal funds for expenses such as travelling or notaries' fees.<sup>209</sup>

The Rabbi formed part of the communal structure. Having mentioned R. Simeon Meme's juridical decision, we might add that R. Yuce Meme, in the 70's, was asked by a converso to absolve him from an oath. Hatarat medarim, absolution of vows, is part of the functions of the Rabbi and we might assume he was performing these duties at that time.<sup>210</sup> The community, as a taxing body, included the neighbouring Turegano. During Shemaya's period of office as a chief Rabbi it paid him an income of 1000 mvs. per annum.<sup>211</sup>

Seneor as an Aljama Officer.

The first mention of AS in connection with the Segovian community is in the letter of Enrique IV granting him the position of 'vedin o alguacil' of the Segovian aljama on 15/11/1468.<sup>212</sup> The 'alvedi' or 'albedinus' is a communal officer who has executive functions. It is known in Aragon and Navarre and rarer in Castile. He did, according to the documents which mention the office, receive a salary.<sup>213</sup>

It might be surmised that in Seneor's case, having in mind the decline of the office of 'alguacil' in Castile in the xvth century,<sup>214</sup> this was a sinecure rather than a full-time occupation. It would be hard to imagine the almost sixty year old Seneor fulfilling police duties, especially in view of his frequent journeys to the South (especially Jerez de la Frontera, Llerena). There is no evidence of him as performing any executive duties in the aljama. That the office seemed important enough to him may be seen from his efforts to renew the appointment under the Catholic Monarchs in 1476.<sup>215</sup>

The document has its importance in showing Enrique IV's trust in Seneor as well as his gratitude. It mentions 'your skill and faithfulness and the many and good services you have done to me in the past and do every day'. This is partly but not entirely a mere formula common to all such grants.<sup>216</sup> It also places Seneor firmly within the communal structure even though he was exempt of the tax-burden.<sup>217</sup>

### Seneor's Social Circle

Against the background of socio-economic diversity in Segovia we have tried to survey, AS appears, although to an extent in a class of his own because of his political connections, still identified with the upper stratum of Segovian Jewry, its interests and outward signs of differentiation. Members of this circle of financiers and tax-collectors stood apart somewhat from the rest of the aljama. Some of the elements of differentiation may be analysed.

Their position as members of an elite was sometimes expressed in specific status symbols which coincided with the age's mentality. D. Luis Felipe de Penalosa<sup>218</sup> and the Marques de Lozoya<sup>219</sup> identify the house on the calle del Sol which used to be known as the 'house of the Coroneles' with that of Seneor. And, indeed, if the family had wished to move out after their conversion, they would hardly have chosen a house in the middle of the 'juderia'. It is by now a commonplace that Castilian Christian architectural ideals were aimed at outward show, while Moslems in e.g. Andalusia aimed at inner comfort. Seneor's house must have been relatively imposing in xvth century Segovia, certainly in comparison with other houses of the juderia. It had its 'patio', and its 'sala alta' (probably on the first floor), where he received his guests, and a room for prayers.<sup>220</sup> Its position near the Chief Synagogue had, no doubt, social significance. It is, in any case, unlike houses rented by artisans from the Cathedral. At his house, Seneor recalled in the 80's 'many nights, various gentlemen

and fidalgos and conversos used to come in at the time when the prayers were being said and they would stay with him upstairs while the prayers were being said ...'.<sup>221</sup>

He certainly had a retinue and one of its members is documented. His escudero, esquire (a cross between a body guard and a valet), Fernando de Talavera (who may have been a converso) is known through a law-suit he had after having fallen victim to an assault on him.<sup>222</sup> One should perhaps emphasize Seneor's mobility in an age and place where social ideals imposed respect for the mobile and where the sedentary were despised.<sup>223</sup>

Dress, and especially the use of silks and precious metals, was another element of the outward show of this class. Seneor asks, and is granted, in 1476, an exemption from the sumptuary laws passed at the junta of the Hermandades.<sup>224</sup> And later, the exemption is extended to his sons (Solomon Seneor amongst them) and their wives.<sup>225</sup> They could, according to the grant, wear 'guarniciones, seda, chamelote, paño de grana, oro, aljofar ...'. This stands in full contrast to the tradition, preserved in the Shevet Judah, about Seneor's predecessor's (Abraham Benveniste) 'black garments'.<sup>226</sup> The need was, besides its social aspects, justified by contemporaries in terms of their functions as tax-collectors. This is the case with the Jews of Calahorra.<sup>227</sup> His exemptions extended to other members of the family, even to those not residing in Segovia. Thus, there is a letter of exemption from certain obligations to his son-in-law at Guadalajara, a member of the Vaquix family of tax-collectors.<sup>228</sup>



When Abarbanel came to Castile, where he is said to have been Seneor's partner in tax-collections, 'he was amazed and exclaimed for there are set the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David ...'.<sup>229</sup>

#### Seneor's Activities in Favour of the Aljama.

In a sense, Seneor typifies the ambivalence governing the relations between this group of wealthy financiers and leaders and the rest of their communities. Their and his displays of wealth are in a line with those which excited the criticism of moralists such as Alami earlier in the century.<sup>230</sup> They fed the social tensions which would, as is shown elsewhere, grow into conflict between different groups in the aljamas.<sup>231</sup> On the other hand, recourse to this group was useful and perhaps inevitable when court influence was needed by the communities. That this was the standard by which Jewish 'courtiers' were judged in medieval Spain is evident from the countless expressions of the ideal court Jew who 'is a spokesman for his people'. This is the case with Abraham ibn David's chronicle *Sepher Haqabbala*,<sup>232</sup> with the letters of Benveniste earlier in the century (concerning the affair of Judah Halevi the Navarre courtier)<sup>233</sup> and even with the views of Alami.<sup>234</sup>

During 1485 Seneor had to contend with the manifestations of opposition to him and the wealthier Jews of Segovia. These factions were brought into confrontation by the activities of the converted Jew, Juan de Talavera. A document of 24/9/1480 describes Juan de Talavera as the

servant and inheritor of a Jew of Talavera whose possessions had been taken.<sup>235</sup> Before 1485, Juan de Talavera had wanted to be assigned to the office of 'escribano' of the aljamas of Castile.<sup>236</sup> This position was connected with fiscal as well as judicial functions of the central Jewish inner self-government.<sup>237</sup> The aljamas and Seneor, perhaps at the 'junta' of November 1484,<sup>238</sup> refused. According to Juan de Talavera this was done because he had converted. The matter was brought before the Council by Juan de Talavera. The 'affair' began with a petition to the Council on 1/2/1485 by 'Maestre Juan de Talavera, vecino of Segovia, concerning the fact that the aljamas of the kingdom do not wish to accept him as escribano of their tribunals and tax-assessments alleging as their reason for doing so the fact that he converted to Christianity and also concerning other litigations which he holds against the aljamas ...'.<sup>239</sup>

On the same day an order was signed by the Council ordering an investigation against Abraham Seneor.<sup>240</sup> The investigation concerned 'some taxes which Abraham Seneor collects unlawfully from the Jews'. This was to be the central issue in the conflict in Segovia in that year. It was alleged by Juan de Talavera that 'Abraham Seneor and Jaco Cachopo "procurador" (he appears in other documents first as procurador for the aljama of Seville and then for the aljamas of Castile) under pretext of having to give money to some members of our council and other officers of our court receive certain quantities from the aljamas since the time we began to reign and they take what he apportions and do whatever they want with it ...'.<sup>241</sup> The investigation results are to be given to Juan de Talavera himself.

In June of the same year, a letter of commission is drawn for the 'arcediano' of Sepulveda by petition of Juan de Talavera in his litigation against Seneor.<sup>242</sup>

Before September, Juan de Talavera's brother, the Jew Yuce Talaveri, one of a group of Jews supporting the opposition to Seneor, made a petition to the Council. In it there is a picture of the tension reigning in Segovia between two rival factions; one of 'many and wealthy Jews' with Seneor at their head, and the other, opposing them with Juan de Talavera at their head.

When in September (7th) the Council orders the alcaide of Segovia to take over the case, the letter mentions

Yuce Talaveri, judio, vecino de la dicha cibdad, nos fiso relacion por su peticion que ante nos en el nuestro consejo presento, diziendo que sobre rason de ciertos pleitos y debates y quistiones que mastre Juan de Talavera, su hermano, trae contra los judios y aljamas destos nuestros reynos, los judios de la dicha cibdad procuravan de matar y faser el danno que pudiesen al dicho mastre Juan y buscavan para ello testigos falsos en la juderia de la dicha cibdad, sobornando los dichos testigos y dandoles y prometiendoles dadivas, porque dixesen contra el dicho mastre Juan, e quel por causa que non matasen al dicho mastre Juan, como dis que han muerto a otros tres convertidos de un anno a esta parte ovo de descobrir y descubrio al dicho mastre Juan lo que asy fasyan y tratavan contra el, el qual dis que provo su ynocencia cerca de aquello que le acusavan, y que por causa quel descubrio lo susodicho dis que porque los judios tienen segund sus derechos que qualquier judio que descubriere sus secretos de lo que entrellos pasa que lo puedan matar sin conciencia ninguna, y dis que como los dichos judios no tienen poder para justiciar a ninguno, que por se vengar del le levantaron y buscaron testigos falsos que dixesen que avia jurado por nuestras vidas y que lo non avia guardado, sobre lo qual dis que le aveis tenido cinquenta dias preso, fasta tanto que a ruego de ciertas personas sobre fiaçores le ovistes de soltar, para que dixese y allegase de su derecho, sobre lo qual dis que el provo que los testigos que contra el avian

presentados eran falsos ante don Habrahan Seneor y ser los testigos muchachos, y porque no fuesen conocidos, averse mudado los nombres, y que como los dichos judios son muchos y ricos y allegados a personas principales de la dicha cibdad, que con los favores que tienen y por otras causas vos aveys mostrado y mostrays favorable a los dichos judios y odioso y sospechoso contra el, e que por temor y miedo de ser agraviado se fe y absento desa dicha cibdad, y que estando fuera della es venido a su noticia que aveys dado sentencia contra el, sin estar el proceso en tal estado ni le llamar ni oyr, y que se teme y recela que de fecho proeedereis contra el a executar la dicha sentencia, y que asy mismo por la dicha causa y rason los dichos judios, por se vengar del y maltratar a el y a sus parientes, an tenido manera con Yuce Tartela, marido de una su hermana, como la hechase, como dis que la echo de su poder y casa abiltada y desonradamente, y se alcace, como dis que se alco con todos los bienes que pertenescen a la dicha su harmana, en lo qual dis quel y la dicha su hermana an recebido y reciben mucho agravio y danno." 243

Seven days later, a letter sent by the council gives a further picture of the state of the community at that time:

"Abrahan Tratas, judio, vecino desa dicha cibdad nos fiso relacion ... disyendo que rabi Samuel de Vidas, judio, asy mismo vecino desa dicha cibdad, le tiene ynjusta e non devidamente e por fuerca e contra su voluntad cinco pares de casas suyas y otros bienes muebles, e dis que sobrello ha tratado cierto pleito ante ciertos jueses judyos, e que agora de medio anno a esta parte a cabsa que el dixo e depuso su dixo en un pleito que los judios desa dicha cibdad trabtan con maestre Juan de Talavera, asy a el como a otros judios que en el dicho pleito dixeron sus dichos, les han echado a perder los dichos judios, y teniendo le nuestra carta de segura, para que por persona ni personas algunas no le fuese fecho mal ni danno en su persona e bienes contra rason e derecho, dis que don Abraham Seneor e otros judios de la dicha cibdad ynjusta e non devidamente e contra toda rason e derecho, seyendoles notificada la dicha nuestra carta de seguro, que la quebrantaron e an menosprecio della le aprisyonaron y le dieron de palos y espaldarazos..." 244

The incident has all the marks of inner Hispano-Jewish factionalism of the period. Internal tensions relating to taxation and opposition to the leadership are aggravated by the presence of the converso element. For Baer,<sup>245</sup> who thought that the documents and the events took place in 'August and September', these records testify to the growing religious ferment of the time. That is understandable, perhaps if they are seen as sequels to the anti-Jewish sermons of Antonio de la Pena in March<sup>246</sup> and the alcaide of Segovia's prohibition to bake matzoth at about the same time.<sup>247</sup> But as the recently published Registro General del Sello shows and we have mentioned, the 'Talavera affair' started in February or earlier. There is little reason to see the affair simply as does Kaplan,<sup>248</sup> as a case of Abraham Seneor defending the community against an external threat posed by an apostate.

Nevertheless, 1485 was indeed a year of mounting tension between Jews and Christians. AS, in this year, acts as spokesman for the Jews of Segovia and tries to fight the anti-Jewish currents from municipality and popular religious feeling. It is in this year that he tries to use his influence at court to stop Antonio de la Pena's sermons.<sup>249</sup> It was in this year that the alcaide of Segovia, Francisco Gonzales de Molina, forbade the baking of matzoth in the city and that AS consequently complained to the Council.<sup>250</sup>

AS seems to be working for and in conjunction with the Segovian aljama at this time with more intensity than before or afterwards. This may have been in response to a sense of the urgency of the problems. Usually, the Segovian aljama, in its petitions to the Council, used

procuradores other than AS.

In January 1486, the Inquisition began its activities against the converso bishop of the town, Juan Arias Davila. AS's gossip about Diego Arias finally reached the Inquisitors as will be seen below.<sup>251</sup> Little is known of AS's Segovian activities until 1492. In March of that year the decree of expulsion was signed.<sup>252</sup> AS was at court during April and May.<sup>253</sup> Alvaro de Zuniga, prior of San Juan, when hearing of the decree proceeded to pocket the rents he owed to AS. AS complained to the Monarchs and asked for a settlement of the account.<sup>254</sup> Suarez Fernandez has seen in this a sign of his wish to go into exile.<sup>255</sup> This might be strengthened by the fact that it was indeed the form of action taken by those Jews who, like Yuce Abravanel, were determined to leave Spain.<sup>256</sup>

In any case, AS changed his mind and with his family converted on the 15th of June.<sup>257</sup> The conversion bears all the features of a propagandistic event designed to influence public opinion. It was carried out at one of the important shrines: Sta. Maria de Guadalupe in the presence of the King and Queen and the Cardinal of Spain. The name adopted by AS, Fernan Peres Coronel, was a combination of the King's patronymic and that of an old noble lineage.<sup>258</sup>

What is more relevant to his Segovian background is that he chose to stay in Segovia<sup>259</sup> and, within eight days, he was called regidor of Segovia,<sup>260</sup> an office to which was added his nomination as contador mayor of don Juan prince of Asturias, royal councillor<sup>261</sup> and patent of hidalgua.<sup>262</sup> Once converted, he maintained his old

Segovian connections and established them through more concrete links. Though still living in the juderia,<sup>263</sup> he could now marry his sons and daughters to Segovian families such as the Del Rios,<sup>264</sup> who had shared the same political allignments at the time of Isabella's accession.<sup>265</sup> During the next, perhaps his last, year he made various gifts to the monastery El Parral in Segovia,<sup>266</sup> in which a Coronel chapel was being built on which were engraved the family's newly acquired arms.<sup>267</sup>

In conclusion, AS's Segovian background, it may be suggested, serves to illuminate certain aspects of his career. The political involvement can be possibly explained in terms of his Segovian associations: Arias Davila, Cabrera and probably Palencia and Quintanilla. The rise of his career as tax-collector may also, perhaps, be connected to the favourite seat of Henry IV's court, the residence of Diego Arias Davila (contador mayor) and many Jewish tax-collectors. His desire for upward social mobility had similarly Segovian expressions: the alguaciladgo of the aljama at first, the regimiento later. And, finally, the social grievances against him and his circle which emerged into conflict in 1485 may be better understood in the light of the tensions reigning between different Segovian Jewish factions.

#### AS as Supra-Communal Leader.

There have been many generalizations on xvth century Hispano-Jewish supracommunal institutions with reference to seneor. These have not always taken account

of all the evidence now available. The attitude of the communities to Chief Rabbis such as AS has been variously described. Zeitlin,<sup>268</sup> for example, has postulated a general Spanish-Jewish custom of acceptance of Rabbis appointed by the Crown. Baron has spoken of a 'silence' in Spanish-Jewish literature about the Rabbis appointed by the government.<sup>269</sup> Neuman briefly described the institution of the Chief Rabbi in Castile,<sup>270</sup> but not always paying attention to the factor of development. In other words, Neuman almost implies that the Chief Rabbi was an institution with the same character and attributes throughout its history. But the nature of the office in the xiii<sup>th</sup> or early xiv<sup>th</sup> centuries was not identical with that of the office in the xv<sup>th</sup> century. Nor does the evidence allow for postulating an identity of character between the institution at the time of Maestre Shemaya, a period of very weak central authority from the Crown, and the Chief rabbinate at the time of Seneor, when centralizing tendencies of the Catholic Monarchs were strengthened by a war situation.

For Baron<sup>271</sup> the major function of AS was as 'tax-assessor'. It may be doubted whether this assertion was justified even considering the state of research on Seneor in 1945 (date of publication of Baron's work). Seneor's functions as Chief Judge of the aljamas deserves equal attention.

#### Abranam Seneor as Chief Judge of the Aljamas.

There exists a certain lack of precision in definitions of the functions of the Chief Judge of the aljamas.



This may be due not so much to a failure by modern historians to recognize the principles consistently followed in judicial practise, but more likely, to the lack of consistency in the judicial functions of the Chief Judge of the aljamas. Thus Neuman, for example, describes the Jewish chief justice as someone 'to whom all appeals from the lower courts were directed'.<sup>272</sup> Teicher describes the nature of the office as being 'of a remedial nature'.<sup>273</sup> Again, on his power to delegate authority, Neuman maintains that 'not even the chief or court rabbi of Castile was permitted to appoint judges in a community unless he was petitioned to do so by a majority of its people'.<sup>274</sup> These statements concerning the definition of the office are based on partial and highly selective use of the evidence. We shall try to show that these are untenable positions and emphasize the variety of functions of the office.

Records concerning AS's judicial activity have been preserved in the archives of the Real Chancilleria<sup>275</sup> and in the series of the Registro General del Sello. The first document mentioning AS as Chief Rabbi makes reference to his judicial capacities. In 1477 (not 1476)<sup>276</sup> the King, Ferdinand, revokes his former grant of the rabbinate of the lands north of Burgos to Vidal Astori. In this letter, he mentions the grant of office made earlier to AS (i.e. before 1477). The office is described as 'judgado mayor e rabinadgo e reprtidor de todas las dichas aljamas ...'. The first item, then, in the list of attributes of the office is a judicial one. The letter was sent to the assembly of representatives of the aljamas gathered in Valladolid in March 1477.<sup>277</sup>

Only two years later, a letter from Ferdinand introduces us to the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in the office of the Chief Judge of the aljamas. The letter,<sup>278</sup> found by Pilar Leon Tello in the municipal archives of Avila, was sent to AS and the aljama and its judges.

"... a vos don Abrahyn Seneor e a vos el aljama e omes buenos judios de la cibdad de Auila e a vos el lugarteniente de juez en la dicha aljama por el dicho don Abraham ... Sepades quel commendador Goncalo Chacon mi mayordomo e contador mayor me fiso relacion por su petycion que ante mi en el mi consejo presento diziendo quel licenciado Andres Lopes de Burgos pesquisydor en la dicha cibdad de Auila por mi carta e mandado puso en posesyon de la judicatura de las cabsas ceuiles e criminales de vos los dichos judios a vos el dicho don Abraen Seneor como allcalde de las aljamas diziendo que maestre Semaya avia estado en posesyon de la dicha judicatura de los dichos judios de la dicha cibdad lo qual disques es en grand agraviõ e detrimento de mi juredicion real porque la mayor parte de la poblacion de la dicha cibdad es de judios y por ser lugar de vandos y questiones y que sy a lo tal se ouiese de dar lugar y las justicias de la dicha cibdad no ouisen de entender en los casos tales questiones non se podría administrar la justicia e que la dicha prouision y todo lo que por ser virtud della se fiso fue contra el muy agraviado porque el e sus lugarestenientes como mi corregidor de la dicha cibdad han estado en posesyon pacifica de conoscer de todas las dichas cabsas ceuiles e criminales de los dichos judios.e."

