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**From Sword to Seal:**

**The Ascent of the Carvajal Family in Spain (1391-1516)**

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**From Sword to Seal:**  
**The Ascent of the Carvajal Family in Spain (1391-1516)**

by  
**Roger Louis Martínez, B.A., M.P.P.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
the University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2008

For my father, Eugene Albert Martínez

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following organizations and individuals. For their generous financial support in the research and writing of this dissertation, I would like to acknowledge the University of Texas at Austin, UT-Austin College of Liberal Arts, UT-Austin Department of History, UT-Austin Medieval Studies Program, UT-Austin Tracking Cultures Program, the Dora Bonham Fund, the Council for European Studies, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Program for Cultural Cooperation/Spanish Ministry of Culture.

For their advice in the preparation of this dissertation, I would like to thank Professor Ann Twinam (dissertation chair), Professor L.J. Andrew Villalon, Professor Denise A. Spellberg, Professor Cory Reed, Professor Julie Hardwick, and Professor Neil Kamil. For their many years of good counsel, a sincere thank you to Professor Bruce Hunt and Ms. Marilyn Lehman.

For their friendship and assistance in their respective archives, Sra. Esther Sánchez Calle, Sr. Isidro Felipe Iñigo, Don Juan Manuel Ramos Berrocoso, and Don Francisco González Cuesta.

For their many years of moral support, I would like to thank my mother (Mary Louis Martínez), my brother and sister-in-law (Mark Eugene Martínez and Patti Martínez), my late uncle (Alfonso Dávila), and my spouse's family (Pat Mora, Dr. Vern Scarborough, William Burnside, Bill Burnside, and Dr. Cecilia Burnside), and many friends.

For her unyielding support and devotion, I would like to thank my spouse, Libby.

**From Sword to Seal:**  
**The Ascent of the Carvajal Family in Spain (1391-1516)**

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

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This dissertation examines the Carvajal family's century-long transformation from less prestigious knights (*caballeros*) into influential church leaders and royal advisors to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel. During the 15th century, the Carvajal family successfully utilized the tools of family confederations, occupational patronage, religious endowments, and wealth generation in their pursuit of enhanced status in Castile. Additionally, this work documents a family confederation formed by the Carvajals and the Santa Marías, an influential clan of Jewish converts to Christianity (*conversos*). The geographic focus of this study is the city and diocese of Plasencia, Spain, and the timeframe is from 1391 to 1516. The key Plasencia families examined in this project are the allied Carvajals and Santa Marías, as well as their rivals, the Estúñigas. Research for this dissertation explored fourteen city, cathedral, provincial, royal, and national archives and libraries across Spain. This pioneering archival history breaks new ground in its exploration of the familial, economic, occupational, and social processes that facilitated the rise of the Carvajals of Plasencia.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS OF ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES CITED**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>ACB</b>   | Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos              |
| <b>ACP</b>   | Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia           |
| <b>ACV</b>   | Archivo de la Catedral de Valladolid          |
| <b>AGI</b>   | Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla)           |
| <b>AGS</b>   | Archivo General de Simancas                   |
| <b>AHMB</b>  | Archivo Histórico Municipal de Burgos         |
| <b>AHPC</b>  | Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cáceres       |
| <b>AHNSN</b> | Archivo Histórico Nacional – Sección Nobleza  |
| <b>AMP</b>   | Archivo Municipal de Plasencia                |
| <b>AMT</b>   | Archivo Municipal de Talavera de la Reina     |
| <b>AUS</b>   | Archivo de la Universidad de Salamanca        |
| <b>BN</b>    | Biblioteca Nacional de España                 |
| <b>BUS</b>   | Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca     |
| <b>RAH</b>   | Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia |

## INTRODUCTION

This pioneering archival history of the rise of a minor noble family investigates the Carvajal family of Plasencia, Spain and its transition from a clan of knights into an extended network of ecclesiastical and royal administrators.<sup>1</sup> The Carvajals served in the royal administration of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel (1474-1504/1516), as well as became critical leaders in the cathedral of Plasencia, a regional institution with significant financial resources and political power. It explores the role of the very important relationship between the Carvajals and the Santa Marías who were *conversos*, or recent Jewish converts to Christianity, in the Carvajal ascent.<sup>2</sup> The families formed a robust collaborative effort that utilized the cathedral of Plasencia to serve their political and financial interests.

The primary geographic focus of this study is the city and diocese of Plasencia, located in the province of Extremadura in the central Iberian kingdom of Castile. Plasencia is the ancestral home (*solar*) of the Carvajals. In the early fifteenth century, a

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<sup>1</sup> This dissertation uses the terms “family” and “clan” interchangeably and they refer to a group of individuals related by blood or marriage ties.

<sup>2</sup> This dissertation defines *conversos* as Jewish individuals and families that converted to Christianity of their own free volition and under duress, as well as their descendants. The use of the term *converso* indicates to the reader that Castilians perceived these persons as a distinct group of Christians that retained elements of their previous Jewish cultural and religious identities. Over the course of the fifteenth century, Castilians increasingly viewed *conversos* as religiously suspect. In his text, *Souls in Dispute*, David L. Graizbord provides an excellent historiographical review of the *converso* issue. See David L. Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Other critical texts on *conversos* include: Renée Levine Melammed, *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1966); and Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995). For local histories of *conversos*, see: Linda Martz, *A Network of Converso Families in Early Modern Toledo: Assimilating a Minority* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Gretchen D. Starr-LeBeau, *In the Shadow of the Virgin: Inquisitors, Friars, and Conversos in Guadalupe, Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); and David Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada: Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492-1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

previously unrecorded branch of the Santa María family migrated to Plasencia, around the same period when the Carvajals began to assume leadership positions within the cathedral chapter. The timeframe of this dissertation traces the emergence and decline of the Carvajal and Santa María family alliance from 1391 to 1516.

These years (1391-1516) bridge the divide between late medieval and early modern Europe. This period witnessed not only a rising tide of anti-Jewish sentiment that led to forced religious conversions, purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) laws, and the Spanish Inquisition, but also the unification of Spain's Christian kingdoms under the Catholic Monarchs. In 1391, Christians conducted violent "pogroms" against Castilians Jews, resulting in the death, displacement, and conversion of much of Spain's Jewish population.<sup>3</sup> It was during this era that Rabbi Solomon Ha-Levi of Burgos converted to Catholicism and became Pablo de Santa María, founder of one of Spain's leading *converso* families. The terminal point of this study, 1516, is the year in which Ferdinand of Aragon died, ending the period of the Catholic Monarchs and ushering in the reign of the Hapsburgs. By this time, the Carvajal family reached its social and economic pinnacle under the leadership of two individuals, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, a royal secretary and prominent Spanish historian, and Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal, who unsuccessfully challenged Pope Julius II (1503-1513) for the papacy.

The key Plasencia families examined in this project are the allied Carvajals and Santa Marías, as well as their rivals, the Estúñigas.<sup>4</sup> Before the fifteenth century, the Carvajals of Plasencia were exclusively a clan of knights (*caballeros*). As *caballeros*, a

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<sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion of Christian violence perpetrated against Jews and Muslims in Spain and France, see: David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). For an insightful history of the Jewish community in Spain, see: Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> For a superior history of the Estúñigas, also known as the Zúñigas, see: Vicente Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia* (Cáceres: Tipografía, Encuadernación y Librería de Jiménez, 1903).



term used in this study to describe the profession and culture of mounted-warriors, the Carvajals fought under the Castilian kings as vassals during the Spanish Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>5</sup> This dissertation traces how generations of the family transitioned from occupations as warriors into ecclesiastical and bureaucratic positions as they controlled and utilized the resources of the cathedral chapter of Plasencia.

While this project principally studies the Carvajals, their alliance with the Santa Marías and their disputes with the Estúñigas, a family of superior wealth and political authority, highlight the significance of family cooperation and conflict during the fifteenth century. By working collaboratively with the Santa Marías, the Carvajals displayed a willingness to ally themselves with a *converso* family during an era of increasing discrimination against Jewish converts to Christianity. The Santa Marías were former members of the Castilian Jewish elite and served as religious and political leaders in their respective communities. This research identifies crucial family figures, many of whom did not use the Santa María surname during this era of increased societal animosity towards *conversos*, and details their mutually beneficial confederation with the Carvajals. In contrast, both families struggled against the inroads of the Estúñigas, who were members of the new Trastámaran nobility, a handful of wealthy and politically powerful Castilian families that emerged in the late fourteenth century.<sup>6</sup> A particular focus of this project traces the alliance's conflict with Pedro de Estúñiga, the first Count of Béjar and Plasencia, and the count's constant competition with the families over local political authority as well as the region's economic resources.

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<sup>5</sup> The term *caballero* conveys a social identity and highlights that the economic and social livelihoods of knights were primarily dependent on their willingness to fight.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the transformation of Castile's nobility, see: Salvador de Moxó, "De la Nobleza Vieja a la Nobleza Nueva: La transformación nobiliaria castellana en la baja Edad Media," *Cuadernos de Historia* 3 (1969): 1-195.

Unlike major Spanish families such as the Dukes of Alba who created a repository of clan documents, the Carvajals, like many minor noble families, failed to preserve their history through the creation of such an archive. As a result, most of the manuscripts pertaining to the Carvajals are geographically scattered across many Spanish archives and libraries. Research for this dissertation explored fourteen city, cathedral, provincial, royal, and national archives and libraries across Spain. The cathedral and municipal archives of Plasencia proved to be particularly rich sources as were the Sección Nobleza of the Archivo Histórico Nacional and the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia.

This multi-archival reconstruction utilizes ecclesiastical, bureaucratic, and business records from the cathedral of Plasencia; family documents (wills, property sales and descriptions, religious donations); municipal meeting records; and royal judicial papers to reconstruct the extended networks of the Carvajal and Santa María families. This research maps their places of residence, professions and educational training, property holdings and assets, business and personal relationships, and religious endowments. It also traces and documents the cathedral of Plasencia's business affairs, property transactions and assets, expenses and income, church officials and roles, and church statutes.

Little family history of this kind exists in Spanish historiography, and the project contributes to the study of three central themes: the rise of lower elite families to ecclesiastical and political power; the impact of *converso* families on Castilian institutions; and the nature of overlapping political jurisdictions in Castile.<sup>7</sup> The Carvajals' social and economic ascent provides a case study of the process by which an

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<sup>7</sup> Regarding the nature of Castile's overlapping jurisdictions, see Chapter Three's discussion of a city-church agreement regarding the collection of taxes on internal trade (*portazgo*), as well as a subsequent city-church arrangement relating to the transportation of wine into the city of Plasencia. Likewise, Chapter Four discusses a royal investigation into competing seigniorial and city claims to lands in the periphery of Plasencia.

upwardly mobile family moved into ecclesiastical and political positions during the fifteenth century and, by doing so, changed the composition of the Castilian aristocracy. The Carvajals benefited from Ferdinand and Isabel's decision to change the membership of their royal council to favor university-educated administrators (*letrados*) over the upper echelon of aristocratic families, like the Mendozas. Likewise, the dissertation reveals how the Carvajals' success in securing the cathedral of Plasencia's archdeaconships and other ecclesiastical positions enabled them to later become cardinals and serve in the Vatican. By focusing this scholarly text on a lower as opposed to a higher stratum in the nobility, this work fills a critical gap in the history of Castilian families.<sup>8</sup>

Also, this study adds to the historiography that dispels the belief that *conversos* had a limited role in shaping Castilian institutions after implementation of the watershed municipal purity of blood statutes of the 1450s. Although scholars position the Santa Marías' impact as primarily in the "central" Castilian locus of power in Burgos, this dissertation demonstrates that the clan's influence extended to the "peripheral" city of Plasencia.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, the *converso* Santa Marías played a central role in the formation of the Carvajal clan of church officials. Following a period of intensive collaboration with the Santa Marías inside the cathedral of Plasencia, the Carvajals systematically

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<sup>8</sup> Scholars of the Spanish aristocracy typically have focused on the high noble houses such as Mendoza, Manrique, Álvarez de Toledo, and Guzmán. Key scholars include Luis Salazar y Castro, Francisco Layna Serrano, Salvador de Moxó, and Helen Nader. By contrast, my research addresses a lower noble clan. Some of the exemplary histories of aristocratic families include: Luis Salazar y Castro, *Historia Genealógica de la Casa de Haro* (Madrid: Archivo Documental Español, 1959); Luis Salazar y Castro, *Historia Genealógica de la Casa y Lara*. 4 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta Real por Mateo de Llanos y Guzmán, 1694-97); Francisco Layna Serrano, *Historia de Guadalajara y sus Mendozas en los Siglos XV y XVI*. 4 vols. (Madrid: Aldus, 1942); Salvador de Moxó's previously noted text; and Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Francisco Cantera Burgos' text, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos* (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1952), and Luciano Serrano's book, *Los Conversos: D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Hebraicos, 1942), are excellent resources on the Santa María family and its activities in Burgos.

replaced the *conversos* as the cathedral's administrators, as well as emulated the Santa María family's use of public displays of religion such as memorial masses to demonstrate their piety and honor.<sup>10</sup>

During the period encompassed by this work, Castile consisted of a patchwork of competing royal, ecclesiastical, municipal, and seigniorial jurisdictions.<sup>11</sup> This dissertation expands historians' understanding of the mechanics of jurisdictional interactions in Castile's periphery through the analysis of three historical examples relating to political and economic conflicts in Plasencia. Specifically, the Carvajal and Santa Marías exploited their familial control over the cathedral to subjugate the city council and its collection of taxes on trade (*portazgo*) and wine, as well as to counter the local seigniorial authority of the Estúñigas. Thus, this local analysis refines historians' understanding of the interactions between key institutions, political authorities, and families in a frontier region of Castile.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, this dissertation breaks new ground in its exploration of the familial, economic, occupational, and social processes that facilitated the rise of the Carvajals of Plasencia. By studying the internal operational dynamics of the cathedral of Plasencia, this project exposes the Carvajals' gradual but systematic accumulation of church positions and administrative expertise. It makes an important contribution to Spanish historiography by illuminating how one lower noble family, in partnership with a

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<sup>10</sup> Chapter Seven's discussion of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's establishment of three religious services (repentance, regular, and honorary masses) at the cathedral of Plasencia speak to the family's desire to communicate its religiosity and honor in Plasencia, as well as appear to share devotional commonalities with the memorial masses endowed by the Santa Marías.

<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Spanish institutions, their organization, and jurisdictional authority, see: Luis G. de Valdeavellano, *Curso de Historia de las Instituciones Españolas* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Revista de Occidente, 1968).

<sup>12</sup> In Chapter Two, the frontier nature of Plasencia's cathedral is compared to the cathedral of Segovia. Both churches exerted significant local authority due to their geographic distance from royal and ecclesiastical seats of power.

*converso* one, rose to ecclesiastical and royal administrative prominence during the fifteenth century.

## Chapter One:

### Plasencia's History, Geography, and Families (8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Century)

#### Excerpt from Pope Honorius III's Papal Bull to King Ferdinand III, 1221.

In Rome, we praise your royal effort to expand the Christian religion. And with the apostolic authority that is invested in the Holy See...we recognize...the valor of your strong arm against the Muslims. We now establish this cathedral of Plasencia with its own diocese, and all rights and privileges...and it shall include the villages of Trujillo, Medellín, Montfrague, and Santa Cruz...We, therefore, confirm upon you, our beloved son in Christ, Fernando III, King of Castile, your request for a bull that places you under our protection.<sup>1</sup>

#### FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CITY AND DIOCESE OF PLASENCIA

Plasencia is located in the rocky and oak-covered Spanish province of the Extremadura—a territory formerly known as the Roman and Visigothic region of Lusitania. Placentinos conceive of themselves as inheritors of this Roman-Visigothic tradition, although the Muslims dominated the area from 713 to 1189.<sup>2</sup> The Muslim supremacy over the region began in 713 when the Visigothic region of the Extremadura, and its commercial capital of Mérida, capitulated to Muslim Governor Musa ibn Nusayr in a pitched battle.<sup>3</sup> At this time, Plasencia was not a major settlement, and as the Islamic rulers learned, most of the Extremadura was sparsely populated and peppered with only minor fortifications and castles.<sup>4</sup> While elite Muslim Arabs stayed in the more fertile lands in Iberia, especially areas surrounding Sevilla and Cordoba, historians such as Hugh Kennedy argue that the less politically powerful Muslim Berbers were “obligated

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<sup>1</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 3-3v; Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos* (Plasencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Plasencia, 1999), 287-289.

<sup>2</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 3-3v.

<sup>3</sup> Janina M. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate, the Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in Al-Andalus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 158.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1996), 56.

to accept inferior lands” including “less rich and inviting” northern and western Iberia, especially in the Extremadura.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while the provincial capital of Mérida was an important western commercial hub on the Iberian Peninsula, much of the surrounding region was not highly prized territory, and at best, modestly suited to the Berber’s pastoral initiatives and limited agricultural work.<sup>6</sup> The province remained relatively unimportant and uncontested up until the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when Castilian King Alfonso VIII aggressively challenged Almohad Caliph Abu Yusuf Ya‘qub al-Mansjur (1184-1199) for frontier territories separating the Kingdom of Castile and Leon from al-Andalus.<sup>7</sup>

From 1189 to 1196, the historical record of the city of Plasencia began to take distinct shape. Castilians remember this era as one marked by the triumphant capture and renaming of the city. For the Islamic Almohads, it was a short-term loss. The earliest historical source from Plasencia that speaks to this 12<sup>th</sup> century event is the 1579 manuscript entitled *Annales de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Plasencia desde su fundación*, of Dr. Juan Correas Roldán, the 16<sup>th</sup> century headmaster of the cathedral of Plasencia’s church school. The unpublished *Annales* are a critical original source for all later historians regarding the history of Plasencia. Dr. Correas Roldán’s *Annales* record the capture and conversion of Plasencia from an Islamic-ruled city to one governed by

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 18, 56.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 115, 237, 246; Note: Historians of Christian Spain and Islamic Spain often utilize different naming conventions for Almohad Caliph Abu Yusuf Ya‘qub al-Mansjur (1184-1199). From a Christian historical perspective, this caliph’s name is commonly shortened to “Ya‘qub I”, whereas scholars of Islamic Spain typically refer to this Almohad ruler as “Ya‘qub al-Mansur.” For the purposes of clarity, this author utilizes the caliph’s full name in all references pertaining to him. Further, this author would like to thank Professor L. J. Andrew Villalon for pointing out that the name “al-Mansur,” which is a title that is often translated as, “the victorious,” is commonly associated with the Spanish Umayyad ruler, Muhammad b. Abi ‘Amir (981-1002), who took the title, “al-Mansur.”

Christians. An important component of the event was the renaming of the city and the regeneration of the local church leadership. Roldán declares in his annals:

In 1189, the 31<sup>st</sup> year of [King Alfonso VIII's] rein,...and in the Province Lusitania, which the Ancients called Vetonia and we now call the Extremadura, you [King Alfonso VIII] won from the Moors...the ancient city called Ambroz. There, you established the city of Plasencia by your royal privilege.<sup>8</sup>

Approximately fifty years after the appearance of Roldán's history of Plasencia, in 1627, Friar Alonso Fernández embellished upon Roldán's account by drawing upon an older and critical Castilian chronicle dedicated to the aggrandizement of King Alfonso VIII. Friar Fernández specifically cites Don Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, the Archbishop of Toledo and an instrumental chronicler during Alfonso VIII's lifetime, and his work, *Historia de España, Libro 7, Capitulo 28, De vita et gestis Alfonsi VIII Ex Roderica Archiepiscopo Toletano de rebus Hispaniae*. Friar Fernández's quotes Jiménez as stating:

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

However, with further examination it appears that King Alfonso VIII was not simply transforming the thriving Islamic city of Ambroz into Plasencia, but establishing a small hamlet to be a new Christian bulwark against the Islamic south. An 1188 royal donation of property given by King Alfonso VIII to Pedro Tajabor, the Archpriest of Ávila and Archdeacon of Plasencia, just one year before the reconstitution of the city, reveals the limited resources of Plasencia. As Pedro Tajabor described:

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<sup>8</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 2; Francisco González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia* (Plasencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Plasencia, 2002), 13. Correas Roldán dates the start of his work to the year 1579 on Folio 5 of ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11. Dr. Juan de Correas Roldán appears to be the author of another early manuscript (ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10) on the history of the cathedral of Plasencia. Titled, *Noticias de los señores obispos de esta ciudad de Plasencia*, the work states that it is an unauthorized copy of a work that recounts events from 1579 to 1586.



I encountered a dam in Plasencia, on the Jerete River, situated close to the city's gate of Santa María. The city's dam was intact in its totality and it had watermill and aqueducts constructed there ...you, [King Alfonso VIII], also made a donation of an ancient church in the city....We found the undisturbed church where the ancient city was first established.<sup>9</sup>

King Alfonso VIII's gift to Pedro Tajabor in 1188 provided him the opportunity to convert Plasencia's modest amenities (a dammed river, watermill, some cultivable lands, and a church that was "still undestroyed") into a consolidated resource. At its best, Plasencia presented settlers like Pedro Tajabor the chance to improve their economic circumstances through land and property donations.

What most local historians of Plasencia exclude from their ecclesiastical histories is the recapture of the city by Caliph Abu Yusuf Ya'qub al-Mansjur in 1195-96.<sup>10</sup> Friar Alonso Fernández is the only local historian who discussed some of the elements of the Islamic reconquest of the Extremadura and Plasencia. He wrote:

In the months of June and July 1195, King Abū Yūsuf of the Almohads gathered a grand army of Moors and Arabs which defeated King Alfonso [VIII] in the Battle of Alarcos,...the Moorish King having won this battle continued his advances and won...Plasencia, which could not be made well fortified. From there he went on and won the Villas of Trujillo, Montachez, and Santa Cruz.<sup>11</sup>

As if attempting to find excuses for the Christian loss of Plasencia, the 16<sup>th</sup> century friar argued that the city's residents could not properly fortify the city. However, Islamic sources explain that the Spanish Muslim recapture of Plasencia was much more devastating than Friar Fernández's account. In April 1196, Plasencia's immediate neighbor to the south, the village of Trujillo, fell, and shortly thereafter, "Plasencia, newly settled by Alfonso VIII...was taken by assault; the bishop and many of the clergy

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<sup>9</sup> Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae. Volumen A* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural "El Brocense" Diputación Provincial de Cáceres, 1982), 37-38; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 246.

<sup>11</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*. (Madrid: Cicon Ediciones, 1627), 55-56.

were killed and others taken as prisoners to work on new buildings at Rabat.”<sup>12</sup> Not only was the Castilian’s triumphant establishment of Christian Plasencia derailed for as many as twenty-six years (through 1221), but even the details of its destruction, the fate of the clergy, and the timing of the capture of Trujillo were either not clearly understood, or misrepresented. Even though the Christians advanced against the Spanish Muslims with their critical victory at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, it took an additional nine years before royal and papal authority was restored to Plasencia. On November 10, 1221, a new Castilian king, Fernando III, “conceded and confirmed” the royal privilege that King Alfonso VIII had previously granted to the City of Plasencia.<sup>13</sup> In that same year, official papal recognition came when Castilian King Fernando III received a papal bull confirming the creation of the Diocese of Plasencia.<sup>14</sup> Pope Honorius III declared:

In Rome, we praise your royal effort to expand the Christian religion. And with the apostolic authority that is invested in the Holy See,...we recognize...the valor of your strong arm against the Muslims. We now establish this cathedral of Plasencia with its own diocese, and all rights and privileges....and it shall include the Villages of Trujillo, Medellın, Montfrague, and Santa Cruz....We, therefore, confirm upon you, our beloved son in Christ, Fernando III, King of Castile, your request for a bull that places you under our protection.<sup>15</sup>

## THE INTERVENING YEARS

During the remainder of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the social fabric of Plasencia changed little. Increasingly, however, two principal classes of men and their families began to dominate the historical trajectory of the city—knights (*caballeros*) and members of the cathedral chapter, hereinafter referred to as “churchmen”. During this period, King Fernando III continuously dispatched the knights to the south where they participated in

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<sup>12</sup> Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 245-246.

<sup>13</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 2-3; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 287-289.

<sup>14</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 3-3v; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 287-289.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

the reconquest of the Muslim cities of Jaén (1246), Baeza (1247), and Sevilla (1248).<sup>16</sup> Almost four decades later, in the service of King Sancho IV, knights from Plasencia besieged Jerez de la Frontera for six months.<sup>17</sup> Among the leading Plasencia families participating in the siege were the Carvajals, Monroys, and Almarazes.<sup>18</sup>

At home, the cathedral's churchmen began to solidify the organization and administration of the diocese. The church finally received its Foundational Statute (*Estatuto Fundamental*) in 1254 establishing its structure and operations.<sup>19</sup> In a papal bull, Pope Innocent IV authorized ten canon positions for the cathedral. The document also created five dignitary offices (*dignidades*), which these canons would hold. The dignitaries included: the Dean, the Archdeacon of Plasencia, the Archdeacon of Trujillo, the Cantor, and a Treasurer. Additionally, the statute created eight prebendary (*racionero*) positions, as well as detailed the separate responsibilities of priests.

From the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century into the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the region witnessed the rise of several families from the lesser aristocracy many of whose members were knights, and each of which began to form their own seigniorial lands (*señorios*). By 1262, the king named Pedro Sánchez the first *Señor de Grimaldo*.<sup>20</sup> His *señorio* passed to the Trejo family twenty years later.<sup>21</sup> The first decade of the 1300s would see additional local knights converted into lords by the king. First, was Fernán Pérez de Bote who formed the *Señorio de Belvis*.<sup>22</sup> Juan Alonso de Almaraz followed him as the *Señor de Almaraz*. In

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<sup>16</sup> Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Volumen A*: 402; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 40.

<sup>17</sup> Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Volumen A*:45; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 10; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 40-41.

<sup>20</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

1309, King Fernán IV granted Fernán Pérez de Monroy a privilege to form his own seigniorial lands near a farmhouse in Monroy.<sup>23</sup>

The unexpected death of King Alfonso XI (1311-1350), who contracted plague at the siege of Gibraltar, led to the succession of his only surviving legitimate son, Pedro I “the Cruel” (1350-1366/69) whose troubled reign ended in a full-blown civil war. In that conflict Pedro’s illegitimate half-brother, Count Enrique of Trastámara, supported by much of the Castilian aristocracy, managed to seize the crown. As Enrique II (1369-1379), he established the new Trastámaran Dynasty that would continue to rule the kingdom into the sixteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The conflict overflowed into the ranks of the Extramaduran knights, pitting the *Señores de Monroy*, who remained loyal to Pedro I, against the *Señores de Almaraz*, who sided with Enrique II.<sup>25</sup> For example, on the battlefield at the village of Valverde, their divided allegiances cost Blasco Gómez de Almaraz his life at the hands of Fernán Pérez de Monroy.<sup>26</sup> The Almarazes would not let the death of Blasco Gómez pass unforgotten. In 1369, after the death of King Pedro I and the end of the war, Diego Gómez de Almaraz, the son of Blasco Gómez, led a retaliatory attack against his father’s last enemy.<sup>27</sup> The bonds within the knight community would

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>24</sup> The author thanks Professor L. J. Andrew Villalon for his tutelage in understanding the nuances of the royal conflict that pitted King Pedro I against Count Enrique of Trastámara. For additional historical details pertaining to Pedro I, see these beneficial articles: “Pedro the Cruel: Portrait of a Royal Failure,” in Donald J. Kagay and Joseph T. Snow, eds., *Medieval Iberia: Essays on the History and Literature of Medieval Spain*, Iberica Series, vol. 25 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1997), pp. 201-16; “Seeking Castles in Spain: Sir Hugh Calveley and the Free Companies’ Intervention in Iberian Warfare (1366-1369),” in L. J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay, eds., *Crusaders, Condotierri, and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003), pp. 305-328; “The Battle of Najera and the Hundred Years War in Spain,” in L. J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay, eds., *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 3-74.)

<sup>25</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Anales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 72.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 72-73; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

eventually re-amalgamate by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century due in part to the increasing power of the cathedral of Plasencia and its churchmen. While the knights were preoccupied with the Castilian civil war, church officials had readied themselves for their own battle with the knights over the collection of church taxes.

**TWO GEOGRAPHIES:  
THE CITY AND DIOCESE, 1390S AND FORWARD**

***The City of Plasencia and Its Community***

Geographically, the fourteenth century city of Plasencia was a hub of social and commercial life in the northern portion of Extremadura. To the north was the university city of Salamanca, to the east was Toledo on the Tajo River, to the south was the ancient Roman city of Mérida, and to west, lay Portugal. (See Figure 1: Map of Fourteenth Century Spain.)

**Figure 1: Map of Fourteenth Century Spain**



The Jerete River encloses the city's southern flank flowing from the west to the east. (See Figure 2: Map of the City of Plasencia, Fourteenth Century.)<sup>28</sup> All along the banks of the river, in the city and northward to the village of Béjar, were sizable agricultural plots. According to the 16<sup>th</sup> century observer Luis de Toro, a physician, the river supported a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. He noted:

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

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<sup>28</sup> The map presented here is based on the following sources: Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*, 153-155; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 147; a map entitled "Plasencia en 1400" that the Spanish *Servicio Geografico del Ejercito* holds in its library that is referenced in Elisa Carolina de Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra. Proyección de un pasado y reflejo de una época* (Cáceres: Instituto Cultural "El Brocense", 1981), 58.

taste and size....There are also every variety of lemon trees...and all types of cherry, pear, and peach trees.<sup>29</sup>

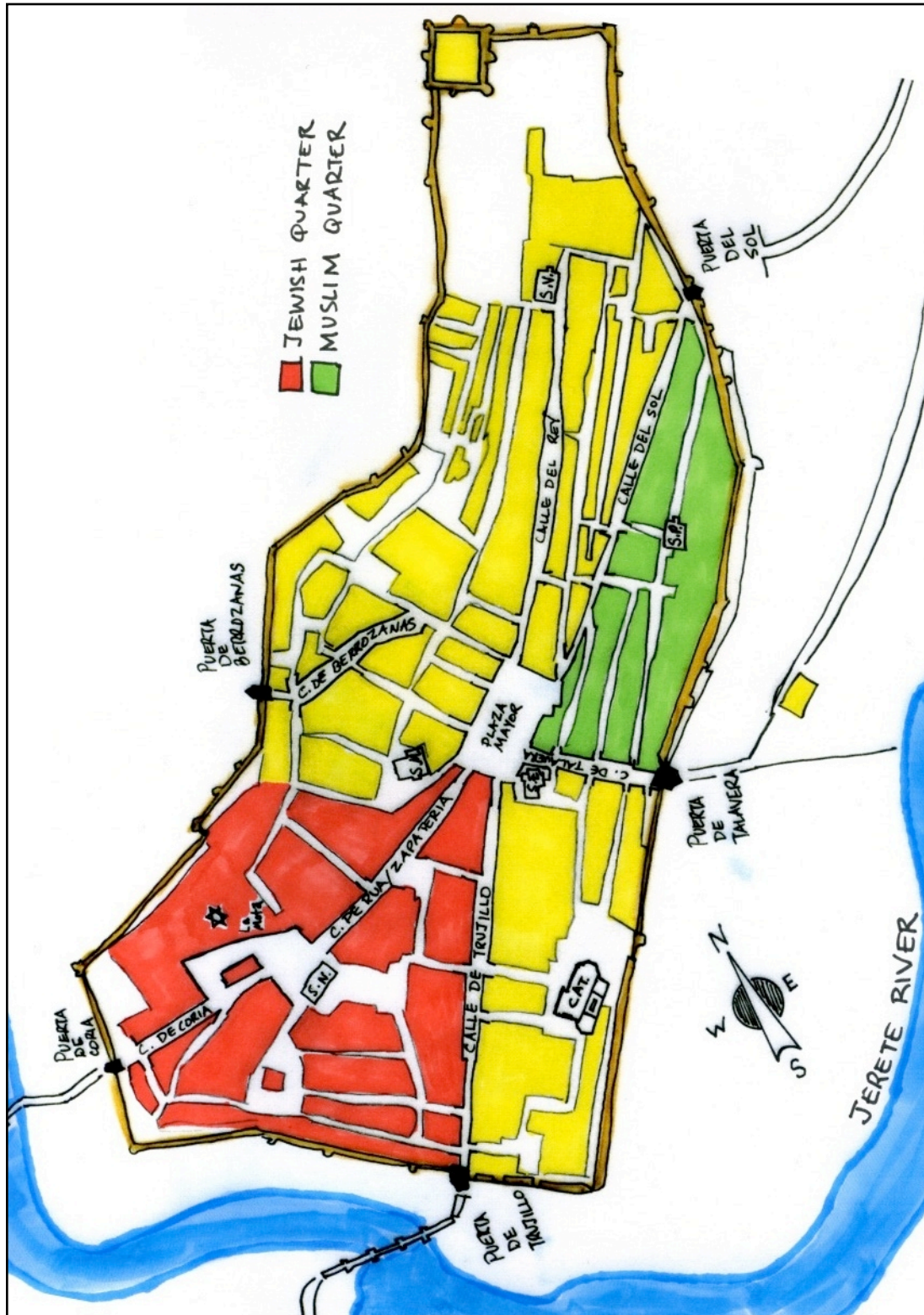
Thus, the immediate region around the city was an agriculturally productive zone that both the church and local knight families could utilize to enhance their wealth.

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

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<sup>29</sup> Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca (BUS), Mss. 2.650. Descripción de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia por Luis de Toro. Folios 25-26.

Figure 2: Map of the City of Plasencia, Fourteenth Century





The *Plaza Mayor* was both the center of civic life, as well as the location of surrounding residences. When the city council (*consejo*) announced critical decisions, like those affecting the local taxation of wine, the city crier (*pregonero*) made these pronouncements in the *Plaza Mayor*.<sup>30</sup> During the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, noblemen like Diego González de Carvajal lived in substantial housing complexes on the plaza.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, renters resided on the town square including those Jewish and Muslim families that did not dwell in the religiously designated sections of the city.<sup>32</sup> Thus, even though Plasencia did have its own Jewish quarter (*juderia*) and Muslim quarter (*moreria*), religious minorities did not reside exclusively within them.

Entering the city from the east would take one through the *Puerta de Sol* and westward along *Calle de Sol* to the central plaza. On this primary thoroughfare, the cathedral owned multiple houses, many of which were close to the *Plaza Mayor*.<sup>33</sup> Rent from these homes was an important source of revenues for the cathedral. Often they were leased to commoners, churchmen, as well as lords like Fernán Álvarez de Toledo from the village of Oropesa.<sup>34</sup> When men like Fernán Álvarez rented houses such as these, they often did so with the intent of subletting them at a profit. In the vicinity of these homes and close to the *Puerta de Sol*, was the Church of Saint Peter (*Iglesia de San Pedro*). The Romanesque church was located in the Muslim quarter (*moreria*) of the city

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<sup>30</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 264-271v.

<sup>31</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25,

<sup>32</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 200-202v; AHPC Paredes, Legajo 13, Documento 11, Folio 12; Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae. Volumen B* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural “El Brocense” Diputación Provincial de Cáceres, 1983), 485.

<sup>33</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 32, 55.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Folio 32.

on the site of a former Islamic palace.<sup>35</sup> The community established this parish, the fifth one in the city, before 1273.<sup>36</sup>

From the southeast, one entered through the *Puerta de Talavera* and passed along *Calle de Talavera* to the center of the city. On this lane was one of the oldest parishes, the Church of Saint Steven (*Iglesia de San Esteban*), which the clergy had reportedly founded as early as 1254.<sup>37</sup> Adjacent to this parish, the cathedral owned additional homes, one of which included its own storehouse and was routinely leased to church officials.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the beginning of the 1400s, the *converso* Santa María family of churchmen continuously rented these properties.<sup>39</sup> Nearby was another religious institution—the Convent of Saint Claire (*Convento de Santa Clara*) that the Carvajal and Camargo clans established during the late 1460s.<sup>40</sup>

Between the southeastern *Puerta de Talavera* and southern *Puerta de Trujillo*, was the Gothic Romanesque cathedral of Plasencia dedicated by Pope Clement III in 1189.<sup>41</sup> The founders placed the church, also known as the Cathedral of Holy Mary, adjacent to an existing fort on one of the highest points in the town. Peppering the streets and alleys adjacent to the cathedral were more church-owned houses as well as stables

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<sup>35</sup> Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 147. See also the map titled, “Plasencia en 1400,” that the Spanish *Servicio Geografico del Ejercito* holds in its library. Source: Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Pedro Codero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historica y Monumental* (Plasencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Plasencia, 1997), 124.

<sup>37</sup> ACP Legajo 1, Documento 6; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 147; Benavides Checa, *El Fuero de Plasencia* (Rome: Tipografia de M. Lobesi, 1896), 11.

<sup>38</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 55v, 116.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Folio 116.

<sup>40</sup> ACP Legajo 1, Documento 24; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 169; Codero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historica y Monumental*, 30-34.

<sup>41</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 2; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 30; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 13; Codero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historica y Monumental*, 60.

(*establos*).<sup>42</sup> Church canons and prebendaries resided in most of these homes and leased them for as little as five *maravedis* a year during the 1410s.<sup>43</sup> This was a relatively modest sum when contrasted with the taxes (*portazgo*) assessed on goods transported into and through the City of Plasencia. For example, a trader passing through the city's gates would pay two *maravedis* to the city council to bring high-quality honey into the city for sale.<sup>44</sup>

The church's locus of authority resided inside the cathedral, and its governing chapter routinely convened in the Chapel of Saint Paul to conduct church business. (See Figure 3: Diagram of the "Old" Cathedral of Plasencia.) These meetings included, among other tasks, the leasing of church properties, the management of tax collections, the distribution of church revenues to its membership, and the preparation of new statutes to govern its internal affairs.<sup>45</sup>

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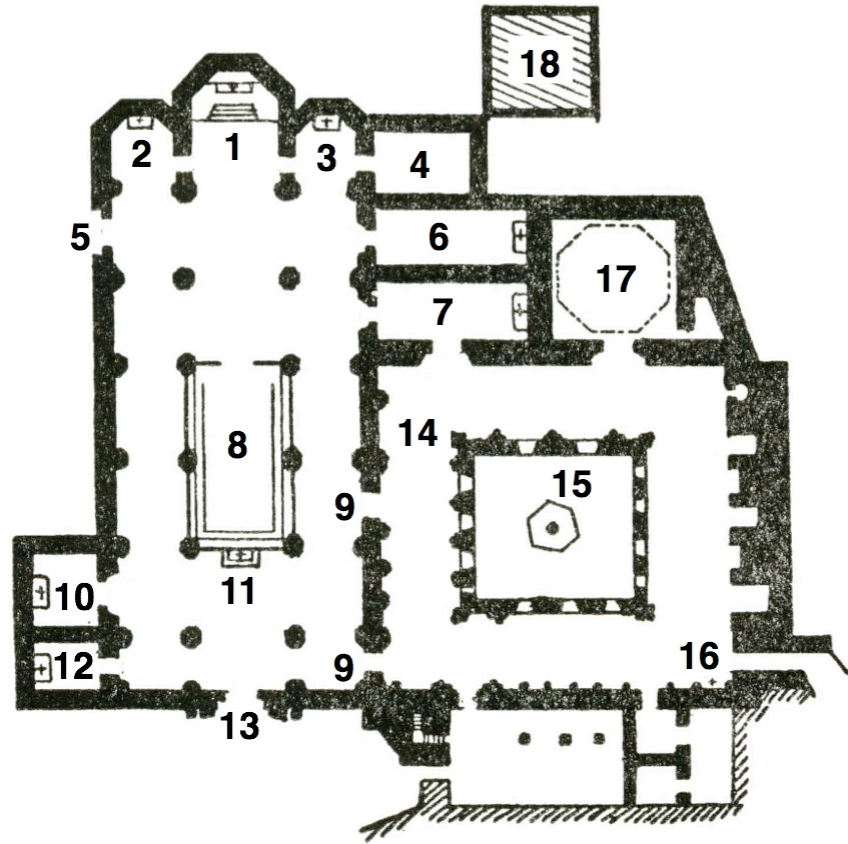
<sup>42</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 57v-58.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>45</sup> Codero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historica y Monumental*, 69.

**Figure 3:**  
**Diagram of the “Old” Cathedral of Plasencia<sup>46</sup>**



**Key Points of Interest**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Main altar                     | 10. Chapel of St. Catherine                             |
| 2. Altar of the Crucifixion       | 11. Altar of the Choir ( <i>transcoro</i> )             |
| 3. Altar of Our Lady of Mercy     | 12. Chapel of the Doctors                               |
| 4. Sacristy                       | 13. Main door   |
| 5. Door of Mercy                  | 14. Cloister  |
| 6. Chapel of St. Vincent          | 15. Plaza of the Oranges & Fountain of Juan de Carvajal |
| 7. Chapel of Holy Mary “The Fair” | 16. Altar of Our Lady of the Cloister                   |
| 8. Choir                          | 17. Chapel of St. Paul and the Cathedral Chapter Hall   |
| 9. Doors to the Cloister          | 18. Bell Tower  |

<sup>46</sup> This diagram of the “Old” Cathedral of Plasencia is adapted and modified from one published in Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 44.

Entering the city from the south, one traveled through the *Puerta de Trujillo* and on to *Calle de Trujillo*. Along this road that led directly to the *Plaza Mayor* were multiple houses with corrals and stables. The church also owned many of these, often leasing them to church officials and local residents.<sup>47</sup> In the 1410s, Prebendary Alfonso Fernández de Soria, a member of the Fernández family of churchmen, rented one such property.<sup>48</sup> The street also served as a boundary between the Jewish *aljama* to the north, and the Christian sector closest to the cathedral.<sup>49</sup>

North of the *Calle de Trujillo* was the *Puerta de Coria*. The two roads connecting this western gate to the Plaza Mayor, *Calle de Coria* and *Calle de la Rual/Zapatería*, traveled through the center of the Jewish *aljama*. In actuality, during the 1400s this section of the town was not exclusively Jewish. Both Jews and Christians lived and owned property here. For instance, during the 1440s, Diego González de Carvajal owned three homes on the *Calle de la Rual/Zapatería*.<sup>50</sup> He leased them to Jewish residents, such as Yucef Daza, a shoemaker, who lived in the vicinity of other tradesman.<sup>51</sup> The Church of Saint Nicholas (*Iglesia de San Nicolás*) and the Jewish synagogue were also located on this road. Established in 1326, the church was built on the foundation of an old Roman temple and held special significance for the Carvajal family because it was the burial location of multiple generations of the family.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 56v-57, 67v-69.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Folio 56v-57.

<sup>49</sup> Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 58.

<sup>50</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Yucef Daza lived across the street from a blacksmith's house and workshop.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

The Church of Saint Nicholas held special importance before the royal expulsion of the Jews in 1492 because interfaith disputes were literally resolved at its front doors.<sup>53</sup> In “extraordinary circumstances”, a Jewish judge and a Christian judge heard and adjudicated cases on the church’s steps that involved conflicts between individuals of these different faiths.<sup>54</sup> The synagogue, the Jewish religious brotherhood (*confradía de los Judios*), and a large block of enclosed Jewish residences (*Apartamiento de Mota*) sat across from the church. In 1416, a group of Jewish residents purchased property and built the *apartamento*, which had its own protective walls and doors that could be closed at night, to house the Abenahim, Abençur, Abenhabibe, Aloya, Castaño, Daça, and Pardo families.<sup>55</sup> Even though this was a predominately Jewish section of Plasencia, clans like the Carvajals and Estúñigas constructed homes in this same location.<sup>56</sup> By the 1480s, as more Jews began to leave the city, the holdings of the Estúñigas were so extensive that local residents identified *Conde Alvaro de Estúñiga*’s kitchen as its own separate and noteworthy building.<sup>57</sup> In 1493, this section of town lost its center of Jewish life, the synagogue, when the Catholic Monarchs forced the Jewish community to “hand over the keys of the synagogue” to local Christian leaders.<sup>58</sup> Both the Carvajal and Santa María families officially witnessed the transaction.

The northwestern *Puerta de Berrozana* provided a circuitous route to the *Plaza Mayor*. Within this part of the city, stood two churches: the Church of Saint Martín

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<sup>53</sup> Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 139, Note 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> ACP Legajo 7, Documento 22; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 42; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/17.

<sup>56</sup> ACP Legajo 7, Documento 22; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 42.

<sup>57</sup> ACP Legajo 7, Documento 22

<sup>58</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 11, “El Abad y Cabildo de la Univesidad toman posesion de la Sinagoga de los Judios el dial de 2 de Febrero de 1493 que les habian concedio los Reyes Católicos en 11 de Enero de 1493.”

(*Iglesia de San Martín*), founded before 1273 as the community's second parish, and the Church of the Savior (*Iglesia del Salvador*), both patronized by the Carvajals. Several arms of the extended family—the Martínezes and Trejos—selected this church for their entombments and the saying of memorial masses for their families.<sup>59</sup> The Santa María clan and Tamayo family, which was intermarried with the Carvajal lineage, located several of their tombs and arranged for family masses at this same church.<sup>60</sup>

### ***The Diocese of Plasencia: Geography and Assets***

Also critical to the Carvajal family was the Diocese of Plasencia, which held jurisdiction over the villages and cities of Béjar, Coria, Trujillo, Cáceres, and Medellín.<sup>61</sup> Not only did they reside in this expansive ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but the region's resources, both natural and man-made, significantly shaped their lives. While the region was not the most abundant provider of natural resources in comparison to other regions of Iberia, it did generate wine, fruit and vegetables, grains, as well as supported livestock. It also contained such man-made assets as buildings, houses, mills, watermills, and river weirs for catching fish. As the Carvajal and Santa María families would learn in the early 1400s, the cathedral of Plasencia owned an extensive collection of property assets across the diocese. These territories and resources were the lifeblood that sustained both the cathedral and the families that controlled the cathedral chapter. When these Carvajals and Santa Marías ultimately garnered control in the 1420s, they jointly learned to utilize church assets for personal and familial wealth building. Fortunately for historical observers of this period, the cathedral and its governing apparatus, the chapter of canons and prebendaries, generated an exhaustive accounting of the church's diocesan holdings

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<sup>59</sup> ACP Legajo 12, Documento 10; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 1.

<sup>60</sup> Codero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historica y Monumental*, 142-147.

<sup>61</sup> The cathedral of Plasencia's chapter referred to the diocese as the "Bishopric of Plasencia." See ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 1.

in the late 1390s. These churchmen created an inventory that reveals the wealth of the cathedral, and likewise presents a fairly complete picture of the diocese's resources.

Sometime during the 1390s and most likely in the Chapel of Saint Paul at the cathedral, members of the chapter gathered to begin the painstaking process of recording the church's diverse and widely-dispersed property holdings. They listed these properties in the Capitulary Acts (*Actas Capitulares*), which recorded the day-to-day business transactions of the cathedral chapter. The *Actas Capitulares* commence with entries from the 1390s and end in 1527.<sup>62</sup> The cathedral chapter drafted them for one essential purpose—to create a written record of the church's valuable assets that in turn were a vital source of church revenues.

Churchmen looking out from the cathedral's steeple could only view a few kilometers of their sphere of influence—an expansive diocese covering over 14,800 square kilometers of territory and several Extremaduran population centers. From the *Actas Capitulares* it is possible to determine the approximate boundaries of the diocese. (See Figure 4.) Roughly matching the modern confines of the Spanish Province of Cáceres, it owned property and exerted its authority over the City of Plasencia, as well as the sizeable population centers of Béjar, Coria, Trujillo, Cáceres, and Mérida.<sup>63</sup> Along its 148 kilometer North-South axis, the diocese encapsulated the northern population center of Pueblo of San Esteban, near the border with the Province of Salamanca, and the southernmost community, the Pueblo of Medellín, near the city of Mérida.<sup>64</sup> Its 100 kilometer East-West axis reached from the Pueblo of Jaraicejo, not far from Guadalupe, to Coria, near the Portuguese border.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomos* 1, 3, 4, and 5.

<sup>63</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 6v-7v, 8, 17v-18, and 20-23v.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Folios 8, 20-23v.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Folios 6v-7v, 17v-18.

