THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE JEWS IN LATE MEDIEVAL PORTUGAL

Contributions to a reevaluation

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Introduction

The cultural construction of the Jews in late medieval Portugal has been treated with a great deal of indulgence by Portuguese scholars. Indeed, despite the clarity of anti-Judaic medieval legislation and the documented violence against the Jews, historians either dilute, or almost omit, xenophobic phenomena in late medieval Portugal. This lenience appears to be based upon two main suppositions: (i) that a permanent and absolute hostility between Christians and Jews did not exist; and (ii) that the situation of the Jews in Portugal was not as perilous as it was in other European countries. Thus, an important number of historians claim that the anti-Judaic culture was either an exception or a belated and sudden phenomenon in late medieval Portugal. However, we consider that this anti-Judaic culture was deeply-rooted in medieval Portugal. Indeed, we believe that most of the indulgence present in contemporary historical writing results from three factors, which we review in the first part of this paper: (i) condescending ideological approaches; (ii) mechanical materialist explanations; and (iii) conceptual misunderstandings. Proceeding from this critique, the second part of our paper explores some of the rare and few remaining sources concerning the cultural construction of the Jews in Portuguese-Christian communities during the late Middle Ages. Our inquiry is directed to different visual data and to a re-evaluation of a well-known book of prayer songs (*laudário*) that has never been explored from this perspective.

A lenient Historiography

When it comes to studying the cultural construction of the Jews in late medieval Portugal, the majority of historians stress the scarcity of anti-Judaic testimonies and the absence of what should be termed explicitly anti-Semitic sources. In fact, it is undeniable that there is neither the quantity of Jewish or anti-Jewish iconography, nor the records of vigorous persecutions against the Jews that we find more easily in Central Europe or even in other kingdoms of Iberia. Nevertheless, without attempting to deny this scarcity, we believe that the remaining records are enough to force a more critical perspective about this subject, as we intend to demonstrate in the second part of this paper.

Therefore, as stated above, we consider that the first factor affecting the historical analysis of the cultural construction of the Jews in late medieval Portugal does not concern the scantiness of data. Rather, we believe that it concerns the ideological approaches of the scholars themselves. Indeed, in several contemporary historical writings we notice the concealed presence of a semi-legendary Portuguese national

identity, distinguishing itself from the Spanish for being more tolerant and peaceful. According to this perspective, the relations between Jews and Christians in late medieval Portugal should have been different from the rest of Europe, just as some centuries earlier the relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims were peaceful in the Iberian Peninsula. The deployment of this idea is so widespread that it would be tedious to enumerate the condescending words of the majority of historians concerning this subject. Nevertheless, in order to offer a representative perspective on this literature, we would like to refer to two authors whom we consider particularly paradigmatic: Armindo de Sousa and Maria Ferro Tavares.

In a chapter written for a best-selling *History of Portugal*, published in 1992 and edited by the well-known historian José Mattoso, Armindo de Sousa states: «*So, we can say that not only at the time of the Black Death but also later on, until 1496, the Jews founded a safe refuge in Portugal* (...). *The persecutions that took place, here and there, were always isolated phenomena quickly controlled by the Power. These persecutions usually occurred as a consequence of envy and plunder, more than for ideological reasons - which, it is true, were also ascribed to*»[1]. In this text two features become clear: the peculiarity assigned to late medieval Portugal (which seems to be an oasis of tolerance in an anti-Semitic Europe) and the preponderance of a materialistic explanation for the attacks against the Jews, almost denying any ideological reason. Even though these ideas may appear to be logical considering that the remaining records of violence against the Jews are inferior to those of Castile, for instance, it is not difficult to discern the underlying myth of Portuguese „*mild habits*" (*brandos costumes*) in Sousa's discourse. In fact, this myth emerges with particular naiveté in another passage, explaining the growth of Jewish communities in Portugal during the fifteenth century, which we digress briefly to comment upon in detail: „*That expansion was mainly due to the protection of our Kings contrasting with the anti-Semitic policy of the time and also, without doubt, to the larger capacity of tolerance of the Portuguese in comparison with the Castilians.*"[2]

Maria Ferro Tavares, who is a leading expert in Portuguese medieval Judaism, has similar perspectives to those of Armindo de Sousa. In addition to the underlying myth of Portuguese „*mild habits*", Maria Tavares recurs to the second factor which we have identified to explain the few documented attacks against the Jews: the insistence on a simple materialist explanation, minimising or even negating any ideological reason. For instance, in her Ph.D. dissertation concerning the Portuguese Jews during the fifteenth

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[1] „*Pelo que, pode dizer-se, não só nessa altura da grande peste como posteriormente, até 1496,* ***os judeus encontraram em Portugal um refúgio eficaz*** [...]. *As perseguições que se verificaram aqui e além, sempre fenómenos localizados e rapidamente combatidos pelo Poder, tiveram geralmente como desencadeadores a inveja e a rapina, mais do que razões ideológicas - que, é certo, não deixaram de se invocar.*" (Armindo Sousa, *1325-1480*, In: José Mattoso, Armindo de Sousa (eds.), *A Monarquia Feudal*, vol. 2, *História de Portugal*, s. l, 1993. p. 352.)

[2] „*Tal expansão deveu-se sobretudo à protecção dos nossos reis, contrastante com a política anti-semita da época, e, sem dúvida, à* ***maior capacidade de tolerância dos Portugueses*** *em comparação com os Castelhanos.*" (*ibidem*).

century she states: *„During the 15th century, the Portuguese Jews live in a real condition of privilege, if we compare it to that of their Iberian coreligionists. The Christian upraisings against the* judiarias *are rare and have robbery as their direct cause, more than for religious hate. Indeed, only by the end of the century would the positions between Christians and Jews become radical, as a reflection of what was happening in Castile against Jews and* conversos *and due to the physical and psychological insecurity caused by epidemics".*[3] Thus, according to this perspective only by the end of the fifteenth century is it possible to identify an ideological movement against the Jews. Then, Maria Tavares considers that before that time the conflict was purely materially-driven.

Although these two perspectives are the more common in Portuguese historiography, some scholars have criticised these positions. One of the leading critics has been Humberto Baquero Moreno, an expert in issues concerning the excluded and the marginal in late medieval Portugal. In a critical treatise Baquero Moreno presents his doubts concerning the proclaimed tolerance and peculiar nature of late medieval Portuguese society: *„The idea that the relations between Christian and Jewish Portuguese communities during the 15th century would have been relatively peaceful gives rise, in my opinion, to some doubts".*[4] In addition, he also doubts that the situation

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[3] *„Os judeus portugueses vivem, ao longo do século XV,* ***uma autêntica situação de privilégio****, se a compararmos com a dos seus correligionários peninsulares. Os levantamentos Cristãos contra as judiarias são raros e* ***têm como móbil directo o roubo****, mais do que o ódio religioso, se exceptuarmos o final da centúria, altura em que, por reflexo do que se passa em Castela contra judeus e conversos e pela insegurança psicológica e física, provocada pelas epidemias, as posições entre Cristãos e judeus se irão radicalizar."* (Maria Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV*, vol. I, Lisbon 1982. p. 418). These ideas are further repeated by the author in different words: „(...) *from our research we think that the hate towards the Jews in Portugal translates into the levels of power and economy, and not into the spirit of intolerance and religious fanaticism that promotes the raisings which occurred in the rest of the Peninsula by that time*" („(...) *o ódio ao judeu traduz-se em Portugal, pelo que conseguimos apurar, aos níveis do poder e da economia e não dentro do espírito de intolerância e fanatismo religioso que promove os levantamentos, ocorridos no resto da Península, nesta época.*") (*idem*, p. 421). The singularity attributed to Portugal and the accent on the indulgence of the Portuguese are scrupulously kept by Maria Tavares in more recent works, namely in the chapters she wrote for João Medina's (ed.), *História de Portugal. Dos Tempos Pré-Históricos aos nossos Dias*, vol. VI, *Judaísmo, Inquisição e Sebastianismo*, Amadora, Clube Internacional do Livro, 1996. pp. 11-48. Indeed, on page 15 she states: *„Anti-Judaism was a late phenomenon in Portuguese history without a particular representativeness, judging on the royal chancellery documentation, the literary sources, the images and even the oral tradition*" („*O antijudaísmo apresentou-se na história portuguesa como uma manifestação tardia e sem uma representatividade específica, a julgarmos pela documentação da chancelaria real, pelos textos literários, pela imagem e pela própria tradição oral*").