The letter finishes by ordering AS and his lieutenant not to judge the Jews from that date onwards.<sup>279</sup>

The background to the letter is the conflict between the interests of the aljama's autonomy and the efforts of the Crown and its officers to intensify the power and extend the jurisdiction of the 'corregidor'.<sup>280</sup> The letter is also of interest because it introduces us to another problematic facet of the office: its power to judge criminal cases. Baer has affirmed that the Jews

had no criminal jurisdiction since 1380 and that the measures legislated in this respect at the assembly of Valladolid of 1432 were never put into effect.<sup>281</sup>

There may, on the other hand, be further evidence that AS had the power to judge in criminal cases: the case of Rabbi Santo aben Ros vs. Mayr and Benzilai de la Cavalleria. Our knowledge of the case comes from a letter of the monarchs of 27/1/1480.<sup>282</sup> They give a 'letter of security' to Rabbi Santo of Murcia because he was afraid lest 'some of our subjects and vassals should harm him or those of his house or take something from his possessions' by cause of 'certain litigation he holds with Mayr de la Cavalleria and Benzilai de la Cavalleria, Jews, inhabitants of the said cities about the death of his (or their?) brother before Abraham Seneor chief judge of the aljamas of the Jews of these our realms ...'.

On the other hand, we have an explicit statement against this in one of the records of the Talavera affair of 1485. One of the letters contains the above-mentioned statement made by Yuce Talaveri, brother of Juan de Talavera:<sup>283</sup>

'The Jews have according to their rights the power to kill any Jew who reveals their secrets of whatever happens amongst them, they can kill themselves without guilt (sin conciencia) and he says that since the said Jews have no power to judge anyone in order to revenge themselves, they found false witnesses saying that he had sworn by our lives and had not kept his oath ....'

The meaning of Yuce's allegation seems to be that the measures of inner discipline against the 'malsin' were no longer sanctioned by the Crown as used to be the case. In other words, the evidence of 1485 seems to show that the

Jews no longer had the power of autonomous criminal jurisdiction which seems to be one of the attributes of Seneor's office.

A plausible explanation might be that the decision of the Cortes in 1380 depriving the Jews of autonomous criminal jurisdiction was not put into effect, as was the case with other measures legislated at that Cortes.<sup>284</sup> Therefore the statutes of Valladolid of 1432 (taqanot Valladolid)<sup>285</sup> are based on the assumption that the Chief Rabbi had the power to judge criminal cases. This would also explain why in the 1460's, when maestre Shemaya was Chief Rabbi of the communities, he could be said to have had civil and criminal jurisdiction, as we have seen in the quotation from the letter to AS in 1479. The situation might have changed after the renewal of these laws at the Cortes of 1480 which were enforced more thoroughly in other aspects as well.<sup>286</sup>

In this letter Seneor appears as a judge of civil and criminal cases amongst the Jews with the right to delegate power to a 'lugarteniente de juez'. This power of delegating judicial authority, which is in contradiction to the assumptions of the taqanot of Valladolid, may be better understood when seen against the background of a similar power possessed by another chief judge of an autonomous minority, i.e. the Moors. Thus, from a document<sup>287</sup> written between 1414-1440, we learn how Muhammad ibn Yusuf al Qaysy, 'chief alcalde of the aljamas of moors of Castile' communicates to the council of Sepulveda that, because of their complaints, he dismisses don Ali de Montejo from his office of alcalde of the moors of Sepulveda which he held by his

appointment and appoints don Içam instead. Thus, we can also see from this letter that Seneor was more than a court of appeals, a 'remedial' officer, or one unable to appoint judges in local communities.

A different question concerns the nature of the cases brought before him. In other words, were cases of a certain type brought before him and others before Rabbis such as Aboab, the last Gaon of Castile, or Simeon Meme, last Rabbi of Segovia?

In the case of Alegre, the nature of the litigation provides the answer, it would seem, to this question. On 14/5/1480, AS 'juez mayor de las aljamas de los judios del reino' pronounces a sentence against Isaac Portuges and his brother because of certain damages they inferred on the Jew Alegre.<sup>288</sup> The Monarchs sign a confirmation on 3/8/1480. (This, incidentally, would seem to show that AS's power was of a limited nature and that for a sentence to be executed it might need the confirmation of the Crown.) It may be suggested that the 'Jew Alegre' of this document is the 'Jew Alegre', buffoon of the Zing, who is mentioned by Bernaldez in his description of the festivities of the baptism of the prince don Juan on 9/7/1478.<sup>289</sup> In other words, the case of Alegre was one in which a fellow court-Jew of AS was involved and it is not surprising therefore to find that the case is brought before AS.

But not all Jews presented their law-suits before AS's court. Thus, for example, in the case of Levi aben Santo of Segovia vs. his wife and father-in-law, the case was presented before the Crown and only then brought before AS.<sup>290</sup> Rabbi Levi aben Santo of Segovia had a litigation

with his father-in-law because he had forced him with the help of the Count of Benavente to divorce his wife against his will. This is the sort of case which the taqanot of Valladolid had legislated against, obviously without much success. On 12/11/1485 he received a letter of security from the council and on the 23/2, the council sent a letter to AS telling him to judge in the case. From this letter we learn that the law-suit was brought before the Council, then advice was sought from 'Jewish Rabbis' and then the case was transferred to AS.

The question is somewhat less simple than it appears. In theory Jews did not bring their law-suits before non-Jewish tribunals. The talmudic maxim against the utilisation of non-Jewish tribunals, codified by Maimonides, was institutionalised in autonomous courts of law.<sup>291</sup> But even Maimonides qualified this injunction in the case of an 'ilem', a powerful individual (or 'poderoso' in the taqanot of Valladolid). The use of non-Jewish tribunals was current at various times and places and is not necessarily a Spanish characteristic. Even German Jewry made use of non-Jewish tribunals as is clear from the document published by Z. Avneri concerning the verdict of the Schutheiz of Nuremberg in a case of the community vs. a Jew on 2/7/1320.<sup>292</sup>

In Castile we find Jews bringing their litigations to the alcalde of the town in the first instance. This can be seen in the records of the litigation between Rabbi Ospyna, judge of the Jews of Miranda del Ebro, and Abraham Habillio in 1483.<sup>293</sup> Rabbi Ospyna brings a case of criminal law (he had been attacked by Abraham Habillio)

before Francisco de Montaya 'alcaide hordinario' and then appeals to the Council to execute the sentence. In this case we can see a criminal litigation between Jews being brought before the Council and, perhaps not insignificantly, at a date posterior to 1480 (when legislation was renewed annulling the criminal jurisdiction of the Jews).

But there were cases when the decision in a civil litigation was not brought before either AS or a non-Jewish tribunal. In other words, the alternative rabbinical courts did function and were accepted. Thus from the exchange of responsa between Don Nisim Benveniste and R. Isaac Aboab, last Gaon of Castile and head of the Yeshiva of Guadalajara,<sup>294</sup> we can see that this alternative was open to litigants and that some did indeed bring their cases before rabbinical courts. The case concerns a litigation between orphans and their tutor. The orphans complain that the tutor sold their immovable property, without their permission, and against talmudic law. The case was brought before R. Nisim Benveniste who, in his turn, brought it before Rabbi Isaac Aboab who held no official position. From the point of view of the history of the judicial process within an autonomous Jewish community, the 'normal' model<sup>295</sup> is one in which two members of the community bring their case before a 'dayan' or judge and his court or 'beth-din' and appeal to a 'dayan silukin' or judge of appeals or, in the case of doubt in the first instance, the case is brought to a famous rabbinical authority.

This is the case with a litigation mentioned in a responsa by Simeon Meme, last Rabbi of Segovia.<sup>296</sup> The papers of litigation brought before R. Simeon Meme of

Segovia concerned the case of R. Jacob Alcaguri in the name of his father and R. Samuel de Castro of Talavera. The dispute was about the inheritance of R. Samuel's wife, who was R. Jacob's sister. It was brought in the first instance before the 'dayan' of the community of Talavera, don Hayim de Yavne (?). Don Hayim in his turn sent the papers to R. Simeon Meme in Segovia. He in turn gave the verdict and sent it with a messenger to Talavera.

Against the background of cases such as this, one can see the peculiarities of litigations between Jews who do not bring their cases before Jewish judges. This and the variety of judicial functions of AS's office (certainly larger than a court of appeals) can be seen from the records of the Real Chancilleria.

One of these is a litigation (2/1486) between don Abraham Sevillano of Avila and the aljama of Avila.<sup>297</sup> Abraham demands 18,340 maravedies from the aljama because he had been their 'envoy'. The case was brought in the first instance before Alfonso de Puerto Carrion, 'corregidor' in Avila, and then there was an appeal before Alonso de Fonseca, President of the 'Audencia'. He and the 'oidores', in view of the nature of the case, remit it to Abraham Seneor so that he should see whether the 'corregidor' had judged correctly. They also ordered that his sentence, once pronounced, should be executed. The verdict was given in favour of Abraham Sevillano.

In this case, as in the case of Levi aben Santo, the litigation was brought before the non-Jewish tribunals in the first instance, and they in their turn remitted it to Abraham Seneor.



Different, however, was the case between dona Cinha of Medina del Campo vs. Yuce aben Farax of Fresno Viejo.<sup>298</sup> In this case the litigants brought their lawsuit before Abraham Seneor in the first instance. The summary of the case mentions the fact that Abraham Seneor had taken counsel with the 'junta' of scholars who had met in Valladolid. This is an important piece of evidence for the workings of the judicial system. The non-Jewish tribunals and the Jewish judges appointed by the Crown sometimes had recourse to rabbinical scholars. This had been the case with Queen Maria de Molina when she consulted R. Asher and with the council of the Catholic Monarchs who consulted a 'Jewish Rabbi'.

Our case revolved around the question of dona Cinha's dowry. Yuce aben Farax was her son's tutor. He appealed against AS's verdict in favour of dona Cinha. The president and 'oidores' of the chancilleria upheld AS's verdict on 5/8/1486. In this case we see AS as a judge in the first instance, so that one cannot maintain that he was only a court of appeals and it would pose anew the question of why, since this case is similar in nature to the one brought before Simeon Meme, some cases were brought before AS and some before local Jewish judges.

Those who did not bring their cases before AS were not necessarily motivated by reasons of piety or the wish to comply with the injunction against bringing cases before non-Jewish tribunals. A case in point is the one which occurred in Trujillo in 1485.<sup>300</sup> The community was torn by a factionalism which we analyse elsewhere. One of the leaders of the faction was Solomon Barchilon. He

had accused another Jew of the same city, Rabbi Mose Juanali, of practising witchcraft (or magic prognostications: *agueros*). AS excommunicated him for having done this without bringing evidence of his accusation. He complained to the council, which ordered AS to lift the excommunication by a provision of 24/9/1485.

That complaints about AS and the lack of acceptance of his judicial decisions were not motivated by considerations of piety can be seen in the case of Simuel aben Hayon.<sup>301</sup> He had been conducting a law-suit against some Jews of Murcia and Lorca before the local 'alcalde' of the town. These, 'seeing the little justice that was being done', asked AS to give them a letter to the effect that the case should be held before Jewish judges. AS did so, but Simuel aben Hayon complained to the Monarchs saying that if the case was conducted before Jewish tribunals, he would lose because he had Christian witnesses. The Monarchs, accordingly, ordered on 10/4/1492 the Jewish judges not to excommunicate aben Hayon and to remit the case to the 'corregidor' of Murcia. In other words this is a case in which the party refusing to obey AS does so not because he wishes to adhere to Jewish tradition but because he wants to win the case.

To conclude: the most evident results of the research on AS's office as Chief Judge of the *aljamas* of the kingdom of Ferdinand and Isabella are negative. AS cannot be described exclusively as a court of appeals. Cases are brought before him in the first instance as well. He had the power to delegate judicial authority. We also see him transferring cases from the *alcalde's*

jurisdiction to that of the Jewish courts. The problem of why some cases were brought before him and others before rabbinical courts, or local Jewish courts or non-Jewish tribunals, might perhaps be explained in terms of the extent of the power of AS to execute his verdict. When both parties agreed to obey the decision of a rabbinical court, there was no reason to use another. When one of the parties of the litigation feared that the other would not accept the verdict and that there was no means of compelling him to do so, he might prefer to bring the case before a tribunal with stronger means of compulsion.

Zeitlin's theory of an Hispano-Jewish acceptance of Rabbis appointed by the government misses the point of the realities of the medieval judicial process. On the whole it may be asserted that the lack of acceptance of Seneor's authority as final in judicial matters has little to do with motivations of piety or general Hispano-Jewish attitudes to Rabbis appointed by the government. The main reason for appealing against his verdicts is simply the desire to win the case by one of the parties in the litigation. In any case this lack of compliance with AS's decisions is amply documented, whether in the form of appeals to non-Jewish tribunals such as the Chancilleria, or complaints to the Council. On the whole, AS seems to stand for the continuity of Jewish judicial autonomy as opposed to the use of non-Jewish tribunals. There is no evidence of a conflict of interests between him and rabbinical courts on the problem of jurisdiction. In other words, the model of tension between the court of the scholarly rabbi

and that of the rabbi by Crown appointment, which could perhaps be applied in the time of R. Asher or Adret,<sup>302</sup> is not documented for the late xvth century. If there is a tension, it exists between AS who stands for a Jewish autonomous judicial practise, of sorts, and the individuals who, because they are interested in winning the case, have no qualms in using non-Jewish tribunals.

Recent historiography has tried to qualify the degree of concentration of power in the Crown under the Catholic Monarchs. Historians such as Highfield,<sup>303</sup> Haliczzer,<sup>304</sup> and Lunenfeld<sup>305</sup> have tried to emphasize the extent to which the nobility still retained, or even increased its power. It may be asserted, however, that the Jewish internal self-government shows an increasing degree of centralization in this period. The issue is obscured by relating it to such broad and long term trends as the decline of Spanish Jewry.<sup>306</sup> It would seem more useful to see it against the background of the centralizing trends characteristic of the mentality of the Catholic Monarchs and the war situation which has as its concomitant an increase in centralization. The growing need for financing these wars created a corresponding pressure on the Jewish communities and above all on the effectiveness of their central fiscal institutions. It may be suggested that it is no coincidence that it is during the years of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs that the most detailed and numerous tax-assessment lists we have for the xvth century were compiled. Again, the rise of pressure on the fiscal machinery reactivated another institution: th

general assembly of the 'procuradores' of the communities. These were attended by the 'procuradores',<sup>307</sup> and also (though we do not have their names) 'learned rabbis',<sup>308</sup> and were presided over by AS, Chief Rabbi, Chief Judge, Chief Tax-collector of the Jews.<sup>309</sup> They had fiscal functions such as assessments of taxes to be apportioned amongst the communities.<sup>310</sup> These are most frequently mentioned in the documents as is to be expected given the fact that the records produced by the Jewish self-government are not extant.

But this was not their only role. Litigations were brought before AS at the junta of Valladolid, for example.<sup>311</sup> At the junta he could pass judgement as Chief Judge. They had a representative character and as such could accept commands from the Crown, as in the junta at Valladolid of 1477 where Ferdinand announced to them his dismissal of Vidal Astori as Chief Rabbi of the lands North of Burgos and appointed AS instead.<sup>312</sup> They had laws governing procedure such as the one mentioned in a document of 30/11/1484:

'... entre ellos esta tal constitucion antigua usada e guardada que los procuradores de las dichas aljamas que vynieren a las tales juntas puedan repartir ... los mrs... puesto caso que a ello non sean presentes todos ...'<sup>313</sup>

It is quite possible that at these juntas the general procurador of the aljamas was given instructions.

#### The Institution of the Procurador of the Aljamas.

In various letters of privilege which concerned all the aljamas of Castile there is mention of an officer

presenting petitions to the Monarchs or the Council in the name of all the aljamas.<sup>314</sup> He should be distinguished from the officer who represented local interests. While the latter's petitions are invariably concerned with the problems of one aljama or group, the former acts in cases in which all the aljamas are involved.

A fund from taxation would be used to pay expenses incurred by the general procurador. These expenses would no doubt include, amongst other things, the fees paid to the escribanos who drew up the privileges.<sup>315</sup> In the case of Abraham Sevillano vs. the aljama of Avila, there is mention of expenses incurred for all the aljamas.<sup>316</sup> One of the accusations in the case of Juan de Talavera vs. AS and the aljamas mentions the fact that AS and Jaco Cacho (whom we know to have been a general procurador) collected sums from the aljamas for the purpose of paying officers of the court.<sup>317</sup> The office seems to have been related to that of the Chief Rabbi with whom he acted in conjunction.<sup>318</sup>

During AS's period of Chief Rabbinate, the office seems to have had a permanent character and have been occupied by Jaco Cacho most of the time.<sup>319</sup> The local procuradores often presented in their petitions, copies of the privileges granted to the general procurador so that there must have been some form of co-ordination in their activities.<sup>320</sup>

There seems to have been an increase in the vitality of the institution during the period of AS's Chief Rabbinate. This increased efficiency may, perhaps, be said to be an effect of the increased tension between Jews and Christians which put pressure on them to ask for

protection from the Crown as well as attest to the general increase in petitions to the Council of the Catholic Monarchs.

This institution left some traces in Hebrew literature as well. These seem to reveal a different facet of the institution. In the RGS and Chancilleria records there is, of course, no mention of the difficulties encountered by the procurador at court and the whole process seems to be a smooth, almost mechanical, one. The Hebrew references to the procurador show him in a different light and inform us as to how he was seen by the Jews.

Shem Tov ibn Joseph when writing down his sermon on Waishlah (Gen.32:4 ff.) would see the Jacob and Esau story as prefiguring the relations between Jews and Christians, especially at a political level, in Spain.

He writes: ... והנה כמו שנהג יעקב ... אנו נוהגים עם בני עשו בזה הגלות והנה יקרה לנו שאנו שולחים להם לומר שכל מה שיש לנו הוא לעבודתם ועם כל זה לא מצאנו חן בעיניהם ויש לנו שלוחים בחצרי המלכים ובסירותם ולא יקבלום ולא יראום ולא יבאו לפניהם אבל יפחדו אותנו בכל עז וזהו הנרמז ביעקב "ויהי לי שור וחמור לעבוד ממנו לעשו" ... " ... כי המלכים והשרים אף שיאמרו להם שאנו עבדים להם לא יסגיתו בנו אבל כשיקבלו מחנות גדולות ... וזו הדרך ראוי שילכו בניו כשישלחו דורות למלכים ולשרים כשיגזרו גזרות עלינו ...

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There seems to be some support here for Juan de Talavera's accusation that AS and Jacob Cachopo 'gave monies' to court and council officers.<sup>321</sup>

One of the last general procuradores wrote a chronicle in which he would make allusions to the institution.

The fact that he himself was one of the general procuradores gives ibn Verga's critical remarks on the institution more than literary import - as well as giving it that ironic quality which is the hallmark of the Shevet Judah:<sup>323</sup>

אמר שלמה מן הדברים האלה יקחו תוכחה שלוחי עמנו השלוחים לכלי אדמה שיעיינו מאד היוצא מפייהם ואל יחשבו שהם עומדים בפני חכם שלהם אוכל לחמם שאע"פ שהוא לסם שמים הוא מורכב עם לחם עצבים ... ובשיש זכות במשלחים ד' ישים בפי שלוחם מה שראוי לדבר ולא לחנם אנו מתחננים ביום האדירך "היה עם פיפיות שלוחי עמך" ...

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The Institution of the 'Escribano Mayor de Juscadgo e Repartimiento de las Aljamas'.

Little is known of the institution of the 'escribano mayor de juscadgo e repartimiento de las aljamas'. Late xiiiith century documents make mention of an 'escribano de los judios' which, according to Baer, acted in transactions involving Jews and Christians.<sup>325</sup> The office is of a local nature and the appointments seem to have been done by a lord or by the King. As oposed to this, the escribano mayor was a supralocal Castilian office. The Crown had the power to appoint the escribano, but from the Juan de Talavera case, we can see that AS could successfully refuse to accept him.<sup>326</sup> It is not clear what exactly his functions were, but they were obviously related to the Chief Rabbi's functions in as much as they concerned judicial and fiscal matters. And unless the word escribano is here used with an exceptional connotation, the escribano



had the right to charge fees for the drafting and issuing of documents (done by him or by a lieutenant).

The increased vitality of these institutions and the fact that it is during AS's period of office that they become more clearly defined and active is, perhaps, not accidental. It may be submitted that it shows the centralizing tendencies at work in AS's activities.

Senear as Representative of the Aljamas.

