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Title:

“Identity, Unity, and Conflict Through Place: Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Spanish Extremadura”

Abstract (94 words):

The late medieval Spanish community of the Extremadura and its identity were substantially dictated by the necessities of geography and a mixed religious population. In direct contradiction to royal codes and cultural norms, the residents of Plasencia and the larger region experienced an ‘environmental co-existence’ that permitted Jews, Christians, and Muslims to step outside of traditional identities. Jews could be noble lords and military arms makers, Christians might purchase property from Muslims or live in the Jewish quarter of the city, and Muslims could own vineyards and live interspersed among the other Abrahamic faiths.

Biography (35 words):

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INTRODUCTION

*Of all the lands from the west to the Indies, you, Spain, O sacred and always fortunate mother of princes and peoples, are the most beautiful...Indulgent nature has deservedly enriched you with an abundance of everything fruitful. You are rich with olives, overflowing with grapes, fertile with harvests—Isidore of Seville (*History of the Kings of the Goths*, 79).*

Ever since Isidore of Sevilla's seventh century praise of Spain in the *History of the Kings of the Goths*, the Iberian Peninsula has occupied a space of plenty in the eyes of its inhabitants. Its natural environment offered a bounty of fruitfulness that would come to shape a vibrant medieval community of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Spain's peculiar religious and cultural history was an important caveat to the impact of environment. Due to Spain's unique multi-religious heritage that spanned from 711 until 1492 C.E., medieval Iberians' identities also reflected the fundamental tensions between the three faith groups. This contribution argues that the late medieval, fifteenth century community of the Extremadura and its identity were substantially dictated by the opportunities and necessities of geography and the resident mixed religious population. This is revealed in medieval Castilian local histories, official cathedral and city administrative records, property leases and sales, and last testaments. In essence, the environment guided the behavior of traditional nobles and church officials, as well as re-shaped the identities of Jewish and Muslim communities as they availed themselves of the opportunities bestowed by the offerings of the natural world.

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The Extremadura's abundant geography, which was at the political periphery, promoted the breakdown of traditional cultural prescriptions that separated religious communities. The diversified Extremaduran environment dictated substantial changes to medieval, monolithic religious identities. Not only were Muslim and Jewish families represented in traditional agriculture and merchant trades (silversmiths, shoemakers, etc.), respectively, but they also branched out into new economic and social realms as they became landed nobles with vineyards and pastures populated by livestock. Similarly, within city environments, the legally prescribed separation of Jewish, Christian, and Muslims families failed to match the actual residential preferences of persons in cities like Plasencia, Spain. In this manner, it can be argued that the environment dictated new forms of acculturation for the entire community of many faiths in the Extremadura. In essence, medieval socio-economic roles categories became more fluid and permeable.

In the first section of this article a political and cultural history of Spain and the Extremadura is explored. This valuable context reveals how this western Spanish region transformed under Christian and Islamic rule (700-1,500). Subsequently, a discussion of Muslim and Christian religious and cultural identity fault lines exposes the seemingly intransigence of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim roles within the Iberian Peninsula. That is, according to Castilian royal legal codes such as King Alfonso X "The Wise" *Las Siete Partidas*, clear religious lines separated the three religious castes and their relationships with each other. Concluding this background discussion is an abbreviated overview of Spanish historiography's desire to characterize the peninsula's history as either unequivocally Spanish Christian or a hybridized creation of three cultures. In the final section of the article, fifteenth century Extremaduran

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communal experiences are evaluated utilizing the tangible, detailed archival record. In direct contradiction to royal codes and perceived cultural norms, the residents of Plasencia and region experienced a form of ‘environmental co-existence’ that permitted Jews, Christians, and Muslims to step outside of traditional roles. In essence, the geographic abundance of the region and the large Jewish and Muslim population dictated flexibility in terms of identities – Jews could be noble lords and military arms makers, Christians might purchase property from Muslims or live in the Jewish quarter of the city, and Muslims could own vineyards and live interspersed among the other Abrahamic faiths.

THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF SPAIN AND THE EXTREMADURA

Appreciating how and why medieval Extremadurans found unity through their environment begins a dynamic political history of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Plasencia was located in the rocky and oak-covered Spanish province of the Extremadura and a territory formerly known as the Roman region of Lusitania. Prior to the fifteenth century, the Iberian Peninsula had known successive rulers – Carthaginian, Roman, Visigothic, Islamic, and native Iberian Christian – from the third century B.C.E through the end of the fifteenth century C.E. The most momentous in shaping present-day Spain and Portugal was the Islamic conquest of Visigothic kingdom in 711. Over the course of eight centuries Spanish history would continuously labor under Christian-Islamic political conflict for supremacy in what has become known as the Spanish *Reconquista*, or the Christian endeavor to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim rule. The origins of fifteenth century Castilian Christian Plasencia are framed in the politically and religiously

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charged language of the Spanish *Reconquista* because *Placentinos* conceived of themselves as Christian inheritors of this Roman-Visigothic tradition, although the Muslims dominated the area from 713 to 1189 (Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia [ACP], Legajo Doc. 11, Folio 3-3v).

Muslim supremacy over the region began in 713 when the Visigothic region of the Extremadura, and its commercial capital of Mérida, capitulated to Muslim Governor Musa ibn Nusayr in a pitched battle.¹ At this time Plasencia was not a major settlement, and as the Islamic rulers learned, most of the Extremadura was sparsely populated and peppered with only minor fortifications and castles.² While elite Muslim Arabs stayed in the more fertile lands in Iberia, especially areas surrounding Sevilla and Cordoba, historians such as Hugh Kennedy argue that the less politically powerful Muslim Berbers were “obligated to accept inferior lands” including “less rich and inviting” northern and western Iberia (especially the Extremadura).³ Over the course of several centuries, as Berber and Arab Muslims settled in the region, formerly Christian Plasencia came to be dominated by a majority of Jewish and Muslim residents.⁴ In spite of the ongoing political struggle between Christian and Islamic polities, Jews and Christians, both considered by Muslims as ‘People of the Book’ (*ahl al kitab*) and ‘protected people’ (*dhimmi*), benefited from Islamic principles that guaranteed freedom of religious practice in return for political loyalty and the payment of a head tax (*jizya*).

From 1189 to 1196, the historical record of the city of Plasencia began to take distinct shape. Castilians remember this era as one marked by the triumphant capture and renaming of the city. For the Islamic Almohads, it was a short-term loss. The earliest historical source from Plasencia that speaks to this 12th century event is the 1579 manuscript entitled *Annales de la Santa Iglesia*

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Catedral de Plasencia desde su fundación. Dr. Juan Correas Roldán's *Annales* record the recapture and re-conversion of Plasencia from an Islamic-ruled city to one governed by Christians. An important component of the event was the renaming of the city and the regeneration of the local church leadership. Roldán declares in his annals:

In 1189, the 31st year of [King Alfonso VIII's] rein,...and in the Province Lusitania, which the Ancients called Vetonia and we now call the Extremadura, you [King Alfonso VIII] won from the Moors...the ancient city called Ambroz. There, you established the city of Plasencia by your royal privilege (ACP Legajo 129, Doc. 11, Folio 2).⁵

Approximately fifty years after the appearance of Roldán's history of Plasencia, in 1627, Friar Alonso Fernández embellished upon Roldán's account by drawing upon an older and critical Castilian chronicle dedicated to the aggrandizement of King Alfonso VIII. Friar Fernández's wrote:

[King Alfonso VIII] directed his effort to building a new and divine city...and he called her Plasencia. He converted those persons living in her villages [to the Christian faith] and exalted the Pontifical Tiara.