[4] *„A ideia de que as relações entre as comunidades cristã e judaica em Portugal no século XV se teriam processado de uma forma relativamente pacífica, suscita em meu entender algumas dúvidas"* (Humberto Baquero Moreno, *Marginalidade e Conflitos Sociais em Portugal nos séculos XIV e XV. Estudos de História*, Lisbon 1985. p. 79).

in Portugal would have been completely different from the situation in the other European and Iberian kingdoms: „*What kind of reflexes would these waves of anti-Semitism in Portugal have had? How to explain that our country would have remained immunized from this grave conjuncture if we take in consideration that our past could hardly be interpreted outside the Iberian context?*".[5] In fact, he states the obvious, „*the situation of the Jews in Portugal should not be separated from the problems that affected this People in the neighboring kingdoms of Castille and Aragon*".[6]

Despite their merit, these questions raised by Baquero Moreno were treated with suspicion and disdain by the majority of historians.[7] We believe that a significant part of this sceptical attitude has to deal with the fact that Moreno's critical approach strikes the core of Portuguese national identity as we have point out. But this resistance can also be explained by the third factor that we have mentioned earlier, which deals with conceptual misunderstandings about anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism.

The discussion concerning the concepts of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism is still the object of major polemics, since it deals with conceptions about the degree and nature of hate and violence towards the Jews. In fact, this is a highly sensitive matter also connected to issues of Christian identity and to the cultural background that ultimately led to the Holocaust. In this way, we regard as highly useful the distinction introduced by Gavin Langmuir. According to this author, anti-Judaism is inherent to Christian identity and consists in „*a nonrational reaction to overcome nonrational doubts*", while anti-Semitism consists in „*an irrational reaction to repressed rational doubts*".[8] Therefore, anti-Judaism is a reaction to overcome doubts which do not have any possible rational answer. These doubts are mainly connected with the incomprehensible reasons that led Jews to not convert to Christianism when the Son of God came to the world. This resistance to conversion among the same own people with whom Jesus had lived was behavior that threatened the confidence about the universality and certainty of Christian faith. Reacting to these doubts the Christians accused the Jews of deicide and dedicated their efforts to reviewing the Old Testament, differentiating the „*good Jews*" from the „*bad Jews*" and insisting on proving their historical „*blindness*". Thus, during the Middle Ages the Jews were kept segregated in true ghettos as living *exempla* of their error and as a proof of their punishment by God.

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[5] „*Que reflexos teriam tido estas vagas de anti-semitismo em Portugal? Como explicar que o nosso país tivesse ficado imunizado desta grave situação conjuntural se tivermos em consideração que o nosso passado dificilmente poderá ser interpretado fora do contexto peninsular?*" (*idem*, pp. 79-80).

[6] „*A situação dos Judeus em Portugal não deverá desligar-se dos problemas que afectaram este povo nos vizinhos reinos de Castela e Aragão*" (Humberto Baquero Moreno, *Exilados, Marginais e Contestatários na Sociedade Portuguesa Medieval. Estudos de História*, Lisbon 1990. p. 139).

[7] Indeed, it is only among foreign authors that we find a more critical perspective on this subject. For instance see Reuven Faingold, *Judíos y conversos en el teatro portugués previcentino. La Farsa do Alfaiate en el Cancioneiro Geral de Garcia de Resende*, In: *Sefarad*, vol. LI, n. 1, 1991, pp. 23-50.

[8] Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism*, Berkeley 1990. p. 276.

According to Langmuir[9], this xenophobic behavior was almost a natural consequence of the historical non-conformity between Christianism and Judaism. Nevertheless, it was far from being an irrational reaction, as it is followed by anti-Semitism, which is a behavior that intends to eliminate any subsisting doubts concerning the dogmas of Christianity. In fact, anti-Semitism usually results from an unconscious disbelief in Christian dogmas that projects its negative characteristics onto the Jews. For instance, the accusations of cannibalism stood for the dogma of the Eucharist, the accusations of crucifixion of children stood for the dogma of Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ while the accusations of Host desacralization stood for the dogma of transubstantiation. According to this author, all these fantastical accusations are excellent examples of the irrationality of the Christians, who attempted thus to eliminate their own religious doubts in order to fortify their Christian faith and identity.[10] These irrational thoughts are different from simple xenophobic behavior, since they tend to view the Jews as a real menace and a symbol of evil. Thus, anti-Semitism led to the final expelling of Jews from all the European countries and it could be interpreted as the wish to either expel or even to eliminate the doubts that attacked Christians' faith. Therefore, anti-Semitism is based on the attribution of fantastic characteristics to the Jews, whose magic powers (given by the Devil) could threaten the Christians or their faith. As Lionel Steiman suggests, this anti-Semitic ideology arises during the thirteenth century when the dogmas of the 4th Lateran Council were being introduced. In fact, it was during this important council that the transubstantiation dogma was defined, as well as the number of the Sacraments or also the renewal of the mandatory use of identifying signs on Jews' clothes.[11]

Even if sometimes it might be difficult to classify one event as anti-Judaic or anti-Semitic, the importance of this conceptual distinction is particularly obvious. On the one hand, being conscious of the historical opposition between Judaism and Christianism and accepting that anti-Judaism is a feature of Christian identity avoids excessive lenience from historians. On the other hand, the sources in Portuguese archives, literature and iconography do not seem to present us any traces of an anti-Semitic culture in late medieval Portugal. Yet, these same sources are particularly clear in what concerns an anti-Judaic culture, particularly focused on the imputation of

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[9] *Idem*, p. 297.

[10] *Idem*, p. 302.

[11] Lionel Steiman, *Paths to Genocide: Antisemitism in Western History*, New York 1998. pp. 27-29. This period also seals the birth of another perfidious association linking anti-Semitism with apocalypticism, specially in court vernacular literature. Briefly, this association explores the idea that the Jews would have a destructive role to play during the Last Days. This idea was further stimulated by the end of the fifteenth century, when Jewish hopes of the imminent arrival of their Messiah were growing, dragged on the unfavorable events of those days marked with the expulsion from Iberia. But what the Jews saw as the Messiah the Christians interpreted as the Antichrist, thus aggravating even more the tension between these communities. On this subject see Andrew Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200-1600*, Leiden 1995.

deicide upon the Jews.[12] The sources we will analyze in the second part of this paper make this point particularly clear.

Contributions to a Reelevation

Although it initially appears that anti-Judaism was relatively late to emerge in Portugal, the fact is that the Jews, unlike the Muslims, experienced considerable difficulties when it came to integration into Portuguese society.[13] Legislation passed since the thirteenth century, for example, clearly seeks to isolate and control the Jews by defining the ways in which the later were permitted to interact with the Christians. While they did not interfere with Judaic customs and beliefs, the Christian communities did nevertheless segregate the Jews. But it was not until the outbreak of the Black Death that anti-Judaism gained strength in Portugal, when the Jews were blamed for the heavy toll of deaths which the plague had claimed.[14]

The growing anti-Judaism became more acute by the end of the fourteenth century, due to the social and political upheavals caused by the dispute over the dynastic succession in 1383-1385. In fact, the new dynasty had largely benefited from the support of the small bourgeoisie, for whom the Jews represented additional competition. Thus, during the sessions of the kingdom's assembly of the Three Estates (the *Cortes*) the main demands for aggravating the legislation against the Jews came from this social group.[15]

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[12] There are nevertheless some signs that anti-Semitism might not have been totally absent from late medieval Portugal. For instance, an unfortunately poorly documented case deals with references to Host profanation by the Jews of Coimbra during the 14th century (Tavares 1982 (see note 3), pp. 31-32). According to this tradition, a Christian had stolen five consecrated particles from the ciborium of a church in order to sell them to a Jew. The latter boiled the consecrated particles in oil and then buried them on a filthy place in the Synagogue grounds. When this sacrilege was discovered the bishop had the particles exhumed and carried them in procession to the cathedral. Ultimately, the Jew was put to death and the Synagogue was converted in the Church of the Body of Christ (*ibidem*). Nevertheless, this clearly anti-Semitic legend was probably created after the forced conversion of the Jews to Christianism in 1497, since it does not exist in any contemporary documentation of this event. A similar anti-Semitic account is given by a different testimony dating from 1459. According to this tradition, the Jews were accused of having murdered a Christian child in the vicinity of Lisbon, which led to a popular movement against the Jews in Lisbon (*idem*, p. 31). Unfortunately, both cases are not supported by conclusive documentary testimonies, but they can be interpreted as a plausible possibility. In fact, anti-Semitic behavior of this kind is more fully manifested just on the other side of the border.