The Jews, as has been mentioned, saw the function of the court-Jews and the Chief Rabbi amongst them, as interceding at court for the welfare of the communities.<sup>327</sup> Senear's role in this respect has been emphasized by Baer:

'He (AS) faithfully exercised his political functions so as to promote the welfare of his people for sixteen years and up to the very day of his baptism at the time of the great expulsion worked untiringly for the sake of the Jewish cause. On occasion he did not hesitate to quarrel even with the Inquisitor knowing that he could depend upon the backing of the king and queen who were in need of his services.'<sup>328</sup>

This concise summary of Baer's views of AS's political activities introduces us to some problems which may be explored further.

Senear's activities in favour of the Jews were partly determined by the social ideals we have mentioned and partly by the tradition created by his predecessors. But it may be submitted that in his activities, one can discern a certain political affinity with the interests of a section of the Jewish population which may be described

somewhat more precisely than by the term 'the Jewish community'. AS's activities coincide with the interests of a social class which is not necessarily identical with the whole of the Jewish population and which may be defined by its economic activities in the field of finance and money-lending and socially by its leading position in some communities. Thus, for example, AS represents the aljamas and tries to solve the problems which arose after the 1476 laws of Madrigal.<sup>329</sup> These had ordered that if a Christian accused a Jew of having loaned money usuriously, the Jew had to bring witnesses (Christian) to prove the contrary. Not unexpectedly, numerous law-suits against Jewish money-lenders are recorded in the RGS between 1476-1485. The council sent various judges and 'pesquisidores' to judge in these cases.<sup>330</sup> At the assembly of the aljamas of 1484 in Maqueda, it was decided to pay the Crown a sum, probably out of communal funds, to stop these special judges. AS accordingly obtained this right from the Crown (before 6/1485).<sup>331</sup> In this case AS's activities are directed towards safeguarding the interests of the Jewish money-lenders.

The affair of Juan de Talavera has been seen as a case of an 'apostate inciting the Christians against the Jews' and one which 'testifies to the growing religious ferment of the time'.<sup>332</sup> But the petition of Juan de Talavera to the Council in 2/1485 was directed explicitly against 'Abraham Seneor, Chief Judge of the aljamas of the Jews of our kingdoms and Jaco Cachopo their procurador'.<sup>333</sup> The petition claims that

...so color e disiendo que para dar a algunos de los del nuestro Consejo e otros oficiales de la nuestra Corte han repartido e reparten muchas quantyas de mrs sobre las dichas aljamas despues que nos reynamos aca non lo pudiendo nin deviendo faser a que se toman lo que asi reparten e fassen lo que quieren dello.....<sup>334</sup>

Whatever the truth of the accusation, its content and its targets testify to a social element in the grievances. One cannot, therefore, totally rule out the element of protection of his social circle in AS's activities against Juan de Talavera and his faction. In fact, were one to follow the documents literally, the whole case could be seen as one in which AS is protecting himself rather than altruistically safeguarding the interests of the aljamas. That would be, however, an extreme view.

Again, in the case of the petition by AS against fr. Alonso de la Pena,<sup>335</sup> there may be social elements involved as well as the obviously religious ones. The Dominican friar of the monastery of Sta. Cruz had been preaching and speaking in private against the Jews of Segovia in March 1485. The petition of AS to the Council, cited in the Council's letter, contains two points which testify to the social aspect of the problem. One is a quotation from Alonso de la Pena's sermons to the effect that 'if they do not burn the mount they could not get the wolves out'.<sup>336</sup> It is noteworthy that this phrase should have been singled out for mention by AS. As we have suggested elsewhere,<sup>337</sup> the 'wolves' metaphor was used in Europe in the late Middle Ages as a cry of popular protest by the lower orders against the wealthy and those in power. In Castile itself, the *Coblas de Mingo Revulco* use the

wolves metaphor for those who are in power and oppress the 'people', who are symbolized by the lamb.<sup>338</sup> In Alonso de la Pena's sermons, they are used no doubt against the circle of wealthy tax-collectors within Segovian Jewry. The other point worthy of mention is that 'he was inciting the people to go and rob the juderia'. There is no mention of trying to convert the Jews as was the case in 1391. Again, in this case AS's activities are also directed at safeguarding the interests of an economic stratum which coincides with his own. One might mention, at this point, that when the small peddlars of Segovian Jewry were threatened with a law forbidding them to 'sell food, salt, dried fish and other things and merchandise ...' in the market on Fridays, AS is not mentioned as the one who presented the petition to the Council in 1488.<sup>339</sup>

There is, however, an instance of Seneor acting for the aljamas which must be explained in terms of the tradition of 'pidion sh'evuin', redemption of captives,<sup>340</sup> rather than by any affinities with a certain social group. In 1487 Malaga fell to the Christian troops and with it the Jewish communities were taken captive. The events can now be followed from allusions to them in documents published by Suarez Fernandez. From a document of 7/6/1490, we learn that 'all the aljamas of ... our kingdoms' were involved in the 'redemption of captives': '... you well know that at the time we conquered the city of Malaga, the Moors and Jews who were there were made captive and all the aljamas of the Jews of these our kingdoms begged us that we should free the said Jews and that they would pay

a certain part of the ransom money which the said captives had to pay ...<sup>341</sup> From a document of 27/3/1491, we learn that the obligation to pay was assumed by 'the procuradores (envoys) of all the aljamas of all our said kingdoms and realms ...'<sup>342</sup>

We learn of AS's part in the ransoming of the Jews from Bernaldez's account:

Avia' en Malaga, al tiempo que el rey la tomo, quatrocientas e cinquenta personas judios e judias moriscos, chicos e grandes; e estos rescato todos un judio de Castilla llamado Abraham Senor, arrendador e fazedor mayor de las rentas del rey, en fiducia de las aljamas e juderias de Castilla; los cuales rescato por veinte mill doblas cayenes, a pagar en cierto tiempo. E apartaronlos luego de los moros, e tomaronles todas sus buenas alhajas e joyas e doblas e monedas que tenian a todos, para en cuenta del rescate; e fizieron lios las casas de cada casa sobre si, e sellaron los lios e escrivieron en cada uno cuyo era. E todo el rescate ficieron junto; e asi para ello fizieron comun todo lo que tenian, puesto caso que unos tenian mucho e otros poco; e el dicho judio tomo el rescate a su cargo.<sup>343</sup>

The collection of money for their ransom was a lengthy process. Two years after the conquest, in 1489, there are still collections being made for gathering the needed sum. A document of 9/1/1489 shows that twenty of the Jewish captives were to go from aljama to aljama begging for the ransom money:

...tomamos e recebimos so nuestra guarda e enparo e defendimiento real a veynte judios de los que fueron vecinos de la dicha cibdad de Malaga, los quales lleven cartas de don Abraham Senor, juez mayor de las aljamas destos nuestros regnos que digan como son aquellos de los dichos veynte judios de Malaga para que puedan andar e anden libre e seguramente pidiendo las dichas limosnas en las dichas aljamas de los dichos nuestros reynos de Castilla e de Aragon ...<sup>344</sup>

R. Mayr Melamed, son-in-law of AS, assumed the responsibility for the payment of the rest of the ransom and a letter of 6/6/1489 mentions his petition for letters of protection for the captives, allowing them to live wherever Jews are allowed to live.<sup>345</sup>

Of the same day is another letter which mentions the petition of R. Mayr Melamed to the effect that he or Abraham Seneor would send some Jewish emissaries to Carmona, where the captives were, and that they should be given protection from the Inquisition of the archbishopric of Seville and Cordova, who had forbidden the entry of Jews into the territories through which the emissaries had to travel.<sup>346</sup>

That AS was involved in the ransom is, as we have seen, a fully documented fact. It is, therefore, of interest to notice that chronicles such as Joseph ibn Zadiq's or Abraham b. Solomon's make no mention of his role in their description of the events.<sup>347</sup>

#### AS and the Inquisition.

The relationship between AS and the Inquisition has been seen by Graetz,<sup>348</sup> Fita,<sup>349</sup> and Baer<sup>350</sup> in the light of his role of protecting the aljamas. Baer affirmed that AS 'worked untiringly for the Jewish cause ... on occasion he did not hesitate to quarrel even with the inquisitor knowing that he could depend upon the backing of the King and Queen who were in need of his services....'<sup>351</sup> Graetz had surmised that AS and Abarbanel had tried to instigate in favour of the conversos.<sup>352</sup>

It was they who, according to Graetz, argued that Jewish witnesses of the Inquisition should not be believed. The assumption was totally gratuitous and Baer remarked that Graetz showed no understanding of the workings of the Inquisition.<sup>353</sup>

Fidel Fita's analysis of the relationship between Torquemada and AS, both of Segovia, is somewhat confusing and contradictory. It is based on a letter written by Torquemada at the monastery of Sta. Cruz on 17/8/1490. It is addressed to the 'good men' of the village of Torquemada:

"A los virtuosos e devotos senores e homes buenos de la villa de Torquemada ... con estos vuestros vezinos e parientes recebi vuestra letra ... Quanto a lo que dezis de la ayuda para la obra que se faze en la yglesia de Sta. Clalla de essa villa que aveys menester mas de los que he dado por cierto bien me plugiera de lo fazer por muchas razones pero al presente non puedo por estar ausente de la Corte a do estoy de partida. Desde que alle fuere, plaziendo a nuestro Senor trabajare con el Rey e la Reyna nustras Senores como vos fazer alguna ayuda como bien vereys. En lo que dezis del arrendamiento de las alcavalas de essa villa yo fable con don Abrahen Senior cerca dello en presencia destos vuestros mensajeros y me dixo como por este ano estava ya fecha la renta a Diego de la Muela que la ha tenido los anos passados pero que en los anos venideros faria todo lo que yo quisiesse e mandasse y assi se fara como a vosotros cumpla ...."<sup>354</sup>

Fita's remarks on the letter is that 'in his meeting with Abraham Seneor (Tomas de Torquemada) had heard from the astute and powerful Rabbi a refusal which could hide under polite terms a certain hostility'.<sup>355</sup> Some pages later, he deduces from the same letter that 'the Spanish Rothschild of the end of the xvtn century' did not wish to break off with the Inquisition and that it is not believable that

Seneor would defend his 'correligionists'.<sup>356</sup> One is left with the doubt whether the relations between AS and the Inquisition are defined by 'hostility' or 'cooperation' and, moreover, how all that can be deduced from a letter which is only concerned with the appointment of a tax-collector.

In fact, there is no evidence to show AS acting against the Inquisition nor that he wished or was able to do so. Moreover, from the unpublished legajo 1413 of the Inquisition section of the Archivo Historico Nacional,<sup>357</sup> we learn that AS did in fact testify before the Inquisition in the case of the bishop of Segovia Juan Arias de Avila. As we know from Beinart's studies of Inquisition procedure, the testimonies against suspects would be collected for many years. When the case for the prosecution was being prepared, testimonies considered relevant would be included in a file. The legajo 1413 seems to be a file of this sort which contains testimonies taken from witnesses of the Inquisition in Segovia and Avila in the case of the bishop Juan Arias de Avila (b. Segovia c. 1436; d. Rome 1497) but which are also concerned with his parents Diego de Arias and Catalina Gonzalez. AS is one of many Segovian Jews who testified against the father (d. 1466) of the bishop.

AS is quoted by other witnesses as saying that Diego de Arias was a heretic and that his bones would be burnt. On 23/1/1486 Alonso de Cabrera testified before the Inquisition saying 'that he had heard Alonso de Balera, mayordomo of the Marchioness, that don Abrahen Seneor had told him that Diego de Arias was a heretic and that Balera



himself had told this witness that he should ask Abraham Senecor whether it was true that Diego de Arias was a heretic. ... On 21/4/1486:

"Don Abraham senior testigo jurado dixo ... Depuso contra muchas personas y entre ellas contra el contador diego arias lo siguiente ... Otrosi que oyo a un conberso de Medina (tachado) Sevilla mercader que aqui estaba en esta ciudad no se como lo llamaban sino que decia que era sebillano que abia fecho gracia de un pano de seda que abia bendid a los judios para cobertura ala tora y que esto era publico entre los judios y que en el andalucia oyo decir de muchos que ayunaban el dia mayor mas que no le bio a ninguno y que oyo decir a un judio que llaman rabi unce meme que Zuo garcia de Fontiduena (?) en el tiempo que fue casado con una muger de ... laguna que judaycaba e que abya pedido a su padre absolucion de un juramento en que abia incurrido equebio (?) aqui dix (?) a un sermon que don salomon su hermano facia en la sinoga mayor de esta ciudad algunos christianos e que se acuerda que era uno de ellos anton basquez canonigo y el otro el ldo. fisico no se acuerda bien que era otro alonso alvarez canonigo de los otros no se acuerda el sermon era de filosofia natural y moral y que oyo decir quen en los tiempos pasados comian adefinas algunos sabados especialmente oyo decir que diego arias las comia y el corregidor juan de estunega quando aqui estaba... Otrosi que oyo que abia tenido diego arias enojo de el porque le abia mucho apurado de algunas adefinas que le facia especialmente de una su becina que llamaban el abenxuxema non pienso que seria asi fue sino por gula y no per juaycar ... otrosi dixo que oyo decir a muchos de los que vivian con diego arias que el dicho diego arias por los caminos tomaba los santos por las piernas y les decia que fuesen a las ermitas por reyr y burlar y que algunos de los suyos oyo decir que un dia que fue a ber un eredamiento suyo apedreo y que pregunto que como llaban a un santo que estaba en una iglesia y porque le dixeran que tenia nombre de muger dixo que no queria sino santo macho en su eredad y no enbra ... asi mismo dixo que oyo decir algunas veces a muchos que cantaba en ebrayco por contrahacer al canto de los judios..."

Enough has been said to show that AS, as did many other Segovian Jews, testified before the Inquisition rather

than obstructed its work. On the other hand, from the same records, it would seem that he had frequent social contact with conversos and that this contact was not unfriendly. The trial is directed against the bishop Juan Arias but we may infer from it something about the friendly relations between AS and the bishop and his family before 1486. One of the testimonies shows that AS had, at one time, been involved in trying to arrange a marriage between the bishop's nephew and a relative of the marchioness of Moya (Bobadilla, wife of Andres de Cabrera). In his testimony, in the same case, before the Inquisition in 1486, Francisco de San Roman said that:

"Don Habraham Senior le encargo a este tgo entre otras coas de decir a la senora marquesa que ya su senoria sabe quantas veces la he escrito sobre el caso que el obispo me fable de casamiento con su sobrino Juan Arias para con fixa de Francisco de Bobadilla a lo que nunca su senoria me na respondido ni por carta ni por palabra de lo qual tengo mucha verguenza del Cbispo que vea su senoria, si es caso que se debe entender en ello si randa que re desvida de ello onestamente por que fasta saber su voluntad no he podido facer otra cosa que diferillo con mucha verguenza por la grande tardanza que su senoria ha puesto e no me haber respondido a ello que a eso respondi a esta tgo. la marquesa en Sevilla: decid vos a Don Habraham que verdad es que todas esas cartas que dize que me escribio me han sido dadas pero que como quiere el que case mi sobrina con hombre que se espera que an de sacar los guesos de sus aguelos para quemar, que bien sabe Don Abraham que el mismo me obo dicho que Diego Arias muriera hereje...." 358

Another obscure facet of AS's relation with the Inquisition centres round the La Guardia trial. Baer has surmised on the basis of Torquemada's letter (quoted above) that the trial was transferred from Segovia because of AS's

influence on Torquemada.<sup>359</sup> The above-mentioned Inquisition file contains a testimony which may, perhaps, be of relevance to AS's relation to the La Guardia trial. According to the records of the trial published by Fita, about mid-July 1490, Alonso Enriques visited Yuce Franco of Tembleque at the jail in Segovia where he was kept.<sup>360</sup> Alonso Enriques' and Antonio Avila's testimonies report that he was dressed as a Jew and introduced himself as R. Abraham. It is in the report of this meeting that AS's name is introduced into the trial records. Alonso alleges in his testimony that Yuce Franco asked him to tell AS that he was in prison 'because of a "mita" of a "naar" '. Baer accepts this testimony; according to him 'it is understandable that Yuce should wish to inform AS of his imprisonment'.<sup>361</sup>

Alonso Enriques' relation to AS was not known either to Fita or to Baer. But from AS's testimony before the Inquisition in the legajo 1413, given on 1/6/1490, we can learn that there was a certain relation between Alonso Enriques and AS and, moreover, that the Inquisition was interested in it. On 1/6/1490:

"Don abrahen Seneor to. jo. dixo que puede aber cinco anos poco mas o menos que estando este testigo en su posada despues de anohecido se acuerda que fray alonso henrriquez estaba en una camara encerrado en casa de este testigo porque no queria el dicho fray alonso que le biese ninguno y estando alli estaban aca fuera con este to. fernando de cabera y el protonotario diego arias e juan de quellar e otros estaban ende con este to. los quales estaban en la sala alta de la casa de este testigo e que a su creer de este to. ninguno de los susodichos no bic al dicho fray alonso ni estuvo el ni los otros a la oracion que se abia fecho aquella noche en su cassa como quier que otras muchas noches entraban en su casa muchos caballeros e fidalgos

e conversos a tiempo que se decia la oracion y estaban con este testigo arriba con el en tanto que se decia la oracion e que podrian ser alguna vez algunos de los susodichos estar alli con los otros e que no se recuerda si entraron los susodichos en casa de este testigo antes o despues que el dicho fray alonso ....."

Six weeks later Alonso Enrique implicates AS in the La Guardia trial. It may not be too adventurous to submit that there might be a certain connection between the two events, i.e. AS's testimony about fray Alonso to the Inquisition on 1/6 and Alonso's mention of AS in his testimony before the Inquisition in the La Guardia trial.

In any case, to conclude, the traditional picture of AS's functions as 'a spokesman for his people' which sees AS as fighting or trying to obstruct the workings of the Inquisition is not based on solid evidence. On the contrary, AS testified against many conversos and some of his testimonies have been preserved in the Inquisition file mentioned above.

### Conclusion.

Historians and thinkers writing after AS's conversion tended to see AS's life in terms of their own preoccupations. Thus the conversion overshadowed other aspects of his career. The social tensions at work in his relationship to the community at large were also seen within this framework. The embarrassment of having to account for the conversion of a leading Jewish figure is reflected in the assertion that he had never been accepted

by the communities as their leader, but had only been appointed by the state against their will. They postulated a tension between AS and the communities on religious issues: AS was an 'epikoros', a man who did not fear the Lord and was not knowledgeable in the Law, an 'enemy of the light'.

These late and contradictory views cannot be said to represent a satisfactory explanation of the issues at stake in AS's conflicts with the communities and in the tensions between him and the rest of the aljamas.

The basic features of these tensions are convergent with those which caused tensions and conflict within the aljamas during the whole century, i.e. political, fiscal, socio-economic issues rather than religious controversies.

As a tax-collector, and moreover, as a chief tax-collector, he belonged to a group which was resented by Jews and Christians alike.

Friction was bound to occur while trying to balance his activities amongst different and disparate sets of loyalties:

- (a) those to the Crown which necessitated the implementation of centralising policies which caused conflict in local settings sometimes torn by inner factionalism.
- (b) those to his family and circle which by their nature accentuated social division in an age in which attention was paid to the expressions of social stratification.
- (c) those to the aljamas, which he fulfilled through his intercessions at court on their behalf, and

which were almost unanimously ignored by those who wrote after the conversion.

Complaints made to the Council about the unfairness of taxation, e.g. in Segovia, Trujillo and Guadalajara, by the representatives of the lower estate, are ultimately indictments on AS's fiscal policy and an expression of tension between AS and the communities. Refusal to accept AS's judicial verdicts are not necessarily a matter of Spanish ideology about Rabbis imposed by the government (to use Zeitlin's phrase) but more likely examples of tension between localist and centralizing tendencies, the issue is often whether or not to fail to comply with the central judicial authority in order to appeal and win the case. Refusal to comply with the commands of AS in Trujillo<sup>362</sup> is an example of factionalism over fiscal issues and localism combined to create opposition to AS. The case of Juan de Talavera in which wealthy and influential Jews side with AS and others side with Talavera shows the extent to which local tensions can result in a conflict which endangers central institutions.