It appears that King Alfonso VIII was not simply transforming the thriving Islamic city of 'Ambroz' into 'Plasencia', but establishing a small hamlet to be a new Christian bulwark against the Islamic south. Hence, a cultural norm placed Muslims and Christians in constant competition with one another. What most local historians of Plasencia exclude from their ecclesiastical histories is the recapture of the city by Caliph Abu Yusuf Ya'qub al-Mansjur in 1195-96.⁶

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As if attempting to find excuses for the Christian loss of Plasencia, Friar Fernández argued that the city's residents could not properly fortify the city (*Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 55-56). However, Islamic sources explain that the Muslim recapture of Plasencia was a devastating Christian event. In April 1196, Plasencia's immediate neighbor to the south, the village of Trujillo, fell, and shortly thereafter, "Plasencia, newly settled by Alfonso VIII...was taken by assault; the bishop and many of the clergy were killed and others taken as prisoners to work on new buildings at Rabat."⁷ Not only was the Castilians' triumphant establishment of Christian Plasencia derailed for as many as twenty-six years (through 1221), but even the details of its destruction and the fate of the clergy were either not clearly understood or misrepresented. It took an additional nine years before royal and papal authority was restored to Plasencia. On November 10, 1221, a new Castilian king, Fernando III, "conceded and confirmed" the royal privilege that King Alfonso VIII had previously granted to the City of Plasencia (ACP Legajo 129, Doc. 11, Folio 2-3).⁸ In that same year, official papal recognition came when Castilian King Fernando III received a Pope Honorius III's bull confirming the creation of the Diocese of Plasencia (ACP Legajo 129, Doc.11, Folio 3-3v). Even with the restoration of Castilian monarchy of the city, its geography and people were byproducts of a hybridized past.

IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN

Muslim and Christian Identity Norms

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Muslims resided in Spain, also known by its Arabic name of *al-Andalus*, for eight centuries. Like their Christian counterparts, Muslims valued religious, tribal, and family lineages as preferred forms of communicating their identities.⁹ For example, the Iberian Muslims were divided into Berber and Arabian lineages, all of whom placed a special value on their religious affiliation to Islam and their genealogical proximity to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁰

During the early conquest and in the subsequent hundreds of years of Islamic rule, Iberian Muslims followed the principles of the *Constitution of Medina* and the *Pact of Umar* in their ethical treatment of the majority Christian and Jewish populace (*Ibn Ishaq. The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, 232; *Medieval Sourcebook: Pact of Umar, 7th Century*). Both of these documents promoted and maintained distinctions of religious group identities, which inevitably contributed to Iberia's collective perspectives on how to define peoples. These cultural values were implemented in the surrender treaties of Christian cities, such as in the case of the Islamic *Treaty of Tudmir*.¹¹ Muslims built upon the foundations of the *Constitution of Medina* by creating an enhanced social contract, the *Pact of Umar*, which guaranteed protection in return for certain religious regulations. The agreement, which in practice was extended to Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians in other places of Islamic dominion, stated that Christians would live in deference to Muslims in return for protection of life, property, and religion. Christians could worship their god without fear of forced conversion or the loss of life or property. Therefore, these Islamic norms reinforced religious identities, which would become similarly reflected in the independent Christian kingdoms in northern Iberia.

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On the other hand, northern Christian Spain approached others' identities through a substantially different lens – the *Reconquista*. A unified proto-Spanish Catholic identity began to form with the accumulation of the military successes of the *Reconquista*, or the Christian endeavor to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims. It garnered its most significant victory at the *Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa* in 1212. The *Reconquista* began in earnest shortly after the Islamic invasion of Iberia and under the leadership of eighth century Austurian King Pelayo. The memory of King Pelayo forms the mythical foundation of Catholic Spain, which itself did not come into existence until the unification of the crowns of Leon and Castile with those of Aragon and Catalonia in late the late fifteenth century.

King Alfonso X's Las Siete Partidas: Law and Reality

Like their Muslim counterparts, the independent Christian kingdoms perceived three discrete religious communal identities. These would become codified in legal codes such as thirteenth century Castilian King Alfonso X “The Wise”'s *Las Siete Partidas*. With the recapture of Spanish lands, a new social phenomenon occurred for the Christians conquerors. As the Iberian Muslims were forced into a slow southern retreat, the Christian kingdoms were confronted with the challenge of governing Muslims and Jews. The ruling Christian lords were a religious minority in these *Reconquista* territories because native and converted Muslims and Jews inhabited most of southern Spain, as well as the Extremadura.

Complicating the matter of governing religious minorities were the Roman Catholic Church's prohibitions delineating Christians from Jews and Muslims (“Saracens”). These anti-Jewish and

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Muslim regulations, codified in the *Fourth Lateran Council of 1215*, restricted moneylending (Canon 67), regulated interfaith sex relations and dress (Canon 68), denied access to public offices (Canon 69), and restricted converts from reverting to their prior faiths (Canon 70) (*Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215*). The intent behind these ecclesiastical codes was self-evident – that Christians were superior and religious minorities should be socially and physically separated from them.

King Alfonso X's *Las Siete Partidas*, a comprehensive legal code for the kingdom, established protections and enabled restrictions on the lives of Muslims and Jews. *Las Siete Partidas* guaranteed Muslims and Jews protection of life, property, freedom of religious worship, and freedom from forced conversion (*Las Siete Partidas*, 1433-1442). Jews and Muslims enjoyed these protections, “so long as they live[d] among Christians with their assurance of security” (*Las Siete Partidas*, 1438). Thus, *Las Siete Partidas* shares with its Islamic counterparts the belief that religious minorities are entitled to protection in return for their loyalty to the state. However, King Alfonso X was not necessarily creating a new model of tolerance, rather, he was codifying and officially sanctioning what had been local custom in these cities since Muslim rule was initiated in the eighth century.¹²

King Alfonso X is likely to have pursued this path of tolerance, as opposed to the expulsion of Jews and Muslims, due to four specific needs that he was attempting address. These needs were to (1) determine an effective method of managing religious minorities; (2) ensure the continuing function of the economy in the re-conquered territories; (3) fund the *Reconquista* against the

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Muslims; and (4) compete, politically and militarily, with the other Christian kingdoms for hegemony over the Iberian Peninsula.

Perhaps, most important, was the issue of the *Reconquista* and the economic demands it made upon Christian kingdoms. Americo Castro, an influential historian of medieval Spain, noted that the Christian kingdoms desperately needed the help of its Muslim and Jewish subjects to compete with the Islamic kingdoms during the *Reconquista*. Out of necessity, Castro states:

The Christian states...had to keep themselves ready for war at all times....To subsist, a civil society must have something more than booty. Warfare may bring wealth, but it teaches nothing about how to create it. That is why the Christian population had to turn to using the labor and skill of the Moors and Mozárabes (Arabized Christians from the south.) And it was not long before the Jews likewise became indispensable—as bearers of Arabic culture, as artisans and administrators, and as diplomatic or fiscal agents. For the first three hundred years of the Reconquest—indeed, until the end of the fourteenth century—Christians, Moors, and Jews were compelled to share a common life.¹³

The “Quest for Unity” and the Impact of Convivencia (Co-Existence)

Staking an honest claim in this late medieval world requires an explicit acknowledgement of beliefs about the impact and longevity of cultural influences on the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula. Many Spanish historians, most notably Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, argued that Iberians suffered no loss of their Castilian Catholic identity and were not influenced by the 800

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year period of Islamic civilization, much less Judaism.¹⁴ As J.N. Hillgarth advanced in his seminal article on Spanish historiography:

