

## *Politics and ideology in Late Medieval Cordoba*

Despite the growth of 'scientific' analysis in the study of the past, it is still rare to find any frankness among historians concerning their own motives and preconceptions. Most historical work is based on remarkably unsophisticated conceptual apparatus, whatever the technical expertise with which written sources are treated. Nowhere is the barren nature of most historical work more clearly exposed than in the study of politics and political ideas. Despite the awareness in some circles that history as an intellectual discipline must die, even though it responds to a fundamental human demand for knowledge and understanding of man's past, if it fails to learn from and absorb other disciplines and their discoveries, it is still in fact, though never explicitly, assumed that men's motives for political actions in past ages can be adequately explained by the use of a few naive and fairly crude concepts. In exploring the theory and the practical results of politics in one late medieval Spanish town, it may be possible to reflect, rather more accurately than is customary, both the reality of a certain context in the past and he ideas and prejudices of one historian.

This article will not begin from wholly materialistic assumptions or from the converse belief that the only true reality is non-material. It will however use the knowledge which has been gleaned from a decade of research into the archives of Córdoba in order to undertake a journey which will, it is hoped, go through various 'archaeological layers' of historical understanding to reach a more rounded view of what some men aspired to do and what they actually did. In this search, it will be assumed that those things which are conventionally described as 'material' or 'spiritual', whether in metaphors derived from that traditional source of imagery, the human body, so beloved

of Biblical writers and medieval and Renaissance political theorists, or in those other images which Marx and his followers have found in the spheres of building and manufacture, are merely different facets of one human nature and one world. Whatever distinctions and divisions may have to be made for purposes of analysis, it must never be forgotten that none of these facts or factors can exist for long without reference to the others.

The apparently complete evacuation of the existing inhabitants of Córdoba, when the city was conquered by Ferdinand III in 1236, gave the new Castilian regime the chance to design a society which accorded as much as possible to contemporary ideals. The actual content of the conquering armies may have fallen far short of the imagined inhabitants of the 'City of God', but it is undeniable that the Christian 'kingdom' of Córdoba was set up in accordance with current social prejudices, even though these were controlled by a measure of current social reality. Inevitably, lands in both the city and the surrounding countryside were distributed in accordance with contemporary society's own perception of itself. In terms of the prevailing theory, Christendom was divided into three 'estates' or 'orders', each with its own duties and privileges. First came the Church, which by the mid-thirteenth century meant not the whole body of Christian faithful, but rather a select group of 'professional' servants of an institution, who were generally male, except for some religious communities of women, and who were set apart to serve God by means of a life devoted to worship, prayer, study and either manual work or pastoral ministry. Second came the military aristocracy, which acted as a professional soldiery, preferably on horseback, and whose duty was to defend the rest of society against attack. Last of all came the 'third estate', the producers of material goods for the support of churchmen and soldiers, as well as themselves. The position of those who did not fit into any of these categories was never resolved in terms of the 'estates' theory, and this problem played an important part in the social difficulties of the late medieval period.

One fact which was made abundantly plain by the distribution (*repartimiento*) of lands and buildings which followed the Christian conquest of Córdoba was that the first and second 'estates' expected to hold virtually all the economic assets in return for their religious and military activities. The Church naturally took over the Great Mosque of Córdoba, which was turned into the Cathedral of St Mary, and the parish system, which was now the approved model for Christian ministry to the laity, was introduced at once to the city. Ferdinand III's choice of religious orders to be established in Córdoba also reflected contemporary fashion. As a result, the Benedictine

and Cluniac orders were never established in the area and the Cistercian order did not appear until the house of the Holy Martyrs was founded in 1332. Instead, the newly-conquered city became a field of operation for the Augustinian canons and the orders of friars-Dominican, Franciscan, Trinitarian and Mercedarian<sup>1</sup>.

However, the Church, whatever its social importance, never became the dominant economic institution in the region. Power in late medieval Europe was largely measured in terms of lordship over men and over land — the two prerequisites for wealth and influence in a largely agrarian society at a fairly low level of technological development. In the kingdoms of Seville and Córdoba, only 5.7 % of the land was under ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the late thirteenth century and by the early sixteenth century the proportion had declined to 3.8 %<sup>2</sup>. Although it is impossible at this stage to obtain an accurate impression of the Church's role as a land-holder, indications are that the bishop, the Cathedral chapter and the larger religious houses derived much of their income from the rents of their own estates, or, in other words, the labour of those who worked their lands and other productive resources<sup>3</sup>. None the less, most of the material resources of Córdoba and its region were, from the beginning, in the hands either of the Crown or of the military aristocracy.

In 1236, the Castilian king acquired all the lands of the kingdom of Córdoba by right of conquest. However, the *repartimiento* delegated rights and powers to certain of his subjects. To begin with, there were two types of grant, the *donadío* and the *heredamiento*. A *donadío* was effectively a special jurisdiction, whose possessor had complete freedom of disposal, though the larger grants carried the requirement that the holder should not absent himself without leaving a military substitute. The recipient was normally a nobleman. *Heredamientos* were redistributed portions of *donadíos*, normally granted to settlers in return for certain obligations and services. The size of these two kinds of property varied, but the *donadío* was very much larger and might consist of more than one *alquería*, or farmstead<sup>4</sup>. Although lordship and its legal, military and economic attributes were still reserved to the Crown, very soon these powers too began to be delegated to subjects. It was out of the social struc-

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<sup>1</sup> See my book *Christian Córdoba* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 164-6.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio COLLANTES DE TERÁN: «Los señoríos andaluces, análisis de su evolución territorial en la Edad Media», *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos*, vi (1979), p. 8 (offprint).

<sup>3</sup> Miguel Angel LADERO QUESADA: «Producción y renta cerealeras en el reino de Córdoba a finales del siglo xv», *Actas del Primer Congreso de Historia de Andalucía* (1976), *Andalucía Medieval* (Córdoba, 1978), i 393-396, and Emilio CABRERA MUÑOZ: «Renta episcopal y producción agraria en el obispado de Córdoba en 1510», *Andalucía Medieval*, i, 406-410.

ture established by Ferdinand III and Alfonso X in the mid-thirteenth century that the social and political problems of late medieval Córdoba arose.

By the mid-fifteenth century, most of the lands in the kingdom of Córdoba were either under royal jurisdiction (*realengo*) or else subject to a secular lord (*señorío*). The principle of *señorío* arose naturally out of 'estates' theory. The Crown rewarded those who had helped in the military campaigns, not only with lands but also, in some cases, with jurisdiction over towns and villages in the area. The rest of the land and its population remained under royal jurisdiction, but this too was delegated, to the citizen body, or *concejo*, of one of the larger towns. In the kingdom of Córdoba, only the capital city itself came into this category. Córdoba became, in effect, the 'lord' of a large number of smaller towns and villages, with considerable legal, financial and political powers over them. In a similar way, the inhabitants of the seigneurial towns and villages had to go to their aristocratic lords for most legal, economic and administrative business. It is not possible to give an accurate account of population numbers in *realengo* and *señorío*. The only source of figures is the fiscal census of 1530, which has been studied by Emilio Cabrera. Using a coefficient of 4.5 for the number in each household, though as Cabrera rightly points out the figure was probably higher, for example 5.0 or 5.5, in rural areas, the total of 33 417 *vecinos* recorded in 1530 in the kingdom of Córdoba would probably amount to about 150 000 people. The city of Córdoba itself had 5845 *vecinos* in 1530, but the most striking feature of the census results is the number of smaller towns in the area with the significant total of between 1100 and 1500 *vecinos*. These included Baena, Priego, Montilla, Aguilar, Cabra and Lucena, in *señorío*, and Bujalance, La Rambla, Fuente Obejuna and Pedroche in *realengo*. Such indications suggest that the population of the region was more or less equally divided between the Crown and the lords. In terms of land area, the distribution was rather different. Nearly two thirds of the land was in *realengo*, suggesting that the *concejo* of Córdoba had been left with a larger proportion of the less productive resources<sup>5</sup>.