FOOTNOTES

1. cf. e.g., Ch.7 of Graetz-SFR, History of the Jews (Hebrew), Warsaw, 1898, Vol.6.
2. BH1, pp. 240-242.
3. *ibid.*, and see the section 'Averroism amongst the Jews', BH2, pp. 253-259.
4. For this formulation cf. BH2, p. 258 and I. Barzilai, Between Reason and Faith, The Hague-Paris, 1967, pp.11, 72, 76.
5. e.g. S. Baron, Social and Religious History of the Jews, Vol.X, p.190 'the *rav de la corte* served as the main intermediary between court and Jewish community' without taking into account the role of the procurador. For a short description of the functions of the Chief Rabbi and the imprecision with which contemporaries used the term 'Rabi Mayor', cf. Cantera, in *Sefarad*, 1974, p. 419 and p.77.
6. Mainly, Suarez Fernandez, Documentos acerca de la expulsión de los judíos de España, Valladolid 1964 (Henceforward SF); Archivo General de Simancas Registro General del Sello, Valladolid 1950 ... (Henceforward RGS); (eds.) Mata Carriazo and R. Carande, El Tombo de los Reyes Católicos del concejo de Sevilla, (especially Vol.3, 1479-1485) Sevilla 1968; Ladero Quesada, La hacienda real castellana entre 1480 y 1492, Valladolid 1967.
7. cf. e.g. Twersky, Rabad of Fosquiers, Cambridge, Mass. 1962, p.2. and n.1.
8. Graetz-SFR, *op.cit.* appx. 4a, p.417.
9. Verzeichniss Karaitischer u. anderer Hebräischer HS. im Besitze des Herrn. J. Fischl, Abdruck aus der H.B. Bd. XI, 1871, Berlin 1872, p.17, 34D, f.916.
10. Neubauer, Catalogue, Vol.1, col.673, Ms.1984.
11. cf. the list of communal leaders appended to the chapter on Bonafed. For an viith-xth century epitaph for a Seneor, cf. J. Navascues, *SEF*, 19, 18-91
12. cf. Cantera Burgos, España Medieval, Arqueología in ed. R. Barnett, The Sephardi Heritage, London 1971, p.49 and 31 and 113, p.256 & "don Senor e don Senor de Senuel" (Belorado, 3/3/1302) Cantera, *Juderías Burgalesas*, *Sef*.13, p.43/4.

13. S. Gillman, The Spain of Fernando de Rojas, Princeton 1972, pp. 245/6 from Serrano y Sanz's documents; cf. also Fita-Llabres, La Espana Hebraea, Madrid 1889, Vol.1, p.242, for Aragonese Jews bearing the name Aven Senhor (1492). For a Solomon Seneor in Hungary in 1488 cf. Andras Kubiny, Spanyol Zsidok a Rozezkori Budan in ed. Sandor Scheiber, Monumenta Hungariae Judaica, Budapest 1969 pp.19-24 (from reports in Sefarad 1970, p.91 and Schischa, in Archives, October 1970); c.f. also Millas-Cantera, Las Inscripciones Hebraicas de Espana, Madrid 1956, p. 366/7.
14. As is indicated by the name for the family in Segovia, cf. Fita, La juderia de Segovia, BRAH, IX, p.347; Lumbroso in Saragossa in SyS, p.31, n.1. in Segovia AGS, Casa y descargos s.v. Lumbroso in index.
15. For Maestre Shenaya Lubel in Segovia cf. IIB, p.321 No. 2-7; for Lubel in Saragossa, cf. list cited in n.11; for Lobel in the Saragossan leadership in xiith century, cf. J. Dishon, Zion, 1971, Vol.36, p.198.
16. cf. IIB, 323, 'Salamon Bienveniste vecino de Segovia' and IIB, 322, 'Yucaf Benveniste vecino de Segovia'.
17. Cf. IIB, 305, n.1 for a document of Saragossa 25/9/1429 mentioning the relation between Leonardo de la Cavalleria and Juce Bienveniste (of Brievesca) 'socerum vostrum'.
18. cf. J. Vicens Vives (ed), Historia de Espana y America, Barcelona 1974, vol.2, p.306, for Saragossa, and pp. 404 and 260 for Segovia, cf. also H. Grau, La antigua industria segoviana, ES, 10 (1969), pp.475-486.
19. Marx, Studies in Jewish History and Booklore, N.Y. 1944, p.85,
20. cf. A. MacKay, Popular movements and pogroms in xvth c. Castille, Past and Present 55, p.44, n.32.
21. Cambridge Economic History of Europe (ed) Postan et al. Vol.3, Cambridge University Press, 1963, pp.316-321.
22. McKay, op.cit., p.43.
23. As in note 21.
24. e.g. Alfonso Garcia Gallo, Curso de historia del derecho espanol, Madrid 1956, Vol.1, p.312 and also Valdeavellanos, Historia de las instituciones de la Espana medieval, Madrid 1970, pp. 592/3.
25. Valdeavellano , ibid.



26. Ibid and n.27, Haliczzer, Castilian aristocracy and mercedes reform of 1478-82, HAHR, 1975, pp.451 ff.
27. Haliczzer ibid., and Valdeavellanos, op.cit., 596/7.
28. McKay, op.cit., p.42
29. e.g. RGS 2/9/1479, 'Abraham Seneor y Vidal Bienveniste recaudadores mayores del arzobispado de Toledo'.
30. e.g. RGS 14/12/1477, 'Don Abraham Seneor y Don Abraham Bienveniste receptores del servicio y medio servicio'.
31. "Church and State 1300-1377, Theory and Fact", ed. Smalley, Highfield, Hale, Europe in the Late Middle Ages, London 1965, pp. 25/6, p.21.
32. For uprisings on this issue in Germany, e.g. Cologne (1364, 1370, 1396) Frankfurt (1355, 1364) Augsburg 1370, Lubeck 1383, CEHE, p.544 for resentment of tax-collectors and fraud and evasion of taxes in medieval Florence, cf. The Toledan rising of 1449 started with the demand for taxes, cf. E. Benito Ruano, Toledo en el s.xv., Madrid 1961, p. 34/35.
33. M. Colmeiro, Historia de la economia politica en Espana, Madrid 1965 (reprint) Vol.1, p.265.
34. cf. H. Beinart, The form of Jewish courtiership in Christian Spain in Elites and leading groups, lectures delivered at the convention of the Historical Society of Israel, December 1964, Jerusalem 1966, pp.55/60 (Hebrew).
35. B. Blanco y Gonzalez, Del cortesano al discreto, Madrid 1962, Vol.1, p.347.
36. McKay, op.cit., p.44.
37. The economies of Catalonia and Castile, in ed. R. Highfield, Spain in the xvth c. ed.cit., pp. 50/51, though there is no clear demarcation between Jews and conversos and between the xvth and previous centuries.
38. Juana Garcia was a conversa who engaged in collecting rents from outside Guadalajara as well cf. Cantera Burgos, Las juderias medievales, Guadalajara, Sefarad 1974, pp. 331 ff.
39. Tarsicio de Azcona, Isabel la Catolica, Madrid 1964, letter dated 1/7/1463.
40. IIB, p.321-322 and T de A, p. 41.
41. For the genealogy of. the references to the legajos of contaduria de la razon in IIB, p.322, n.2.
42. Members of the family appear as guarantors for each other, cf. n.41.

43. cf. IIB, p.320, n.1.
44. Cn Cabrera cf. BH2, 305, 308, 315, T de A, p.41, p. 190, 191, 198; and J. de Val Valdevieso "Resistencia al dominio señorial durante los últimos años del Reinado de Enrique IV" Hispania, 126, pp. 53ff, especially pp. 53, 73.
45. BH2, p. 270, Julien Weil, Les Juifs de Soria et Isabelle la Catholique, in REJ.
46. cf. IIB, p.280 (No.286) and McKay, op.cit., pp.42/3.
47. cf. IIB, p.322, n.22.
48. cf. e.g. the letter of the Crown, by petition of the Council of the Mesta, ordering that AS and Abraham Bienveniste should be allowed to collect the income from servicio y montazgo; RGS 10/10/1477; letter to the shepherds and owners of cattle ordering them that they should pay their servicio y montazgo dues to Abraham Seneor and Abraham Bienveniste; on 28/3/1479 Henry IV orders the contadores mayores to pay Abraham Seneor and Abraham Bienveniste the 'pedidos of the villas y lugares' in the archbishopric of Toledo, Madrid, Guadalajara, Talavera, et.al. Don Vidal Bienveniste had given the King 1480000 mvs. on account of the collection. Toledo Archivo de los Condes de Cedilo, from Filar Leon Tello, Judios de Toledo, Vol.2, No.1185 (in print) cited by kind permission of the author. They are designated as "recaudadores de los pedidos".
49. McKay, op.cit., pp.43/4, n.32.
50. Cn the sentencia, cf. BH2, p.302, IIB, No.318, pp. 329/331, Amador de los Rios Historia Social politica y religiosa de los judios de Espana y Portugal, Madrid 1960 (reprint) pp. 642-644.
51. Amador, op.cit., p.642, n.3.
52. McKay, op.cit., pp. 43/44, cf. n.48 and Weil, art. cit., and IIB, p.371.
53. The economies of Catalonia and Castille, loc.cit.p.50.
54. IIB, p.334, No.322 and written communication of Amado Represa from A.G.S. IyP='06=37.
55. Cn the juros, cf. Vicens Vives, 'Approaches to the history of Spain. ed.cit., p.78; A. Natilla Tascon, Declaratorias de los Reyes catolicos por reduccion de juros y otras mercedes, Madrid, 1952, pp.7-14 and p.8 on the juros de heredad to 'natural persons'.
56. cf. e.g. the grant of a tax-exemption to Maestre Serraya, 15/11/1451 in IIB, p.321, l.

57. cf. also BH2, p. 315 'To assign such revenues to a Jew, something previously unheard of', Mastre Shemaya had an income of 1000 mvs. situated in the aljama of Turegano, cf. n.211; Cantera, Los repartimientos del R. Jaco Aven Nunes, in Sef.14, p.229; cf. also A. Matilla Tascon, Declaratorias de los Reyes Catolicos sobre reduccion de juros y otras mercedes, ed.cit. pp. 84/5 for mentions of the physician R. Abraham's juro of 50000 mvs. in 1480 and Abraham Bienveniste's juro of 20000 mvs.; cf. no.151, No.368 and No.911 for Seneor.
58. IIB, No.322, p.334.
59. The title appears, apparently, only in the letter to the aljama, cf. *ibid.*
60. Colmeiro, *op.cit.*, Garcia, Gallo, *op.cit.*, Valdeavellanos, *op.cit.*
- 60a. cf. Moxo (*art.cit.* in N.97), p.360 & N.62.
61. Graetz, *op.cit.*, p.260, Kayserling, Christopher Columbus, 1894, p.24/27; Baron, Social and Religious history of the Jews, Vol.X, p.201, 202 and p.389, n.41; Neuman, The Jews in Spain, Vol.2, p.271; Battista i Roca, in New Cambridge Modern History, ed.G.R. Potter, CUP 1957, Vol.1, p.321. Baer is more cautious, cf. BH2, p.490 n.7 'the legendary stories', but cf. p.305 *ibid.* where Capsali's account of the expulsion is called 'a mixture of truth and legend', p.509, n.8.
62. cf. also the anonymous chronicle published by Marx, *op.cit.*p.83.

וידון אברהם הנז' הוא עשה הקרבה מהמלך עם המלכה כי היתה המלכה יורשת המלכות והמלך  
 שר אחד משרי ספרד ...

The first statement may be correct. The chronicler seems to be indebted to Capsali's source. To call Ferdinand שר אחד when he was King of Sicily and heir to the Crown of Aragon is an error which they both share. The legend is not mentioned either by R. Joseph ibn Saddiq, Abraham b. Solomon or Zacuto. Capsali's account is in Sederelyahu Zuta, Chs.56-50, ed. A. Shmoelevitz, S. Simonsohn, M. Benayahu, Jerusalem 1975, pp. 18C/9 and p.181, n.25.

63. cf. J. Vicens Vives, Historia critica de Fernando II de Aragon, Zaragoza, 1962, p. 234 and T de A, p.142.
64. *ed.cit.*, in n.62, p.185.
65. cf. IIB, No.329 where by misprint the date is rendered 1476 a mistake which is repeated in Kaplan, in EJ s.v. Seneor.

66. cf. IIB, No.322.
67. IIB, No.306 and No.323.
68. Vicens Vives, *Historia Critica ...*, p.587.
69. Vicens Vives, *ibid.*, p.260 and 258-263.
70. cf. his Juan Bravo y la familia Coronel, Instituto Diego de Colmenares, Segovia 1949 (offprint from ES, I, 1949) pp.8-9 from a copy of 1523; cf. also Teofilo Hernando's, Luis y Antonio Nunez Coronel, in ES (21) 1969, pp. 413-15, from a copy of 1785.
71. Vicens Vives, *op.cit.*, pp. 250 ff.
72. cf. his personal evaluation of his character in his Decadas, ed. Paz y Melia, BAE 258, Libro viii, Decada II, cap.x, p.112: "inspirado en su rectitud", "gran experiencia", "fiel observador de las leyes de la amistad"; T de A, pp. 114-116, 121-124, 133-135.
73. cf. notes 54, 49, 59.
74. IIB, p.334 "vuestra suficiencia e fidelidad e los muchos e buenos servicios que me avedes fecho e fasedes de cada dia".
75. As in N.72.
76. Vicens Vives, *op.cit.*, p.359 and n.1191 and n.1189.
77. *ibid.*, p.358 and n. 1187.
78. BH2, pp. 308-309 seems to date it to 1473 and in p. 305 to early in 1474.
79. Vicens Vives, *op.cit.*, pp.365; T de A, p.190.
80. Hernan Peres Coronel was AS's name after the conversion at Sta. Ma. de Guadalupe; cf. Cronicon de Valladolid, ilustrado con notas por D. Pedro Sainz de Baranda, Codoin, t: xiii, Madrid 1848, p.195 and n.301, 15/6/1942.
81. He was made consejero on 23/6/1492 (RGS 1492-vi-f.51) and on the same date contador mayor of Don Juan Prince of Asturias, SF, No.203.
82. Who these individuals were can only be guessed. The Duque de Albuquerque and the Conde de Benavente confederated themselves with Cabrera (cf. Vicens Vives, *op.cit.*, p.368-9). They both had Jewish assistants, or stewards and connections.
83. As in N.70.
84. cf. Vicens Vives, *op.cit.*, p.387, N.1283.

85. BH2, p.306; cf. also his characterization of AS and Abravanel's political tendencies in Don Isaac Abravanel's attitude to historical and political problems, Tarbiz, 1937, (viii) pp. 247 ff.
86. e.g. R. Jaco 'judio fisico vesyno de Madrid, IIB, no.328, pp. 337/8; cf. Beinart, The converso community in xvth c. Spain in ed. R. Barnett, The Sephardi Heritage, vol.1, London 1971, p.439 for conversos in the army of the Marques de Villena, a trend which he attributes to 'early disappointment and deep fore-knowledge'. For the allegiance of the Jews of Caceres to Portugal cf. T de A, p.383, n.45.
87. Vicens Vives, op.cit., pp.387/9.
88. On his relations with Bobadilla cf. the document of 1484 which mentions 'la confianza que della tovo e tiene el dicho don Abraham' IIB, p.335 after 1475; cf. also the testimony of Francisco de San Roman, concerning AS's activities as intermediary in the (intended) marriage of Juan Arias, nephew of the homonymous bishop and Bobadilla's niece in de Penalosa, op.cit., pp.21-22 (probably of the 1480's as it mentions burning of heretics).
89. Palencia, op.cit., loc.cit.
90. For Alonso de Quintanilla's role in Isabell's occupation of the Alcazar of Segovia, cf. R. Fuertes Arias, Alfonso de Quintanilla, Vol.1, Oviedo 1909, pp.117-119 and ibid., for his relations with Cabrera. For documents linking him to Seneor (of. 1489) cf. ibid., Vol.2, pp.109-110 and 119-120; orders to AS as treasurer of the Hermandad to pay Quintanilla, contador mayor de Cuentas.
91. cf. N.72.
92. Battista i Rocca, op.cit., loc.cit.
93. T de A, p.224 and Vicens Vives, op.cit., p.454.
94. As we learn from a document of 1484 which quotes an alvala of 28/2/1475, IIB, p.335/336.
95. IIB, p. 335.
96. The document is of 22/3/1476 in IIB, p.334.
97. On the alcabalas cf. Colmeiro, op.cit., Vol.1, pp. 539/40 and S. Moxo, Los Cuadernos de Alcabalas, AENE, 39, 1969, pp. 317-451.
98. cf. A. Garcia Gallo, op.cit., p.314.

99. Cf. Fita, BRAH, 23 p.414, n.2 and AHN, Inq.leg.1413 (AS's testimony cited below). The connection might explain the later adoption of an andalusian noble name: Corolonel. Cf. de Penalosa, op.cit.p.8.
100. RGS Catalogues, No.2820.
101. ibid., No.2868.
102. cf. N.31.
103. Palencia, op.cit., I, 94.
104. T de A, p.284.
105. RGS, I, No.3229.
106. 2/9/1479: "comision a peticion de Abrahen Seneor y don Vidal Bienveniste recaudadores mayores del arzobispado de Toledo y al bachiller Diego de Caceres alcalde de Talavera que haga pagar ciertos maravedies de ciertas rentas que les deben ciertas personas". RGS, Vol.2, No.1866.
107. cf. the 'memorial' discovered by T de A in Simancas, Diversos de Castilla, 'Las cosas que debían remediar los reyes' though undated it obviously precedes the establishment of the Inquisition, cf. idem, op.cit., p.387 and p.332.
108. RGS, Vol.2, No.470, 17/4/1478: "Provision para que AS receptor del servicio y montazgo don Abraham Bienveniste y los otros receptores nombren personas que tengan cargo de cobrarlos", cf. also McKay, op.cit., p.42.
109. op.cit., p.355/56.
110. J. Klein, The Mesta, Cambridge, Mass. 1920, p.208-242.
111. RGS, Vol.2, No.2736, 6/3/1480: "...que nos se paguen las yervas e medio diezmo e montazgo de la Serena, salvo a AS e a los que su poder tienen ...."
112. Klein, op.cit., p.217.
113. As in No.100 and 101.
114. cf. e.g. Vol.2 No.357, 2/3/1478 order to AS 'receptor hierbas de la Serena de la Orden de Alcantara', No. 2736, but cf. also No.1868, 2/9/1479 'Abraham Seneor y Vidal Bienveniste recaudadores mayores del arzobispado de Toledo' and N.111.
115. cf. Klein, op.cit., p.28 and p.293.

116. For a glossary, cf. Klein, p.428: yervas: fee exacted from those who cut hay on the commons; medio diezmo: half tithe levied on migratory sheep.
117. Klein, op.cit., p.180.
118. Cf. e.g. 2/6/1480, RGS, No.3611'a los concejos de villas y lugares de la Serena, y otras personas que no se entrometan de impedir que no acudan a AS o a quien su poder hubiere con los mrvs. del servicio y montazgo".
119. RGS, Vol.2, No.1868, 2/9/1479.
120. TRC, Vol.3, II 289(and II 280) pp. 421-423 (and pp. 410-412).
121. ibid., II, 280, pp. 410-412.
122. Matilla Tascon, Declaratorias ..., p.18.
123. ibid.
124. ibid., No.151, Abraham Bienveniste had 20,000 mvs. and loses 15,000; and ibid., No.362, R. Abraham the physician had 50,000 mvs. and loses 35,000. The aljamas of Calahorra (No.187) and Huete (No.480) are also mentioned.
125. IIB, p.335, an alvala of 28/2/1475, quoted in a letter of 14/2/1484.
126. Matilla Tascon, op.cit., No.911 to be taken from the rents from Segovia.
127. Rodriguez Villa, Bosquejo Historico de don Beltran de la Cueva, Madrid 1881, p.225, doc.No.51: "... a don Abraham Seneor nuestro receptor del servicio y montazgo ...vos mandamos que todos ... los mvs. e ganados que recibiedes ... del año que paso 1474 por el puerto de Arroyo Castano e los Mijares que se suelen recibir e recaudar por don Beltran de la Cueva duque de Albuquerque por merced que de ellos tenia ... que lo tengais en vuestro poder e no acudades con cosa alguna dello a ninguna persona ...", 30/4/1480. AS and others had advanced 3 million mrvs. to compensate Pacheco for Riaza which was taken by the monarchs, AGS, MYP, 7s-83. cf. also Ladero Quesada, La Hacienda, p.26 & N.23.
128. e.g. Kayserling's article in JE s.v. Seneor and Neuman, op.cit., Vol.2, p.272, speaks of 'the life pension of 150,000 mvs. which included the gift of 50,000 mvs. voted him by the Cortes of Toledo in 1430'; J. Kaplan, loc.cit. speaks of 'a gift of 100,000 guilders', all of them based probably on Clementin, Elogio de la reina dona Isabel, Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia, VI, 1821, p.150 where the text is misleading on the point unless read carefully.