For Sánchez-Albornoz and the Castilianist school in general...the peoples of the Iberian peninsula [sic] are ‘heirs to a common tradition, and at any given period of medieval period shared a common historical experience.’ There is a continual attempt to unify the peninsula, the driving engine which is Castile. To quote an American member of this school, ‘The *quest for unity*, whether achieved or not, is the *characteristic* theme of medieval Hispanic history.’¹⁵

In stark contrast to Sánchez-Albornoz stands Americo Castro. He subscribed to a culturally integrative historical method that has come to be appreciated as *convivencia*, or the co-existence of Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim peoples, ideas, and practices. Castro’s *convivencia* is an attempt to explain the nature of intercultural life in medieval Spain and Al-Andalus. For Castro it meant more than the physical coexistence, it meant the productive tension, cooperation, and conflict produced by their interaction. Thomas Glick, another prominent historian, describes *convivencia* as “loosely defined as ‘coexistence,’ but carries connotations of mutual interpenetration and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion.”¹⁶ Another critical element of Castro’s *convivencia* is that it allows Jews, Muslims, and Christians to step out of their pre-defined ethnic roles and to interact in new manners with other ethnic groups. Shifting roles during the medieval period was extremely difficult due to sharply structured ethnic and religious ascriptions, as well as social class delineations.¹⁷

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Therefore, it is Castro's *convivencia* and method that propel this work on the Spanish Extremadura.

ENVIRONMENTAL CO-EXISTENCE IN LATE MEDIEVAL PLASENCIA

At its most fundamental level, this study proposes an understanding of late medieval Spanish identity via an acute appreciation of cultural and religious interchange that is in response to the character of the Extremaduran environment and population. Both factors – the environment and the mixed-religious community – shaped Extremadurans' identity.

Integrating Many Peoples: The City of Plasencia During the Fifteenth Century

Geographically, late fourteenth century Plasencia was a hub of social and commercial life in the northern portion of Extremadura. Extremaduran Jews, Christians, and Muslims and their families were integral components of the agricultural, commercial, and even property-owning class during the fifteenth century. To the north of Plasencia was the university city of Salamanca, to the east was the former Visigothic capitol of Toledo on the Tajo River, to the south was the ancient Roman city of Mérida, and to west, lay the independent kingdoms of Portugal. The Jerte River encloses the city's southern flank flowing from the west to the east.¹⁸ All along the banks of the river, in the city and northward to the village of Béjar, were sizable agricultural plots. According to the 16th century observer Luis de Toro, a physician, the river supported a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. He noted:

It supports innumerable farming plots, vineyards, olive groves, and chestnut trees, but principally, there are apple groves....They have the apples of the sweetest taste and

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size....There are also every variety of lemon trees...and all types of cherry, pear, and peach trees (Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca, Mss. 2.650. Descripción de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia por Luis de Toro. Folios 25-26).

Thus, the immediate region around the city was an agriculturally productive zone that the community could utilize to enhance their lives. According to archival tax records from the Diocese of Plasencia, in the year 1400 there were only 119 adult men and their families—40 Christians (34%), 50 Jews (42%), and 29 Muslims (24%)— that resided in the city (Paredes y Guillén, 1903, pp. 66-67; Santos Canalejo, 1981, p. 105-107). Historians speculate the total population of the city was roughly 800 to 1,000 souls, although Luis de Toro reports that the city’s population did not reach “almost 1,000 persons” until the 1570s. (Toro, Luis de, Folio 14v.) Thus, Jews and Muslims were a key component of the population base throughout the fifteenth century and one was incredibly important to the local economy.

The fortified, walled city relied on five gates both to facilitate the flow of people and goods into the city and to deny access to enemies. Four of the city’s gates (*puertas*) led to nearby villages and territories. These included the *Puerta de Talavera*, *Puerta de Trujillo*, *Puerta de Coria*, and *Puerta de Berrozana*. The fifth city gate, the *Puerta del Sol*, was oriented in the direction of the sunrise. Flowing inward from these exterior points, like spokes on a wheel, were several major streets that led to the *Plaza Mayor*.

The city’s Jewish (*juderia*) and Muslim (*moreria*) quarters, which were not exclusively populated by their respective faiths, were located within the community’s walls and were not physically

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segregated or defined by internal city walls or gates. Rather, this was an ‘open’ community where Jews, Christians, and Muslims resided alongside of another. The large *juderia* dominated the western portion of the city and could be entered via the *Puerta de Coria* or the *Puerta de Trujillo*. By the early fifteenth century, the Muslim population had contracted and found itself settled in the eastern part of the city and in-between the *Puerta de Talavera* and the *Puerta del Sol*. Map 1 presents the fifteenth century city of Plasencia, its respective religious quarters, and important Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim properties discussed in this article.

Insert Map 1

Fifteenth Century Plasencia, Spain

The *Plaza Mayor* was both the center of civic life, as well as the location of surrounding residences for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In the ideal Spanish Christian world, this should have been an exclusively Christian zone. When the city council (*consejo*) announced critical decisions, like those affecting the local taxation of wine, the city crier (*pregonero*) made these pronouncements in the *Plaza Mayor* (ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado [Actas]*, Folio 264-271v). During the first half of the 15th century, noblemen like Diego González de Carvajal lived in substantial housing complexes on the plaza (ACP Legajo 14, Doc. 25). Similarly, renters resided on the town square including those Jewish and Muslim families that did not dwell in the religiously designated sections of the city (ACP *Actas*, Folio 200-202v).¹⁹ For example, 1438, the Muslim nobleman and carpenter Arrodamen lived on the *Plaza Mayor* adjacent to homes leased by the Cathedral of Plasencia to the Jewish shoemakers Simuel and Abraham Aruso (ACP *Actas*, Folios 361v-363v). Their Jewish housing complex was an expensive property, costing 400 maravedis and three pairs of chickens per year. In 1444, the

Map 1: Fifteenth Century Plasencia, Spain

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Principal Structures

Gates

- S - Sol
- Ta - Talavera
- Tr - Trujillo
- Co - Coria
- B - Berrozanans

Churches

- Ca - Cathedral
- P - St. Peter
- St - St. Steven
- N - Nicholas
- Ma - Martin
- Sa - Savior