The system of government in fifteenth-century Córdoba was typical of that which existed in most large Castilian towns. The conduct of municipal affairs was notionally in the hands of the male householders, the *vecinos*, but it seems most unlikely that an open

<sup>4</sup> Julio GONZÁLEZ: *Repartimiento de Sevilla*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1951), i, pp. 236-293.

<sup>5</sup> Emilio CABRERA: «Tierras realengas y tierras de señorío a fines de la Edad Media. Distribución geográfica y niveles de población», *Andalucía Medieval*, i, 295-308.

council (*concejo abierto*) of all the *vecinos* ever existed in Córdoba. Instead, the Crown appointed magistrates (*alcaldes*) and a constable (*alguacil*) to take charge of judicial and military affairs, respectively. The *vecinos'* only role in the government of their city was to elect *jurados*, two for each parish (*collación*), who were also responsible for drawing up the lists (*padrones*) for the payment of royal taxes and for military service. According to a royal document of 1320, the *jurados* were also supposed to inform the king about the way in which the city was being governed. However, this definition of the role of the *jurados* more or less coincided with the introduction to Córdoba of a permanent council, whose members were known as *regidores*. The new council was the result of a policy carried out on a large scale by Alfonso XI, and under the new system, the *alcaldes mayores* continued to be appointed by the Crown, but they were joined by twenty-four *regidores*, also known from their number as *veinticuatro*s. After the *regidores* were introduced, their *cabildo* replaced the *concejo* of *vecinos* as the municipal governing body, although royal documents were still addressed to the *concejo*, as well as the various city officials<sup>6</sup>.

Even if the structure of municipal government is accepted at face value, without regard for any contrasting reality which may have lain behind it, it is clear that the Crown did not leave the *cabildo* of *regidores* entirely to its own devices. Spasmodically from the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth, and regularly from 1478, the Crown appointed a *corregidor*, who was either a lawyer or a lesser noble in royal service and whose duty was to 'correct' abuses in municipal government. The powers of the *corregidor* under Ferdinand and Isabella, as illustrated in the royal ordinances for Córdoba of 1491, were virtually those of a municipal viceroy. In theory, a *corregidor* was only sent to a town if he was asked for by the local council, but, in practice, the appointment of a *corregidor* was seen as a punishment for municipal misgovernment and, under the Catholic Monarchs, he became the automatic head of the local administration. The *corregidor* was supported by the developing apparatus of the central government, the *Consejo Real*, which issued administrative documents and acted as the final court of judicial appeal, and the *Chancillería* or *Audiencia*, which acted as a high court of justice, was established in Valladolid, and set up an Andalusian outpost in Ciudad Real in 1494, which moved to Granada in 1505. As a result of the growth of this legal and administrative system, which was carefully fostered by Ferdinand and Isabella,

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller description of the development of local government in Córdoba, see *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 24-57.

Córdoba council, and in particular the *corregidor*, received a constant flow of legislation and directives, and the legal business of, at least, its wealthier citizens was increasingly transacted by professional royal judges, in the *Audiencia* or the *Consejo Real*. Even the smallest criminal or civil case was normally heard by the *corregidor* or, more commonly, one of his officials<sup>7</sup>.

In view of the above, it would clearly be quite wrong to discount the influence of the Monarchs and the servants of the central government on the daily affairs of Córdoba. None the less, a study of municipal records in that period very soon reveals that despite the energetic efforts of the Crown, most effective power still remained in the hands of local men. In order to understand how things worked, it is necessary to approach the question in terms, both of the political structure and of its social nature and significance.

Local interest in political activity centred mainly on the office of *regidor*, or *veinticuatro*. It has already been noted that the *regidores* formed, under the Crown's authority as mediated through the *corregidor*, the decision-making body of the city. One of the main attractions of a *regimiento*, from the point of view of a citizen of Córdoba who had political ambitions, was that such an office was normally a guarantee of political influence both for the office-holder himself and for his descendants. A *veinticuatro* of Córdoba in the fifteenth century was unlikely to be removed from office. Indeed, the Crown encouraged him to regard his post as a family possession to be transmitted to his heir. Partly for this reason, the demand for *veinticuatrias* seems to have exceeded the supply throughout the fifteenth century. The Trastamaran kings, and in particular John II and Henry IV, responded to this demand by creating extra offices, known as *oficios acrecentados*. Both monarchs tried in vain to revoke the extra grants and Ferdinand and Isabella renewed the effort at the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, but success was limited. It is possible that the situation in Córdoba was one of those which precipitated the 1480 measures. In theory, there had, of course, been twenty-four *regidores* since the fourteenth century, but by 1469 the actual number was 70. In 1480, the total seems to have reached 114, including no fewer than 90 *oficios acrecentados*. As a result of efforts to enforce the laws of Toledo, the number of *regidores* in Córdoba council had fallen by 1516 to 34<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 27-34 and 52-56, and also Bartolomé YUN CASALLA: *Crisis de subsistencias y conflictividad social en Córdoba a principios del siglo XVI* (Córdoba, 1980), pp. 197-198.

<sup>8</sup> See *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 34-43, and also Ladero, *Andalucía en el siglo XV, Estudios de historia política* (Madrid, 1973), pp. 86-87.

One of the main factors in the growth of *oficios acrecentados*, which had flourished in the turbulent years on either side of 1450, was the possibility of transmitting a *veinticuatria* to an heir, and thus establishing the family concerned in a position of public influence and respectability for the future. *Cabildos* of *regidores* were never intended to be democratic, and hereditary office-holding had been legal since the time of John II. Ferdinand and Isabella clearly understood that, in order to solve the problem of *oficios acrecentados*, they would have to regain control of the system of *renunciaciones*, which had largely been lost by the Crown, despite the fact that each transaction had to be individually authorised. The laws of Toledo stated the royal intention to abolish all hereditary office-holding, but in practice, business continued as before, though on a reduced scale. After 1480, a *renunciación* was only considered valid if the original office-holder lived for at least twenty days after the grant had been obtained. Fine timing was thus required, but nevertheless, between 1476 and 1515, the Crown is known to have granted at least sixteen faculties for future resignations of *veinticuatrias* to named beneficiaries. In addition, thirty-two other resignations to particular individuals took place in this period. Out of this total of forty-eight recorded resignations or faculties to resign a *veinticuatria* in Córdoba, thirty-four involved a transfer to the office-holder's son. In one case, the beneficiary was the holder's father and there is one example of resignation to a brother and one to a nephew. In twenty-one cases, the Crown, usually for a special reason, provided candidates to *veinticuatrias* who were not apparently related to the previous holder, but it is clear nevertheless that the predominant character of the *cabildo* of Córdoba in this period was that of a self-perpetuating oligarchy. It remains to enquire into the social characteristics of the families which achieved this significant degree of control over the political life of the city<sup>9</sup>.

Although theorists such as Diego de Valera might complain that nobles often obtained their rank on the basis of other people's virtues rather than their own, no attempt was made, even by the most radical of Ferdinand and Isabella's lawyers, to attack the hereditary principle among the military aristocracy<sup>10</sup>. It was generally accepted that nobility might be conferred in perpetuity by the king and that it might properly be granted to those who possessed wealth and breeding and who followed the military calling. This is not to say, however, that there were not problems of social status in the upper echelons. It was easy to distinguish the *grandes*, or *títulos*, who

<sup>9</sup> See *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 24-57, for fuller details.