129. M. Lunenfeld, The Council of the Sta. Hermandad, Coral Gables, Florida, 1970, p.69.
130. L. Suarez Fernandez (SF) p.13.
131. *ibid.* and n.4.
132. SF, No.139, letter of exemption for Solomon Seneor son of Abraham Seneor which mentions another for AS.
133. Quintanilla's role is emphasized in Lunenfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-33.
134. Lunenfeld, *op.cit.*, p.61.
135. The document was published by IIB, No.363 and again in SF, No.109 and again in TRC for that date.
136. *cf.* Lunenfeld, *op.cit.*, pp. 73/4.
137. BH2, p.316.
138. Lunenfeld, *op.cit.*, p.106.
139. Lunenfeld, *ibid.*, and n.49.
140. Lunenfeld, *ibid.*, and n.49.
141. Similarly, Haliczzer in his "Castillian aristocracy and mercedes reform" (HAHR, 1975) stresses the mal-practices of tax-collectors rather than those of tax-payers. For frauds etc. of French crown officers in the early xvith c. *cf.* J.H. Shennan, Government and Society in France 1461-1661, London 1969, p.142, n.59.
142. Amador, *op.cit.*, p.712.
143. TRC, III, 34, pp. 34ff.
144. Fuertes Arias, Quintanilla ..., vol.2, doc.29, p.119 "...no ceseis de pagar los nueve cuentos de mvs. que en vos estan librados a Pedro Zapata e a Juan Alvarez de Toledo para la paga de los castillos fronteros ...".
145. Fuertes Arias, *op.cit.*, docs.27 and 29, pp.109 and 119.
146. Diego de Colmenares, Historia de Segovia, Segovia 1922 (ed. G.M. Vergara), p.357 "Fuderia ... a la banda del mediodia de la Sinagoga hoy iglesia de Corpus Christi por detras de lo que hoy es iglesia mayor por la puerta que entonces nombraban fuerte y hoy de San Andrés, hasta la casa del Sol que hoy es matadero ..."
147. EH1, p.198.



148. cf. the leases of houses by Jews from the Cathedral, such as the one in which Abraham Alcael, son of Don Mose Alcael, vecino de Segovia, rents a house in the Calle Mayor de la Juderia, which extends from Sant Andres to the 'placuela del cano de la juderia'. One of its borders is 'to the back, the street which goes from the placuela del cano to the Sinoga Mayor' the document is of 2/6/1478, IIB, p.365 (From AHN).
149. A document of 15/6/1496 shows Yucef Nahmias Lohon leasing a house in the collacion de Sant Miguell (rather than San Adres); cf. IIB, p.365; another of 1477 witnesses the sale of the house of Ysaque Aben Testiel and his wife in the collacion de Sant Miguel, cf. IIB, p.365.
150. The xviith c. (1780), Libro de hipotecas (Archivo Provincial Segovia) IV, f.312 quoted a document of 1472, in which are mentioned: "Salamon Matutia, David Matutia ... hijos y herederos de Dna Canha (Cinha?) mujer que fue de Isaque de Bejar difuntos ... judios vecinos que fueron de Segovia "who transfer the lease of some houses to Iza Bermejo, and moro vecino de Segovia en arrabal de la moreria ... linderos por una parte ... calle publica..." 5/8/1472. (My thanks to Lda. Manuela de Villalpando for pointing it out).
151. *ibid.*, f.177, document of 1467.
152. There is some difficulty in identifying the Sinagoga Mayor, Authors who follow the Fortalitium Fidei identify it with today's Corpus Christi convent. The identification is not convincing as shown by Oscar D'Araujo, La Grande Synagogue de Segovie, REJ, 39, p. 209. Joseph ibn Shem Tov used to preach at  
in the Great Synagogue in the fifties, cf. his sermons in Jews College MS 61, f.102V.
153. AHN, Inq., leg.1413 and n.357.
154. On the cemetery, cf. Notes sur l'histoire des juifs en Espagne, REJ 14. p.255, No.2
155. Marques de Lozoya, La Moreria de Segovia, ES, 1967, p.305.
156. The document states explicitly 'now that the Jews of the said city were segregated by my order from amongst the Christians the council of the said city has moved them to behind the monastery of Sta. Maria de la Merced in land belonging to it ...', IIB, No.278, p.274, Fita, BRAE, 9, p.287ff.
157. IIB, p. 346.

158. BH1, p.191 and p.420, n.5: "it is possible to extract from similar registers for the years 1389-90 which Fita published in BRAH, IX, 1886, 344, the names of 55 Jewish householders". I could only find 53. Beinart (EJ s.v. Segovia) found only 50! Simuel Hayme Vidas y suhijo (Fita, p.345) are probably not to be counted as two households. Similarly Ysrael in 'las casas do solia morar Ysrael' might be dead, similarly don Zag in 'Yuda Levi texedor hijo de don Zag' (p.346) might be dead. The two Caragoci (p.347) Mose and Cag are obviously related. Should they be counted as two families?
159. BH1, p.191.
160. On the basis of the tax-assessments of servicio y medio servicio of 1474 and 1482 and the castellanos de oro tax of 1485, 1486, 1488, 1490 and 1491, cf. SF, p.56.
161. cf. McKay, op.cit., p.38, but cf. also p.39. Baer, BH2, p.485, maintains that in Segovia in 1460 there were 29 independent households. The list made by Fita (ibid., p.351-2) from the Libro de Mayordomias of 1460 written by Diego Lopez del Castillo again concerns only those Jews who rented land from the Cathedral.
162. M.A. Ladero Quesada, Juderias de Castilla segun servicios fiscales (S.xv), Sef. 31, 1971, 249-264, p.251.
163. cf. Beinart in E.J. s.v. 'Segovia'.
164. cf. Sobreques in Vicens Vives, ed. Historia de Espana y America, Vol.2, pp.260-263; Klein, op.cit. p.2, n.2.
165. AGS, Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda, Vol.1, leg.I (1369-1500), No.5.
166. For the significance of this, cf. McKay, op.cit. p.47 and also Colmenares, op.cit., t.2, p.283 for the date.
167. If one follows Baer's interpretation, BH1, p.198. A list of rented houses is, however, bound to include more of the poorer members. These lists are not complete as they omit Jewish names known to have lived in Segovia from other sources, such as AS.
168. The (unpaginated) Inc.leg.1413 (AHN) mentions, e.g. Don Jacob Cohen (1486) calcetero; Abraham Neme, joyero (1488); rabi Salamon, fisico (1490) Abrian Neme, when testifying in Jan.1482 remembered how his father, don Semoel went to the house of Diego Arias, (i.e. before 1466) to sell some 'olanda e licencos'. (Conti over).

168. (Contd). A document of 1488 mentions Jews 'who sell food, salt, dried vesugos, and other things and merchandise'... in the market on Fridays ...' (in the place near the aqueduct probably) cf. SF, p.41, n.14 and doc. No.118, pp.310-311. Also mentioned are Jaco Pilo, jubetero (4/7/1476), Ysaque, pelicero (22/6/1478) in IIB, p.365. Also Abnaten, jubetero (1432), Rabi Yuce, fisico que murio (1460), Acequi, syllero (1460); Caque Pilo, ferrero (1460); Abraham Gates, tintorero (1460); Mayr de Vidas, joyero (1461), in Fita, BAH, IX, pp.350/353, and also p.278-279 (documents of segregation) 1489 mention: Hayme Sastre, Yuce de Castro, currador. R. Abraham aven Bueno, fisico, was an agent in Segovia for Burgos merchants for whom he would buy wool (cf. IIB, p.426 and SF, No.205). In 1482 Jaco Batidor, represents the aljama at the city council (SF, p.206).
169. IIB, p.520, n.2.
170. SF, No.238, p.497 "... los judios que tenian muchas rentas de yglesias e dis que so color que devian las rentas de las dichas yglesias dis que dexaron e traspasaron muchos contrabtos usurarios ... muchos labradores synples e otras personas que asi fizieron los ... contrabtos son fatigados por vos o por los otros juezes de su obispado..."
171. IIB, No.292 and No.293, pp. 305/310.
172. IIB, No.305, p.320, "Rab<sup>n</sup> Yuce aben Santo fisico e contador mayor de cuentas del principe nuestro sennor e del su consejo". For his Segovian domicile cf. the superscriptions to his sermons in MS Jews College No.61 & N.152.
173. IIB, No.307, pp. 321-322.
174. IIB, No.309, pp.322-325
175. IIB, No.350, p.384.
176. IIB, No.362, pp. 387-8
177. IIB, No.372, pp. 398/9.
178. cf. IIB, p.234 and also F. Cantera, in Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios Sefaradies, Madrid, 1970, p.366: "... de Madrid para arriba, de ordinario no hubo en 1391 la repercusion que nosotros creiamos..." but cf. BH2, p.98.
179. Graetz-SFR, Vol.6, pp.98 and n.1 are still useful and BH2, p.288 and p.488 n. 29. Martin A. Cohen (ed. & transl.) Usque's "Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel, Philadelphia 1969, p. 196/7 & N.83m, p.319.
180. Colmenares, op.cit.,T.2, pp.196-198.

181. See Jews College MS No.61, f.112a "

ויהי בשנים עשרה שנה על חמשה אלפים ומאתים לחדוש העולם כשבא הפרינספי דון אינריק י"א בערי אנדלוס בחדש ניסן שלחו אליו קהל שיגוביא שני אנשים עברים מנכבדיהם על אודות האומה אשר קמה עליהם להתעולל עלילות ברשע יום חליית משיחם לשלול שלל ולבוז בז והוא צוה אותי ללכת אל העיר ואגרות נתן לי אל שר העיר ומנהיגיה ואל הקהל שטר אמנה לנחם אותם ולדבר על לבם ואנכי באתי אל העיר ערב שבת עיף ויגע מרוב הדרך ...

182. SF, p.489/90, No.23: "por amistad que tenia con algunos judios vezinos de la dicha cibdad y por les fazer buena obra..."

183. IIB, No.274, p.262.

184. IIB, No.278, p.274.

185. SF, No.60, 22/6/1482.

186. IIB, No.248/2, p.364.

186a. SF, No.118, No.60, No.73, No.74.

187. cf. Notes sur l'histoire des juifs en Espagne, REJ, 14, No.8, pp.257 ff. and Fita, La Juderia de Segovia, BAE II, p.368/9.

188. For Alfonso de Espina's residence in Segovia from 1455 and onwards cf. Fita, BAE, IX, p.353 and (ed. Cayetano Rossel) Diego de Talera's Memorial de diversas hazanas (B.E 70) Madrid 1878, ch.iv, p.7 and BH2, pp.285/292. Netanyahu, Alonso de Espina, Was he a new-Christian?, PAAJR, Vol.43, 1976, pp.107-165.

189. BAE 23, (1893) pp.369ff.

190. Colmenares, T.2, Ch.33, p.301ff. On Juan Arias D'Avila cf. the excellently documented article 'Arias Davila, Juan' in Historia Ecclesiastica de Espana, Appendix, by Tarsicio de Azcona (in print) cf. also Beinart, EJ s.v. Segovia.

191. Testimony of Salvador Meme before the Inquisition, 13/2/1488, cf. n. 357.

192. Espana Hebrea, p.237.

193. cf. Neubauer, Medieval Jewish Chronicles, Oxford 1887, p. xiv.

194. Testimony of Maestre Geronimo, 4/5/1487, cf. n.357.

195. Toledano, La lumiere du Maghreb, Jerusalem, 1911, pp. 54 and 266. Also A. Shmuelevitz, S. Simonsohn, N. Benvenhu (eds) Seder Elyahu Zuta by Rabbi Elyahu Capsali Jerusalem 1975, pp. 179 and 236.

196. Kerem Hemed, ed. Abraham Alnakawa, Livorno 1871, part 2, No.96. (R. Yuda de Castro is mentioned in IIB, p.382; Avila 1486; and Yucef Castro of Talavera in 1446 in IIB, p.302; in IIB, p.421 there

196. (contd) is mention of R. Yuda Algaroche, Buitrago 1492; but I can find no connection between these and the litigants).
197. He quotes him *ibid*.
198. cf. Marx, Studies in Jewish history and booklore, ed.cit., p.85.
199. cf. EJ s.v. Maimi.
200. cf. Antonio de la Torres testimony before the Inq. on 25/6/1498 "...que era natural de Segovia fijo de Yuda Locano e que se convirtio el anno antes quel pregon de la salida de los judios ... ha 24 o 25 annos ... seyendo este testigo de hedad de 12 o 13 anos ... estava estudiando en la dicha villa con un Cerulla judio difunto ... algunas fiestas venia a casa del dicho su padre a Segovia ...", IIB, p.527.
201. cf. Steinschneider, Katalog Munchen, p.28, n.64. For Moses Bienveniste de Segovia (early xvith ) cf. *idem*. CB, Vol.2, Col.1779.
202. cf. Harkavi's ed. in Hadashim gam Yeshanim, in Graetz-SPR, op.cit., Vol.6, p.21.
203. *ibid*, n.2.
204. cf. *infra.*, p. 272.
205. By Jacob ibn Polia from Toledo who was in Segovia in 1401. In a colophon to a MS he finished on that year he relates how he went to see the river with 'my relative Don Joseph Gonzon, R. Isaac Adobles, Don Joseph Salina and the head of the community, Don Moses Arroyo ...", cf. Comite de Paleographie Hebraique. Manuscrits Medievax en caracteres hebraiques, Vol.I, Jerus. Paris, 1972, I.I. notices, I, 75.
206. On procuradores of the aljama of Segovia in 23/7/1409, cf. IIB, No.274 & N.207. on the 'almadna de la carne de los judios' in Madrid 1442 cf. BAH, 35, 436 and IIB, p.125, N.3, for the same in Toledo 23/3/1385, IIB No.233 and p.226 for the alcavalas de la carne e vino judiego de Valladolid'. for Seville 1411, IIB, p.236, No.249.
207. List of Segovian Jewish procuradores follows:
- | mentioned in | procurador       |
|--------------|------------------|
| 7/1409       | Jacob de Cuellar |
| 7/1409       | Yuda Asayute     |
| 6/1422       | Yuda Caragoca    |
| 6/1422       | Jaco Galhon      |
| 6/1422       | Jaco Batidor     |
| 8/1432       | Ysaque Avia      |
| 10/4/1486    | Mosse Caragosa.  |

208. cf. Loeb in REJ, 14, p.263. Though his view of the development of the institution is not fully documented.
209. cf. e.g. the litigation between Abraham Sevillano and the community of Avila about his payment in Arch.Chanc.Valladolid, Leg.2/58 and IIB, No.355, pp. 381-2 (February 1486).
210. cf. infra, p. 272.
211. cf. Cantera Burgos, Sefarad 14, p.223, No.235, Los Repartimientos de R. Jacob Aben Nunez (1474): 'el aljama de los judios de Segovia con los judios de Turruegano e con las ayudas que con ellos suelen pechar...', 1472, p.229, 'mrs. que dellos tiene por merced en cada ano maestre Seraya fisico del dicho señor rey'; cf. also, Ladero, Sef.31, 1971, p.263, n.21 since 1464 at least.
212. cf. IIB, No.322, p.334.
213. cf. IN, p.81.
214. cf. e.g. Diccionario de Historia de Espana, s.v. 'alguacil'.
215. cf. IIB, No.322.
216. cf. Matilla Tascon, op.cit.,p.7, mercedes 'de recompensa' have the formula 'por los muchos e buenos servicios que me fecistes'.
217. IIB, No.322.
218. Juan Bravo y la familia Coronel (ES 1949)(p.11, 12 of the offprint cited in n.70).
219. Quoted ibid.
220. cf. infra., p. 274-5.
221. cf. ibid.
222. cf. RGS, Vol.1, 3075, 17-ii-1477, on 'Edcudero', cf. Juan Manuel, El Libro de los Estados, ed. R. Tate and J. Macpherson, Oxford 1974, pp. 132/9.
223. J.H. Parry, The Age of Reconnaissance, London, 1973, p.45/6.
224. SE, No.39, pp.162-3 "...vestir nin traer en sus ropas nin guarniciones seda nin chamelote nin pano de grana nin oro nin aljofar ..."
225. ibid.
226. BH2, p.259/60.

227. T de A, op.cit. p.635.
228. Cantera Burgos, Las juderías de Guadalajara, Sef. 1974, p.70 ff - 20/1/1488.
229. cf. ed. Ischak Lopes, Aboab, Nomologia, Amsterdam 5347, Ch.27. Netanyahu's paragraphs on the relation between Seneor and Abravanel in his Don Isaac
230. Abravanel, Philadelphia 1953 (pp. 50, 52, 54, 55, 59) are mostly hypothetical. There is no convincing evidence that Abravanel was in Segovia.
230. cf. chapter on Alami.
231. cf. chapter on social conflict.
232. cf.G.D. Cohen, The Book of Tradition by Abraham ibn Davd, Philadelphia, 1967, p.20 and n.15 also pp.270-276.
233. IB, p.988:                             ... דון יהודה הלוי ... כאשר היחה המשרה על שכמו ...  
  ... דורש טוב לעמו ודובר שלום בכל לשון של זכות ...
234. Iggeret, p.27:                         ... אחרי אשר לא נשאר יהודי רואה פני המלך ודורש ...  
  ... טוב לעמו ומליץ עליהם ...
235. RGS, Vol.3, 24/9/1480: "al corregidor y alcalde de Talavera sobre los bienes de la herencia de un judío vecino de esa villa tomados a Juan de Talavera su criado y universal heredero ..."
236. RGS, Vol.IV, No.134, 1/2/1485 'petición del maestro Juan de Talavera vecino de Segovia sobre que las aljamas de judíos del reino no quieren recibirle por escribano del juzgado y repartimiento de ellas alegando haberse convertido al cristianismo...."
237. RGS, Vol.IV, No.142, 2/2/1485 "no quisieron recibirlo por escribano del juzgado y repartimiento de las aljamas de los judíos del reino ..."
238. For the meeting in November, cf. SF, No.78, p.243, 30/11/1484.
239. cf. N.236.
240. RGS, Vol.IV, No.136, 1/2/1485.
- 2-1. SF, No.80, pp.246/7.
242. RGS, Vol.IV, No.1069, 4/5/1485.
243. IIB, No.252, pp.376/8.
244. *ibid.*, Section 2.
245. BH2, p.341.

246. IIB, No.348 and 349.
247. IIB, No.348.
248. cf. Seneor, Abraham in EJ.
249. IIB, No.349 and 349.
250. IIB, No.343. The measure might have been taken with the conversos in mind and in response to contemporary feeling against conversos judaizing which was so often expressed in eating maşot for Passover.
251. cf. further and Tarsicio de Azcona's 'Arias Davila, Juan' in Diccionario eclesiastico de Espana, appx. (in print).
252. IIB, No.37 8.
253. SF, p.421, No.192 (on 7/5) "despues que el vino a nuestra corte".
254. *ibid.*
255. SF, p.49, n.8.
256. SF, No.201.
257. cf. Chronicon de Valladolid, loc.cit. (cf. n.80).
258. *ibid.* and A.yA Garcia Carraffa, Diccionario Heraldico, S.7. Coronel.
259. Marques de Lozoya, ES, 1960, 12, p.65.
260. SF, No.203, p.438.
261. *ibid.*
262. de Penalosa, op.cit. (25th/7/1492) pp.8-9.
263. cf. Marques de Lozoya, ES, 1960, 12, p.65.
264. de Penalosa, op.cit. p.13 (but he considers them 'sospechosos' cf. N.265).
265. Colmenares, op.cit.T.2., cap.34
266. cf. El libro del Parral, ed. R. Hernandez Ruiz de Villa, ES, 1966, Vol.18, p.314, 317, 329, 359.
267. Piedras de Segovia, by Juan de Vera, ES, Vol.II, pp.488, 495, and from a document of 1544, p.457 'entiempos pasados mando Hernan Perez Coronel difunto 10,000mvs. de juro para dote y memoria' cf. also Archivo Protocolos leg.124, p.24a/5e (Lazaro de Coto)(My thanks to N.de Villalpando for pointing it out).