[13] José Mattoso, *Identificação de um País. Ensaio sobre as Origens de Portugal*, 3rd ed., vol. I, Lisbon 1988. p. 333.

[14] See Tavares 1982 (see note 3) , p. 425. In fact, all over Europe the Jews were the elected scapegoat for the Black Death, which explains the countless massacres during that same period. On this subject see Steiman 1998 (see note 11), particularly p. 37. Nevertheless, we believe that a deeper research on early sources from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries will show us a situation not very different from the one in other Iberian Kingdoms.

[15] Even Maria Tavares (Tavares 1982 (see note 3), pp. 397-398) considers that the various

They argued that the Jews were exhibiting growing signs of richness and prosperity, contradicting the idea of religious tolerance that allowed the presence of the Jews among Christians as living *exempla* of divine punishment.[16] This hatred was aggravated after the entry of a large number of Jews across Portuguese borders escaping from the great persecutions in other Iberian kingdoms during 1391.

In fact, the demographic presence of the Jews in Portugal had grown significantly during the late Middle Ages adding extra weight to anti-Judaic prejudice. If during the fourteenth century there were only thirty-two Jewish communities in Portugal, in the following century that number rose to one hundred and thirty nine.[17] Kenneth Stow suggests that between 1300 and 1490 the number of Portuguese Jews had doubled, going from forty thousand to eighty thousand.[18] This growth is even more impressive if we take into account that due to the Black Death the overall population of the country had drastically decreased from c. one million and a half inhabitants to c. nine hundred thousand one century later, in the middle of the fifteenth century.[19]

Thus, if not sooner, by the early fifteenth century the demographic pressure was heavy and the situation of the Jews in Portugal was precarious. Indeed, contact between Christian and Jews was subjected to extremely tight regulation. Banished to their ghettos - the *judiarias* - Jews were forced to wear a six-point star, of red or yellow, on their clothes.[20] In fact, legislation specifically directed at the Jews became increasingly

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sessions of the *Cortes* held during the reigns of D. João I (1385-1433) and D. Duarte (1433-1438) clearly attest a growing intolerance against the Jews.

[16] See Tavares 1982 (see note 3), p. 399-403. The Augustinian doctrine, which supported the maintenance of the Jews to bear witness of the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies in Christ, seems to have been forgotten by then. On Augustine doctrine see Kenneth Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe*, Cambridge / Mass. 1992. pp. 17-20.

[17] See Sousa 1993 (see note 1), p. 352. For instance, Lisbon, the city capital, had three Jewish quarters by itself in 1449.

[18] See Stow 1992 (see note 16), p. 7.

[19] See Sousa 1993 (see note 1), p. 356. Since the first demographic census was taken only in the sixteenth century, the exact percentage of Jewish population is still a matter of discussion. While Portuguese authors suggest numbers around three percent at the time of the expulsion (1496-97) (e.g., João J. Dias (ed.), *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica*, vol. V, *Nova História de Portugal*, Lisbon, 1998, p. 48), some foreign authors like Kenneth Stow suggest numbers around eight percent (in Stow 1992 (see note 16), p. 7).

[20] See Moreno 1985 (see note 4), p. 83. An analysis on the use of discriminatory signs by the Jews is given by Jorge Couto, *Os judeus de sinal na legislação portuguesa da Idade Moderna*. In: Maria H. Santos (cord.), *1º Congresso Luso-Brasileiro sobre Inquisição*, Lisboa, Universitária Editora, 1989, pp. 125-134. According to this historian, the decisions taken by the 4th Lateran Council on this matter were not received with great enthusiasm by the Iberian Kingdoms. In fact, the Portuguese Kings took more than a century to implement this council's decisions on Portuguese legislation. Indeed, it was only in 1325 that the *Cortes* decided to force the Jews to wear a yellow sign on their hats (*idem*, p. 126). Later, in 1391, again due to the pressure of the popular representatives on the *Cortes*, the King João I approved a new legislation that made mandatory the use of red signs with six arms (thus, in the shape of a star) on the clothes of the Jews. Furthermore, in order to made them easily

repressive, and the climate of persecution intensified. As Maria Tavares observes, Christian authorities came to the point of offering incentives for reporting misdemeanors committed by the Jews.[21] As in many other countries of Europe, the hatred against the Jews forced the monarchs to offer special protection to Jewish communities, not so much as the result of their particular preference for the Jews as their need of the useful skills or the financing capacity of the latter.[22] The freedom of movement of the Jews was more and more restricted, to the point that they were forced to observe curfew. Assaults, kidnappings and homicides were common, particularly when the Jews were traveling isolated or in small groups.[23] Indeed, despite the silence of documentary sources, there exist clear indicators that social tension ran especially high during Lent and Christmas periods, when aggressions on isolated Jews or small assaults on the *judiarias* seem to have been common. For example, the known assaults on the *judiarias* of Leiria (1377)[24] and Lisbon (1449), occurred respectively on Eastern and on Christmas.[25] Moreover, as David Nirenberg emphasizes for medieval Catalonia,

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visible, those signs needed to be as big as the royal seal and were worn over the chest (*ibidem*). Relying on the legislation of the fifteenth century, namely the *Ordenações Afonsinas*, the use of this sign remained mandatory until the expulsion of 1496-97. Even after this expulsion, Jews who were temporarily on transit in Portugal (namely traders and businessman) were also forced to wear this sign.

[21] See Tavares 1982 (see note 3), p. 402.

[22] On this subject see Reuven Faingold, *Los judíos en las cortes reales portuguesas*. In: *Sefarad*, vol. LX, n. 1, pp. 77-104. In other European kingdoms this situation started to change during the thirteenth century, when the hatred against Jews was so strong that it became dangerous for political leaders to continue protecting the Jews. Therefore, monarchs all over Europe stopped opposing and punishing popular anti-Semitic movements, which led to a spiraling of violence and massacres that only stopped after the definitive expulsion of Jews. (An account on this may be found in Langmuir 1990 (see note 8), specially p. 304). In Portugal this process was slower, but during the fifteenth century the popular resentment towards the Jews also forced the monarchs to change their policy leading ultimately to the expulsion of 1496-1497. A different interpretation that can complement this one is given by Stow 1992 (see note 16), particularly pp. 281-283. According to this author the expulsion of the Jews was due to the centralization process of the state and to the need to mobilize the population towards this goal. Indeed, the sanctified *corpus reipublicae mysticum* aggregating both the king and its subjects could not tolerate the presence of a different religious group.

[23] On these violent actions see Tavares 1982 (see note 3), particularly pages 415-418.

[24] Certainly, the document referring Leiria's assault intends to prevent future actions, but it also seems to confirm that in previous years violent actions like that one have occurred, specially during Eastern. Indeed, to prevent similar conflicts the King forbids the Jews to leave the *judiaria* during that time, particularly on Holy Thursday and Friday. (This document was published by Maria Ferro, *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XIV*, Lisbon 1970, pp. 228-229). A similar interdiction was taken in England, where Jews were not allowed to be on the streets during the Holy Week (Robert Stacey, *The conversion of Jews to Christianity in thirteenth-century England*, In: *Speculum*, vol. 67, n. 2, 1992, p. 265).