<sup>10</sup> Diego de VALERA: *Espejo de la verdadera nobleza*, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, cxvi, pp. 89-116.

were granted titles and lordships by the Crown. No-one would seriously have suggested, either, that Don Alonso de Aguilar was a commoner, even though he was not a duke, marquis or count. Not so easy to understand, though, particularly in practice, was the distinction between the lesser noble, who was a *hidalgo*, and the *caballero*, although the theoretical difference between them was clear enough, because a *hidalgo* was defined by birth and a *caballero* by his function, as a horse-soldier. It does, however, seem to have been consistently true that *alcaldes*, *regidores* and *jurados*, like *hidalgos*, were exempt from royal direct taxes, in the form of *servicios*, though there were disputes about the status of office-holder's relatives, and non-noble *jurados* were supposed to revert to the status of *pechero* if they resigned from their offices<sup>11</sup>. The main guarantees of the economic and social power of the office-holding families of Córdoba, who were all 'noble' at least in fiscal terms, were gifts from the Crown in the form of *señoríos* or personally-assigned royal revenues (*juros*), and the grant of *mayorazgos* which ensured that individuals could hand their accumulated goods on to their heirs. The hereditary principle in municipal office-holding fitted naturally into this system and later documentation in national archives indicates that *mayorazgos* were virtually universal among such families by the late fifteenth century<sup>12</sup>.

The importance of the nobility in a regional society such as that of Córdoba depended to a large extent on the strength of whole families rather than those families' individual heads. The crucial groupings in this context were the *linaje* and the *bando*, which involved all the noble families, both seigneurial and non-seigneurial, which dominated the government of Córdoba in this period. The seigneurial families included the various branches of the Fernández de Córdoba, the Mexía lords of Santa Eufemia, the Portocarrero lords, later counts, of Palma, the Méndez de Sotomayor of El Carpio, the Venegas of Luque, the Sotomayor counts of Belalcázar and two branches of the De los Ríos, lords of Fernán Núñez and Las Ascalonias, respectively. The non-seigneurial office-holding nobility included such families as the Aguayo, Angulo, Argote, Cabrera, Cárcamo, Cárdenas, Carrillo, Castillejo, Godoy, Góngora, Hoces, De las Infantas and Mesa. These families showed a strong tendency to marry within their peer group. Together they seem, in the early sixteenth century, to have totalled approximately 350 individuals. The office-holding families were distributed fairly evenly through the various parishes of the city. There was no 'aristocratic quarter' in Córdoba and many fa-

<sup>11</sup> See *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 63-6.

<sup>12</sup> Angel GONZÁLEZ PALENCIA: *Biblioteca histórica y genealógica*, i, *Mayorazgos españoles* (Madrid, 1929), *passim*.



milies had members in several parishes. Eight of these families had members in no fewer than five parishes each. Thus while the office-holding group was socially cohesive, there is little or no sign of individual families achieving dominance over particular parishes or parts of parishes, as happened elsewhere in this period, especially in Italy.

Instead, the most prominent political groupings in late medieval Córdoba were the *bandos*, which were led by the two main branches of the Fernández de Córdoba, the houses of Aguilar and Baena. All the seigneurial nobility of the Córdoba area, except for the counts of Belalcázar, was represented in the city's *cabildo*. In particular, Don Alonso, the head of the house of Aguilar, was *alcalde mayor* of Córdoba and the count of Cabra, head of the house of Baena, was *alguacil mayor*. These two magnates were among five who held *votos mayores* in the council, the others being the *alcaide de los donceles*, Gonzalo Mexía, lord of Santa Eufemia, and Don Luis Portocarrero, lord of Palma<sup>13</sup>. The *voto mayor* seems not to have given an additional vote, but to have been a formal title of honour, beyond the style 'Don', which was restricted to members of the highest rank of the upper nobility and to senior churchmen. It was not, however, through honorific titles that the upper nobility exercised political power in Córdoba. This was done in some cases by marriage alliances and in others by the payment to council members of *acostamientos*, which were intended to secure the loyalty of the *regidor* concerned to the cause of a certain magnate. Royal attempts to restrict or forbid this practice were as unsuccessful as all the Crown's other efforts to regain control of the municipal government. The political developments in Córdoba and district which reveal the activity of the two *bandos* have been surveyed elsewhere<sup>14</sup>. The important points to notice here are firstly, that these groupings were fairly amorphous in character, so that many office-holding families had members in both, and secondly, that the available evidence shows that the two *bandos* were supported by many individuals who did not have feudal or marriage ties with their leaders, so that it was probably impossible for any politically-active citizen of Córdoba to avoid connection with one or the other.

If the control of the upper nobility and its lesser-noble allies over the political life of Córdoba was as complete as has been suggested up to now, it is reasonable to ask whether this state of affairs was accepted by the rest of the population. Out of respect for the traditional belief in the efficacy of administrative measures, the search

<sup>13</sup> LADERO: *Andalucía*, p. 86.

<sup>14</sup> This and other questions concerning the noble *linaje* and the social structure of Córdoba are discussed more fully in *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 133-43.

for potential sources of opposition to the *status quo* will begin with the *jurados*, who were officially designated as guardians of constitutional and administrative propriety in the city.

The independence of the *jurados* of Córdoba seems to have survived, at least in part, until the beginning of the fifteenth century. In or around 1402, they reported to king Henry III concerning the misgovernment of their city and region, in a manuscript which is preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional. The burden of their complaint was that local nobles and their followers were preventing the due administration of justice by the *alcaldes* and the enforcement of the *fuero* and other royal laws by the *alguaciles*. Prisoners were being seized by their allies in the midst of court hearings, the municipal officials were neglecting the upkeep of the city walls and the Puente Romano, and *regidores* were taking a lead in the seigniorial usurpation of publicly-owned lands for private use, thus dismembering the municipal patrimony which it was their duty to protect. The *jurados'* response to what was, by their account, a virtual breakdown of public order was to form a *hermandad*, consisting of 'los omes medianos de la çibdat', in order to defend the king's justice against noble attack. This *hermandad*, with the help of some churchmen, seems to have mediated successfully in at least one or two feuds among the local aristocracy, and the king responded to the *jurados'* complaints by sending a *corregidor* to the city<sup>15</sup>.

By the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, the *jurados* seem to have retained little of their former political vitality. Royal legislation in the fifteenth century attempted to ensure that the *jurados* were effective representatives of their parishes by insisting that they had to live in or close to the parish concerned and might not appoint deputies to do their work for them. The existence of these laws was probably in itself a bad sign, but the main security for the representative character of the *jurados* was the right of the parishes to elect them, which was confirmed for Castile in general by John II in 1432 and for Córdoba in particular by the Catholic Monarchs in 1484. Córdoba's privilege stated that when a *jurado* died in office, the *vecinos* of the parish were to meet in its church and elect a successor. The election was open, without lots or ballots, in the presence of the other *jurados* of the city and of the *corregidor*. The *vecinos'* choice had to be approved first of all by the other *jurados*, who then conducted the successful candidate to the *cabildo* for ratification by the *regidores*. Between 1476 and 1515, fifteen such elections are known to have taken place. However, very few *vecinos* actually voted and it appears that

<sup>15</sup> The manuscript is transcribed and studied by Manuel Nieto Cumplido in «Luchas nobiliarias y movimientos populares en Córdoba a fines del siglo XIV», *Tres estudios de historia medieval andaluza* (Córdoba, 1977), pp. 13-65.

there was often only one candidate. The clearest indication, though, of the decline of the *jurados* as representatives of the people is the fact that, in the same period, between two thirds and three quarters of the new *jurados* appointed in the city were named by the Crown, in the majority of cases in accordance with the wishes of their predecessors in the offices concerned. As with *veinticuatrias*, the Crown exploited any unusual circumstances in order to make its own provisions, but a study of appointments to *juraderias* in this period makes it absolutely clear that the *jurados* had, by 1480, become largely integrated into the urban oligarchy. Many of the *jurados* came from families which also provided *regidores*, for example, the Carrillo, Cárdenas, Mesa, Pineda and Valenzuela. Some individuals were, at different times, both *jurados* and *veinticuattros*<sup>16</sup>.