268. Zeitlin, Opposition to leaders appointed by the government, JQR, 1941, , 31, pp.282, 300, .295.
269. Baron, The Jewish community, Vol.3, p.66, n.7.
270. IN, pp.114/5, but also p.118, 145/6, for Aragon.
271. The Jewish Community, I, p.290.
272. IN, p.114.
273. Laws of Reason and Laws of Religion, Essays and Studies presented to St.A. Cook, London, 1950, pp.91/2.
274. IN, p.115.
275. I have used the summaries of the 3 cases where AS is mentioned in IIB and added a few details from the cases in the Archivo Real Chancilleria, Valladolid. (My thanks to Ms. Varona for her help with general comments and paleography).
276. cf. IIB, No.329, on Vidal Astori, cf. L. Piles, Notas sobre judios del Reino de Valencia, Sef.13, 1953, p.118.
277. IIB, No.329. The letter obviously written at AS's request, shows his centralizing mentality.
278. P. Leon Tello, Los Judios de Avila, Avila 1963, pp.60/1, No.XIII.
279. ibid. "que non useades del dicho officio de judicatura de los judios e la dicha cibdad de Avila en lo cevil ni en lo criminal de que no usabdes e conosciades antes e al tiempo que fuesedes puesto en la dicha posesion ..."
280. On the corregidor, see B. Gonzalez Alonso, El Corregidor castellano (1348-1808) Madrid, 1970.
281. BH2, p.270.
282. SF, No.43, pp.167/8.
283. IIB, p.377.
284. On the legislation of 1380, cf. IIB, No.227, p.221.
285. IIB, p.288 "que lo faga natar el ray de la corte ..."
286. e.g. in the creation of separate quarters.
287. cf. Deputacion Provincial de Segovia, Publicaciones Historicas, Vol.4: Colecion Diplomatica de Sepulveda Segovia 1956, p.534, doc.161.
288. RGS, Vol.3, No.22, 3/8/1480.

289. According to Bernaldez, the Duchess of Medina, godmother of the infante was wearing amongst other things 'un tabardo de carresi bordado en damasco' which, at the end of the festivities, she gave to a 'Jew, bufoon of the king whose name was Alegre ...' cf. ed. Gomez Moreno and J. de Mata Carriazo, Memorias del reinado de los reyes catolicos, Madrid, 1962, p.74. For albadan or albardan, cf. Cantera, Fernando del Pulgar y los conversos, in ed. Highfield, Spain in the xvth century, p.552, n.43. In Ladero Quesada, La hacienda, p.92 there is mention of a 'judio Portugues' (1491) who, if identical with our Portuguese would indicate the nature of the case as a conflict between two court Jews.
290. cf. IIB, No.347, pp. 361/2 completed by RGS, Vol.IV, No.392, 23/2/1485.
291. Hilkhot Sanhedrin, 26/7, and Dinur, Israel Bagolah, I,2, pp.476/80, and Asaf, Bate Hadin, Vesidrehem, Jerusalem, 1924, Ch.I.
292. Z. Aveneri, Zion, 1960, 57-61.
293. IIB, No.338, p. 349/50.
294. Shiv'a Enayim, Leghorn, 1745.
295. IN, pp.112-114.
296. Merem Hemed, Part 2, No.96, ed.cit. in N.196.
297. IIB, No.355 and Archivo Real Chancilleria, Seccion Ejecutorias, leg.2/58.
298. IIB, No.358, 5/8/1486 and ARC, SE, leg.4/35.
299. IIX, p.152 and BH1, p.317 and IIB, No.347, p.362 "lo qual por los de nuestro consejo visto e avido sobre ello cierta ynformacion de rebi de judios cerca de lo que la ley de los judios quiere e dispone..."
300. RGS, Vol.IV, No.788, 24/9/1485. For AS's command against Mayr Barchillon and his faction on 15/11/1491 cf. SF, No.167, p.357/377.
301. IIB, No.379, pp.408/409.
302. BH2, pp.318/320, Asaf, Bate Hadin Vesidrehem, p.75, N.1 from Adret, I, 475.
303. cf. The Catholic Kings and the titled nobility of Castile, in Europe in the Late Middle Ages (eds. Hale, Highfield, Smalley, London 1962, pp.384/5.
304. S. Haliczzer, Castilian aristocracy and Mercedes Reform, HAHB, 1975, p.421.

305. Marvin Lunenfeld, The Council of the Sta. Hermandad; University of Miami Press, 1970.
306. As is implied by Asaf, op.cit. pp.76/77.
307. cf. list of general assemblies, appended.
308. cf. N.307.
309. BH2, p.270.
310. cf. List 1.
311. IIB, p.383.
312. IIB, p.338.
313. SF, No.78.
314. cf. List No.2.
315. The escribania mayor de privilegios is described in Martin Postigo, La cancelleria de los reyes catolicos, Valladolid, 1959.
316. IIB, No.355.
317. SF, p.247.
318. ibid, No.90.
319. cf. List No.2.
320. e.g. in 1480 the aljama of Leon presents a letter obtained by the general procurador Santo Apullate de Alcala, from Juan II, SF, No.49.
321. cf. Derashot Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov, Salonika 1525, f.17a, col.c.
322. cf. N.317.
323. On his role as procurador cf. IIB, n.403/4, No.376 on Shevet Judah, cf. Baer, Untersuchungen u. Quellen u. Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin 1923, and 'He'arot Hadasot lesepher Sheret Judah' in Tarbiz, VI, p.152ff.
324. Ibn Verga, Shevet Judah, end of Chapter 41.
325. cf. IIB, pp.88, 101, 102 and index s.v. escribania.
326. See further and chapter on Social Conflicts in Castile.
327. cf. N.232, 233, 234.
328. BH2, pp. 314/5.
329. SF, No.90.

330. SF, pp.23/30.
331. SF, No.90.
332. BH2, p.341ff.
333. SF, No.80 and No.81.
334. SF, p.247.
335. IIB, No.349.
336. *ibid*, p.366.
337. cf. Chapter on Social Conflicts in Castile.
338. cf. E, Rincon (ed) Coplas Satiricas y Dramaticas de la edad media, Madrid 1968, p.37; "Ve los lobos entrar y los ganados balar"; "Trae un lobo carnicero ...", p.41: "La gran loba hambrienta".
339. SF, p.310, petition by the 'aljama de los judios', 4/11/1488.
340. The tradition is not exclusively Spanish. It is one of the usual factors in centralization.
341. SF, No.141 and M.A. Ladero Quesada, Dos temas de la Granada Nazari in Estudios sobre la sociedad castellana en labaja edad media, Universidad Madrid, 1969, pp.321-325, and *idem*, La esclavitud por guerra a fines del siglo xv., Hispania, 105, 1967, pp.63-88.
343. Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Catolicos (eds. M. Gomez Moreno, J. de Mata Carriazo) Madrid, 1962, p.195.
344. SF, No.122.
345. SF, No.131.
346. IIB, p.393/4.
347. cf. Harkavi (ed) Abraham b. Solomon's chronicle appended to Graetz-SPR, op.cit.p.19. and X.11.
348. BRAH, Vol.23 (1893), p.389.
349. *ibid.*, p.425.
350. BH2, p.314.
351. *ibid.*
352. cf. N.348.
353. BH2, p.502 and N.74/75.
354. BRAH, Vol.23, p.413.

355. *ibid.* p.423.
356. *ibid.* p.434.
357. The legajo has been used by T de A for his article 'Arias Davila Juan' (*loc.cit.*). Three paragraphs are transcribed in L.F. de Penalosa, *art.cit.* The paragraphs I transcribe have not, to my knowledge, been used before. The legajo is unpaginated but arranged chronologically.
358. de Penalosa, *op.cit.*, p.21/22 and *supra*, N.88.
359. BH2, p.401/402, Fita, *op.cit.*, p.425 also surmised that AS had been responsible for the delay in the transfer to Avila.
360. Fita, El Santo Nino de la Guardia, BAH, XI, 1887, No.29 and No.31 (pp.56/59 of the offprint) and cf. BH2, p.503.
361. BH2, p.400.
362. SF, p. 375.

APPENDIX 1

The following lists try to show the intensification of activity in two centralized institutions under AS: the procurador and the general assembly or junta.

LIST NO. 1.

GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF JEWS  
UNDER FERDINAND AND ISABELLA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DESIGNATION</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
12/3/1477	Valladolid	"procuradores ... están juntos..."	Information about AS's appointment	IIB, p.338.
30/11/1484	Maqueda	"Ayuntados los procuradores"	fiscal	SF, 78.
1485	Valladolid	"procuradores ... ayuntados..."	fiscal	SF, p.273.
Bef.1486	Valladolid	"sabios que en la junta de Valladolid fallo ...."	judicial	IIB, 383
c.1490	?	"los procuradores de todas las aljamas...."	redemption of captives	SF, No.156

LIST No. 2.

INSTANCES OF ACTIVITIES OF  
THE GENERAL JEWISH PROCURADOR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
31/5/1457	Valladolid	Jaco de Cuellar	SF, p.126
5/5/1446	Madrigal	Sento Alpullate	SF, p.122
30/1/1447	Valladolid	Santo Anpullate	SF, p.127
29/3/1447	Valladolid	Sancho Alpullate de Alcala	IIB, 313
28/5/1455	Cordoba	Santo Apullate	IIB, 327
12/8/1455	Sevilla	Santo Alpullate	SF, p.123
6/9/1477	Sevilla	procurador	SF, 193.
27/10/1477	Xeres	procurador	SF, p.129
9/11/1478	Medina del Campo	por parte de las aljamas ..."	SF, No.31.
9/3/1479	Tarrazona	Jaco Cachopo	SF, No.74.
28/4/1482		Mose Manan	SF 262/3
13/2/1483	Madrid	Jaco Cachopo	IIB, p.314
12/3/1484	Agreda	" "	SF, pp.220/221
15/9/1484		Jaco Cachopo	SF No.75
15/6/1485		" "	SF No.90
2/12/1485	Valladolid	Mose Manan	SF, No.93
23/2/1486		por parte de las aljamas ..."	SF, No.95
bef.2/1486		Abraham Sevillano	IIB, 381
4/12/1488	Valladolid	Rabbi Abraham Najara "procurador que se dixo ser de las aljamas ..."	SF, No.120



APPENDIX 2.

THE REPUTATION OF AS IN  
THE XVTH AND XVITH CENTURIES

The following is an attempt to present and analyze the attitudes to AS present in literary sources of the xvth and xvith centuries, both Jewish and Christian. These accounts are characterized by the omission of many if not most of the facts known from the documents used in the chapter.

Alonso de Palencia (1423-1492)

The paragraphs dealing with AS in Palencia's Decadas have been described (above Ch.5) as sympathetic. This becomes more clear if we have in mind the attitude to court Jews in previous Castilian chronicles.<sup>1</sup> To say that they were antisemitic is not a very useful generalization since that might be said about most Spanish works of the period and because the Jews occupy a very minor role in them. But the selection of facts on Jews might be said to be determined by a framework of motifs concerning Jews which is ultimately unsympathetic.

These motifs include the 'Jew as sly',<sup>2</sup> the 'Jew as evil counsellor',<sup>3</sup> the 'Jew as magician' (a theme ultimately related to the motif of the 'devil and the Jew')<sup>4</sup> etc.

This might be said to be the case with the attitude

to Abraham Bienveniste in the Cronica de Juan II (by Alvar Garcia de Sta.Maria) in the Victorial of Gutierre Diez de Games (1438-1448?), in the Cronica del Halconero de Juan II of Pedro Carrillo de Huete and in the Refundicion of the same by Lope Barrientos.<sup>5</sup>

Palencia refers to AS in connection with the events which led to the transfer of the alcazar of Segovia to the Isabeline party and eventually to the so called reconciliation between Henry IV and Isabella. A reconciliation which in fact was a clear victory for the Isabeline party.

The question of who held the Alcazar of Segovia was of major tactical importance in any Castilian power conflict of the time as it was in 1473 not only because of its inherent quality as a fortified structure, but also because it housed the royal treasure.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, Isabel's establishing a hold on the alcazar was an important and major step towards consolidating a political position which would eventually lead to her recognition as heiress and crowning as Queen.

To involve AS in the events as a factor is therefore to establish him as an early and firm supporter of the Isabeline cause. This is precisely what Palencia does in his account of the events cited above.

As to AS's important role in helping to consolidate the Isabeline party's political position, Palencia's account does not by any means overstate the case even though modern Isabeline historians do not mention AS. On the contrary, the above mentioned document published by Luis Felipe de Penalosa in 1948 shows that if anything AS did

more than just advise Cabrera to keep the alcazar and not give it over to Henry.

Both the Queen's letter and Palencia refer to AS's activities in 1473, Palencia with perhaps less warmth as he is writing about a Jew while the Queen is writing about a Christian. Still Palencia, unlike previous Spanish chroniclers writing about Jews, actually pays attention to AS's motivations and gives a character description which transcends the usual repetitions of literary motifs. Moreover within the unmistakable pro-Isabeline and anti-Enriquean bias of his chronicle his association of AS with events leading to Isabel's succession is evidence of a sympathetic and positive attitude towards Seneor.

At the root of this sympathetic attitude lies not only Palencia's probable first-hand acquaintance with AS as fellow workers for the Isabeline cause in those years. Palencia belonged to that circle of historians who were creating historical propaganda trying to legitimise Isabel's pretensions and justify her policy. The reputation of AS a favourite of the monarchs benefited from this by reflection.

Andres Bernaldez (1463-1513?)

It would seem that this is the reason for the treatment of AS in the chronicle of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella by the curate of Los Palacios, near Seville, Andres Bernaldez, b. Fuentes de Leon c.1450.

Bernaldez' attitude to AS cannot be said to be necessarily sympathetic in the sense in which Palencia's is.

But the passages devoted to AS show a tendency which might be explained similarly in terms of a justification of Isabeline behaviour.

Most historians who deal with Bernaldez's attitude to the Jews are content with dismissing him as an antisemite and then proceed to use his chronicle as evidence. This would seem to be an oversimplification which does not answer the perhaps more important questions of the sources of his attitudes to Jews and the particular form this attitude takes.

If by antisemitism one means a consistent negative attitude to the Jews, Bernaldez would not seem to fit this description.

It may perhaps be more helpful to describe him as a historian who is primarily concerned with justifying or glorifying the reign of the Catholic monarchs and one who identifies himself with the lower orders perhaps more precisely with the andalucian rural population. In other words when a justification of Crown policy necessitates it he attacks the Jews. Once he attacks them he does so voicing at times popular anti-Jewish feeling and at times theological commonplaces for which one of his sources is the 'Fasciculus Temporum'.

When this justification of Crown policy by anti-Jewish diatribe is not necessary he adopts a neutral position. This attitude of interest and neutrality or even sympathy can be noticed in the passages on AS.

One of these, the description of the conquest of Malaga in 1487 mentions AS and has been cited above.

That Bernaldez' information is accurate can be seen from the various mentions in documents of the RGS concerning the ransom and AS's role. Bernaldez' interest in the episode lies in his view of it as an example of how Providence acts against the Jews,<sup>7</sup> but he does not bring this out as clearly as he does in his description of the capture of the Moors.

Then when describing the expulsion of the Jews<sup>8</sup> he is interested in giving the numbers of the Jews (this preoccupation with numbers seems to be one of his characteristics) and he uses a letter written by Meir Melamed to AS.

In Ch.CXII he describes how the Jews lived in Spain and he gives AS as an example of how wealthy the Jews were

"there were amongst them people who had ten million (maravedies) such as Abraham Seneor who used to farm the rents of Castile (que arrendaba la masa de Castilla) and others who were merchants and were very wealthy and notwithstanding all this glory and confiding in the vain hope of their blindness they went on the roads and left the lands of their birth etc."<sup>9</sup>

Bernaldez who had access to AS's letters may very well have known him. This hypothesis may be strengthened by the fact that Bernaldez shows interest in and detailed knowledge of events in Jerez and Utrera which were towns where AS collected taxes from early on. Seneor's presence in Andalucia is well attested from his signature in contracts in Jerez and from Inquisition records.<sup>10</sup>

In Bernaldez we see AS's reputation as a wealthy man and one who helped the Jews as well as a reliable

authority on Jewish statistics. This picture of AS as a wealthy tax collector who helps the aljamas changes completely in the next sources which are concerned with his conversion. Here AS is represented as a model of piety. The financial aspect, distasteful to certain exponents of xvith c. Spanish thought, is entirely omitted.

The Chronicon of Valladolid.

Thus the chronicon of Valladolid,<sup>11</sup> probably edited by the Dr. Franco of Toledo, the Queen's physician, only mentions AS in connection with his conversion and that of his family.

Despite the brevity of the entry as of all entries in the Chronicon the author thought it necessary to add that AS converted because "he was enlightened by the Holy Spirit".<sup>12</sup> This remark is absent from his description of the conversion of the Infantes, sons of the King of Granada<sup>13</sup> or in the description<sup>14</sup> of the conversion of Seneor's fellow court Jew, Abraham, physician of the Archbishop of Toledo. The editor sees no connection between the imminent expulsion and Seneor's conversion.

Domingo de Valtanas (1488-1568)

This emphasis on the voluntary and religious character of AS's conversion is also present in Domingo de Valtanas' book 'Apologia sobre ciertas materias morales sobre las cuales hay opinion' (Seville 1556).<sup>15</sup> The book

has attracted some attention in the last two decades.<sup>16</sup>

He was a partisan of tolerance of conversos who were faithful Christians. He mentions Don Pablo of Burgos, Tomas de Guzman and

"the two brothers Coronel (Luis and Antonio Coronel) both very learned and great servants of God ... were sons of Abraham Senior, who, while a Jew used to feed poor Christians ... he was enlightened by the Holy Spirit and of his own accord went to the Catholic Monarchs ... and told them that he wished to be a Christian. And they rejoiced greatly and were his godparents. And having decided that on the next day he would be baptized with solemnity he left their Highnesses and went to the Synagogue to pray with the other Jews. When the monarchs found out about this they ordered him to come before them thinking he had changed his good intentions. And he answered that until he was baptized he would not cease to do what he was obliged to do as a Jew because he must not live one hour without religion (sin ley)."<sup>17</sup>

For Gillman<sup>18</sup> this is evidence that 'religion was far more rooted into the habits and the basic rhythms of existence than it is for most of us', 'the removal of divine sense from all ritual activity of daily life ... left a vacancy and rootlessness far more alarming than most of us have experienced'.<sup>18a</sup>

It may be suggested, however, that in Valtanas' late and erroneous account (more than sixty years after the event) we have evidence for a selection of traditions about AS's conversion determined by the polemical needs of a mid xvith century "orthodox reformer" rather than evidence for the existential significance of religion.

Valtanas seems to be combatting the view of the conversos as living 'outside religion'. In the 1480's Pulgar had said the Toledan conversos 'in great ignorance

and peril to their souls were not keeping either one religion or the other'.<sup>19</sup>

The Hebrew sources obviously have a different vantage point but the problems around AS's reputation are sometimes similar. They certainly all pay attention to the conversion.

The earliest is an anonymous chronicle of the expulsion published by Marx. According to him it was written by an Italian Jew in Naples in 1495.<sup>20</sup>

The chronicle may be said to emanate from circles interested in the world of Yeshivot, giving as it does a uniquely detailed list of the Yeshivot on the eve of the expulsion, their heads and location.