[25] Despite this negative scenery, close contacts between individuals of different creeds did exist. In fact, the documentation is rich in exceptions to the segregationist legislation. There are several cases of Jews who left their goods to Christians as an heritage, and it was a normal procedure to allow the Jews to participate in public ceremonies organized by the city councils (see Tavares 1982 (see note 3), pp. 412-413). This contact is particularly notorious

popular uprisings against the Jews were a normal event during the Holy Week.[26] In fact, one of the highest moments of this violence was the throwing of stones at the Jews during the Holy Friday, which sometimes could achieve the degree of a real lapidation. Yet, as Nirenberg points out, because this practice was already a real tradition, it was usually tolerated by the Power, except in the cases when massive destruction was performed on the *judiarias* or when there was a considerable number of injured people.[27]

Iconography

Contrary to developments in other countries[28], there does not exist any systematic scrutiny of Jewish medieval iconography in Portugal. In fact, the most comprehensive

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at the higher levels of society, namely at the Court, due to the role played by the Jews in functions connected with the organization and financing of the State (Faingold o.J. (see note 22). For instance, several Jews were appointed as *almoxarifes* (tax collectors), others became tenants of tax collection and others became tenants of certain means of production belonging to the State (Mattoso 1988 (see note 13), p. 332). Thus, it is not a surprise that there was a minority of Jews who were granted royal privileges, including an elite that acquired the right to have their own coat of arms (see Tavares 1982 (see note 3), p. 407 and also her article *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV,* (Tavares 1996 (see note 3), namely pp. 13-15). Nevertheless, according to Faingold o.J. (see note 22), pp. 100-103, this was due to the acculturation that Jewish courtiers underwent due to their presence at the court from an early age. Indeed, due to their education, they were first courtiers and only then were they Jews. Furthermore, the professional specialization and the unquestionable competence of the Jews in several domains opened for them the doors of aristocracy and high clergy, specially in the case of goldsmiths (Nuno Vassalo Silva, *Ourives e aferidores Judeus no Portugal dos Descobrimentos*. In: Salete da Ponte and Helena Romero (eds.), *Os Judeus e os Descobrimentos. Actas do Simpósio Internacional*, Tomar 1992, pp. 33-45) and in the case of physicians (Margarida Garcez Ventura, *Médicos Judeus na corte e no reino: a excepção consentida pelo papa Eugénio IV*. In: *idem*, pp. 59-64). Furthermore, it was so important for Portuguese Kings to keep Jewish physicians that a special exemption was even requested from the Pope. Besides, sometimes there was no alternative to the Jews. For instance, during the fifteenth century around seventy five percent of the physicians were Jews (see Tavares 1996 (see note 3), p. 22). Sometimes, when a Jew had high professional competence, the aristocracy or the city councils might have appealed to the king for exempting him from observing curfew or for allowing him to dwell outside the *judiaria*.

[26] David Nirenberg, *Les Juifs, la violence et le sacré*. In: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 50, n. 1, 1995, pp. 109-131 (specially pp. 111-113).

[27] *Idem*, p. 111. Nirenberg also refers to the „Holy Friday officers", who were Christians appointed by the King representatives to protect the *judiarias* from attacks of other Christians (*idem*, p. 113).

[28] On Jewish iconography during the Middle Ages and Modern times see Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Le Juif Médiéval au Mirroir the l'Art Chrétien*. Paris 1966; Eric Zafran's Ph.D. dissertation, *The Iconography of Antisemitism: a Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe, 1400-1600*. New York 1973; and also Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: an Illustrated History*. New York 1996.

study concerning Jewish medieval iconography only refers to three different sources[29]: (i) a console from the porch of Évora's cathedral where two Jews with dog faces and the characteristic pointed hat (*pileus cornutus*) are represented above the feet of one apostle (dating from c. 1330); (ii) two figures with pointed hats on the painted beams of the Colegiada de Guimarães' church, including a dragon with human head (both dating from c. 1390); and (iii) some miniatures representing Jews with pointed hats in manuscripts proceeding from the Santa Cruz de Coimbra monastery (dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). Therefore, the number of known Portuguese Jewish iconography is not impressive. One reason for this situation may be the disappearance of the majority of easel and mural paintings from that period.

Nevertheless, there are other visual sources that remain unexplored, where researchers can find extremely interesting data. In this article we add three more iconographic references to the sources known until now. Thus, we begin by mentioning the less interesting one, since it is similar to the ones already known. It is found in a Cistercian missal proceeding from the Alcobaça monastery and dating between 1330 and 1350.[30] On folio 24r there is a capitular miniature representing the Epiphany in which two of the Magi are wearing pointed hats (Fig. 1). According to Horácio Peixeiro[31] this manuscript was produced in Alcobaça's *scriptorium*. Thus, even if the iconography was a mere copy of another manuscript belonging to a foreign monastery it is important to emphasize that it was produced in Portugal early in the fourteenth century. Therefore the common iconography of the Jews represented with pointed hats was already known in Portugal by then, as the other examples mentioned above from Évora and Guimarães corroborate.

Nevertheless, the iconography of the Jews that we could expect as purely Portuguese appears to be totally absent from the few remaining visual sources of that period. In fact, the mandatory use of a yellow sign on Jews' hats is not represented in any of these sources. This fact might suggest two ideas: (i) Portuguese legislation was not sufficiently disseminated or observed; and (ii) the iconographic matrix for representing the Jews strictly followed models from abroad where that sign was not used.

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[29] See Maria Tavares, *O estereótipo do Judeu português na época dos Descobrimentos*, In: Salete da Ponte and Helena Romero (eds.), *Os Judeus e os Descobrimentos*. Tomar 1992. pp. 15-25. We should also add the representation of a human head with a conical hat on Mértola's church porch, as is mentioned in Tavares 1982 (see note 3), p. 23. Another figure traditionally identified as a Jew (and probably the most famous one) is a man wearing a six-armed red star on the chest, who is depicted in Nuno Gonçalves' famous St Vincent polyptych. Yet, as Dagoberto Markl has proved, this red sign is a recent addition, since the original sign visible on radiographs only presents four arms in what seems to be a St Andrews Cross (see Dagoberto Markl, *Na procura de um rosto perdido*. In: AA VV, *Nuno Gonçalves, Novos Documentos*, Lisboa, IPM, 1994. pp. 27-32).

[30] Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Códice Alcobacense n. 26: *Missal*. A study of this manuscrit can be found on Horácio Peixeiro's *Missais Iluminados dos Séculos XIV e XV. Contribuição para um Estudo da Iluminura em Portugal*, 2 vols., Lisbon, M. A. Dissertation – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1986, specially on pages 238 to 241 of the first volume.

[31] *Idem*, pp. 238-241.

Nevertheless, even if the iconographic models might have come from abroad, they were clearly adjusted to local conditions, as it is proved by the different shape of the pointed hats. Moreover, it appears that the use of the star-shaped sign of yellow or red on Jews' hats or clothes was not a common practice in late medieval Portugal. Indeed, as Maria Tavares argues, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Jews received royal permission to not wear distinctive signs wherever they were known as Jews. Thus, the sign was only mandatory when the Jews were on transit or in a distinctive place from their usual local of inhabitance.[32] In other words, the majority of the Jews lived among the Christians without having to use distinctive signs.

An extremely interesting image is one miniature representing the Lapidation of Saint Stephen (Fig. 2), founded in one Cistercian breviary whose date is uncertain since it has been attributed both to the fourteenth and to the fifteenth centuries[33]. It is important to note that this manuscript has only three illustrations: the above-mentioned Lapidation of St Stephen (fl. 219v), St Vincent lying in a boat guided by three crows (fl. 231v) and a representation of a Cistercian monk (fl. 195v). This latter representation is quite natural in a monastery of the Cistercian order and the presence of St Vincent is not unusual, since he was one of the most important saints of medieval Portugal. However, the image representing St Stephen being assassinated by a group of Jews demands further reflection.

Being the first martyr of the Christian faith, Stephen was a very popular saint during this period and his feast day was particular important in the Christian liturgical calendar. Together with the periods of Christmas and Lent the feast of St Stephen was a day particularly favorable to stimulate anti-Semitic behavior[34]. Indeed, the dramatization of the events leading to the lapidation of Saint Stephen was conducted by inflamed preachers, who found extra support for their hate in images like the one we are analyzing. This image is divided in three areas and the first one is occupied by a King, enthroned, ordering the lapidation of the saint. This action is a clear consequence of the influence of a small black devil with long horns, who is represented next to the right ear of the King. One feature concerning this King deserves particular attention: the gesture of his right hand resembling the genitalia of a male whose interpretation we believe unnecessary[35]. In the center of the composition there are four Jews with pointed hats throwing stones at the saint, who stays on the right side of the folio. The saint is represented on his knees, with his hands joined, significantly wearing a monastic habit. On his tonsured head he exhibits several signs of injuries caused by stones that are

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[32] See Tavares 1996 (see note 3), p. 15.