Unlike some other towns, Córdoba never acquired any constitutional representative of its citizens' interests, other than the *jurados*. This fact provides a contrast with Carmona, where, in the first years of the sixteenth century, a brief experiment took place with the appointment of a *personero* to represent the *comunidad de la villa*, by attending *cabildo* meetings and criticising misgovernment by the *regidores*. The existing authorities stoutly resisted the admission of the *personero* and even after he won this battle, the institution seems to have remained ineffective, partly through lack of support from the citizenry in general. No *personero* is recorded in the *actas capitulares* after 1506<sup>17</sup>. In Seville, under the Catholic Monarchs, two *regidores*, two *jurados* and two citizens without public office were appointed to meet with a representative of the *asistente* (Seville's equivalent of a *corregidor*) for a similar purpose. They were known as *fieles ejecutores*, but, as their provenance suggests, they did not constitute an independent political force<sup>18</sup>. There seems to have been no equivalent in Córdoba.

It thus appears that there was no possibility of effective dissent within the legal political framework of Córdoba. Control of the government was in the hands of a largely aristocratic group which owed its allegiance at least as much to the leaders of the two *bandos* as to the king and queen themselves. The *jurados*, who had previously been constitutional guardians and channels for the views of the citizenry, were now effectively a part of the oligarchy of the *regimiento*. They still had regular meetings in a separate *cabildo*, in addition to

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<sup>16</sup> Archivo Municipal de Córdoba (AMC), Sec. 19, ser. 4, núm. 64. Archivo de Protocolos de Córdoba (APC), Of. 18, tom. 8, fols. 437-40. YUN: *Crisis*, páginas 57-59.

<sup>17</sup> Manuel GONZÁLEZ JIMÉNEZ: *El concejo de Carmona a fines de la Edad Media (1464-1523)* (Sevilla, 1973), pp. 160-166.

<sup>18</sup> LADERO: *Historia de Sevilla*, ii, *La ciudad medieval* (Sevilla, 1976), p. 141.

the meetings of *regidores*, but the surviving records from the early sixteenth century suggest that political matters were not discussed at these gatherings<sup>19</sup>. Protest therefore had to come from outside the official political system. The Carmona experience of 1503-6 showed that, even with the backing of the Crown, it was difficult or impossible for outsiders to have their views heard in the *cabildo* of *regidores*. The royal laws themselves jealously protected the *regidores* from unwarranted interference. Citizens had the right to attend the meetings at which their business was discussed. They might be summoned by the *regidores* and even interrogated, but this hardly constituted a dialogue between equals.

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that no-one in Córdoba attempted to criticise the conduct of municipal affairs. In this context, the most important group was that of the *caballeros de premia*. That they should have sought an active political role is appropriate in the sense that they represent an earlier and more dynamic phase in Castilian urban life. Their ancestors were the *caballeros villanos* of the northern towns and they were part-time cavalry soldiers. Originally, they had been induced to keep the equipment of a *caballero* and to parade regularly, by the offer of exemption from *monedas*, which formed a part, but only a part, of direct royal taxation. However, by the late fifteenth century, service as a *caballero de premia* was obligatory for all those who possessed a certain minimum quantity of goods, generally value in cash terms at 50,000 *mrs*<sup>20</sup>. Perhaps it was the limited nature of the *caballeros de premia's* privileges which led them to defend their right so vigorously. Some information on the size and character of this group may be found in a list of those who took part in an *alarde* on the Campo de la Verdad to the south of Córdoba, on 5 November 1497. There are 195 names on the list, but it appears to be far from complete, as five parishes are missing altogether and some others are represented by very few names. In a few cases, the occupations of the *caballeros* are included and, as might be expected, they cover a wide range. There were *caballeros de premia* among the *traperos*, the *mercaderes* and the *merchantes*. Among industrial workers, tanners and dyers seem to have achieved this rank and artisans were represented by silver-smiths and furniture-makers, among others. *Labradores*, *hortelanos* and *silvaneros* also appear on the lists. 'Base and vile offices' were thus well represented in this group<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> AMC, Sec. 19, ser. 4, *Libros capitulares de los jurados*, i (1509-1513).

<sup>20</sup> LADERO: *La hacienda real de Castilla en el siglo XV* (La Laguna, 1973), pp. 199-211.

<sup>21</sup> APC, Of. 14, tom. 31, cuad. 22, fols. 304v-306.

The *caballeros de premia* showed various signs of militancy in this period. It appears that they experienced some difficulty in obtaining recognition of their status and privileges from the municipal authorities. Their resentment was particularly strong against the *hidalgos*, who had greater tax exemptions and were more favourably viewed by society. It is fairly obvious that wealthy *traperos* and prosperous tradesmen, confined by the nature of their office to the 'bought' rank of *caballero de premia*, were likely to resent those *hidalgos* whom they may well have regarded as idle, pretentious and, often, poor. One reaction of the *caballeros de premia* to this state of affairs seems to have been to try to drag the *hidalgos* down to their level. The pretext for the *caballeros'* action was a demand from the Crown, which was presented to Córdoba *cabildo* on Sunday 20 December 1495 by the royal *repostero*, Cristóbal de Robles, for a levy of 400 *espingarderos*, to be equipped with armour, arms and ammunition and assembled on 30 March 1496 in squads of fifty. They were to be provided with two months' pay by Córdoba, while any further wages were to be found by the Crown. The council duly agreed to this demand, but when it came to deciding who should contribute, the *regidores* were divided. The problem was that the soldiers required were infantrymen of the most expensive kind. Thus while an infantry *servicio* would normally not involve *caballeros* at all, it was possible that the *peones* of the city would not be able to raise sufficient cash to equip and pay the soldiers. The sum required was estimated at two million *maravedís*. Eleven *regidores* voted that this *servicio* was a matter for *peones* and that no *caballeros* of any kind should be involved. However, sixteen others voted that the *caballeros de premia* and the *caballeros de gracia* (who had been knighted in the chivalric way as individuals) should contribute as well, 'por que los peones de Cordova e su tierra están tan pobres que no saben si buenamente podrían cunplir el dicho servicio'. The majority duly triumphed and the order went out to the *collaciones* of Córdoba and to the *tierra* that the *caballeros de premia* were to contribute to this *servicio de peones*. The *regidores* may or may not have been aware that this action was to start a legal dispute which would last for at least eighteen years<sup>22</sup>.

By February 1496, it is clear that the *caballeros de premia* had protested to the Crown about their inclusion in the *repartimiento*. However, what is more significant is that they seem to have presented the issue as one of unfair distribution of taxation between rich and poor, at least within their own group. The *escribano del concejo* recorded in the *actas capitulares* that,

<sup>22</sup> AMC, *Actas capitulares*, 20-12-1495.

'a lo que disen de los cavalleros de premia, sy serán iguales en el servicio los ricos con los pobres, en esto dise la çibdad que al cavallero rico, que le echen dos peonías de las más ricas, y en los de mediana fasienda al respeto, y así en los de poca fasienda, por manera que aviendo consyderaçon se faga con el rico como con rico y al de mediana fasienda por mediano y al pobre como con pobre, como mejor vos paresçieron al respeto, con tanto que no se acontien las fasiendas, como está mandado por Cordova'<sup>23</sup>.

The last point is highly significant, because it touches on the obstinate refusal of Castilian municipalities in this period to tax wealth and income effectively. If the *caballeros de premia* were in fact interested in relating tax contributions to wealth, then they were truly revolutionaries.

The next development was the presentation in the *cabildo*, by Juan de Espinar, on behalf of the *caballeros de premia*, of a *real carta* which stated that the *repartimiento* should be collected by means of a *sisá*, 'para que todos pechan por ygual'. It appears from this document that the *caballeros de premia* had obtained the Crown's support for an attempt to share the financial burden of raising these troops. As the letter correctly stated, a *sisá*, or municipal imposition on the price of foodstuffs, would have involved all citizens, whether *caballeros* or *peones*. Not unnaturally, the *regidores* found it hard to accept the royal injunction and, after a vote had revealed their divisions, they postponed their decision for four days. After this delay, they plucked up courage to refuse to comply with the *real carta* and to supplicate against it, because, 'las cosas en que suelen sysas estan echadas para la Hermandad, y no ay otras'. Thereafter, the collection of the *repartimiento* continued in accordance with the council's decision, while the Crown's reply to the supplication was awaited. However, Juan Mexía Tafur was paid 15 000 *mrs*, ironically loaned from Hermandad funds, to take to Court a further petition from the *caballeros de premia*. On 16 March, Mexía returned to Córdoba with a royal *cédula* which stated that all those who had contributed financially and served in the wars against the Moors should pay towards the current *servicio* for *espingarderos*. Judging from the fact that the *regidores* took trouble soon afterwards to ensure that the *jurados* did not include *comensales* in the *padrones*, *caballeros* did, after all, have to contribute to the *servicio*<sup>24</sup>.