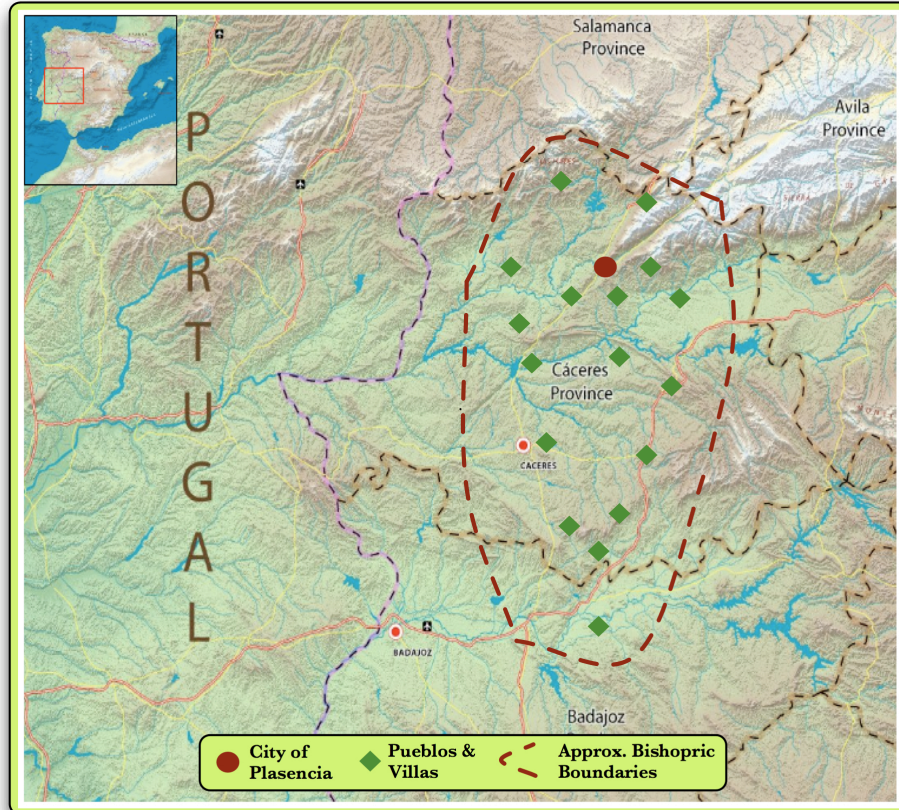


**Figure 4: Approximate Boundaries of the Diocese of Plasencia, 1390s**

Calculated Area: 14,800 sq. kilometers/5,714 sq. miles

Greatest Distance North to South: 148 kilometers/92 miles

Greatest Distance East to West: 100 kilometers/62 miles



Source: *Mapa Oficial de Carreteras Impermeable*, Edición 38, Año 2003. Ministerio de Formento de Espana

The labors of the cathedral chapter generated a descriptive list of fifty-one individual properties held by the cathedral. As the scribe recorded the details of each unique territory, he did so in a manner that indicated the men sitting around the table were very knowledgeable about the diocese's villages, roads, landmarks, natural

resources, and community members. Each property description provided valuable insight into what 14<sup>th</sup> century Placentino churchmen found to be of value—both from informational and intrinsic perspectives.

A representative entry in the *Actas Capitulares* is one for “the pasture (*dehesa*) called La Habaza,” close to the Pueblo of San Esteban that was reportedly donated to the cathedral by Doña Gracia, wife of García González.<sup>66</sup> Pastures like *La Habaza* were large sized parcels that often presented a range of useful natural resources and multiple structures. From a wealth perspective, the donated land included, “a landmark of many *quijos*,” or a gold and silver laden-type of quartz, multiple holm-oak forests (*carrasceleos*), seasonal running streams (*aguas bertientes*), and a small grouping of houses (*casar*.) *La Habaza* was a prized possession of the church because it provided housing, precious mineral resources, sturdy timber, oak acorns for grazing pigs, and water that could be used for agricultural and other pastoral purposes. Another striking element of the entries during this period is the relative absence of standardized measurement distances, such as the league. Although in at least two of the church’s descriptions of property records the notary reported distances in leagues (*leguas*), this was not common.<sup>67</sup>

The church’s holdings and authority extended from the city of Plasencia into the surrounding region (See Figure 5 and Table 1.) Close to its administrative center, the cathedral of Plasencia owned forty-six and a half *caballerias*, or lands that the king had

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Folios 20-23v.

<sup>67</sup> According to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, the length of a league (*legua*) is the equivalent of 5,572.7 meters, and under the Spanish system of measuring distances, a league was the distance a person could travel by foot on a road for one hour. The only cases in which the Church Council utilized the distance of a league to describe church holdings were: (1) the location of the “place called Ensinilla” that was located one league from the village of Albala, and (2) a house owned by the church that had one “bad league” of land attached to it. See ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1v-3, 11-11v.

previously given to knights in compensation for their service.<sup>68</sup> These were located in the valleys between mountains surrounding the city and the Alion de la Erguijuela, the Alion de la Moeda del Yugar, Alion de Saucedilla, and the Alion de Callejuela. The church purchased some of the *caballerias*, while noble families and churchmen's families donated others.<sup>69</sup>

The cathedral's fourteen geographically-dispersed houses, most of which were located in the southern portion of the diocese and south of the Tajo River, were in the Pueblo de Abala, Ensinilla (in the vicinity of Abala), Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Villa de Trujillo, Talavan (on the Tajo River), Pueblo de Portezuelo, Pueblo de Riobermejo (near Plasencia), and Santa María del Campo.<sup>70</sup> Often, houses such as these could be beneficial because they were connected to other productive assets like vineyards (*viñas*), gardens/irrigated land (*huertas*), mills (*aceñas y molinos*), corrals (*corrales*), and storage

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Folios 1-1v.

<sup>69</sup> During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the cathedral of Plasencia used the words "*caballerias*" and "*yugadas*" interchangeable to describe one type of property, as evidenced in the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 161-164. Within colonial Spanish American history, the term *caballeria* is a very specific measurement of land. In his article, "The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain," Manuel Carrera Stampa cites colonial Mexican sources that describe a *caballeria* of land as, "a width of 192 varas of the said measure and double this, that is, 384 varas for the length." However, in Plasencia during the 14 and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the use of the term *caballeria* did not seem to communicate this level of specificity. The *Diccionario de la Lengua Español* (1729) clarifies that this specific measurement pertained to "las Indias" and not peninsular Spain. The dictionary definition is, "Se llama tambien en las Indias cierto repartamiento de tierras o haciendas que permitieron los Reyes se pudiesen dar a las personas que fueron pobladores de las partes que se conquistaban, para que se aveindasen y mantuvieren." The only definition of *caballeria* that relates to financial or territorial compensation that pertains to peninsular Spain is the following: "En Aragon se llamaron ciertas rentas que los Ricos hombres repartian de las suyas propias entre los *Caballeros*, y gente de guerra, que eran sus vassallos, y los assistian, quando salian a servir a los Reyes." The cathedral of Plasencia's mixed use of the terms *caballeria* and *yugada* complicates this discussion because the *DEL* (1729) defines a *yugada* as "el espacio de tierra de labor, que puede arar un par de bueyes en un dia." This explanation indicates that a *yugada* was an imprecise space of tillable land—it depended on the oxen and man leading them. Therefore, in this dissertation the terms *yugadas* and *caballerias* are used as the 15<sup>th</sup> century churchmen used them, interchangeably, and in the most generic sense. Both are defined as varied areas of workable agricultural land that were most likely given by a king to a knight for services rendered. See Manuel Carrera Stampa, "The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 29, Documento 1 (Feb., 1949): 2-24.

<sup>70</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 5v-8, 9-9v, 11-11v, 19v, 20-23v.

vesses and structures for agricultural and pastoral items (*tinafas, cilleros, y bodegas*).<sup>71</sup> They also could be used to board church leaders in the diocese's different villages or they could be leased to other parties to generate revenues or other valuable goods. One such property with extra amenities was on the Tajo River and Talavan. There, the cathedral owned a 50 percent share of two houses with adjacent water mills (*aceñas*), a garden/irrigated land (*huerta*), and two poorly maintained fishing weirs (*cañas de pesca/cañares*.)<sup>72</sup> In other communities, the church's houses offered additional resources. For example, one house in the Portuzuelo was equipped with three wooden casks used to store wine and fish.<sup>73</sup>

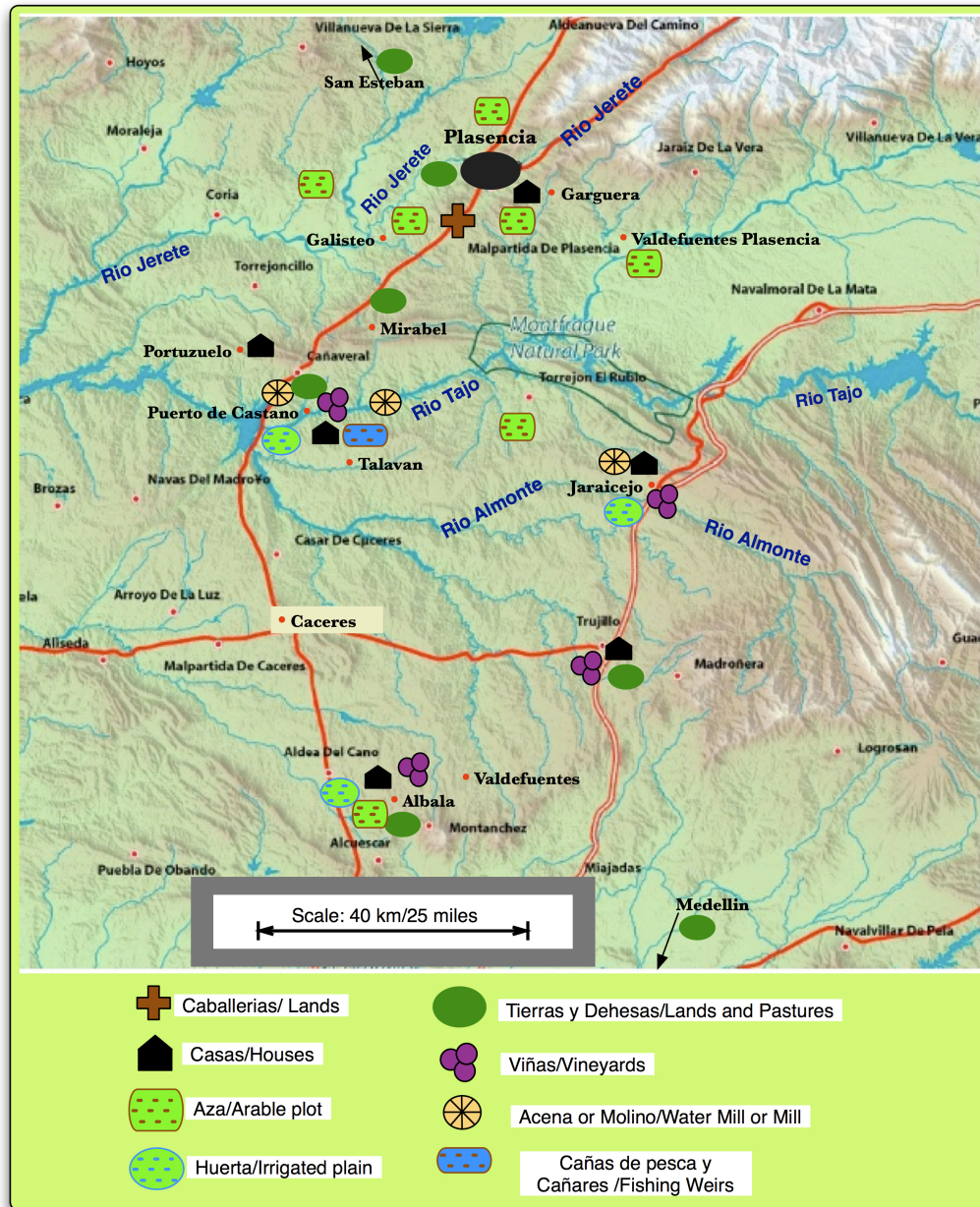
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<sup>71</sup> *Huertas* are both gardens, as well as any land that is irrigated. *Bodegas* are often storehouses for wine, hence our understanding of them as wine cellars.

<sup>72</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 9-9v.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 11-11v.

**Figure 5: Distribution and Types of Property Held by the Diocese of Plasencia, 1390s<sup>74</sup>**



<sup>74</sup> This map does not depict each individual property. Rather, the map presents the geographic distribution of each type of property. For example, a single icon represents all of the cathedral's 46.5 *caballerias* at the outskirts of the City of Plasencia.



**Table 1: Property Types Held by the Diocese of Plasencia, 1390s**

| Property Type  | Count    | Locations (closest populated settlement)  |
|--|----------|---|
| <i>Caballerias/Yugadas</i><br>-Lands formerly owned by <i>caballeros</i> | 46.5     | Termino de Plasencia  |
| <i>Casas</i><br>-Houses  | 14       | Pueblo de Abala, Ensinilla (Abala), Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Villa de Trujillo, Talavan, Pueblo de Portezuelo, Pueblo de Riobermejo (Plasencia), Santa María del Campo  |
| <i>Azas</i><br>-Plots of arable land                                     | 57       | Ensinilla (Abala), Camino de Riobermejo a Aldeanueva, Torrejon, Sendero de Medio, Aldea de Riobermejo, Valle de Milana (Galisteo, Coria), Valde Barrancos (Galisteo, Coria), El Pico (Coria), Valdefuentes, |
| <i>Huertas</i><br>-Gardens<br>-Irrigated land                            | 5.5      | Pueblo de Albala, Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Puerto de Castaño  |
| <i>Tierras y dehesas</i><br>-Lands and pastures                          | 11       | Pueblo de Albala, Termino de Medellín, Termino de Villa de Trujillo, Aldea de Riobermejo, Termino de Plasencia, Pueblo de San Esteban, Campo de Calamoco  |
| <i>Viñas</i><br>-Vineyards   | 15       | Pueblo de Albala, Pueblo de Jaraicejo, Villa de Trujillo, Puerto de Castaño   |
| <i>Acenas/Molinos</i><br>-Water mills/mills                              | 3.5      | Pueblo de Jaraicejo, (Rio Tajo) Talavan, Puerto de Castaño  |
| <i>Cañas de pesca/Cañares</i><br>-Weirs for catching fish                | 50% of 2 | Rio Tajo (Talavan)  |

In the villa of Trujillo, the church owned a pair of houses with a storehouse (*cillero*), as well as livestock corrals held in common with another tenant that were purportedly “in good condition.”<sup>75</sup> The homes owned by the church in the Pueblo and Termino de Jaraicejo to some extent a mixed blessing. One collection of houses along the Almonte River included a stone tower, a boat pier, a mill, and an irrigated property known as “Seledillas”. Not all properties were as sumptuous as in the case of a small cottage donated by María Alfonso and another house given by Anton Pérez with “doors in very bad condition” and a fallen storehouse.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 8.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 6v-7v.

The greatest collection of territorial wealth held by the cathedral were 57 simple, but productive arable plots of land (*azas*.) All but three of these plots were either located close to the city of Plasencia or along one of its roads leading to neighboring communities.<sup>77</sup> The best plots of land had direct road access back to Plasencia and water supplies in the form of minor seasonal streams or year-round rivers.

Of the five and half gardens or irrigated lands held by the cathedral chapter, one is particularly interesting. It was located in Puerto de Castaño. While one might expect the record keeper to focus on the benefits, or the lack of benefits, of the property, he instead chose to highlight two walnut trees.<sup>78</sup> These trees were important because when the property was separated into two pieces, the space between the trees was used to form a border between the church's part of the property and that of Diego Blasco, a resident of Plasencia who lived on Calle de Coria.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, as the scribe notated, "half of the trees and their fruit," are the property of the cathedral.<sup>80</sup> In particular, the nuts and leaves of the walnut tree had significant medicinal value, first as an astringent, and second, as a treatment for *scrofula*, a tubercular infection of the skin on the neck. Thus, this medicinal tree was an important resource to the diocese's community.

General land (*tierras*) and pasture (*dehesas*) properties, typically larger than irrigated land/gardens, but similar to the previously described pasture of *La Habaza*, were evenly scattered across the diocese of Plasencia. One particularly noteworthy church property was an enormous collection of pastures and meadows that sat inside the triangle created by the settlement of Mirabel, Puerto de Castaño, and the Pueblo of Portuzuelo.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Folios 13-13v, 15-19v, 23v-27. Additionally, Don Simon's full identity is Don Simon Sánchez according to an 1807 copy of his donation. See ACP Legajo 136, Documento 26.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Folios 10-11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Folios 23v-27.

Topographically, it offered access to two seasonal streams and bordered mountain ranges. It also contained valuable natural resources such as multiple oak forests (*carrasquillas*), several asphodal flower fields (*gamonals*) for the grazing of cattle and sheep, large collections of granite (*berrocales*), and several sites with gold and silver-laden quartz (*quijos*). At the time of the accounting of church property, the church also owned fifteen vineyards, all located in the central and southern portions of the diocese.<sup>82</sup> In sum, the cathedral of Plasencia's territories were an enormous church benefice that provided substantial resources and revenues to fund church operations and salaries.

#### NOTABLE FAMILIES

Dominating the City and Diocese of Plasencia during the late 14<sup>th</sup> through early 16<sup>th</sup> century were a small collection of wealthy and noble families. The Carvajals and their extended family relations are the primary focus of this history. However, other critical families had both positive and negative influence on the Carvajal family's social and occupational aspirations. Among the most consequential was the well-known *converso* Santa María family from Burgos. The Santa María family's impact on the Carvajal family is not a well-documented subject. The families' collaborative efforts in the cathedral of Plasencia helped transform the Carvajals from a family of minor knights to one composed of ecclesiastical leaders and royal advisors. To a lesser extent, families like the Álvarez de Toledo (*Señores de Oropesa*) competed with the Carvajals. Lastly, other families served as critical foils to the ambitions of the Carvajals. The most noteworthy were the Estúñigas, the *Condes de Béjar y Plasencia*. The wealthy and militarily powerful Estúñigas began as Carvajal collaborators during the 1410s. However, after disputes over the *Condes'* treatment of local nobles in Plasencia during

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Folios 5-5v, 6-6v, 8-8v, 10-11.



the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and later, with specific instructions from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel in the 1480s, the Carvajal family became an active enemy of the Estúñigas. Prior to this engagement with the Estúñigas, the Carvajals had entered into an indirect dispute with the Fernández family over the collection of church taxes. At that time, the Fernández family of local churchmen dominated the cathedral's governing chapter. Together, the Carvajals' extended family, the Santa Marías, the Álvarez de Toledos, the Estúñigas, and the Fernándezees are all vital components of understanding the remarkable ascent of the Carvajal family.<sup>83</sup>

### ***The Carvajal Extended Family***

Spanish nobility genealogies report that the Carvajal family of Plasencia is descended from the line of King Bermudo II of Leon (982-999) and through these noble origins they entered into knightly service.<sup>84</sup> The earliest tangible evidence connecting the Carvajal family to Plasencia, is a mixture of narrative and physical evidence. According to Friar Alonso Fernández, a 16<sup>th</sup> century local historian of Plasencia, Diego González de Carvajal, and his father resided in Plasencia and were in the service of King Ferdinand III (1217-1252). The two men participated in the king's military campaigns against the Iberian Muslims and reportedly attended to the king's mother, Doña Berenguela, as her stewards (*mayordomos*).<sup>85</sup> Further, after the reconquest of Sevilla (1248), Diego González de Carvajal and his father retired to Plasencia.<sup>86</sup> Friar Fernández bolsters his

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<sup>83</sup> I do not discuss the Fernández family in this chapter. Instead, their abbreviated family history is incorporated into Chapter Two.

<sup>84</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro, Tomo C-20, Folios 211-213v.

<sup>85</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 37-38; Alberto y Arturo García Carraffa, *Diccionario Heraldico y Genealogico de Apellidos Espanoles y Americanos*, Vol. XXII (Madrid: Imprenta de Antonio Marzo, 1926), 268-69.

<sup>86</sup> Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Volumen A*: 402; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 37-38; García Carraffa, *Diccionario Heraldico y Genealogico de Apellidos Espanoles y Americanos*, Vol. XXII, 268-69.

claim that the Carvajal family resided in Plasencia by noting that Diego González gave a founding donation to the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Mark (*Monasterio de San Marcos*). This gift allowed the nuns to establish their order in Plasencia in the 1230s.<sup>87</sup> In the monastery's church, and at its main altar, Friar Fernández reported that an inscription on a sepulcher read, "Diego González de Carvajal, family founder."<sup>88</sup> Friar Fernández cites this as tangible evidence of the early connection of the Carvajal family to this region, and he added, "From these words recorded on the epitaph, we know that Diego González de Carvajal was the progenitor and propagator of the Carvajal family in Plasencia."<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, the nuns abandoned the Monastery of Saint Mark in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and there is no longer any way to verify Friar Fernández's account. Nonetheless, the friar's history of Plasencia provides tantalizing evidence of the origins of the Plasencia line of Carvajal knights.

Roughly one hundred years after the death Diego González de Carvajal, the founder of the Monastery of Saint Mark, the Carvajal family appears frequently in the personal testaments, royal documents, and church accountings held by the *Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia*. The progenitors of the Plasencia lineage investigated in this dissertation are the noble Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas, and his spouse, Sevilla López de Villalobos, both of whom died before 1400. Regarding these two individuals, there is only one significant detail known—that Sevilla López chose to be interred in page Church of Saint Nicholas.<sup>90</sup> After her death, the Carvajal family continued to patronize the church and many descendants, well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, selected the Church of Saint Nicholas as their final resting place.

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<sup>87</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 37-38.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

Although the couple were nobles, they were neither extremely wealthy nor held titles that named them the lords of any city, village, or land. In comparison to the Estúñigas, the Counts of Béjar, and Álvarez de Toledo, the *Señores de Oropesa*, the Carvajals lacked commanding incomes and extensive property bases. While it is difficult to determine Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas' personal wealth, the property of his eldest son, Diego González de Carvajal, is quantifiable suggesting that the Carvajal family's holdings were quite modest in comparison to the Estúñigas and the Álvarez de Toledos. For example, in his will of 1455, Diego González de Carvajal documented that he possessed 62,000 maravedis in money; owned an extensive housing complex in the City of Plasencia; and held a varied portfolio of properties in the region, including several vineyards, a grain mill, twenty-three *caballerías* (lands given to him by the king), and over two-dozen other houses and varied lands.<sup>91</sup> This was substantial wealth in comparison to commoners, but very little in relationship to the Estúñigas. In contrast, in one single year (1454), Count Pedro de Estúñiga collected 3.6 million maravedis in rents and taxes alone from his seigniorial lands.<sup>92</sup>

While not as affluent as the Estúñigas, the Álvarez de Toledo family was also a great deal more prosperous than the Carvajal family. For example, fifty years before Diego González de Carvajal's will of 1455, the *Señor de Oropesa* already collected about 26,000 maravedis in annual rents and taxes from his seigniorial lands near Talavera.<sup>93</sup> In addition, the *señor's* 1398 property holdings included multiple houses, lands, mills, and vineyards in Oropesa, Jarandilla de la Vera, Tornavacas, and Torralba.<sup>94</sup> Likewise, the he

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Jesus Martínez Moro, *La Renta Feudal en la Castilla de Siglo XV: Los Stuñiga* [sic] (Valladolid: Graficas Andres Martín, S. A., 1977), 116.

<sup>93</sup> Alfonso Franco Silva, "Oropesa, El Nacimiento de un Señorío Toledano a Fines del Siglo XIV." *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, Documento 15 (1985): 299-314.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 308-311.

earned revenues from his livestock: 1,600 sheep, 288 cattle, 140 swine, 88 goats, 21 oxen, and 126 beehives.<sup>95</sup> By the 1450s, the *Señor de Oropesa* also collected a healthy salary from the king. For example, in 1452, *Señor* Pedro Suarez de Toledo earned a salary of 81,200 maravedis a year as the Chief Collector (*Recaudador Mayor*) of royal taxes in the Archdiocese of Talavera.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, even though the Carvajal family did command a moderate amount of wealth, they were by no means were in the top tier of noble families in the Extremadura.

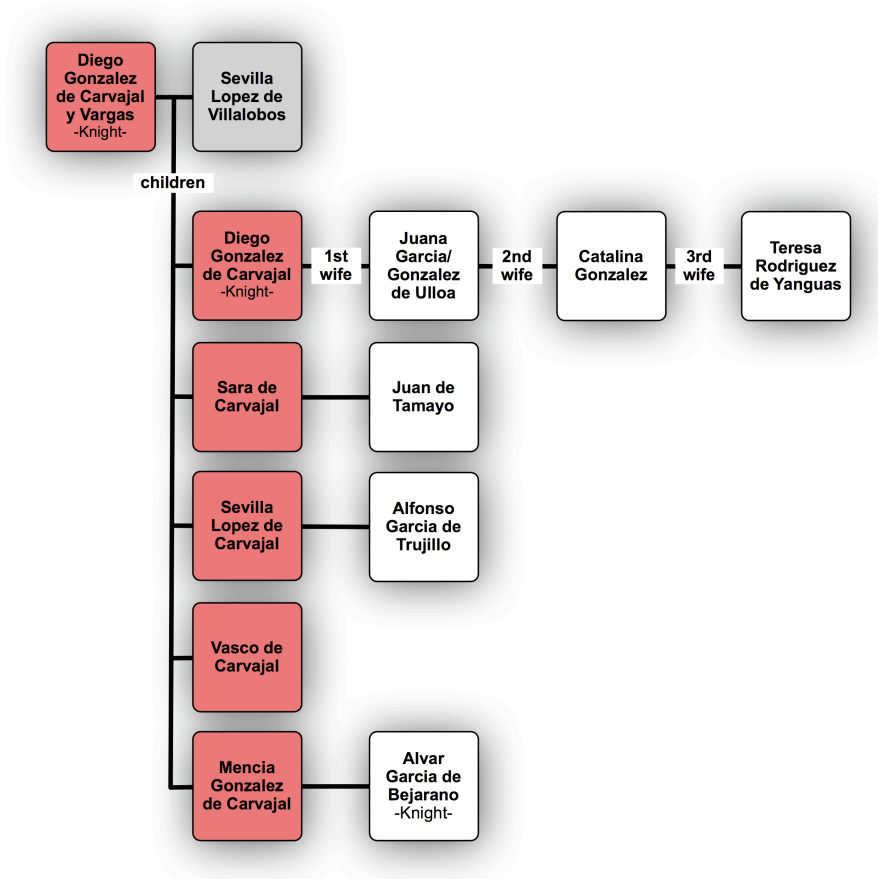
Nevertheless, Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas and his wife, Sevilla López, were successful in ultimately producing a distinguished family lineage with significant mobility into royal and especially ecclesiastical offices. (See Figure 6.) Their first son, Diego González de Carvajal, served as one of the king's local city councilmen (*regidores*) in Plasencia and produced multiple heirs from three separate marriages.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 310-311.

<sup>96</sup> AHNSN Frias, Caja 1762, Documento 3/4, Folio 3.

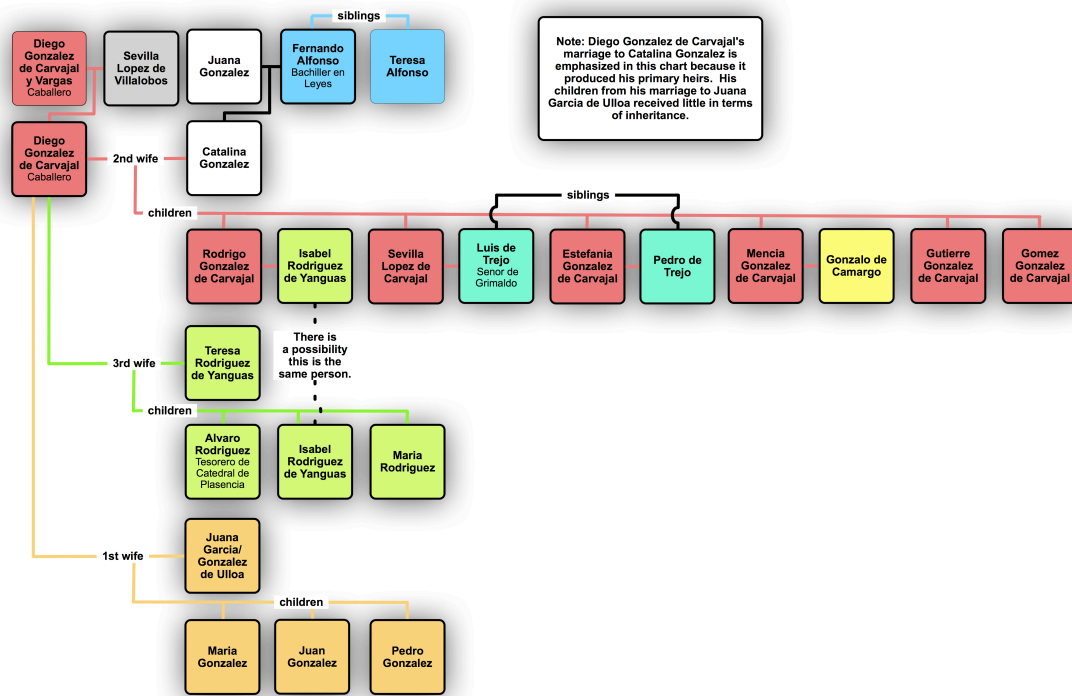
**Figure 6: Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas and Sevilla López de Villalobos, Progenitors of the Carvajal Family of Plasencia**



His first marriage to Juana García de Ulloa assisted in the integration of the Ulloa and Carvajal clans, as well as introduced the merchant Espadero family into the Carvajals' extended family. Juana García de Ulloa was a granddaughter of Espadero clan. Additionally, through this marriage, the Carvajal family shared a distant family connection to the *converso* Santa María family residing in Plasencia. Namely, Juana García de Ulloa's first cousin, María Gómez de Almaraz, was married to Juan González de Santa María. More importantly, Diego González de Carvajal's second marriage to Catalina González generated children that would further enhance the family's fusion with other knight clans, like the Camargos and Trejos. Both of his children, Rodrigo González

de Carvajal and Sevilla López de Carvajal, also founded the family's first entailed estates (*mayorazgos*) in the 1480s and 1490s. (Figure 7.)

**Figure 7: Diego González de Carvajal, His Three Wives, and Children**



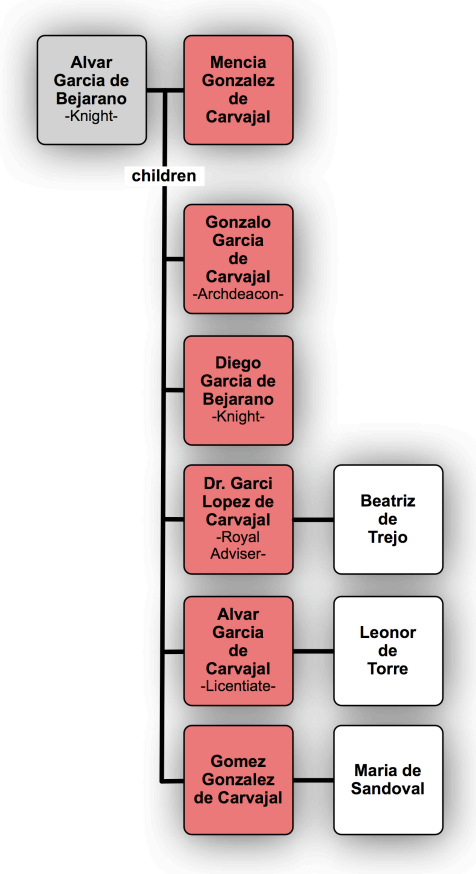
The daughters of Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas, Sara and Mencía, brought forth a new generation of family leaders that placed the family in competition for critical royal and church positions. Mencía González de Carvajal's children and descendants would become the most successful of the extended family's church leaders and royal advisors. (See Figure 8.) Her marriage to Alvar García de Béjarano created a hybridized family of knights, churchmen, and administrators. One son, Diego García de Béjarano continued in the family's traditional profession as a knight. However, three other sons pursued learned traditions. Gonzalo García de Carvajal was the first Carvajal to enter into the religious profession. The cathedral of Plasencia named him the Archdeacon of

Plasencia and Béjar in 1421 and he was a critical collaborator with the Santa María family inside the church. His brother, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, served as both a judge (*oidor*) in King Juan II's royal court (*real audiencia*) and was also a local city councilman (*regidor*).<sup>97</sup> Like his brother Gonzalo García, from the 1420s to the 1440s, Dr. Garci López benefited from a secure relationship with the Santa Marías. He assisted the cathedral of Plasencia in royal affairs and resolved local disputes between the church and the city council. Lastly, Alvar García de Carvajal, another sibling, held the university degree of Licentiate.

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<sup>97</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 1; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo C-20, Folio 212-212v.

**Figure 8: Mencía González de Carvajal, Her Spouse and Children**



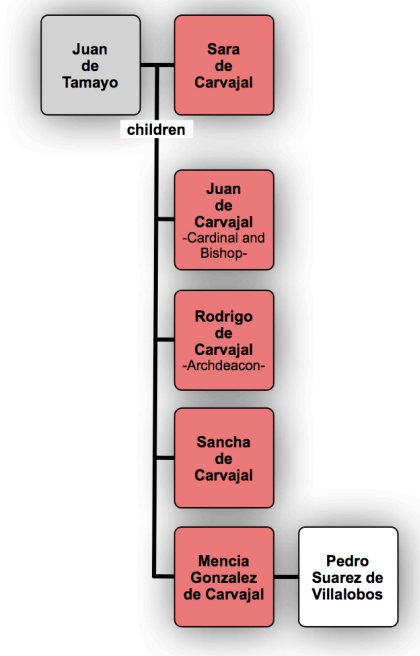
Mencía González de Carvajal’s sister, Sara de Carvajal, married Juan de Tamayo, a nobleman from Bonilla de la Sierra. (See Figure 9.) Their marriage produced two sons who would also rise to prominence in the church. Their eldest, Juan de Carvajal, became the family’s first bishop and Catholic Cardinal. In the Roman Catholic Church he served as an auditor in the Vatican’s legal courts, the *Rota*, and subsequently the pope named him Governor of Vatican City.<sup>98</sup> Juan de Carvajal reached the pinnacle of his career in 1446 when named the Bishop of Plasencia and a Cardinal. Later, in 1455, he demonstrated his Christian religious zeal when he preached a crusade in Hungary to rally support behind efforts to counter the Ottoman Turks. Rodrigo de Carvajal, Sara de

<sup>98</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18.



Carvajal's other son, prospered in the cathedral of Plasencia as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar. Rodrigo de Carvajal played a critical role in the family's dominance of the cathedral, which allowed them to utilize repeatedly the institution for their financial and patronage needs. The sister of Juan and Rodrigo, Sancha de Carvajal, while not a member of a religious order, was a significant benefactor of churches in Plasencia and Bonilla de la Sierra. This served the family's interest in advancing their social status and perpetuating the Carvajal clan's reputation as one that was both noble and Catholic.

**Figure 9: Sara de Carvajal, Her Spouse and Children**



Approximately one hundred years after the death of the modestly wealthy Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas, his grandchildren and great grandchildren had entered the upper reaches of the church hierarchy. At the time, they were also being recruited by the crown for a leadership role. In 1488, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel called on a family to relieve the Estúñigas (*Condes de Béjar*), of their jurisdiction over

Plasencia, they called on Francisco de Carvajal for the difficult task. Riding into the city in order to return it to direct royal rule, the Carvajals and their supporters called out to the residents, “Plasencia! Plasencia! For the Monarchs Don Fernándo and Doña Isabel!”<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas’ great grandson, Bernardino López de Carvajal, further extended the family’s role in royal and papal politics. In the 1470s and 1480s, Bernardino López rapidly advanced within the Vatican’s walls, much like his uncle, Cardinal Juan de Carvajal. Pope Innocent VIII made Bernardino López his papal ambassador (*papal nuncio*) to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel, and later he was “distinguished with the red Cardinal’s hat” by Pope Alexander VI.<sup>100</sup> Bernardino López’s ambition exceeded his capability when at the schismatic Council of Pisa in 1511 he accepted the title of Pope, thereby challenging Pope Julius II for this papal throne.<sup>101</sup> The Pope Julius II excommunicated Bernardino López de Carvajal for his act, but in 1513, Pope Leo X brought him back into the church’s fold and restored to his status as a Cardinal. These specific members of the Carvajal family, and their extended relatives, are the key focus of this study. It is an investigation that chiefly examines how the Carvajal family of Plasencia transformed itself from its modest knight origins into an esteemed clan of royal and church leaders. However, the Carvajals were not the only key family members in Plasencia.

### ***Santa María, Rodríguez de Maluenda, and Gutiérrez de la Calleja Families***

Distinct from all other notable families in Plasencia were the *converso* Santa Marías. Prior to 1406, the family does not appear in the cathedral of Plasencia’s archival

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<sup>99</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 150-153.

<sup>100</sup> Jose López de Toro, *Pedro Martir De Angleria, Espistolario, Documentos Ineditos Para La Historia De Espana*, Vol. IX (Madrid: Imprenta Gongora, S.L., 1953), 298.

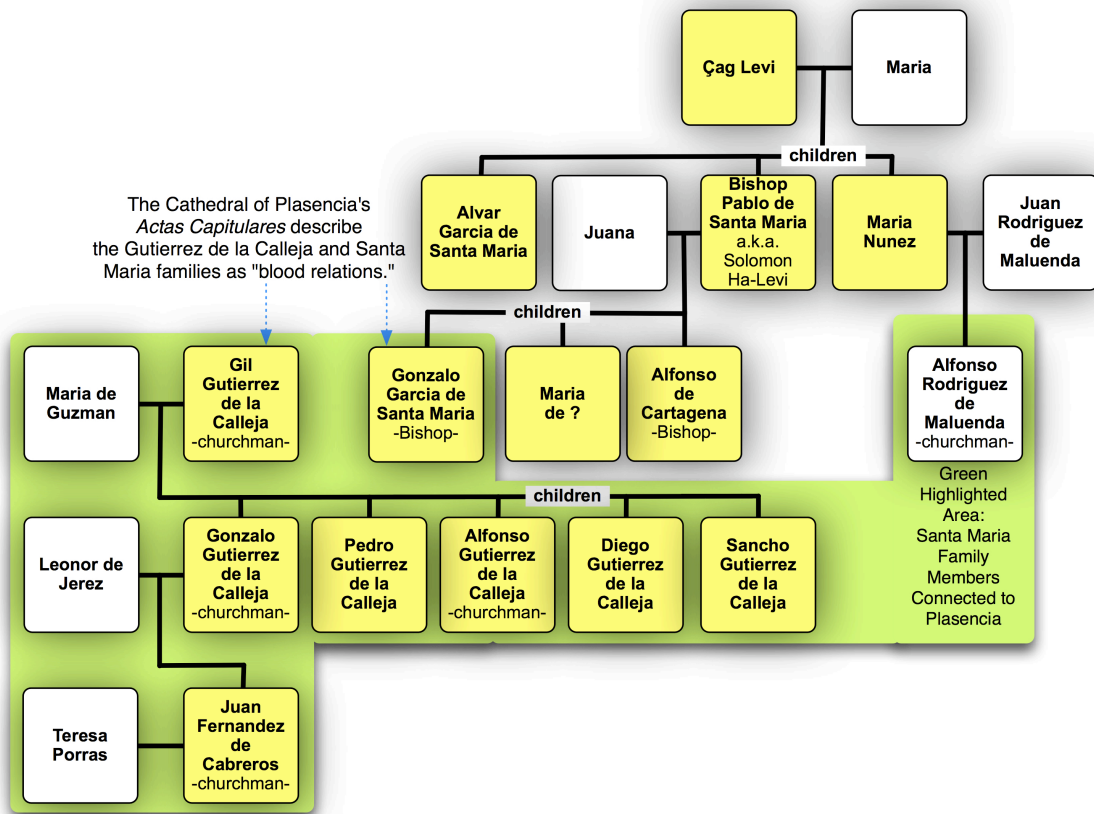
<sup>101</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Vol. VI. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1950), 387-393.

documentation. The chain of events that brought the Santa Marías from their ancestral lands in Burgos to Plasencia commenced as early as 1390, the year Rabbi Solomon Ha-Levi converted to Catholicism and became Pablo de Santa María.<sup>102</sup> Throughout the first three decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Pablo was an ever-present force in the court of King Juan II. First, he was the young king's tutor and subsequently was his Senior Chancellor (*Chanciller Mayor*). The king also named him the Bishop of Cartagena (1403-1415) and the Bishop of Burgos (1415-1435). Pablo de Santa María's *converso* siblings, children and relatives assumed various Castilian surnames including Santa María, de Burgos, de García, de Cartagena, Rodríguez de Maluenda, and Gutiérrez de la Calleja. While many elected to stay in Burgos, others routinely traveled to Plasencia, with some settling there permanently. (See Figure 10: The Santa María Family and Their Extended Family in Plasencia, 14th Century).

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<sup>102</sup> Luciano Serrano, *Los Conversos: D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Hebraicos, 1942), 52, 62; Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos: Historia de la Judería de Burgos y sus conversos mas egregious* (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1952), 304.

**Figure 10: The Santa María Family and Their Extended Family in Plasencia, 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries**



The most prominent of the Santa Marías to spend time in Plasencia and the Extremadura were Pablo de Santa María's son, Gonzalo García, and his brother, Alvar García.<sup>103</sup> From the 1420s through the 1440s, Gonzalo García de Santa María served as

<sup>103</sup> There is a debate about whether Alvar García de Santa María was the son or the brother of Pablo de Santa María. The historian Francisco Cantera Burgos raises this issue in his text, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*. Cantera Burgos argues that Alvar García de Santa María was the brother of Pablo de Santa María, and not his son. Cantera Burgos cites other historians, including Maríana, Florez, Floranes, Jose Amador de los Rios, Anibarro, A. Paz y Melia, who agree with him. On the other hand, Luciano Serrano, author of *Los Conversos* is the only one that disagrees with this finding, suggesting instead that Alvar García was the son of Pablo. Curiously, Cantera Burgos attributes this error in genealogy to the royal chronicler and adviser to the *Reyes Católicos*, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, a resident and descendant of the Plasencia Carvajals. See: Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 60-61.

Plasencia's bishop. Pablo's brother, the treasurer and royal chronicler Alvar García de Santa María, traveled to the Extremadura in the 1430s on court affairs. However, neither of these men were the first Santa Marías to travel to or settle in Plasencia. Church Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja, married to María de Guzman, is the first documented Santa María to come to Plasencia establishing his family just prior to 1406.<sup>104</sup> Multiple church records verify the relationship of the Gutiérrez de Callejas to the Santa Marías as church notaries refer to Gil Gutiérrez, and his sons (Alfonso, Diego, Pedro, and Sancho), as the "family" of Gonzalo García de Santa María.<sup>105</sup>

Gil Gutiérrez was also the first Santa María family member to find a position in the cathedral's leadership chapter. In 1407, he appeared to be a well-established and respected member of the church hierarchy. The chapter acknowledged his continued services as one of its prebendaries (*racioneros*), and more importantly, it re-elected him to a new term as Dean.<sup>106</sup> However, Gil Gutiérrez de Calleja was not the only Santa María in the city at this time. Another one of his relatives, Juan González de Santa María, was married to María Gómez de Almaraz, the daughter of the knight family of Diego Gómez de Almaraz.<sup>107</sup> Gil Gutiérrez, Juan González, and María Gómez were close

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<sup>104</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 29-29v, ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13, unfoliated.

<sup>105</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 46-46v, 99-100v, 105, 116, and 161.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 29-29v.

<sup>107</sup> ACP Legajo 143, Documento 12; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13. Juan González de Santa María was likely the brother of Alfonso García de Santa María, the cathedral's Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín during the 1430s. Two additional sources document Alfonso García's church position in Plasencia, as well as name his siblings. First, the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 217v-219, detail Alfonso's church position. Additionally, Francisco Cantera Burgos's text, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, pages 524 and 532, notes that Alfonso García de Santa María works in the service of Bishop Gonzalo de Santa María at the cathedral of Plasencia. Professor Cantera Burgos also notes that Alfonso García had two brothers, Pedro García de Santa María and Juan González de Santa María. Thus, Juan González seems to be the same individual named in the Archive of the cathedral of Plasencia's records and in Cantera Burgos' text.

family members. In one case, Gil Gutiérrez and Juan González defended María's interests in an ongoing property conflict (1406-1421) she had with her aunt, Leonor Sánchez.<sup>108</sup>

### ***Álvarez de Toledo Family, the Señores de Oropesa***

The Álvarez de Toledo family was yet another important Plasencia family who descended from García Álvarez de Toledo, the Master of the Christian Military Order of Calatrava.<sup>109</sup> In 1366, Prince Enrique II (the future king) conceded the villages of Oropesa and Valdecorneja to García Álvarez and named him a *Señor*. While he was not as prosperous or influential as his brother, Fernán Álvarez de Toledo (founder of the House of Alba), in the 1390s García Álvarez left his family with an expansive *señorio* capable of generating significant rents and income. At the opening of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Álvarez de Toledos and Carvajals would initially view the cathedral of Plasencia as a common foe due to the families' complaints about church taxes.

### ***Estúñiga Family, The Condes de Béjar y Plasencia***

Like the Santa María family, the Estúñigas do not appear in Plasencia's archival documentation prior to 1400. The Estúñiga family was originally from the Kingdom of Aragon, but later enjoyed success as royal bureaucrats in the Kingdoms of Navarra and Castile.<sup>110</sup> In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, the clan found solid footing in Castile when Diego López de Estúñiga, the founder of the *Condes de Béjar*, was part of a new generation of powerful elites that surrounded adolescent King Enrique III. The key men advising the monarch were Diego López de Estúñiga, his *Justicia Mayor*; Juan Hurtado de Mendoza,

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<sup>108</sup> ACP Legajo 143, Documento 12; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13.

<sup>109</sup> Jose Manuel Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Oropesa y Los Álvarez de Toledo* (Toledo: Diputación Provincial, 1985), 14-17.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

the *Mayordomo* of the royal house; and Ruy López Davalos, *Constable* of the army.<sup>111</sup> King Enrique III facilitated the entry of the Estúñiga family into the Diocese of Plasencia when he granted Diego López de Estúñiga permission to found a family *mayorazgo*, or entailed lands, in the village of Béjar in 1397.<sup>112</sup> Throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Village of Béjar would be the primary base of operations for the clan. At the time Diego López de Estúñiga established his *mayorazgo* in Béjar, the family owned an extensive collection of properties across Castile. The primary beneficiary of these lands was his eldest son, Pedro. Pedro de Estúñiga received the seigniorial territories in the village of Béjar, as well as others in Burgos, Valladolid, Burguillos, Algaba, Urbel, and other cities.<sup>113</sup> King Juan II appointed Diego López de Estúñiga's other son, Gonzalo de Estúñiga, the Bishop of Plasencia in 1414.<sup>114</sup>

The tensions between the Estúñigas and the city and Diocese of Plasencia took full form in 1441 when King Juan II granted Pedro de Estúñiga the title of *Conde de Plasencia*, as well as regional authority over Plasencia in exchange for the village of Trujillo.<sup>115</sup> Eventually, animosities built between the Castilian Crown and the Estúñigas. In 1488, the Catholic Monarchs used the knight-arm of the Carvajal family to “liberate” the city of Plasencia, to “reduce” the city to the will of the monarchs, and to remove the city from the Estúñiga's territorial jurisdiction.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 213, Documento 19 (21), Folios 253-259; 347; See these folios for the Estúñiga family genealogy recorded in Diego López de Estúñiga's testament.

<sup>112</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 213, Documentos 19 (20) – 19 (21), Folios 239-259; María Luisa de Villalobos y Martínez-Pontremuli, “Los Estúñiga. La Penetración en Castilla de un Linaje Nueva,” *Cuadernos de Historia*, Vol. VI (Madrid: 1975): 331-333.

<sup>113</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 213, Documento 19 (21), Folio 253-259; Martínez Moro, *La Renta Feudal en la Castilla del Siglo XV*, 53-71.

<sup>114</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 164-168.

<sup>115</sup> Vicente Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia* (Cáceres: Tipografía, Encadernación y Librería de Jiménez, 1903), 44.

<sup>116</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro, Tomo C-20, Folio 213; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 247-249.

However, before the Carvajals and the Estúñigas would settle their long-brewing 15<sup>th</sup> century conflict, Plasencia and its families would undergo significant social, economic, and political changes that would prompt the Carvajal clan to alter dramatically their identity as knights. The seeds of this family transformation began in the late 1390s when elite and lesser noble knight families confronted the cathedral of Plasencia over the imposition of church taxes (*diezmos*) on the knights' lands and territories.



## Chapter Two: The *Caballeros* and the Cathedral, 1391-1420s

### Royal Provision and Letter from King Enrique III to His Knight Vassals in the diocese of Plasencia, 11 February 1396

Bishop Pedro Fernández de Soria wrote to and informed me that some of you, my vassals and señores...will not consent to the collection and leasing of church taxes in your seigniorial lands....That you all do not wish to pay even half of their valued amount....From this point forward, none of you will cause interference, act with impunity, or hold back any of these church taxes. If you fail to comply with my orders, you will suffer the loss of my grace and a penalty of 10,000 maravedis.<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, the lower noble Carvajal family of knights (*caballeros*) learned that the cathedral of Plasencia was a potent ecclesiastical entity that could humble even elite Castilian seigniorial lords. Specifically, in 1396, the Carvajals witnessed how the cathedral's churchmen successfully appealed to King Enrique III for help enforcing the church's right to collect a tax (*diezmos*) from the region's high noble families, such as the *Señores de Oropesa*, as well as low noble families like the Carvajals. Conflicts between local lords and bishops over *diezmos* had consistently occurred in Christian kingdoms since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Cathedrals and churchmen highly prized the right to collect *diezmos* because they were entitled to keep for themselves those excess tax revenues they had not previously agreed to pay to the Castilian crown and the greater Roman Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "Real Provisión de D. Enrique España que los Sres. de los lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos obtenida a instancia del Sr. Obispo D. Pedro..." unfoliated; ACP *Extractos del inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 3, Documento 338.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in 1257, Artal de Luna refused to pay these church tariffs to the Bishop of Zaragoza. See: R. Ignatius Burns, "A Mediæval Income Tax: The Tithe in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Aragon," *Speculum*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Jul., 1966): 445.