[33] Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Códice Alcobacense n. 66: *Breviário*. As far as we know, this manuscript did not receive any specific study except for a very brief note made by Horácio Peixeiro. See Peixeiro, *Missais Iluminados*, vol. II, p. 442.

[34] See Tavares 1982 (see note 3), pp. 32 and 416.

[35] This King is also presented in the *attitude royale*, according to which the right leg is crossed over the left leg. Nevertheless, the torsion of the King's body, the gestures of his two hands (particularly the impious resemblance previously mentioned), the crossed leg and the influence of the small devil altogether emphasize the opposition between this figure and the model of a righteous sovereign.

continually being thrown in his direction[36]. Thus, the presentation of the saint as a monk emphasized the familiarity and empathy between victim and reader/viewer, even though he is wearing an habit of a different religious order. We believe that the anti-Judaism of this image is fairly obvious and we should take in account the fact that this image was not imported from abroad. In fact, stylistically it seems to have been produced by the monks who inhabited this monastery[37], the most important one of the Cistercian order in Portugal and a leading center of Portuguese culture[38].

The last image we refer to is a mural painting from c. 1438 representing Calvary, which was discovered a few years ago in the main chapel of St Francisco's Church in Leiria[39]. Presently measuring about c. twenty square meters, this unfinished painting presents a sweeping view of Calvary with a multitude of figures, almost all of whom are represented in realistic scale (Fig. 3). The focal point of the composition is the figure of

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[36] The Lapidation of St Stephen's iconography is vast. Among the most interesting representations of this subject there is one of his reliquaries dating from c. 1210 now at the Halberstadt cathedral, whose remaining bronze figures show us four Jews with conical hats throwing stones. (A photo of these figures can be found on Schreckenberg 1996 (see note 28), p. 174). This iconography also has its analogies with two attempts of stoning Christ narrated by John the Evangelist (8,59 and 10,31). In fact, the circumstances surrounding the death of Stephen clearly evoke the death of Jesus, which they try to emulate. Thus, in the account of Stephen's death (Acts 6,8-7,60) we find the use of false witnesses in his trial, the accusations of acting against the Temple, the reference to the Glory of the Son of Man and Stephen's giving forgiveness for his own murder just like Christ did. A study of this iconography is given on Blumenkranz 1966 (see note 28), pp. 83-85.

[37] Besides, we believe that the iconographic differentiation between these pyramidal hats and the typical conical or pointed hats from other European regions also reflects the native origin of this painter, even if he might have been inspired by foreign iconographic models. At the same time, as we have pointed out earlier, the fact that these Jews do not wear distinctive signs of red or yellow on their clothes might be due to the weak diffusion and implementation of the legislation concerning these. Indeed, one should bear in mind that the popular representatives at the *Cortes* kept making claims for measures against the absence of identifying signs on the Jews.

[38] Indeed, it seems that anti-Jewish (or anti-Semitic?) culture was particularly strong in this monastery. The *scriptoria* of this abbey had several manuscripts with clear anti-Jewish discourses, some of them engaged in anti-Jewish polemics. Among them there are texts from St Thomas Aquinas, Gislebertus Crispinus, St Isidore of Seville, Pedro Alfonso, Nicolas of Lyra and Nicolas of Asmo. (On this subject see Mário Martins, *A polémica religiosa nalguns códices de Alcobaça*. In: *Brotéria*, vol. XLII, 1946, pp. 241-250). With such remarkable nutriment this anti-Jewish culture inbred healthfully among the sons of the monastery. Thus, it is not a surprise that during the first half of the fourteenth century João de Alcobaça, a monk from this monastery, have written a manuscript entitled *Speculum Disputationes contra Hebraeos* now at the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (Códice Alcobacense n. 236). Even if this manuscript seems to have been written in order to overcome the defeat of Father Paulo against Rabi Moses of Gerona at the 1263 *disputatio* of Barcelona, it clearly expresses the anti-Jewish culture of an entire institution. (On João de Alcobaça see Mário Martins, *Frei João de Alcobaça é contraversista*. In: *Brotéria*, vol. XLII, 1946, pp. 412-421).

[39] See Luís Afonso, *As Pinturas Murais da Igreja do Convento de S. Francisco de Leiria*. 2 vols., Lisbon, M. A. Dissertation – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1999.

Christ crucified, on whom the gaze of nearly every member of the crowd is fixed. In the foreground are the figures usually to be found in Calvary paintings, namely the women weeping at the foot of the cross (with an unusual Virgin Mary), John the Evangelist, the Roman centurion and also some key figures of the Franciscan hagiography, namely St Anthony, St Francis and St Bonaventure. Further, there is a royal couple with their young heirs in devotional posture in opposed sides of the cross. Behind these figures are a considerable number of anonymous onlookers, generally depicted in profile or in three quarters, and it is one of them that brandishes the spear which pierces Christ's side. Although their expressions of grief or horror show that some of these onlookers are clearly moved by the events they are witnessing, most of the figures in the crowd are in fact jeering and mocking Christ, as we can tell by their open mouths showing their teeth and by their provocative gestures, namely the crossed fingers (Fig. 4)[40].

Using wisely the disposition of the painting and the longitudinal plan of the building, this image of the *Christus Patiens*, looming over the crowd and depicted in a larger scale, seems to embrace the whole nave of the church in its magnetism, compelling the attention of all who enter this building. As we know, the image of the crucified Christ was probably the most common one during the late Middle Ages. An essential element in the social cohesion of the period, it represents the moment at which God made man redeemed from the original sin by Christ's sacrifice, opening the way for the salvation of all those prepared to repent their wrongdoings. In this light, the inclusion of figures who clearly approve the crucifixion of Christ, and who are impervious to His pain, could only elicit hatred[41]. Therefore this grand narrative scene is used as a vehicle for exploiting, as well as inciting, antagonism towards the Jews as the authors of the death of Christ. This is how we are forced to interpret a host of details, such as the spear

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[40] Gestures like the crossed fingers or the making of grimaces were perfectly familiar to the people. In fact, the majority of the population seems to have used them in situations of mockery and joking. (On this subject see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La Raison des Gestes dans l'Occident Médiéval*. Paris 1990. specially p. 260). Nevertheless, using these gestures against the holy figures was considered one of the highest possible sacrileges. For instance, in Dante's *Comedia* one of the major punishments that we can find in the *Inferno* results from the irreverence of the impious thief Vanni Fucci. As Dante reports in Chant XXV: „*Al fine de le sue parole il ladro / le mani alzò com amendue le fiche* [crossed fingers], / *gridando: 'Togli, Dio, ch'a te le squadro!*'". The punishment was immediate: „*Da indi in qua mi fuor le serpi amiche, / perch'una li s'avvolse allora al collo, / come dicesse 'Non vo' che piú diche*'". In fact, suddenly his body was completely covered with snakes and a centaur and other beasts attacked him: „*Maremma non cred' io che tante n'abbia, / quante bisce elli avea su per la groppa / infin ove comincia nostra labbia*". His wickedness and his remorselessness were so clear that Dante states: „*Per tutt'i cerchi de lo 'nferno scuri / non vidi spirito in dio tanto superbo, / non quel che cadde a Tebe giú da' muri*".

[41] This kind of anti-Judaic representations seems to have been common by the end of the Middle Ages. For instance, in the Museum of Unterlinden (Colmar) there are two panels (one of which is attributed to the workshop of Schongauer) dating from the end of the fifteenth century were we can find the same gestures as those used on Leiria's fresco. A stimulating exploration of this type of iconography is given by James Marrow, *Circumdederunt me canes multi: Christ's tormentors in northern European art of the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*. In: *Art Bulletin*, n. LIX, 1977, pp. 167-181.

which pierces Christ's side, the henchman hammering a nail into His feet and the Jews who shout and gesticulate obscenely in the direction of God[42]. The fact that these Jews do not wear distinctive signs on their clothes only reflects and reinforces the social reality of the times, since the use of distinctive signs by the Jews was hard to implement as we have seen earlier.