Pm - Plaza Mayor

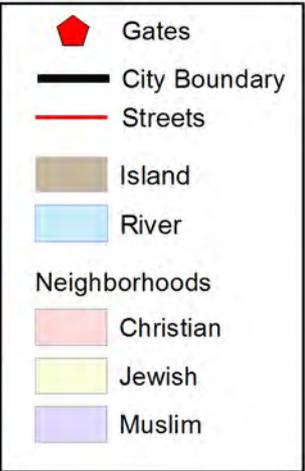
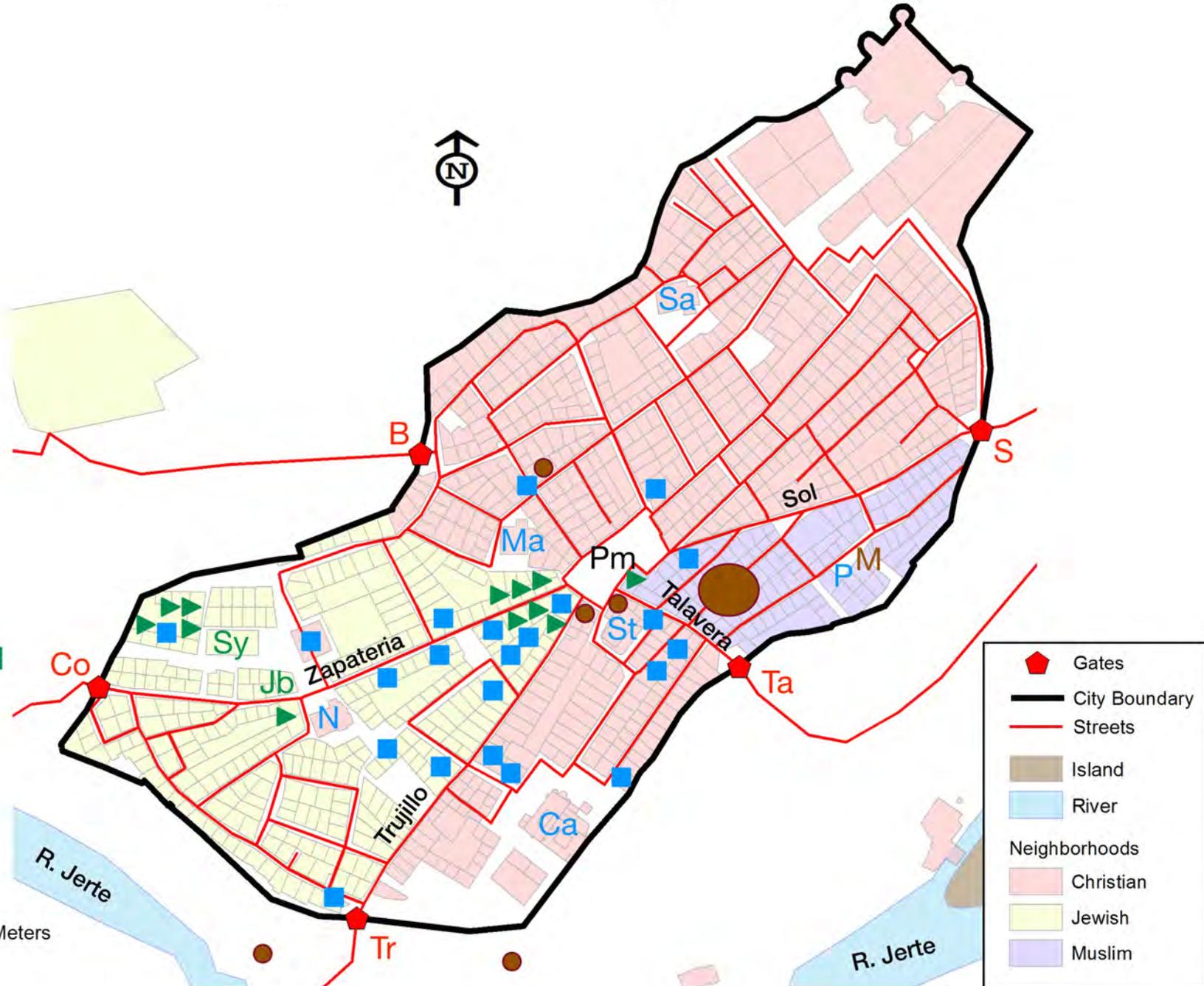
M - Mosque

Sy - Synagogue

Jb - Jewish brotherhood

Residences/Properties

- Christian
- ▶ Jewish
- Muslim



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archival record also reported the church rented homes on the plaza to Yuda Caces, a Jewish clothing shearer, who was curiously, the son of Pedro Gonzalez, a Jewish convert to Christianity (*converso*) (ACP Actas, Folios 319-323). The co-residence of Jews and Christians was explicitly prohibited by royal and church legal codes, yet, it occurred in a prominent public space. Like his first cousins who managed the Cathedral of Plasencia, the knight Diego González de Carvajal earned valuable income from Jewish tenants (ACP, 1455, no folio). Immediately behind Diego's personal residence on the *Plaza Mayor*, Diego let out three homes to Yaco Zafia, Eza Harruso, and Yuce Pando. For Jews, a likely benefit of leasing housing from the cathedral or a Christian knight was the knowledge that they might enjoy better protection from Christian religious harassment because they, as tenants, provided a steady income streams. Therefore, a property contract purchased more than shelter—it also shielded residents from anti-Jewish animosities. Likewise, church leaders and private parties who owned property had a vested economic interest in making certain that the local Jewish population had access to safe and secure housing.

Entering the city from the east would take one through the *Puerta de Sol* and westward along *Calle de Sol* to the central plaza. The eastern section of the city was designated the Muslim quarter (*aljama*). Yet, it was not a religiously one-dimensional space. On this primary thoroughfare, the cathedral owned multiple houses, many of which were close to the *Plaza Mayor* (ACP Actas, Folios 32, 55). Rent from these homes was an important source of revenues for the cathedral. Often they were leased to commoners, churchmen, as well as lords like Fernán Álvarez de Toledo from the village of Oropesa. When men like Fernán Álvarez rented houses such as these, they often did so with the intent of subletting them at a profit. In the vicinity of these homes and close to the *Puerta de Sol*, was the Islamic place of worship (mosque) that

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during the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century was converted to the Church of Saint Peter (*Iglesia de San Pedro*).²⁰ According to one of the principal historians of the city, D. Jose Benavides Checa, the first reference to Christian artwork and a chapel in the former mosque was not recorded until 1562.

Like most of city found behind the medieval walls, the Muslim *moreria* was a residential and commercial zone for all faiths. In fact, the close proximity of Christians and Muslims simply was not an issue as in the case of Abdalla Bejarano, a Muslim, who lived next to many churchmen. One of those church leaders was Cardinal Juan de Carvajal who was often absent from the city when he was preaching Christian crusades against the true Muslim enemies of Spain, the Ottoman Turks (Real Academia de la Historia [RAH], Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folio 159v; RAH Manuscript L-5, Folio 106v).²¹ What was problematic to *Placentinos* was the nonpayment of a valuable rent that was due to the cathedral. In 1456, the cathedral found itself lamenting its prior decision to lease an enormous property within the city walls to Abdalla Bejarano, a Muslim carpenter. On a fall day, the ninth of October, eight church leaders including Dean Alonso de Salazar, Treasurer Alfonso Garcia de Santa Maria, Dr. Juan Fernandez de Betanços, and Canon Pedro de Carvajal, collected themselves in the cathedral hoping to resolve the horrible annual loss of 300 *maravedis* (and three pairs of chickens) because Abdalla was not paying his rent (ACP Legajo 7, Doc. 10, Folio 1). The property in question, a collection of several homes with their own storehouse (*bodega*), stables, and corral, was vast and circumnavigated a large portion of the eastern section of the city. It abutted the *Plaza Mayor* and radiated out between Calle de Talavera and Calle de Sol and toward the city walls. Interestingly, it was also in front of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's houses near on Calle de Sol and next to Dr.

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Juan Fernandez's homes on Calle de Talavera. While Abdalla had made two monetary payments during the year, they were insufficient and also, they did not include the chickens (ACP Legajo 7, Doc. 10, Folio 2). With little recourse, the church leaders elected to strip Abdallas of the valuable stables and corral and pursue a legal judgment against him and his heirs.

This intriguing situation, in spite of the negative consequences for everyone involved, demonstrates that the church was ready to grant sizeable properties for lease to Muslims, provided they could pay their rents. The use of the religious-prescribed city quarter for Muslims also seems to not have been carefully enforced. The presence of two church leaders, the cardinal and the doctor, living in what was considered the Muslim quarter never appears to register any concern with these guardians of Christianity.