<sup>3</sup> David E. Vasseberg, *Land and Society in Golden Age Castile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 220.

This ecclesiastical demonstration of power highlights the nature of late 14<sup>th</sup> century economic competition between Castile's *caballero* families and church clans, both of whom pursued wealth generation with fundamentally different approaches. Both high noble and low noble knight families generated a sizeable portion of their familial incomes from agricultural and pastoral activities as well as property leases. Seigniorial lords, or those high noble families with titles and secular jurisdiction over local communities in which they resided, also collected income through secular taxes, such as the Castilian internal trade tax (*portazgo*). On the other hand, families that depended on the church for their livelihood, like the Fernández clan of Plasencia, relied on church tax collections and the leasing of church assets to fund their cathedral salaries. It was within this late 14<sup>th</sup> century social and economic competitive framework that the Carvajal family found themselves aspiring to a higher stature in the Kingdom of Castile.

In 1403, perhaps because the Carvajals lacked other options to improve their financial well being, this low noble family chose to reinitiate the *caballeros'* conflict with the cathedral of Plasencia over church taxes. The quarrel was so bitter that Bishop Diego Arias de Balboa excommunicated Diego García de Béjarano (a Carvajal clansman) as punishment for leading the tax revolt. Ultimately, the bishop brought the church's complaint to the attention of a royal court in Cordoba. The Carvajals' attempt to free themselves from these church *diezmos* failed when the court negotiated a settlement between Diego García and the cathedral of Plasencia in 1410. An investigation of the *caballeros'* conflict with the church, as well as an exploration of familial wealth building during this era, demonstrates that the Carvajals likely pursued their confrontation with the cathedral to improve their economic condition.

An unusual outcome of the *caballeros'* tax revolt is that it appears to have initiated the Carvajal family's entry into the ecclesiastical and royal administrative world.

Unlike other Placentino *caballero* clans, the Carvajals recognized that if they could secure leadership positions in the cathedral of Plasencia they could enhance their family's authority, stature, and economic position in the region. In fact, in a transformative sequence of events, Diego García's brother, García Gonzalo de Carvajal, would become the cathedral's Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar in the 1420s.

Facilitating the Carvajals' entrance into the cathedral were internal divisions and fissures within the cathedral of Plasencia's leadership chapter. During this era, the Santa María clan, newcomers to Plasencia, gained initial access to the cathedral chapter. However, the Fernández family of churchmen, the strongest clan on the chapter, largely excluded the Santa Marías from the church's lucrative patronage and wealth building opportunities. Together, this environment created an opening for the Carvajals to form an alliance with the Santa Marías to garner access, and ultimately control, of the cathedral of Plasencia's chapter. By acquiring mastery of the cathedral chapter, the Carvajals and Santa Marías could harness the church's impressive ecclesiastical authority for familial gain, as well as benefit from new patronage and financial enhancement opportunities. Thus, this chapter's findings will demonstrate how the Carvajal family began its ascension into the ranks of Castile's learned professions in order to overcome the social limitations of their lower noble status, as well as their inadequate economic resources. Further, it details how families in Plasencia leveraged their clan's relations to compete for control over the local church's primary governing institution—the cathedral chapter—so that they could access valuable church opportunities.

#### **CABALLEROS VS. CHURCHMEN**

From 1396 to 1410, Plasencia's high noble knights (*señores* and *condes*) and low noble knights aggressively engaged the cathedral of Plasencia's churchmen in a

competition over a perennial focus of life – money and taxes. Specifically, the high and low noble families repeatedly refused to pay church taxes to the cathedral of Plasencia. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, local church dioceses had imposed *diezmos* on their local communities. The independent Christian kingdoms likely derived this church taxation system from the secular, seigniorial tax structure used by the Visigoths.<sup>4</sup> At the Council of Peñafiel, held in 1302, the Spanish Church specified that *diezmos* would be a ten percent tax assessed on goods produced in the countryside, such as grain, wine, fruit, livestock, and milled products. These revenues provided a considerable sum for the cathedral’s operations. A decade after the Council of Peñafiel, the cathedral of Plasencia held its own local constitutional synod. There, Bishop Domingo and the cathedral chapter’s officials agreed to distribute two-thirds of these annual tax revenues to themselves, and to reserve the remaining one-third for the “works of the church.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, families employed by the church, for example the Fernándeze, depended on these revenues to fund both their salaries and the patronage opportunities they showered on their relatives and associates. When tax collections did not meet expectations, they had a direct impact on the financial well being of the cathedral’s churchmen.

When Bishop Pedro Fernández de Soria, the patriarch of the Fernández family, pleaded in 1396 to King Enrique III to intervene in the church’s *diezmos* conflict with local *caballeros*, his petition represented much more than a jurisdictional and taxing

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<sup>4</sup> Quintin Aldea Vaquero, Tomas Marin Martínez, and Jose Vives Gatell, eds. *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: CSIC, 1972), s.v. “Diezmo,” by G. Martínez. Note: Although the *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España* does not cite potential Islamic antecedents of this agricultural tax, it should be noted that *diezmos* also resemble the Islamic practice of collecting the *kharāj*. For more information on the *kharāj*, see: Richard S. Cooper. “The Assessment and Collection of *Kharāj* Tax in Medieval Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1976), 365-382.

<sup>5</sup> Note: Bishop Domingo’s surname is not known. ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 1. “Constituciones Sinodales publicadas por Señor D. Domingo I, natural de Béjar, y aprovadas por el Cabildo Placentino, en 14 de Junio de 1229. Vertidas del latin al castellano, martes 3 de Abril de 1313,” unfoliated.

authority issue. His complaint straddled a fault line separating Plasencia's families. On one side were elements of the nobility ("mayors", "gentlemen" and members of royal "councils") and armed knights.<sup>6</sup> Among these individuals were Gastón de Béarn y de la Cerda (*Conde de Medinaceli*), Gonzalo González de Herrera, Fernán Álvarez de Toledo (*Señor de Oropesa*), Diego Gómez de Almaraz, Fernando Rodríguez de Monroy, and Gutierre González de Trejo.<sup>7</sup> Of these men, Gastón de Béarn y de la Cerda and Fernán Álvarez de Toledo were part of the grand nobility of Spain (*la grandeza*) as they held both titles and seigniorial lands.<sup>8</sup> Noticeably absent from those accused of not paying their *diezmos* were the Carvajal family's *caballeros*, who included the notables—Diego González de Carvajal of Plasencia and Alvar García de Béjarano of Trujillo.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the bishop did not name these men in his appeal to the Castilian monarch either because these men chose to pay their *diezmos*, or because they lacked sufficient wealth to be of importance to the cathedral of Plasencia.

Opposing this collection of high and low noble *caballeros* was a determined chapter of church families that understood that their salaries were dependent on the successful collection of church tariffs and rents. The key families in the cathedral chapter at this time included the Fernándeze, Martíneze, Blasqueze, González, García, Sáncheze, and Domíngueze. More so than their compatriots, the Fernández family enjoyed a long-established foundation in the local church; as early as 1338 Sancho Fernández held the office of prebendary (*racionero*).<sup>10</sup> During the time of the *diezmos*

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<sup>6</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "Real Provisión de D. Enrique España que los Sres. de los lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos obtenida a instancia del Sr. Obispo D. Pedro..." unfoliated ; ACP *Extractos del inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 3, Documento 338.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo C-20, Folios 211-213v.

<sup>10</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 3, unfoliated.

conflict of 1396, Pedro Fernández de Soria served as Bishop of Plasencia and his nephew, Martín Fernández de Soria, held the influential Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar.<sup>11</sup> In general, the *caballero* and church families did not share immediate family relations nor did they overlap professionally. Thus, the two clusters of men had decidedly different perspectives on the payment of taxes.

At the heart of this church-*caballero* tax conflict were the multiple deceptive practices employed by the knights to obscure the accounting of income generated from the taxable lands and territories. In his appeal to King Enrique III, the bishop stated that the *caballeros* were “interfering” with the collection of *diezmos* by transporting bread, wine, and other goods to be stored in locations outside of the bishopric.<sup>12</sup> The transfer of products outside of the diocese meant that the cathedral could not accurately record and account for these items and therefore could not tax them. To remedy this situation, the king ordered his knights, “to no longer lease or rent houses or storehouses or storage casks in places other than your lands.”<sup>13</sup> Further, the monarch insisted, “Just like other landholders and residents in other places...you must pay *diezmos* for bread and wine and other things.”<sup>14</sup> According to the bishop, another tactic utilized by the *caballeros* to deny the cathedral its fair revenues was their recording of agricultural products and livestock “at half of their actual value” or simply the refusal by the knights “to pay the appropriate amounts.”<sup>15</sup> As a result of these perceived infringements upon the church’s tax collection

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<sup>11</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 15-15v; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 132-33; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 81-85.

<sup>12</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento “Real Provisión de D. Enrique España que los Sres. de los lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos obtenida a instancia del Sr. Obispo D. Pedro...” unfoliated ; ACP *Extractos del inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 3, Documento 338.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

rights, Bishop Pedro Fernández argued that, “much of the *diezmos* collections for these seigniorial lands had been lost and were progressively dropping each year.”<sup>16</sup>

In an indication of the growing power of the Castilian monarchy in relationship to the nobility, King Enrique III intervened on behalf of the cathedral of Plasencia and required that his nobility obey his order or suffer the loss of his favor and a 10,000 maravedis fine.<sup>17</sup> With the jurisdictional authority of the church bolstered by King Enrique III’s royal authority, the churchmen would ultimately prevail on the taxation issue. Although the multiple overlapping jurisdictions—royal, church, municipal, and local seigniorial—complicated the issue of levies, the king forced a resolution between the *caballeros* and the churchmen.

#### **WEALTH AND INCOME IN PLASENCIA**

The origins of the 1396 conflict between Plasencia’s nobility, especially its lesser *caballeros*, and the cathedral of Plasencia’s churchmen is rooted in the fundamentally different ways both groups garnered wealth. The Castilian nobility in the diocese of Plasencia was composed of two classes of knight families—the high nobles (the *señores* and *condes*) and the low nobles. Indeed, since its inception, Castile’s nobility was generated almost exclusively from its knight families.<sup>18</sup> At the opening of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the low noble clans in the diocese of Plasencia were the Carvajal, Orellana, Trejo, Monroy, Camargo, and Ovando families.<sup>19</sup> As the lowest members of the Castilian nobility, these lesser knights relied exclusively on production from their lands and property leasing to generate a livelihood and accumulate wealth. Specifically, 90 percent

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Isabel Beceiro Pita and Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave, *Parentesco, Poder y Mentalidad. La Nobleza Castellana Siglos XII – XV* (Madrid: CSIC, 1990), 68-69.

<sup>19</sup> Marie-Claude Gerbet, *La Noblesse dans le Royaume de Castille: Étude sur ses Structures Sociales en Estrémadure (1454-1516)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979), 136-139.

of their familial revenues were derived from vineyards, agricultural production, and herding, whereas 10 percent were accumulated from housing and land leases.<sup>20</sup> Also within the region, there were two families that were among the Castilian high nobility—the Estúñigas, *Condes de Béjar*, and the Álvarez de Toledos, *Señores de Oropesa*. These high noble clans derived their titles and generous economic privileges, such as the right to tax their individual patrimonial villages and lands, by virtue of royal privilege and feudal concession.<sup>21</sup> Unlike their low noble counterparts, these high noble families derived the majority of their income from seigniorial taxes and duties.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, members of the high nobility derived 57 percent of their revenues from trade tariffs (*portazgo*, *montazgo*, *alcabala*, *tercias*), and only 43 percent from the rents and cultivation of their lands.<sup>23</sup> Thus, when one re-evaluates the *señores* and *condes*' decision to comply with King Enrique III's 1396 royal order to pay *diezmos* to the cathedral, it is likely that the high nobility did so in order to guard against losing their more important source of revenue—seigniorial taxes. On the other hand, lower noble clans did not benefit from these same royal taxation privileges, and as a result these lower nobles were disproportionately impacted and particularly vulnerable to the financial pressures imposed upon them by church *diezmos*.

An investigation of the earliest church financial records of the cathedral of Plasencia (from the 1390s), also demonstrates that low noble knights, as well as local merchants, bore the brunt of church taxation, while local churchmen were largely unaffected by these tariffs. While many *caballeros* did earn salaries as

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 274-275.

<sup>21</sup> Bartolome Clavero, *Mayorazgo: Propiedad Feudal en Castilla 1369-1836* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, S. A., 1974), 28.

<sup>22</sup> Gerbet, *La Noblesse dans le Royaume de Castille*, 250-251.

<sup>23</sup> Martínez Moro, *La Renta Feudal en la Castilla del Siglo XV: Los Stúñiga* [sic], 21, 25-26; Gerbet, *La Noblesse dans le Royaume de Castille*, 251.



councilmen/municipal officers (*regidores*) in their local communities of as much as 1,000 maravedis a year—their greatest source of income came from the earnings of their lands.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Plasencia’s clerics and canons derived their compensation from a mix of *diezmos* revenues, the leasing of church lands, and the production of goods from church lands.

A review of the *Actas Capitulares*, which commence in the 1390s, reveals that *diezmos* had a disproportionately negative effect on *caballero* and merchant families, as compared to clergymen’s families, specifically because knights and merchants tended to own more land than churchmen.<sup>25</sup> These church records not only record ecclesiastical properties, but also detail local property owners. Interestingly, the cathedral’s accounting does not provide a complete picture of the region, as it does not provide information about the seigniorial lands of the Estúñigas, *Condes de Béjar*, and the Álvarez de Toledos, *Señores de Oropesa*. This might suggest, as highlighted in Bishop Pedro de Fernández de Soria’s 1396 tax complaint against regional lords, that the cathedral had difficulty documenting property ownership by these lords. These accounting records reveal that the Carvajal family of *caballeros* relied heavily on agricultural lands and vineyards to generate their wealth, and therefore they were subject to *diezmos* tariffs. Of the thirteen wealthiest individuals in Plasencia, five were from *caballero* families, two were from merchant families, and only one was from a churchman’s family.<sup>26</sup> (See Table

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<sup>24</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento “Privilegio del Rey D. Alfonso XI dado a favor de la ciudad de Plasencia...,” unfoliated.

<sup>25</sup> The *Actas Capitulares* are the day-to-day business transactional records of the *Cabildo de la Catedral de Plasencia*, or the local cathedral chapter. The *Actas Capitulares* commence in the early 1390s and detail church statutes, properties, and organizational affairs. See ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1-29, for the 1390s accounting of cathedral properties.

<sup>26</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1-29.

1.) The five remaining families in the accounting, whose occupations cannot be determined, were not members of the church leadership.<sup>27</sup>

As the king typically compensated knight clans with land for their military service, it is not surprising that the Carvajal, Pérez de Granada, Pérez de Monroy, and Sánchez *caballero* families owned the majority of income producing properties in the diocese. The merchants, who also claimed noble titles, included just one extended family—the Martíns and Pérezes. The only clerical family with any recorded amount of land wealth was the well-established Fernándezes.

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<sup>27</sup> A review of the *Actas Capitulares* reveals that none of these families had kin on the governing cathedral chapter.

**Table 1:**  
**Cathedral of Plasencia's 1390s Accounting of Church Properties**  
**(Named Landowners with Property Adjacent to Church Properties)**

| Primary Landowners (Occupation)  | Properties Owned |
|--|------------------|
| María Pérez, wife of Martín Domínguez (merchant)                                     | 10               |
| Sons of Diego Pérez de Granada ( <i>caballeros</i> )                                 | 8                |
| Gonzalo García de Carvajal ( <i>caballero's</i> son)                                 | 7                |
| Gómez Fernández of Abala (clergy)  | 6                |
| Mateo Sánchez, royal servant ( <i>caballero</i> and <i>balletero</i> ) <sup>28</sup> | 6                |
| Diego Martínez, of <i>Calle de Trujillo</i>  | 5                |
| Juan Pérez de Buenaventura   | 3                |
| María Martín (merchant)  | 3                |
| Gracia (wife of García González de Plasencia)  | 3                |
| Miguel Sánchez of Aceituna, of <i>Calle de Coria</i> ( <i>caballero</i> )            | 3                |
| Diego Munoz, of <i>Calle de Trujillo</i>   | 3                |
| Fernán Pérez de Monroy ( <i>caballero</i> ) <sup>29</sup>                            | 3                |
| Ximena (spouse of Duran González)  | 3                |

Unlike cathedral officials and their families, Plasencia's merchant clans relied on a broad mix of real estate holdings to provide for themselves. In the *Actas Capitulares*, the landholdings of María Pérez, a noble lady (*doña*) and merchant (*tendera*), are especially noteworthy.<sup>30</sup> She, and not her husband, Martín Domínguez, owned ten properties consisting of arable plots, lands, and vineyards. All of the goods produced from her lands—wine, vegetables, wheat, and the like—were subject to the *diezmos*.

<sup>28</sup> Don Mateo also donated three properties to the cathedral of Plasencia. See ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1-1v.

<sup>29</sup> Given the time period in which the *Actas* property records are generated, around the 1390s, this Fernán Pérez de Monroy is very likely the *caballero* that served under Kings Alfonso XI and Pedro I during the mid to late 1300s. Friar Alonso Fernández notes that Fernán Pérez de Monroy was one of the well-known *caballeros* in the Bishopric of Plasencia during this time period. In 1369, Fernán Pérez de Monroy, a *caballero* loyal to King Pedro I during the Castilian civil war, attacked and killed Blasco Gómez de Almaraz. Blasco Gómez de Almaraz is also listed in the *Actas* as the property owner of a house in the Pueblo de Albala (ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 6v.). See also Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 121-123; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 77.

<sup>30</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 5v-6v, 15-15v, 16-16v, 18-19v, 20-23v.

María Pérez's extended family relations owned 14 additional parcels, the most of any local family. Her merchant family also incorporated the Pérez, Domínguez, and Yañez lineages. However, Plasencia's merchant families did not bear the brunt of the church tariffs as they only accounted for two of the thirteen wealthiest families in the diocese.

On the other hand, as *caballeros* accounted for five of Plasencia's thirteen most affluent families, as a group they were the primary target of ecclesiastical taxation. For instance, second in wealth to María Pérez were the sons of the *Caballero* and *Regidor* Diego Pérez de Granada, who jointly owned eight properties.<sup>31</sup> Diego Pérez's sons held a significant and diverse mix of real estate that included houses, arable plots, vineyards, and irrigated plains. The eight territories were located in the cities and villages of Plasencia, Coria, Galisteo, and Puerto de Castano. Together, the extended Pérez de Granada clan held 12 properties. Like the Pérez de Granada family, the Carvajals were among the wealthier low noble clans in Plasencia. Gonzalo García de Carvajal's extended family, which included the Orellana, Espadero, and Ulloa lineages, was the third wealthiest group of landowners in the diocese.<sup>32</sup> (See Tables 1 and 2.) In total, Gonzalo García de Carvajal owned seven distinct lands and his extended family owned ten parcels.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Folios 1-29.

<sup>32</sup> The 1390s census of church properties is recorded in Folios 1-29 of the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Folios 8-8v, 15-15v, 17-18v.

**Table 2:**  
**Three Key Landowners Named in the Cathedral of Plasencia's 1390s**  
**Accounting of Church Properties**

|   | <b>María Pérez<br/>a.k.a. Mari-Pérez</b>                   | <b>Sons of<br/>Diego Pérez de Granada</b>   | <b>Gonzalo García<br/>de Carvajal</b> |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Social Status and Occupation              | Noble Merchant   | Noble Caballeros  | Noble Caballero                       |
| Total Properties Owned by the Individual  | 10   | 8   | 7                                     |
| <b>Location of Properties</b>             |  |   |                                       |
| Plasencia,<br>Riobermejo,<br>Aldeanueva   | 4 lands ( <i>tierras</i> )<br>1 arable plot ( <i>aza</i> ) | 1 house (casa)<br>1 land<br>1 arable plot   | -                                     |
| Coria, Galisteo,<br>Puerto de Castano     | 3 lands  | 1 irrigated lands/gardens ( <i>huerta</i> )<br>1 land<br>1 arable plot ( <i>aza</i> ) | 4 lands                               |
| Torrejon,<br>La Penuela                   | 1 land<br>1 vineyard ( <i>vinas</i> )                      | 1 land  | 2 lands                               |
| Trujillo                                  | -  | -   | 1 vineyard                            |
| Albala                                    | -  | 1 vineyard  | -                                     |
| Total Properties Owned by Extended Family | 14   | 12  | 10                                    |

The Carvajals and their extended relations concentrated their financial efforts in the profitable, but taxable, enterprises of agricultural and livestock production. In the village of Trujillo, adjacent to the vineyards of Albaladejo owned by the priests, Diego García de Béjarano, and his brother, Gonzalo García de Carvajal, owned one parcel with vineyards.<sup>34</sup> Gonzalo García also owned agriculturally-productive lands in Torrejon that

were adjacent to the Jerete River and the cathedral's smaller plots (*azas*.) Likewise, Gonzalo García held four sizeable lands in the *Valle de Milana* and *El Pico*, both near the village of Coria, that sat adjacent to church farm lands. These larger parcels would have likely been utilized for livestock grazing. Therefore, most of the lands owned by Gonzalo García and his extended Carvajal family were subject to church *diezmos*.

The Carvajal family also supplemented their income from agricultural activities through their intermarriage with merchant families. For example, Gonzalo García de Carvajal was married to the daughter of Rui Pérez, a local merchant and shopkeeper. The record tells little about Rui Pérez's livelihood although he owned two pieces of land, one in the *Pueblo de San Esteban* and another in the *Campo de Calamoco*.<sup>35</sup> His ravine in *Pueblo de San Esteban* reportedly contained a valuable natural resource—quartz rock with silver and gold deposits (*quijos*.) However, even though the Carvajal family did have other sources of revenue, such as merchant activities, they were primarily dependent on their farming and herding lands for income.

#### **THE SECOND *DIEZMOS* TAX REVOLT, 1403-1410**

It is likely because the Carvajal family of *caballeros* was so dependent on the income generated from their lands that in 1403 they elected to renew the *caballero* tax revolt with the cathedral of Plasencia. Led by Diego García de Béjarano (a Carvajal clansman), a new group of *caballeros* resumed the *diezmos* dispute after a new bishop, Vicente Arias de Balboa, took the helm of the diocese. Although the *diezmos* disagreement of 1396 had ended relatively quickly with the pronouncements of King Enrique III, this new conflict spanned seven years, from 1403 to 1410. According to Bishop Arias de Balboa, Diego García de Béjarano led the latest “rebellion” of six nobles

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Folios 20-27.

who refused to pay their church taxes.<sup>36</sup> Diego García was the son of *Caballero* Alvar García de Béjarano and Mencía González de Carvajal, the daughter of *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas.<sup>37</sup> For seven years, Bishop Vicente Arias was unable to compel Diego García and his fellow compatriots to pay their *diezmos*.

Only when the bishop threatened them with a very serious ecclesiastical weapon—excommunication—did the stalemate conclude through a legal settlement. On May 15, 1410, Bishop Vicente Arias, Diego García, and several other leading men from the region appeared in front of Alfonso López, a member of King Juan II's royal court (*real audiencia*), and Fernándo, the Bishop of Cordoba.<sup>38</sup> In the process of explaining the settlement, Diego García conceded that he had, “obfuscated the truth, retained, and did not want to pay in any manner the *diezmos* ...nor had he informed the church for what amount he had sold the products from the meadows, mountain, and pastures of his inherited properties.”<sup>39</sup> Bishop Vicente Arias added that the *caballero's* actions were part of a “conspiracy” and that Diego García, “had participated in a depraved crime against the bishop, the dean and the cathedral chapter, and its clergy...and his actions were a violation of the church's privileges.”<sup>40</sup>

The notary recorded that Diego García, humbled by the judicial ordeal, “appeared to be contrite in his conscience and displayed great humility. He was now a faithful son of the holy mother church and a faithful Christian of the religion...and he swore not to rebel against this judgment or fail to pay the taxes.” In the final act of that day, Alonso López of the *real audiencia* reviewed the terms of the settlement, which granted the

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<sup>36</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documento 13.

<sup>37</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo C-20, Folio 212v.

<sup>38</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documento 13.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

*caballero* spiritual absolution in exchange for full payment of seven years of unpaid diezmos, and he approved the agreement. Also present at the hearing was Diego García's uncle, the Diego González de Carvajal, who served as a witness to the agreed terms of the settlement. While Alonso Pérez did not record Diego García de Béjarano's financial penalty, he did note that the *caballero's* co-conspirators were also in arrears on their taxes. On June 10, 1410, four of these men also "confessed" their crimes and agreed to pay the *diezmos* owed to the cathedral (Franciso Gil, 1,285 maravedis; Juan Sánchez, 730 maravedis; Gil García, 1,507 maravedis; and Gil Blasquez, 63 maravedis).<sup>41</sup> Presumably, Diego García had owed a significantly larger amount given that he was Bishop Vicente's primary target. Just as with the tax dispute of 1396, Diego García's conflict with the church was a symptom of a broader social competition for wealth and status. Both groups, *caballeros* and churchmen, were steadfast in their desire to build and protect family wealth. What divided these families were the mechanisms they used to generate wealth—*caballeros* produced wealth with their own lands, churchmen created wealth through taxation and leveraging the assets of the church.

#### **AUTHORITY AND OPPORTUNITY INSIDE THE CATHEDRAL OF PLASENCIA**

Before the 1410s, it appears the Carvajals had neither the inclination nor the ability to access the cathedral of Plasencia's chapter of canons and prebendaries. Prior to this period, there is no mention in the Carvajals' recorded history of a family member branching out of traditional military service and into church service.<sup>42</sup> It was not until

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<sup>41</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documento 14. Alfonso López, the sixth co-conspirator, is named and absolved but is not required to pay any financial penalty. Note: There are some monetary discrepancies between the transcribed and original document. Specifically, the original states that Juan Sánchez owes 730 maravedis, and not 430 maravedis.

<sup>42</sup> An intensive review of the archival indices of the *Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia*, and all its *legajos*, *libros*, and *extractos* pertaining to the Carvajal family produced no evidence of the Carvajal family serving as churchmen in the diocese of Plasencia prior to 1400. Further, an investigation of the genealogy and nobility records held by the *Real Academia de Historia* (Madrid, Spain), especially its *Colección*



after the *caballero* tax revolts, and most likely due in part to their limited opportunities for social and economic advancement, that the Carvajal family began to appreciate the political and economic possibilities provided by membership in the cathedral chapter. Specifically, if the clan could find a path into the cathedral of Plasencia's leadership organization, then they could financially benefit from the church's patronage opportunities, resources, and taxation authority. Blocking the clan's access was the Fernández family of churchmen, as well as bishops sympathetic to the Fernándezes.

Fundamental to the ecclesiastical strength and autonomy of Catholic dioceses in the Kingdom of Castile during the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries were the significant local powers the Catholic Church bestowed upon them. In each of Spain's regional ecclesiastical benefices, including the diocese of Plasencia, a bishop (*obispo*) and cathedral chapter (*cabildo de la catedral*) governed the jurisdiction. Although the bishop was the titular leader of the diocese, the cathedral chapter often played a role in the appointment of the bishop as well as the chapter could significantly circumscribe the bishop's authority in local matters.

From 1375 to 1422, there was considerable tension and turbulence within the administration of the Plasencia diocese. In at least three cases, Plasencia's bishops found themselves in conflict with the cathedral chapter and the local community. For instance, between 1375 and 1401, Bishop Pedro Fernández de Soria (1375-1401) attempted to gain control of the membership of the local church council for his own family, but the chapter successfully rebuffed his efforts until his death. Likewise, Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa (1401-1414) battled local noble families and *caballeros*, like the Carvajals, repeatedly over church taxes. Lastly, and to the detriment of the diocese, Bishop Gonzalo

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Salazar y Castro and *Colección Floranes*, and the *Archivo Histórico Nacional-Sección Nobleza* and its pertinent collections (Alba de Yeltes, Baena, Bornos, Castrillo, Fernán-Nuñez, Frias, Luque, Mocejón, Osuna, Ovando, and Torrejón), produced similar findings.

de Estúñiga (1415-1422) sold large tracts of church lands in the village of Béjar to his powerful brother, Pedro de Estúñiga, the *Conde de Béjar* and the *Justicia Mayor* of King Juan II.<sup>43</sup> As was not unusual in Castile, the relationship between the bishop and the cathedral chapter was problematic at best.<sup>44</sup> Not until the leadership of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María (1423-1446), and the harmony of bishop-chapter relations under this administration, did stability return to the leadership of the diocese of Plasencia. Critical to creating the conditions necessary for a smoothly operating cathedral was the bishop's tacit acceptance of the chapter's authority over the diocese.

Local cathedral chapters and bishops derived their specific authority to govern their dioceses by virtue of papal authority.<sup>45</sup> Cathedral administrative chapters began to appear in Castilian churches during the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> At that time, the pope granted to the chapters all his rights and privileges provided they were "used for the local common good of the diocese."<sup>47</sup> Bishops similarly derived their authority from Catholic canon law, which specified, "bishops as the successors of the Apostles, and by divine order...they are placed to lead and govern the church in all matters under the authority of the Roman Pontificate."<sup>48</sup> Empowered as such, in theory, bishops administered absolute ecclesiastical and sacramental authority within their respective geographic jurisdictions

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<sup>43</sup> Gonzalo de Estúñiga and Pedro de Estúñiga were the sons of Diego López de Estúñiga, the *Justicia Mayor* of King Juan I and a member of his royal council. Their mother was Juana García de Leiva, a likely *converso*. See: Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae. Volumen B* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural "El Brocense" Diputación Provincial de Cáceres, 1983), 368.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Linehan notes disagreements between the bishop and cathedral chapter in Burgos during the 1260s. Jodi Bilinkoff documents similar economic and patronage conflicts between the Bishop of Ávila and its cathedral chapter during the 1450s. See Peter Linehan, *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 256; and Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 29.

<sup>45</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, s.v. "Cabildos," by P. Álvarez.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

and only the pope could remove them from office.<sup>49</sup> However, by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, cathedral chapters retained their own competing authority over the diocese.<sup>50</sup>

Like bishops, Castilian kings found themselves equally constrained by the local authority of churchmen. Since King Alfonso X's creation of *Las Siete Partidas* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, monarchs obligated themselves not only to protect and guard, and but also not to interfere with church property and goods.<sup>51</sup> Thus, an intricate web of relationships bound the king, pope, bishop, and cathedral chapter. While royal and papal authority were supreme in their own rights, with each step away from the royal and church centers in the cities of Burgos and Rome, those powers weakened and local power grew. In this manner, the cathedral of Plasencia shared much in common with other late 14<sup>th</sup> century Castilian "frontier" ecclesiastical centers, like the Cathedral of Segovia, where, "ecclesiastics [were] liberated by distance and environment and from the constraints of authority."<sup>52</sup>

The cathedral chapter governed every aspect of the diocese of Plasencia's ecclesiastical activities. These not only included the saying of regular masses, but also payment of church officers, the management of church properties, and collection of church rents and taxes. While the bishop was the local "lord" of the church, the chapter had significant control over the administration of the diocese. Often Placentino bishops hailed from other cities in Spain and were physically absent from Plasencia while

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<sup>49</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, s.v. "Iglesia y Estado," by D. Mansilla.

<sup>50</sup> R. Ignatius Burns, "The Organization of a Medieval Cathedral Community: The Chapter of Valencia (1238-1280)," *Church History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Mar., 1962): 14. Author's note: R. Ignatius Burns is usually referred to as Robert I. Burns.

<sup>51</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: CSIC, 1972), s.v. "Iglesia y Estado," by D. Mansilla.

<sup>52</sup> P.A. Linehan, "Segovia: A 'Frontier' Diocese in the Thirteenth Century," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 380 (Jul., 1981): 481-482.

attending to affairs in the king's royal court (*real audiencia*).<sup>53</sup> In fact, for over thirty years (from the 1390s to 1423) not a single sitting bishop of Plasencia appeared to be physically present at any of the recorded meetings of the cathedral board.<sup>54</sup> Bishops Pedro Fernández de Soria (1375-1401), Vicente Arias de Balboa (1401-1414), and Gonzalo de Estúñiga (1415-1424) were mostly absentee bishops that left the cathedral chapter to attend to their own affairs.<sup>55</sup> The first bishop to appear in the cathedral chapter's meeting records was interim Bishop Friar Don Diego Fernán Sánchez de Seradilla, who occupied the chair for only part of 1424.<sup>56</sup> This routine absence of bishops from the diocese of Plasencia generally promoted a strong self-identity and reliance on self-governance by the cathedral chapter.

In the Castilian western frontier of the Extremadura, far from Burgos and Rome, the diocese of Plasencia perceived itself as a self-administering local institution. When the Dean and church officers met to discuss administrative matters, in most cases in the Chapel of Saint Paul (*Capilla de San Pablo*), they did so by invoking their own, not the bishop's, authority. They communicated their authority not in the name of the king, the pope, or even the bishop, but in the name of "the Dean and the Cathedral Chapter." Additionally, from the diocese's perspective, the bishopric belonged to the governing chapter and not to the bishop. The invocation of the cathedral's *Actas Capitulares*, the local church's official record of its business affairs, states: "In the name of God who made all things: This is the Book in which are written and described the possessions of the Dean and the Chapter of the Church of Plasencia and all of its Bishopric."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> For example, see comparative evidence for absentee bishops in Ávila. See: Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1-79.

<sup>55</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 15-16v.

<sup>56</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 79.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Folio 1.

Thus, the Christian God's patronage flowed directly from him, "who made all things," to his local representatives, the dean and the cathedral chapter. They acted with their own authority for they, not the bishop, "owned" the church's property, "leased" it to other parties, "gave" and "exchanged" church property for other lands, and "obligated" themselves to the terms of their negotiated contracts.<sup>58</sup> Further, the cathedral of Plasencia's Foundational Statute (*Estatuto Fundamental*) of 1254 dictated that the cathedral chapter controlled the naming of local church officials, such as canons.<sup>59</sup>

Typically, in the Kingdom of Castile and Leon, a cathedral chapter's membership included its dean, who served as its presiding officer; archpriests (*archiprestes*) who oversaw the clergy and religious services; archdeacons (*arcedianos*) who administered all church business affairs and participated in religious services; the cantor (*chantre*) whose role included overseeing and leading the choir, but also other unspecified duties; a church treasurer (*tesorero*); and a headmaster of the church school (*maestrescuela*).<sup>60</sup> Cathedral records often refer to this group as the diocese's ecclesiastical dignitaries (*dignidades eclesiasticas*.) Bishops were highly dependent on the chapter, primarily composed of prominent families from the local community, for advice on the peculiarities of governing their territories.

Since the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, the diocese of Plasencia's church organization mimicked this standard form, except that Plasencia's cathedral chapter operated in a highly decentralized manner. Further, its archdeacons, canons, and prebendaries had considerable independent decision-making authority. The *Actas Capitulares* reveal that the most important members of the Plasencia cathedral chapter were its dean,

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Folios 31v, 32-33, 50-50v, 98-98v, 114v, 168.

<sup>59</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 10.

<sup>60</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, s.v. "Dignidades Eclesiásticas," by P. Álvarez.

archdeacons, cantor, treasurer, canons (*canonigos*), prebendaries (*racioneros*), notaries (*notarios*), attorney (*abogado*), and a vicar general (*vicario general*.) The archpriests were not active members of the decision-making chapter, and the diocese had no school headmaster. The cathedral of Plasencia's Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar and Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín oversaw their respective regions with the assistance of their hand-selected canons and prebendaries. Additionally, the Archdeaconship of Coria also appeared to be a part of the diocese during this era.<sup>61</sup>

The *Actas Capitulares* indicate the church's canons and prebendaries managed most of the routine administrative affairs relating to church property, taxes, and salaries. From its cadre of canons, the chapter selected its archdeacons. These Archdeacons had the authority to hire their own prebendaries, which were often family members or close associates. In all business transactions, one of several church notaries recorded the critical elements and terms of transactions, as well as documented church officials presiding over these events, and other attending parties and witnesses.

Within the diocese of Plasencia, the ill-defined role of cantor was nonetheless a key post in the chapter. According to the *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, although the cantor was the leader of the choir, his responsibilities could also extend beyond this role.<sup>62</sup> In Plasencia, the cantor appeared to have broader administrative duties as he had two canon positions to dispense to family and associates. In particular, the cantor worked with other members on developing church statutes and served as a high level witness when the cathedral leased substantial properties.<sup>63</sup> On occasion, the

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<sup>61</sup> In 1424, the Archdeacon of Coria was a member of the Plasencia cathedral chapter. However, this jurisdiction was later moved into the diocese of Cáceres. See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 98-98v; Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, s.v. "Cabildos," by P. Álvarez.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 35-35v; 65v; 274v-279.

cathedral of Plasencia also appointed an attorney to handle legal issues surrounding church jurisdiction and the collection of taxes. However, the church did not consistently employ a chapter member as an attorney.<sup>64</sup>

Given that the cathedral chapter appointed its own members and was not obligated to accept the bishop's input on the naming of canons and prebendaries, the only post that the bishop had distinct control over was that of vicar general. The vicar general represented the bishop's interest in local issues, especially as they related to managing the clergy and enforcing church statutes.<sup>65</sup> Often, the bishop selected senior and well-respected family members and friends to serve as his vicar. When a bishop died in office, his vicar general would serve in his position until the appointment of a new bishop.

The lack of centralized control within the cathedral of Plasencia meant that no one party—the bishop, the vicar general, or the chapter dean—exercised mastery over the diocese. Throughout the late 14<sup>th</sup> and until the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, Plasencia's church leaders seemed to distrust the idea of vesting too much authority in one position. Unlike cathedral chapters in other dioceses, like Ávila and Valencia, Plasencia's dean was not the most powerful member on the council or the most likely to negotiate agreements and resolve problems for the church.<sup>66</sup> When the chapter confronted difficult decisions or complicated financial transactions, more often than not, Plasencia's two main archdeacons and not the dean were the senior officials present to oversee these matters.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> When the chapter did use the title of lawyer (*abogado*), as in 1442, the church gave it to a canon (Ruy García de Salamanca) with the proper legal credentials. Ruy García took on these additional duties and its supplemental salary. See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 249v-252.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Folios 60v-65v; Charles George Herbermann, ed. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume XV (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), s.v. "Vicar General" by William H.W. Fanning.

<sup>66</sup> Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 30-31; R. Ignatius Burns, "The Organization of a Mediaeval Cathedral Community: The Chapter of Valencia (1238-1280)," 18.

<sup>67</sup> For two examples of the superior status of archdeacons, see the March 6, 1445 bishop's statute regarding misuse of church resources and a property sale/exchange from January 2, 1441. See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 274v-279, 291-297v.

The limitations placed upon Plasencia's dean are evident in the cathedral chapter's decision never to grant the deanship to any man for life, therefore preventing any dean from exerting the full force of his office over other members. Rather, senior members of the council rotated through the dean's post, often while they held other permanent church positions.<sup>68</sup>

At times, the chapter left the deanship vacant, presumably because this post was not necessary to manage the day-to-day operations of the diocese. For instance, on October 6, 1403, Archdeacon Pedro Fernández leased several church houses on *Calle de Zapatería* in Plasencia for 150 maravedis to Fernán Álvarez de Toledo, *Señor de Oropesa*, "on behalf" of the dean and chapter.<sup>69</sup> Theoretically, the dean or the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar should have overseen this transaction for Plasencia properties. Instead, Pedro Fernández, the Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín, completed it. Because the cathedral chapter relied on this decentralized approach for managing the church's affairs, it also opened new pathways for local families with administrative backgrounds, like the Santa Marías, to gain access to the chapter. However, in most cases, it required family or patronage connections to find a post in the cathedral of Plasencia.

#### **FAMILIES, PATRONAGE, AND CHANGE IN THE CATHEDRAL**

In the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the cathedral of Plasencia's chapter membership underwent considerable change as a result of the rise and decline of several

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<sup>68</sup> Men that held dual roles on the council, and that served short periods as the dean, included: Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja (1406-1407), Canon Diego Blasquez (1408), Sacristan Juan Sánchez (1417), Prebendary Diego Martínez (1417), Canon Sancho Ortiz de Estúñiga (part of 1424), Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal (part of 1424), Canon Ruy González (1434), Canon Alvaro de Monroy (1437-1438), and Canon Alvaro de Salazar (1445, 1453). See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 29v, 47v-48, 65v-66, 69, 75-76v, 98-98v, 243v-245v, 284v-291, 363v-368, 424-426.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Folios 31v, 33-33v, 50-50v



family confederations in the city. With these radical shifts in family fortunes, the cathedral's authority and patronage opportunities passed out of the hands of the Fernández family of churchmen and into those of the *converso* Santa Marías and the Carvajals. From the late 1300s to the 1420s, the ecclesiastical patronage network in Plasencia had revolved around four key families—the Fernándezes, Estúñigas, Santa Marías, and Carvajals. Since the 1370s, the Fernández family had attempted to control the cathedral through its participation on the chapter, and had seen one of its clansmen named bishop. The Estúñiga family, which was forming a base of power and property in the village of Béjar in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, entered into the ecclesiastical fray in the 1410s and had its greatest influence on the church under Bishop Gonzalo de Estúñiga (1415-1422). During the first decade of the 1400s, the Santa María clan entered the local church hierarchy, but did not find prominence until the naming of Bishop Gonzalo de Santa María in the 1420s. The Carvajals' entry into the church patronage structure was very late and not evident until the early 1420s.

From 1391 to 1424, before the arrival of *converso* Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María in Plasencia, local church leaders effectively locked both the Carvajal and Santa María families out of most cathedral leadership positions and patronage opportunities. Similar to the governing chapter of the Cathedral of Valencia, Plasencia's churchmen aggressively competed for the "lucrative and honorific" posts of archdeacon, sacristan, and cantor.<sup>70</sup> Exclusion from these roles denied families access to superior salaries and the privilege of controlling church decision-making relating to church assets, such as the leasing of houses, vineyards, agriculturally productive lands, and other real estate. Ultimately though, neither the established Fernández family of Plasencia nor the

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<sup>70</sup> R. Ignatius Burns, "The Organization of a Mediaeval Cathedral Community: The Chapter of Valencia (1238-1280)," 16-17.

prominent and powerful newcomers to the Extremadura, the Estúñigas, were able to exclude the emergent Santa María-Carvajal patronage network. The *converso* Santa Marías had a firm set of ecclesiastical credentials and capabilities linked to their noteworthy family head, Pablo de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos and member of the king's royal council. Furthermore, the Carvajals willingly rallied their high regional stature, earned through their services as *caballeros*, to the new challenges of mastering the cathedral of Plasencia. Through shrewd local politicking and patience, the Santa María-Carvajal confederation weathered this transitional period and assembled their family members and friends on the cathedral chapter. Although each of these four families made every effort to mold the cathedral of Plasencia for their personal needs, the Santa María and Carvajal clans proved the most effective at directing the institution for their explicit enrichment and advancement.

The patronage system that defined the cathedral of Plasencia stemmed from ancient Greek and Roman social principles that made masters responsible for the care of servants, as well as on feudal ideas that bound lords and vassals together. In its most common but oversimplified form, feudalism obligated a lord who accepted the allegiance and homage of a vassal to provide him with the means to secure a living (a benefice.) In his seminal work, *Feudal Society*, Marc Bloch states that this social and economic system developed, “as the Roman social order collapsed, [and] ‘powerful men’ maintained their prestige, fortune, and safety by subordinating less powerful men in need of protection.”<sup>71</sup> It involved becoming the “‘man’ of another man” and initiated a complex interchange of familial and economic relationships.<sup>72</sup> These linkages formed an important backdrop for

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<sup>71</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society, Volume I: The Growth of Ties of Dependence*. trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 148.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 146, 219.

the social and economic affairs of the noble families in the Kingdom of Castile. Certainly during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Castilian king and his militarized vassals, the knights, practiced a variant of feudalism whereby the king granted conquered lands and properties to his vassals during the Spanish *Reconquista*. The Carvajal family was a beneficiary of this social order as they migrated from their ancestral home of Leon, and later settled on Extremaduran lands given to them by the king.

Like the lord-vassal relationship, patronage relied on a bi-lateral relationship, between patron and client. This socio-economic system, which allowed ambitious men to occupationally advance in return for “reliable and useful service” to their patrons, found form through family networks.<sup>73</sup> “Patrons” and “clients” formed associations through their extended families, as well as with their close associates. Individuals looked to their clan relations—uncles, cousins, and distant relatives—to access the wider realm of occupational opportunities.<sup>74</sup>

If familial relationships provided unfruitful, men could also turn to the families of their allies. Within these networks, clients sought better professional positions, advancement, and access to new social and financial resources from the patrons they served.<sup>75</sup> In the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Kingdom of Castile and Leon, the Santa María and Carvajal families’ social and economic worlds overlapped significantly, especially in the area of patron-client relations in the cathedral of Plasencia. Specifically, the lords of the local church—the bishop and the cathedral chapter—utilized their positions to bestow choice church roles on each other’s family members.

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<sup>73</sup> Sharon Kettering, “Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France,” *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 1989): 408-409, 412.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 408-409, 412.

Patronage opportunities in Plasencia were highly dependent on the ability of competing family networks to control the bishop's position and the cathedral chapter's membership. When no single family patronage network had complete power over the cathedral chapter, competition and conflict for limited church resources was common. Prior to the establishment of a Carvajal-Santa María patronage network in the early 1420s, the Fernández clan was the most powerful family on the cathedral chapter (1380s-1410s). Yet, they ultimately would not command the cathedral of Plasencia as completely or as effectively as the Carvajal-Santa María confederation. This lack of absolute dominance limited any one family from fully benefiting from the patronage possibilities afforded by the church—specifically, access to salaried positions.

Among the competing families, the Fernándezees came closest to gaining singular authority over the cathedral of Plasencia. Their best chance at leading the church was under the guidance of their family elder, Pedro Fernández de Soria. He became Bishop of Plasencia in 1375.<sup>76</sup> The first indication that the family attempted to build a loyal membership on the cathedral chapter was the appointment of one of the bishop's nephews, whose name was also Pedro Fernández, as a prebendary in 1380.<sup>77</sup> Given that the archdeacons selected their own prebendaries, this appointment is a good indication that the bishop had allies in the governing chapter. Over the next four years, the canons Juan Fernández and Toribio Fernández concurrently served with Pedro Fernández in the cathedral.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, in spite of the Fernándezees' success in securing these appointments, the family still did not enforce its will over the leadership council. During the 1380s and

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<sup>76</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 15; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 132-133; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 81-85.

<sup>77</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 3, unfoliated.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

1390s, the membership of the cathedral chapter remained highly diversified and included the Martínez, Blasquez, González, García, Sánchez, Domínguez, and Gutiérrez de la Calleja clans.<sup>79</sup> The Fernándezes persisted and their efforts gained some ground between 1396 and 1401, when Martín Fernández de Soria, the nephew of the bishop, assumed the Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar.<sup>80</sup> With this position, Martín Fernández could name men of his choosing to other salaried offices (canons, prebendaries, pages) within his jurisdiction. For example, Archdeacon Martín Fernández employed Alfonso Fernández, his nephew, as his personal page.<sup>81</sup>

Just as the family's control of the diocese appeared to come to fruition, it effectively collapsed. Although Pedro Fernández collected the archdeaconship of Trujillo and Medellín in 1401, Bishop Fernández would die on October 18<sup>th</sup> of that year.<sup>82</sup> If the family had captured all three positions—Bishop of Plasencia, Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar, and Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín—they could have utilized these posts to consolidate their family power over the cathedral.

With the Fernández family unable to realize the complete domination of the cathedral of Plasencia at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Plasencia's ecclesiastical leadership began to fragment and new families began to participate in the administration of the diocese. Beginning with Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa's term (1404-1414) and continuing through the end of Bishop Gonzalo de Estúñiga's (1415-1422) stewardship, a

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<sup>79</sup> The Gutiérrez de la Calleja family was a part of the *converso* Santa María family.

<sup>80</sup> In addition to the Fernández family, the following men were members of the cathedral chapter: Diego Blasquez, Dean; Juan Sánchez, Cantor; and Pedro "Cardenal de España", Treasurer. See: ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 15v.

<sup>81</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 9, unfoliated "Testmento del Bachiller en Descretos D. Martín Fernández de Soria, Arcediano de Plasencia y Béjar 4 de Octubre 1424." Also, Archdeacon Fernández served as a tutor to his brother's son, Martín de St. Esteban. The affinity that Martín had for this nephew was so great that he would later name him his "universal heir" in his last testament.

<sup>82</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 15-15v. ACP *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folio 1.

consequential shift in family power occurred in Plasencia. This transitional environment was crucial to the entrance of the Carvajals and the Santa Marías into the cathedral chapter. Little is known about Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa and his tenure, but what is evident is that he inherited a diocese undergoing transformation. This climate impeded the monopolization of church positions by any one family. Instead, the cathedral chapter defaulted to an uneasy sharing of posts.