The issue of whether *hidalgos* should contribute to military *servicios* was not, however, left there. The Archivo Municipal in Córdoba contains a list, dated 21 June 1496, of 63 *hidalgos* who agreed

<sup>23</sup> AMC, Actas capitulares, 5-2-1496.

<sup>24</sup> AMC, Actas capitulares, 15-2-1496, 19-2-1496, 22-2-1496, 9-3-1496, 16-3-1496, 21-3-1496.

to take part in a *pleito* against the *caballeros de premia*. It appears, from a copy in the same document of a *real carta* of Burgos, 17 January 1497, addressed to the *corregidor* of Córdoba, Alonso Enríquez, that the case had reached the Consejo Real. The *hidalgos* had made a *relación* before that assembly, protesting at the *caballeros'* claim that the *hidalgos* should have the same duties as *caballeros de premia* in financial levies for military service to the Crown. It is clear that the question had arisen out of Córdoba council's decision to include the *caballeros de premia* as contributors to the December 1495 *repartimiento*. As was frequently the case with such legal actions, the matter reached no immediate conclusion. The Consejo Real apparently delegated it in 1502 to the *audiencia* at Ciudad Real, which gave sentence in favour of the *hidalgos'* exclusion from military *repartimientos*, but there must have been an appeal, because in January 1513 the whole case was opened up again, with a new list of *hidalgos* being assembled<sup>25</sup>. On 5 May 1514, a *requerimiento* from the *hidalgos* of Córdoba was read in the *cabildo*, demanding that the *corregidor* and *veinticuatro*s should investigate the inclusion of certain *hidalgos notorios*, without any indication of their status, in the *padrones* of the parishes of Sta Marina and San Lorenzo. The council agreed to investigate the titles of all the *hidalgos* in the city, with the result that a valuable list, containing 196 names, is included in the *actas capitulares*<sup>26</sup>.

The accumulation of all this evidence suggests that the dispute between the *hidalgos* and the *caballeros de premia* concerned more than the personal jealousy of a few individuals. It is notable that in the copy of the Consejo Real's letter of 17 January 1497, which has already been referred to, the *pleito* is said to have been between the 'cavalleros de premia e comunidad de la çibdad de Cordova' on the one hand and 'los cavalleros escuderos e fijosdalgo' on the other. The word *comunidad* acquired revolutionary overtones in the events of 1520-22, but it represented a much older tradition of urban dissent. Recently, the words *común* and *comunidad* have been extensively studied. The latest writer on the subject, J. I. Gutiérrez Nieto, is inclined, probably wrongly, to discount any parallels with Italy, but it seems clear that the word *común* was associated with sedition from the time of Alfonso XI, if not earlier. After the introduction of councils of *regidores* to the Castilian cities, *común* and *comunidad* seem to have developed in parallel, as terms to describe the *pueblo* as a political force, consisting of all the *vecinos* who were not included in the oligarchical council. Municipal disturbances in the late

<sup>25</sup> AMC, Sec. 2, ser. 10, núm. 1.

<sup>26</sup> AMC, Actas capitulares, 5-5-1514-12-6-1514.

Middle Ages were frequently described in terms of a conflict between *común* and *caballeros*<sup>27</sup>. It has already been noted that the term *comunidad* was used in the royal designation of the *personero* in Carmona in 1503. In Córdoba, the *comunidad* was referred to once again in some remarkable petitions, copies of which are included in the *actas capitulares* for 1515.

The *caballeros de premia* had already shown that they were not only interested in defending their own economic interests and in restricting the *hidalgos*' privileges. They also tried, in this period, to retain control over certain lesser municipal offices, apparently in order to keep them out of the hands of the oligarchy. According to a council decree of 1496, the tradition was that the *alcaldes ordinarios*, the *alcalde de las dehesas* and the *alcalde de la aduana* should be elected annually by two *caballeros de premia* from each parish, so that all parishes had an equal opportunity to fill the posts. However, the rights of the *caballeros de premia* were disputed, and in 1493 and 1498 the Crown had to intervene to protect their privilege against the attempts of the *corregidor* to take over the appointment of *alcaldes ordinarios*. The *caballeros de premia* seem to have been fighting a rearguard action for the former practice of electing magistrates locally. A similar problem arose over the *fieldades del almotacenazgo* and the office of *portero del cabildo*. A *real provisión* of 1480 supported the *caballeros*' claim to elect to the latter office, but an action had to be fought, interestingly enough by the *jurados*, in order to secure this right. Sentence was finally obtained from the *audiencia* at Granada in 1515<sup>28</sup>.

The petitions of that year contain far more radical ideas about the municipal government. The surviving copies claim to represent three petitions which were presented by Antón de la Mesta, on behalf of the *caballeros de premia* of Córdoba, to the Consejo Real, in 1514, as well as Córdoba council. According to the first petition, the reason for the *caballeros*' action was that,

'la comyunydad de la dicha çibdad va cada día en tanta dymynuçion e perdimiento que sy vuestra señoría no manda poner en remedio es muy çierto e notorio que la çibdad se perderá del todo.'

The reasons for this state of affairs were said to be that the *veinticuatro*s and *jurados* were living in the houses of the 'cavalleros principales' and were, quite contrary to the law, *avasallados*, and therefore incapable of properly discharging their public duty. The *caballeros de premia* were being offered the rank of *hidalgo notorio* in

<sup>27</sup> J. I. GUTIÉRREZ NIETO: «Semántica del término "comunidad" antes de 1520: las asociaciones juramentadas de defensa», *Hispania*, xxxvii (1977), 319-367.

<sup>28</sup> AMC, Sec. 2, ser. 17, núm. 2; Sec. 2, ser. 20, núm. 8.



order to neutralise their political opposition and 'para destruyr la dicha comunydad'. The *corregidor* and his officials were accused of conniving at this behaviour and the remedies proposed by the *caballeros de premia* were drastic. The Crown should give permission to the *comunidad*,

'que pueda entrar en el cabildo de la dicha çibdad, para que no consienta los daños e prejuizios della e lo pueda notificar a vuestra alteza e a su muy alto consejo.

'Yten, que la comunydad pueda hazer e haga sus ayuntamientos con la Justicia, e que nonbren e señalen personas cada un año que tengan poder de la dicha comunydad...'

It was proposed that the Crown should order the magistrates of Córdoba to meet the *comunidad* in order to solve the city's problems. For some matters, it would be necessary that 'los cavalleros y algunos dellos se juntarán con la comunydad para el servicio de vuestra alteza'. The second petition complained about the administration of the *repartimiento* to pay for the settlement of the case between the council and the order of Calatrava over Fuente Obejuna. This touched on the pending case concerning the taxation of *caballeros de premia*, against the 'ley e fuero del Andaluzia'. The *caballeros* also criticised the *jurados* in this matter, asserting that 'serán señores del pueblo'. The third petition claimed that the *regidores* and their allies were subverting the efforts of the royal *jueces de términos* to end the misuse of public and private land in the area. The efforts of the *caballeros de premia* seem to have had no effect, but the content, and above all the tone, of the petitions are of the greatest interest, particularly in the context of the revolt of the Comuneros in Castile<sup>29</sup>.

The presentation of unanswered petitions cannot, of course, compare with physical and unconstitutional action to alter the *status quo*. In other parts of Europe, and even of Spain, various groups did rebel violently and it is necessary to ask whether any revolts or acts of violence took place in Córdoba in this period. In accordance with hallowed custom, though not necessarily with reality, a distinction will be made between urban and rural rebellion.