In the case of this particular mural, the identification of the mocking figures in the painting with a minority religious group, living then and there in the same small town, could only signify an incitement to anti-Jewish sentiment. A painting of this nature, using a visual language which was accessible to all and which could be closely echoed by the inflamed sermons of the preachers and by the lauds recited and sung by the population, clearly reinforced received opinion on the intrinsic perfidiousness of the Jews. And we know that anti-Jewish sentiment did exist in Leiria, as the sack of the ghetto in Easter 1377 demonstrates[43]. And, while images such as these (which were taken at face value, as faithful representations of real facts) sanctioned and perpetuated anti-Judaic ideology, they also soothed the conscience of the Christians with regard to the persecution and segregation of the Jews. Just as the sermon could whip anti-Jewish sentiment into a frenzy during sensitive periods such as Easter, images such as the Leiria fresco constituted the historical «proof» of the heinous conduct of a people who even then persisted in their false beliefs. Therefore images of this type must be regarded as a moral justification for the violence committed against the Jews[44].

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[42] As James Marrow has pointed out, the behavior of the Jews who shouted and roared with their mouths more or less opened resembled the behavior of demented dogs (*idem*, p. 178). Indeed, even if in Leiria's fresco there is not a metamorphosis of the anatomy of the Jews (in order that their face and posture resembles dogs, lions or other wild beasts), it is quite clear that there is an attempt at projecting the behavior of wild animals upon this exalted crowd who gnash their teeth like demented dogs.

[43] Information about Leiria's Jewish community is given in Saúl Gomes' study *Os Judeus de Leiria medieval como agentes dinamizadores da economia urbana*. In: *Revista Portuguesa de História*, t. XXVIII, 1993. According to this historian, the *judiaria* of Leiria was formed during the thirteenth century and achieved high cultural and economic standards (for instance it had one of the first printing houses in the country). Nevertheless, the relations between the Jews and the Christians of Leiria started to deteriorate by the second half of the fourteenth century when the pressure on the Jews was increasing. The hatred between these two communities was growing and the Christians demanded more and more the enforcement of anti-Jewish legislation. It is in this context that during the Thursday and Holy Friday of Eastern of 1377 the *ghetto* of Leiria was attacked and plundered. Later, in 1414, due to the pressure of the local representatives even their right of *vizinhança* was withdrawn by the King, which forced the Jews to pay a toll whenever they entered in the village (see Humberto Baquero Moreno, *Exclusão e marginalidade social no Portugal quatrocentista*. In: *Ler História*, n. 33, 1997, pp. 37-51). Therefore, a painting like the one of St Francis church would help validate and strengthen the anti-Jewish culture and behavior of this population.

[44] Initially, one of the main goals of the mendicant orders evangelization consisted on the conversion of the infidel, whether it be a Jew, a Muslim or a gentile. However, the difficulties experienced in the conversion of the Jews transformed the optimistic evangelic approach of the mendicants into a clear anti-Judaism, namely among the Dominicans. According to Jeremy Cohen (*The Friars and the Jews. The Evolution of Medieval Anti-*

An illustrative Prayer Book

A very different kind of source is constituted by a book of laudes[45] written by André Dias de Escobar around 1434[46]. Although his biography is fascinating in the extreme[47], what concerns us here is his role as the founder of the brotherhood of the Name of Jesus in the most important Dominican church of Lisbon[48]. Following its inception in 1432, the brotherhood grew at a spectacular rate and became famous thanks to the supposedly miraculous properties of the water blessed at the altar of the church. Indeed, the miraculous water of this altar was able to heal almost every disease. It was so efficacious that according to seventeenth century chronicler Frei Luís de Sousa[49] forty days drinking this water were enough to repel the epidemic affecting Lisbon in 1432[50].

It was for this brotherhood that André Dias composed his *laudário*, which was strongly influenced by Italian religious poetry[51]. For the present purpose, what interest us most in

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Judaism. Ithaca 1982), the mendicant friars played an important role in the growth of anti-Jewish culture in Europe, translating to popular culture the elaborate thought of anti-Judaic theologians. One should bear in mind the role of the Dominicans as inquisitors (see Stow 1992 (see note 16)) and the role of the mendicants in the expelling of the Jews from the Christian kingdoms (see Steiman 1998 (see note 11), pp. 31-34).

[45] Written and sung on national languages, the laudes were devotional popular songs easily followed and memorized by the faithful. They were particularly used in the liturgy of the mendicant orders.

[46] For a study of this *laudário* see Mário Martins, *Laudes & Cantigas Espirituais de Mestre André Dias († c. 1437)*. Roriz 1951.

[47] The rich but sinuous life of this religious man would merit the interest of a novelist. Indeed, this man who lived for one hundred and two years (c. 1349 – c. 1451) started as a Dominican friar, later became a canon of St Augustine and finally entered the Benedictine order. His curriculum in the religious hierarchy is also curious: abbey of the monastery of Rendufe in Portugal, bishop of Ajaccio in Corsica, bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo in Spain, titular bishop of Megara in Greece and Tabor in Palestine, he was finally commendatary abbot of the monastery of Alpendurada in Portugal. Living for several years in Rome and Florence, while the Benedictine monastery was directed by the Portuguese abbot D. Gomes, he was also one of the national ambassadors to the Councils of Basel and Constanz. For an in-depth study of his biography see Mário Martins, *idem* and specially António Sousa Costa, *Mestre André Dias de Escobar, Figura Ecuménica do Século XV*. Roma and Porto 1967.

[48] To better appreciate the importance of St Dominic's church in the daily life of Lisbon, we need only to recall that the popular uprising of 1506, which ended in the massacre of two thousand Jewish converts, had begun in this same church.

[49] Frei Luís de Sousa, *História de S. Domingos*, Porto, 1983, p. 350 (first edition 1623).

[50] André Dias does not spare his words about the virtues of the blessed water and cult of the Name of Jesus: „*come to His altar which stands on the monastery of St Dominic of the city of Lisbon, where through it many miracles are performed every day*" („*viinde ante o seu altar, que esta en no mosteiro de sam Domyngos da çidade de Lixbõa, onde el se fazem muytos miragres em cada huum dya*"). Cited in Martins 1951 (see note 46), p. 14.

[51] For more on this influence, particularly from the *laudário* of Pisa, see Mário Martins, *Raízes comuns entre o Laudário de Mestre André Dias e o Laudário de Pisa*. In: *Didaskalia. Revista da Faculdade de Teologia de Lisboa*, vol. XI, n. 2, 1981, pp. 281-306. This Italian

this *laudário* are the passages containing anti-Jewish sentiment. Some of Dias' canticles are indicative of the degree to which anti-Jewish sentiment was rooted in the Christian communities. Especially evident is the perception of the Jews as the murderers of Christ[52]. In a prayer designed to be read on Easter Monday, for example, an account of Jesus' Road to Emmaus contains unequivocal language, such as the following:

And do you not know of these Jewish dogs,
and of the scribes and Pharisees,
how they killed Jesus of Nazareth,
who in His words and deeds
was most virtuous and highly praised by the people
and how out of envy the Jews have crucified Him[53].

We should bear in mind that these lines were written for being sung during the Holy Week, a time of special tension when anti-Jewish sentiment was particularly strong. The directness of the vernacular, with the Jews referred to as «dogs», leaves no doubt as to its interpretation[54]. Similarly, the part played by the Jews in the death of Christ and in all the torments He suffered during the Passion is constantly evoked.

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laudário is a collection of different poems and prayer songs among whose authors we find the name of Jacopone da Todi, the most famous poet before Dante. Anyhow, the source for Dias's anti-Judaism should not be looked for in Jacopone's poetry, since it is absent from his writings (cf. Franco Mancini (ed.), *Laude. Iacopone da Todi*. Rome 1980).

[52] The historical evolution of this perception was studied by Jeremy Cohen, *The Jews as the killers of Christ in the Latin tradition, from Augustine to the friars*. In: *Traditio*, vol. XXXIX, 1983, pp. 1-27. According to this author, until the twelfth century there persisted a tradition whereby the Jews were ignorant of their crime of deicide. But after this period a new tradition started to emerge, which considered that the Jews were conscious of their crime. The mendicant masters of theology who taught at the University of Paris were the main advocates of this new idea; among them we find names such as Duns Scotus, St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas, Nicolas of Lyra and others.