Immediately upon arriving in Plasencia in 1404, Bishop Arias de Balboa faced several governing challenges that required the acquiescence of the cathedral chapter. The key families on the chapter at this time were the Fernándeze, Martíneze, Sáncheze, Blasqueze, Pérez de Alfaro, Gonzáleze, and Gutiérrez de la Calleja.<sup>83</sup> In April 1410, when the bishop personally proposed local church statutes to address problems with “slandorous” talk in Plasencia, as well as rules relating to the collection of church taxes (*diezmos*), he did so with “the consensus of the cathedral chapter.”<sup>84</sup> The bishop and the chapter most likely deemed both statutes necessary given the continuous history of conflict between the cathedral and local *caballeros*.<sup>85</sup> The cathedral chapter promulgated these statutes soon after Diego García de Béjarano conceded his position in the *diezmos* tax rebellion of 1403-1410.<sup>86</sup> Even though the bishop was able to convince the chapter to enact these new church laws, the local churchmen were displeased with the bishop’s application of them. Regarding the bishop and his statutes, the late 16<sup>th</sup> century Placentino cleric and historian Friar Alonso Fernández stated, “Although [he]...was very

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<sup>83</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 15v-16.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 7, unfoliated “Constituciones del Senor Obispo Vicente Arias de Balboa.”

<sup>85</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documentos 13, 14, 15, 16; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 2, unfoliated “Real provision de Don Enrique para que los Señores de los Lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos...”

<sup>86</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documentos 13, 14, 15, 16.

learned, he was unfair in their application and used these anti-slander statutes on all occasions and without reservation.”<sup>87</sup>

In order to impose his will on the cathedral of Plasencia, the bishop also required the assistance of the chapter’s strongest family faction, the Fernándeze. The core of the Fernández clan’s local ecclesiastical power rested in their control of the Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar and the Archdeaconship of Trujillo and Medellín. As the Fernándeze occupied these powerful archdeaconships, they had the greatest leverage over church affairs.

The Fernándeze motivation for supporting the bishop’s initiatives, especially those intended to constrain the *caballero* families that resisted paying *diezmos*, was a primarily a financial decision. To enjoy the fruits of their archdeaconships, and the posts below those positions, the Fernándeze’s livelihood depended on a financially stable diocese. The two Fernández family archdeacons likely earned individual annual salaries comparable to the dean’s share of 800 maravedis.<sup>88</sup> However, the salary was just one of the benefits of these position. As most of the cathedral’s employment opportunities fell under the Fernándeze’s authority, they also stood to suffer the most from reduced tax collections. For instance, in 1405, Archdeacon Pedro Fernández collected 3,224 maravedis in taxes and other earnings from his parish churches, the Churches of Santa María de Trujillo and San Martín de Trujillo.<sup>89</sup> In return for providing these monies to the cathedral chapter, its membership rewarded Archdeacon Pedro Fernández with six canonships to grant to the men of his preference. Each of the archdeacon’s hand-selected canons earned an annual salary of 230 maravedis.

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<sup>87</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 16.

<sup>88</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 29v.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 35-35v.

When an archdeacon successfully performed his administrative duties, such as gathering critical church rents and taxes, the entire cathedral chapter benefited. With the funds collected by the Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín in 1405, the cathedral chapter generated fourteen new canon positions for its other members. The Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar received two new canons; the dean, two canons; the cantor, two canons; and five lesser chapter officials shared funding for eight canons. Through this distribution, the Fernández family secured nine new, dedicated jobs for their family and friends. These offices were in addition to the two archdeaconships and the two preexisting church canonships awarded to Gil Fernández and Alfonso Fernández. Thus, the Fernández family continuously utilized its position on the cathedral chapter to create additional opportunities for their family members.

Other families benefited from the church collections, but not as generously. Canon Juan Sánchez and Canon Christobal Sánchez received one-and-a half canonships. Fernán Martínez received a canon position. The Fernández clan awarded the remaining half-time canonships to lesser men like Andres Domínguez, Juan Gutierre, and Pedro González. Noticeably excluded from the cathedral's distribution of new patronage opportunities to current members of the chapter was Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja of the Santa María clan. Perhaps, because of Gil Gutiérrez's exclusion from these benefits, the Santa Marías were less than exuberant supporters of the dominant Fernándezes.

One prominent change in the makeup of the chapter during Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa's tenure was the entry of the *converso* family, the Santa Marías, into its membership. The first generation *converso* Santa María clan included the Gutiérrez de la Callejas, Fernández de Cabrerros, and Salamanca families. Finding a post on the cathedral chapter was a challenge, but the first family member to do so was Gil Gutiérrez de la



Calleja. On December 24, 1406, the chapter acknowledged his continued services as a prebendary, but more importantly, the chapter re-elected him to a new term as its Dean or *Mayordomo* in 1407.<sup>90</sup> When he renewed the mantle of Dean in 1407, he verbally obligated himself, “to serve as is the custom, faithfully and justly,” and in return his colleagues provided him a rich annual salary of 800 maravedis.<sup>91</sup> This was not a modest clergyman’s salary—it was three times a canon’s income of 230 maravedis a year.<sup>92</sup> Further, its purchasing power is evident considering that the average annual lease for a centrally located house in the city of Plasencia was 104 maravedis and a pair of chickens. For at least a decade, Gil Gutiérrez was the lone member of the Santa María family to penetrate the close-knit leadership chapter of the cathedral.<sup>93</sup> However, in 1414, when Bishop Arias de Balboa left his post in the diocese, and Gonzalo de Estúñiga became the new Bishop of Plasencia, the fortunes of the Santa María family began to improve substantially.

The first transformative shift in the cathedral chapter’s membership occurred when Bishop Gonzalo de Estúñiga initiated a series of actions to transition the leadership of the cathedral chapter away from the Fernández family. Although he had no direct authority to make those changes, he did have powers of persuasion and other families had an interest in assuming the Fernándezes’ places on the chapter. One step in carrying out his plan was to appoint Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria as his Vicar General and personal

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<sup>90</sup> The cathedral chapter utilized the titles of “Dean” and “Mayordomo” interchangeably from the 1390s until at least the 1430s. However, by 1434, a property transaction reports that the Mayordomo, not the Dean, and cathedral chapter authorized a transaction. See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1, 29-29v, 62.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Folio 29v.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Folios 35-35v.

<sup>93</sup> Not until 1424 does another Carvajal or Santa María appear in the *Actas Capitulares* as a church official, when Gonzalo García de Carvajal was appointed the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar. See: ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 1-97v.

representative on the chapter.<sup>94</sup> Gil Martínez was an educated Doctor of the Law (*Doctor en Discretos*) and a seasoned canon from the Church of Calahorra. On June 19, 1417, he demonstrated his ability to influence the members of the cathedral chapter when he proposed and led the implementation of new church statutes.<sup>95</sup>

It was an unusually well-attended meeting that drew the interests of twelve men to the cathedral's Chapel of Saint Paul. The Fernández family appeared with their two archdeacons and two canons, and the rest in attendance were a mix of the other representative families, including Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja. The men gathered to address what appeared to be a recurring problem—the embezzlement of church assets and income. Vicar General Gil Martínez de Soria explained:

Some of the favored individuals of this church have interfered and taken the fruits and monies and other things that belong to the church for themselves...and without the approval nor the command of the Dean and the Chapter. We do not know the allocations or the amounts of these things or to whom they were due or given to. [In the future,] no individuals that serve this church will have or borrow or take that which is rightly deserved by the church without the approval of the Dean and the Chapter. We will pay everyone what they deserve because in the end, we are all one.<sup>96</sup>

The enactment of the statutes indicates that the cathedral's leadership conceptualized itself as communal entity that treated its members fairly. As a whole, they believed these corrupt practices needed to end immediately.

Even though the chapter did not name the guilty parties, it was an inescapable truth that since 1401, Martín and Pedro Fernández had held the church's two primary archdeaconships. These archdeacons and their canons and prebendaries managed most of the cathedral's properties. Given their control of the archdeaconships, it is likely that the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Folios 60v-65v.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.; ACP Legajo 25, Documento 18 "Estatutos antiguos. Copias de 1534 a 1580," Folios 51-53.

<sup>96</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 61v-62.

Fernández family was the guilty party. Although cathedral families routinely utilized church assets for their own benefit, such as when they personally rented church properties at reduced rates and subsequently leased them to other individuals at higher rates, theft was an entirely different matter.

The unrecorded events that led to the enactment of the embezzlement statutes promoted a climate and desire for change in the governing chapter. One way the bishop and the chapter implemented this organizational shift, without overtly confronting the Fernández clan, was by expanding the cathedral's leadership positions. In a move that added a voice of equal status to the other two archdeaconships, the bishop and the church council named Alonso Rodríguez de Maluenda as the newly created Archdeaconship of Coria. Alonso Rodríguez, a *converso*, was a relative of the local Santa María clan and the prominent Pablo de Santa María of Burgos. He was a well-respected church leader who later served simultaneously as the Vicar General for Bishop Santa María and the Abbot of Castro at the cathedral of Burgos.<sup>97</sup> With Alonso Rodríguez taking the archdeacon's post, the Santa Marías gained another vote on the cathedral chapter, which allowed them access to new financial resources and patronage opportunities.

By 1421, the cathedral's membership was in full transition. The church's leaders forced Martín Fernández out of his position as Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar and replaced him with Gonzalo García de Carvajal.<sup>98</sup> Gonzalo's appointment is significant as he displaced Martín Fernández from his position over three years before the elder Fernández even committed his will to parchment. Given most archdeacons held their

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Folio 313.

<sup>98</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 16-16v; ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 98-98v.

positions for life, Gonzalo García's appointment indicated that the Fernández clan's power had weakened on the cathedral chapter.<sup>99</sup>

Nonetheless, before the reforming Bishop Estúñiga left office, he too abused his office and initiated a seventy-year conflict that pitted his family against most of Plasencia's other clans. In 1417, Bishop Estúñiga assisted his family with their consolidation of property in the village of Béjar when he sold the bishop's housing complex to his brother, Pedro de Estúñiga, King Juan II's *Justicia Mayor*.<sup>100</sup> The sum his brother paid was sizeable, 2,350 Aragonese gold florins, but it was not likely that the amount offset the symbolic loss of these important homes or the physical displacement of church leaders from this area of the diocese. According to the Spanish historian Domingo Sánchez Loro, this event marked the beginning of the Estúñigas negative impact on Extremadura.<sup>101</sup> Friar Alonso de Fernández, an early 17<sup>th</sup> century local historian and cleric, also stated that this highly controversial property sale angered Placentinos because it provided the Estúñigas even more local power in the diocese.<sup>102</sup>

Nonetheless, during the 1410s and 1420s, there was an unstated *quid pro quo* agreed to by the Estúñiga, Santa María, Carvajal, and Martínez families. The Estúñigas gained an important church housing complex in the village of Béjar. The Santa María family increased its stature on the cathedral chapter through Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja's and Archdeacon Alonso Rodríguez de Maluenda's roles in the church. The Martínez and Carvajal clans found their first church patronage opportunities with the naming of Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria as Vicar General and Gonzalo García de Carvajal as Archdeacon. Together, these parties effectively displaced the Fernández family's twenty-

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<sup>99</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 9, unfoliated.

<sup>100</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 16v.

<sup>101</sup> Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Volumen B*: 369.

<sup>102</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 164-168.

year attempted domination of the cathedral chapter and created the political environment necessary for the formation of a new alliance of families, the Santa María-Carvajal confederation, which would take hold of the cathedral in the mid-1420s.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Creating a Family Confederation, 1420s-1430s**

#### **The Ties That Bind**

On March 13, 1427, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María called the church chapter together for a gathering in the Chapel of Saint Paul in the Cathedral of Plasencia. Although this council met for the purposes of conducting business affairs, the event took on the formal qualities of a religious ceremony blended with overtones of feudal homage. Pedro González, the notary, reported, “The Lord Bishop calls us together, the Lords of the cathedral chapter, with the tolling of the bells and by the verger and the symbols of his office.” The presence of the bishop was highly unusual, as he did not regularly attend their recorded meetings—rather, the chapter tended to operate with great autonomy. Alongside the bishop, archdeacons, prebendaries, treasurer, notary, and other officials stood Dr. Garci López de Carvajal. Although Dr. Garci was not a churchman, the bishop was about to present him with one of the precious benefits of chapter membership. With all assembled, Bishop Santa María stated, “I and the chapter are in debt to you, Dr. Garci, especially for all of your assistance and counsel on specific affairs at the royal court. As from this point forward we will be in need of your advice on future affairs, the chapter will pay you 300 maravedis every year.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The decade of the 1420s marked the inception of the Carvajal and Santa María family confederation. Through careful and well-planned collaboration, the two established a working relationship that focused on capturing the Cathedral of Plasencia’s leadership arm and sharing in its patronage opportunities. Their nascent alliance first revealed itself when the Carvajals cast aside traditional loyalties to their extended clan and instead offered their allegiance and favor to their emergent partners. This chapter begins by recounting a legal dispute between the Carvajals’ extended relatives and the Santa Marías. This conflict not only highlights the origins of their collaboration, but also details significant findings relating to early 15<sup>th</sup> century social standards of family

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<sup>1</sup>ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 252-256.

solidarity, personal honor and truthfulness. In addition to these early affairs that bound the Carvajals and Santa Marías together, events within the Cathedral of Plasencia hastened the collaboration of the two families.

A careful analysis of the Cathedral of Plasencia's chapter operations between 1422 and 1431 reveals not only the development of the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation, but also the occupational transformation of the *caballero* Carvajals. Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, who was both a member of the city council in Plasencia and a royal adviser to King Juan II, was a key facilitator of the emerging close relations the two families. More importantly, Dr. Garci López and his brother, Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal, initiated the family's conversion from a knight (*caballero*) clan to that of an ecclesiastical and administrative family. The doctor and the archdeacon were at the vanguard of the family's occupational metamorphosis, which entailed the use of bureaucratic posts and church leadership roles to advance the clan's social status and economic efforts. As a royal adviser, the doctor exemplified the ascent of Castile's educated professional class (*letrados*) who during the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Carvajal family's placement of Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal into a cathedral post in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century positioned the family to compete successfully with more powerful *caballero* families for lucrative positions as bishops and cardinals in the Catholic Church.

Occurring simultaneously, was the development of the Carvajal-Santa María partnership in the Cathedral of Plasencia. The Santa Marías of Plasencia were members of an influential family of Jewish converts to Christianity (*conversos*) that advised the Castilian king and guided church affairs for the kingdom. Within Plasencia, the two

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<sup>2</sup> Richard L. Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 88, 202; Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 37, 128-129.

families exploited the Cathedral of Plasencia's internal problems—a fragmented leadership chapter and accusations of corruption—to gain access to and capture control of the cathedral chapter and the bishop's position.

In the 1420s, as their alliance unfolded and their confederation prospered, the Santa Marías rewarded their Carvajal partners with the honor of collecting papal monies to present to the Castilian king. This financial transaction reveals how complex patronage “chains” linked families, the crown, and the papacy together. Additionally, an analysis of the families' ecclesiastical activities from 1422 to 1431 exposes the critical impact of clans on local church institutions in Spain. It explicitly details how family groups' controlled local church procedures in the areas of contracting, property management, and chapter appointments. Further, this chapter explores how cathedral families like the Santa Marías and Carvajals employed church assets for personal and familial wealth building projects.

The cumulative effect of the clan's close bonds also heralded renewed collaborative efforts between the knight-dominated city council and the cathedral. This was not a minor accomplishment as jurisdictional confrontations between city and church leaders were common in other Castilian communities well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Through the active guidance and leadership of both families, these local institutions restored long-dormant tax revenue-sharing arrangements. Further, their alliance avoided bitter confrontations over a valuable local commodity—wine.

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<sup>3</sup> Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 24-27; Carla Rahn Phillips, *Ciudad Real 1500-1700: Growth, Crisis, and Readjustment in the Spanish Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 98.



## EARLY EVIDENCE OF CARVAJAL AND SANTA MARÍA COLLABORATION

Often, noble Castilian families facilitated political and economic collaborations through marriage.<sup>4</sup> However, unlike the typical marriage alliances used by high nobles like the Mendozas and Pechas, it does not appear that Carvajals and Santa Marías directly intermarried in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Although there is suggestive evidence that indicates the two families did eventually intermarry by the mid- to late-15<sup>th</sup> century, the period's anti-*converso* hysteria may have conspired to conceal these family relations.<sup>6</sup> After the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the military orders, church, and municipal governments propagated strict blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) statutes that discriminated against and banned *conversos* from participating in these institutions solely based on their Jewish ancestry. Thus, by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, many noble families began a systematic process of hiding and destroying evidence of their *converso* ancestries. In fact, it was not until the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the descendants of the Santa María family received a special papal dispensation granting them blood purity.

Instead, the Carvajal and Santa María's alliance appears to have commenced as a mutually supportive relationship of peers. Their collaboration first came into view in

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<sup>4</sup> Beceiro Pita, *Parentesco, Poder y Mentalidad. La Nobleza Castellana Siglos XII – XV*, 145-149; Simon R. Doubleday, *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 105-112; Phillips, *Ciudad Real 1500-1700*, 100-103; Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 40-42; L. J. Andrew Villalon, "The Law's Delay: The Anatomy of an Aristocratic Property Dispute (1350-1577)" (Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1984), 116.

<sup>5</sup> Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 40-41.

<sup>6</sup> The appearance of the Carvajals' multiple interconnections to and intermarriage with the Villalva family are especially key to understanding a major element of this investigation—the depth of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation. This finding, that by the 1460s the Villalvas, Carvajals, and Santa Marías were related, is the outcome of documenting the relationship between Sevilla López de Carvajal and her churchmen cousins. It demonstrates that while other Castilians were targeting high profile *conversos* for exclusion from church and royal positions during the mid- to late-1400s, the Carvajal family was not only strengthening its collaborative relations with their Santa María partners in the Cathedral of Plasencia, but the two clans had also advanced their relationship into the area of shared blood relations. See: ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4; ACP Legajo 1, Documento 18; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25; ACP Legajo 269, Documento 25; AHNSN Luque C. 160, Documento 9; Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 148-151.

1421, when the Carvajals willingly rose in defense of the Santa María family in a local property dispute in Plasencia.<sup>7</sup> The collision of family interests pitted Leonor Sánchez against her niece, María Gómez de Almaraz, who was the spouse of Juan González de Santa María. At issue was the property known as *El Corral del Medio* that Leonor Sánchez had donated to the cathedral as compensation for her future memorial masses. In return for this customary land donation, the cathedral assured her that ten masses a year would be said in her memory.<sup>8</sup> Given that most donated properties typically produced one mass a year for the benefactor, the corral was likely a substantial territory.<sup>9</sup> (See Figure 1: Carvajal, Santa María, and Sánchez Family Relations.) Unfortunately, according to María Gómez, the corral was not Leonor Sánchez's to give; María Gómez claimed that her father, Diego Gómez de Almaraz, had left it to her.<sup>10</sup>

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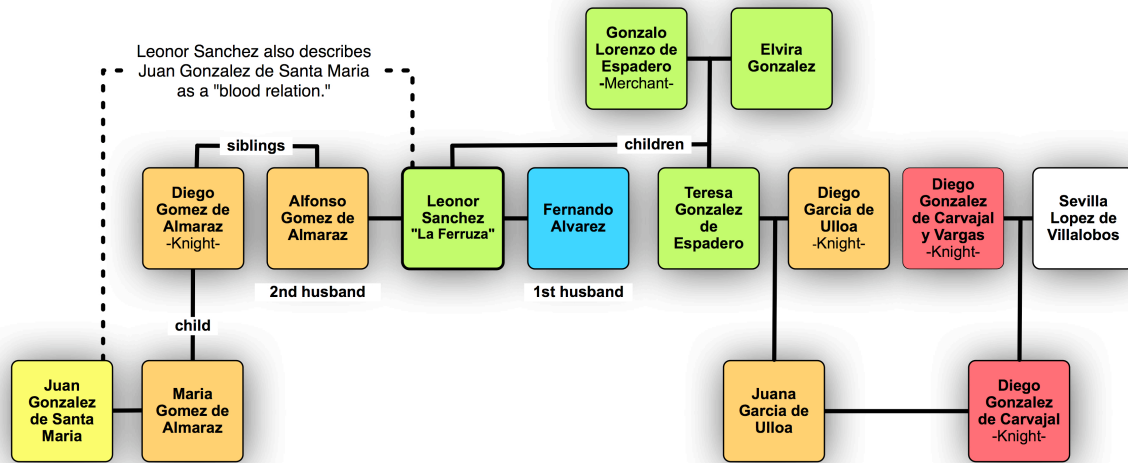
<sup>7</sup> ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13, Unfoliated.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*. This text was located in the Archivo de la Catedral de Plasencia during fall 2007 and is not catalogued. The *Calendario*, which records anniversary masses before the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, includes 26 masses for men and women ("*seculares*") that were not clergy. Although as many as 10 masses might be said for a donation, this only occurred for one benefactor, Doña Gracia González. A review of the *Calendario* reveals that the vast majority of donations only produced one anniversary mass for the benefactor. As Leonor Sánchez's donation was not accepted, due to the judge's decision in favor of María Gómez, her anniversary masses were not recorded in this text.

<sup>10</sup> Leonor Sánchez also described Juan González de Santa María as her "family relation", therefore Leonor was related to María Gómez through extended marital ties, and Leonor was related to Juan through unspecified blood relations (i.e., uncle, aunt, grandparent).

**Figure 1:  
Carvajal, Santa María, and Sánchez Family Relations**



To determine the ownership of the property, the ecclesiastical judge Pedro González summoned the parties to the cathedral and required that all in attendance “defend and abide by his decision or face the penalty of excommunication.”<sup>11</sup> Leonor Sánchez argued that her late husband, Alfonso had granted her the property. To this claim, María Gómez responded, “I do not agree this is the truth and it is my understanding that many witnesses that live in the vicinity of *El Corral del Medio* will confirm that my father gave this land to me more than twenty years ago.”<sup>12</sup>

In a defining moment in the resolution of the dispute, Diego González de Carvajal, along with María Gómez’s spouse Juan González de Santa María, testified that indeed, “more or less thirty years ago,” Diego Gómez gave the corral to his daughter, María.<sup>13</sup> However, Diego González clarified, “some of these lands do belong to Leonor Sánchez...except for the ones [*El Corral del Medio*] adjacent to my property called

<sup>11</sup> ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13, Unfoliated.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Valsagrado, which are located at the periphery of the city.”<sup>14</sup> The contested property was a sizable portion of Leonor’s total donation to the church. Diego González’s testimony effectively placed the Santa María’s needs above those of his wife’s aunt, Leonor Sánchez.<sup>15</sup>

Given his social status as a knight, the king and society expected Diego González de Carvajal to be faithful to the truth. Both Visigothic and Spanish Christian social traditions dictated that noble knights should pursue their lives with “justice”, “honor”, and “truth” in their hearts.<sup>16</sup> In the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Chronicle of King James I of Aragon*, which details the king’s perception of proper knightly behavior, James I described the character of a particular vassal of Castilian King Alfonso X. Specifically, James I stated, “I hold Ovieco García to be so good a knight that he will not fail to tell the truth.”<sup>17</sup> While the *caballero*’s honor code dictated that Diego González should speak with honesty on the property issue, Diego’s loyalty to his extended Sánchez family would have provided him with a strong incentive to counter María Gómez’s property claim. In fact, the 15<sup>th</sup> century world highly valued and relied upon kin relationships for survival. Therefore, two competing value systems influenced Diego’s testimony: his status as a *caballero* and his membership in an extended family. As Helen Nader notes in her study of the Mendoza family at the opening of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, “a *caballero* was repeatedly faced with conflicts that forced him to choose between loyalty to family and loyalty to monarch,” as was the case when the Ayala-Mendoza-Estúñiga families chose fidelity to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> AHNSN Ovando, Caja 35, Documento 1993, Folios Title page, 1-1v; ACP Legajo 99, Documento 42, unfoliated.

<sup>16</sup> S.P. Scott, ed., *The Visigothic Code (Forum judicum)* (Boston: Boston Book Co., 1910), xx.

<sup>17</sup> John Forster, ed., *The Chronicle of James I, King of Aragon* (London, 1883), 461.

each other over King Juan II.<sup>18</sup> From a family perspective, Diego's responsibility was to protect his extended clan, the Sánchezes.

Leonor certainly granted Diego the opportunity to support her original claim to all of *El Corral del Medio*, especially when she produced her own witnesses. This included Fernándo Blasquez, who countered, "All these lands are owned by Leonor Sánchez...even those at the periphery."<sup>19</sup> Interestingly though, Diego did not support Leonor's arguments and instead backed María Gómez, the wife of a Santa María clansman. His actions marked a turning point in the Carvajal clan's relations with the Santa María family. From this point forward, the Plasencia Carvajals displayed a faithfulness to the Santa María clan that seldom existed between two families that were not intermarried—a devotion that even triumphed over extended clan ties.

The judge, having heard the competing claims of the litigants and the witnesses' testimony, next exposed the cathedral's interest in the matter, namely the judge's determination that regardless of the outcome, he did not plan to relinquish the church's hold on *El Corral del Medio*. After weighing the differing accounts presented by both parties, the judge ruled, "that with the recording of this judgment I offer remediation to María Gómez. That in defense of her rights the church chapter will pay her 100 gold *reales* for her lands."<sup>20</sup>

Even though the judge ruled in favor of María, he would not cede the church's claim to the property. His decision underscores that the Diocese of Plasencia had a strong interest in retaining all lands that it acquired, even those garnered initially through unusual or dishonest circumstances. By electing to give María one hundred *reales* for *El*

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<sup>18</sup> Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 80, 85. See also R. Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, *Poder, familia y consanguinidad en la España del antiguo regimen* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial del Hombre, 1992), 53, for a discussion of intergenerational family solidarity.

<sup>19</sup> ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13, Unfoliated.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

*Corral del Medio*, instead of returning the property to her, the church exposed its long-term view that retaining property was more important than experiencing a short-term financial loss. The cathedral considered church lands to be an essential source of long-term income—a perpetual lifeblood—to fund the church’s operations.

Diego González’s decision to support María Gómez and the Santa Marías ran counter to the intensive internal unity and loyalty that characterized families. On that day, standing alongside the victorious María Gómez and her husband Juan González de Santa María were her family relations, Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja, as well as the *caballeros* Diego González de Carvajal and his nephew, Diego García de Béjarano. While Gil Gutiérrez elected not to testify in the case, probably to avoid the appearance of inappropriate internal church pressure on the ecclesiastical judge, the Carvajal family chose to support the Santa María-Almaraz’s claim over the Sánchez-Almaraz’s claim. In this instance, the Carvajal clan elected to side with the rising Santa Marías, even to the detriment of their extended Sánchez relations.

This property dispute reveals significant findings relating to families and the church. The property entanglement demonstrates that individuals and families placed a high worth on perpetuating their own personal and family memories through church rituals. Perhaps women like Leonor were so highly motivated to purchase religious favor that they would risk alienating themselves from their own families and jeopardize the well-being of future family generations by attempting to give lands that were not entirely their own. As time passed, the Carvajal-Santa María alliance would extend to matters greater than private property disputes, and would encompass their collaborative efforts to secure broad patronage opportunities in the local cathedral chapter.

## AN EMERGING PATRONAGE PARTNERSHIP

In early 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain, the ability to partake in a church diocese's patronage opportunities necessitated friends on the cathedral's leadership chapter. To control these opportunities, a family needed to hold its own canonships and more importantly, be able to form close alliances with other monopolistically-oriented families. During the 1420s and 1430s, the Carvajals and Santa Marías committed themselves to these principles and to each other as they labored to find access to the Cathedral of Plasencia's chapter, and later, master control of the entire organization. A likely motivation for the clans' interest in church professions was the understanding that throughout the Middle Ages other families had successfully utilized ecclesiastical positions to advance socially and economically.<sup>21</sup> Exploring the Carvajal and Santa Marías' entry into the leadership of the Cathedral of Plasencia reveals how European families accessed church positions and their attendant rewards.

Just one year after the church compensated María Gómez de Almaraz and Juan González de Santa María for the loss of *El Corral del Medio*, the makeup of the Cathedral of Plasencia's leadership underwent a significant transition. In 1422, at the end of Gonzalo de Estúniga's term as bishop, the family relations and patronage initiatives of the Carvajals and Santa Marías began to coalesce due to a consequential shift in the membership of the cathedral's governing apparatus. Bishop Estúniga's Vicar General, Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria, presided over the first transformative event. Specifically, he exposed the Fernández family's corrupt governing practices, and in the process, weakened the stature of the family.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> David Herlihy, "Three Patterns of Social Mobility in Medieval History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Spring, 1973): 624, 626.

<sup>22</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 61v-62. See also my prior discussion of these events in Chapter Two.

These changes had a decidedly positive impact on the upward mobility of the Santa Marías and the Carvajals. In the aftermath of these revelations, the Santa Marías gained a new role in the chapter—the Archdeaconship of Coria. Prebendary Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja, who was the sole Santa María family on the chapter since 1407, now welcomed Alfonso Rodríguez de Maluenda in 1422 into the cathedral chapter. The addition of this archdeacon was significant because it introduced a rising Santa María family leader into Plasencia's community. Alfonso Rodríguez's *converso* pedigree was impeccable from the Santa María's perspective as he could claim his mother, María Nuñez, was the sister of Bishop Pablo de Santa María, the influential Senior Chancellor of King Juan II.<sup>23</sup> Like the Santa Marías, the *caballero* Carvajal clan gained new prominence on the chapter. The cathedral chapter appointed Gonzalo García de Carvajal as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar sometime before 1422. This post must have been particularly satisfying to the family as Gonzalo's brother, Diego García de Béjarano, had previously been threatened with excommunication in 1410 by the Cathedral of Plasencia.

With his appointment as archdeacon, Gonzalo García initiated the Carvajal family's first significant occupational transition. Generations of Carvajal men had served as *caballeros* in the king's armies, however none had ever pursued a churchman's livelihood.<sup>24</sup> For several hundred years, the Carvajals had labored, like the Mendoza family, as "military entrepreneurs."<sup>25</sup> However, only those warriors with extensive existing personal wealth, proven military talent, and the desire for financial and social

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<sup>23</sup> Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 385. Note: Alfonso Rodríguez de Maluenda was the son of María Nuñez and Juan Garces Rodríguez Maluenda. María Nuñez, a Jewish convert to Christianity, was the sister of Pablo de Santa María.

<sup>24</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, C-20, Folios 197-217. This statement is based on my thorough review of sources in the RAH, AHHSN, and the ACP.

<sup>25</sup> Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 40.



advancement could readily enter the upper echelon of Castile's nobility.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the Carvajal clan lacked significant wealth and could only boast modest successes on the battlefield in relationship to their counterparts.<sup>27</sup> Further, like all noble families, their social and economic status was always in jeopardy. A noble clan could rapidly degenerate in status if the family's size exceeded the economic capacity of its resources or if they failed to generate sufficient male heirs to perpetuate the clan's lineage.<sup>28</sup>

Sometime after the Plasencia *caballeros'* cathedral tax revolts of 1396 and 1403-1410, the Carvajal family guided Gonzalo García toward ecclesiastical service. The family's decision forever redirected the trajectory of the Carvajals of Plasencia and began the family's social and economic metamorphosis. With these early family initiatives in place by the first decade of the 1400s, the Carvajal family was at the forefront of occupational change among Castile's *caballero* clans and sprinted ahead of other noble families like the Mendozas who delayed their entry into the ecclesiastical world by an additional fifty years.<sup>29</sup>

Swift changes in the diocese's leadership decidedly shifted power in favor of the Santa Marías and Carvajals, thus allowing them to collect multiple roles on the cathedral chapter. The two families' fortunes improved after the departure of Bishop Estúniga in 1422, and the short tenure of Bishop Friar Diego de Badan who governed from 1422-1423.<sup>30</sup> Between 1424 and 1425, both the membership of the cathedral chapter shifted in

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<sup>26</sup> Herlihy, "Three Patterns of Social Mobility in Medieval History," 639-641.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter One for a discussion of the Carvajals' *caballero* origins, lower noble status, and modest wealth.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 632-633.

<sup>29</sup> The *caballero* Mendoza family did not aggressively advance into the church service until King Juan II's 1458 appointment of Pedro González de Mendoza as Bishop of Calahorra. Even though the Mendozas recognized the importance of ecclesiastical service in the pursuit of higher social stations, the family only accepted the king's offer of the bishop's position after they understood the king would not provide them what they truly desired, new seigniorial titles. See Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 49-51.

<sup>30</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 16v-17; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folio 15.

favor of the Santa María and Carvajal families and the king named Gonzalo García de Santa María the Bishop of Plasencia.<sup>31</sup> These events were the first indication that the joint family confederation was beginning to dominate local ecclesiastical offices.

To hold cathedral power, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation needed to decrease the power of its rivals and place even more members in key positions. An opportunity arose with the death of Archdeacon Pedro Fernández de Soria, when the chapter selected Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria as the new Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín.<sup>32</sup> This change in leadership effectively marked the end of the Fernández family's influence on the chapter.

It was the opening that the Carvajals and Santa Marías had patiently awaited. With the Dr. Gil Martínez's cooperation, the new makeup of the chapter fell decidedly into the arms of the family partners. The Santa María, Carvajal, and Martínez families equally shared the council's three commanding archdeacon titles. In the early 1420s, of the fourteen identified members of the cathedral's governing chapter, four were Santa Marías (Gutiérrez de la Calleja and Rodríguez de Maluenda), one was a *caballero* Carvajal, another a *caballero* Almaraz (intermarried with the Santa Marías), and two were Martínez clansmen.<sup>33</sup> Only one Fernández family member remained on the chapter, severely diluting their influence. Thus, the cathedral chapter's power was not simply autonomous and institutionally separate from its membership, but rather an actual

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<sup>31</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 29v; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folios 16-16v.

<sup>32</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 114v.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Folios 65v, 66, 67v-69, 75-76, 98-98v, 99v-100v, 105, 114v, 119, 121v-122, 143v, 151. Note: The Santa María family includes the de Calleja, Maluenda, and Salamanca families. The Santa María and Gómez de Almaraz families had intermarried during this period. Specifically, María Gómez de Almaraz was married to Juan González de Santa María during time period of 1406 to 1421. See ACP Legajo Legajo 143, Documento 12; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13. Additionally, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María had three pages or servants that he paid, but were not members of the chapter. They were Gonzalo de la Calleja, Gonzalo de Salamanca, and Gabriel Sánchez.

reflection of local families' ability to impose their authority over the local church and the community.<sup>34</sup> Put simply, a family's canonships equaled power. (See Figure 2: Extended Santa María Genealogy and Table 1: Cathedral Chapter Membership, 1414-1425.)

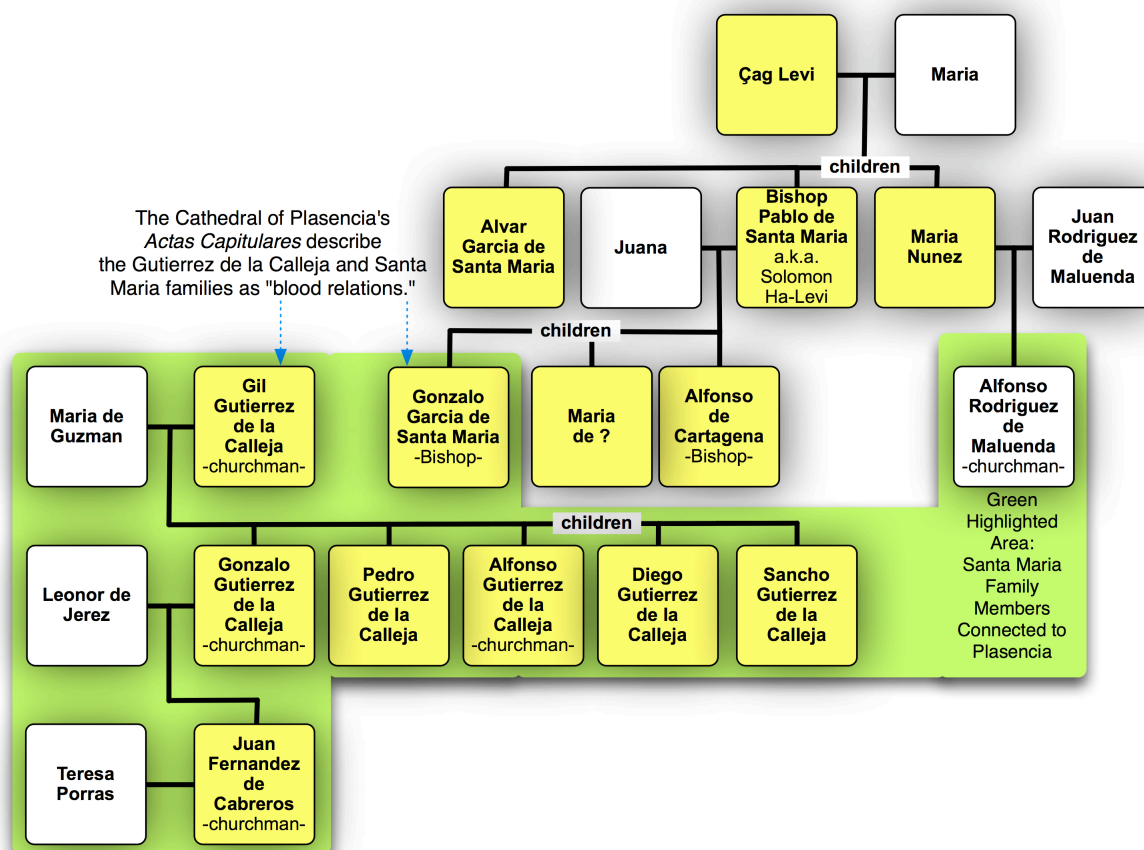
**Table 1:  
Cathedral Chapter Membership, 1424-1425**

| Members  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Gonzalo García de Carvajal, Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar (Dean for part of 1424)</li> <li>•Gil Martínez de Soria, Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín and Vicar General</li> <li>•Alfonso Rodríguez de Maluenda, Archdeacon of Coria</li> <li>•Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, Treasurer</li> <li>•Sancho Ortiz de Estúñiga, Canon (Dean for part of 1424)</li> <li>•Diego Blasquez, Canon (Dean for part of 1425)</li> <li>•Andres Pérez, Canon (Dean for part of 1425)</li> <li>•Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja, Prebendary</li> <li>•Alfonso Gutiérrez de la Calleja, Prebendary</li> <li>•Diego Martínez de Soria, Prebendary</li> <li>•Blasco Gómez de Almaraz, Prebendary</li> <li>•Pedro González, Prebendary and Notary</li> <li>•Juan Sánchez, Sacristan</li> <li>•Gómez Fernández, Canon</li> </ul> |

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<sup>34</sup> Similarly, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Cabero and López de Calatayud families utilized their dominance over the Diocese of Ávila's cathedral chapter for familial advancement and benefit. However, the events in Ávila occurred over one hundred years after the Carvajal and Santa María confederation's activities in Plasencia, and the neither of the Ávila families came from a *caballero* background. See Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 29-33.

**Figure 2: Extended Santa María Genealogy**



With a dominant position on the cathedral chapter, the Santa Marías and Carvajals now shared a common interest in creating a working majority that would ensure the successful nomination of their candidate for bishop. The Santa Marías wished to enhance their growing prominence on the chapter. Like their counterparts, the Carvajals and Almarazes desired new patronage opportunities for their families, but also hoped to shield their families from further church tax investigations. The Martínez and Estúniga families further shared this interest of continued participation in church's benefits. The Estúnigas, while increasingly estranged from the Plasencia churchmen, were indebted to

the families that now ruled the chapter.<sup>35</sup> Thus, each family had a vested interest in Gonzalo García de Santa María's appointment as the new bishop in 1424. Even though the Carvajals did not necessarily appear to have much to gain from a Santa María bishop, the forthcoming years demonstrated that the Santa Marías would be extremely generous with patronage and wealth building initiatives on behalf of the Carvajal clan.

The naming of Bishop Santa María, as well his first actions, suggest that he and the cathedral chapter's families shared an alignment of interests. In 1425, just after the chapter named Dr. Gil Martínez as archdeacon, the bishop rewarded him with the Vicar General's seat.<sup>36</sup> While the Vicar General was a member of the cathedral chapter, he was the bishop's only personally appointed local authority.<sup>37</sup> Further, the Cathedral of Plasencia's Foundational Statute (*Estatuto Fundamental*) of 1254 dictated that the cathedral chapter determined the archdeaconships and other council positions.<sup>38</sup> The willingness of both the chapter and the bishop to confide their trust in the doctor signaled a new direction for the Cathedral of Plasencia. The bishop and chapter rewarded Dr. Gil Martínez with a church position for their allegiance to the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation and his prior attack on the Fernández family's corrupt church practices.

Likewise, the Castilian bishop-appointment process positioned the Santa María-Carvajal dominated cathedral for an exponential growth in power and unity. Although the king was not required to consider a cathedral chapter's input, customarily he would take into account a chapter's recommendation for bishop.<sup>39</sup> Although no records detailing the

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<sup>35</sup> Bishop and Royal Counselor Pablo de Santa María had recommended to the king that Gonzalo de Estúñiga be appointed as Bishop of Plasencia from 1415 to 1422. See Luciano Serrano, *Los Conversos*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 121v-122.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Folio 60v-65v; Herbermann, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Vicar General" by William H.W. Fanning.

<sup>38</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 10.

<sup>39</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España* (Madrid: CSIC, 1972), s.v. "Iglesia y Estado," by T. de Azona.

politics surrounding Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's actual appointment are preserved, it is likely that the Santa María-Carvajal dominated chapter recommended him as their candidate for bishop to the king. Subsequently, the pope confirmed the king's choice.

Unlike the three bishops appointed prior to his term, Bishop Santa María's placement was therefore indicative of the development of a new alliance of families in the Cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>40</sup> The selection of Gonzalo as bishop was also ideal from the perspective of those who had King Juan II's ear in Burgos. Key among those advisers was the new bishop's father, Pablo de Santa María. The coalescence of royal and local agreement on one candidate virtually assured that the Cathedral of Plasencia and its dominant families would rule the bishopric with little external or internal interference.

If the Castilian king did take into account the Plasencia chapter's recommendation for bishop, then Bishop Santa María's engagement with the cathedral is significant because it attests to his family's distinct role in shaping the Extremaduran church. Gonzalo García de Santa María's selection as Bishop of Plasencia is not only further evidence of the rapid expansion of the *converso* Santa Marías inside the royal administrative and ecclesiastical center in Burgos, but also indicates that their leadership reached into the Castilian periphery of the Extremadura. Perhaps, the Placentino leaders' decision to recommend him to be their bishop also reveals that these men recognized the value of favoring this administratively and royally connected family. The rewards were not insubstantial; by accepting the position of bishop, Gonzalo García de Santa María was entitled to one-third of Plasencia's collection of church taxes (*diezmos*).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento. 1. "Constituciones Sinodales publicadas por Senor D. Domingo I, natural de Béjar, y aprovadas por el Cabildo Placentino, en 14 de Junio de 1229. Vertidas del latin al castellano, martes 3 de Abril de 1313," Unfoliated.

Once the Santa María and Carvajal clans controlled the bishop's position and the majority of positions on the cathedral chapter, in 1425 the two families began rewarding the chapter membership. Crucial among such benefits was the authority to lease its tax collection power to local entrepreneurs. Customarily, the chapter might elect to use this financial tool so that the church could both guarantee itself a precise income and expedite the collection of that income. Specifically, the churchmen leased to Juan Ruiz de Camargo the cathedral's tax collection of *diezmos*, the annual church tax assessed on locally produced goods such as wine, wheat, cattle and hogs.<sup>42</sup> From these tax proceeds, the Cathedral of Plasencia distributed one-third directly to the cathedral chapter, paid one-third to the bishop, and reinvested the last third in "the works of the church."<sup>43</sup> Thus, the church received an "advance" on future tax levies that would be collected by Juan Ruiz.

Individuals like Juan Ruiz chose to rent these tax collection powers with the expectation that they could realize a profit by collecting more tax revenues than the purchase price of their lease. In the four-year agreement with Ruiz, the Cathedral of Plasencia leased the right to collect and keep one-eighth of the annual church taxes for a portion of the diocese.<sup>44</sup> On December 26, 1425, the chapter gathered to disburse the proceeds from this contract.<sup>45</sup> Juan Ruiz paid the dean and cathedral chapter 18,000 maravedis, which the Santa Marías and Carvajals promptly divided among the thirteen church canonships. Thus, each of these officials received an additional 1,400 maravedis—

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<sup>42</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 75-76.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.; ACP Legajo 282, Documento.' 1. "Constituciones Sinodales publicadas por Senor D. Domingo I, natural de Béjar, y aprovadas por el Cabildo Placentino, en 14 de Junio de 1229. Vertidas del latin al castellano, martes 3 de Abril de 1313," unfoliated.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 75-76.

a substantial amount considering that a canon earned an annual salary of 230 maravedis.<sup>46</sup> After four years of proven loyalty to one another and with the benefits of their partnership in the Cathedral of Plasencia now beginning to pay tangible dividends, the Carvajal and Santa María families extended their collaborative efforts onto the stage of papal and royal affairs.

### **TRUST AND PAPAL PATRONAGE**

By November 1425, just one year into Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's administration, the Carvajal and Santa María confederation had taken full form. One example of their staunch alliance was the decision by Bishop Santa María to appoint Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal to execute a prominent act of papal patronage. Rather than completing the task himself, or appointing a member of his family, Bishop Santa María elected Archdeacon Carvajal to collect and then deliver a cathedral payment of 45 gold Aragonese *florin* coins to King Juan II.<sup>47</sup> Pope Martín V (1417-1431) offered these monies to reaffirm the church-royal relationship and to bestow patronage upon the king. The *florin* coins were much more than a simple payment to the king—they were a formal papal expression of approval and appreciation. As such, Bishop Santa María could not entrust this offering to a minor local church leader. Thus, the bishop's tapping of Archdeacon Carvajal to perform this task was an explicit act of personal faith.

On November 25th, Archdeacon Carvajal appeared before his colleagues, the members of the cathedral chapter. They convened in the Chapel of Saint Paul, where Archdeacon Gil Martínez de Soria announced the important news on their agenda.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> To make the financial distribution to the thirteen canons an easily rounded amount, Dean Sancho Ortiz de Estúñiga included an additional 200 maravedis in church funds with the disbursement. Therefore, the 18,000 maravedis payment plus the 200 maravedis adjustment equaled 18,200 maravedis, or 1,400 per canonship.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Folios 114v-116.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



There his counterpart, Archdeacon Carvajal, stated that Pope Martín V ordered, “the clergy of the diocese to pay their lord king who offers his favor and support to the Holy Mother Church.”<sup>49</sup> Presenting them a formal letter of payment (*carta de pago*), Archdeacon Carvajal instructed his counterparts, “to approve and extend the payment of 45 gold florines within three days...and for each day past this deadline, a penalty of 10 maravedis would be assessed per the order of the pope.”<sup>50</sup> The chapter did not delay its action and readily agreed to the offering. With their approval, Archdeacon Carvajal, “accepted and confirmed the receipt of the payment. Setting aside the rules of the cathedral chapter, he did not view nor did he count the money. Instead, he accepted the word of the witnesses that the payment was properly tallied.”<sup>51</sup> With the completion of these last tasks, it appears the cathedral dispatched Archdeacon Carvajal to deliver the gold to the king.

What is extraordinary about this minor episode in the history of the Catholic Church and the Kingdom of Castile is that it signaled to the Castilian nobility and church that the Santa María and Carvajal families shared a unique and steadfast bond. Bishop Santa María’s actions placed the Carvajal family into the enviable position of serving as a papal-royal intermediary. Yet, from another perspective, the bishop’s promotion of the Carvajal family was not an entirely unselfish act, as it likely enhanced the relationship between royal adviser Dr. Garci López de Carvajal and the Santa Marías serving in the Castilian court. Certainly, the bishop could have favored another more powerful family for this honor. For example, he could have chosen a man with more prestigious and noble credentials, like the Placentino canon, Sancho Ortiz de Estúniga. As a member of the Estúniga family and the Condes de Béjar, the king knew his name and family well.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Folio 115.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Folios 115v-116.

Ultimately though, Bishop Santa María selected the Carvajals over other noble families for the honor of patronizing the king. Events like this one communicated powerful symbolic messages to Burgos and Rome, namely that the Carvajal and Santa María confederation was now an important link in the patronage chain binding the Papacy to the Castilian Crown. Not only did the two families focus their attention on these kingdom-level patronage initiatives, but they also directed their mutual efforts at leveraging their local authority in the Cathedral of Plasencia. By exercising their joint control over the local church, they could use the church's property wealth to enrich themselves, extended family members, and friends.

#### **UTILIZING THE CATHEDRAL'S WEALTH**

The families of the cathedral chapter enjoyed exclusive privileges in the management of the diocese's diverse property, which they could utilize for the direct advancement of the church's mission or the provision of financial sustenance for its administrators. Now in full control of the cathedral chapter and reassured by the strength of their loyalty to one another, during the 1420s and 1430s the Carvajal and Santa María clans began an extensive program of utilizing the cathedral's assets for family enrichment. The church's property holdings included a wide mixture of resources, such as houses, land plots formerly granted to *caballeros*, arable plots, irrigated land and gardens, lands and pastures, vineyards and grapevines, water mills and land-based mills, and fishing weirs.