The view of AS of this chronicle is frankly anti-pathetic, one in which his conversion overshadows every other aspect

"and in those three months which were given them they hoped and tried to come to an arrangement and stay through the Rabbi who was the leader of the communities of Spain whose name was don Abraham Seneor and who used to ride on thirty mules. And through R. Meir Melamed (or the Melamed) who was the king's notary or secretary and Don Isaac Abar-banel who escaped from the King of Portugal to Castile. And he was also great in the court of the king of Castile and later was exiled to Naples and became important in the court of the King of Naples. And the great Rabbi, Rabbi Isaac de Leon used to call Don Abraham Seneor, Sone Or (enemy of the light) because he was a heretic and his later end shows it for he and his family converted at the age of eighty. And R. Meir Malamed converted with him. And the said Don Abraham had brought about the reconciliation, for the queen was the heiress of the kingdom and the king was one of the nobles of Spain. And because of this he became Rabbi over the Jews and not with their consent."<sup>21</sup>



In this brief passage we have many of the elements which constituted Seneor's reputation among the exiles; he is seen as a heretic member of the upper classes, (Netanyahu's translation of hapikores as Epicurean<sup>22</sup> seems doubtful since even in the Talmud the term bears, according to Stern,<sup>23</sup> no relation to any distinguishable Epicurean doctrine). There is no mention of his performance of necessary functions before the expulsion. Some of the assertions about AS seem very doubtful. Isaac de Leon could not have said that his later end showed he was a heretic because Seneor converted a year after de Leon's death (1491). Equally doubtful is the relation between de Leon's critique of Seneor and Seneor's appointment by the Crown. De Leon is hardly likely to have criticised Seneor's connection with non-Jewish authorities since he himself wrote in Spanish a sort of responsum or juridical advice for a Christian judicial officer judging in a litigation between two Jews and trespassing on the jurisdiction of the local rabbi.<sup>24</sup> He is also known to have used Christian officers to support his Halakhic decisions.<sup>25</sup> From a responsum of his pupil Abraham Bulat we know that he saw himself as the rightful successor of Isaac Campanton.<sup>26</sup> The tension between De Leon and Seneor is probably best explained in terms of rivalry for the leadership in an age in which Aboab, Abarbanel, de Leon, Seneor each one saw himself as the head of Spanish Jewry. This would seem more plausible than seeing the conflict in terms of piety versus heresy or scepticism. There are no contemporary complaints against his appointment by the Crown. But after his conversion his career seems to have been reinterpreted

in the light of his apostasy.

One of the most outspoken exponents of the view of the treason of the upper classes amongst the Hebrew chroniclers is Abraham b. Solomon Arduziel (b.1482). His chronicle followed the genre of continuations of Ibn Dawd's *Sefer Hakabbala*. According to Baer there were other such continuations which are now lost. He used for his chronicle a source which was common to Zacuto and Joseph ibn Zadiq of Arevalo but in his descriptions of the exile he differs from them. His descriptions of the year of the expulsion are important, but not because he was an eye witness nor because he is characterised by paying great attention to historical accuracy. In fact he was no more than ten years old at the time and as for historical accuracy suffice it to mention that he speaks of a meeting between Isidore of Seville's father and Titus Vespasianus.<sup>21</sup>

What gives interest to his chronicle is the fact that it reflects the views of a certain type of exiles of their past. He criticises strongly the Hispano-Jewish upper classes for having converted. Although a kabbalist, he speaks with admiration of Abraham Seneor's brother "Solomon Seneor the wise philosopher".<sup>28</sup> The postulated dichotomy between kabbalists and philosophers or between faith and reason is not entirely pertinent to his critique of the upper classes:

"And most of the Jews and their great men and their nobility and their magistrates remained at home and converted... and chief amongst this multitude of heretics was the Rabbi of the Spanish community the Rav don Abraham Seneor and his children and everything which was his and there were thousands and tens of thousands may they be blotted out from the book of the living for they sinned and caused many to sin

for the eyes of many hung upon them and therefore the sin of the majority is borne by them and only very few of the great men and leaders of Spain resolved to submit to martyrdom and the greatest of these was Don Isaac Abarbanel may he rest in peace who publicly sanctified the name of God before the King and his officials he and the scholar Don Solomon Seneor brother of the said Rav." 29

The criticism of AS is simple and clear: his conversion is the only element which constitutes his reputation for Abraham b. Solomon. There is no attempt to minimise the leading role AS occupied in Hispano-Jewish society. On the contrary it is precisely because he was an acknowledged leader of Jewry that his responsibility was not to convert.

This acknowledgement of AS as a leader of Jewry is absent from the previously mentioned anonymous Neapolitan chronicle and is the main controversial point in the allusions to AS of David Messer Leon. David Messer Leon, the Mantuan rabbi, wrote in his forties during the first decade of the xvith c. a responsum in which he uses AS's reputation as a weapon of anti Castilian invective.<sup>30</sup>

The general background to his anti-Castilian views is the reigning tension between the newly established communities of exiles from the Iberian peninsula and the older inhabitants. The more immediate context is provided by a quarrel which erupted in the Synagogue of Avilona between the Portuguese and Castilian Synagogues. David Messer Leon who had personal reasons for animosity against some of its leaders (notably Meir ibn Verga) tries to dispute the claims which by implication deny his own authority. Amongst these is the view held by the Castilian Jews that 'the title of Rabbi is merely an adoption of Gentile customs'.<sup>31</sup>

In one of the passages of his long responsum, the so called Kevod Hakhamim, he praises the custom of the Jews of Corfu who, when calling up the Sephardim to the Reading of the Law, do not use the title Rav but Hakham because the Sephardim have no real claims to the title. "In any case" he continues,

"the title Rabbi is more appropriate in relation to matters of Torah and Talmud rather than with regard to state matters, for in Spain they used to designate as Rabbi the individual who was appointed by the King over the Jews even if he was not knowledgeable in decisions and laws and did not take care in matters of ascetism and fear of sin as is well known about the Rabbi who was in Castile whose latter end showed how he was all along..."<sup>32</sup>

Graetz and Bernfeld,<sup>33</sup> who followed him, identify this as an allusion to Solomon Halevi of Burgos who converted around 1391. In fact this must be an allusion to Abraham Seneor. Solomon Halevi of Burgos if he was an official Rabbi was not appointed by the Crown. It was Meir Alguadez who was the Crown appointed Rabbi during the eighties and nineties of the xivth c. There may, moreover, be some echoes of the previously mentioned chronicle in its comments on Seneor. Both mention the fact that he was appointed by the Crown and both used the phrase "she sofo hokhiakh al tehilato" and both make a point of his impiety and indeed David Messer Leon had neapolitan connections through his father.

David Messer Leon's implicit intention might be to attack the Castilians by showing that it is they who misapply the term Rabbi rather than the Ashkenasim. His negative attitude to Seneor must be explained as did Baron by reference to his conversion.<sup>34</sup>

Although these three exponents of attitudes to AS do reflect the negative stance of the Spanish exiles and are informed by them, the negative view of AS which concentrated on his conversion was by no means unanimous amongst the Spanish exiles.

The Spanish exiles confronting their new Jewish neighbours tended to emphasize certain features of their past which glorified Spanish Jewry. Thus they frequently make allusions to their wealth, their lineage, the heights which they reached at court, etc. These have been studied by Ben Sason in his 'Dor Galut Sefarad al asmo!'<sup>35</sup> It may be submitted that in the views of at least one writer on Seneor, Elijah Capsali, we can see this trend at work.

Capsali, a member of a well known rabbinical family, wrote his Seder Eliahu Zuta in 1523 during the plague in Candia. Part of it contains an account of the history of the Jews in Spain. His sources are apparently Spanish exiles. He came into contact with the exiles in 1492 when he was involved in what Porges calls 'relief work'.<sup>36</sup> In his Seder he mentions AS on two occasions. On one he gives a story of AS's involvement in the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella and on the other he elaborates on his activities at the time of the expulsion.

We have tried to show (above Ch.5) the implausibility of Capsali's account of Seneor's involvement in Isabela's marriage. But some words might be said about its ideological orientation. Capsali writes of AS: 'the (material) welfare of the whole kingdom was entrusted to him'.<sup>37</sup> The allusion to the Joseph story (Gen.41/40) would have been clear to his Bible-educated audience. An audience which

would understand the phrase 'nosheq al yado' in the economic sense as had done Onkelos and Rashi<sup>38</sup> rather than the connotation of government given in the REV rendering.

The chronicler's story implies throughout that Seneor's opinion or decision on the question of the choice of royal consort was a decisive factor in the matter. Further it is said that 'all the king's income used to go through his hand'<sup>39</sup> something which might, perhaps, have been true of the Mayordomo or the Contador Mayor rather than one of the recaudadores mayores. This exaggeration is in line with the purpose behind his mention that he was one of the 'great ones of the kingdom' and 'had access to the king',<sup>40</sup> (again using a phraseology reminiscent of the Joseph story: Gen. 43/3,5). Again, in another passage he is portrayed as being surrounded by the 'barons' dressed as one of them and 'a golden chain was about his neck'.<sup>41</sup> This last detail is expressed in words reminiscent of the Joseph story (Gen.41/42).

Enough has been said to show that Capsali's view of AS is certainly not negative, as that of other Jewish chroniclers. Indeed, the account might be said to be, if not dominated, at least informed by the 'Joseph typology', almost a literary blueprint for descriptions of court Jews. This phenomenon had a respectable antecedent in ibn Dawd's 'Book of tradition'.

To conclude: this appendix has tried to examine the sum of attitudes to AS which constituted his reputation by looking at Christian Castilian writers and Hebrew writers.

The attitudes of the Christian writers who deal with AS during the reign of the Catholic monarchs may be characterised as highly selective, generally positive and seen as part of the general purpose of justifying their policies, a feature which explains the contrast to the attitudes to court Jews expressed in previous chronicles.

The attitudes of Christian writers who deal with his conversion may be characterised as creating a new 'persona' AS the pious and spiritually minded and respond to polemic issues centering around the characteristics of the conversos.

The Hebrew writers are similarly all affected by his conversion. The conversion overshadowed other aspects of his reputation and informed the selection of facts which could be mentioned in writing about him. Even Capsali responds to it apologetically.

Seneor's reputation may be said to have been moulded by concerns with conversos and by the problems present in the thought of the Spanish exiles. One should therefore end by referring to Ben-Sason's view of his reputation.

For Ben-Sason, Seneor's conversion was "a symbol of the treason of rationalist courtiers"<sup>43</sup> for the generation of exiles.

Ben-Sason's remark may now be confirmed as well as qualified in view of a more general approach to Seneor's reputation.

There is little reason to connect him with the conflict between rationalism and mysticism. There is no

evidence that he ever concerned himself with philosophy or any intellectual pursuit. Even the writers who attack him do not mention any philosophical inclinations. Abraham b. Solomon Arduziel, a kabbalist, praises his brother, Don Solomon Seneor, the 'wise philosopher'. David Messer Leon, who accuses him of impiety, was not entirely adverse to philosophy.

What was at stake was the much more basic issue of conversion as well as the attitude of the Spanish Jews to their past. This sometimes contradictory attitude to the past may be said to lie behind both the negative attitude to AS as someone who had converted, as well as the emphasis on the heights reached by him at court.



FOOTNOTES

1. The subject of the Jews in xvth century Castilian Historiography has been treated, though not exhaustively, by amongst others: Cantera Burgos, Alvar Garcia de Sta.Maria y su familia de conversos, Madrid 1952, pp.237-242. Idem. 'Fernando del Pulgar y los conversos', Sefarad, IV, 1944, pp.295-348. The same author's paper in Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Orientalists (Leyden 1957, Vol.2, pp.106-113) contains little additional information. Tate's, Ensayos sobre la historiografia peninsular del s.xv. Madrid 1970, though not dealing specifically with this problem is essential for the subject. Baer's remarks on Ayala, Palencia and Bernaldez are still useful.
2. Cf. Alvaro Garcia's description 'los jodios de Sevilla heran sotiles ... faziendo su relacion non verdadera ...' Cantera, Alvar Garcia, ed.cit., p.238/9. The Jew as sly is one aspect of the theme of the Jew as wise or clever, studied by A. Castro in e.g. De la edad conflictiva (3rd ed.) Madrid 1972, pp.140, 144, 146, 147, 153, 154, 156, 158 etc. But the Jew as wise is a theme which might be traced to the earliest mentions of Jews in Greek literature, cf.e.g. J. Levi, Olamot Nifgashim, Jerusalem 1960, p.5, 16, or M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism (transl.J. Bowden) London 1974, Vol.I, p.255/261.
3. The theme is explicit in Alvar Garcia's passages on Bienveniste, Cantera, op.cit., pp.238/9 and even more so in the Victorial of Gutierre Diez de Gamez which was influenced by it, ed. Mata Carriazo, Madrid 1940; pp.41, 48, 320. It should be noted that the only passage dealing with Jews in the Cronica del Halconero de Juan II by Carrillo de Huete (ed. Mata Carriazo, Madrid 1946, p.14) is the one on Abraham Bienveniste's imprisonment in (1427) Tuéla del Duero by Carrillo and the same goes for the Refundicion by Lope Barrientos (ed. Mata, Madrid 1946, pp.53/4).
4. Cf. the Victorial, ed.cit., p.48. On the 'devil and the Jews' theme cf. Trachtenberg, The devil and the Jews, Yale Univ. Press 1943, pp.57-75.
5. Cf. notes, 2, 3, 4.
6. On the whole question v. Vicens Vives, Historia Critica de Fernando II de Aragon, Zaragoza 1962, pp.360/1 and p.356.
7. This has been noticed in another passage by Baer in his 'The messianic movement in Spain at the time of the expulsion', Measef Zion, 5, 1933, pp.61-78, p.66.

8. Bernaldez, op.cit., ed.cit., p.255.
9. Ibid, p.258.
10. Cf. above Ch.5.
11. Ed.cit. (in Ch.5) p.9. On him cf. J.B. Avalle Arce, "Tres Poetas del Cancionero General (I): Cartagena", in *Temas Hispánicos Medievales*, Madrid 1974, pp.286, n.9, 287, 289.
12. *Cronicon*, ed.cit., p.195.
13. Ibid., p.191.
14. Ibid., p.194.
15. I have not been able to consult that rare edition. I have used the edition of A. Huerga and P. Sainz Rodríguez, Barcelona 1963.
16. Cf. e.g. the bibliography cited *ibid.*, *Preludio*, p.xi-xii and Castro, *De la edad conflictiva*, ed.cit., pp.84/87.
17. *Apologia*, ed.cit., p.155. It seems that the editor's change (cf. *ibid.*, n.13) obscures the fact that the story is about AS.
18. *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, Princeton 1972, p.190.
- 18a. Luis Coronel was not the son of AS., cf. Carrete, *Sef.*, 37, 1977, p.341, N.10.
19. Cf. *Cantera Burgos, Fernando del Pulgar and the conversos*, in ed. Highfield, op.cit., p.347/8.
20. Cf. Marx, op.cit.
21. Ibid., p. 83.
22. *The Marranos of Spain*, ed.cit., pp.62, 129, 193, 196, but cf. p.125, n.107.
23. M. Stein, *The Epicureans in Talmudic literature*, in *Dat va-da'at*, Cracow 1935, pp.44-48 (reprinted in *Mehqarim*, Ramat-Gan 1970, pp.122-4).
24. Cf. the controversy in *Shiv'a Enayim*, ed.cit., pp.55-64
25. Cf. IIB, p.453.
26. *Shiv'a 'Enayim* 63b.
27. Cf. F. Baer, *Untersuchungen über quellen und komposition des Schebet Jehuda*, Berlin 1936 (1st ed.1923) pp.28, 49., cf. also EJ sv Abraham b. Solomon Arduziel.

28. Cf. Harkavi's edition of the chronicle in *Hadashim Gam Yeshanim* (appended to Graetz-SPR, op.cit., ed. cit.), p.21.
29. *Ibid.*, pp.20/21.
30. Ed. S. Bernfeld, *Kebod Chachamim*, Berlin 1899.
31. *Ibid.*, introduction.
32. *Ibid.*, pp.63/4.
33. *Ibid.*, p.64, n.1.
34. Baron, *The Jewish community*, Vol.1, III, p.182.
35. *Loc.cit.*, pp.23/8.
36. REJ, 78, p.23ff.
37. *Ed.cit.*, p.181.
38. *Ad.loc.* REV has: 'according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled...' BDB considers the use of the root nsq in this verse as 'doubtful'.
39. *Ed.cit.*, p.185.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Loc.cit.*, p.186.
42. Cf.G.D. Cohen, *The Book of Tradition* by Abraham ibn Daud, Phila.1967, pp.270-276.
43. *Art.cit.*, p.61.

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SUPPLEMENTTRANSLATIONS FROM RELEVANT HEBREW PASSAGES

The translations are merely intended to convey the historically relevant content of the Hebrew quotations to the non-Hebraist reader. The number in brackets indicates the nearest footnote in the text or the nearest reference.

To p.viii (7). See p.28 (104) and p.39.

To p.2 (3). Hardship has stricken us in our generation and evil has happened to us lately in the districts of Castile to its width and length and in the kingdom of Catalonia in the year 5151 (i.e. 1391).

to p.2 (4) The same happened to the remaining communities in the Kingdom of Aragon when a new king rose over them and passed new evil decrees.

to p.3 (7) I have written this because I have been perplexed for 24 years because of the destruction that befell us in 5151 (1391) - why has the Lord done this to us, destroying (or disowning) us in every generation?

to p.4 (10) The earth was angry (or moved) because of three sins of the Jews: because of false oaths, because of cupidity, because of gains from stealing and the sin of neglect of Torah study which outweighs them all.

to p.6 (24) If these guilds pass a rule concerning their trades, it is as binding upon the individual tradesman as are the laws of the Torah, for every trade organization is a city unto itself and does not require the consent of the outer community for its enactments ... the members of the guild are as autonomous in their own affairs as are the citizens of the city. Therefore each group or community is permitted to conduct its affairs and to prescribe fines and punishments which may not be found in the laws of the Torah. This is the practice of all the Holy congregations and no one has ever questioned its legality.

To p.7 Most of the distinguished men of the community, their noble ones, and their exalted ones and their leaders who stand before the kings in their palace and courts ... have despised Torah and humility and work (or manual work or the work of the artisan).

p.8 (31) Learn a trade to make a living from your work. Oh you will be blessed indeed if you eat from the toil of your hands ... do not ask men ... God will provide you. For the honourable thing for people is to make a living from their own toil and work and not to think as the proud do in their idiocy that work is a punishment. It is better to have a vegetable meal than the best meat at someone else's table....

p.9 (35) Most of the extortioning tax collectors left when ... tax farming was withheld from them for they had not learnt a trade from which to make a living.

p.9 (36) Because of the destruction and oppression and imprisonment the artisans left (the fold) when witnessing these (evil) events and troubles. They were oppressed and could not withstand these trials and changes.

p.9 (37) Evil events and troubles.

p.10 Love (manual?) work and industry and despise the pursuit of office and idleness and laziness.

p.10 (as in p.7).

p.11 Because we built grandiose houses and spacious and beautiful upper chambers while being in exile because of the destruction of our Temple, we were expelled and scattered in the fields and by the rubbish heaps ... most of the distinguished members of the community ... built palaces (for themselves).