[53] *„E nom sabes tu de aquelles cães judeus, / e dos escrivães e phariseus, / como a Jhesu de Nazare ham morto, / que per palavra e per obra / era muyto virtuoso e das gentes muyo louvado / e como per enveja os judeus o ham cruçifiçado*". Cited in Martins 1951(see note 46), p. 176.

[54] Again, like in Leiria's Calvary, there is a similitude between the angry Jews and the demented dogs. As James Marrow suggests in "*Circumdederunt me canes multi*" this resemblance has its main source of inspiration in Psalm 21 where bulls, lions and dogs are referred surrounding and attacking the psalmist. Further, this Psalm has other references which were later duplicated in Christ's Passion by the Evangelists, namely the partaking of the garments by the soldiers or the dramatic appeal to God at the moment of Christ's death. Nevertheless, despite their support to Old and New Testament narratives the new biographies of Christ that appeared during the late Middle Ages (like Ludolph's of Saxony *Vita Christi* or Pseudo-Bonaventure's *Meditationes Vitae Christi*) contained extra-Gospel information never used before. This popular literature also insisted on a very negative interpretation of Jewish behavior during the time of Christ. Indeed, according to James Marrow, referring to Christ's tormentors as dogs became a commonplace in medieval Passion literature and the depictions of dogs "*meant to characterize or identify Christ's tormentors range from subtle to pointedly obvious*" (*idem*, p. 174).

The Jews are again clearly described as killers of Christ in another laud, where the punishments inflicted on Christ serve as the pretext for further inflammatory rhetoric:

And after this He was tied securely to a column,
and lashed severely all over His body,
and from the many lashes He was covered in blood,
as if He were a false man, a thief and a traitor.
At the third hour all the Jews yelled out:
let Him be crucified now, this demon,
who has bewitched all our people
with His deceitful wiles.
And they promptly burdened Him with a heavy cross
and a noose around His neck they slung
and with much uproar and proclamation they led Him
to the place of Calvary as a thief and a robber[55].

Taken prisoner and lashed to a post, whipped all over until his body was one large bloody wound – Christ is treated here like the lowest of criminals. He is then dragged by a rope around his neck and forced to carry a heavy cross on his shoulders, and is further vilified in the worst possible manner as he makes his way to Calvary. This passage certainly does not mince its words; but even more interesting is another laud whose subject is the veneration of the Cross:

At that hour He was lashed
To a column and whipped
By all the Jewish commons
And by their chief rabbi[56].

This passage once again refers to Christ tied to a post and whipped, and once again the wickedness of the acts imputed to the Jews is clearly and overtly expressed. But still more interesting here is the transposition of contemporary social realities to the New Testament context. In asserting that Christ was tortured by *all the Jewish commons* and by «*their chief rabbi*», André Dias is clearly referring to the Jewish communities of the early fifteenth century, and the system of segregation then existing in Portugal. There is, therefore, a clear identification of fifteenth-century society with the society in the time of Jesus Christ. And in both cases, the leader of the Jews is their chief rabbi, the

[55] „*E depoys desto a hu(m)a columpna fortemente foy legado, / e per todo o seu corpo gravemente foy açoutado, / e dos muytos açoutes foy todo ensangoentado, / como se fosse huum falso homem ladrom e treedor. / Aa hora da terça todos os judeus braadarom: / seja logo cruçifiçado este indiebrado, / que todo o nosso poboo há enfeytiçado, / como mentiroso obrador. / E logo hu(m)a muyto pesada crux ao collo lhe poserom, / e huum baraço na garganta lho lançarom, / e com grandes aruydos e pregões o levarom / ao logar de calvaria como ladrom e furtador*". Cited in Martins 1951 (see note 46), p. 158.

[56] „*Aaquella ora foy legado, / a hu(m)a columpna e açoutado, / per toda a comuna dos judeus, / e per o sseu arraby mayor*". Cited in Martins 1951 (see note 46), p. 151.

religious official who operated as the link between the political powers and the various Jewish communities around the country.[57]

The same ideas were also conveyed in religious theatre, specially in plays of the Passion. As Jean Delumeau[58] has pointed out, theatrical enactments such as these were an ideal opportunity for encouraging ridicule and hatred of the Jews. Indeed, religious theatre was capable, like no other vehicle, of recreating, and therefore re-enacting, all the outrages committed against Christ by the Jews, namely in scenes like the dispute with the rabbis, the purification of the temple, the betrayal by Judas and the scenes representing the torments inflicted on Christ by the Jews during the Passion. Thus, in these re-enactments the culprits would naturally be interpreted as the contemporary Jewish communities.[59]

Many of the lauds composed by André Dias seem in fact quite suited to religious theatre by virtue of their detailed narrative[60], their vivid evocative imagery and, above all, the constant presence of an anonymous but active multitude.[61]

(...) and gall and vinegar they proffered Him to drink,
and all the Jewish one voice clamoured:
let Him die, let Him die, the criminal.[62]

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[57] For an account of the hierarchy and organization of Jewish communities in late medieval Portugal see Tavares 1982 (see note 3), pp. 107-158.

[58] Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occidente – XIVe-XVIIIe siècles. Une Cité Assiégée*. Paris 1978. p. 279. See also Nirenberg 1995 (see note 26), p. 121, who reffers to payments made to Christians (or even Jews) for performing the role of the Jews on Passion plays.

[59] Some plays from Gil Vicente clearly reflect this reality, namely the *Diálogo da Ressurreição* (1527). A critical edition of Gil Vicente's plays was organized by Leonor Buescu, *Gil Vicente. Compilaçam de Todalas Obras*. Lisbon 1983. For an overall perspective on Gil Vicente's attitude towards the Jews (by then converted and called '*New Christians*') see Maria Cruz, *Gil Vicente e a Sociedade Portuguesa de Quinhentos*. Lisbon 1990. pp. 185-200 and also Maria Tavares *O Judeu em Gil Vicente*. In: João Medina (ed.), *História de Portugal,* (see note 3), pp. 41-48. From 1500 on, there is a growing presence of anti-Semitism in Portuguese literature. On this subject see Maria Rodrigues, *Literatura e anti-Semitismo. Séculos XVI e XVII*. In: *Brotéria*, July and August/September, 1979, pp. 41-56 and 137-153.

[60] According to Martins 1981(see note51), pp. 297-298, some *laudes* from André Dias might have been partially and briefly represented with the help of a narrator. On this subject see the opinion of Luiz Francisco Rebelo, *O Primitivo Teatro Português*. 2nd ed., Lisbon 1984. pp. 43-44; and also António Saraiva, *O Crepúsculo da Idade Média em Portugal*. 3rd ed., Lisbon 1993. pp. 88-90.

[61] As David Nirenberg refers, the expressions of popular discontentment against the Jews mainly consisted on the throwing of stones at the *judiaria* and on the vigorous clamors accompanying those demonstrations. Usually, more violent actions were rare (see Nirenberg 1995 (see note 26), p. 116). Thus, André Dias's lauds may represent a faithful testimony of the clamors accompanying anti-Jewish events particularly during the Holy Week.

[62] „(...) *e fel e vinagre a bever lhe apresentarom, / e todos os judeus a hu(m)a voz bradarom: / moyra moyra o mal feytor.*" Cited in Martins 1951 (see note 46), p. 159.

These same exclamations recur elsewhere:

> *(...) and midst the uproar of the Jews He was condemned*
> *to a prompt and very unjust death.*
> *And all yelled out at the top of their voices:*
> *crucify Him, crucify Him, this false prophet,*
> *let Him die on the cross a cruel and loathsome death,*
> *let Him never return to deceive all our people.*[63]

The realism of these passages, and the emotion they convey, must have been very similar in spirit to the Passion plays enacted in the same period. Unfortunately, little is known about them.[64] Nevertheless, echoes of this tradition seem to be present in the religious theatre performed on rural Portugal by the beginning of the twentieth-century. Indeed, as José Cutileiro tells us on his anthropological monograph about a small Portuguese rural community of Northern Alentejo, when Passion plays were performed during the Holy Week the emotions were so powerful that the crowd could easily move from compunction to violence.[65] For instance, the „actors" representing the Jews on the *Flagellation*, on the *Way to Calvary* or on *Calvary* needed to have their faces covered with a cloth to avoid being identified as the real Jews who crucified Christ two thousand years ago. In fact, this anonymity was the only protection from a crowd that was ready to punish those «Jews» with their own hands after the play was over.[66] Obviously, this identification results both from the emotional performance of the ritual, and from the (con)fusion between past and present generated by this representation performed every

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[63] „(...) *e com muytos braados dos judeus foy condanado, / que logo morresse muyto injustamente. / E todos bradavam com grande voz e alta: / cruçifica, cruçifica este falsso propheta / e morra sobre a cruz morte cruel e fea, / que já mays nom engane toda a nossa gente.*" Cited in Martins, *idem*, p. 162.