Industrious church officials could profit from these property assets by personally leasing them from the cathedral, often at below fair market value, and then subletting them to other parties at higher rates. For example, although cathedral chapter families could lease a house from the church for an average rate of 93 maravedis a year, a local community member with no ties to the cathedral chapter paid, on average, 138 maravedis

for the same lease.<sup>52</sup> Thus, community members paid 45 percent more for comparable transactions than church families.

A more pronounced difference in leases is evident for agriculturally productive lands like vineyards and grapevines. While the church rented these properties to their family members for 170 maravedis a year, community members paid 278 maravedis for their leases (a 64 percent difference.)<sup>53</sup> It is evident that the churchmen who negotiated fixed, life-long rates from the cathedral planned to utilize these commercial properties as personal investments. Many church contracts specified that the party renting the real estate, “could benefit from its fruits year in and out,” but did so, “at their own risk, at whatever danger, and in all cases of fortune and were obligated to pay the cathedral chapter the agreed to maravedis.”<sup>54</sup> In the case of houses leased by churchmen, some church contracts named the initial lessee, as well as the ultimate tenant of the house (the sub-lessee.)<sup>55</sup> To help offset any uncertainty, the churchmen crafted agreements so that their payments to the church were delayed as long as a year or separated into two installments.<sup>56</sup>

Initially, the Santa María and Carvajal families found it difficult to partake of these advantageous leases because the previously dominant family on the chapter, the Fernándeze, limited most churchmen’s access to discounted leases. Before the installation of Bishop Gonzalo de Santa María, from 1400 through 1423, the Santa Marías were only able to rent 5% of all church properties. During the same period, the Carvajal family was unable to lease a single piece of church property. (See Figure 3:

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<sup>52</sup> These lease rates, as well as all other lease rates reported here, were calculated using 139 separate church contracts reported in the *Ibid.*, Folios 29v-428.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

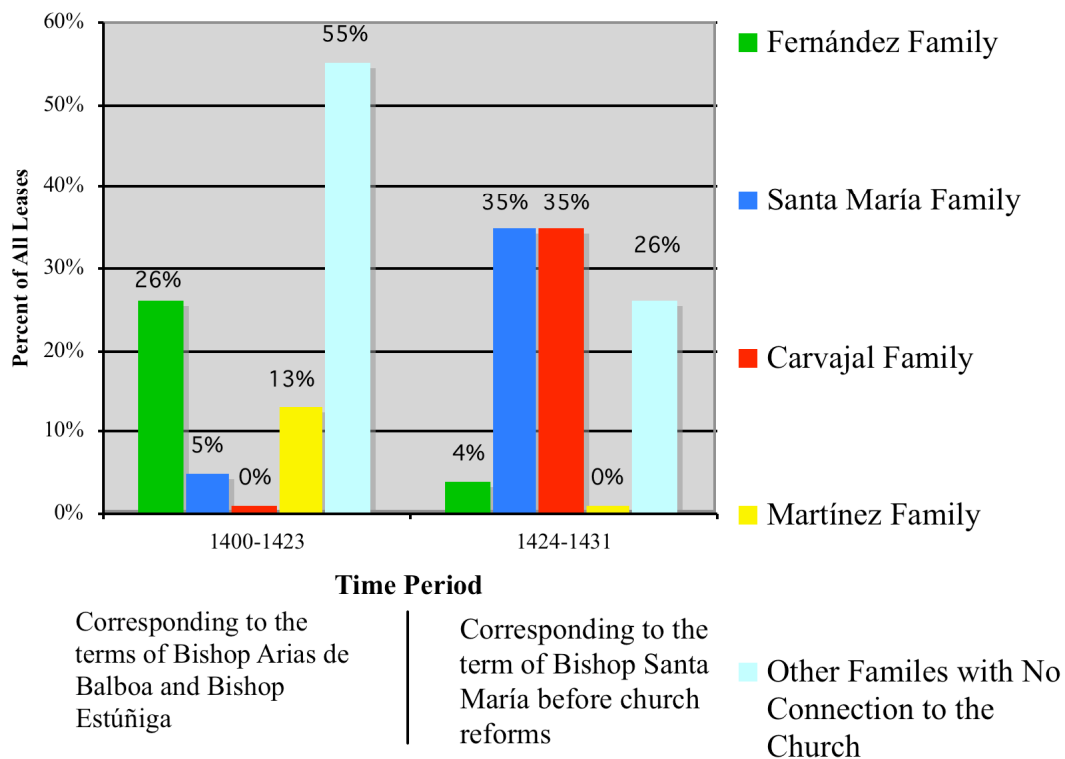
<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 67v, 98.

<sup>55</sup> See Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja’s lease of a home that he did not live in. Fernán Sánchez actually resided there. *Ibid.*, Folio 59.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Percent of Cathedral Leases Granted to the Fernández, Santa María, Carvajal, Martínez, and Other Families.) Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa and his supporters, the Fernándezes, never granted the Santa Marías and Carvajals meaningful access to these properties. However, from 1400 to 1423, the Fernández family secured 26% of all leased church properties, and the Martínezes about 13%. The cathedral chapter's practice of renting the majority of church properties (55%) to ordinary community members suggests that the church greatly limited churchmen's access to discounted property contracts. It is remarkable that although the Santa María family was a member of the cathedral chapter during this period, the chapter almost totally excluded them from these lucrative property transactions.

**Figure 3:**  
**Percent of Cathedral Leases Granted to the Fernández, Santa María, Carvajal,**  
**Martínez, and Other Families**



Under Bishop Estúñiga (1414-1422), the Santa María family fared slightly better. In 1416, *Racionero* Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja (a member of the Santa María family) rented his first houses on Calle de Talavera from the church for five maravedis a year, well below the average lease rate of 138 maravedis a year.<sup>57</sup> As the record indicates, Gil Gutiérrez did not live in these houses. He had actually sublet them to *Racionero* Fernán Sánchez.

Not until eight years later, under Bishop Santa María, did the Carvajal and Santa María's fortunes substantially improve as a result of the transformation of the chapter's

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

membership. During the first seven years of the bishop's term (1424-1431), the period before the cathedral's local church reform efforts, the two families rapidly gathered multiple church leases.<sup>58</sup> From 1424-1431, the confederated families collectively secured 70 percent of all church property leases for their personal use. Instead of the meager five percent of church contracts they held between 1400 to 1423, the Santa Marías now collected 35 percent of property agreements with the chapter. The Carvajal family, who had never secured a church property before this period, also acquired 35 percent of all church leases.

In contrast to the significant gains made by the Carvajals and Santa Marías, the loss of seats by other families on the chapter resulted in a subsequent exclusion from church lease opportunities. The displaced Fernández family lost almost all their access to these transactions, dropping from 26 percent to 5 percent of all property contracts. Because the family had failed to retain its two archdeaconships under the new administration of Bishop Santa María, the chapter effectively denied the Fernándezes the ability to compete for church leases. Unexpectedly, the Martínez family did not fare well under the new bishop. Even though Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria was the Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín, the family did not rent any church properties following the change in church administration.

In addition to the losses experienced by the Fernández and Martínez families, local community members with no family relations on the cathedral chapter also lost a significant share of church leases. Under Bishop Arias de Balboa and Bishop Estúniga, these "outsiders" rented 55 percent of all cathedral properties. Under Bishop Santa

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<sup>58</sup> After 1431, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation acquired fewer leases for newly available church properties. However, they did not relinquish the church leases they had previously secured from 1424-1431. This change in family leasing practices corresponded to their efforts to impose church reforms in the Cathedral of Plasencia.

María, their share dropped to 25 percent. The primary reason why these families lost access to the church's lands, houses, vineyards and other territories was due to the Santa María-Carvajal confederation's dominance of cathedral contracts. Rather than allowing the church to rent these properties at their full market rate, the family confederation leased the church's assets at discounted rates and subsequently used them for their own familial enrichment. The clans either sublet properties to those who had previously rented real estate from the cathedral, or put the lands, like vineyards, into production for personal wealth building. Thus, the profits from church properties no longer flowed as robustly or as directly to the cathedral chapter. Rather, from 1424 to 1431, the Santa María and Carvajal families intercepted these profits as they pursued an aggressive policy of acquiring church property leases.

### **The Santa María's Use of Cathedral Wealth**

Prior to their involvement in the Cathedral of Plasencia, the *converso* Santa María/Gutiérrez de Calleja churchmen ("the Santa Marías") were neither significant landowners nor did they rent and manage sizeable agricultural or animal-herding lands in the region. In this manner, they were similar to other local Jewish individuals who owned only a few commercial properties such as vineyards.<sup>59</sup> In Plasencia, Jewish families typically made their livelihoods in the trades (blacksmiths, shoemakers, military arms makers), as well as through leasing royal tax collections (*alcabala*).<sup>60</sup> However, the

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<sup>59</sup> For instance, in the late 1390s, the Jewish noble Don Abraen owned a vineyard in the Village of Trujillo that was adjacent to those owned by the Carvajal family. See *Ibid.*, Folios 3-4. Likewise, the Jewish Molho and Aruso families owned vineyards in the vicinity of Plasencia. See ACP Legajo 5, Documentos 29 and 30.

<sup>60</sup> In addition to wine producers, Jewish families in Plasencia were military arms sellers/makers (the Çapa family), shoemakers (the Aruso family), and blacksmiths (the Daza family). See *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 340-345, 361v-363v; AHNSN Osuna Caja 298, Documento 3/17; Marciano de Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra*, Vol. II *Colección Diplomática (1187-1823)* (Sevilla: Objectivo 4, Medios Audiovisuales, 2001), 86. Wealthier Jewish individuals, such as Yucef Béjarano and Jacob Faralon, would lease the king's tax collection authority from the municipal council at a

*converso* Santa Marías of Plasencia made a considerable break from the traditional economic activities of Plasencia's Jews by engaging in intensive personal property management efforts to generate familial wealth. From 1424 to 1431, the Santa María clan secured a diverse collection of eight church leases, including two houses, two vineyards, and four leases for various sized lands (*yugadas*, *caballerias*, *heredades*).<sup>61</sup> Seven of these newly acquired properties were income-generators. For example, Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, the son of Gil Gutiérrez and a Santa María clansmen, rented a church-owned house with a subterranean storehouse or wine cellar (*bodega*) on Calle de Santa María.<sup>62</sup> Since the home was strategically located two blocks south of the Plaza Mayor and two blocks north of the cathedral, finding a subleasee for the property was not difficult. In fact, the house was a favorite residence of church officials. Gonzalo Gutiérrez leased the property from the cathedral for 10 maravedis a year, well below the average amount charged to church officials (about 93 maravedis) and significantly below the average amount charged to local community members (about 138 maravedis).<sup>63</sup> As he acquired the lease near the end of the year, the cathedral only required him to pay half of the agreed to amount, a paltry five maravedis, by Christmas and the remainder by the Feast of San Juan in June 1426.

The Santa Marías not only focused on urban properties, but diversified their wealth generation activities into the countryside. They began to participate in the land management activities customarily engaged in by property-rich *caballeros*. For example, they secured other income-producing church properties that included three small

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set price, thereby hoping to collect more in tax proceeds than they paid for purchasing this taxation authority. See ACP Legajo 270, Documento 1.

<sup>61</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 99v-101v, 103-103v, 116, 132-133, 155v-158, 161.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Folio 116.

<sup>63</sup> See Table 2: Annual Leases Rates for Various Types of Church Property.



vineyards (*parrales*) and other varied types of real estate (*yugadas*, *caballerias*, *heredades*). Before the arrival of the planting season, in January and February 1425, *Racionero* Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja rented three smaller Plasencia-area vineyards (*parrales*) situated amongst larger vineyards (*vinas*).<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, Gil Gutiérrez named his son, Alfonso, as his co-signer for one of the transactions. By making him a party to the real estate agreement, Gil Gutiérrez began the process of introducing his son to the business dealings of the cathedral. Alfonso Gutiérrez was fortunate to participate in the contract as it exposed him to the specific benefits of church membership. By paying only 40 maravedis a year for one *parral* with an arroyo and 50 maravedis a year for two *parrales*, Gil Gutiérrez realized 80 percent discount on the typical community contractual rate for similar properties.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the reduced rent on the vineyards, Gil Gutiérrez realized profits from the production of grapes and wine from the fields.

The benefits of the larger pieces of real estate rented by the Santa Marías are more difficult to ascertain, but they clearly indicate that the family valued agriculturally and pastoral properties. Because these agreements specified that the lands were subject to *diezmos* and *alcabala* taxes, it is certain that all of them were used for agricultural production, grazing purposes, or another taxable economic activity.<sup>66</sup> Put simply, they were income-producing lands. Most likely, the Santa Marías pursued these transactions knowing that cattle, sheep, and pigs already grazed on these pastures and lands—a typical use for large parcels in the vicinity.<sup>67</sup> The largest of these tracts was the *Heredad de Fresnodoso*, which Juan Rodríguez de Sevilla, the controller for Bishop Santa María,

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<sup>64</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 101-101v, 103-103v.

<sup>65</sup> See Table 2: Annual Leases Rates for Various Types of Church Property.

<sup>66</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 99v-101v, 103-103v, 132-133, 155v-158, 161-164.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 382v-387.

leased for 1,000 maravedis in 1431.<sup>68</sup> Over thirty years earlier, former Bishop Arias de Balboa had donated the immense parcel, with its collection of houses, to the church for his memorial masses.<sup>69</sup>

Although Juan Rodríguez, a close Santa María associate, paid a significant sum for this *heredad*, the Santa Marías secured three other properties (*yugadas* or *caballerías*) at reduced rates.<sup>70</sup> For comparison, consider that the cathedral leased two *yugadas* in the *Heredad de San Pedro* to Diego de Solís, a man with no connections to the church leadership chapter, for 400 maravedis a year.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the average rate charged to the community for one *yugada* of land or a *caballería*, was approximately 200 maravedis a year. Although these figures are not an exact measure of value because all properties are unique and vary in quality, they reveal a general rental rate for land in Plasencia in the 1430s.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Folios 158-159.

<sup>69</sup> ACP *Extractos del Inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 2, Folios 10-10v.

<sup>70</sup> During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Cathedral of Plasencia used the words “*caballerías*” and “*yugadas*” interchangeably to describe one type of property, as evidenced in the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 161-164. Within colonial Spanish American history, the term *caballería* is a very specific measurement of land. In his article, “The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain,” Manuel Carrera Stampa cites colonial Mexican sources that describe a *caballería* of land as, “a width of 192 varas of the said measure and double this, that is, 384 varas for the length.” However, in Plasencia during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the use of the term *caballería* did not appear to communicate this level of specificity. The *Diccionario de la Lengua Español* (1729) clarifies that this specific measurement pertained to “las Indias” and not peninsular Spain. The dictionary definition is, “Se llama tambien en las Indias cierto repartamiento de tierras o haciendas que permitieron los Reyes se pudiesen dar a las personas que fueron pobladoras de las partes que se conquistaban, para que se aveindasen y mantuvieren.” The only definition of *caballería* that relates to financial or territorial compensation that pertains to peninsular Spain is the following: “En Aragon se llamaron ciertas rentas que los Ricos hombres repartian de las suyas propias entre los Caballeros, y gente de guerra, que eran sus vassallos, y los assistian, quando salian a servir a los Reyes.” The Cathedral of Plasencia’s mixed use of the terms *caballería* and *yugada* complicates this discussion because the *DEL* (1729) defines a *yugada* as “el espacio de tierra de labor, que puede arar un par de bueyes en un día.” This explanation indicates that a *yugada* was an imprecise space of tillable land—it depended on the oxen and man leading them. Therefore, in this dissertation the terms *yugadas* and *caballerías* are used as the 15<sup>th</sup> century churchmen used them, interchangeably, and in the most generic sense. Both are defined as varied areas of workable agricultural land that were most likely given by a king to a *caballero* for services rendered. See Carrera Stampa, Manuel, “The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb., 1949): 2-24.

<sup>71</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 380-382v.

This comparative rate suggests that the Santa Marías secured their remaining leases at below fair market rates. For instance, Juan Fernández de Cabrerros (a Santa María family member) leased four *yugadas* of land for only 200 maravedis a year. Furthermore, Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja acquired four *caballerias* for 280 maravedis a year, and the previously mentioned Juan Rodríguez de Sevilla rented an entire *heredad* with houses for 150 maravedis a year.<sup>72</sup> In each of these property transactions, the Santa Marías paid considerably less expense for their leases than Diego de Solis, a man who lacked family connections on the cathedral chapter. Like the Santa María family, the Carvajals readily accessed church properties for personal wealth building during this time period.

### **The Carvajal's Use of Cathedral Wealth**

The Carvajal family, drawing upon their traditional *caballero* expertise of managing and collecting rents from their feudally obtained agricultural and herding lands, vigorously sought church contracts for large parcels of land.<sup>73</sup> In total, from 1424 to 1431, the clan signed eight property agreements with the church (representing 35 percent of all church leases). The Carvajal family dedicated most of its attention to the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Folios 99v-100v, 155v-157, 161-164.

<sup>73</sup> Typically, the Castilian king rewarded his *caballeros* for their successful military service in two manners, with booty and lands. These knights accumulated booty such as precious metals, clothing, horses, oxen, and cattle during military campaigns. Additionally, the king compensated these men with short-term land tenancies, as well as grants of land. With these lands, *caballeros* could generate income through property rents, agricultural production, and animal husbandry. At the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, high noble Castilian families who had accumulated extensive property collections converted many of these lands into inalienable family entailed lands (*mayorazgos*) that the eldest son (sometimes daughter) of each successive generation would inherit. See Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 28-29, for an example of how the Lara family collected booty and lands during the Spanish *Reconquista*. Also see James F. Powers, *A Society Organized for War: The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 104-107, for a discussion of 13<sup>th</sup> century land compensation provided by the king to his knights and soldiers in Extremadura. See Clavero, *Mayorazgo*, 71, 102-109, for a discussion of feudal lands (their value and uses) and the creation of *mayorazgos*. See Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance*, 112-115, for a discussion of the Mendoza family's use of agricultural and sheepherding lands.

cathedral's more expansive properties, such as pastures, meadows, irrigated lands, gardens, and some vineyards. Due to this focus on larger tracts of land, the Carvajal family became the Cathedral of Plasencia's largest and most valuable client. Between 1424 and 1431, the annual value of the Carvajal family's cathedral lease agreements was 9,191 maravedis.<sup>74</sup> (See Figure 4: Total Annual Value of All Cathedral Property Leases, 1424-1431.)

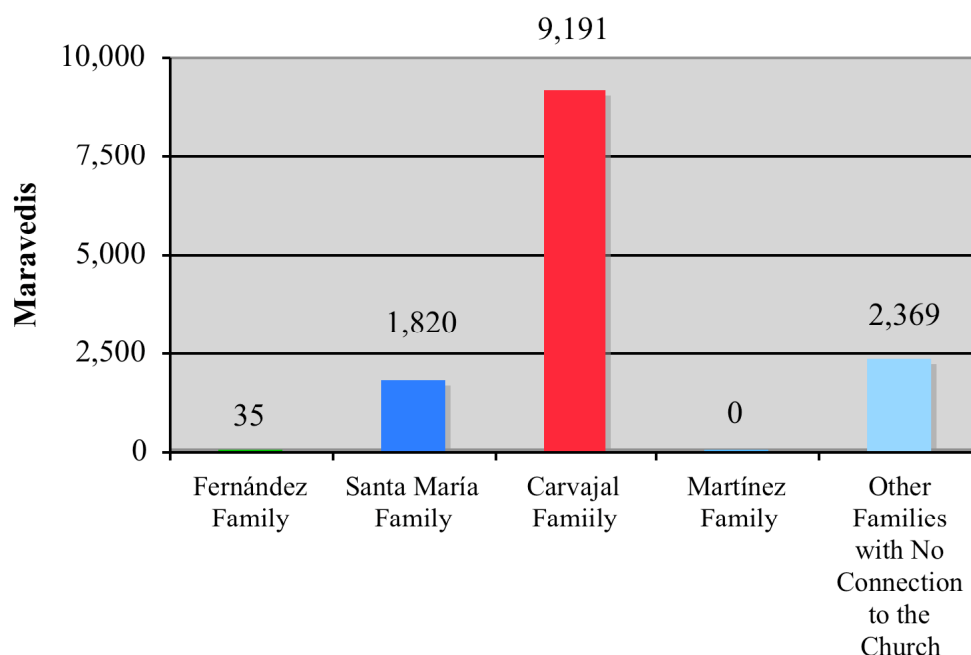
A significant difference separating the confederated families was the liquid wealth each family had available or was willing to invest in church transactions. From 1424 to 1431, the Santa Marías signed eight leases valued at 1,820 maravedis a year. On the other hand, the Carvajals negotiated eight contracts for 9,191 maravedis a year. Thus, while both families shared equally in the number of church rental agreements they acquired, the Carvajals invested about five times more of their wealth into these efforts than the Santa Marías. Further, it can be argued that the *caballero* Carvajal family had a higher tolerance for risk than the Santa Marías, perhaps because they were more accustomed to facing great perils (i.e., endangering their lives in pitched battles) in return for financial rewards. Additionally, the Carvajals also had more personal wealth to risk than the Santa Marías as evidenced by the Carvajals' superior local property holdings as reported in the cathedral's 1390s accounting of church and local community properties.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> The total value of church leases for 1424 to 1431 was calculated using the 23 documented transactions for this time period. These are reported in the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 29v-428.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter One's discussion of church assets and local notable families' assets.

**Figure 4:**  
**Total Annual Value of All Cathedral Property Leases, 1424-1431**



In addition to pursuing higher financial risks, the Carvajal family sought church property contracts that leveraged the family's existing expertise in overseeing vineyards like those they owned in the Village of Trujillo.<sup>76</sup> For example, in 1424 Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal signed the clan's first lease with the chapter for the vineyards of *Los Barriales* in Plasencia for the amount of 350 maravedis annually.<sup>77</sup> With the vineyard, Gonzalo began to cultivate a new income source, even though the rent was above the average rate of a vineyard of 278 maravedis a year.<sup>78</sup>

Curiously, even though Gonzalo García held the high-status post of archdeacon, the cathedral chapter took the unusual step of requiring him to secure a co-signer (*fiador*)

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Folio 145.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Folios 98-98v.

<sup>78</sup> A comparative lease rate for vineyards was calculated using 139 separate church contracts reported in the Ibid., Folios 29v-428.

for the vineyard of *Los Barriales*. Before the 1430s, the church tended to require *fiadores* for some, but not all contracts. Most of those agreements pertained to property transactions conducted by first time renters, like Archpriest Pedro Fernández de Soria, who was the nephew of Prebendary Juan Rodríguez de Fuenteveros, and for individuals who lived outside of Plasencia, like Fernán Álvarez de Montealbán.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the church required Gonzalo García de Carvajal to provide a co-signer because he was a relatively new member of the chapter or because his brother, Diego García de Béjarano, had led the knights' church tax rebellion of 1403 to 1410. To comply with this requirement, Gonzalo García did not turn to family members. Instead, he relied on the steadfast Santa María family. Archdeacon Alfonso Rodríguez de Maluenda, a Santa María family member, willingly agreed to serve as his co-signer and therefore obligated himself and his own personal fortune to the Carvajals.

Once a family with significant leadership positions and allies on the cathedral chapter had entered into its first church property contract, the family could arrange additional agreements that were more substantial. Just three years after Bishop Santa María took the reins of the Diocese of Plasencia, Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal and his brother, Gómez González de Carvajal (a knight), rented eight separate properties (*heredades, dehesas, casas, vinas*) in the Village of Trujillo and its periphery.<sup>80</sup> This single transaction included the church's longest-held pastures in Trujillo, known simply as the "pastures and land that is called the church's," the *Heredad de Valnegro*, the *Heredad de Pizarral*, the pasture of Toribio Gil, the pasture of "azuquen de los fierros," and a house and part of a vineyard on the outskirts of Trujillo. For 8,500 maravedis a

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Folios 31v, 83-83v. Note: Fernán Álvarez de Montealbán was later known as Fernán Álvarez de Toledo, the Señor de Oropesa.

<sup>80</sup> This property agreement for 8,500 maravedis combined several pieces of land into one consolidated lease agreement. Therefore, I have treated this lease agreement as a single property lease for the purposes of calculating the total number of cathedral property leases. See Ibid., Folios 145-151.

year, plus ecclesiastical (*diezmos*) and royal (*alcabala*) taxes, the brothers acquired the church's most significant holdings in Trujillo. As expected, the favorable terms negotiated by the Carvajals ensured that the full contract was not payable until one year after its signing and the annual payment dropped by 500 maravedis to 8,000 maravedis after the first year. The moment was significant for the Carvajals and the Cathedral of Plasencia because the family's contract with the church was the largest annual life-long agreement recorded in the sixty years detailed in the *Actas Capitulares, Tomo 1 (1390-1453)*.<sup>81</sup>

These generous church contracts only hinted at what lay below the surface of the family collaborations occurring within the Cathedral of Plasencia. Through successive and increasingly complex property and payment arrangements, Bishop Santa María cemented the families' partnership. This alliance would extend well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, long after the decline of the *converso* Santa Marías.

One of the recipients of the bishop's attention was Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, the brother of Archdeacon Gonzalo García. The doctor was a fixture in local affairs in Plasencia as well as in the Castilian royal court. As the son of a moderately powerful *caballero* in the region, the king appointed Dr. Garci López as one of the twelve members (*regidores*) of the city council of Plasencia. As with his brother, Garci López's family had directed him into a learned career. His family also provided him the opportunity to obtain the most prestigious university credential one could earn in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century— a doctorate, most likely in canon law, which required at minimum seven to eight years of education.<sup>82</sup> The doctor ushered in an entirely new administrative

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<sup>81</sup> Although in 1426, the Carvajals' relative, Juan Ruiz de Camargo, signed a limited, four-year lease for 18,000 maravedis for a portion of church tax collections (*diezmos*), his annual payment was only 4,500 maravedis a year. See Ibid., Folios 75-76.

<sup>82</sup> Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain*, 202.

class of Carvajals who would successfully serve in Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand's royal administration at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Like his brother Archdeacon Gonzalo García who was the first ecclesiastical leader in the family, Dr. Garci López was the first of many family members to become royal bureaucrats.

The doctor was also the precursor of the rise of Castile's educated professional class (*letrados*), whose "infancy" did not begin until the reign of Isabel and Ferdinand.<sup>83</sup> The *letrados* posed a threat to the traditional position of high noble families in the royal administration. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, powerful *caballero* families like the Mendozas populated most of the monarchs' administrative posts such as admirals of fleets, military governors (*adelantados*), chief notaries (*notarios mayores*), royal administrators (*coregidores*), and military governors (*alcaldes*).<sup>84</sup> However, as the *letrado* profession developed during the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the monarchs minimized the bureaucratic participation of high noble families.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the Carvajal family's early 15<sup>th</sup> century engagement in the royal bureaucratic service was an exceptional event because not only did the family use education to out compete higher status *caballeros*, but also because the family's administrative initiative represented a precursor of the development of the *letrado* class.

Although Dr. Garci López was well-educated, he was an untitled noble and relatively powerless in Castilian affairs, thus offering a unique utility to the Castilian king. Lacking the political, economic, and war making power of high noble families like the Mendozas and Estúñigas, the doctor's family was of almost no consequence and thus could never pose a threat to the king. Like the administratively successful Santa Marías, who were beholden to the king for their positions, the Carvajals were an ideal family for

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>84</sup> Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 128-129.



the king to recruit for administrative posts. Thus, it is of little surprise that in 1423 and 1424 King Juan II made Dr. Garci López a Judge (*Oidor*) in his Royal Court (*Real Audiencia*).<sup>86</sup> As a member of the *Real Audiencia*, the doctor occupied a seat that the king typically did not award to *caballero* families.<sup>87</sup>

Although it is difficult to ascertain when and where the Carvajal and Santa María families first encountered each other, it is evident that by 1423 Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María recognized Dr. Garci López de Carvajal's as a rising star and one willing to collaborate with the Santa María clan. As a close personal associate of Bishop Santa María (a member of the king's *Consejo Real*) and coordinator of royal affairs, the doctor enjoyed a unique connection to the Cathedral of Plasencia. Although not a sitting church administrator, like his brother Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal, he was a routine presence in the cathedral. At times, he served as a character witness for church property transactions, and at other times, as a party to delicate business negotiations between the city council and cathedral.<sup>88</sup>

The act of ecclesiastical homage that sealed the Carvajal-Santa María confederation occurred in March of 1427, when Bishop Santa María called the church chapter together in the Chapel of Saint Paul (*Capilla de San Pablo*) to specially honor and compensate Dr. Garci López for his efforts on behalf of the cathedral.<sup>89</sup> In all of the recorded meetings of the cathedral chapter, this was only the second time Bishop Santa María was physically present.<sup>90</sup> In most cases, he conducted business or communicated

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<sup>86</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 1; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo C-20, Folio 212-212v.

<sup>87</sup> Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, 37.

<sup>88</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 231v-235v; 264-271v.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 252-256.

<sup>90</sup> On only one previous occasion, in 1425, did Bishop Santa María oversee church affairs relating to the lease of a house and storehouse to his "family member," Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja. See *Ibid.*, Folios 116-116v.

with the cathedral chapter through correspondence.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, his participation and direction of the event was unusual.

Although the cathedral chapter usually met for the purposes of conducting business affairs, this particular event took on the formal qualities of a religious or homage ceremony. Pedro González, the notary, reported, “The Lord Bishop calls us together, the Lords of the cathedral chapter, with the tolling of the bells and by the verger and the symbols of his office.” Alongside the bishop and Dr. Garci López were the archdeacons, prebendaries, treasurer, notary, and other officials. With all gathered, Bishop Santa María stated:

I and the chapter are in debt to you, Dr. Garci, especially for all of your assistance and counsel on specific affairs at the royal court. As from this point forward we will be in need of your advice on future affairs, the chapter will pay you 300 maravedis every year.<sup>92</sup>

By acknowledging his personal debt to the doctor and granting the doctor this financial benefice, Bishop Santa María invoked the feudal bonds that tied two men together. Lower status church prebendaries did not conduct this transaction, like many of the church’s lease contracts, but rather this event involved the bishop’s initiation of highly choreographed religious actions. However, unlike a traditional act of homage where one man was beholden to the other, neither the bishop nor Dr. Garci López were subordinated, and thus the event demonstrates how ceremonialism influenced acts of patronage. Although not an official functionary of the cathedral, with the bishop’s orders Dr. Garci López became a *de facto* member of the cathedral leadership and a most

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<sup>91</sup> For example, in 1425 Bishop Santa María communicated with the cathedral chapter via letter that Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal was responsible for collecting papal-ordered funds for the Castilian king. See Ibid., Folios 114v-116.

<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately, Bishop Santa María never elaborated on the services that Dr. Garci López de Carvajal performed for the Cathedral of Plasencia.

respected dignitary and advocate. No other person enjoyed these monetary and organizational privileges. Important to note is that even though the bishop ordered the action, in order to implement it he invoked his authority and the cathedral chapter's authority. The salary for Dr. Garci López de Carvajal was likely funded with the support of Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal and Prebendary Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja.

Unlike any other previous church act, the bishop and the cathedral chapter also compensated Dr. Garci with the gift of church lands.<sup>93</sup> Dr. Garci López's property compensation took the form of a convoluted land exchange (*cambio*) pertaining to the *Heredad de El Berrocal*. Earlier in his life, Dr. Garci López had traded two-fifths of his ownership of the *heredad* to the cathedral for some ancestral homes (*casas solares*) behind his own homes on Calle de Trujillo. Since that trade, the church had reportedly earned a meager 15 maravedis in annual income off these lands—a disappointing rate of return given houses on average fetched a minimum of 138 maravedis annually. Ancestral houses, the prestigious historic homes previously owned by noble families, garnered as much as 400 maravedis a year.<sup>94</sup>

Unwilling to part with the homes he now owned, but wanting to reconstitute the entire *heredad*, Dr. Garci López agreed to lease from the chapter his two-fifths of *El Berrocal*. For this lease, the doctor would pay 600 maravedis a year – an indication that perhaps the land generated much more income than the 15 maravedis the church claimed. It appears highly unusual that Dr. Garci López would be willing to lease the property for

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<sup>93</sup> A review of church records, specifically ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, indicates that this was the only occurrence of a church gift of land to an individual from 1399 to 1453. Additionally, the Cathedral of Plasencia's limited archival records for the period before 1399 also indicate that this was the first occurrence of such a gift.

<sup>94</sup> For example, a collection of ancestral homes with corrals on Calle de Rua rented for 400 maravedis a year. See *Ibid.*, Folios 393-394.

such a substantial sum when it only supposedly generated a minimal amount in annual rents. After all, the Carvajals had demonstrated impressive business acumen throughout this period and they expertly maneuvered the church in their favor. This payment was unique because the cathedral rarely sold, or even released ill-gotten lands, as evidenced by the Santa Marías' loss of *El Corral del Medio* in 1421.<sup>95</sup>

All questions about the rationale for the exchange evaporated when the notary recorded the bishop's final orders on the transaction. In short, Bishop Santa María increased Dr. Garci López's overall compensation by granting him a life-long lease of the church's portion of *El Berrocal*. Under the terms of the final agreement, the doctor would receive his annual 300 maravedis salary, keep the ancestral houses, and assume a life-long lease of the church's two-fifths portion of *El Berrocal* for a single payment of 315 maravedis. These financial rewards to Dr. Garci López de Carvajal are further evidence of the unprecedented partnership between the Carvajal and Santa María families.

#### **NEW COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN CABALLEROS AND CHURCHMEN**

The Carvajal and Santa María confederation of families did not confine their initiatives to the church alone as they also promoted new collaborations between the *caballero*-dominated city council and the cathedral chapter. In earlier years, the two distinct groups of men had found cooperation tenuous in light of disagreements over church taxes. Yet, over the course of two days in 1428, the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and their extended family relations overcame these previous impediments to cooperation. Together, this confederation steered the city council and the cathedral through a revenue collaboration arrangement, as well as through a potentially explosive dispute over wine and taxes. Their success in leading these specific Plasencia city-church negotiations is

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<sup>95</sup> ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13, Unfoliated.

particularly noteworthy because in other Castilian communities, such as Ávila and Ciudad Real, community issues like these often turned into jurisdictional battles.<sup>96</sup>

The first of these initiatives involved the Cathedral of Plasencia's lease of its portion of the *portazgo*, or royal taxes assessed on goods passing through the city's gates and its periphery, to the city council.<sup>97</sup> In Plasencia, as in other cities in the kingdom, residents were subject to multiple forms of annual taxation. The most important of these were church taxes on goods and livestock (*diezmos*), royal sales taxes (*alcalaba*), and royal toll taxes for goods passing through the city (*portazgo*).<sup>98</sup> In Plasencia, the *portazgo* was assessed on a wide assortment of items. Among the named items subject to the toll tax were livestock, honey, olive oil, vinegar, herbs like "zumaque", chestnuts and other nuts, fruit, cheese, butchered meats, bacon, salted fish, linen, wool, cloth, iron and iron objects, timber, and glazed tile.<sup>99</sup> In the case of each of these goods, the city council and cathedral determined a specific tax. For instance, at the lower end of tax assessments, the city and church agreed to levy a tax of one *dinero* coin for each slab of bacon.<sup>100</sup> At the upper end, the city and church collected two *maravedis* coins for honey of "higher quality" and one *maravedis* coin for honey of a "lesser quality".<sup>101</sup> The only exceptions to the levy included wine and bread, which the king excluded from taxation in his

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<sup>96</sup> Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 24-27; Phillips, *Ciudad Real 1500-1700*, 98.

<sup>97</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>98</sup> Vaquero, *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, s.v. "Diezmo," by G. Martínez; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León 1188-1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 51, 144-145; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal, Volume II* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 282.

<sup>99</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

foundational document for the city, its *fuero*, and those goods that vendors sold at the city's weekly Tuesday market (*feria*.)<sup>102</sup>

The sensitive business negotiations between the city council and the cathedral were not necessarily led by the mayor and bishop, instead men from the community's new leading families often conducted these affairs. Acting on behalf of the city council, of which he was a member, *Regidor* Dr. Garci López de Carvajal negotiated and finalized the city's lease of one-third of the church's *portazgo* collections with his counterpart, Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, Treasurer of the Cathedral of Plasencia. Interestingly, Mayor Alonso Arias de Gibrleon was not the principle party who arranged the agreement. Rather, three city council men (*regidores*) led the effort to rent these annual tax collections from the church for the sum of 1,600 maravedis a year. The first of these three men was Dr. Garci López, who by this year was a close associate of Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez (a Santa María family member). As a *de facto* member of the cathedral who had directly benefited from Bishop Santa María's favor and patronage, the doctor had a favorable opinion and affinity for the Cathedral of Plasencia.

Adding his voice to the acceptance of this agreement was the elder *caballero* and *regidor*, Gutierre Gutiérrez de Trejo. His presence and his expressed approval of the city-church partnership was evidence of an extraordinary transformation of *caballero* and churchmen relations. Less than thirty years earlier, Bishop Pedro Fernández de Soria had personally written to King Enrique II to complain about Gutierre Gutiérrez's recalcitrance and failure to pay *diezmos* in 1396.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "Real Provisión de D. Enrique Espana que los Sres. de los lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos obtenida a instancia del Sr. Obispo D. Pedro..." unfoliated ; ACP *Extractos del inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 3, Documento 338.

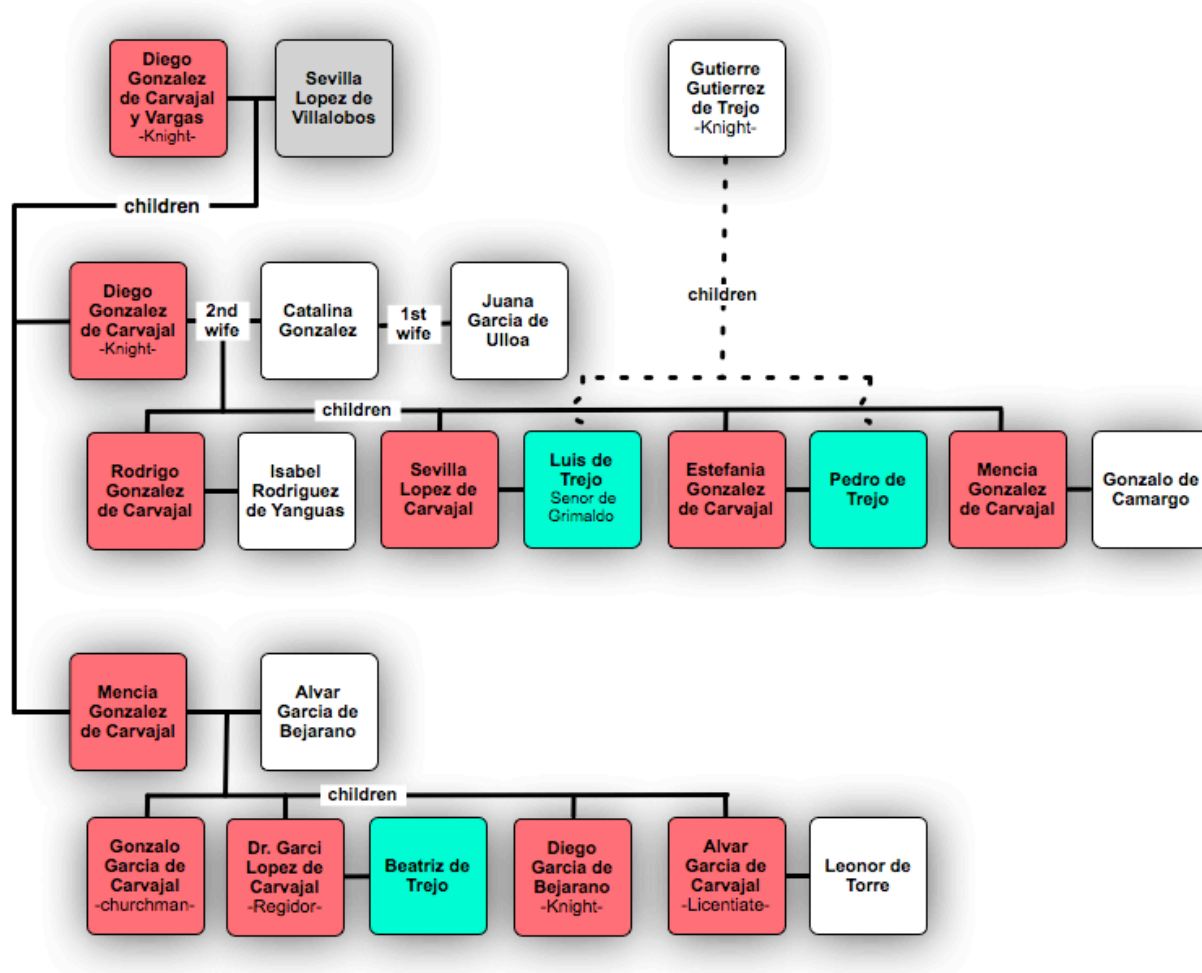
The Carvajal family proved that the *caballeros* and the cathedral could co-exist and thrive, as the clan's own members had set aside their past conflicts with the church and now secured canonships and other cathedral benefits. The many Carvajal family members surrounding Gutierre Gutiérrez de Trejo likely helped spur and gain his acquiescence to the agreement. After all, the Carvajals hailed from similar *caballero* stock. Dr. Garci López de Carvajal's father, grandfather, and brother, Diego García de Béjarano, were all *caballeros*. The Carvajal family, especially Diego García who had his own brush with excommunication by Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa, remembered and understood the Plasencia knights' troubled past with the church. From the perspective of Gutierre González de Trejo, the new leadership of the Cathedral of Plasencia, led by the Santa María and Carvajal clans, must have appeared less threatening. Potentially, the church could even be a long-term partner of the *caballero* clans.

Personal family relationships also likely influenced Gutierre Gutiérrez de Trejo. (See Figure 5: Extended Carvajal and Trejo Family Relations.) As two of his four sons married daughters of Diego González de Carvajal, the uncle of Dr. Garci López de Carvajal. Those couples included Luis de Trejo who was married to Sevilla López de Carvajal and Pedro de Trejo who was married to Estefania González de Carvajal.<sup>104</sup> The proximity of these relations could only have further helped convince Gutierre Gutiérrez de Trejo that the *portazgo* lease was favorable for all parties to the agreement.

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<sup>104</sup> ACP Legajo 143, Documento 3; ACP Legajo 14, Documentos 38, 48, and 56; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25. Additionally, it appears that Francisco de Trejo, another son of Gutierre Gutiérrez de Trejo, was married to another Sevilla López de Carvajal. Sevilla's pedigree cannot be established, but she may have been the same woman married to Luis de Trejo. Perhaps, Luis de Trejo died earlier in life and Sevilla remarried his brother, Francisco de Trejo. See ACP Legajo 13, Documento 24.

**Figure 5: Extended Carvajal and Trejo Family Relations**



Because several local families participated on both the city council and cathedral chapter, the *portazgo* contract was more than an institutional agreement, it was also an inter-familial accord. The final member of the city council's leaders that negotiated the arrangement with the church was Alfonso Fernández de Logroño. Like the Carvajals his family had a close association with the church. Pedro Fernández de Logroño, a family member of Alfonso Fernández, served as a prebendary in the cathedral chapter.<sup>105</sup> Thus,

<sup>105</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 252.



the relationship between the three city councilmen and Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja likely helped them to advance the *portazgo* agreement. These families, especially the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, were part of a restoration of church and city relations that had not existed since 1385, the last year the two parties had consented to a similar *portazgo* contract.<sup>106</sup>

Shedding light on this city-church collaboration was a simultaneously negotiated agreement regarding the churchmen's transport of wine into the city.<sup>107</sup> Unlike the *portazgo* arrangement, the issues surrounding wine displayed the hallmarks of a simmering conflict. The problems began when the city council suspected that unnamed churchmen were abusing their church privileges. These liberties allowed the cathedral's men to bring wine into the city free of locally imposed tariffs provided the wine was for church or personal use.<sup>108</sup> However, the city's representatives believed that churchmen were transporting wine under the guise of church/personal use, but then selling it below the cost of taxed wines. Not only were wine merchants impacted by this alleged covert economic activity, but more importantly, from the perspective of the city council, the city was cheated out of these revenues. Again, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, Gutierre González de Trejo, and Alfonso Fernández de Logroño reviewed the charges of impropriety and abuse of church privileges. As they studied the facts, the city's public notary reported the following:

The lords of the cathedral are allowing the transportation of wine by its clergy into the city. This occurs in opposition to our ordinances, as the city council has not consented to this. Further, when wine tax collectors confront the clergy carrying the wine in, the clergy threatens to present them with a letter of excommunication. Now, we remain at this impasse.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> ACP Legajo 270, Documento 18.

<sup>107</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 264-271v.

<sup>108</sup> It should be noted that these wine taxes were different from internal trade levies (*portazgo*.)

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, Folio 264-271v.

Rather than attacking the church's abuse of their wine privileges, Dr. Garci López, Gutierre González, and Alfonso Fernández emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of the church and promoting harmony in the community. They clarified that, "the council will always protect the church's right to bring wine into the city," however, it has, "always been understood that this privilege must be secured with a written order of a councilman."<sup>110</sup> Further, "all wine transported by the clergy must pass through the Gate of Talavera and no other city gate."<sup>111</sup> After discussing this matter on Friday, January 2, 1428, the next day the city councilmen came to a decision on how best to address the circumstances. Each of them made the sign of the cross and placed their hands on their hearts. They explained their decision as follows:

Because God came to help us, both in this world of the living and the other world of the spirit, it is our duty to do what God demands. We are charged with the responsibility of doing what is right. So, we order that from this time forward that for those churchmen that have permission to bring wine into the city, they will only pass through the Gate of Talavera...However, from this point forward, all wine that enters the city will only pass through this gate and no other. All other goods, whether they are beasts or containers, can be taken through any other gate. Anyone that violates this order will suffer the penalties ordered by the council.<sup>112</sup>

For all parties, it was a fair and face-saving measure. It ensured the city would still collect its wine taxes and that the movement of wine into the city could be easily monitored at one single city gate, the Gate of Talavera (*Puerta de Talavera*). For the churchmen, it required no admission of legal transgressions. Lending credence to the belief that the agreement was acceptable to both parties was the presence of two church officials at the reading of the official order. Later that day, in the city's Plaza Mayor, Juan Cadino, the city crier (*pregonero*), announced the city council's new rules on wine transportation to and from the city. Noted among the prominent witnesses of the reading

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

of the agreement were cathedral Prebendary Martín Fernández de Logroño, a relative of city councilman Alfonso Fernández de Logroño, and members of the Santa María clan. The Santa Marías present included Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrerros and his young son, also named Juan, who was being raised and trained to be a future member of the cathedral chapter. The appearance of Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrerros, the son of cathedral Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, was a subtle communication from Bishop Santa María that he accepted the terms of the new city council's orders.

Near the end of the day, a second and private component of the city-church negotiations concluded. Retreating to the quiet of the Chapel of Saint Paul in the cathedral, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María convened the church chapter. Gathered were his family members, Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez and Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrerros, and Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal, the brother of Dr. Garci López de Carvajal. Mayor Alonso Arias attended the meeting and confirmed the city council's commitment to protect the church's wine privileges. Bishop Santa María invoked his authority as well as asserted the chapter's authority, which was required for the resolution of the matter, and ordered the implementation of new church statutes governing churchmen and their wine. Bishop Santa María explained:

All churchmen can freely bring wine into the city. Even taking one or two measures of wine (*azumbres*) to any person that you wish is acceptable. However, if you are to bring more than this amount, you are not to sell it to anyone for any price, whether that is in the public square or on the street corner. Further, I order my Provisor and Vicar General to regularly check with the wine tax collectors to see if any churchman is transporting hidden wine along with livestock, whether that is in the city or at its periphery. If any churchman violates this order or the city ordinance, we will present them with a letter of excommunication.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Folios 264-271v; According to John Edwards, an *azumbre* is a "liquid measure: 2 liters, or 3.5 liters." See John Edwards, *Christian Cordoba: The City and its Region in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 193.

The church notary recorded no discussion of the matter. Likewise, the cathedral chapter and its nominal leaders, Archdeacon Carvajal, Archdeacon Martínez de Soria, and Archdeacon Rodríguez de Maluenda, voiced no dissent to the proposal. Rather, “all of them [in attendance] judged the statute to be right.”<sup>114</sup> With one voice, the bishop and the chapter approved the new measures to avoid future confrontations between the city and church. These two events, the city’s leasing of the church’s *portazgo* and the collaborative orders to prevent clerical abuses of church privileges, indicated the Santa María-Carvajal family confederation greatly influenced church and city council affairs in Plasencia and the surrounding region. In the coming years, the families would confront more aggressive challenges, including cathedral reforms and the consequences of growing anti-Jewish sentiments in the city. Nonetheless, these changes would not impact their continuous initiatives to expand patronage and wealth opportunities for themselves.

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<sup>114</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 264-271v.