To p.12 Most distinguished members of the community ... etc. (as in p.7).

to p.13 (49) the keys of the treasury were given to them ... and they wore majestic clothes, official dresses, and their wives and daughters were dressed as princesses and ladies in most splendid ornaments of gold and silver and pearls and precious stones.

to p.13 (50) ... because we were dressed like them they forced us to wear different clothes, so that we should be noticed with scorn while all the people watched. And, because we shaved our beards and sidelocks we were ordered to grow our hair and beard like mourners ...

to p.17 (63) they took great and goodly asses for their carriages ...

to p.17 (65) they were ignominiously expelled from the courts of the kings and nobles ...

p.18 (67) On what they exact from the poor/quite a few leaders became poor/ and rich men strived and were moved/ tribute should not be exacted from the poor/

to p.18 (71) the extortioning tax-collectors.

to p.19 (72) woe unto those who think and do evil bringing council from afar establishing unjust laws to evade the burden of taxes and burden the poor with it ...

p.19 (73) some recent scholars have erred and sinned by hating each other, by selling the Torah for gifts, they were only interested in being pedantic about the reading and expatiated in novellae, decisions, exegesis in the Talmud and Mishna, writing various books on every minor point of halakha, which are of no use and which will save no one changing opinions, they threw modesty, charity (or justice) and asceticism and holiness behind their backs. What one reveals the other conceals ...

p.27 (101) They agreed amongst themselves that they should not behave as the learned Jews do in their academies to interrupt each other and shame each other when they disagree so that they should not be shamed before the Pope ...

p.28 (102) ...In our house an enormous quarrel ensued between us i.e. R. Matitiah and R. Todros, for they did not watch themselves and were not careful in what they said ...

p.28 (104) The social view of the exiles from Spain and their forefathers is not one of reform or rebellion, neither internally nor externally ... no one advocates the abolition of the institution of the Jewish courtier ...

p. 30 (107) The community of Burgos (?) agreed to assign seats in the new synagogue to the members of the community. The community unanimously agreed to choose three 'good men' of the community to assign these ... the whole community agreed to the apportioning except for two or three who did not and did not want to sit in the places assigned to them ...(the continuation of the responsum shows that the disagreement was serious enough to draw up a deed before the Christian notary and excommunicate those who disagreed).

p.30 (110) ... when you come to the synagogue or amongst people do not be choosy about the place you will sit in, sit anywhere even in the lowest places for this will be your glory...

p.32 (119) When you go up to the Reading of the Law go up with the others and do not try to be first or last ...



p.33 (124) when the 'good people' donate a small sum to charity you will hear the donors whine ... and the treasurers have to go back and forth ten times, they are told: 'go and come back tomorrow then I will give it ... and their task is obstructed when the donors are dishonest ... and the poor of my people wait in hope of their donation, and when he sees the change (i.e. that the donors will not give the money) his distress is doubled ...

p.34 'the scholars who eat the bread of affliction with sadness ...

p.34 (125) the wealthy Jews and their leaders ... eat as sons of kings and dress as princes ...

p.34 (126) for the leaders and great ones do not hope or wish to make their children take up the study of the Torah as a profession ...

p.34 (127a) The wealthy Jews and the Jewish leaders provide for their scholars a little bread and water to their shame, while they eat like sons of kings and dress like princes and the scholars eat the bread of affliction in sadness and the little that is given them to sustain them is done humiliatingly, they have to go after treasurers to get their portions ...

p.35 (127b) The shame of the scholars, their poverty and disgrace ... in shame they have to go after the treasurers to get their portion

p.35 (129) the Christians when they assemble to hear the preacher, stand quiet and are moved by his rebuke no one sleeps or slumbers, lest they lose a word of the sermon ...

p.36 (132) when the community is assembled to hear Torah from a scholar, the leaders soon begin to slumber and the rest chat idly and the preacher will be silenced by the conversation of the men and the murmuring of the women who stand at the back of the synagogue ...

p.37 I have even found an impure one appointed as head of their synagogues and the Lord helped me to extirpate him and they held it against me, two or three of the wily leaders with their lies for they wanted him to dwell amongst them, to include their children in the pact ...

p.38 (135) The Jews have used this custom in some hymns and rhymed pieces for they have mixed amongst gentiles and learnt from them they ruin the harmony and the melody of the liturgy ...

p.39 This social factor, the courtiers, seemed admirable to the exiles from Spain in their tradition there is no criticism of 'courtiership' neither of the social phenomenon nor of the life style it necessitates nor of its claims to leadership and heavenly reward. The social views of the exiles from Spain, etc. as in p.28 (104).

p.41 (141) The rabbi from Portugal, R. Solomon Alami in his Iggeret Musar stood up as a powerful hero to fight sharply against the philosophers of our people ...

p.43 leaders, modern (or later) scholars

p.47 (2) The rabbi from Portugal, R. Solomon Alami in his Iggeret Musar

p.47 (5) our contemporaries who conduct their conversations during prayers, some of the 'bright ones' stumble (untranslatable pun) by bringing their 'books of wisdom' to synagogue in order to be honoured before the elders of their people ...

p.47 (6) they lay snares for the rebuker at the gate with the scourge of their tongues (Job 5/21)

p.47 (8) And, perhaps, what happened by the secret of Providence (happened) because of that, and also the concealment of God's countenance and the expulsions and the evil decrees, and the decrees of persecution, and now that the ill has spread to Spain for that reason (i.e. lack of concentration on Bible study) ...

p.48 (9) ... and (that year, 1391) was marked by (the words) 'a zealous God' (the numerical value of the letters adding up to the year) for we have a tradition that they took Gentile women into their homes till they became pregnant. And their children were Gentiles. And it was they who killed their parents. And although there were just ones amongst them, we are responsible for one another and even more so in sexual matters; he who comes close to or marries a Gentile (causes) the Lord becomes zealous and He is just and there is no one who can tell Him what to do

p.48 (19) Many think that the soul will not be lost if it avoids the good and shrinks from the right path but they do not know that he who averts his eyes from charity (or justice) is evil and his sin is very heavy ... You do not know how long wealth will last ... If guests come to his house he should receive them amiably and as soon as they come he should set bread to eat before them. For sometimes the poor may come without having eaten beforehand and he is ashamed to ask. If you wish to hire workers and you found poor ones let them be as members of your household and do not shame them.

p.48 (21) most of them were artisans ...

p.48 (23) artisans .... members of the city (citizens)

p.49 (25) an important man ... members of the city (citizens)

p.49 (29) God cursed the one who seeks (manual) work (or being an artisan) and such non-essential pursuits ... possessions without honour are the cause of all that is low

p.49 (31) love (manual) work and industry and hate the pursuit of leadership and idleness and laziness

p.50 (43) 'The strong ones' who said 'let us build ourselves a city and we shall make a name for ourselves' and they built synagogues and houses of study

p.52 (74) and these three were causes of many of the troubles which befell the Jews in this Diaspora ... (one of them being) the extreme hatred amongst the leadership.

p.53 (85) lack of erudition . . . are unpleasant and unclear (or unpolished)

p.53 I know that I will be accused and ridiculed by the foolish masses and the rabbis for having translated him but if the ignorant who are (hypocritically) over Jewish and over pious with idiotic piety ...

p.54 (90) For I have seen people complaining against the custom in all Jewish communities throughout the ages to assign a salary to their rabbis (or scholars)

p.54 (93) They engage in its study (the Torah) ... only very few of the young Jews and most of them poor who have no other way of making a living ... he who hopes to become a leader or in order to get a reward ... and he will take a heiress and cast his crown (i.e. the Torah) aside...

p.54 (93) 'Much food is in the tillage of the poor but there is that is destroyed for want of judgement'. This refers to the rabbis who have taught the Torah to the Jews and who have eaten leadership, who have become the heads of the people and who have not led the people in the path of the Torah but only have tried to eat and their merits are consumed by the rabbis ...

p.54 (93b) 'but there is that is destroyed for want of judgement'. This is the rabbi who has not carried out justice perhaps because he has a vested interest or because of his friendship has avoided true judgement

p.54 (93c) Since this stupid man has already decided everything, for he considers himself wise, and he is arrogant because of his knowledge of the Torah, do not engage in discussions concerning the Torah with him because he is stupid ...

p.56 (117) whoever is greater in scholarship has precedence

p.56 (131) They (the Jewish philosophers?) made my house worthless, they gathered rubbish (cf. Zeph 2/1 B.D.B. s.v. qss, Targum ad loc.) and hardened (while the Christians) to them only was the land given, comprehension and understanding, who can count the number of their houses of study and wisdom ... she (Christianity) has (now) the primogeniture, there dwell the thrones of understanding ...

p.56 (131) the Christian scholars in their study of have investigated well in order to prove the truth of those (theological) principles by true arguments ...

p.56 (131) Christian scholars drew water from the spring, they have been enlightened, the bitter waters have sweetened there (among the Christians) and turned into something else ... this is not the case with the few Jews ...

p.56 (131) we have to learn a fortiori from the Christians

p.57 (143) our being close to the Gentiles and being distanced from the Jewish scholars and leaders ...

p.67 (to p.19 line 97) And the poor people stare at his face as if his head was of pure gold and in order to try the people out he will even find a needle between (the cow's) stomachs (allusion to his casuistry in ritual law).

p.67 (to p.24 line 3/4) and the poor ones in the herd did not see that he intends to trick them and he is against their souls

p.67 (to p.7 line 69) and the poor people when they hear the excommunication ban and the voice (of the one who recites it) growing louder start to tremble ...

p.67 (to p.24 lines 14/15) Moses Afia who lifts himself to be the head, above everyone, he is poisonous, he lords it over these silly Jews

p.68 (p.39 line 49) the stupid people have anointed their king and growl after him and say to the evil one: you are god ... and the young (or chosen) Jews bow down to Haman

p.69 (p.53 line 18-20) from the day of your arrival the right ways ceased and the office was barren

p.69 (28, lines 6-8) They also agreed that if one stands up to give false testimony that he should be exempt from taxes

p.70 (to p.24 line 1) when the leaders assemble ... to issue ordinances ... to steal the freedom of choice (of the members of the community (something) which was not commanded them by God...

p.70 (to p.24 line 14) he slanders and is an informer against the Jews (cf. Derekh Eres ch.xi and Jastrow, s.v. qursin)

p.70 (to line 16) He makes money dishonestly

p.70 (to line 29) he devours his people by usury

p.70 (to p.25 line 34, 39/40) The non-believer scribe he is all flattery and evil ... his pen turns back like the dew, he is a lying thing ... he jests ... for he alters the right date in contracts.

p.70 (to p.26 line 52) His palms are full of extortion and he robs his community when doing the accounts

p.70 (line 62) he runs after bribes and loves them

p.72 (to p.35 line 11/12) woe unto a community which used to be bound in wisdom and whose people were noted for their piety of heart and mercy and today it is changed into a community of artisans

p.72 (to p.15 line 11) simple men are heads of the community, the tailors and shoemakers are judges

p.72 (to p.17 line 63) Woe unto the joyous city, the praiseworthy city which used to be valuable and today it is changed into chaos

p.72 (to Schirman, Vol.2, p.628 line 1) see the horses running as lightning in the midst of the sea and ships in the market place

p.73 (to line 8) The tailor when he goes out with his needle thinks he can throw down the offspring of giants

p.73 Do not be surprised if the world turns upside down (or is fickle) and the times are far from the natural path

p.73 wisdom is rejected like death and the infants claim it

p.73 (to p.629 line 12) and the weaver thinks his web on the loom as good as a Talmudic tractate. The time's judgement has turned poisonous, for the lowly are exalted as the stars and all perfect men are thrown down

p.74 (op.cit. line 15) let us go, friend, far away ... and strike down our tent in a bed of roses (or lilies)... and we shall not see the turning of the times

p.75 (to Schirman vol.2 p.627 line 9) Oh dove, you have despised a pleasant friend as if he were a raven

p.76 Moses ibn Ezra: The owner of hair as black as the raven's wing has turned suddenly as the wing of a dove ...  
ibn Shabtai: a woman as black as a raven ... Moses Benjamin is like a raven and a Kushite

p.79 (to p.17 line 53/4) if you wish to know the ways of man see with whom he associates

p.79 Woe to this city, the prostitute, the raven and the ostrich have found (in it) their rest but not the dove

p.79 (to p.24 line 7 and p.22 line 162) They thought to write an indictment against some individuals and the cast fell on the dove.

p.80 (to p.55 line 12/13) They are not acquainted with our sages or if fines are applied in the Diaspora. They pugnaciously impose moneys (taxes - a pun on 1 Kings 2/5 shed the war of blood in peace) ... they do not consider the heavy weight of their impositions.

p.80 (to lines 17/18) The tax-collectors harass and press them

p.80 (to line 19) the soul of the hungry and the thirsty grows faint

p.80 (to lines 19-20) their wood has to be paid for but when they have enough to light the fire there is still no meat to cook in it

p.81 (to line 21) he who brings wine from outside will no (longer?) be looked upon (reference to the prohibition of importing wine)

p.81 (to line 22) The whole people cries ... the tax collector and the communal treasurer quick their fierce counsel (or cleverness, wisdom, slyness)

p.81 (to line 21) they drink wine (like that) of the condemned, poisonous wine

p.82 (to line 26/27) on the eve of Passover ... they have to eat the worse quality of meat at exorbitant prices

p.82 (to line 27) if on the way they find good meat they fight over it

p.110 (16) the 'new' preachers 'who come from nearby' go up to the rostrum to preach and most of their sermon deals with syllogisms and the sayings of the philosophers

p.122 (14) A letter sent by magister Astruch (Rimoch) on behalf of the community of Fraga to the community of Monzon: All Jews are responsible for one another ... they should help one another ... our brothers and our princes: You know how we have suffered during the persecutions, till we have no mouth left to answer with, nor forehead to raise. Had we not spent our money while being at the castle where we dwelt and wept, we would have suffered the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. And despite all that, the masses are still in anger. So much so that we had to pledge ourselves by oath to give money, everyone according to his means. And since we have no money left we seek sacks (of money?) from our friends, in order to be saved ... please fulfill our petition ... for we have already mortgaged the communal treasury ...

p.139 (70) We have been told and heard from the report of trustworthy persons, that strife and conflict has been renewed amongst you concerning the question of the right way of paying the taxes imposed upon you. There are men amongst you who prefer hoda's, because they think at first sight, that this manner (of apportioning) brings about equality. That is, that every man should pay according to his means, whether he is rich or poor. When we heard these reports we were angry, for experience and the senses are indeed to be heeded. For this is the view of the boors and idiots among the people. It is contentious counsel. Their hearts are bent on evil. Many have stumbled upon this matter and were vanquished for reasons necessarily arising out of it, in the eyes of God and man. There is no end to their numbers and there is no need to mention them. And now too, nearby, strife has fallen upon the community of Jaca because of similar reasons. Depravity befell them and they chose that way and after a short while they found in their paths a cold wind blowing, debris, darkness and division; till we, here, have woken up when seeing the enormous damage which will arise from this. For they have created a damaging agent to destroy ... and we have come out to save them ... to take away the stumbling block from your path, divert you from that way ... hearken to our voice ... for since the past the fire of taxation has burnt the Jews ... it is like a sword which destroys hills and mountains ... like an open net which causes excommunication and snares of evil doers. And especially now, at this time, when so many troubles befall us and our enemies are our judges and watch us carefully and take counsel watching out for our downfall and whoever diverges slightly from the plain path is thought to be a great criminal ... Therefore take heed, all the community, all are saints; the great ones as well as the small ones. Depart from that way. Give glory to God and escape from the path before it plagues you ... And if there is among you one who is a source of discord and does not want to abandon this way, be he small or great, be it because he is after his own profit or his neighbour's loss we shall help the faction which opposes him ...

p.150 (90) strife was the cause of the destruction of the previous community in your place ...

p.150 (91) After I wrote this they did not listen to me and within a few days divine justice struck them and they converted to Christianity because of strife ...

p.150 (93) This land devours its inhabitants and cannot contain those who fight and will expell them as it did the previous community

p,150 (94) God is with the Jews when their leaders are together ... and if you are friends and pay attention to each other the Divine Presence says I will cause to hear me

p.150 (94a) Blessed is the generation in which the great ones listen to the small ones and certainly the small ones must learn ethics and listen to the great ones

p.150 (95) ...The contention amongst you which is heard amongst the honoured converts, for if fire comes out from among you it will find kindling wood among them and the result will be that the stack of grain will be burnt ... let them impose restrictions, under ban of excommunication that people should not introduce the converts amongst them ...

p.262 (321) ...we have envoys at the courts of the kings and their castles and they wont receive them and will not see them and (will not allow them) to come before them but will frighten us all the time and that has been hinted at in the Jacob story: "and I have oxen and asses to work for Esau"... Jacob prepared himself for three things, to send him a gift ... for the kings and the court officers even if they are told that we are their servants will pay us no attention unless they receive great gifts and then they pretend to be friendly in order to receive even more ... (Jacob) took with him different sorts (of gifts) ... in order to satiate the eyes of the said evildoer and thus should be done by his descendants when they send gifts to the kings and officers when they pass evil decrees on us ...

to p.263 (324) ... Solomon says: the envoys of our people to the monarchs should take a lesson from this and learn to give much thought to what they say and let them not think that they are standing before a Jewish sage who eats their bread . . . and when the envoys are righteous (or have merits) the Lord will put in their mouths what should be said ... and it is not for nothing that we pray on the Day of Atonement 'be with the mouths of the envoys of your people ...'

to p.291 (181) Now it happened on 5212 years to the creation, when the prince don Enrique, may the Lord warch over him, came to the towns in Andalusia in the month of Nisan, the community of Segovia sent two Jews of their honoured ones concerning the people who had risen against them to plot evil plots on the day of the hanging of their Messiah, to steal and to rob. And he ordered me to go to the city. He also gave me letters to the ruler of the town and its leaders. And (he gave me) to the community, a 'letter of trust' (star he emanah or haemuna) to comfort them and to speak to their hearts. And I came to the city on Friday, tired and worn out from the long journey and because my heart was heated and I stood up ... and rebuked the noblemen and the great ones of the city because they did not punish or stop those who sought to harm the Jews ...

to p.294 (233) Don Judah Halevi ... when he was in office ... used to seek the good of his people and speak kindly in their favour

to p.294 (234) ... after no Jew who was admitted to the king's presence was left to seek the good of his people and advocate their cause ...



## CONCLUSION

In the light of the documentation adduced above it would seem very difficult to minimize the importance and extent of social tensions within the Hispano-Jewish communities of the xvth century. The frequent complaints in the literary sources, the social ills which the communal statutes try to resolve and the complaints to the Council of the Catholic Monarchs are sufficient evidence of the acuteness of the problem.

As in any study of social tensions it is useful to identify the issues, the expressions and the protagonists.

Political and socio-economic issues are paramount in the sources examined. These are often inter-related. The criticism of the outward expressions of social stratification and the echoes of the complaints of the poor are not isolated from the resentment against the wealthy francos (tax-exempt). The fiscal grievances against unjust tax collection are also projected towards the supracommunal rulers. Local challenges to supracommunal central authority also exist and have, at times, undertones of tension along economic and fiscal lines.

The forms of the tensions are very varied. They range from the simple expression of grievances and aspirations to armed conflict (as in Trujillo), complaints and denunciations to the authorities.

The usual European and Spanish models of social tension are not very helpful to determine who the protagonists of this conflict were. The 'contradictions' between

feudal lord and peasant have obviously very little relevance in the urban Jewish communities. Though tensions between landlord and tenant exist (at least in one case), they can hardly be said to be central to the problem. Conflict between rich and poor is frequent, but there are also conflicts in which the tensions exist between members of the leading stratum as well as factionalism between families on the Mediterranean model. More inclusive might be a formulation based on the concept of power in its widest sense. The resentment exists against those who have power to tax, rule, legislate, excommunicate, avoid taxation, impose their will on the community through outside influence (malsin and poderoso) or simply command deference by their wealth.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AGS = Archivo General de Simancas
- AHDE = Anuario de Historia del Derecho Espanol
- AHN = Archivo Historico Nacional
- AHR = American Historical Review
- IB = F. Baer, Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien, Vol.1.
- IIB = F. Baer, Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien, Vol.2.
- BAE = Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles
- BH1 = Y. Baer, The Jews in Christian Spain, Vol.1.
- BH2 = A History of the Jews in Christian Spain, Vol.2.
- BRAH = Boletin de la Real Academia de Historia
- CB = Cancionera de Baena
- CEHE = Cambridge Economic History of Europe
- CHE = Cuadernos de Historia de Espana
- Cuadernos = Cuadernos de Historia (Instituto Jeronimo Zurita)
- EJ = Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem)
- ES = Estudios Segovianos
- ELMA = ed. J. Hale, R. Highfield, B. Smalley, Europe in the  
late Middle Ages, London 1965.
- HAHR = Hispano-American Historical Review
- HB = Hebraische Bibliographie
- Highfield = Spain in the fifteenth century, ed. R. Highfield,  
London 1972.
- HR = Hispanic Review
- HUCA = Hebrew Union College Annual
- H. Ub. = M. Steinschneider, Die Hebraische ubersetzungen des  
Mittelalters
- IM = Iggeret Musar

KS = Kiriath Sepher

Korrespondenzblatt = Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins zur  
Gruendung einer Akademie fuer die Wissenschaft  
des Judentums

MGWJ = Monatschrift fuer die Geschichte und Wissenschaft  
das Judentums

IN = A. Neuman, The Jews in Spain, Vol.1

IIN = A. Neuman, the Jews in Spain, Vol.2.

P & P = Past and Present

PAAJR = Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish  
Research

RABM = Revista de Archivos Bibliotecas y Museos

REJ = Revue des Etudes Juives

RGS = Catalogo del Registro General del Sello

Ribas = Isaac b. Sheshet, Responsa, Vol.IV.

RSbA = Solomon ibn Adret, Responsa

SB = Solomon Bonafed

Sef = Sefarad

Seph.Her. = Sephardi Heritage, ed. R. Barnett, London 1971,  
Vol.I.

SF = L. Suarez Fernandez, Documentos acerca de la Expulsion  
de los Judios Valladolid 1964.

SyS = Serrano y Sanz, Origenes de la dominacion Espanola en  
America, Madrid

TdeA = Tarsicio de Azcona, Isabel la Catolica, Madrid 1964

TRC = R. Carande y J. Mata Carriazo, eds. El Tombo de los  
Reyes Catolicos de Sevilla

TSbZ = Teschuvot R. Simeon b. Zemah Duran.