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**There Goes the Neighborhood:
The Religiously Diverse Nature of the Jewish Quarter of Plasencia, Spain (1400-1450)**

Often, Spanish historiography depicts fifteenth century Christian Spain as a world where Castilian Christian and Jewish populations at best co-existed tenuously with one another. Further, that the two communities' difficult interrelations demanded that the two peoples physically separate themselves into distinct quarters within each city or town. It is believed that in most Castilian cities and towns there was an *aljama* or *juderia* – the city quarter where Jewish families tended to congregate. Historians tend to depict these Jewish “cities within cities” as religiously homogenous communities, but this assertion is far too simplistic to explain the complex nature of interreligious life in some Castilian cities, such as Plasencia, which is located in the western frontier province of Extremadura. In 1400, the city's population was exceptionally diverse – 42 percent of Placentinos were Jewish, 24 percent were Muslim, and 34 percent were Christian. As such, Plasencia's Jewish quarter was a residential zone heavily peppered with families of different faiths and religious backgrounds, including Old Christians as well as new converts to Christianity (*conversos*). Thus, Plasencia's Jewish quarter was not a hermetic Jewish community, but rather one where Christian and Jewish clans lived and worshiped alongside of one another.

In this paper, I explore the complex network of personal, economic, and institutional relationships that supported the extensive residential intermixing of Jewish and Christian families in Plasencia, Spain. In particular, I discuss how the Carvajal family, a family of knights, and the Santa María family, a critical *converso* and ecclesiastical family in Castile, utilized their control of the cathedral of Plasencia to foster and protect the city's traditional residential pattern of religious intermixing. Specifically, I examine how the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Jewish families collaborated to insulate the Jewish community from the aftermath of the devastating anti-Jewish conversion “pogroms” of the 1390s, as well as from the predatory actions of other local lords like Count Pedro de Estúñiga. Therefore, this paper demonstrates that even as Christian anti-Jewish sentiment grew across 15th century Castile, the Carvajal and Santa María families of Plasencia labored aggressively to maintain the religiously diverse residential nature of the city.