## Chapter Four:

### Jews, Social Disruptions, and Violence in Plasencia, 1420s – 1440s

#### The Royal Investigation Conducted by Judge Miguel Sánchez de Sepúlveda

When King Juan II dispatched Judge Miguel Sánchez to Plasencia it was for the specific purpose of determining who was involved in a regional conflict over fishing, grazing, and agricultural rights. At stake was whether the city council of Plasencia could project and maintain its authority over its peripheral lands that the *Señor de Oropesa* and the *Señor de Valverde* had claimed as their own. However, on September 3, 1431, when the judge gathered members of the city council and residents from neighboring villages to take testimony on the matter, he learned that the dispute had inflicted a costly toll on the region's inhabitants. According to a few villagers from Jarandilla, events took a turn for the worse when their local council, "claimed all of the surrounding land around Jarandilla as a part of their jurisdiction and erected a hanging gallows." As events unfolded, innocent men were "imprisoned" and held hostage for "great quantities of maravedis." The most fortunate victims had their "hands bound." Others, like Rabbi Abraham Deloya were "shackled in chains." The least fortunate of them, a Jewish couple, only appeared in the record as, "the bodies of Fartalo and his wife."<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

From the mid 1420s until the late 1440s, just as the Carvajal and Santa María family confederation was solidifying their control of the cathedral of Plasencia and the city council, several pressing crises confronted the clans. At the most fundamental level, these challenges related to social and political transformations occurring within the Kingdom of Castile. Ever since the devastating Christian riots and conversion "progroms" of the 1390s, which targeted both Castilian Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity (*conversos*), the traditional Iberian pattern of interreligious co-existence (*convivencia*) began to break down.<sup>2</sup> For Plasencia, this situation was particularly dire as

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<sup>1</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel Sánchez de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."

<sup>2</sup> Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 32-33.

the city's population in 1400 was exceptionally diverse—42 percent of Placentinos were Jewish, 24 percent were Muslim, and 34 percent were Christian.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Jewish quarter of the city, the *aljama*, was not a religiously homogenous residential community, but rather one where Christian and *converso* clans lived and worshiped alongside of one another.

Responding to this actively hostile environment that targeted the remaining Jews for violence and conversion, in the early 1400s several Placentino Jewish families built a protective, walled collection of homes known as the *Apartamiento de La Mota*. Unfortunately, the Jewish families' effort to insulate themselves and their local synagogue was short-lived. At the end of the 1410s, *Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga purchased a section of *La Mota* and began to build a substantial housing complex within it. By the 1420s, *La Mota* no longer offered its protective powers.

This continuity and escalation of Christian animosity directed towards Jews had a profound financial impact on the cathedral of Plasencia and local noblemen such as *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal. From the 1420s to the 1440s, Jewish families had provided both the church and noblemen a steady and reliable source of tenants through their leasing of properties in the Jewish *aljama*. Thus, for the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, it was vital from an economic standpoint to protect the Jewish families under their care, as well as to maintain the religiously diverse residential nature of the city.

At the end of the 1420s and the beginning of the 1430s, just as the religious turmoil began to subside within the city, a second fundamental transition within the Castilian kingdom began to unfold—namely, a substantial increase in political unrest,

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<sup>3</sup> Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 66; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 105.

violence, and economic competition. In the region surrounding Plasencia, this took the form of a secular challenge to the Carvajal-Santa María confederation's authority over lands at the periphery of the city. Two local lords, García Álvarez de Toledo (the *Señor de Oropesa*) and Pedro Niño (the *Señor de Valverde*), directed residents in neighboring villages to deny and block access to the city of Plasencia's grazing, fishing, and agricultural rights in these territories. The records of a 1431 royal judicial inquest into the ensuing conflict between the city council of Plasencia, these lords, and neighboring villages, expose the nature of secular jurisdictional conflicts at this time, as well as the precariousness of life for Christian commoners and Jews. Cumulatively, this regional conflict over natural resources, as well as the social and religious disruptions to Iberia's tradition of *convivencia*, highlights how the Carvajals and Santa Marías responded to their changing times.

#### **THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND PROTECTING CARVAJAL AND SANTA MARÍA FAMILY INTERESTS**

Throughout the early and mid 1400s the Carvajal family and *converso* Santa María clan demonstrated a uncommon respect and appreciation for what scholars describe as *convivencia*, the cooperative and competitive tension bred by the commingling of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian peoples on the Iberian Peninsula. According to Spanish historian Thomas Glick, "*convivencia*....carries connotations of mutual interpenetration and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion."<sup>4</sup>

*Convivencia* began to unravel in the Kingdom of Castile during the 1390s when Christians unleashed devastating violence upon Jewish communities and forced large

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas F. Glick, "Convivencia: An Introductory Note," in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick, and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1992), 1.

numbers of religious minorities to convert to Christianity. After the attacks on the Jewish quarters (*aljamas*) in Sevilla, Toledo, Cordoba, and other communities, it is estimated that as many as 100,000 Jews converted to Christianity, that 100,000 Jews were killed, and that another 100,000 Jews fled to Muslim territories or gone into hiding.<sup>5</sup> Although these events cast a dark shadow on the acceptance of Jewish communities in Christian Spain, these events created an opening for some elite Jews who converted to Christianity to access new occupational opportunities in the Kingdom of Castile. Among the most successful converts were elite Jewish families like the Ha-Levis of Burgos who were baptized as Catholics during the 1390s and transformed themselves into the ecclesiastical and royal administrative family known as the Santa Marías.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of the violence against Jews concluded at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century after Castilian King Enrique III (1390-1406) repeatedly demanded his subjects cease their harassment of both Jews and new converts to Christianity.<sup>7</sup> In a July 30, 1392 royal *cedula* sent from the city of Segovia, he mandated to all persons living in the kingdom:

No person shall obligate Jews to become Christians by force, nor make listen to a sermon against their will, nor mistreat them, because is counter to Christian charity.<sup>8</sup>

As the king was still three years from the age of majority, his royal advisers and tutors likely had a profound impact on the king's decision to call an end to the violence.<sup>9</sup> Among the most powerful advisors surrounding King Enrique III were Ruy López

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<sup>5</sup> Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 113; Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Serrano, *Los Conversos: D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena*, 52, 62; Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 304.

<sup>7</sup> Pedro López de Ayala, *Cronica de Enrique III* ed. Constance L. Wilkins and Heanon M. Wilkins (Madison: The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, Ltd., 1992), 24.

<sup>8</sup> AHMB Legajo HI-2961.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Charles Lea, "Ferrand Martínez and the Massacres of 1391," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Jan., 1896): 216; Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 24-25.



Davalos, *Constable* of the army; Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, the *Mayordomo* of the royal house; and Diego López de Estúñiga, *Justicia Mayor*.<sup>10</sup> In other specific cases, as in the Santa María family's ancestral city of Burgos, King Enrique III sent communiqués that enhanced these basic religious protections. Not only would the youthful king and his advisors not tolerate the forced conversion of Jews, but the royal administration also directed *Regidor* Alvar García de Santa María (the uncle of the future Bishop of Plasencia, Gonzalo García de Santa María), to enforce the decision to allow forced converts to return to Judaism.<sup>11</sup> On this issue, the king's pronouncement stated:

Many [Jews] had converted and now wanted to return [to their faith]...Not one person should harrass them, and if some of amount of them were to return [to Judaism], no one should seize them.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Castilian monarchy's concern for Jewish communities, or *aljamas*, harkened back to the traditional political and social norm of *convivencia*, the call to protect Jews was also an acknowledgement that Jewish communities were a vital component of the economy. At the kingdom level, the crown relied on Jewish communities to pay a religious poll tax (*cabeza de pecho*), to provide monies to fight wars against Islamic Granada, as well as to offer loans for other royal activities.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the *aljamas* in each community contributed to the royal coffers. For example, in the early 1400s, the Jewish *aljama* of Plasencia paid the king 10,250 maravedis annually in *cabeza de pecho* taxes.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the Placentino Jewish community was a financially

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<sup>10</sup> J. C. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 401.

<sup>11</sup> AHMB Legajo HI-2960.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> AHCB Volume 48, Folio 250; AHCB Volume 46, Folio 424; AHCB Volume 5, Folios 51-51v.

<sup>14</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 300, Documentos 8(6), 9(5); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 299, Documentos 1(4), 1(6), 2(1); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 303, Documentos 42, 51; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 79; Hervás, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 174-180.

valuable asset that necessitated royal protection on economic grounds. This same economic argument appears to have been on the minds of Christian Placentinos as well.

Plasencia's sizeable Jewish community was critical to the city's economic vitality. Although an exact population census for the city and Diocese of Plasencia is not available for the period between the 1420s and 1440s, tax records from the year 1400 indicate only 119 persons—40 Christians, 50 Jews, and 29 Muslims—resided in the city of Plasencia.<sup>15</sup> Thus, within the city limits, Jews were a key component of the population base. However, the Diocese of Plasencia's outlying villages and countryside dwarfed the city's population by a factor of 1 to 8; this expansive region contained 881 persons. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in 1494, the city's population grew almost nine-fold to approximately 1,000 persons, while the Diocese's countryside population increased five-fold to 4,890 persons.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, no estimates of the overall number of Jewish residents in Plasencia or the surrounding area are available for the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

In total, these statistics suggest that the city of Plasencia's population from the 1420s to 1440s might have numbered roughly 300 to 500 persons, assuming a linear population growth rate. While the Jewish community probably did not grow as fast as the Christian community due to the harsh realities of anti-Jewish sentiment in the kingdom, Jews likely remained a substantial component of the total population of the city.

From the 1420s through the 1440s, the city's Jewish residents became an increasingly critical component of the local economy—one that the cathedral of Plasencia and noble land-owning families (such as the Carvajals) relied upon as a steady source of income. While the Castilian king and seigniorial lords enjoyed the unique financial

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<sup>15</sup> Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 66; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra. Proyección de un pasado y reflejo de una época*, 105.

<sup>16</sup> Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 67; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra. Proyección de un pasado y reflejo de una época*, 106-107.

rewards of a poll tax imposed on Jewish (and Muslim) subjects, local communities benefited from the leasing of homes and property to Jewish families. Even though Plasencia's Muslim population was much smaller than the Jewish community, Muslim residents also rented homes from the cathedral and local Christian families. While some Jewish and Muslim families, such as the Cohens and Serranos, owned homes and property in Plasencia, many others leased their residences from the cathedral and noblemen.<sup>17</sup> Although there are no records that reveal why Jews and chose to rent properties from the church and nobility, it seems likely that both religious groups did so to reduce the likelihood that they would be the targets of Christian harassment and violence.

During Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's term (1424-1446), a period when the Carvajal-Santa María confederation dominated the cathedral chapter, the church departed from prior local church policies by increasing access to housing leases for Jewish and Muslim families. While the prior cathedral leadership only leased four percent (4%) of church houses to religious minorities, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation actively directed twenty-two percent (22%) of all leases to Jews and Muslims.<sup>18</sup> This amounted to an almost six-fold increase in access for Jewish and Muslim tenants. (See Table 1: Cathedral Housing Leases, 1401 to 1446.) Thus, the Catholic-*converso* confederation displayed a higher level of acceptance of providing housing

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<sup>17</sup> ACP Legajo 2, Documento 55; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 22.

<sup>18</sup> These lease rates, as well as all other lease rates reported here, were calculated using 139 separate church contracts reported in the ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 29v-428. The specific Jewish and Muslim contracts identified in this analysis are found in Ibid., Folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v. The only religious minority to rent a home from the cathedral of Plasencia between 1401 and 1424 was "Don Arradamen", a Muslim master carpenter. Don Arradamen leased his house on the Plaza Mayor, adjacent to the *Iglesia de San Esteban*, for 150 maravedis a year.

leases to Jews and Muslims as compared to their church predecessors, Bishops Arias de Balboa and Gonzalo de Estúñiga.

Perhaps, the Carvajals and Santa Marías' openness to renting properties to religious minorities related to their own unique relationship. That is, in spite of the intense societal and religious animosities directed at *conversos* and Jews after the 1390s, the Carvajal family of "Old Christians" (i.e. those with an ancient Christianity pedigree) readily collaborated with the Santa María clan of "New Christians", who were very recent adopters of the Christian faith. For reasons unknown, the Carvajals viewed the Santa Marías as ideal professional and business partners, as evidenced by their intensive collaborations in the church. The Carvajals did not appear to espouse or subscribe to Castilians' negative perceptions of *conversos*. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Castilian society considered all *conversos*, even those like the Santa María clan of royal and religious administrators, to be of a lesser social and religious stature based purely on their *converso* identity. Therefore, the lower noble Carvajal family demonstrated an unusual openness toward *conversos* and Jews. Likewise, the Santa Marías showed that they harbored no ill will toward their former coreligionists, and in some cases, even rose to their defense. In sum, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation's decision to lease property in great numbers to Jews and Muslims in Plasencia indicates they were inclined to support the traditional approach of peaceful co-existence of the three faiths.

**Table 1: Cathedral Housing Leases, 1401 to 1446**

| Years     | Cathedral Leadership   | House Leases to Christians      |                                       | House Leases to Jews/Muslims     |                                      |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|           |  | Number and Percent of Total     | Average Lease Rate                    | Number and Percent of Total      | Average Lease Rate                   |
| 1401-1423 | Bishop Vicente Arias de Balboa, Bishop Gonzalo de Estúñiga, and the Fernández Family   | 27 houses (96%)                 | 55 maravedis                          | 1 house (4%)                     | 150 maravedis                        |
| 1424-1446 | Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María and the Carvajal-Santa María Family Confederation | 25 houses (78%)                 | 109 maravedis                         | 7 houses (22%)                   | 191 maravedis                        |
|           | <b>Percent Change from 1401-1423 and 1424-1446 (%)</b>                                 | 7% decrease in Christian Leases | 98% increase in Christian Lease Rates | 600% increase in Minority Leases | 27% increase in Minority Lease Rates |

Previously, Christians' tolerance of Jews and Muslims in Plasencia had come at a high price. When the Santa Marías and Carvajals gained control over the cathedral chapter in the mid-1420s, they inherited a collection of housing lease agreements with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim families. In the period before the family confederation's administration, from 1401 to 1423, Christian tenants on average paid 55 maravedis each year for a cathedral-owned home, whereas Jewish and Muslim tenants paid on average 150 maravedis per year. Thus, during this era, religious minorities paid almost three times more than Christians did for housing agreements. However, after the Carvajal-Santa María confederation garnered control of the cathedral chapter in 1424, the governing body changed their leasing practices. Under the families' management of the chapter, all new home agreements increased in price. However, Christians experienced a 98 percent increase in their rates, while Jewish and Muslim residents experienced only a 27 percent increase. From 1424 to 1446, Jewish and Muslim tenants on average paid 191

maravedis for a housing contract, whereas Christians paid 109 maravedis. Thus, even though religious minorities paid more for their housing than their Christian counterparts, the chapter raised lease rates more aggressively for Christians than they did for Jews and Muslims. Typically, the cathedral's Jewish and Muslim tenants were tradesmen, as opposed to religious leaders like Plasencia's rabbis who tended to live in Jewish-owned homes.<sup>19</sup> The cathedral's clients included a Muslim family of tailors (the Chicalas), as well as Jewish shoemakers (the Arusos), clothing-shearers (the Caces/Gonzálezs), blacksmiths (the Arrañons), and military arms makers (the Capas). (See Table 2: Cathedral Housing Leases to Jews and Muslims, 1430s to 1440s.)

Given that the Carvajal and Santa María families managed the cathedral's operations from the 1420s to the 1440s, it seems likely that their willingness to provide additional housing to Jewish tenants indicated that interfaith cooperation might have been especially vibrant at this time. As illustrated in Table 2, the cathedral signed seven church leases with Jews and Muslims during this decade. Church administrators were also open-minded to leasing houses to families of mixed faiths—that is, families with Jewish and *converso* members. For instance, the Caces and González family was a mixed religious household where Pedro González, a *converso*, lived with his son, Yuda Caces, who had retained his Jewish faith.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/17; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 86-92, 100-102; Marciano de Hervás. *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. I. De los orígenes a la Inquisición siglos XII - XVII* (Sevilla: Objectivo 4, Medios Audiovisuales, septiembre 2001), 38-50.

<sup>20</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 319-323.

**Table 2: Cathedral Housing Leases to Jews and Muslims, 1430s to 1440s**

| Year | Lessee   | Religious Faith            | Annual Lease                          | Location   |
|------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1434 | Abraen Chicala and Amat (“the tailor”)   | Muslim                     | 320 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens | Plaza Mayor at Calle de Pañaderia  |
| 1436 | Yusefe Champus Arrañon; his son, Abraham Arrañon (“the blacksmith”); and Yefada Daza | Jewish                     | 110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens | Calle de Zapatería – behind homes owned by Diego González de Carvajal  |
| 1438 | Simuel Aruso and Abraham (“the shoemakers”)  | Jewish                     | 400 maravedis and 3 pairs of chickens | Plaza Mayor – next to the house of Don Arrodamen (Muslim carpenter) and the house of the heirs of Gonzalo Jiménez del Barco            |
| 1441 | Abraham Arrañon (“the blacksmith”)   | Jewish                     | 110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens | Calle de Rua   |
| 1441 | Yusefe Champus Arrañon (Lease transfer from his brother, Abraham)                    | Jewish                     | 110 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens | Calle de Rua   |
| 1442 | Zanfines Capa (“the chainmail maker”)  | Jewish                     | 120 maravedis and 2 pair of chickens  | Calle de Rua – next to the houses of Yusef Molio (“the shoemaker”) and the houses of the Clergy Chapter of the University of Plasencia |
| 1444 | Yuda Caces, son of Pedro González (“the clothing shearer”)                           | Jewish/<br><i>converso</i> | 170 maravedis and 2 pairs of chickens | Plaza Mayor  |

Particularly interesting is a 1442 lease to Zanfines Capa, a maker of chainmail (*jubetero*), because of the multiple economic, social, and religious interconnections revealed by the transaction.<sup>21</sup> First, it is apparent that Zanfines was most likely a recent arrival to the city because the cathedral of Plasencia’s chapter required him to provide a co-signer (*fiador*) for his housing lease.<sup>22</sup> By the 1430s, the practice of requiring a co-signer was limited to cases involving new members of the local community or younger

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Folios 340-345.

<sup>22</sup> As Zanfines was a sole proprietor, and not an apprentice to a craftsman, he was likely an older adult. If he was from Plasencia, then the cathedral would not have required him to provide a co-signer. As Zanfines had to produce the rabbi, a senior member of the local Jewish community, as a co-signer, this contract suggests that Zanfines was not a native of the city.

men procuring their very first church lease.<sup>23</sup> In this 1442 agreement, Zanfines Capa produced Rabbi Abraham of Plasencia, a well-known member of the community, as his co-signer. This contract also demonstrates the church did not require Jewish or Muslim parties to present Christian co-signers, but rather the church viewed well-known members of other religious communities to be trustworthy and legally recognizable parties. Equally fascinating is Zanfines' trade—that of a Jewish arms maker—meant that he likely provided defensive weaponry to the region's large collection of *caballeros*, such as the Carvajals, Estúñigas, Álvarez de Toledos, Amarazes, Camargos, and Monroys. This indicates that Jewish residents provided both financial contributions to the community, in the form of rents, as well as invaluable tools of war that were used by Castilians still pursuing the Reconquest (*Reconquista*) against Islamic Granada.

Church homes leased to the Jewish Capas and other religious minorities also expose the significant residential intermixing of the three faiths in Plasencia. (See Figure 1: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Residence and Interaction Patterns in Plasencia, 1420s to 1440s.) Although the Capas' homes were located on *Calle de Rua* in the Jewish *aljama*, they were also adjacent to venues that were important to the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Estúñigas. (See Figure 1, the Jewish home adjacent to “Univ. †”.)

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<sup>23</sup> Most church agreements that required a co-signer pertained to property transactions conducted by first-time renters, like Archpriest Pedro Fernández de Soria, who was the nephew of Prebendary Juan Rodríguez de Fuenteveros, and by individuals who lived outside of Plasencia, like Fernán Álvarez de Montealbán. See *Ibid.*, Folios 31v, 83-83v.



[illegible]

The Church of Saint Nicholas (*Iglesia de San Nicolás*) was of tremendous familial and historical importance for the Carvajals because it held the remains of the family's progenitors and it is where subsequent generations interred their family members.<sup>24</sup> This church, located in the Jewish quarter, was also especially vital to Plasencia's resolution of interfaith disputes.<sup>25</sup> (See Figure 1, item labeled "S. Nicolás †".) Specifically, in "extraordinary circumstances", a Jewish judge and a Christian judge stood on the church's steps and adjudicated cases that involved conflicts between individuals of different faiths.<sup>26</sup>

For the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, this city quarter was equally critical as it housed the leadership chapter for the cathedral's University of Plasencia (*Universidad de Plasencia*).<sup>27</sup> (See Figure 1, item labeled "Univ. †".) Also positioned at this location was the heart of the Jewish community, the synagogue, as well as the houses of the Jewish Brotherhood (*Cofradia de los Judios*), and the remaining portion of *La Mota*.<sup>28</sup> (See Figure 1, items labeled "Synagogue", "Cofr." and "La Mota".)

During the late 1420s, important Christian nobles also established their homes in the religiously diverse section of the Jewish *aljama*. The Estúñigas, the future Counts of Béjar and Plasencia, positioned their first homes and palace (*Palacio de los Marqueses de Mirabel*) in a part of *La Mota*.<sup>29</sup> (See Figure 1, item labeled "Estúñiga".) Similarly, the *Señores de Oropesa* (the Álvarez de Toledo family) and the Almarez clan owned homes

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<sup>24</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 42; ACP Legajo 4, Documento 6; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13; ACP Legajo 6, Documento 48.

<sup>25</sup> Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 139, Note 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 340-345.

<sup>28</sup> ACP Legajo 3, Documento 20; ACP Legajo 7, Documento 22.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 20; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/13 and 3/14; Hervás, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 100-102.

in this area.<sup>30</sup> (See Figure 1, items labeled “Álvarez” and “Alvarez”.) The Álvarez de Toledos’ housing complex, an elaborate structure with a “tower”, was either purchased by the Carvajals or transferred to the Carvajals by the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> The 1469 marriage of *Regidor* Diego de Carvajal to Elvira de Toledo likely facilitated this property transfer.<sup>32</sup> Thus, from the 1420s through the 1440s in an area clearly described as the Jewish quarter by the 16<sup>th</sup> century historian Friar Alonso Fernández, Christians, *conversos*, and Jews worshipped, labored, and resided together.<sup>33</sup>

Although most of the cathedral-owned homes were located in the Jewish *aljama*, these leased properties were adjacent to homes lived in and owned by the Carvajal and Santa María families. This suggests that there were no rigid social norms enforcing the physical separation of Jews and Christians in Plasencia. The Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Jewish clans all lived in a collection of closely clustered homes near the Plaza Mayor, in between *Calle de Rual/Zapatería* and *Calle de Trujillo*. Residing in these homes were *iCaballero* Diego González de Carvajal, Cathedral Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja and his sons (a Santa María family), and Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For records on the intermarriage of between the Carvajal and Alvarez families, as well as their property holdings, see ACP Legajo 4, Documento 9; ACP Legajo 4, Documento 46; ACP Legajo 4, Documento 47; ACP Legajo 269, Documento 3; ACP Legajo 12, Documento 10; Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 129-131. For records on the intermarriage of between the Carvajal and Álvarez de Toledo families, as well as their property holdings, see AHNSN Frias, Caja 1763, Documento 3, 31, and 32; AHNSN Bornos, Caja 705, Documento 3; and AHNSN Bornos, Caja 796, Documento 2.

<sup>31</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 77.

<sup>32</sup> AHNSN Frias, Caja 1764, Documento 32. Also, it should be noted that before the Carvajal and Álvarez de Toledo families would unite, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation would enter into a complex regional and jurisdictional conflict with the Álvarez de Toledos (late 1420s).

<sup>33</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 153-155; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 147. See also the map entitled, “Plasencia en 1400,” that the Spanish *Servicio Geografico del Ejercito* holds in its library. Source: Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 58.

<sup>34</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 20; ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 116, 174, 197v, 223v-225v; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 13; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. I*: 96-97.

Additionally, a Muslim family—the Barros—lived in the immediate vicinity.<sup>35</sup> (See Figure 1, items labeled “DGC”, “RC”, “Mus”, solid color boxes labeled “S.M.”, and the Jewish homes on the *Plaza Mayor*.) Deeper into the Jewish *aljama*, along *Calle de Rúa/Zapatería*, several Santa María clansmen resided in another three homes. This residential zone included a large housing complex rented by Diego Jiménez de Burgos, the nephew of Bishop Santa María, and two other housing contracts transferred from Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja to his kinsman, Ruy García de Salamanca, another Santa María relative.<sup>36</sup> (See Figure 1, two-tone color boxes labeled “S.M.” along *Calle de Rúa/Zapatería*.)

The remaining members of the Santa María and Carvajal families resided along *Calle de Trujillo* and close to the cathedral, at the periphery of the Jewish *aljama*. Included in this area were homes owned by Dr. Garci López de Carvajal and other houses leased by Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María, all of which were across the street from the cathedral and on *Calle de Iglesia*.<sup>37</sup> (See Figure 1, items labeled “GLC” and a two-tone color box labeled “S.M.”.) The bonds between the Carvajals and Santa Marías were so secure that during the 1430s the elderly Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal resided in a home with Alfonso García.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Christian, *converso*, and Jewish families were interspersed in the Jewish *aljama*. While the anti-Jewish riots of the 1390s had done much to damage Jewish-Christian interfaith relations in other regions of the kingdom, during the early to mid-1400s, Plasencia remained a city where groups of different faiths resided together.

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<sup>35</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 112-113.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 391v-392v, 393-394, 394-395v.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 208v-209, 217v-219, 252-256, 284v-297.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 208v-209, 217v-219.

In addition to the residential relationship between the Carvajal-Santa María dominated cathedral and the city's Jewish residents, the Carvajal family also leased their own private property holding to religious minorities. Like his first cousins in the cathedral chapter, *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal earned valuable income from Jewish families that rented houses from him.<sup>39</sup> Just behind Diego's personal residence on the *Plaza Mayor*, he leased three collections of homes to the Jewish individuals Yaco Zafia, Eza Harruso, and Yuce Pando. (See Figure 1, red and green two-toned color boxes.) For Jewish residents, a likely benefit of leasing housing from the cathedral or a Christian *caballero* landlord was the knowledge that they might enjoy better protection from Christian religious harassment because they, as tenants, provided a steady income stream to Christian property owners. Thus, a lease contract purchased more than shelter—it also shielded residents from anti-Jewish animosities like those that had arisen in the 1390s. In sum, the interrelated Carvajal families of Plasencia had a vested economic interest in making certain that the local Jewish population had access to safe and secure housing.

#### **DISRUPTIONS TO PLASENCIA'S TRADITION OF INTERMIXED JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN HOUSING**

Nonetheless, Plasencia was not free of anti-Jewish sentiment as there were serious disruptions to the traditional residential intermixing of Jewish and Christian families. Ever since the 1390s and the massive anti-Jewish riots that characterized this period Jews in the Kingdom of Castile and in Plasencia resided in a religiously-charged environment that placed their communities in economic, religious, and physical jeopardy. Although the exact date of construction is unknown, sometime before 1416, several Jewish families found it necessary to live in a fortified and gated collection of homes known as the

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<sup>39</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25, Folio 9v-10v.

*Apartamiento de La Mota*.<sup>40</sup> This enclosed section of homes was located across from the Church of Saint Nicolás. Contemporaneous militant Christian evangelization of Jewish communities in the region during the early 15<sup>th</sup> century may have been the impetus for the creation of *La Mota*. In 1411, Vicente Ferrer, an aggressive proselytizer in the Jewish *aljamas* of the Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile preached in the cities of Zamora and Salamanca, which are located just north of the city of Plasencia.<sup>41</sup> Ferrer went as far as to preach his message of conversion in these communities' synagogues.<sup>42</sup>

In response to these Christian initiatives, Plasencia's Jewish community built the enclosed *Apartamiento de La Mota*, which was secured with stone walls surrounding both homes and the synagogue.<sup>43</sup> The large wooden doors of *La Mota* were likely festooned with bronze or steel hardware and at night they could be closed and locked from within by a large metal bar (*aldaba*).<sup>44</sup> In 1416, there were two zones within the *apartamento*—one area contained the synagogue and multiple Jewish homes, and the other area included the dwellings of Tel Diaz de Vega, a local Christian city councilman (*regidor*).

Why Tel Diaz was the sole Christian property owner inside *La Mota* is not clear, but it does suggest that he may have been a recent convert to Christianity (*converso*). When the city council forced Tel Diaz to forfeit his properties inside of *La Mota* to Alvaro de Sande, due to unpaid debts, many details about the *apartamento* and its

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<sup>40</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/17; Hervas, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra*. Vol. II: 86-92, 100-102; Hervas, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra*. Vol. I: 38-50.

<sup>41</sup> José M. De Garganta and Vicente Forcada, *Biografía y Escritos de San Vicente Ferrer* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1956), 172-173.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 154. While there is no explicit evidence describing Ferrer's travels within the Diocese of Plasencia, the Estúñiga family would later construct a monastery bearing his name in Plasencia's *La Mota*.

<sup>43</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/17, Folio 42v.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

inhabitants emerged.<sup>45</sup> An accounting of properties conducted by Mayor Juan Sánchez and the scribe Fernándo Rodríguez revealed that Tel Diaz owned approximately five homes in the walled community.<sup>46</sup> Jewish families occupied all of Tel Diaz's properties, including Rabbi Abraham Deloya, Yucef Castaño, Symuel Abenabibe, Yuce Abencur, Cag Pardo, and Hayn and Symuel Daza.<sup>47</sup> In April 1416, the city council supervised the initial liquidation of Tel Diaz's holdings in order to settle Alvaro de Sande's petition. Fernándo de la Mota purchased all of these homes, but allowed the families to continue to reside in them. In an interesting display of the process involved in taking possession of a house, the scribe recorded that:

Fernándo entered into the houses lived in by Yucef Castaño [and other Jewish residents]. These houses, the best of all of them, had been owned by Tel Diaz. [Fernándo] took possession of the homes by physically walking into them...and then he closed all of its doors. He then opened the doors and shook the hands of Leticia and her husband, Symuel Abenabibe, and all of the other Jews living in these homes.<sup>48</sup>

In this manner, Fernándo de la Mota proceeded to secure all of his houses in the *apartamento*. Unfortunately for these families, less than eight months later the properties were sold again and purchased for 100,000 maravedis by Iñigo de Camudio, the shield bearer of Alonso de Sande.<sup>49</sup> By 1426, less than a decade after taking possession of these homes, the new owner forced all of the Jewish clans from their homes.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Plasencia's Jewish community was ultimately unable to secure an

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Folios 45-46v; Hervas, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra*. Vol. I: 42.

<sup>46</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documento 3/17, Folio 77v.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Folio 78.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Folios 90-90v.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Folio 91.

<sup>50</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documentos 3/13 and 3/14; Hervas, *Historia de los judios de Plasencia y su tierra*. Vol. II: 100-102.

adequate protective zone. *La Mota* came to resemble the traditional mixed-religious residential pattern previously characteristic of Plasencia.

The displacement of Jews from this part of *La Mota* was not necessarily part of any Christian plan to prevent Jewish families from separating themselves from the rest of the city's population. Rather, their ejection from these domiciles appears to be the product of a brewing competition among the region's local *caballeros*, the cathedral of Plasencia, and the Estúñiga family. Specifically, Iñigo de Camudio's purchase of these homes in *La Mota* appears to have been part of a secret arrangement for the Estúñigas to acquire property in Plasencia. Iñigo had served a critical role, some might say a deceptive one, when he executed the purchase of this section of *La Mota* not for himself or his lord, Alonso de Sande, but for Alonso's superior—Pedro de Estúñiga, the Count of Béjar, who was positioning to extend his political influence over the region.<sup>51</sup> After the mid-1420s, the Estúñigas would quickly consolidate their land holdings in this section of the Jewish *aljama*, which would in turn lead to a significant conflict with the Carvajal and Santa María confederation. The Estúñiga's efforts to secure properties in *La Mota*, which disabled the protective benefits provided to the local Jewish community, were only the beginning of a darker time for Plasencia's Jews. Just a few years later, in 1431, a tumultuous regional conflict would find Rabbi Abraham Deloya imprisoned and two of his coreligionists murdered.

#### **THE LIMITATIONS OF AUTHORITY: JEWS AND CHRISTIAN COMMONERS CAUGHT WITHIN A BROADER REGIONAL CONFLICT**

Although by the opening of the 1430s the Carvajal-Santa María confederation would exercise significant control over the cathedral of Plasencia and the city council, in

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<sup>51</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documentos 3/13 and 3/14; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 100-102.



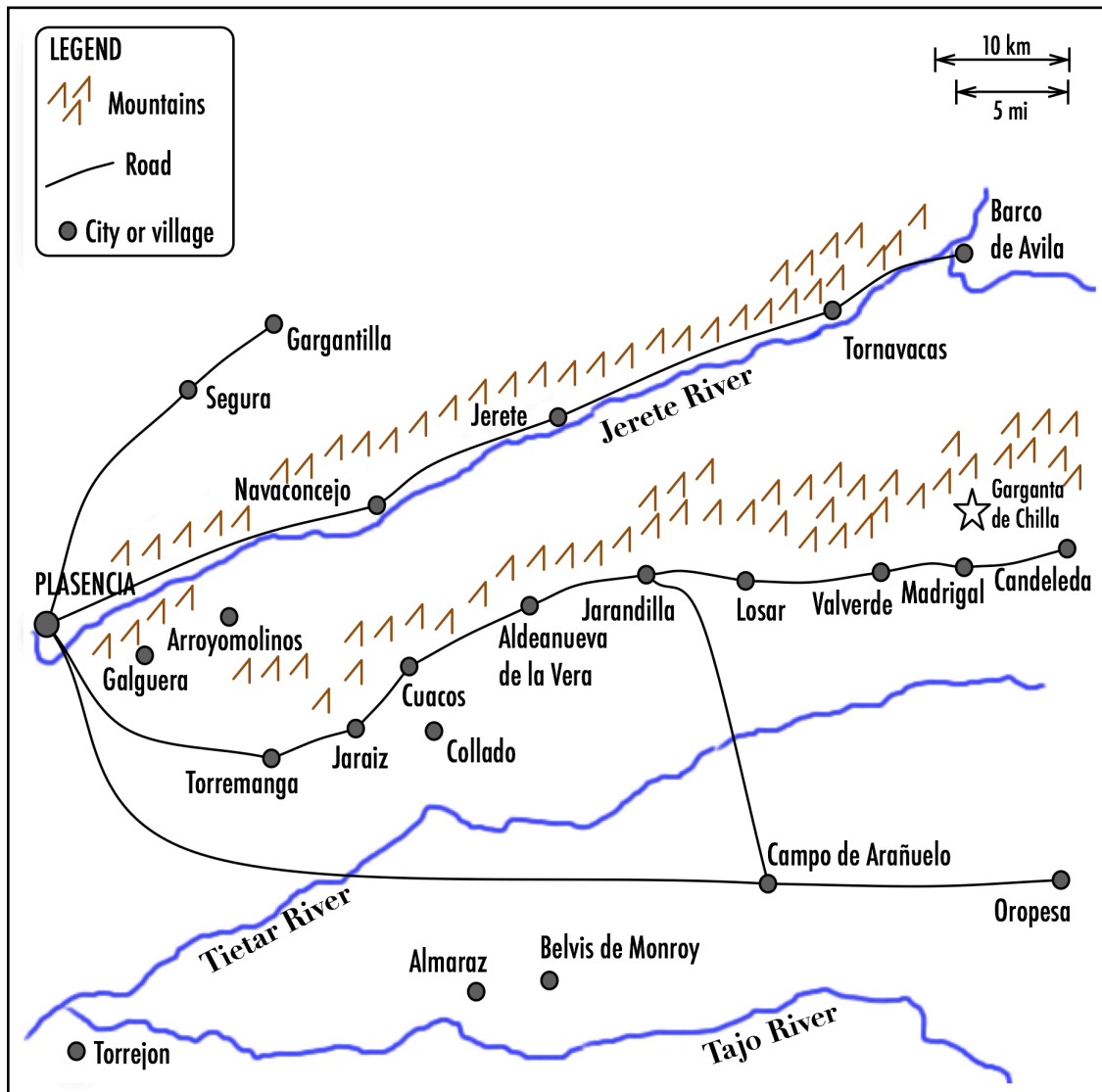
the previous decade the authority of the two families' was severely limited in the broader region. To a great extent, this was due to the competitive environment and inter-familial discord that characterized the leadership of the chapter of the cathedral of Plasencia, which was at the time populated by the Fernández, Estúñiga, Santa María, Carvajal, and Martínez clans. During the late 1420s, just as the Santa María and Carvajal families were gathering their collective power, the *Señor de Oropesa* (the Álvarez de Toledo family) and the *Señor de Valverde* (the Niño family) coordinated an attack the traditionally recognized jurisdiction of the city council over its neighboring villages. What ensued was a fierce regional conflict over natural resources (grazing, fishing, and agricultural rights) and secular leadership in the region.

During this era, it appears that the city council and the cathedral of Plasencia served as the de facto local authorities for resolving secular conflicts in the northeastern section of the Diocese of Plasencia. However, during the 1420s these instruments of power were insufficient to compel local lords like the *Señor de Oropesa* and *Señor de Valverde* to comply with the will of either governing institution. As evidence for this argument, in 1431 King Juan II dispatched Judge Miguel Sánchez de Sepúlveda to the city to investigate disputes over jurisdiction and property, as well as review multiple claims of improper imprisonments and the deaths of two Placentino Jews.<sup>52</sup> Tragically, Christian commoners and Placentino Jews became unwilling pawns in this regional quarrel over communal access and rights to lands near the village of Jarandilla de la Vera (referred to as Jarandilla), which is located east of Plasencia. (See Figure 2.)

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<sup>52</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."

**Figure 2:**  
**The Geographical Focus of the 1431 Royal Investigation**



In December of 1431, Judge Miguel Sánchez assembled the city council of Plasencia, along with representatives from neighboring villages, to oversee a judicial investigation into a conflict between the city of Plasencia and several local lords over property rights near and around Jarandilla. Among those participating from the city

council were *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal, Alfonso Fernández de Cabrerros (a Santa María clansman) and his son by the same name, and their familial ally, Alfonso Fernández de Logroño.<sup>53</sup> The four men enjoyed a collaborative relationship, which they employed previously to direct many of the council's actions. For instance, just three years earlier, the four *corregidores* and their relatives inside the cathedral of Plasencia had overseen the city council and cathedral's initiative to share royal transit tax collections (the *portazgo*).<sup>54</sup>

Also gathered for the hearings, which were held in the Church of St. Vincent, were residents from the neighboring communities of Losar, Arroyo Molinos, Jarahiz, Cuacos, Aldeanueva de la Vera, Jerete, Navaconcejo, Ojalvo, Esperilla, Gargantilla, Segura, and Tornavacas.<sup>55</sup> Notably absent from the meeting were García Álvarez de Toledo (the *Señor de Oropesa*) and Pedro Niño (the *Señor de Valverde*) whose own interests ran counter to those from Plasencia and most other local communities. At the heart of the conflict, according to Judge Miguel Sánchez, was whether or not García Álvarez de Toledo had ordered the residents of Jarandilla to take someone prisoner if they fished, tended cattle, or farmed in the disputed lands.<sup>56</sup> Although King Enrique II had donated the villages of Jarandilla and Tornavacas to García Álvarez's father, Fernán Álvarez de Toledo (d. 1398), the territory surrounding these villages was not within the jurisdiction of the *Senores de Oropesa*.<sup>57</sup> To a lesser extent, the judge was also interested

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>55</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Jose Manuel Gutiérrez Rodríguez et. al., *Oropesa y Los Álvarez de Toledo* (Toledo: Diputación Provincial, 1985), 17.

in Pedro Niño's efforts to appropriate lands near the village of Valverde. Embedded in Miguel Sánchez's royal charge was only a hint of the deterioration of societal affairs in the region surrounding Plasencia, which the local lords and Plasencia's leaders could not resolve.

Indeed, in the years prior to the inquest, there was a significant increase in violence against persons and property in the kingdom as a result of convoluted property and jurisdictional conflicts involving the monarch, noble families, and churches.<sup>58</sup> The Carvajal family was engaged in these disputes. It is telling, for example, that three of the ascending members of the Carvajal clan received papal absolutions for their participation in violent clashes in the village of Trujillo and the surrounding region. In 1427, the Holy See granted Rodrigo de Carvajal, who would become the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar in the 1440s, and his cousin, Alvaro, "absolution of censure for...their armed intervention" in a conflict that left many persons in the village of Trujillo injured or dead.<sup>59</sup> Two years later (March 1429), the pope granted Juan de Carvajal, the brother of Rodrigo and the future Bishop of Plasencia, a more extensive papal dispensation for his participation in a "quarrel that resulted in bloodshed."<sup>60</sup> Juan's crimes were so problematic to his advancement in the church that Pope Martín V absolved the churchman of "all irregularities and infamy" that would prevent him from acquiring a religious benefice. Five months after receiving his papal dispensation Juan was able to assume a canon's position in the Cathedral of Palencia, which is located to the northeast

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<sup>58</sup> Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 69, note I.

<sup>59</sup> Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549), Volumen II* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1966), 302-303; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 213, Folio 19.

<sup>60</sup> Beltrán de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549), Volumen II*: 329-330; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 244, Folio 250.

of Plasencia.<sup>61</sup> Thus, it appears that the ecclesiastical relief that Juan and his brothers sought from the Roman Catholic Church was not linked to an isolated affair, but rather multiple regional disagreements, which ultimately required the intervention of an outside royal judge.

In a 1431 letter that accompanied Judge Miguel Sánchez on his journey to Plasencia, King Juan II endowed the judge with broad and comprehensive authority to review the discord in the Diocese of Plasencia. The king stated:

I have placed my trust in Miguel Sánchez de Sepúlveda, Bachiller of Law...to conduct an investigation regarding any items—all of them—including...pleas, ...allegations ...and thefts. And for half a year Miguel Sánchez can suspend the offices and powers of my local mayors and judges [to pursue this investigation].<sup>62</sup>

Thus, the king's decision to grant the judge this breadth of power reveals that the confederated families lacked sufficient political sway to resolve these regional conflicts and enforce peace in the greater diocese. It further suggests that King Juan II believed he needed to subjugate all local secular powers in the region to his supreme authority. Only in this manner could the judge resolve the conflicts. This circumstance was almost certainly due to the nature of Castile's overlapping secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Because the *Señor de Oropesa* and *Señor de Valverde* were the king's vassals, only the monarch could hold them to account in secular affairs. These *señores* had explicitly demonstrated through their actions that they believed the city council of Plasencia lacked any authority to impose its decisions and mandates on territories considered outside its periphery (*termino*). In particular, the *Señor de Oropesa* appeared willing to test the limits of his jurisdictional authority outside of the villages of Jarandilla

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<sup>61</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549), Volumen II*, 332; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives ) Reg. Suppl. 244, Folios 19v-20.

<sup>62</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."

and Tornavacas. A critical focus of the judge's investigation and findings would center on the extent of Plasencia's periphery, particularly the area to the east of the city.

As all of the claimants framed the conflict as a secular matter, and not as a church issue, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation was unable to harness the authority of the cathedral of Plasencia to resolve the matter in their favor. If the issue were ecclesiastical in nature, then Bishop Santa María and the cathedral's church chapter could claim jurisdiction over all lands west of the Cathedral of Ávila and the Monastery of Guadalupe. However, the jurisdictional conflict did not pertain to church properties or the payment of church taxes and therefore the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation could not exercise the church's power in the matter. Thus, to ensure that Judge Miguel Sánchez had sufficient authority to enforce an agreement among the parties, the king empowered him with absolute secular authority over all parties.

The line of questioning pursued by the judge focused on five issues pertaining to actions of several of the residents of Jarandilla:

- (1) Did they occupy and take possession of the disputed lands belonging to the city council of Plasencia?
- (2) Did they pay the city council for these lands?
- (3) Had they taken anyone prisoner?
- (4) Had they erected a hangman's gallows in the disputed lands?
- (5) Did they do any of these things with the help of García Álvarez de Toledo?<sup>63</sup>

Judge Miguel Sánchez's questions quickly revealed critical facts about Jarandillans' activities as well as the obstinance of García Álvarez de Toledo and Jarandilla's village council. Not only did García Álvarez fail to present himself at the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

hearing, but the only men from Jarandilla compelled to attend the inquiry were Juan Sánchez de Castillo, Pedro Fernández, and Diego Gómez, none of whom held any official position on their local council. With each response that these men provided to the judge's questions, the inquiry verified that García Álvarez had claimed the disputed properties as his own seigniorial lands. Further, García Álvarez had ordered the residents of Jarandilla, who were his vassals, to enforce a fishing and herding ban in nearby areas, thereby disturbing the traditional "peace and coexistence" of the local communities.<sup>64</sup> Thus, if García Álvarez and the residents of Jarandilla could effectively expand the generally accepted boundaries of the village of Jarandilla, then both parties could claim new income-producing resources as their own. In effect, García Álvarez and Jarandillans were attempting to redraw the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the city of Plasencia.

The men from Jarandilla also explained to Judge Sánchez that events took a turn for the worse when their local village council, "claimed all of the surrounding land around Jarandilla as a part of their jurisdiction and erected a hanging gallows."<sup>65</sup> As the line of questioning proceeded, these men also noted that some of their unnamed neighbors had taken three local pastoralists from the village of Losar, as well as Rabbi Abraham Deloya of Plasencia, hostage and had transported all of them to García Álvarez's village of Oropesa. Cumulatively, these findings demonstrated that the *Señor de Oropesa* had aggressively pursued his claims to these lands through his proxies in Jarandilla, who willingly used physical force, intimidation, detentions and fines, as well as the threat of hanging against anyone that trespassed into these disputed areas.

The testimony from the men of Jarandilla also exposed the limits of what Judge Miguel Sánchez could accomplish in the case. He was ultimately unable to force the men

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

to name any member of the group that had taken hostages. Moreover, the absence of García Álvarez, or any his personal representatives, from the proceedings highlights how little power the king had to compel the *Señor de Oropesa* to appear and address the parties' claims in this specific investigation.

Although García Álvarez did not attend the hearing, Judge Miguel Sánchez's questions revealed that he believed the city council of Plasencia was the proper local authority and owner of the disputed lands. (See Figure 3.) By framing the question, "did the residents occupy and take possession of the disputed lands belonging to the city council of Plasencia," he explicitly accepted the Placentino's claims.<sup>66</sup> The judge was on solid legal ground because the *Fuero de Plasencia*, the royal document establishing the rights and privileges of the city of Plasencia, granted the lands in question to the city.<sup>67</sup>

Judge Miguel Sánchez's direct questioning of the residents of the village of Losar established the customarily acknowledged eastern periphery of the city. These lines were explicitly marked with boundary stones (*mojones*). The eastern reaches of the periphery abutted Pedro de Estúñiga's secular lordship of Barco de Ávila and Pedro Niño's ownership of the villages of Valverde and Madrigal. However, according to the residents of Losar, the land situated in between these two seigniorial lands, which was close to Garganta de Chilla.

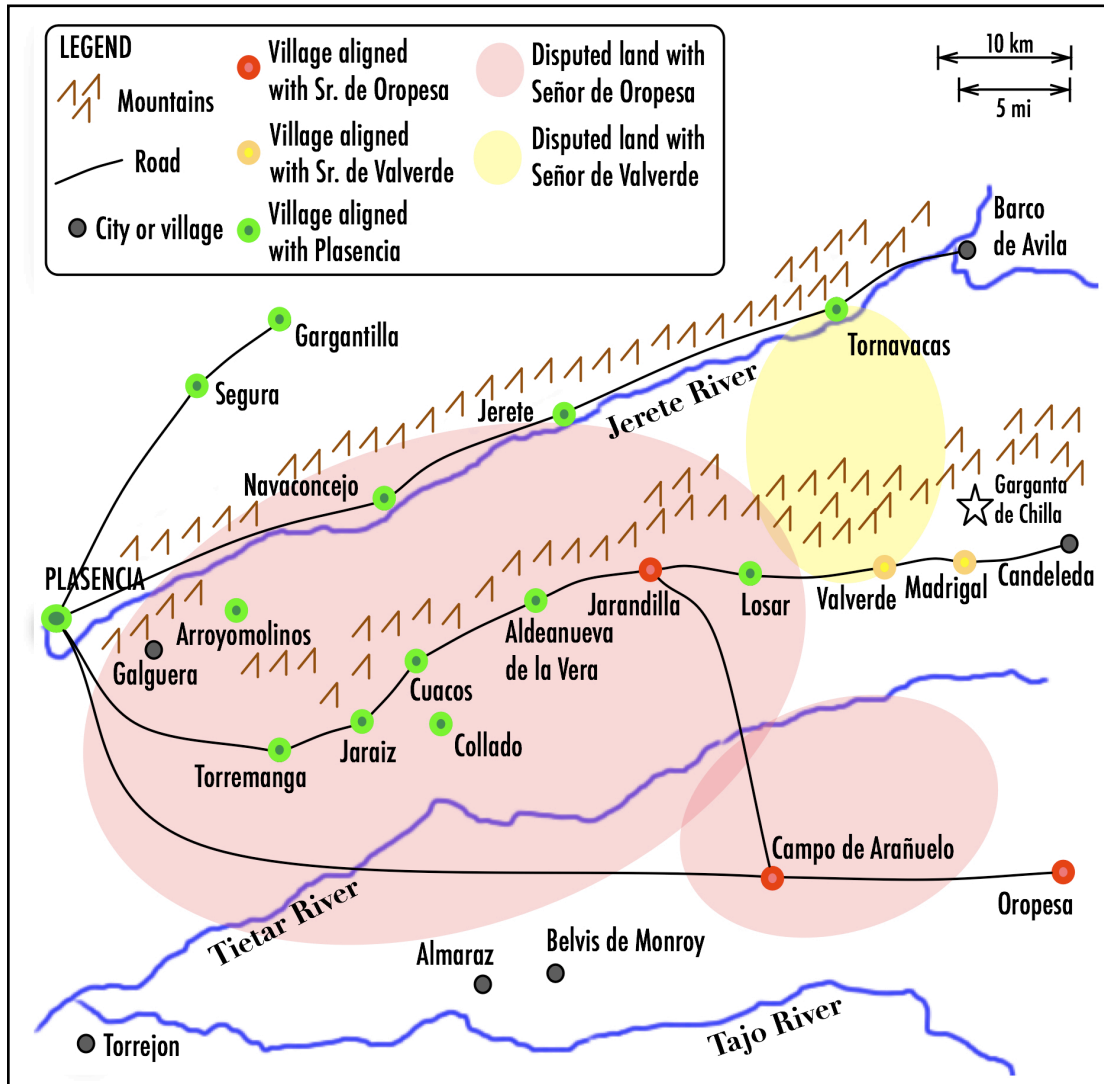
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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 7.