As far as the city itself is concerned, there is no sign in the surviving records of any co-ordinated opposition to the municipal authorities. In other large industrial towns, labour was at least partly organised in guilds, and conflict was sometimes caused by the efforts of workers in the less privileged trades to gain guild status and thus achieve a role in the city government. In Córdoba, there seems

<sup>29</sup> AMC, Actas capitulares, 20-7-1515 (petitions dated 25-6-1515, 27-6-1515).

to have been no connection between guild membership and political power. Most of the surviving evidence for the organisation of labour concerns the textile industry. The privileges of the weavers' guild (*gremio de tejedores*), which had existed since the reign of Alfonso X, were confirmed by Alfonso XI in 1320 and Henry III in 1369<sup>30</sup>. It was always hard for workers to act together when their industry was organised on the 'putting-out' system, and this was the case with Córdoba's textile manufacture. However, the *actas capitulares* refer to *cofradías* of dyers, weavers, fullers and shearers (*tundidores*). The word *cofradía* seems to have been used indiscriminately to describe professional associations and religious brotherhoods. The guilds seem to have been tightly controlled by both Crown and municipality, but they do not seem to have been politically active<sup>31</sup>.

It is equally hard to find evidence of violent resistance by rural producers in the Córdoba region to the exactions of lords, whether individual nobles or Córdoba council itself. This may seem surprising, in view of the predominance of agriculture and the concentration of the larger part of the area's property in the hands of the military aristocracy. It is true that land was more equally distributed in a few districts. In an investigation of grain surpluses made in 1502 by the *corregidor* of Córdoba, the extremes of concentration and division are represented by Pozoblanco, in the Sierra, where no-one declared a surplus and there were no absentee landlords, and Castro del Río, in the Campiña, where thirty-two *cortijos*, parcels and mills produced the massive total of 5871 Hl of grain in rent. Nearly all of this was delivered, either to the Church or to the houses of private individuals in Córdoba. Even in other centres of grain production, such as Bujalance, Adamuz and Fuente Obejuna, very few people actually had any grain to spare after paying their *terrazgos* and other rents and supplying their own needs. Ladero quotes the example of two peasants in Pedro Abad, who produced a harvest of 140 *fanegas* (77.7 Hl), but after handing over 46 *fanegas* in rent and allocating the necessary amounts as seed-corn and for their own consumption, they were left with a surplus of only 15 *fanegas*. The document suggests that many *labradores* in the Córdoba area were in a worse case than this, and they were not at the bottom of the social hierarchy<sup>32</sup>.

It is possible that the very poverty of the majority of rural inhabitants may have weakened their will to resist. It is also possible that the concentration of many of these people in small towns may

<sup>30</sup> Paulino IRADIEL MURUGAREN: *Evolución de la industria textil castellana en los siglos XIII-XVI* (Salamanca, 1974), pp. 28, 35, 117.

<sup>31</sup> AMC, *Actas capitulares*, 31.1-1500, 16-12-1500.

<sup>32</sup> LADERO: *Producción y renta cerealeras*, pp. 379-396.

have facilitated political control by the Crown, council and nobility. In any case, it seems that virtually all the conflicts which arose in the countryside in this period concerned either the relations between the *cabildo* of Córdoba and the *concejos* of its *tierra*, or the use and misuse of land by individuals. Each town in the *tierra* had a *concejo* of its *vecinos* which, at least in a few cases, met occasionally for some important purpose, as with the passing of new ordinances at Montoro in 1511. In Fuente Obejuna, admission to the local *cabildo* was restricted, in 1496, to the two *alcaldes*, the two *jurados*, the *escribano* and five representatives each of the *caballeros* and the *peones*. In most towns, *alcaldes* were elected annually, but often this was done by Córdoba council, though in Bujalance the *caballeros de premia* chose the two *alcaldes*, the *alguacil* and his deputy. *Jurados* were elected locally, but their appointments had to be confirmed in Córdoba. *Escribanos* were normally provided by Córdoba council, often using the *renunciación* procedure, while *alcaldes* of castles and fortresses were appointed by the Crown. In any case, it is clear that there was little scope for officially-condoned political vitality in the countryside<sup>33</sup>. The immense activity of royal *jueces de términos*, on which the council in Córdoba spent so much time and energy, revealed a great deal of rural conflict, but, like the occasional disputes between Córdoba and the authorities in the *tierra*, the *pleitos* over boundaries and land-use rarely allowed initiative to anyone except the nobility. Lesser men might be enlisted to assist nobles in the furtherance of their interests but seem virtually never to have acted independently<sup>34</sup>.

None the less, there were violent outbreaks within the city of Córdoba itself and these must be analysed, if an explanation is to be found for the fact that the social order was not significantly altered by these upheavals. The years 1469-74 in the Córdoba region were, of course, dominated by conflict between the *bandos* of Aguilar and Baena. Here, the motives for action were clearly the desire of certain upper noble families to obtain power and wealth by taking a lead in local and national politics, and the various pressures on lesser men to support them. However, in 1473, a riot took place which suggests that other factors were at work. The trouble began in March, when a child spilt some water from a balcony on to a statue of Our Lady, which was being carried in a Lenten procession by the most influential of Córdoba's religious brotherhoods, the *Cofradía*

<sup>33</sup> AMC, Sec. 13, ser. 10, núm. 6; Sec. 13, ser. 10, núm. 5, fol. 1. AMC, Actas, 2-1-1496, 15-1-1496, 28-4-1497, 18-2-1512. AMC, Sec. 13, ser. 10, núm. 4, fol. 4. AMC, Actas, 27-7-1479, 10-11-1501, 5-11-1507, 3-4-1510, 21-10-1506, 31-8-1513, 6-10-1497. For the government of the *tierra*, see *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>34</sup> YUN: *Crisis*, pp. 63-177. For a fuller discussion of the activities of *jueces de términos*, see *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 118-24.

de la Caridad. It was said that the liquid was urine and that the act was deliberate. The supposed insult to the Mother of God led immediately to violence and, since the house concerned belonged to a *converso*, large-scale looting of *converso* property began throughout the city. The *alcalde mayor*, Don Alonso de Aguilar, whose *bando* was currently in control of Córdoba, retired to the Alcázar until, after three days, exhaustion brought the rioting to a halt. He then emerged to announce that, henceforth, no *converso* should ever again hold public office in the city. Many *conversos* fled from Córdoba, during and after the riots<sup>35</sup>.

After Ferdinand and Isabella had visited the city in 1478, suspending Don Alonso de Aguilar and the count of Cabra from their offices as *alcalde mayor* and *alguacil mayor* respectively, there seems to have been no significant act of political opposition to royal authority until 1506. In that year difficulties over food supplies, which had been building up since 1502, reached a peak. The local upper nobility had helped to alleviate the problem by providing grain and cash, and it was probably inevitable that the *señores* would exact a political, as well as a financial, price. Just before Isabella's death, on 26 November 1504, the marquis of Priego, who had succeeded his father as leader of Córdoba's aristocracy, began to attend council meetings, thus breaking with the practice of his father since 1478. When, in June 1506, the *corregidor*, Diego López Dávalos, left the city in the midst of a social and economic crisis, the marquis, together with his new, if scarcely trusted ally the count of Cabra, apparently staged a kind of 'coup', and they began to exercise their offices as *alcalde mayor* and *alguacil mayor* of Córdoba. Their reign was short, as a new *corregidor*, Don Diego Osorio, was received without demur on 19 August 1506, but the nobles repeated their bid for power in August 1507, when Osorio failed to appear personally in the *cabildo* to hear the reading of the royal letter which extended his appointment for another year. By this time, Córdoba was suffering from the plague, as well as food shortages, and the *corregidor* had left the city in the previous April. On this occasion, the local nobles remained in control for four months, until Diego López Dávalos was received once again as *corregidor* in December 1507.