From the southeast, one entered through the *Puerta de Talavera* and passed along *Calle de Talavera* to the center of the city. On this lane was one of the oldest parishes, the Church of Saint Steven (*Iglesia de San Esteban*), which the clergy had reportedly founded as early as 1254 (ACP Legajo 1, Doc. 6).²² During the mid to late 1400s, a Muslim family of silk merchants and purveyors of grains (wheat and rye) lived adjacent to church and even held a license to sell its wares – in of all places – on the grounds of the old cemetery of the church (Archivo Municipal de Plasencia. Documento “Casa de San Esteban (sobre un moro Bejarano y tiene un testificacion de un criado de los Carvajales”). Adjacent to this parish and a local communal market, the cathedral owned additional homes, one of which included its own storehouse and was routinely leased to church officials (ACP *Actas*, Folio 55v, 116). Throughout the 1400s, the Jewish converts to Christianity (*converso*), the Santa María family of churchmen, continuously rented

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these properties. Nearby was another religious institution—the Convent of Saint Claire (*Convento de Santa Clara*) that the Christian noble knightly clans, the Carvajal and Camargo, established during the late 1460s (ACP Legajo 1, Doc. 24).²³ Here again, not only were the three faiths intermingling, but new converts to Christian co-existed and resided side-by-side.

Between the southeastern *Puerta de Talavera* and southern *Puerta de Trujillo*, was the gothic Romanesque cathedral of Plasencia (ACP Legajo 129, Doc. 11, Folio 2; *Historia y Annales*, 30).²⁴ Peppering the streets and alleys adjacent to the cathedral were more church-owned houses as well as stables (*establos*) (ACP *Actas*, Folio 57v-58). Church canons and prebendaries resided in most of these homes and leased them for as little as five *maravedis* (silver coins) a year during the 1410s (ACP *Actas*, Folio 57v-58). This was a relatively modest sum when contrasted with the taxes (*portazgo*) assessed on goods transported into and through the City of Plasencia. For example, a trader passing through the city's gates would pay two *maravedis* to the city council to bring high-quality honey into the city for sale (ACP Legajo 282, Doc. "El Portazgo de Plasencia"; ACP Legajo 270, Doc. 15). In respect to the population residing in this southeastern section of the city, this was one of the few zones that was populated exclusively by Christians.

Entering the city from the south, one traveled through the *Puerta de Trujillo* and on to *Calle de Trujillo*. Along this road that led directly to the *Plaza Mayor* were multiple houses with corrals and stables. The church also owned many of these, often leasing them to church officials and local residents (ACP *Actas*, Folio 56v-57, 67v-69). In the 1410s, Prebendary Alfonso Fernández de Soria, a member of the Fernández family of churchmen, rented one such property. The street

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also served as a boundary between the Jewish quarter (*juderia*) to the north, and the Christian sector closest to the cathedral.²⁵

North of the *Calle de Trujillo* was the *Puerta de Coria*, which led to the Jewish quarter filled with Christian nobles. The two roads connecting this western gate to the Plaza Mayor, *Calle de Coria* and *Calle de la Rúa/Zapatería*, traveled through the center of the Jewish quarter. In actuality, during the 1400s this section of the town was not exclusively Jewish. Both Jews and Christians lived and owned property here. For instance, during the 1440s, Diego González de Carvajal owned three homes on the *Calle de la Rúa/Zapatería* (ACP Legajo 14, Doc. 25). He leased them to Jewish residents, such as Yucef Daza, a shoemaker, who lived in the vicinity of other tradesman (ACP *Actas*, Folio 57v-58)..²⁶

Prior to end the fifteenth century, the Jewish quarter was the most religiously and social diverse in the city. It represented the pinnacle form of environmental co-existence – a space that dictated close integration due to the Jewish population dominance of the city. It also raises the larger issue of how the leaders of this community, specifically the Cathedral of Plasencia's ecclesiastical leadership, choose a path of cultural inclusion during the mid-fifteenth century. This is reflected in the decisions of the Jewish convert to Catholicism, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María. During his term (1424-1446), the church increased access to housing leases for Jewish and Muslim families. The cathedral's former ecclesiastical governors only leased four percent (4%) of church houses to religious minorities, whereas the *converso* bishop and his functionaries directed twenty-two percent (22%) of all leases to Jews and Muslims (ACP *Actas*,

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Folio 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v). This amounted to an almost six-fold increase in access for Jewish and Muslim tenants.

Typically, the cathedral's Jewish and Muslim tenants were tradesmen, as opposed to religious leaders like Plasencia's rabbis who tended to live in Jewish-owned homes (Archivo Histórico Nacional-Sección Nobleza [AHSN] Osuna Caja 298, Documento 3/17).²⁷ The cathedral's clients included a Muslim family of tailors (the Chicalas), as well as Jewish shoemakers (the Arusos), clothing-shearers (the Caces/González), blacksmiths (the Arrañons), and military arms makers (the Capas). The church's decision to lease property in greater numbers to Jews and Muslims in Plasencia indicates they were inclined to support the traditional approach of peaceful co-existence of the three faiths.

A closer inspection of the *juderia*, both of church-owned and personal-owned properties, reveals a highly intermingled grouping of faiths. Especially interesting is a 1442 church lease to Zanfines Capa, a maker of chainmail (*jubetero*), because of the multiple economic, social, and religious interconnections revealed by the transaction (ACP *Actas*, Folio 340-345). First, it is apparent that Zanfines was most likely a recent arrival to the city because the cathedral required him to provide a co-signer (*fiador*) for his housing lease. By the 1430s, the practice of requiring a co-signer was limited to cases involving new members of the local community or younger men procuring their very first church lease (ACP *Actas*, Folio 31v, 83-83v). In this 1442 agreement, Zanfines Capa produced Rabbi Abraham de Loya of Plasencia, a well-known member of the community, as his co-signer. This contract also demonstrates the church did not require Jewish or Muslim parties to present Christian co-signers, but rather the church viewed well-known

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members of other religious communities to be trustworthy and legally recognizable parties. Equally fascinating is Zanfines' trade—that of a Jewish arms maker—meant that he likely provided weaponry to the region's large collection of Christian knights, such as the Carvajals, Estúñigas, Álvarez de Toledos, Almarazes, Camargos, and Monroys. This indicates that Jewish residents provided both financial contributions to the community, in the form of rents, as well as invaluable tools of war that were used by Castilians still pursuing the *Reconquista* against Islamic Granada.

Church homes leased to the Jewish Capas and other religious minorities also expose the significant residential intermixing of the three faiths in Plasencia. Although the Capas' homes were located on *Calle de Rua* in the *juderia*, they were also adjacent to venues that were important to the Christian nobles such as the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Estúñigas. During the late 1420s, important nobles also established their homes in the religiously diverse section of the Jewish *aljama*. The Estúñigas, the future Counts of Béjar and Plasencia, positioned their first homes and palace (*Palacio de los Marqueses de Mirabel*) in a part of *La Mota* (ACP Legajo 3, Doc. 20; AHNSN Osuna Caja 298, Doc. 3/13-3/14).²⁸ Similarly, the *Señores de Oropesa* (the Álvarez de Toledo family) and the Almarez clan owned homes in this area (ACP Legajo 4, Doc. 9, 46, and 47; ACP Legajo 269, Doc. 3; ACP Legajo 12, Doc. 10; AHNSN Frias, Caja 1763, Doc. 3, 31, and 32; AHNSN Bornos, Caja 705, Doc. 3; and AHNSN Bornos, Caja 796, Doc. 2).

Deeper into the Jewish quarter, along *Calle de Rua/Zapatería*, several *converso* Santa María clansmen resided in another three homes. This residential zone included a large housing complex rented by Diego Jiménez de Burgos, the nephew of Bishop Santa María, and two other housing

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contracts transferred from Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja to his kinsman, Ruy García de Salamanca, another Santa María relative (ACP Actas, Folio 391v-392v, 393-394, 394-395v).