**Figure 3:**  
**Competing Jurisdictional and Ownership Claims**



By securing this testimony, which occurred under the approving eyes of the Carvajal-Santa María-dominated city council of Plasencia and in the venue friendly to these clans (the Church of St. Vincent), Judge Miguel Sánchez established the furthest eastern boundary of Plasencia (between Barco de Ávila and Candeleda). The findings

were damning, as they demonstrated that Pedro Niño (*Señor de Valverde*) had encroached into Plasencia-owned lands close to the village of Losar and north toward the village of Tornavacas and the River Jerete. Curiously, although the *Señor de Oropesa* owned Tornavacas, it was the *Señor de Valverde* who contested the city of Plasencia's rights in this region.<sup>68</sup> It seems likely that García Álvarez offered Pedro Niño something of value, perhaps control or use of his lands in Tornavacas, in return for his assistance with contesting Plasencia's jurisdiction.

Additional testimony highlighted the accepted southeastern boundaries of the jurisdiction of Plasencia. Specifically, witnesses indicated that an unknown party had tampered with and removed boundary stones demarking the city council of Plasencia's southeastern periphery near Campo de Arañuelo—a village that was under the lordship of García Álvarez (*Señor de Oropesa*).<sup>69</sup> These witnesses definitively noted that although the *Señor de Oropesa* rightfully claimed the village of Jarandilla as his own secular jurisdiction, all of the territories surrounding this village fell within the city of Plasencia's authority. Thus, with the exception of Jarandilla, all of the *Señor de Oropesa*'s seigniorial lands fell south of the Tietar River. The judicial process also exposed the unwarranted seizure of cattle and prisoners in and around Jarandilla, as well as in around other villages immediately adjacent to Plasencia, such as the village of Galguera. In sum, Judge Miguel Sánchez utilized this judicial method to map the physical topography, including referencing mountains, pastures, and valleys, in order to clarify and validate the jurisdictional claims of the city of Plasencia.

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<sup>68</sup> Alfonso Franco Silva, "Oropesa: El Nacimiento de un Señorío Toledano a Fines del Siglo XIV," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, Vol. 15 (1985): 309.

<sup>69</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Oropesa y Los Álvarez de Toledo*, 17.

In addition to reinforcing the physical boundaries of the city of Plasencia, the inquiry also revealed Plasencia's relationship with other local communities. The judge's inquest confirmed that the villages and inhabitants of Arroyo Molinos, Torremanga, Jaraiz, Collado, Cuacos, Aldeanueva de la Vera, Losar, Jerte, and Navaconcejo perceived themselves to be within the secular jurisdiction of the city council of Plasencia. As such, these residents likely expected Plasencia to protect them from malfeasance and the predatory behavior of the *Señor de Oropesa* and *Señor de Valverde*. Interestingly, although the residents of the village of Tornavacas were a part of the *Señor de Oropesa's* seigniorial jurisdiction, they too claimed to be outside the authority of García Álvarez.

The judicial process also exposed the willingness of local communities to use the royal legal process to pursue the redress of wrongs against them. For example, several men from Aldeanueva de la Vera, Cuacos, and Tornavacas readily confirmed that, "García Álvarez ordered that no one was to fish from the Jerete River in that area," and that the *señor* had taken many local residents prisoner.<sup>70</sup> Others, like the Sánchez family of shepherders, added that the *Señor de Oropesa* incarcerated these residents, as well as other "poor men", until their families paid "great quantities of maravedis".<sup>71</sup> The conflict extended to lower nobles, like Martín Fernández de Toledo, when men took his herdsmen with their "hands bound" to Jarandilla and confiscated his cattle.<sup>72</sup> By presenting their claims to Judge Miguel Sánchez, it appears that these and other parties hoped to recoup lost assets and the unfair imposition of ransoms for hostages.

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<sup>70</sup> AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel de Sepúlveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad."

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps those most unable to protect and defend themselves during this regional conflict were the Jewish residents of Plasencia. During the investigation, several imprisoned residents of Jaraiz confirmed that men from Jarandilla had not only taken Rabbi Abraham Deloya captive, but that he was singled out for harsher treatment when his hands were not bound, but instead “shackled in chains”.<sup>73</sup> The group of prisoners noted that their captors later transported the rabbi to their village of Jarandilla and held him captive for an extended period of time in an isolated house in the mountains. Although the rabbi appeared to survive the disturbing and demeaning ordeal, two of his coreligionists were not as fortunate. The shepherders Juan and Pascual Sánchez of Tornavacas reported they had seen men transporting the “bodies of Fartalo and his wife”, both Jews from Plasencia, to the village of Oropesa.<sup>74</sup> Although no one could elaborate on the circumstances of their deaths, it is possible that they were victims of Jarandilla’s gallows.

Although local Christians suffered the temporary loss of liberty, monies, and assets during this conflict, the judge’s inquiry revealed that no Christian lost his or her life during these events. The death of the two Jewish residents of Plasencia, and the lack of additional questioning on the matter by Judge Miguel Sánchez, revealed that Plasencia’s Jews lived a precarious existence in a society that targeted them for harsh punishment and sometimes murder. Although the archival record does not preserve the final ruling of Judge Miguel Sánchez de Sepúlveda, the thrust of his investigation demonstrated his willingness to support the claims of the municipal council of Plasencia over the assertions of regional lords. It was a position that was more favorable to the king because he ultimately controlled city councils, which served as valuable royal

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

counterbalances to independent-minded seigniorial lords.<sup>75</sup> Fortunately for the Carvajal and Santa María clans, whose members served as the monarch's counselors and on his city council in Plasencia, this arrangement also benefited the two families' efforts to fortify their own political and economic positions in Plasencia.

Cumulatively, the royal inquest of 1431 demonstrated that liberty and livelihood in Plasencia was dependent on a complex interaction of political, economic, and religious factors. The nature of the investigation revealed that the Kingdom of Castile and Leon existed as a patchwork of royal, municipal, religious, and seigniorial jurisdictions. When local city councils and local lords could not agree on how to balance the needs of these jurisdictions, the king's supreme authority was required to settle disputes. In particular, Christian commoners and religious minorities such as Jews often found themselves trapped in the mechanics of these conflicts.

Although the Carvajal-Santa María confederation would effectively clear this jurisdictional hurdle in 1431, they would soon encounter an even more problematic situation and challenge to their local authority. The *Señor de Oropesa* and *Señor de Valverde* had proved worthy adversaries of the confederated families, but they would be insignificant in comparison to the Estúñiga family, who the king made the *Condes de Plasencia* in 1441.

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<sup>75</sup> The king controlled the city council because he appointed its members, the *corregidores*.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **New Adversaries: The Estúñigas and the Cathedral of Plasencia, 1430s – 1440s**

#### **“The Great Malice of Our Times”, March 1444**

We are gathered here together in the [cathedral’s] Chapel of St. Catalina—some members of the city council and cathedral chapter, along with other city residents—to discuss...the conflict between this church and other persons. We must do this to defend the church’s property and rights. Our [defense] extends to certain individual members of the cathedral chapter and their personal entitlement to justice and the rule of law, personal liberty, ecclesiastical immunity and privileges, and control over their geographic jurisdictions....The conflict, hatred, and ill will that exist now are a sign of the great malice of our times, [especially] considering...some persons have been held prisoner...and others cannot come into the city, cannot go to their personal homes, and cannot even perform their customary religious duties. Further, it is apparent that earlier this year when Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal exercised his ecclesiastical authority in the defense of church properties—for some time he was forced from the city and physically not allowed to return. These injuries and others continue today.<sup>1</sup>

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the final years (1430s and 1440s) of Gonzalo García de Santa María’s term as the Bishop of Plasencia, the Carvajal and Santa María families would begin a long battle of political and economic attrition with the Estúñiga family. Even though the Carvajal family secured a tactical political victory in 1440 when they prevented their native village from falling under the secular lordship of Pedro de Estúñiga, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation suffered a debilitating and strategic loss in 1441 when the king named Pedro the Count of Plasencia. With the entry of the new count into Plasencia, the confederated families would witness the evaporation of their political and economic domination of the local city council. Utilizing the authority they had amassed in the

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<sup>1</sup>ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 274-279; ACP Legajo 25, Documento “Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cuaderno 1”, Folios 8v-12v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 “Estatutos y Sinodos”, unfoliated.

cathedral of Plasencia's chapter, the Carvajals and Santa Marías positioned themselves as a weakened counterbalance to the Estúñiga's surging political power in the region. With modest but effective methods, the clans rallied the cathedral of Plasencia to intervene against the Estúñigas. In one case, the families intruded and thwarted the Estúñiga's direct secular rule over local Placentino Jews. The clan acted to protect their economic interests by using property contracts to both retain access to Jewish renters as well as to purchase Jewish property.

The Carvajal and Santa María families further transformed the cathedral into a bulwark of family power by insulating its decision-making processes from outsiders and conglomerating the church's leadership into the hands of a few, select group of family members. This was a turbulent period in Castilian history as King Juan II was heavily engaged in military conflicts with his neighbors, the Kingdoms of Navarra and Aragon. The kingdom lived in a perpetual state of social and economic unrest resulting from extensive competition among minor nobles, local churches, and communities for control over income-producing resources. Left exposed to similar attacks on their assets and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the cathedral of Plasencia's churchmen initiated multiple reforms and initiatives to withstand the continuous physical and financial harassment of their newest adversary—*Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga. During this period, the churchmen were repeatedly threatened by the Estúñigas and prevented from performing their church duties—they lived, as they reported in 1444, “in fear.”<sup>2</sup>

Even as the Santa Marías and Carvajals managed the cathedral under constant duress, they also committed themselves to significant statutory reforms. While some of their efforts seem focused solely on enhancing their family assets, other acts

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

demonstrated the clans' intention to professionalize the administration of the church and to ensure its financial stability. Unlike their rapid and fortuitous ascent to power in the cathedral of Plasencia during the early 1420s, this era tested the resolve of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation and its ability to retain its local authority and relevance in a radically transformed city of Plasencia.

#### **AN EMERGING ENEMY: THE ESTÚÑIGA FAMILY, *CONDES DE PLASENCIA***

The year 1441 brought the rapid expansion of the Estúñiga family into the affairs of the city of Plasencia, and with their arrival, they planted the seeds for a forty-year conflict with the Carvajal and Santa María families. During the remaining four years of Gonzalo García de Santa María's term as Bishop of Plasencia, the confederated families' utilized their rule of the city council and cathedral chapter to thwart, albeit in modest ways, the Estúñigas' solidification of power in the region.

#### **Losing Plasencia to the Estúñigas**

The political chain reaction that initiated the families' competitive animosities commenced in 1440 when King Juan II named Pedro de Estúñiga as the new Count of Trujillo (*Conde de Trujillo*).<sup>3</sup> As the village of Trujillo was one of the ancestral homes of

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<sup>3</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 96; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 77-79; Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 35-36, 44-45. Additionally, in 1441, Pedro de Estúñiga appears with his new title as the *Conde de Trujillo*. See Pérez de Guzman, *Crónica del Rey Don Juan II* (Madrid: B.A.E., 1953), 604. Further, it should be noted that Pedro de Estúñiga was the eldest son of the deceased Diego López de Estúñiga, the former Chief Judge (*Justicia Mayor*) of King Juan II. In addition to benefiting from the extensive wealth accumulated by his father, Pedro de Estúñiga was the heir of his father's titles (*Justicia Mayor* and *Conde de Béjar*) and seigniorial lands that were widely distributed across the Kingdom of Castile and Leon. The most prominent of those territories were the family's newest lands in the village of Béjar, which was located in the Diocese of Plasencia. Although Pedro often found himself in constant confrontation with King Juan II's favorite, *Condestable* Alvaro de Luna, in 1423, Pedro de Estúñiga collaborated with de Luna in the defense of the king during a Castilian civil war. King Juan II faced a significant contest for the throne initiated by his brother, Enrique, who had the armed support of many Castilian nobles, as well as the support of the King of Aragon and the King of Navarra. When King Juan II defeated his enemies, he rewarded Pedro by granting him the title, and the lands associated with it, of the *Conde de Ledesma*. Years later, in 1440, when the



many regional knight families, such as the Carvajals, Orellanas, and Béjaranos, the community quickly demonstrated its unwillingness to accept Pedro as their new secular lord. Among the Placentino Carvajals that called Trujillo their childhood home were Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, a member of the city council of Plasencia and a royal adviser to King Juan II, and his recently deceased brother, Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal. Although these two men did not follow their father's example as *caballeros*, their brothers, Diego García de Béjarano and Gómez González de Carvajal, had maintained the family's commitment to arms and they continued to live in Trujillo. In October of 1440, when Gómez (mayor of the village of Trujillo) received a letter from King Juan II ordering the village to submit to Pedro de Estúñiga's authority under the penalty of the "loss of life and goods," he and his brother, Diego, refused to yield.<sup>4</sup> Instead, the Carvajals rallied the village's knights, prepared the castle for battle, and vowed to resist Pedro de Estúñiga's assumption of his lordship of Trujillo. With the promised aid and support of Gutierre de Sotomayor, the Master of the military Order of Alcántara (*Orden de Alcántara*), a bloody military engagement between many of King Juan II's leading knights seemed all but certain. If necessary, Pedro de Estúñiga promised, "he would take the village of Trujillo by force."<sup>5</sup> Pressured by the Carvajals' brinkmanship and determined not to risk a war between his knights, the king preserved Trujillo as a royally administered community. In its place, he offered Pedro the city of Plasencia.<sup>6</sup>

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king wished to reclaim the village of Ledesma, the king offered Pedro the village of Trujillo in compensation for his loss.

<sup>4</sup> Elisa Carolina de Santos Canelejo notes that Gómez González de Carvajal joined "Diego de Orellana" and other knights in the armed resistance to Pedro de Estúñiga's naming as *Conde de Trujillo*. However, it should be noted that Diego de Orellana was also known as Diego García de Béjarano Orellana "La Nueva". Both Diego and Gómez were brothers. See Santos Canelejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 79; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 96; Pedro Carillo del Huete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946), 353.

<sup>5</sup> Pérez de Guzmán, *Crónica del Rey Don Juan II*, 608.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 96.

While the preservation of Trujillo as a royal city was a tactical victory for the Trujillo-based Carvajal family, the loss of Plasencia to the Estúñigas was a devastating and a strategic loss for the Carvajal-Santa María confederation in Plasencia. The allied clans had invested significant human capital and energy to garner control of the cathedral of Plasencia—a lucrative prize that offered access to church positions and valuable church assets. Likewise, the enhanced collaboration between the cathedral and the city council of Plasencia from the mid-1420s until 1440, earned the Carvajal and Santa María clans the consistent acquiescence and approval of their fellow city councilmen. While the city’s regional property conflict with the *Señor de Oropesa* and *Señor de Valverde* (in 1431) had required the intervention of a royal judge, the families had demonstrated keen management and problem-solving skills in other affairs.<sup>7</sup> For example, in 1428, the Carvajals and Santa Marías guided the city council and the cathedral chapter through a potentially crippling standoff that occurred when several churchmen had threatened city officials with excommunication over a wine tax dispute.<sup>8</sup>

With the arrival of Pedro de Estúñiga as their new count, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation would find their local authority minimized and political influence curtailed. The clans likely feared that they would no longer be able to maximize their dominance on the city council to support their cathedral operations. With the consolidated authority they had amassed on the city council, by the late 1420s, the Carvajals and Santa Marías had effectively transferred the control and collection of the

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Five for a discussion of this regional conflict over fishing, grazing, and water rights, as well as AMP “Pesquisa hecha por Miguel Sánchez de Sepulveda corregidor de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad.”

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Four’s analysis of the wine dispute of 1431, as well as ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 264-271v.

city's royal trade tax collections (the *portazgo*) to the cathedral.<sup>9</sup> When Pedro de Estúñiga assumed his secular position as the *Conde de Plasencia*, which entitled him to the king's portion of the *portazgo*, it was highly likely he would no longer consent to this arrangement.

In December of 1441, King Juan II communicated the extent of the political and financial deference he expected the cathedral of Plasencia and the city council to extend to their new count. Not only should the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and the other noble families receive Pedro as their new lord, but his assumption of the city and its lands would include all "peripheral lands, tribute taxes, notary fees, trade taxes, rents, and all rights over the city."<sup>10</sup> From that point forward, the city council was required to direct the king's share of their tax collections and fees to the new *Conde de Plasencia*. In the past, the king had been inclined to share some of his proceeds with the city council.<sup>11</sup> Worse yet for the king's nobles on the city council was the loss of their political authority as *Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga would now directly rule the territory as his own. Required to be "obedient" to the count, several noble families elected to abandon their homes in the city rather than live under a peer's rule.<sup>12</sup> These men included Rodrigo de Monroy, who

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Four for a description of the city-cathedral trade tax (*portazgo*) agreement of 1428, as well as ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..." and ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>10</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 300, Documentos 8(6), 9(5); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 299, Documentos 1(4), 1(6), 2(1); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 303, Documentos 42, 51; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 79; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 174-180. The king granted the count all of Plasencia's "términos, martiniega, yantar, escribanías, portazgos, rentas, pechos, y derechos." *Martíniega* is a royal tribute paid on the saint's day of St. Martín.

<sup>11</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15.

<sup>12</sup> AHNSN Osuna, Caja 300, Documentos 8(6), 9(5); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 299, Documentos 1(4), 1(6), 2(1); AHNSN Osuna, Caja 303, Documentos 42, 51; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 79; Fernández, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 174-180.

retreated to his seigniorial lands in the nearby villages of Belvis and Deleitosa, and García Álvarez de Toledo, who returned to his own village of Oropesa.<sup>13</sup>

As the city of Plasencia enjoyed the benefits of a charter (*fuero*), in which the king established the rights and privileges of the city, Pedro de Estúñiga could not disband the municipal council and both the count and the city's nobles would live a contentious co-existence until 1488.<sup>14</sup> In that year, the Carvajal family would eagerly eject the *Condes de Plasencia* from the city at the request of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel and restore the city to direct royal rule.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, in the forty years of Estúñiga's governance (1441 to 1488), it was primarily the Carvajal and Santa María families that would regularly test the limits of the count's authority.

### **Intervening in the *Conde's* Relationship with the Placentino Jews**

During the remaining years of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's term, which concluded in 1445, the Carvajals and Santa Marías used a combination of personal wealth, church authority, and church statutes to block Pedro de Estúñiga's attempt to solidify control over the region and its inhabitants. Three months after he assumed his title, the Carvajal and Santa María families used their countervailing power in the cathedral to manipulate real estate transactions and to prevent the Estúñigas from consolidating control of key properties in the city's Jewish quarter.

Previous to the count's arrival, the Carvajal and Santa María families used their control over the city council to oversee Plasencia's Jewish population. Now, to protect themselves and some Jewish families from the Estúñigas, the allied clans transferred ownership of strategically located Jewish real estate to Carvajal family. In a transaction

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>14</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 7.

<sup>15</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Anales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*, 150-153; Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 185-187.

conducted on March of 1442, Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal facilitated *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal's purchase of multiple Jewish homes and properties owned by Juan de Bergara, Dana de Cerjo, Alenatar de Cerjo, and Abraham Almale.<sup>16</sup> These collections of homes were all located in the Jewish quarter of the city, precisely where the Estúñigas had begun to establish a presence in the 1420s. Not only were all of the domiciles and their corrals within the Jewish *aljama*, the Cerjo and Bergara homes were located in *La Mota*—adjacent to the synagogue and the Estúñiga's new palace.<sup>17</sup> Although Diego González purchased these houses, he also elected to lease the same properties back to the Jewish families.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the most questionable aspect of the property transaction was that Archdeacon Rodrigo noted that the actual sale of the properties purportedly occurred in 1430 and 1436, although the parties did not record the agreement until 1442, after Estúñiga's assumption of the city.<sup>19</sup>

This event is striking in terms of how it addressed both the multilayered goals of the confederated families, as well as the potential needs of the Jewish families. The credibility of the agreement appears dubious, especially in terms of the recorded sales dates. It suggests that the parties shared a common interest—perhaps collectively agreeing to lie about the dates of the property sales—in order to prevent the Jewish families and homes from falling under the complete control of the Estúñigas.

By executing the contract under the aegis of the cathedral of Plasencia, the Carvajal and Santa María families re-established a competing jurisdictional oversight

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<sup>16</sup> Archivo Municipal de Plasencia (AMP), uncatalogued document, "Expediente a instancia de Dona Ines María de Vargas...1815."

<sup>17</sup> ACP Legajo 7, Documento 22; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 20; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 298, Documentos 3/13 and 3/14.

<sup>18</sup> Archivo Municipal de Plasencia (AMP), un-catalogued document, "Expediente a instancia de Dona Ines María de Vargas...1815."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

over some Jewish residents that partially blocked the Estúñigas' expansion in the Jewish quarter. If the Estúñigas challenged or attempted to nullify the agreement, which was likely as they were consolidating personal property in Plasencia's Jewish quarter, then the cathedral chapter could threaten them with financial and religious penalties, including excommunication. Existing local church precedent, first established in 1396 and later reinforced in 1410, had clarified the supremacy of the cathedral of Plasencia over local lords and *caballeros* in affairs relating to ecclesiastical transactions and taxation.<sup>20</sup> In fact, before the Carvajal-Santa María confederation had garnered control of the cathedral chapter, the church temporarily excommunicated *Caballero* Diego García de Béjarano (a Carvajal family member) for failure to pay taxes (*diezmos*) to the church for earnings produced from his lands. Thus, it appears likely that any party that challenged an ecclesiastically administered transaction, such as Diego González's purchase of the Jewish homes in the *aljama*, would have been subject to similar church penalties. Furthermore, the Jewish residents that rented homes directly from the cathedral—such as the Arrañons, Dazas, Arusos, Capas, and Caces—arguably benefited from church protections as well.<sup>21</sup> Since the count's jurisdiction was purely secular, this cathedral chapter action resided outside of his authority.

Not only the cathedral chapter, but Diego González (the buyer) as well as the Jewish sellers realized tangible benefits from the property contracts. For Diego, a city councilman and the first cousin of the archdeacon, the transactions accomplished three goals: (1) they enhanced his family's property holdings that were later incorporated into

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Two for a discussion of the church-*caballero diezmos* conflicts of 1396 and 1410. ACP Legajo 282, Documento "Real Provisión de D. Enrique Espana que los Sres. de los lugares no impidan el arrendamiento de los diezmos obtenida a instancia del Sr. Obispo D. Pedro..." unfoliated; ACP *Extractos del inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 3, Documento 338; ACP Legajo 45, Documento 13.

<sup>21</sup> At this time, Estúñiga planned a three-fold increase of the religious poll tax on the Jewish *aljama*. ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 52v-53, 112-113, 200-202v, 223v-225v, 319-326v, 326v-328, 340-345, 361-363v, 378v-380v.

the entailed lands (*mayorazgo*) of his son, (2) they created a physical Carvajal presence next to the Estúñiga's housing compound, and (3) they provided Diego with the church's jurisdictional protection.<sup>22</sup>

For the Jewish parties, the property sales were more problematic although perhaps indicative of their differing perceptions of the Estúñiga and Carvajal families. It is likely that one of the two clans, either the Estúñigas or the Carvajals, pressured the Jewish residents to sell their homes in *La Mota*. If the Cerjos and Almales had not done so, then these families very likely faced eviction by the Estúñigas given that the *Condes de Plasencia* had chosen to amass and consolidate a number of properties in the area in order to create a substantial housing complex.

A communiqué sent by King Juan II to Pedro de Estúñiga just two months before the cathedral recorded the Carvajal-Jewish sales contracts provides some indication why the Jewish families might have chosen to sell their homes to the Carvajals rather than to the Estúñigas. This royal notice exposes the predatory nature of the Estúñigas and their likely approach to governing local Jewish residents. In January 1442, the king informed the count that he could only collect 3,500 maravedis in annual poll taxes (*cabeza de pecho*) from Placentino Jews and not the 10,200 maravedis that the count desired.<sup>23</sup> Although Juan II's existing agreements with the *aljama* of Plasencia entitled the king to a higher poll tax, after 1438, Juan II levied the lesser tax of 3,500 maravedis on the Jewish residents because, as he noted, "there are so few of them and they are poor."<sup>24</sup> The king's

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<sup>22</sup> For records on the Carvajals' *mayorazgos* in Plasencia, see ACP Legajo 1, Documento 29; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 11; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 22; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 42.

<sup>23</sup> AGS *EMR*, Legajo 1; AHNSN Osuna, Caja 215, Documento 10(2), Folio 58v; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 158-159, 181-182; Santos Canalejo, *El siglo XV en Plasencia y su tierra*, 111; M.A. Ladero, "Las Juderías de Castilla según algunos 'servicios' fiscales." *Sefarad*, Volume 31 (2) 1971: 254.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

note to Pedro, which specified the count was to collect the lesser amount, revealed Pedro de Estúñiga's possible intention to pursue as aggressively as possible the collection of substantial taxes from his Jewish subjects. Thus, it seems likely that the Bergara, Cerjo, and Almale families had much to fear from the Estúñigas as potential landlords. On the other hand, Diego González de Carvajal was a well-known landlord to many Placentino Jewish families like the Zafias, Harrusos, and Pandos. The property sale also had the blessing of the cathedral of Plasencia, which had a proven record of openness to providing Jews and Muslims with access to housing and income-producing lands.

In sum, these agreements provided an array of benefits to the Carvajal clan. The agreements reinforced the notion that Carvajal family was willing to maintain a traditional relationship of religious co-existence with the Placentino Jewish community. The cathedral of Plasencia had found a novel manner to intervene in the *Conde de Plasencia's* direct rule of his Jewish subjects. Lastly, the Carvajals acquired valuable territories within Plasencia that physically constrained the Estúñigas' consolidation of territory in the city.

#### **A TRANSFORMED CATHEDRAL: BULWARK OF THE CARVAJAL-SANTA MARÍA CONFEDERATION**

After the forceful entry of the Estúñiga family into Plasencia in 1441, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation's only remaining authority and access to economic opportunities resided in the cathedral of Plasencia. From early 1431 until 1446, the two families thoroughly transformed the cathedral into a bulwark to defend their familial as well as church interests. Not only did the clans insulate the cathedral chapter from families outside their alliance, as well as the *Conde de Plasencia*, but they pursued multiple reforms that generated new clerical positions and established more rigorous administrative statutes. Likewise, they continued to conduct the cathedral's operations as



a family business being certain to grant themselves personally beneficial contracts while also advancing their next generation of leaders inside the cathedral.

### **Insulating the Cathedral from Outsiders**

The Carvajal and Santa María family confederation utilized two primary methods to ensure that their dominance of the cathedral remained unchallenged and illusive to outsiders: (1) the enactment of a chapter secrecy statute and (2) the consolidation of the chapter's leadership into the hands of a few men. The chapter agreed to the secrecy statute, the first of its kind, in 1437. On the day the chapter enacted the statute, only a select group of churchmen collected for a private meeting in the smaller Chapel of St. Catalina (*Capilla de San Catalina*), as opposed to the traditional convening location of the Chapel of St. Paul (*Capilla de San Pablo*). Not every member attended the meeting as those in the room collectively agreed, "[that] not all of the chapter needed to be included in all matters."<sup>25</sup>

With the exception of Sacristan Sancho Ortiz de Estúñiga, the only canons or prebendaries present at the meeting were Santa María and Carvajal family members. As Sancho Ortiz had been a canon in the cathedral chapter since 1420, and had participated in the process of transitioning the leadership of the cathedral of Plasencia to the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, presumably he remained a trusted confidant in 1437.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Sancho appeared to possess limited resources, and thus he posed little threat to the Carvajals and Santa Marías. Unlike his affluent distant relatives, the future *Condes de Plasencia*, Sancho only had the financial means to lease one home from the church.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> ACP Legajo 25, Documento 14, Folios 53v-54; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 2, Folio 134. Note: Tomo 2 is a lost book of the *Actas Capitulares*. However, Legajo 25 provides this specific reference to the lost text.

<sup>26</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folio 67v.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 384v-387, 391v-392v.

Gathered together, the Carvajals, Santa Marías, and Sancho Oriz pledged their commitment to the secrecy agreement and then signed themselves with the cross. With their right hands raised to pledge, they swore, “never to reveal their secret discussions to any person”, and that if one should violate this statute, “[they] would face penalties imposed by the chapter that could not be reduced.”<sup>28</sup>

With closer command over the proceedings of the governing chapter of the cathedral, the confederated clans also moved to limit the participation of other families in critical leadership roles. From 1436 until 1442, Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal, Canon Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, and Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María passed the treasurer’s job back and forth from one another while holding their other existing official roles.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Bishop Santa María rotated the Vicar General’s title between his blood relations, Canon Gonzalo Gutiérrez, Archdeacon Alfonso García, and Juan Fernández de Cabreros. More importantly for the Carvajals, the chapter took the unprecedented step of converting the Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar into an unofficial hereditary office. As Gonzalo García de Carvajal advanced in age, he elected to step down as archdeacon and in his place his younger cousin, Rodrigo de Carvajal, assumed his title and jurisdiction in the winter of 1440.<sup>30</sup> For the next successive seven generations, the family held the archdeaconship.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the allied families so heavily weighted the cathedral chapter in their favor, that from the 1430s onward, the chapter’s goals closely mirrored the families’ goals. In essence, the clans and the local church were one and the same.

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<sup>28</sup> ACP Legajo 25, Documento 14, Folios 53v-54; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 2, Folio 134.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Folios 197v-313.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Folios 309-313.

<sup>31</sup> Successive Archdeacons of Plasencia and Béjar (1420-1578): Gonzalo García de Carvajal, Rodrigo de Carvajal, Garci López de Carvajal, Bernardino de Carvajal, Francisco de Carvajal. and Alvaro de Carvajal. See ACP Legajo 282, Documento 3 “Prebendados y Dignidades”, unfoliated.

## Responding to Attacks on the Cathedral and Its Families

One of the cathedral chapter's primary goals from the mid 1430s through the 1440s was to shield the cathedral and its administrators from the ongoing turmoil within the kingdom and the local region. The three most prominent sources of this turbulence were the growing power of Castile's noble families and their "attempts to control and exploit the monarchy," the Castilian King Juan II's continuous political and military confrontations with the Kingdoms of Aragon and Navarra, and the rise and fall of Juan II's favorite advisor, Alvaro de Luna.<sup>32</sup> Another component of these kingdom-wide disruptions was the unremitting conflict and competition between powerful secular lords, ecclesiastical leaders, and church dioceses. To be expected, property and other sources of income fostered the parties' animosity towards one another. For example, in July 1434, Pope Sixto IV named the cathedral of Plasencia and its chapter as his "judges" in the matter of securing restitution for substantial numbers of stolen church assets.<sup>33</sup> Specifically, the pope charged the Placentino church with the responsibility of recovering the "lands, villages, castles, and other possessions" usurped from the Dioceses of Toledo, Ávila, Salamanca, and Plasencia, by regional nobles and wayward ecclesiastical officials. Thus, Plasencia, like other Castilian communities, encountered significant discord and the degradation of the rule of law throughout this period.

Plasencia's political environment substantially deteriorated when the Estúñiga family began to exert its seigniorial power over the city in 1442. Like many of his predecessors, the 20<sup>th</sup> century historian Domingo Sánchez Toro characterized the

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<sup>32</sup> López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla, Tomo Segundo. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, No. 68* (Madrid: Estereotipia y Galvanoplastia de Aribau y Compañía, 1877), 547-653; Nicholas Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Alvaro de Luna* (London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1986), 1-31; Villalon, "The Law's Delay: The Anatomy of an Aristocratic Property Dispute (1350-1577)", 232-254; Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516. Volume II*: 303-305.

<sup>33</sup> Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Volumen B*: 403.

Estúñigas' rule over the region as, "the most ignominious and bestial event ever perpetrated in the Extremadura, that is, after taking into consideration their extensive robbery of and usurpation of church freedoms."<sup>34</sup> While the hostile actions of the *Conde de Plasencia* were not immediately visible at the opening of the 1440s, by 1444 the cathedral of Plasencia was able to expose the negative environment the Estúñigas fostered toward the local church and its administrators—especially the Carvajals and Santa Marías.

In March of 1444, the key members of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation met in the cathedral's Chapel of St. Catalina to discuss troubling local affairs.<sup>35</sup> Among the members in attendance were Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal, Cantor Gonzalo Gutiérrez de Calleja (and his son, Vicar General and Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrerros), Treasurer Alfonso García de Santa María, and Canon Ruy García de Salamanca. It was a tense event as the churchmen had invited several, but not all, members of the city council to participate and witness the chapter's efforts to record the misdeeds perpetrated against the church by "certain people."<sup>36</sup> Giving a stark appraisal of the situation, the cathedral's notary recorded:

We are gathered here together in the [cathedral's] Chapel of St. Catalina—some members of the city council and cathedral chapter, along with other city residents—to discuss...the conflict between this church and other persons. We must do this to defend the church's property and rights. Our [defense] extends to certain individual members of the cathedral chapter and their personal entitlement to justice and the rule of law, personal liberty, ecclesiastical immunity and privileges, and control over their geographic jurisdictions....The conflict, hatred, and ill will that exist now are a sign of the great malice of our times, [especially] considering...some persons have been held prisoner...and others cannot come

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 410, note 16.

<sup>35</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 274-279; ACP Legajo 25, Documento "Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cuaderno 1", Folios 8v-12v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 "Estatutos y Sinodos", unfoliated.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

into the city, cannot go to their personal homes, and cannot even perform their customary religious duties. Further, it is apparent that earlier this year when Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal exercised his ecclesiastical authority in the defense of church properties—for some time he was forced from the city and physically not allowed to return. These injuries and others continue today.<sup>37</sup>

After hearing the churchmen's reports, the present members of the city council stated that they "did not do these things and had not prevented church officials from entering into the city."<sup>38</sup> However, the councilmen did not deny that "certain persons" had targeted and expelled Rodrigo Carvajal from the city and blocked him from re-entering the city for an extended period.<sup>39</sup>

The physical harassment of Rodrigo challenged the authority of the cathedral chapter and the Carvajal family. It suggested that those who had targeted the archdeacon understood it would be highly disruptive to the confederated families' activities. After these persons forced Rodrigo Carvajal out of the city, he could neither perform his official duties as the archdeacon nor attend regular meetings of the cathedral chapter. His lack of freedom of movement jeopardized his collection of rents and taxes in Plasencia and Béjar, prevented him from directing his church staff, and excluded him from the chapter's policy-making meetings. For the Carvajal family and Rodrigo, the impact of these events had even more dire consequences because it jeopardized the archdeacon's ability to reap the rewards of his ecclesiastical position. Specifically, in 1438, the cathedral chapter had implemented new residency requirements for its members.<sup>40</sup> If Rodrigo was not physically present and performing his duties for six months of every year, he would be ineligible to receive his salary or other forms of compensation.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 245v-249; ACP Legajo 25, Documento "Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cuaderno 1", Folios 8v-12v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 "Estatutos y Sinodos", unfoliated.

One man in particular had the motive and means needed to target the Carvajal-Santa María confederation and to deny the church its privileges—*Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga. The count's motives centered on his escalating regional conflict with the two families, and to a lesser extent, the Santa Marías' connection and loyalty to the king's advisor, Alvaro de Luna, a well-known enemy of the count. The Carvajal family had incurred Pedro's animosity when they successfully prevented the count from imposing his lordship over the village of Trujillo in 1440. The count was further provoked when the Carvajal and Santa María families utilized the resources of the cathedral to facilitate the rapid purchase of Jewish homes, thus limiting Pedro's monopoly of properties in the Jewish quarter of Plasencia. In addition, the clans' domination of the local city council, as well as the autonomous authority of the cathedral of Plasencia posed substantial impediments to the *conde's* efforts to master control of the region. Only by weakening these local institutions and the family confederation's bases of political authority could the *Conde de Plasencia* realize and maximize the financial benefits of the region's taxes, rents, and other resources. In addition to these local conflicts with the count, the Santa Marías and Carvajals also found themselves at odds with Pedro de Estúñiga in broader royal affairs.

At the kingdom level, it was apparent that the Santa Marías were closely aligned with King Juan II's primary advisor, *Condestable* Alvaro de Luna. This relationship positioned the Carvajals and Santa Marías for additional confrontation with the Estúñigas. By the early 1440s, Alvaro de Luna considered *Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga a significant threat to his personal power, even though Alvaro and King Juan II needed the count's assistance during the war with Aragon and Navarra.<sup>41</sup> By the opening of the

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<sup>41</sup> Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 32-33.

following decade, in 1452, Alvaro de Luna would secretly plan to capture and eliminate Pedro at his military stronghold in the village of Béjar, just north of the city of Plasencia and within the Diocese of Plasencia.<sup>42</sup> When Alvaro's plan collapsed and his life was in danger, the man he turned to for physical shelter and political cover was Bishop Alfonso de Cartagena, the brother of Plasencia's bishop, Gonzalo García de Santa María.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the political loyalties that bound Alvaro de Luna to the Santa Marías also positioned the Carvajal-Santa María confederation as an enemy of Pedro de Estúñiga. It is likely that this political and economic competition motivated Pedro's harassment of the cathedral of Plasencia's churchmen during the early 1440s.

Pedro de Estúñiga also possessed the necessary means to battle the cathedral of Plasencia and provoke "fear" in the churchmen.<sup>44</sup> The count's resources included the support of large numbers of knights and men-at-arms, opulent wealth comparable to the most elite noble families, and a noteworthy political dexterity that had gained him the lordship of Plasencia and the king's reliance on him despite his inconsistent loyalty.<sup>45</sup> In short, the *Conde de Plasencia* had the rationale and ability to attack the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, but what he lacked was the opportunity.

The perfect opening appeared in 1445 when the churchmen were essentially defenseless due to the absence of family members who were knights. As *caballeros* such as Diego González de Carvajal, Gómez González de Carvajal, and Diego García de

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<sup>42</sup> López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, 676-678.

<sup>43</sup> Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 65.

<sup>44</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 274-279; ACP Legajo 25, Documento "Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cuaderno 1", Folios 8v-12v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 "Estatutos y Sinodos", unfoliated.

<sup>45</sup> Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia*, 27-35.

Béjarano, were away at war with King Juan II.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Pedro could fully exploit the military weakness of the families. He also used deception to take advantages of the cathedral's vulnerability. In addition to Rodrigo de Carvajal's expulsion from the city, other members of the cathedral chapter also reported to their compatriots that they had, "received letters from the king or from *Conde* Pedro de Estúñiga instructing them to leave the city...under false pretences, persuasions, and appeals."<sup>47</sup> The members of the cathedral chapter and their city council associates discussed these findings and concluded that someone loyal to Pedro had sought to confuse and trick the churchmen into believing they were required elsewhere by the king or the count.<sup>48</sup>

In light of this physical harassment and deception, the cathedral responded with a novel approach considering their limited ability to defend themselves. Vicar General Alfonso García de Santa María proposed that the chapter should implement a temporary two-year statute that waived previously enacted residency requirements until 1446.<sup>49</sup> Therefore even if the churchmen were kept out of the city by force or trickery, the cathedral could still pay them. Unable to protect themselves with arms and lacking the assistance of their absentee *caballero* clansmen, the chapter's legalistic solution focused on the art of the possible. The churchmen's actions also demonstrated that the cathedral chapter believed it should govern itself, even in times of peril, under specific written rules and that the chapter placed a high value on the maintenance of their governing statutes.

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<sup>46</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 98-99. Note: The Carvajals' *caballeros*, along with the *conde* and other knights from the region like Gutierre de Sotomayor, the Master of the Order of Alcantara, were at war with the *Infantes* de Aragon and King of Navarra.

<sup>47</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 274-279; ACP Legajo 25, Documento "Acuerdos del Cabildo, Cuaderno 1", Folios 8v-12v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 "Estatutos y Sinodos", unfoliated.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



The harassment of the cathedral's leadership did not end in 1444. Instead, it bled into 1446 and damaged the formerly positive relationship between the cathedral and their remaining supporters on the city council. In April of 1446, the canons and prebendaries gathered once again in the Chapel of St. Catalina to discuss the difficult state of affairs, noting:

In the past two years since the Dean and cathedral chapter moved to create the statute, this great malice of our time has not stopped and it continues with no end. Now it only increases...there seems little calming down of the situation.<sup>50</sup>

The church notary recorded that after the perpetrators had expelled Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal out of the city, in 1445 they also forced Cantor Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja (a Santa María clansman) from Plasencia. The notary further reported on the condition of a third churchman. He stated, "now Canon Ruy González is currently cast out...and he and others are incurring great financial expenses because they cannot return to their homes."<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the chapter acknowledged that "[the] debates between the city council and cathedral chapter are now multiplying in size...they are growing larger."<sup>52</sup> Because the cathedral chapter was unable able to resolve the mistreatment of their clerical administrators, they became increasingly frustrated with the city council, which was unwilling or unable to guarantee their safe passage and residence in the city. Once again, in 1446, the cathedral chapter elected to extend the allowable absenteeism for its canons and prebendaries for an additional two years.

In the final statements of the cathedral chapter on the matter, the churchmen revealed both their desperation for divine intervention, as well as who they believed could resolve these injustices. On these points the cathedral notary wrote:

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

By the mercy of God we hope that within two years God will give us peace and concord...and that our lords, Bishop [Santa María], Count [Pedro de Estúñiga], and the Countess will return to the city... so hopefully this conflict will end.<sup>53</sup>

Only secular and ecclesiastical lords could negotiate the necessary solution to the matter. Even though they believed Pedro had instigated these attacks on the church's privileges, the churchmen understood that it would require the bishop and the count to negotiate an end to these hostilities. By 1448, the aggression directed at the cathedral of Plasencia presumably ended, as the chapter did not need to renew their absenteeism statute. Likewise, there were no other recorded forced expulsions of church members. Cumulatively, the cathedral's governing initiatives, both those regarding ecclesiastical residencies and those demanding secrecy, indicate the Carvajal-Santa María confederation would not easily concede their positions and authority to the Estúñigas. Rather, the allied families remained vigilant and devoted to protecting and advancing their interests, as well as those of the cathedral of Plasencia.

### **Cathedral Initiatives and Reforms**

By the 1430s, the Carvajal and Santa María clans readily understood that a well-managed and professionalized cathedral enhanced not only the church's mission, but had corollary benefits for their family confederation. Through the implementation of multiple church reforms and initiatives—impacting staffing, masses, accounting practices, loans, and chapter meetings—the clans transformed the cathedral of Plasencia. Ultimately, the statutes they enacted attempted to create a better balance between the needs of the church and those of the Carvajals and Santa Marías.

One of their earliest initiatives that relied on this dual-benefit approach addressed the need for a dedicated clergy to officiate at funerary, as well as daily masses. In 1433,

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Bishop Santa María established six religious benefices for new clergy with revenues earmarked from specific church property leases.<sup>54</sup> These monies funded six new priests and six altar boys who were exclusively responsible for celebrating regular masses, as well as anniversary masses for the deceased.<sup>55</sup> This initiative was resourceful because it not only funded new church jobs, it communicated an enticing message to prospective church donors. That is, if an individual bequeathed properties or funds to the church so that memorial masses (*capellánias*) could be said for their soul, then the donor knew that specific priests and altar boys would be there to perform the services.

Memorial masses served as a robust conduit for encouraging parishioners to bequeath property and other financial gifts to the church in their last testaments (*testamentos*). Typically, a wealthy *caballero* or his spouse would will between 200 to 300 maravedis to the cathedral for a one-time funerary mass.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, a family could arrange a more elaborate annual memorial service, which might include a procession and masses said at different liturgical hours, with the donation of real estate or though annual payments.<sup>57</sup> For example, in August of 1430, Teresa López donated her *Heredad de Cuadrilleros* to the church so that priests would sing six masses each year for the soul of her husband, Lope Ortiz de Montoya.<sup>58</sup> In 1459, the Fernández-González clan chose only to obligate themselves to pay 200 maravedis a year for memorial masses for

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<sup>54</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 17-17v; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 5, “Estatutos de la Catedral de Plasencia editados por Don Andrés Noroña, 1615.”

<sup>55</sup> The altar boys ranged from 13 to 18 years of age, therefore indicating these were young men preparing for church service, as opposed to children.

<sup>56</sup> For a selection of typical one-time donations to the church, see ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 1v, 2, 3v, 5, 6v, and other unfoliated pages.

<sup>57</sup> ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 2v, 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

their deceased family members, Alfonso Fernández and Teresa González.<sup>59</sup> In return for these annual payments, the church would celebrate two masses each year for their relatives. Thus, personal property donations, as opposed to one time or annual payments, yielded substantially more care for one's soul. Just as church statutes created a dedicated staff to sing memorial masses for the deceased, the cathedral chapter also implemented other initiatives to improve the day-to-day management.

Other innovative operational procedures introduced by the Carvajal and Santa María families placed a high priority on the formalization of the cathedral's internal workings, regardless of their impact on the clans. For instance, before the clans assumed the management of the cathedral in 1424, the governing chapter had not required its clerical administrators to be physically present in the diocese. As highlighted earlier, the cathedral chapter had promulgated its first mandatory residency requirements (six of every 12 months) for church canons and prebendaries in 1438.<sup>60</sup> This reform was particularly timely as absenteeism was a common problem in most church dioceses across Europe.<sup>61</sup> It also was an indication that the cathedral of Plasencia was beginning to establish stricter requirements and encourage ecclesiastics to perform their required responsibilities.

The cathedral chapter also created church statutes that enhanced chapter efficiency and group solidarity. All members were required to meet at the cathedral every Friday night to conduct church business, as well as to assist in other matters.<sup>62</sup> The chapter described these meetings as "necessary" and that "no excuses, regardless of the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 "Estatutos y Sinodos", unfoliated.

<sup>61</sup> Lawrence G. Duggan, "The Unresponsiveness of the Late Medieval Church: A Reconsideration." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Apr. 1978): 24-25.

<sup>62</sup> ACP Legajo 25, Documento "Estatuto para que viernes se celebrarse Cabildo, hecho el viernes 12 de Octubre de 1431."

circumstances” would be tolerated or accepted. In addition to the desire for routine communications and meetings that ensured the church addressed pressing issues, the cathedral of Plasencia also committed itself to remembering the service of its departed chapter members. Not until the 1430s did the cathedral guarantee its priests would sing memorial masses on behalf of all deceased canons, prebendaries, and other local church officials, regardless of their ability to purchase these services.<sup>63</sup>

The Carvajals and Santa Marías also pursued reforms intended to improve church operations, prevent or resolve financial irregularities, and increase churchmen’s compensation and benefits. For example, one mechanism utilized to improve church operations was a 1440 statute requiring the cathedral’s canons, prebendaries, chaplains, and other church officials to pay the church rent collections in a timely manner—specifically, no more than eight days after the official received the funds from a renter.<sup>64</sup> In this manner, the chapter could reduce both the temptation and likelihood that church officials would improperly utilize church monies or keep any portion of the proceeds.

Perhaps, it was past experience that convinced the Carvajal-Santa María confederation that it was necessary to implement these financial practices. After all, it was because of financial irregularities in the church during the 1410s that the Fernández family fell into disfavor on the cathedral chapter.<sup>65</sup> The Fernándezes’ abuse of their cathedral positions prevented them from successfully rehabilitating either their name or their previous influence on the chapter.

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<sup>63</sup> The church provided funerary services for all cathedral chapter members for nine months.

<sup>64</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento 1 “Estatutos y Sinodos”, unfoliated. ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 2, Folio 146. Note: *Tomo 2* is a lost book of the *Actas Capitulares*, however, Legajo 282 provides this specific reference to the lost text.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter Two for my prior discussion of the financial irregularities that contributed to the decline of the Fernández family on the cathedral chapter.