In 1508, the marquis of Priego took the next step, and moved into open revolt against the Crown. Violence had been recurring in Córdoba throughout the years 1506-8. In addition to the economic

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<sup>35</sup> M. NIETO: «La revuelta contra los conversos de Córdoba en 1473», *Homenaje a Antón de Montoro en el V centenario de su muerte* (Montoro, 1977), pp. 31-49. J. H. EDWARDS: «Religious belief and social conformity: the *converso* problem in late-medieval Córdoba», *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxi (1981), 115-128.

problems of the period and the political conflicts which involved the upper nobility and the Crown, the conduct of the inquisitor of Córdoba, Diego Rodríguez Lucero, had brought violence to the city. Things had reached such a point, by the early months of 1508, that the Crown sent an *alcalde de la real casa y corte* to investigate misconduct in the government of Córdoba. The marquis imprisoned the royal *alcalde* in his castle at Montilla, and Ferdinand, as governor of Castile, brought a large army of veterans from the Italian campaigns to force the rebellious magnate into submission. The rebels received summary justice. The marquis was exiled from the *tierra* of Córdoba, one *veinticuatro* was executed, and four *veinticuatros* and two *jurados* were imprisoned. Lesser men received more severe and violent sentences. In August 1510, when the Crown finally decided that the punishment was over, the marquis himself, ten *veinticuatros* and six *jurados* were readmitted to the *cabildo* of Córdoba<sup>36</sup>.

The 1508 rebellion seems to have been aristocratic in character. It was followed by a period of relative peace, in which, although some *señores* committed acts of violence against the property of Córdoba council and the city's inhabitants and agents, there was no popular outbreak. On the surface, at least, this was also true of Córdoba's role in the revolt of the Comunidades of Castile. There were minor disturbances in the city, even, in 1512, an exchange of insults which led to violence outside the *cabildo* between Don Juan Manuel de Lando and the *jurado* Gonzalo de Cañete, but Córdoba took no part in the uprising in 1520-2 and its nobles participated in the *junta* of La Rambla, in 1521, in order to keep the peace in Andalucía on behalf of the king<sup>37</sup>.

All the available evidence suggests, therefore, that not only was there no change in the political system in Córdoba during this period, but there was no great pressure for such a change from the citizens. As Yun has pointed out, when the coup came in 1506, it was 'led' by Gonzalo de Hoces, in support of the senior member of the local nobility, the marquis of Priego<sup>38</sup>. Indicative of the lack of radical

<sup>36</sup> EDWARDS: «La révolte du marquis de Priego à Cordoue en 1508: un symptôme des tensions d'une société urbaine», *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, xii (1976), 165-172. YUN: *Crisis*, pp. 281-283. For a fuller account and discussion of the politics of Córdoba in this period, see EDWARDS: *Christian Córdoba* pp. 148-163.

<sup>37</sup> AMC, Actas, 3-9-1512. Manuel DÁNVILO: «Documentos relativos a las comunidades en Córdoba. Actas de sesiones municipales, 1520-1521», *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, cxii, 9-114. DÁNVILO: *Historia crítica y documentada de las Comunidades de Castilla, Memorial Histórico Español*, xxxv, pp. 276-278, 421, 431, 450; xxxvi, 164, 172-173, 454-456, 604-605, 757; xxxvii, 339-345; xxxviii, 136-140.

<sup>38</sup> YUN: *Crisis*, pp. 190-191.

sentiment in the city is the fact that the main opposition to the *corregidor* and *veinticuatro*s came from the *caballeros de premia*, men of economic substance who were scarcely in a position to represent the labouring population in town and country.

Any attempt to explain this phenomenon must begin with the economic, social and political dominance which the seigneurial nobility had achieved in Córdoba and its region. Equally clear is the lack of any alternative political programme or system of ideas. Without such a conceptual framework, it was unlikely that any alternative source of power and political organisation would develop. The inequalities of the distribution of wealth in Córdoba very probably led to deep personal discontent among large sections of the population, but those who articulated that discontent, the *jurados* and *caballeros de premia*, were all too easily, and naturally, diverted into the pursuit of personal and group privilege. When the *caballeros de premia* complained in their petitions to the Crown of the *veinticuatro*s' habit of buying consent by offering *hidalguía* to discontented *caballeros*, they reached the heart of the problem. The society of Córdoba and its *tierra* was governed by the ideals of a military aristocracy and therefore responded naturally and easily to the leadership of the houses of Aguilar and Baena. Thus by far the most significant political event in Córdoba during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella was the reconciliation between the two *bandos* which took place, with active royal intervention, in 1502<sup>39</sup>. It is arguable that many of the political problems of the region in the first decade of the sixteenth century stemmed from this end to a long-standing division in local society. It has recently been argued that Ferdinand attempted to develop the *alcaide de los donceles*, the leader of the third line of the Fernández de Córdoba, as an alternative source of power to the marquis of Priego, but the *alcaide* spent most of his time between 1505 and his death, in 1518, in the royal service in Africa and Navarre, so that he was able to exercise very little personal influence on the politics of Córdoba and district<sup>40</sup>.

There was, however, one other possible source of political thought and organisation which might have provided an alternative to the prevailing 'estates' theory. This was the teaching and practice of Christianity. Various attempts have been made to explain the hostility of the Christian majority towards the Jewish and Muslim minorities in late medieval Spain. An explanation has to be found for the new foundation of the Inquisition in the late fifteenth century

<sup>39</sup> Real Academia de la Historia, Colección Salazar y Castro, M-49, fols. 72-v-73v, 75v-76v; K-37, fol. 191.

<sup>40</sup> YUN: *Crisis*, pp. 190-191. See *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 160-161, for an alternative view.

and for the expulsion of Jews and Muslims who refused to convert to Christianity. Not only does this problem raise questions about the European or non-European identity of Spain, but it places under severe strain the historian's understanding and acceptance of his own perception of the world.

Recently, scholars have begun to reassess the nature and role of myth in human history. It has been realised by some that belief in a certain event, or explanation of an event, may be a historical factor in a later development and its causes, even if that belief appears not to be supported by scientifically-observed fact. In this sense, 'myth' may be 'true', while material 'reality' may be untrue. It appears inescapable that an approach of this kind should be used if the Spanish Christian attitude towards Jews and *conversos* is to be understood. In the late fifteenth century, most Spaniards probably still assumed that co-existence, however uneasy, between Christians and Jews was natural and normal. However, after 1492 a new belief came to prevail that Spain was, or should be, a country of one religion, a uniformly Christian society in which dissenters had no place. The expulsion of unbaptised Jews and Muslims and the attempt to remove Jewish belief and practice from the Church by means of the Inquisition were intended to achieve this aim. The prevailing myth had changed and social conditions had to be forcibly altered to match the new theory<sup>41</sup>.

As far as events in Córdoba are concerned, recent studies have followed the lines of materialist explanation, as laid down by Wolff and MacKay<sup>42</sup>. The basis of this argument is that religious attitudes and actions are no more than a product of material circumstances. In this case, after the pogrom of 1391, the Spanish Jewish 'problem' largely became a *converso* 'problem', so that, just as in the fourteenth century the Jews had become the focus of more general discontent, partly because some of them were successful government financiers and tax-collectors, so in the fifteenth century jealousy was caused among Old Christians by the ease and rapidity with which former Jews achieved success in ecclesiastical and secular society, once a change of religion had removed the bar to their holding office. This general dislike of Old Christians for New was focused on each of the violent incidents which preceded the introduction of the Inquisition. The attacks on *conversos* in Toledo and Ciudad Real in 1449, in Toledo in 1467 and in Andalusia in 1473 all took place at

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<sup>41</sup> The issues are more fully discussed in EDWARDS: *Religious belief and social conformity*, pp. 122-128.