The Church of Saint Nicholas (*Iglesia de San Nicolás*) and the Jewish synagogue were also located on this road. Established in 1326, the church was built on the foundation of an old Roman temple and held special significance for noble knightly families because this was the burial location of multiple lineages. The church held special importance before the royal expulsion of the Jews in 1492 because interfaith disputes were literally resolved at its front doors.²⁹ In “extraordinary circumstances”, a Jewish judge and a Christian judge heard and adjudicated cases on the church’s steps that involved conflicts between individuals of these different faiths.³⁰ The synagogue, the Jewish religious brotherhood (*confradía de los Judios*), and a large block of enclosed Jewish residences (*Apartamiento de Mota*) sat across from the church. In 1416, a group of Jewish residents purchased property and built the *apartamento*, which had its own protective walls and doors that could be closed at night, to house the Abenahim, Abençur, Abenhabibe, Aloya, Castaño, Daça, and Pardo families (ACP Legajo 7, Doc. 22; ACP Legajo 14, Doc. 42; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Doc. 3/17). Even this exclusive Jewish block had its own Christian noble in residence. Thus, during the fifteenth century this area – which was distinctly described as the Jewish quarter by the sixteenth century historian Friar Alonso Fernández – was a place where Christians, *conversos*, and Jews worshipped, labored, and resided together (*Historia y Annales, 153-155*).

The last sector of the town (a Christian zone) was accessed via the northwestern gate (*Puerta de Berrozana*), which provided a circuitous route to the *Plaza Mayor*, and reached up to the city’s

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castle. Within this part of the city stood two churches: the Church of Saint Martín (*Iglesia de San Martín*), founded before 1273 as the community's second parish, and the Church of the Savior (*Iglesia del Salvador*). Several noble Christian families resided here, such as the Martínezes and Trejos, who also favored these churches for their entombments and the saying of memorial masses for their families (ACP Legajo 12, Doc. 10; ACP Legajo 14, Doc. 1).

Like most of the city's other neighborhoods, this one claimed a mixed Muslim-Christian pedigree. For example, in 1486, Abrahyn Serrano, a wealthy Muslim property holder, entered into a property trade with Pedro Lopez and Juana Gonzalez, who were Christians (ACP Legajo 8, Doc. 13, Folio 1). Both parties owned something the other wanted, unfortunately, the Christians lacked the financial liquidity to purchase what they desired – several houses in Plasencia that were on Calle de Tea and next to the Church of Saint Martin. Thus, working under the auspices of a church notary, they prepared a contract and Abrahyn collected large incoming-producing pastures in the community of Serradilla in exchange for this home. These pastures, as noted in the record, generated an annual income of 1,550 maravedis. This record indicates that prosperous Muslims were still collecting substantial agricultural rents in the Extremadura, that they could own property outside the Muslim quarter in Plasencia, and that they owned desirable resources. Ultimately, what becomes evident from archival record is that this community was dedicated to ensuring the free flow of resources—regardless of religious status (ACP Legajo 8, Doc. 13, Folio 5-7). Although Spain's Islamic and Christian roots dictated strict delineations of the three religious communities, within the city of Plasencia very different facts occurred on the ground.

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Integrating People and the Bounty of the Environment

Environmental co-existence was equally pronounced within the broader region surrounding Plasencia. This was especially the case when one considers the bounty of the environment and what it required and offered its caretakers. To appreciate the valuable geographic and environmental benefits of the greater region, one can consider the assets owned by the Diocese of Plasencia. Churchmen looking out from the cathedral's steeple could only view a few kilometers of their sphere of influence—an expansive diocese covering over 14,800 square kilometers of territory and several Extremaduran population centers. Roughly matching the modern confines of the Spanish Province of Cáceres, the diocese owned property and exerted its authority over the City of Plasencia, as well as the sizeable population centers of Béjar, Coria, Trujillo, Cáceres, and Mérida (ACP *Actas*, Folio 6v-7v, 8, 17v-18, and 20-23v). Along its 148 kilometer North-South axis, the diocese encapsulated the northern population center of Pueblo of San Esteban, near the border with the Province of Salamanca, and the southernmost community, the Pueblo of Medellín, near the city of Mérida (ACP *Actas*, Folio 8, 20-23v). Its 100 kilometer East-West axis reached from the Pueblo of Jaraicejo, not far from Guadalupe, to Coria, near the Portuguese border (ACP *Actas*, Folio 6v-7v, 17v-18).

Placentino churchmen reside in an expansive ecclesiastical jurisdiction with substantial natural and man-made resources that shaped their lives. It generated wine, fruit and vegetables, grains, as well as supported livestock. It also housed man-made assets such as buildings, houses, mills, watermills, and river weirs for catching fish. These territories were the lifeblood that sustained both the cathedral as well as the Christian families that controlled the diocese. Fortunately for

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historical observers of this period, the cathedral and its governing apparatus, the chapter of canons and prebendaries, generated an exhaustive accounting of the diocese's and residents' holdings throughout the fifteenth century.

For example, for the first half of the fifteenth century the church leaders lists over 150 individual properties owned by the cathedral. As the scribe recorded the details of each unique territory, he did so in a manner that indicated the men sitting around the table were very knowledgeable about the diocese's villages, roads, landmarks, natural resources, and community members. Each property description provided valuable insight into what fifteenth century Placentino churchmen found to be of value—both from informational and intrinsic perspectives. For the archival record it is discernable that throughout the fifteenth century Jews, Christians, and Muslim families were busily performing large property, financial, and agricultural transactions. All seem to be responding and reacting to what could be produced from the environment.

A representative entry from the local archival record is one chronicled in the *Actas Capitulares*, or the Cathedral of Plasencia's record of its official actions. For example, one entry details “the pasture (*dehesa*) called La Habaza,” close to the Pueblo of San Esteban that was reportedly donated to the cathedral by Doña Gracia, wife of García González (ACP *Actas*, Folio 20-23v). Pastures like *La Habaza* were large sized parcels that often presented a range of useful natural resources and multiple structures. From a wealth perspective, the donated land included, “a landmark of many *quijos*, or a gold and silver laden-type of quartz; multiple holm-oak forests (*carrasceijos*); seasonal running streams (*aguas bertientes*); and a small grouping of houses (*casar*.) *La Habaza* was a prized church possession because it provided housing, precious

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mineral resources, sturdy timber, oak acorns for grazing pigs, and water that could be used for agricultural and other pastoral purposes.

Close to its administrative center, the cathedral of Plasencia owned forty-six and a half *caballerias*, or lands that the king had previously given to knights in compensation for their service (ACP *Actas*, Folio 1-1v). These were located in the valleys between mountains surrounding the city and the Alion de la Erguijuela, the Alion de la Moeda del Yugar, Alion de Saucedilla, and the Alion de Callejuela. The church purchased some of the *caballerias*, while noble families and churchmen's families donated others.³¹

As late 1496, both Christian and Muslim families personally owned *caballerias*. For example, in one case the Muslim Serrano family was busily conducting property transactions with the noble *converso* Carvajal family. Doña Yanina, the wife of the Abrahyn Serrano, and her daughters sold several *caballerias* individually valued between 20,200 and 26,240 *maravedis*, a substantial sum, to the Diego Gonzalez de Carvajal and his wife, Elvira Gutierrez de Trejo (ACP Legajo 3, Doc. 22, Folio 1-3v). These *caballerias*, collectively own with her daughter, Sara and Fatima, were located in the vicinity of town of Serradilla and others within Plasencia itself and adjacent to the Monastery of San Vicente.