[64] The study of Portuguese medieval religious drama faces the absence of written sources, specially before 1500. In fact, the existing references mostly refer to isolated theatrical representations connected with public celebrations, even if their mention is quite usual on the dispositions of medieval synods. Nevertheless, some reviews of already known manuscripts have revealed extraordinary information, as is the case of the dramatization of the Canticle of Canticles found in a thirteenth century Lectionary from the monastery of Arouca studied by Aires do Nascimento (A. Nascimento, *Osculetur me osculo oris sui: uma leitura a várias vozes ou dramatização do Livro dos Cantares num manuscrito cisterciense de Arouca*. In: A. Nascimento and Cristina Ribeiro (eds.), *Literatura Medieval. Actas do IV Congresso da Associação Hispânica de Literatura Medieval*, vol. I. Lisbon 1993. pp. 49-55). Still, the best introductory studies of this subject are two articles from Mário Martins (*Teatro sagrado na nossa Idade Média*. In: *Brotéria*, vol. L, 1950, pp. 140-153; and *O teatro litúrgico na Idade Média Peninsular*. In: *Estudos de Cultura Medieval*. Lisbon 1969. pp. 11-33) and a book by Luiz Francisco Rebello, *O Primitivo Teatro Português*.

[65] *Ricos e Pobres no Alentejo. Uma Sociedade Rural Portuguesa*. Porto and Sá da Costa, 1977, specially pages 335-336 (1st ed. *A Portuguese Rural Society*, Oxford, 1971).

[66] As David Nirenberg points out, in certain areas of Europe this tradition of the 'killing of the Jews' during the Holy Week has survived until present day, namely in the Iberian Peninsula. See Nirenberg 1995 (see note 26), p. 110.

year. Despite the distance in time, these qualities are probably the same that we find in the religious plays of the early fifteenth-century, from which the *Laudário* of André Dias is a good reflection.

Likewise, it also seems most likely that the religious discourse employed by the preachers for involving the laity was in much the same tone as we find in the *laudário* of André Dias.[67] One of the best known illustrations is that of Mestre Paulo[68], a converted Jew who became vicar of Braga cathedral during the second half of the fifteenth century and whose incendiary preaching style so effectively fanned the flames of intolerance.[69] Indeed, possessed with the typical fervor of the neophytes Mestre Paulo threatened with excommunication all the Catholics that met with Jews who did not attend to his preaching. Thus, his proselytizing efforts and his anti-Judaic speeches were directed not only at the Christians of Braga but also at the Jewish community of that city. The fervor of this preacher and the hatred he stimulated against the Jews motivated major complaints from them to King Afonso V, who experienced major difficulties in controlling the tension in that city. Indeed, the resistance to the proclamations of the King prove that the royal power was fast becoming impotent in stopping anti-Judaic violence.[70]

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[67] Indeed, there are other sources confirming this situation, namely the popular poetry of Matfre Ermengaud in his *Breviari d'amor* or the sermons of Berthold von Regensburg and Giordano da Rivalto. All of these sources have been examined by Cohen 1982 (see note 44), pp. 226-241. For a study on Jews and *conversos* on Portuguese early drama see Faingold 1991 (see note 7).

[68] On Mestre Paulo see two studies from Moreno 1990 (see note 6), pp. 139-155.

[69] In most cases the major inducers of anti-Judaism seem to have been the *conversos*, that is the Jews converted to Christianism (see Delumeau 1978 (see note 58), pp. 297-304 and also David Romano, *Penseurs chrétiens catalans vis-à-vis des Juifs*. In: Jeremy Cohen (ed.), *From Witness to Witchcraft. Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*. Wiesbaden 1996. pp. 299-336). For instance, two of the most important *disputatio contra iudeos* – the one from Paris, in 1240, and the one from Barcelona, in 1263 – were promoted by two *conversos* belonging to the Dominican Order (see Gilbert Dahan (ed.), *Ingetus Contardus. Disputatio Contra Iudeos. Controverse Avec les Juifs*. Paris 1993. pp. 44-45). Further, the creator of the most violent anti-Jewish legislation in Castile during the first half of the fifteenth century was the *converso* Pablo de Santa Maria, who eventually would became bishop of Burgos (see Moreno 1990 (see note 6), pp. 151-152).

[70] For instance, when this King tried to punish the leaders of the assault on Lisbon's *Judiaria Grande*, in December of 1449, the risk of a popular insurrection was so real that the King was forced to soften the sanctions against these men (see Moreno 1985 (see note 4), specially pp. 98-99). This reluctance to respect public order in what concerns the Jews is also evident in other Iberian areas. For instance, in Gerona the authorities responsible for protecting the Jews during 1331's Holy Thursday were attacked and humiliated by the enraged population of that city, who was led by the clergy of the Cathedral (see Nirenberg 1995 (see note 26), pp. 116-119).

Conclusion

With this brief study we hope to have contributed to a more critical perception of the cultural construction of the Jews in late medieval Portugal. Indeed, the sources we have analyzed show us how Portuguese Christian communities held a negative view of the Jews, namely accusing them of being the killers of Christ. Using the power of images and words, the Cistercians and the mendicant Orders played a fundamental role in creating and nurturing an anti-Judaic ideology, especially in urban communities where Christians cohabited with Jews. Hence, it is obvious that many of the religious songs and pictorial works of art of the late Middle Ages were not merely conceived for purposes of illustration and instruction. Their instructive intent may be praiseworthy, but in most cases such songs and images belonged to the ideological system by which the different social groups were structured. Neither the images nor the lauds we have analyzed were conceived as neutral or disinterested gestures, as mere instruments whose function was purely didactic, liturgical or aesthetic. On the contrary, the images and the lauds operated as vehicles for the corporate interest of religious and social institutions, helping to legitimize and justify the power of these bodies.

Despite the efforts of Portuguese revisionist historians, who consider Portuguese anti-Judaism as a tardy and sudden phenomenon and who tend to explain it in terms of occasional materially-driven disruptions, the sources we have examined show us, on the contrary, that the cultural construction of the Jews in late medieval Portugal was an enduring and structured ideological phenomenon particularly promoted by the Cistercians and by the mendicants[71]. Indeed, these sources clearly reveal an anti-Jewish Christian worldview, whose consequences could be particularly violent for the Jews during Eastern and Christmas. Actually, it seems likely that only the existence of a deeply-rooted anti-Jewish sentiment can explain the political and social events of an extremely intolerant period. Thus, the expulsion of the Jews from Portugal decreed by D. Manuel in December 1496 seems to have been the logical consequence of the growth of anti-Judaism in Portugal during the late Middle Ages. Moreover, the hatred of this anti-Jewish culture was kept alive and redirected at the *Cristãos-novos* („New Christians"), who became the principal target of the Inquisition after 1540 onwards.

[71] For a study on the pivotal role played by the mendicant Orders in the consolidation of an anti-Jewish ideology see Cohen 1982 (see note 44). See also Steiman 1998 (see note 11), pp. 30-38 and Jeremy Cohen's more recent book *Living Letters of the Law. Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*. Berkeley 1999, specially Part Four.



Fig. 1: **Epiphany,** c. 1330-1350.
(Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Códice Alcobacense n. 26, fl. 24r).



Fig. 2: **Lapidation of St. Stephen**, 14th -15th centuries.
(Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Códice Alcobacense n. 66, fl. 219v).



Fig. 3: **Calvary**, c. 1438. (St. Francis' Church in Leiria).



Fig. 4: **Calvary**, c. 1438 (detail). (St. Francis' Church in Leiria).