<sup>42</sup> P. WOLFF: «The 1391 pogrom in Spain. Social crisis or not?», *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), pp. 4-18. A. MACKAY: «Popular movements and pogroms in fifteenth-century Castile», *Past and Present*, 55 (1972), pp. 33-67.

times of great political and social instability. MacKay has also shown that they coincide with periods of particular economic difficulty, often themselves related to the political situation. More specifically, attitudes towards *conversos* appeared to reflect the differing circumstances of various social and economic groups. In Andalusia in 1473, magnates such as the duke of Medina Sidonia and Don Alonso de Aguilar attempted to protect *conversos* from attack. Against the mobs in the larger cities they were unsuccessful, but in the smaller seigneurial towns such disturbances were repressed with speed and brutality by the lords. On the other side, contemporary evidence, both from chronicles and from records of property transactions, suggests firstly that *conversos* in Córdoba tended to be associated mainly with its centres of economic activity and secondly that the two most prominent groups in the Old Christian religious confraternities and among the rioters of 1473 were lesser-noble office-holding families and artisans. The Old Christian artisans were ready to use religion as a pretext for attacking converts who had surpassed them in economic and social terms. The lesser nobles, on the other hand, seem to have had more a political than an economic motive, connected with their stance in local *bando* conflicts. Thus the house of Aguilar appeared as the protector of the *conversos* and the house of Baena as their opponent. It has been argued, with some force, that the main purpose of Ferdinand and Isabella's request to the Pope for an Inquisition was to help them secure the Castilian throne by restoring order in the cities, particularly in Andalusia<sup>43</sup>.

This analysis has, in any case, to be amended when it comes to the Lucero affair. By 1506, the two *bandos* in Córdoba were reconciled and the municipal and Cathedral authorities seem to have acted with virtual unanimity against the inquisitor. There is evidence of continuing Old Christian resentment of the *conversos*, and hence support for the Inquisition, among artisans and labourers, but the events of 1506-8 demonstrate the ability of the urban authorities to manipulate 'popular' sentiment. Thus the sympathy felt by many members of Old Christian *cofradías* and other urban workers for the Inquisition did not prevent the attack on the inquisitors and their prison in the Alcázar in 1506 and the eventual condemnation of Lucero by a Catholic Congregation at Burgos in 1508<sup>44</sup>.

However, there are more serious inadequacies in an explanation of anti-*converso* feeling which is based entirely on material economic, social and political factors. Such causes do not seem to be sufficient to explain the extraordinary ferocity of Old Christians

<sup>43</sup> NIETO: «La revuelta», *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> YUN: *Crisis*, pp. 215-218. See also EDWARDS: «La révolte», «Religious belief and social conformity», and *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 185-188.



against Jews, and against *conversos* because they had formerly been Jews. It is time that historians began to consider religious revelations as a historical factor, along with plagues, wars and corn production. The impetus which causes the believer to behave in a certain way in public must, in the case of a revealed religion, be expected to arise from what he perceives as personal communication between himself and the Creator. The basic explanation of the *converso* 'problem' and the Inquisition therefore seems to be the common medieval equation between religious belief and social conformity. All Jews had to suffer because of their refusal to accept that Jesus was son of God and Messiah. Further, public actions were held to be far more important than internal, personal beliefs, and all this applied even if they converted to Christianity. If the Inquisition and fifteenth-century writers appear to have largely discounted inner conviction, a curious reversal has taken place in more recent centuries, even among historians who do not personally believe in any revealed religion. There is an implicit assumption in most modern work that, even if religion has to be reluctantly admitted as a historical factor, and many writers do not accept this at all, then it is only admissible in terms of abstract moral or doctrinal principles, apprehended and believed in by the individual intellect. Any attempt to put religious beliefs into practice in the world is regarded as quite improper. If this is done by the wealthy and powerful, it is condemned as an abuse of 'pure' religion in the cause of political, economic or social self-interest. If the lower classes are involved, their activities are dismissed as 'folk superstition'.

Such views, however, are not only elitist and patronising, they also fail to confront the phenomena of religious belief in late medieval Córdoba, or, indeed, in any other time or place. The reality is that, for late medieval Cordobans, all thought about the roles of individuals and groups in society was expressed in the organic imagery of the human body, for which the most important source was the Bible. This might be modified by scholastic adaptation of certain ideas from Aristotle and Plato, but it is clear that none of these texts, as they were currently interpreted, encouraged the overturning of the existing social hierarchy. The citizens of Córdoba in the reign of the Catholic Monarchs envisaged their own society in terms of the three estates, which were an attempt by earlier scholars to reconcile Christian theory with contemporary social practice. These estates did not correspond to reality and contemporaries were clearly aware of this fact, but the activities of the *caballeros de premia* are a good illustration of the mental horizons of those who were dissatisfied with the *status quo*. There were, of course, alternative principles which might have been invoked, and occasionally this happened.

The Bible itself contains much biting criticism, in the Old Testament, the Magnificat, the letter of James and other places, of the abuses of power and wealth. However, possibly under the influence of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture which was so fashionable among scholars in the late medieval period, the connections between these biblical texts and current social problems were rarely, if ever, made. As far as Andalusians were concerned, the only glimmer of an alternative political system seems to have been the experience of communal government in certain Italian cities. The evidence for the influence of this concept in the Crown of Castile is very slight. In Andalusia, it consists partly of the chronicler Alfonso de Palencia's admiration for Italian civic feeling and partly of a reference to a lost chronicle, commissioned by the *concejo* of Seville in the 1440s from one Juan Guillén in order to celebrate the city's resistance to the attempts of prince Henry (later Henry IV) to gain its support for his rebellion against his father. The most substantial evidence is that of an actual uprising in Seville in 1463-4, apparently in support of archbishop Alonso de Fonseca the younger<sup>45</sup>.

There is, however, no evidence as yet that these Italian political ideas influenced developments in Córdoba. Helen Nader has recently pointed out that the humanistic views which in Italy are normally associated with the mercantile élite of Florence are to be found, in Spain, among the military aristocracy, though not usually expressed in Latin<sup>46</sup>. In Seville, the fantasy of a commune on the Italian model seems to have been associated with the nobility. In Córdoba, there is, again, almost no direct evidence of 'humanistic' interests among the aristocracy. The marquis of Priego's library contained, in 1518, a number of classical and scholastic Latin works including, interestingly enough, some by Alfonso de Palencia, but it would be hard to determine any Italian influence on his public political activity<sup>47</sup>. It seems clear that the main features of the society of Córdoba and its region throughout and beyond this period were the complete political, social and economic dominance of the seigneurial nobility, the relative strength of agriculture and weakness of the industrial and commercial sectors and an alliance between the nobili-

<sup>45</sup> R. B. TATE: «Political allegory in fifteenth-century Spain: a study of the *Batalla campal de los perros contra los lobos* by Alfonso de Palencia (1423-1492)», *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, i (1977), pp. 169-186, and «The civic humanism of Alfonso de Palencia», *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, xxiii (1979), pp. 25-44. MACKEY: «Cultura urbana y oligarcas sevillanas en el siglo XV», *Andalucía Medieval*, ii (1978), pp. 163-171. LADERO: *Andalucía en el siglo XV*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>46</sup> Helen NADER: *The Mendoza family in the Spanish Renaissance* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1979), pp. 1-35.

<sup>47</sup> Concepción QUINTANILLA RASO: *Nobleza y señoríos en el reino de Córdoba*, *La casa de Aguilar* (Córdoba, 1979), p. 157.

ty, the royal government and the Church which succeeded in stifling any threat from alternative potential sources of power, such as the merchants, the guilds, the peasantry, communes or religious minorities. Thus the outlines of the Habsburg regime are clearly visible in the Córdoba of the Catholic Monarchs. It was a society organised for war and taxation, and no other institution, except perhaps the Inquisition, functioned as effectively as the organs which were devoted to these two purposes. Possibly as a result of the long-standing conflict with Islam and Judaism, Christianity too had been effectively captured by the Crown and the nobility. In a society with such a militaristic and hierarchical outlook, it was hard for a merchant or an industrialist to live, and virtually impossible for a faithful Jew or Muslim.

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