In this transaction it is apparent that Muslims not only were powerful property owners, but that as elites they enjoyed noble status in Castilian society. Here, Doña Yanina, sold multiple properties that were technically possessions that could only be received in the military service of the Castilian king.³² This revelation implies that this Muslim noble family, perhaps through

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Doña Yanina's lineage, had earned and owned the *caballerias* through knightly service. As Abrahyn, her husband, did not carry a noble title, it is a fair assumption to note that what he lacked in social status he held in financial status. Similarly, the property sale speaks to nature of the Extremaduran political-military leadership as the Carvajal family was also a knightly family that too had earned its own *caballerias* from the king during the thirteenth century. This indicates the close political and economic relationship – perhaps even the wholesale integration – of a Muslims into Catholic society. In spite of legal and religious prescriptions that supported neat demarcations of Christian and Muslim roles in society, here Doña Yanina accurately characterizes the necessity of Christian Spain to incorporate others into elite portions of society.

The cathedral's fourteen geographically-dispersed houses, most of which were located in the southern portion of the diocese and south of the Tajo River, were in the Pueblo de Abala, Ensinilla (in the vicinity of Abala), Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Villa de Trujillo, Talavan (on the Tajo River), Pueblo de Portezuelo, Pueblo de Riobermejo (near Plasencia), and Santa María del Campo (ACP *Actas*, Folio 5v-8, 9-9v, 11-11v, 19v, 20-23v). Often, houses such as these could be beneficial because they were connected to other productive assets like vineyards (*viñas*), gardens/irrigated land (*huertas*), mills (*aceñas y molinos*), corrals (*corrales*), and storage vessels and structures for agricultural and pastoral items (*tinajas, cilleros, y bodegas*).³³

The greatest collection of territorial wealth held by the cathedral were 57 simple, but productive arable plots of land (*azas*.) All but three of these plots were either located close to the city of Plasencia or along one of its roads leading to neighboring communities (ACP *Actas*, Folio 13-

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13v, 15-19v, 23v-27). The best plots of land had direct road access back to Plasencia and water supplies in the form of minor seasonal streams or year-round rivers.

Of the five and half gardens or irrigated lands held by the cathedral chapter, one is particularly interesting. It was located in Puerto de Castaño. While one might expect the record keeper to focus on the benefits, or the lack of benefits, of the property, he instead chose to highlight two walnut trees (*ACP Actas*, Folio 10-11). These trees were important because when the property was separated into two pieces, the space between the trees was used to form a border between the church's part of the property and that of Diego Blasco, a resident of Plasencia who lived on Calle de Coria. Furthermore, as the scribe noted, "half of the trees and their fruit," are the property of the cathedral. In particular, the nuts and leaves of the walnut tree had significant medicinal value, first as an astringent, and second, as a treatment for *scrofula*, a tubercular infection of the skin on the neck. Thus, this medicinal tree was an important resource to the diocese's community.

General land (*tierras*) and pasture (*dehesas*) properties, typically larger than irrigated land/gardens, but similar to the previously described pasture of *La Habaza*, were evenly scattered across the diocese of Plasencia. One particularly noteworthy church property was an enormous collection of pastures and meadows that sat inside the triangle created by the settlement of Mirabel, Puerto de Castaño, and the Pueblo of Portuzuelo (*ACP Actas*, Folio 23v-27). Topographically, it offered access to two seasonal streams and bordered mountain ranges. It also contained valuable natural resources such as multiple oak forests (*carrasquillas*), several asphodal flower fields (*gamonals*) for the grazing of cattle and sheep, large collections of granite (*berrocal*s), and several sites with gold and silver-laden quartz (*quijos*).

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Like other natural resources, general lands and pastures were owned and tended by Muslims and Christians. In 1491, Calam Promyo, a Muslim, purchased pastures and rent-producing lands in the communities of Serradilla and Malpartida de Plasencia from two Christians (ACP Legajo 8, Doc. 13, Folio 5, 7). As previously mentioned, Abrahyn Serrano, the wealthy Muslim property owner, had traded homes he owned in Plasencia for pastures in Serradilla that produced 1,550 maravedis in income each year (ACP Legajo 8, Doc. 13, Folio 1).

The last category of properties, vineyards (*vinas*), is one that is only discussed only in the opening accounting of the *Actas Capitulares*, but is one that garnered considerable attention of Cathedral of Plasencia throughout the fifteenth century. Winemaking was a perennial interest of Jews, Christians, and even, Muslims. Even though Muslims were religiously proscribed from drinking wine by the *Qur'an* because of it led a culture of “debauchery”, this did not prevent Extremaduran Muslim families from owning, renting, and managing their own production of wine.³⁴ In this manner, wine-making created a co-existence of cultures.

At times, the local wine culture corrupted even the most devout – especially churchmen. During 1430s, Bishop Gonzalo Garcia de Santa Maria and church leaders exerted considerable effort to reign in their local clergy who drank more than their fair share of wine produced in church and personally owned vineyards. Put simply, the bishop decreed he would excommunicate his clerics if the malcontent and obstinate ones failed to “cease and desist” in their excessive consumption (ACP Legajo 91, Doc. 18).

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Church leaders, as individual proprietors, were happy to participate in the local wine industry and other agricultural endeavors. In 1424, Don Gonzalo Garcia de Carvajal, the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Bejar, secured his own lease of a bountiful vineyard called “Los Bariales” that commanded the annual lease of 350 maravedis (ACP *Actas*, Folio 98-98v). Gonzalo’s expensive lease, roughly seven times the cost of Alonso Fernandez’s use of the vineyard of “La Salgada”, must have generated incredible, high-quality and plentiful grapes. Similar, the Ruy Gonzalez, a ractioner in the Cathedral of Plasencia, benefited from a large yearly lease (100 maravedis) of an *aza* of olive trees in the Dehesa de los Caballos (ACP *Actas*, Folio 372v-374).

During the fifteenth century, the Diocese of Plasencia owned fifteen vineyards, all of which were located in the central and southern portions of the bishopric, including the Pueblo de Albala, Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Villa de Trujillo, and Puerto de Castano (ACP *Actas*, Folio 5-5v, 6-6v, 8-8v, 10-11). The church’s chief concerns about the vineyards often related to the quality and maintenance of the vineyards. In the Pueblo de Abala, where twelve of the vineyards were located, the scribe notated that the church held the best grapevines of them all – “la Vina Mayor dellas” in the site called Roman Gordillo and the “Vina Mayor” vineyards donated by Torme Gil de Guacos.

The cathedral also tracked the ownership of the land surrounding the cathedral’s own vineyards; there was good incentive to do so since their fruits were subject to a church tithe or tax (*decimos*) of ten percent. These included the vineyard called “El Mafuelo” in Pueblo de Abala that belonged to the priest, Gil Fernandez, and the vineyard called “Albaladejo” in the Villa of Trujillo. Albaladejo had it’s own interesting history as it was first owned by the Chantor of Coria

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and Archpriest Alfonso Martin de Retortillo who then bequeathed it to Archpriest Gonzalo Matos, and who then leased it in the 1390s to the clergy of Trujillo. Unlike the previously discussed pastures, churchmen seem to have jealously guarded and transferred these precious vineyards from generation to generation.

Alongside the clergy of Trujillo's vineyards of Albaladejo in the Villa of Trujillo there were others belonging to Diego Garcia Bexarano, Gonzalo Garcia, and Don Abraham (brother of Don Joseph.) Although little is known about Don Abraham and Don Joseph other than both were Jewish nobles living in Christian Castile, we do know something about Diego Garcia and Gonzalo Garcia—they were brothers—and their mother was Doña Mencia, daughter of the knight Diego Gonzalez de Carvajal of Plasencia (ACP *Actas*, Folio 145; RAH Coleccion Salazar y Castro, Tomo C-20, Folio 212v-214v).

Other church records from 1414 point to Muslim winemaking in the region (ACP *Actas*, Folio 51v). For example, the Christian Alfonso Fernandez Alfagerme assumed a lease of a vineyard known as “La Salgada”, this name perhaps a reference to orach greens growing in the area. Subsequently, the same document present a broader social view of the cluster of vineyards that were owned by Christian Marta Fernandez, Christian Juan Gutierrez, and lastly, the Muslim known only as “Ali”. Ali's vineyard carried the distinct name, “El Caballo”, or the horse.

In a more detailed accounting for vineyards in the vicinity of the village of Trujillo, in 1443, it noteworthy that Muslim leases were a part of family tradition of Islamic winemaking (ACP *Actas*, Folio 378v-379). In an region known as Albaladejo, at the periphery of Trujillo, the

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Cathedral of Plasencia first leased lands with grapevines to Mahomet del Corral, and after his agreement expired or was not renewed, his brother Aiza Luengo, took on the property. As in the prior example of La Salgada, these wine-producing lands were adjacent to a community of vineyards – one was rented by the Christian, Alonso Martinez Lucero, and another by the Muslim, Omat Sillero.

Closer to Plasencia, the extent to which Muslims engaged in winemaking and allowed their environment to shape them in spite of religious prescriptions is the important case of the Jahen family. The Muslim Jahen family appears to have been very prosperous as it leased and owned several properties just outside the walls of Plasencia. In 1462, Abrahym Jahen secured a perpetual “infinitem” license to an “olleria de viños”, presumably a structure for making and preserving wine in pottery containers, and its lands alongside the Jerte River and close to the southern city gate (*Puerta de Trujillo*) (ACP *Extractos del Inventario de los papeles del archivo, Tomo 2*, Extracto No. 22, Folio 32). Up until 1472, Abrahym owned other agricultural lands adjacent to the *Puerta de Trujillo* and a smaller rock bridge (ACP Legajo 151, Doc. 26, Folio 1). This valuable finding indicates that Extremaduran Muslims, just as their Jewish counterparts, could be fully integrated into a regional geography that demanded flexibility in terms of economic roles.

Jewish families also participated in the wine tradition of the region, but apparently, to a lesser extent as they were represented more thoroughly in local urban trades. With the Catholic Monarchs’ *Edict of Expulsion* of 1492, all Jews were forced leave territorial Spain. They were required to sell their real property as well as limited in terms of the personal property and

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coinage they could take with them. From this archival record several Jewish families can be identified as vineyard owners. On May 21st of 1492, the Jewish noblemen Ysay Parhe and Arabram Haruso sold their houses (in Plasencia) and vineyards to the Christian, Pedro Nieto (ACP Legajo 5, Doc. 30, Folio 1). Approximately one month later, the dean of the cathedral, Diego de Jerez, purchased the homes and vineyards from the Jewish individuals, Ysaque Molho and Ysaque Abenhabibe (ACP Legajo 5, Doc. 29, Folio 1). Thus, before the radical religious transformation of Spain into a Catholic state at the end of the fifteenth century, the Extremaduran land offered the opportunity to create grapes and wine and accordingly this community of Jews, Muslims, and Christians all produced it.

CONCLUSION

Late medieval Spain, in spite of Islamic and Christian preoccupations with delineating the three faith groups, experienced environmental co-existence out of necessity. Communities like Plasencia, which exist at the periphery of Spanish history and the Iberian Peninsula, offer tangible evidence that Jews, Christians, and Muslims shaped their lives in relationship to the land and its bounty. Pressed with the demands of the Spanish *Reconquista*, Christian kingdoms could ill-afford to squander any ecological or human resource. The Spanish Extremadura, especially during the fifteenth century, is a testament to the integral interplay of people and the environment.

¹ Safran 2000, 158.

² Kennedy 1996, 56.

³ Kennedy 1996, 18.

⁴ Paredes y Guillén 1903, 66-67; Santos Canalejo 1981, 105-107.

⁵ González Cuesta 2002, 13.

⁶ Kennedy 1996, 246.

⁷ Kennedy 1996, 245-246.

⁸ Benavides Checa 1999, 287-289.

⁹ Lapidus 2002, 12-13.

¹⁰ Szombathy 2002, 11-13.

¹¹ Burns and Chevedden 1999, 201.

¹² Gillman 1977, 196.

¹³ Gillman 1977, 193-194.

¹⁴ Hillgarth 1985, 25-26.

¹⁵ Hillgarth 1985, 26.

¹⁶ Glick 1992, 1.

¹⁷ Glick 1992, 4.

¹⁸ This map created by the author is based on the following sources: Fernández 1627, 153-155; Benavides Checa 1999, 147; Santos Canalejo 1981, 58.

¹⁹ Sánchez Loro 1983, 485.

²⁰ Benavides Checa 1999, 147-148; Santos Canalejo 1981, 58.

²¹ Sanchez Loro 1983, 461-462.

²² Benavides Checa 1999, 147; Benavides Checa 1896, 11.

²³ Benavides Checa 1999, 169; Codero Alvarado 1997, 30-34.

²⁴ González Cuesta 2002, 13; Codero Alvarado 1997, 60.

²⁵ Santos Canalejo 1981, 58.

²⁶ Yucef Daza lived across the street from a blacksmith's house and workshop.

²⁷ Hervás 2001a, 38-50; Hervás 2001b, 86-92, 100-102.

²⁸ Hervas 2001b, 100-102.

²⁹ Benavides Checa 1999, 139, Note 1.

³⁰ Benavides Checa 1999, 139, Note 1.

³¹ During the 14th and 15th centuries, the cathedral of Plasencia used the words “*caballerias*” and “*yugadas*” interchangeable to describe one type of property, as evidenced in the ACP *Actas Folio* 161-164.

³² During the 14th and 15th centuries, the Cathedral of Plasencia used the words “*caballerias*” and “*yugadas*” interchangeable to describe one type of property, as evidenced in the ACP *Actas o, Folio* 161-164. The use of the terms are complicated by their appearance in peninsular and American contexts. Within colonial Spanish American history, the term *caballeria* is a very specific measurement of land. In his article, “The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain,” Manuel Carrera Stampa cites colonial Mexican sources that describe a *caballeria* of land as, “a width of 192 varas of the said measure and double this, that is, 384 varas for the length.” However, in Plasencia during the 14 and 15th centuries, the use of the term *caballeria* did not seem to communicate this level of specificity. The *Diccionario de la Lengua Español* (1729) defines *caballeria* as “Se llama tambien en las Indias cierto repartamiento de tierras o haciendas que permitieron los Reyes se pudiesen dar a las personas que fueron pobladoras de las partes que se conquistaban, para que se aveindasen y mantuvieren.” The definition of *caballeria* that relates to financial or territorial compensation that pertains to peninsular Spain is the following: “En Aragon se llamaron ciertas rentas que los Ricos hombres repartian de las suyas proprias

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entre los Caballeros, y gente de guerra, que eran sus vassallos, y los assistian, quando salian a servir a los Reyes.”

³³ *Huertas* are both gardens as well as any land that is irrigated. *Bodegas* are often storehouses for wine hence our understanding of them as wine cellars.

³⁴ Sells 2006, 136.

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