The enacted strict payment policy came with an important benefit as another church rule authorized the cathedral to make interest-free personal loans to the dean, archdeacons, cantor, treasurer, canons, and prebendaries.<sup>66</sup> Specifically, the cathedral would lend these individuals monies for the term of one year and eight days at no cost. However, if the individual failed to pay the loan back on time, then he was subject to unspecified fines. Again, the thrust of these two church statutes—the timely payment of collected rents and access to interest-free loans—highlights the chapter’s fundamental belief that if churchmen performed their duties with honesty, then all could enjoy the church’s resources. These beliefs acknowledged that church assets and funds were not the personal property of the chapter members. Further, chapter members could not easily embezzle or indefinitely retain the church’s assets for personal use.

In addition to these new accounting procedures, during the mid-1440s the chapter enacted additional statutes to improve compensation for its members, specifically doubling some churchmen’s salaries and creating new high-paying appointments for others. The key beneficiaries of these changes were the canons. This was the first major improvement in salaries for them since 1407, when their pay rate was set at 230 maravedis a year.<sup>67</sup> In 1442, the chapter increased a canon’s compensation to 500 maravedis a year.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, during the 1440s, the pay of cathedral notaries rose to 300 maravedis per year.<sup>69</sup>

Along with pay increases, the chapter also generated new church positions that both extended the administrative capabilities of the chapter, as well as offered new

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<sup>66</sup> ACP Legajo 25, Documento 14, Folios 6-6v; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 2, Folio 46. Note: *Tomo 2* is a lost book of the *Actas Capitulares*. However, Legajo 25 provides this specific reference to the lost text.

<sup>67</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 35-35v.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Folios 249v-252.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

opportunities for family members and associates. For instance, Canon Ruy García de Salamanca, a Santa María clan member, was the first to assume the title of church attorney (*Abogado*).<sup>70</sup> In his first year of service, because of financial shortfalls in cathedral income, Ruy García received a partial salary of 1,000 maravedis. Thereafter, he earned 1,200 maravedis a year. At the same time, the dean and chapter crafted new posts to professionalize the collection of rents from church properties in Plasencia, Trujillo, Béjar, and Medellín.<sup>71</sup> This task, previously overseen by canons and prebendaries, now passed to the church's Accountants (*Contadores*). For local properties in the city of Plasencia, the church hired two accountants at 200 maravedis each per year. However, to administer the collection of rents in the diocese's other regions, much larger salaries were set aside. Trujillo and Medellín's individual accountants earned an annual salary of 800 maravedis, whereas Béjar's accountant collected an annual salary of 1,500 maravedis.

It is likely the cathedral formulated these new accounting roles in response to a church financial scandal that occurred in 1444. These financial irregularities appear directly related to the confederated clans' strict adherence to a family patronage system. Because the Carvajals and Santa Marías valued loyalty over competence, they had mistakenly appointed a number of canons to posts they could not effectively perform. On this matter, the chapter's notary recorded:

In just one year there has been much dissension and discord and scandal relating to the offices held by some members....It has caused great concern among us. Some persons are not apt to hold these offices responsible for collecting rents for the chapter. Because we wish to avoid these difficulties and scandals in the future, and as we wish to live in peace and harmony as brothers, we now agree

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., Folios 363v-368.

and order the accountants to be responsible [for collecting these rents.]... We do this to eliminate derision and to conserve our good brotherhood.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, although the clans had avoided the graft and corruption issues that plagued the cathedral in the 1410s, they had not fully appreciated the limitations of their closed patronage system. Rather than requiring Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal and Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María to remove their hand-selected canons, and disrupt the families' patronage network, the chapter elected to fund three new positions to solve the rent collection problem. As for the canons that had created this problem, the archdeacons neither fired them nor imposed any punitive reduction of their salaries. Instead, they and the rest of the chapter rewarded themselves for making these necessary changes. In the same agreement approving the new accountants and their salaries, the churchmen also arranged to distribute 2,200 maravedis a year among its membership. From that point forward, these maravedis, which were derived from annual rent collections, would be shared among the men with at least three years of official residence on the church council. Thus, it appears the chapter attempted to placate everyone with these changes. The ineffective canons kept their titles, the archdeacons received five new positions, and the senior members of the chapter shared in the take of rental incomes.

### **Enjoying the Fruits of Their Labors**

During the remainder of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María's term as bishop (1431 to 1446), the Carvajal and Santa María families continued to leverage substantial financial and patronage opportunities from the cathedral of Plasencia. Specifically, the confederated clans devised increasingly creative ways of leasing church properties for personal gain by using atypical partnerships, transferring contracts to their descendants, and exchanging personal assets for church assets. For instance, between 1433 and 1434,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Folios 363v-368.



Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja implemented an unusual financing mechanism to lease two large parcels from the cathedral.<sup>73</sup> In 1433, when the *Heredad de Visnuela* and the *Heredad de Malpartida*, with their desirable “pastures and river access”, became available for lease, the church treasurer jumped at the opportunity.<sup>74</sup> The properties likely generated lucrative profits from animal grazing because Gonzalo took the unprecedented step of entering into a limited two-year partnership with an outsider to acquire them. On June 6, 1433, he and *Caballero* Diego Sánchez de Riotortillo leased the *heredades* for 600 maravedis annually.

This contract was exceptional as neither the Santa Marías nor the Carvajals entered into business partnerships with persons outside their confederation. In fact, this transaction is the only one of its kind for either a Carvajal or Santa María clansman recorded in the *Actas Capitulares* for the years 1390 to 1454. Because the first payment for the two properties was due on the Feast of San Miguel in September 1433—just three months after the signing of the contract—and the 600 maravedis was approximately what Gonzalo Gutiérrez earned annually as treasurer, the churchman probably required an outside partner to secure the property in the short term.

What happened approximately a year later, in November of 1434, seems to indicate that Gonzalo did not intend to keep his partner for the long-term. In November, a full seven months before the expiration of the partnership’s lease, Gonzalo returned to the cathedral chapter and renewed the contract as the sole renter. Further, the Dean and his church associates converted the property agreement into a life-long one, reduced the rate by 17 percent (100 maravedis), and delayed Gonzalo’s payment for a full 10 months.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Folios 172v-174v, 205-206v.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Gonzalo Gutiérrez's successful conversion of the property agreement demonstrated that cathedral membership had its privileges.

Securing church contracts for oneself was not the only goal of these churchmen. At other times, the chapter members also devised mechanisms to convert their existing non-transferable cathedral contracts into new lease agreements for their relatives and each other. In particular, in 1433, Treasurer Gonzalo Gutiérrez de Calleja transferred his 60 maravedis annual lease of houses and a corral on "the street they call the ugly one", which was next to the Church of the Savior (*Iglesia de San Salvador*), to his son, Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrereros.<sup>75</sup> It appears that with this lease transfer, this arm of the Santa María family would settle into this particular section of Plasencia for the long-term as they later chose to endow a family chapel in the adjacent church.<sup>76</sup> After Gonzalo Gutiérrez's death, in 1448, the cathedral chapter also transferred his property contracts for several houses that contained orchards, cultivation tools, and storage vessels, to his relative, Cantor Ruy García de Salamanca.<sup>77</sup> The cantor was also able to continue paying the rate Gonzalo Gutiérrez had previously negotiated, which was 350 maravedis and two pairs of chickens. Likewise, the Carvajals also shared and transferred some of their leases to the younger members of the Santa María family. In November 1434, the cathedral

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Folios 197v-198v. Note: Why Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja's son's last name was Fernández de Cabrereros is an interesting issue. Juan's mother's name was Teresa Porras. As the Gutiérrez de la Calleja surname was known to the community of Plasencia as a *converso* one, it appears that the family chose to change their name to begin the process of masking their *converso* identity. The Fernández de Cabrereros name was transformed throughout the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and eventually became simply Cabrereros or Cabrero in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. See ACP Legajo 282, Documento 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 4v-8; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 9, "Traslado de los autos hechos en lo de septiembre de 1524 por el Juez Lic. Gonzalo Campo, que pretendió quitar los balcones de las ventanas de las casas de Plasencia", Folios 1-1v.

<sup>76</sup> Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 145.

<sup>77</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 391v-392v.

chapter transferred Archdeacon Gonzalo García de Carvajal's annual lease for an irrigated land/garden (*huerta*) with olive trees to Canon Alfonso García de Santa María.<sup>78</sup>

Another innovative tool the clans employed for personal gain were property exchanges in which they traded less valuable personal lands for more beneficial church real estate. For instance, on April 26, 1438, Vicar General and Cantor Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja convened the church council to implement the bishop's instructions to transfer the entire *Heredad de los Carrascales* in exchange for one yugada of land in Dr. Garci López de Carvajal's portion of the *Heredad de Rio Bermejo* in Plasencia.<sup>79</sup> Dr. Garci López not only kept most his property, he also gained ownership to another good-sized territory.<sup>80</sup> As if the agreement needed sweetening, the Vicar General also added in the lease of several additional houses on Calle de Trujillo for 15 maravedis a year. Approving and witnessing the transaction were three Santa María clan members—Cantor Gonzalo Gutiérrez, Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María, and Canon Ruy García de Salamanca. Moreover, and as in all cases, Dr. Garci López brought his servants (*criados*) and family members, Miguel de Trujillo and Juan de Carvajal, to witness and learn how the cathedral operated.<sup>81</sup> This moment provided Juan de Carvajal, who had recently become a canon in the Cathedral of Zamora, a valuable introduction to the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Folios 168-168v.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Folios 284v-291.

<sup>80</sup> The *Heredad de Rio Bermejo* was made up of 40 yugadas according to the record. The doctor owned only 2.5 yugadas of the land. *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal, his cousin, also owned portions of this family *heredad*. See ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>81</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish word "*criado*" should not be confused with the modern connotations associated with the terms "servant" or "maid." Rather, a *criado* during the 15<sup>th</sup> century was mostly like a nephew or a younger relative that was in the service of an older family member. As a *criado*, the younger man served more as an assistant to the older family member so that he could learn a profession or acquire business and political experience. The *criado*, while subservient to the older family member, was expected to provide good service, but also the older family member was responsible for training, educating, and readying the young man for his adult life.

bishopric that he would later inherit. In 1446, the king and pope would name him the Bishop of Plasencia.<sup>82</sup>

Three years after this property transaction, the same men and the recently appointed Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal (brother of Juan) returned to the Chapel of Saint Paul to provide the doctor with another special opportunity. On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, again acting on the guidance of the bishop, the cathedral exchanged “some of its houses on the street that runs from the cathedral to Calle de Trujillo, with its corrals, and the statue in the street”, for one of Dr. Garci’s *yugadas* in the *Heredad de Rio Bermejo*.<sup>83</sup> To guarantee that there was no confusion regarding this contract and the previous transaction, the notary reported that, “this [property] is separate from the other *yugada* that Dr. Garci López had given to the cathedral chapter in exchange for the *Heredad de los Carrascales*.”<sup>84</sup> Following the completion of this contract in 1441, Dr. Garci López effectively disposed of his less valuable periphery lands and created an interlocking collection of homes close to the cathedral. In these incremental ways, the Santa María and Carvajal families consistently channeled the cathedral’s assets into their own families’ coffers.

### ***Monopolizing Positions and Promoting Internally***

As discussed in Chapter Four, after capturing the cathedral of Plasencia’s leadership chapter in the 1420s, the Carvajal and Santa María families aggressively sought church positions for their families and associates. During the 1430s and 1440s, the two families accelerated this practice by monopolizing almost all of the cathedral positions. What emerged from their collective efforts was a very specific patronage

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<sup>82</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549), Volumen II*: 410; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives ) Reg. Suppl. 319, Folio 85.

<sup>83</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 291-297.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

sharing arrangement. While the Santa Marías took the majority of the chapter roles for themselves (Cantor, Prebendary, Provisor and Vicar General, and Treasurer), the Carvajals occupied the Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar and controlled the positions (accountants, canons, and prebendaries) assigned to it.<sup>85</sup> As the Santa María and Carvajal families ascended the patronage ladder, the cathedral awarded increasingly central roles to them at the expense of others. When the respected Dr. Gil Martínez de Soria, Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín, died, the council decided not to give his title to another Martínez, but instead bestowed it upon Alfonso García de Santa María.<sup>86</sup> Even though Gil Martínez had guided the council through an extraordinary embezzlement controversy in the 1410s and had served as Bishop Santa María's personal representative on the chapter, this service was not sufficient reason to make his ecclesiastical position into a hereditary one for his family. Although it was lesser compensation, by February 1436 the Martínez family did gain a new canonship for the deceased archdeacon's relative, Juan Martínez.<sup>87</sup> Fourteen months later, Juan had sufficiently demonstrated his capabilities and Archdeacon Alfonso García de Santa María entrusted him with the collection of rents and *diezmos* for Trujillo and Medellín.<sup>88</sup>

As stated previously, another church role monopolized by the Carvajal and Santa María family confederation was that of Vicar General, the bishop's official representative in the diocese during his frequent absences. After 1436, the position of Vicar General became a critical stepping-stone for training younger members of the Santa María family.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Folios 197v-313; Successive Archdeacons of Plasencia and Béjar (1420-1578): Gonzalo García de Carvajal, Rodrigo de Carvajal, Sancho de Carvajal, Garci López de Cavajal, Bernardino de Carvajal, Francisco de Carvajal. and Alvaro de Carvajal. See ACP Legajo 282, Documento 3 "Prebendados y Dignidades", unfoliated.

<sup>86</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I* (1399-1453) Traslado, Folios 217v-219.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Folios 236v-237.

For example, immediately after the death of Dr. Gil Martínez, the bishop appointed his relative, Canon Juan Fernández de Cabrerros, as his Vicar General. Canon Juan Fernández was the teenage son of the churchman Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, and the grandson of the churchman Gil Gutiérrez de la Calleja. The teenager only held the position for a portion of 1436 as it appears he spent the next several years earning his doctorate in canon law. His father served as Vicar General from the end of 1436 to 1445.<sup>89</sup> In 1444, after earning his degree, Dr. Juan Fernández de Cabrerros returned to Plasencia and by 1446 he re-assumed the title of Vicar General at the end of Bishop Santa María's term.<sup>90</sup>

Because the Santa Marías occupied many of the senior posts in the cathedral of Plasencia, the younger Carvajal men relied on the Santa Marías' willingness to extend patronage opportunities to them. For instance, in 1437, Bishop Santa María created a new Deputy Vicar's position for Bachiller Alfonso de Carvajal.<sup>91</sup> In this role, Alfonso's loyalties extended outside of the Carvajal family and became deeply embedded within the Santa María's personal patronage network. Additionally, when Archdeacon Alfonso Rodríguez de Maluenda needed to fill a canonship in the village of Coria, he did not select a family member, but instead chose Juan Ruiz de Camargo, a Carvajal relative, for the post.<sup>92</sup>

This family partnership did not end in 1446, the year Gonzalo García de Santa María left his position as the Bishop of Plasencia and was named the Bishop of Sigüenza. Rather, when Juan de Carvajal was appointed as Gonzalo García's successor in Plasencia, the two families continued on this path of collective action and patronage. As one

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Folios 274v-279.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Folios 333-335.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Folios 229v-300; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 1, Folio 99v. Alfonso was the son of Diego Fernández Braicio and Isabel de Carvajal.

<sup>92</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 229v-300; ACP Legajo 45, Documento 41, Unfoliated.

generation of Santa Marías and Carvajals aged and retired, their sons, nephews, and cousins methodically and dutifully replaced them. Under Bishop Juan de Carvajal's leadership (1446-1469), the families' attention was no longer exclusively focused on maintaining their authority in the cathedral. More ambitiously, their unified endeavors would be directed towards creating and perpetuating a communal memory of a pious and noble Carvajal family.

## Chapter Six:

### Promoting a Noble and Pious Family Identity, 1440s – 1470s

#### Sancha de Carvajal's Last Testament Instructions to the Chaplain and Nuns of the Convent of St. Clare, 1467

The chaplain is obligated to sing four [memorial] masses—on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—every week for me. Also, on every day he sings a regular mass he is to say the responsorial psalms in front of my grave. He is to do this in a clear voice and in a manner such the nuns in the choir can hear them as well.<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

Unlike any prior period for the Carvajal family, the forty years that unfolded between 1440s to the 1470s represented an era of unparalleled family stability. Largely due to the beneficial circumstances, the Carvajals successfully utilized these decades to initiate multiple projects to promote publicly their nobility and piety for the purpose of solidifying their social status. Critical to the success of these initiatives was the reliability and strength of the Carvajal-Santa María family confederation inside the cathedral of Plasencia. The clans' partnership ensured that both families continued to share patronage resources as well as share new opportunities to promote younger family members in the church organization. However, outside the cathedral's protective walls the conflict with the Estúñigas, the Counts of Plasencia and Béjar, was an ever-present force. In addition, Castilian societal attitudes toward elite *conversos*, such as the Santa Marías, began to change fundamentally by the mid-1400s. Increasingly, Castilians perceived *conversos* as insincere converts to Christianity. They also believed that *conversos* had too much influence in royal affairs and over King Juan II. Unfortunately for all *conversos*, these hardening and discriminatory attitudes found footing in some of Castile's most important

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<sup>1</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4.



cities, such as Toledo, where so-called *Old Christians* violently rioted and attacked local *conversos*. Similarly, Old Christians formulated new blood purity statutes (*estatutos de limpieza de sangre*) to exclude *conversos* from public office. Caught in the midst of these societal changes were the Santa Marías who were close associates of King Juan II's most influential adviser, *converso* Alvaro de Luna. In 1453, in an almost unimaginable fall from power, the monarch had Alvaro executed and other elite *converso* families began a precipitous decline in influence over Castilian royal and church affairs.

Perhaps due to these radical transformations in the political and social landscape in the Kingdom of Castile, the Carvajal family in Plasencia began to assume more authority in the Carvajal-Santa María confederation. Even though Juan de Carvajal's ascent to the position of Cardinal and Bishop of Plasencia (1446-1469) had done little to change the dynamics of the clans' partnership, both families recognized by the late 1460s that the Santa Marías' social position was in decline. Further, the long-term success of the confederation was now dependent on the Carvajals' future in the church, as well as their occupational prospects in the royal administration. By the 1460s, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation was more than a business partnership; evidence suggests that the two clans' shared extended blood relations.<sup>2</sup> It is likely that common family bonds tied Santa Marías' support of the Carvajals' ascent in the church and royal bureaucracy.

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<sup>2</sup> By the 1460s, it appears that the Carvajals shared extended family relations with the *converso* Santa Marías through the Villalva family. Specifically, in 1438 the cathedral of Plasencia's notary recorded that the church official Juan de Villalva was a "family" member of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María. Juan Villalva either was a progenitor or related to the progenitor the Plasencia Villalvas. Several of the noteworthy family members included cathedral cantor Christoval de Villalva, Juan de Villalva, and Juan's son, Coronel Christoval de Villalva (circa 1450-1520). The Plasencia Carvajals, specifically, Francisco de Carvajal (the Señor de Torrejon), was reportedly a second cousin of Coronel Christoval de Villalva. Likewise, Coronel Villalva was married to Estefania de Trejo y de la Cerdo, who was the daughter of Pedro de Trejo (Señor de Grimaldo) and Ines de Carvajal y Buezo. Further, the Trejo and Carvajal familias shared extensive clan relations through the previously mentioned Francisco de Carvajal. Francisco's parents were Dr. Garci López de Carvajal and Beatriz de Trejo. Therefore, by the mid to late 15<sup>th</sup> century the Carvajal, Santa María, Villalva, and Trejo families were a closely interconnected network of clans. See ACP Legajo 269, Documento 25; ACP Legajo 12, Documento 11; AHNSN Luque Caja 160, Documento 9; AHNSN

The Carvajal clan also bolstered their status through an aggressive program aimed at lionizing the nobility and piety of their lineage. They accomplished this goal through a three-pronged approach: (1) individual family members instituted annual church memorial services to honor themselves, as well as their ancestors; (2) Sevilla López de Carvajal and Sancha de Carvajal established sizeable religious foundations and endowments that funded the creation of a convent, as well as other religious activities; (3) the cathedral of Plasencia and Cardinal Juan de Carvajal implemented a comprehensive program to integrate the Carvajal family memory into the diocese's religious practices, architecture, and public works. In this chapter, the religious initiatives of individual family members and two Carvajal women are explored, whereas in Chapter Seven the massive clan effort to celebrate Cardinal Carvajal's persona is evaluated.

#### **CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES IN PLASENCIA AND CASTILE**

From the 1440s through the 1460s, life for the Carvajal and Santa María families in Plasencia proceeded at a steady pace even though the bishop's miter passed from the Santa Marías to the Carvajals. In 1446, an elderly Gonzalo García de Santa María stepped down as the Bishop of Plasencia and completed the remaining years of his ecclesiastical service as the Bishop of Sigüenza.<sup>3</sup> In his place, King Juan II nominated Juan de Carvajal for the Plasencia post. At the time, Juan was heavily involved in papal affairs serving as the Auditor of the Vatican's *Rota*, Governor of Vatican City, and as a papal legate to many different regions in Europe.<sup>4</sup> These responsibilities, along with his appointment by Pope Eugene IV to the Council of Cardinals, prevented him from actively governing the

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Luque Caja 159, Documentos 16 and 17; AHNSN Osuna Caja 300, Documento 9(7); Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 148-151.

<sup>3</sup> Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 208.

<sup>4</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18.

Diocese of Plasencia.<sup>5</sup> Instead, he left the administration of the bishopric to the cathedral chapter, which the Carvajals and the Santa Marías managed exclusively throughout his tenure.

Rather than disrupt the smooth functioning of the cathedral and its leadership chapter, Juan de Carvajal continued to support the intensive involvement of the Santa María family throughout his administration (1446-1469). While the cardinal's brother, Rodrigo de Carvajal, served as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar from the 1440s until 1470, the Santa Marías continued to staff a significant number of chapter posts.<sup>6</sup> During the late 1440s and 1450s these Santa María clan members included: Cantor Ruy García de Salamanca, Archdeacon Pedro González de Illescas, Treasurer Alfonso García de Santa María, and Canon and Vicar General Dr. Juan Fernández de Cabreros.<sup>7</sup> Cardinal Carvajal's comfort and support of the families' alliance was evident through his retention of Vicar General Dr. Juan Fernández, a Santa María clansman, as his personal representative on the chapter. Undermining the two families' stability within the cathedral was their ongoing conflict with the Estúñigas, the Counts of Béjar and Plasencia.

During this era, the Estúñigas remained a significant thorn in the side of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation. In 1454, the cathedral of Plasencia and *Conde* Alvaro de Estúñiga, the son of Pedro (d. 1453), renewed their hostilities against each other and engaged in a legal battle over control of the city's taxes on trade (*portazgo*).<sup>8</sup> Even though the cathedral of Plasencia had signed an agreement with the city council of

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 368v-372v.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Folios 424-426.

<sup>8</sup> ACP Legajo 273, Documento 2; Hervás, *Historia de los judíos de Plasencia y su tierra. Vol. II*: 218-219; Elisa Carolina de Santos Canalejo, *La historia medieval de Plasencia y su entorno geo-histórico: la sierra de Béjar y la sierra de Gredos* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural El Brocense, 1986), 479-480.

Plasencia to lease these tax collections, the count invalidated the contract. As the secular lord of Plasencia, he successfully enforced his right to control these levies and instead leased these same collections to Yuça “The Muslim.”

While the city council and the cathedral of Plasencia could not prevent the count from taking these tax collections, the Carvajals and Santa Marías continued to antagonize Estúñigas in other ways. Repeatedly, from 1461 to 1465, Alvaro appeared before the city council claiming, “with great injury to me—you, the members of this council—do not obey my ordinances...as is customary for one’s vassals.”<sup>9</sup> Yet, his protests often fell on deaf ears as council members like Fernando de Carvajal, Dr. Juan Fernández de Cabreros (the Vicar General), Francisco de Carvajal, and García de Carvajal repeatedly refused to appear at these council meetings.<sup>10</sup> Left with few alternatives, Alvaro could only order his personal notary to take temporary possession of the council’s *Book of Acts* (*Libro de Actas*) and record within it his protests and orders, which he then had read in the *Plaza Mayor*.<sup>11</sup> Dueling through notaries, the council would respond and confront Alvaro’s claims in the *Book of Acts* and continue to insult him by arguing that they were not bound to the count as they maintained their position as noblemen (*hijos de algo*) not by his authority, but “by the grace of their king.”<sup>12</sup> Neither the Santa Marías nor the Carvajals readily backed down from this constant hostile engagement with Estúñigas. The clans were likely emboldened by the cardinal’s high profile in the kingdom and papal affairs, as well as the families’ local success in transitioning younger family members into new leadership roles in the cathedral.

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<sup>9</sup> AMP *Actas Municipales* 1461-1465, Folio 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, Folios 20-26.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Folios 17-18.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Folios 30v-32.

Throughout the 1460s and 1470s, as both families' representatives on the cathedral chapter retired, church officials integrated younger clansmen into the local church's leadership. For instance, Diego de Carvajal ascended the ecclesiastical ladder in the cathedral of Plasencia when the chapter named him a prebendary in the 1460s and later promoted him to Archdeacon of Coria in the 1470s.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, after the cardinal's brother, Rodrigo, stepped down as Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar in the late 1460s, the cathedral replaced him with Sancho de Carvajal.<sup>14</sup> In this manner, a third generation of Carvajal family members, all descended from the *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas and Sevilla López de Villalobos, assumed the reins of the cathedral chapter. Similarly, the Santa Marías promoted their junior family members within the chapter. Ruy García de Salamanca would assume the Archdeaconship of Trujillo and Medellín in the 1460s and hold this post into the 1470s.

Although both families effectively promoted their relatives into new local ecclesiastical positions, the 1470s were a watershed decade for the confederation, as the Carvajals became the dominant partner in the alliance. After Cardinal Juan de Carvajal retired as Bishop of Plasencia in 1469, the king and pope replaced him with Bishop Rodrigo de Ávila (1470-1496). As Rodrigo was not a member of the family confederation, the Carvajal and Santa María clans understood their local authority in cathedral of Plasencia was at risk.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, a review of the key leadership positions in the cathedral reveals many critical church roles began to shift from the Santa Marías to the Carvajals during the

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<sup>13</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 1v-3, 5v-7; ACP Legajo 25, Documento 14; ACP Legajo 99, Documento "Girones de Talavera".

<sup>14</sup> ACP *Extractos del Inventario de los papeles del archivo*, Tomo 2, Folios 32-32v; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 6v-7.

<sup>15</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 19.

1470s.<sup>16</sup> (See Table 1: Carvajals and Santa Marías in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1420s-1500s.) From the 1420s through the late 1460s the Santa Marías occupied almost every significant position in the cathedral chapter (Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín, Archdeacon of Coria, Cantor, Treasurer, and Vicar General), whereas the Carvajals only controlled the Archdeaconship of Plasencia and Béjar.<sup>17</sup> However, in the late 1460s and early 1470s, a major rebalancing of these cathedral posts occurred. While Sancho de Carvajal continued to hold the title of Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar, Alvaro de Carvajal assumed the role of Treasurer, and the churchmen named Diego de Carvajal the Archdeacon of Coria.

This was a significant departure from the prior forty-year pattern in which the Santa Marías mostly managed the cathedral treasury and the church's affairs in the village of Coria. By the late 1470s, Ruy García de Salamanca was the last remaining Santa María holding a senior post in the chapter. After 1485, the Santa Marías' status would deteriorate as they assumed lesser positions as public and church notaries in Plasencia.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This finding was determined after reviewing all five surviving books of the cathedral of Plasencia's *Chapter Acts*, or *Actas Capitulares*, for the years 1390 to 1510. This includes Tomos 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. In addition, ACP Legajo 282, which is a collection of transcriptions from the *Actas Capitulares*, was also consulted.

<sup>17</sup> The bishop was not a member of the cathedral chapter, although his personal representative, the Vicar General, did participate in the chapter's meetings.

<sup>18</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 2-8. By 1490, the only Santa Marías participating in the cathedral chapter is Juan Fernández de Cabreros who was a public notary.

**Table 1: Carvajals and Santa Marías in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1420s-1470s**

| Decade  | Bishop                                 | Archdeacon<br>of Plasencia<br>and Béjar | Archdeacon<br>of Trujillo<br>and<br>Medellín | Archdeacon<br>of Coria              | Cantor                                | Treasurer                             | Vicar<br>General<br>(appointed<br>by bishop) |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1420s   | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Santa María    | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Carvajal        | NR   | Alfonso<br>Rodríguez de<br>Maluenda | NR                                    | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja | NR   |
| 1430s   | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Santa María    | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Carvajal        | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María          | Alfonso<br>Rodríguez de<br>Maluenda | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja | Juan<br>Fernández de<br>Cabreros             |
|   |  |   |  |                                     |                                       |                                       | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja        |
|   |  |   |  |                                     |                                       | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Carvajal      | Alfonso<br>Rodríguez de<br>Maluenda          |
| 1440s   | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Santa<br>María | Gonzalo<br>García de<br>Carvajal        | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María          | Alfonso<br>Rodríguez de<br>Maluenda | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja | Gonzalo<br>Gutiérrez de<br>la Calleja | Juan<br>Fernández de<br>Cabreros             |
|   | Juan de<br>Carvajal                    | Rodrigo de<br>Carvajal                  |  |                                     | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca         | Juan<br>Fernández de<br>Cabreros      |  |
|   |  |   |  |                                     |                                       | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María   |  |
| 1450s   | Juan de<br>Carvajal                    | Rodrigo de<br>Carvajal                  | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María          | No<br>information<br>available      | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca         | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María   | Juan<br>Fernández de<br>Cabreros             |
|   |  |   | Pedro<br>González de<br>Illescas             |                                     |                                       |                                       |  |
| 1460s   | Juan de<br>Carvajal                    | Rodrigo de<br>Carvajal                  | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca                | No<br>information<br>available      | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca         | Alfonso<br>García de<br>Santa María   | No Vicar<br>General                          |
|   |  | Sancho de<br>Carvajal                   |  |                                     |                                       | Alvaro de<br>Carvajal                 |  |
| 1470s   | NR                                     | Sancho de<br>Carvajal                   | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca                | Diego de<br>Carvajal                | Ruy García<br>de<br>Salamanca         | Alvaro de<br>Carvajal                 | NR   |
| Key: Santa María family (orange cells) and Carvajal family (green cells). NR = Not related to the Carvajal or Santa María families. |  |   |  |                                     |                                       |                                       |  |

Although it is difficult to ascertain why this local shift in power occurred, it appears likely due to the deteriorating social and religious position of all *conversos* in Castilian society.<sup>19</sup> Those who considered themselves to be Old Christians (*crístianos viejos*) increasingly viewed *conversos* as fundamentally different from themselves, and disparagingly referred to them as *New Christians* (*crístianos nuevos*). Elite *conversos* in particular became the focus of the wrath of Old Christians, especially when King Juan II relied on this group to implement unpopular measures, such as his efforts to raise taxes to fund the war with Islamic Granada. In 1448, when King Juan II turned to his *converso* advisor Alvaro de Luna to oversee the collection of 1,000,000 maravedis from the city of Toledo for the war with Islamic Granada, the city's leaders and inhabitants revolted.<sup>20</sup> Not only did Pedro Sarmiento, the *Alcalde Mayor* of Toledo, lead the charge against Alvaro de Luna's hand-selected *converso* tax collector, Alonso Cota, but the mayor and an "angry mob" burned Cota's house down.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, the Toledans framed their conflict as not with the king, but with Alvaro de Luna, who many Christians suspected of being overly supportive of Jews and *conversos*.<sup>22</sup> These royal taxes were proof to the Toledans that the *conversos* had, "instigated [the higher taxes] in order to 'humiliate' the 'Old Christians' who clearly could not afford to pay such a sum."<sup>23</sup> What started as conflict over royal taxes devolved

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<sup>19</sup> As highlighted in Chapter Six, during the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century Castile was caught in the turbulent wake of extended and varied conflicts. The conflicts troubling the Kingdom of Castile included Castilian noble families competing with one another for control and influence over King Juan II, Castile's continuous political and military confrontations with fellow Christian kingdoms and Islamic Granada, and the fall of the Juan II's most powerful advisor, the *converso* Alvaro de Luna. See: López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla, Tomo Segundo, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, No. 68*, 547-653; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 1-31; Villalon, "The Law's Delay: The Anatomy of an Aristocratic Property Dispute (1350-1577)", 232-254; Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516, vol. II*, 303-305.

<sup>20</sup> Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, 89.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



into physical violence against the *conversos*. These attacks were not isolated to Toledo. The violence against the New Christians also appeared most notably in Valladolid and Cordoba (1473) and in Segovia (1474).<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, from the mid-to-late 1400s, *conversos* became the focus of new forms of societal and institutionalized discrimination. In the aftermath of the 1449 riots in Toledo, the local city council implemented new blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) ordinances to exclude *conversos* from prominent and profitable offices.<sup>25</sup>

Rising to the defense of himself and other *conversos* during this era was Bishop Alonso de Cartagena, the brother of Gonzalo García de Santa María (former Bishop of Plasencia). Alonso was a powerful voice for the fair treatment of *conversos*, arguing in a letter (known as *In Defense of Christian Unity* or *Defensorium Unitatis Christiane*) to King Juan II that not only were all Jews and Christians part of a common humanity, but that Jews who converted to Christianity were fully sanctified by the act of holy baptism.<sup>26</sup> *Relator* Fernán Díaz de Toledo, a fellow *converso* and royal secretary, extended the line of these arguments in his 1449 letter to his friend, Lope de Barrientos, Bishop of Cuenca.<sup>27</sup> Fernán Díaz stated that “sacred law” dictated that *conversos* and “Old Christians” were “brothers”.<sup>28</sup> He further argued that Castilians held misguided positions on blood purity because Old Christian and Jewish families had heavily intermarried in the preceding decades.<sup>29</sup> Fernán Díaz went as far to name many of the great Castilian noble

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<sup>24</sup> Jerome Friedman, "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18.1 (1987): 11.

<sup>25</sup> Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, 89; Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> Alonso de Cartagena, *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, trans. P. Manuel Alonso, S.I. (Madrid: CSIC, 1943) 43-52.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 343-356.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

families known to have intermarried with Jewish families, including the Manriques, Mendozas, Guzmans, Fernández de Cordobas, López de Estúñigas, Pimentels, and many others.<sup>30</sup> Precisely as the Castilian nobility engaged in this debate about *conversos*, the king's key advisor, *Condestable* Alvaro de Luna, fell from power.

In an extraordinary convergence of events in the 1450s, a convoluted conflict intertwined Alvaro de Luna, the Estúñigas, and the *converso* Santa Marías. The affairs ended with the execution of de Luna. In the preceding decade of the 1440s, Alvaro de Luna had considered Pedro de Estúñiga, the *Conde de Plasencia y Béjar*, to be a significant threat to his personal power.<sup>31</sup> He held this conviction so strongly that in 1452 he secretly premeditated the capture and elimination of Estúñiga at the count's fortified stronghold in the village of Béjar.<sup>32</sup> However, when Alvaro's plan failed he appealed to Bishop Alonso de Cartagena (the brother of Gonzalo García de Santa María) for political and physical shelter.<sup>33</sup> While Alvaro initially found asylum in the bishop's home in Burgos, royal authorities eventually forced Alvaro to surrender himself. In the end, a royal court convicted Alvaro of multiple crimes and the king refused to intervene on his behalf. In a startling collapse of personal power, the court executed Alvaro in 1453 and subsequently the Santa Marías experienced a steady erosion of familial power in royal and church affairs.<sup>34</sup> With Alvaro's death and the Santa Marías' decline, the elite *conversos* who had guided royal policies since the 1390s were now in full retreat.

After the 1470s, as the Santa Marías' royal and political influence began to wane, it appears that the Carvajals began to reduce their explicit support of their *converso*

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 32-33.

<sup>32</sup> López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla, Tomo Segundo*, 676-678.

<sup>33</sup> Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 1; Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su Familia de Conversos*, 409-516.

partners in the cathedral of Plasencia. The extent of the Carvajal clan's withdrawal from their alliance with the Santa Marías is difficult to establish fully because throughout the second half of the 1400s, the Santa Marías routinely changed their surnames. In essence, the *converso* family began to conceal their identity. For example, the most prominent lineage of the local Santa Marías in Plasencia, descended from Gonzalo Gutiérrez de la Calleja, who served as a canon, treasurer, and cantor in the cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>35</sup> Gonzalo's wife was Leonor de Jerez. Yet, the couple did not bestow either the "de la Calleja" or "Jerez" family names on their son, Juan Fernández de Cabrerros.

Juan also participated in the cathedral as a notary. When Juan served in the church, he often dropped the use of the "Cabrerros" surname and substituted "Betanzos" in its place. Betanzos was also not a known surname in the family. Likewise, when Juan had his own son with Teresa de Porras, he named him "Juan de Cabrero", thus dropping the "s" on the family surname. Thus, by 1500 the Santa Marías effectively obscured their lineage although Juan de Cabrero routinely provided notary services to the cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps, the Gutiérrez de la Callejas renamed themselves to hide their identities and their link to the Santa María *converso* lineage. Many *conversos* who were concerned about *limpieza de sangre* prohibitions, which could limit access to employment opportunities, customarily changed their surnames to conceal their ancestral identities.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo I (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 197v-198v; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 4v-8; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 9, "Traslado de los autos hechos en lo de septiembre de 1524 por el Juez Lic. Gonzalo Campo, que pretendió quitar los balcones de las ventanas de las casas de Plasencia", Folios 1-1v.

<sup>36</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 4v-8

<sup>37</sup> Stafford Poole, "The Politics of *Limpieza de Sangre*: Juan de Ovando and His Circle in the Reign of Philip II," *The Americas*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jan., 1999): 386.

Unlike the Santa Marías whose participation in royal and papal affairs was diminishing rapidly, the Carvajal family of Plasencia continued on its social and political ascent from the 1440s through 1470s. At the opening of the 1440s, after over twenty years of royal service, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal was the family's leader in kingdom affairs. Not only had he served as one of Juan II's judges in Valladolid, but the king also named him to simultaneous posts as a *corregidor* (councilman) in the cities of Plasencia and Valladolid.<sup>38</sup>

When he was not attending to legal affairs in Valladolid, King Juan II depended on Dr. Garci López for a variety of administrative and diplomatic services. For instance, during the 1420s, the king ordered the doctor to supervise the removal of old city walls near Valladolid's *alcazar*, which ran from the Church of St. Julian to the Monastery of St. Benedict.<sup>39</sup> This project had become absolutely necessary, as the king explained in a letter to the doctor, "[because] some people use this area [as an opportune one] to steal from and harm others."<sup>40</sup> By the early 1440s, the monarch entrusted Dr. Garci López with significantly more important affairs. Specifically, he was a member of an elite collection of royal advisers (including Bishop Alonso de Cartagena), who the king dispatched as his peace emissaries to the Kingdom of Navarra.<sup>41</sup> While at the pinnacle of his own career within the royal administrative service, Dr. Garci López witnessed the rise of another Carvajal family member who would eventually surpass his own achievements. For the next three decades Dr. Garci López's cousin, Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, would expand

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<sup>38</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Documento "El Portazgo de Plasencia pertencia al Cabildo Catedral..."; ACP Legajo 270, Documento 15; Luis Rodríguez Martínez, *Historia del Monasterio de San Benito el Real de Valladolid* (Valladolid: Caja de Ahorros Popular de Valladolid, 1981), 73, note 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla, Tomo Segundo*, 572-574.

the family's influence well beyond Spain and he would come to embody the noble and religious ideals of the clan.

### THE EMERGENCE OF JUAN DE CARVAJAL AS A FAMILY LEADER

Juan de Carvajal was the first of the family's new ecclesiastical lineage to traverse a path that led beyond the protected sanctuary of the cathedral of Plasencia and into the arena of papal affairs.<sup>42</sup>

Like Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, he embodied the Carvajals' transformation from *caballeros* into learned men. He was likely born in the first decade of the 1400s, roughly twenty years prior to the formation of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation.<sup>43</sup> Like his extended family, he benefited from a noble birth as he was the son of Juan de Tamayo, a nobleman from Bonilla de la Sierra, and Sara de Carvajal, the daughter of Placentino *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal.<sup>44</sup> (See Figure 1: The Immediate Family of Juan de Carvajal.) Among his five siblings, his brother, Rodrigo, and sister, Sancha, also had a close relationship with the Catholic Church. While Rodrigo served in an official capacity as the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar from the mid-1440s until the mid-1460s, Sancha lived a religiously devout life. As will be explored shortly, although she never took the vows of a nun, in her final years she was a generous benefactor of churches in Plasencia and Bonilla de la Sierra.

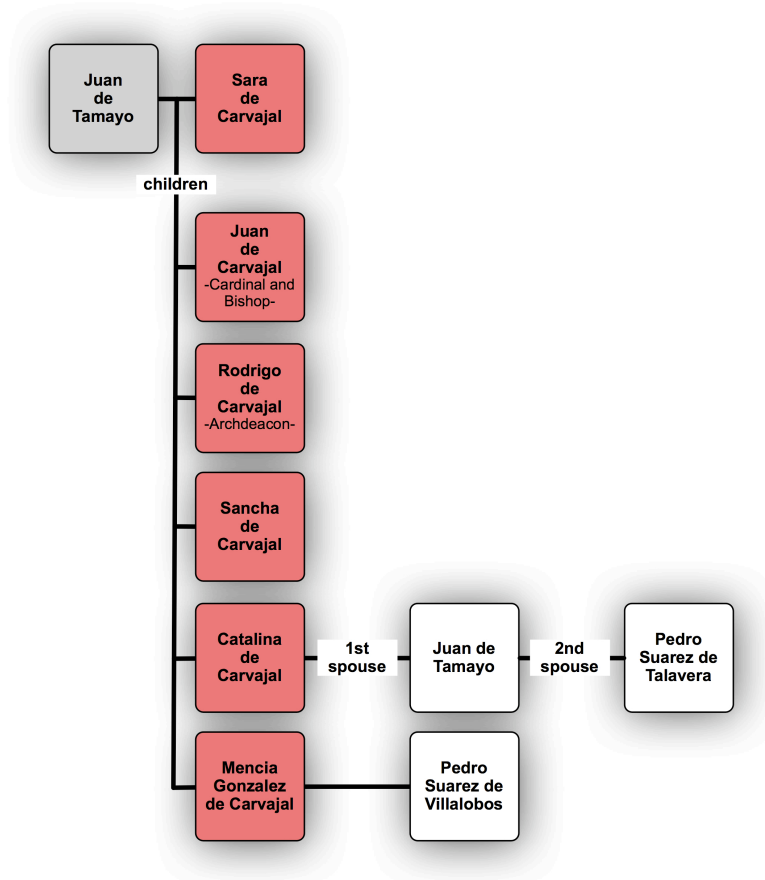
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<sup>42</sup> Several other Carvajals followed Juan de Carvajal's example. They included his second cousin, Bernardino López de Carvajal, who ascended to the position of Cardinal and challenged Pope Julius II for the papal tiara in the 1510s, and his nephew, Juan Suarez de Carvajal, who served as Bishop of Lugo from 1539-1561 and later was a member of the *Council of the Indies* under Phillip II. See: Fernández, *Historia y Anales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 175; AHNSN Frias, Caja 1017, Documento 3; AHNSN Mocejón, Caja 7, legajo sin número; RAH Colección Pellicer, 9/4058, Folio 1-6, 100.

<sup>43</sup> Lino Gómez Canedo, *Don Juan de Carvajal: Un Español al Servicio de la Santa Sede* (Madrid: CSIC, 1947), 31.

<sup>44</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folio 159.

**Figure 1: The Immediate Family of Juan de Carvajal**



A close inspection of Juan's ascension in the Catholic Church hierarchy reveals not only how church officials could manipulate the advancement process, but also the extent to which Juan was transitioning from a family of warriors to the world of ecclesiastical leaders. After completing most of his academic training for his bachelor degree in law at the University of Salamanca during the 1420s, in one short decade he would graduate from serving as a canon in the Cathedral of Toledo to the position of Auditor of the *Rota* in Vatican City.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18.

Juan did not achieve his rapid progression from local church affairs in Spain to papal matters in Rome by his merits alone. Rather, the official intervention by Pope Martín V and King Juan II made his journey possible, even when Juan's background and training fell short of what was expected. For example, in 1429, when Pope Martín V bestowed upon Juan his canonship in the Cathedral of Toledo, the pope also granted him an extensive papal dispensation forgiving his participation in a "quarrel that resulted in bloodshed."<sup>46</sup> As discussed previously (Chapter Five), Juan de Carvajal and his extended family of knights had participated in the warfare and armed conflicts that pervaded the Diocese of Plasencia throughout the 1420s. His direct involvement in these violent affairs was so problematic to his church advancement that Pope Martín V absolved him of "all irregularities and infamy" that would prevent him from acquiring his religious benefice in Toledo. The papacy's intervention proved helpful, possibly necessary, because five months after receiving his papal dispensation, Juan's acquisition of church posts accelerated. He subsequently accepted another canon's position, this time in the cathedral of Palencia, another key religious center in the Castilian heartland.<sup>47</sup>

By 1430, it appears that Juan's superiors in Toledo or Palencia expected him to join a religious order—a responsibility that might have slowed his progress in joining the church's elite administrative class. However, once again, Pope Martín V intervened on Juan's behalf. The pontiff ordered that no one could compel Juan to join a religious order while he was pursuing his studies at the University of Salamanca because the pope desired Juan be prepared fully for his "journey" to the *Roman Curia*.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>46</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 329-330; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 244, Folio 250.

<sup>47</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 332; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 244, Folios 19v-20.

<sup>48</sup> Gómez Canedo, *Don Juan de Carvajal*, 34.

pope noted that Juan already had sufficient church responsibilities, given his position in Palencia and another post provided to him by his relatives in the cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>49</sup> With respect to the latter, Juan collected a salary generated from two annual memorial masses said by the clergy in the Church of Holy Mary in the village of Trujillo.<sup>50</sup>

During the remainder of the 1430s, church leaders ushered Juan through a series of church appointments intended to prepare him for service in the Vatican. In 1432, he collected another canon's position in the Cathedral of Zamora, but then quickly transferred to the Diocese of Astorga where he became the Dean of the cathedral chapter.<sup>51</sup> In this role, Juan gathered valuable administrative experience working with archdeacons and a staff of canons. Gonzalo García de Santa María, then the Bishop of Plasencia, likely made Juan's move to Astorga possible as Gonzalo had served as Astorga's bishop less than ten years earlier.<sup>52</sup> However, just as Juan was becoming accustomed to leaving behind the violent *caballero* past of his family, in 1433, he found himself seeking and receiving another papal absolution. On this occasion, he had participated in a conflict that ended in the deaths of several men, as well as their "mutilation."<sup>53</sup> The pope's willingness to approve this dispensation, as well as the prior one in 1429, indicates that Juan had powerful patrons willing to clear path of any obstructions that might impede his advancement.

In the final years of his preparation for service at the Vatican, Juan de Carvajal continued to benefit from papal leniency. In 1433, the pontiff granted him another

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 379-380; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 283, Folios 250v-251.

<sup>52</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 142-143; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 134, Folio 51.

<sup>53</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 381-383; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Lat. 364, Folios 247-248.



benefice, this time in the Church of Holy Mary of Ecija.<sup>54</sup> He received this promotion in the church hierarchy, even though his academic studies were faltering. The letter of appointment for his Ecija benefice noted that he had only completed, “a couple years of study in civil law.”<sup>55</sup> In spite of these shortcomings, the church granted Juan yet another source of income, as well as to retain the other paid positions provided by the Dioceses of Astorga, Zamora, Plasencia, and Palencia.<sup>56</sup>

Not surprisingly, Juan also secured the benefice in Ecija by way of family connections—a traditional appointment mechanism. Juan received the position vacated by the death of Alfonso de Cabreros, who was a relative of Cardinal Juan Cervantes of Sevilla.<sup>57</sup> To be expected, when a benefice or canon’s seat became available, the most likely candidate to receive the opening was another family member of the deceased or a close associate. In this case, Juan was a relation of Cardinal Cervantes.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, it seems likely that Alfonso de Cabreros shared family ties with the Santa María clan as all of these churchmen appear to be connected to the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, which included the Fernández de Cabreros’ church leaders in Plasencia.

In 1436, Juan de Carvajal secured one last position with the aid of King Juan II and his influential advisor, Alvaro de Luna.<sup>59</sup> In that year, Pope Eugene IV made him the Abbott of Holy Mary of Husillos (*Abadia de Santa María de Husillos*), which was

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<sup>54</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 385; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 290, Folios 36v.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Cardinal Juan de Cervantes is named as a family member of Rodrigo de Carvajal, the Treasurer for the Archdeacon of Coria in the Diocese of Plasencia. Rodrigo and Juan de Carvajal were brothers. For details about the relationship linking the Cervantes and Carvajal families, see: Gómez Canedo. *Don Juan de Carvajal*, 35, note 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 36.

located in the periphery of Palencia.<sup>60</sup> Although another church official, Juan de Quiñones, tried to block his appointment, the king and his advisor wrote to Pope Eugene IV asking him to intervene on behalf of Juan de Carvajal.<sup>61</sup> Understanding that “King Juan II expressed his concern and preference for Carvajal,” the pope ordered Quiñones to cease his actions and to “no longer oppose the rights of who he had named.”<sup>62</sup> As mentioned earlier, at this critical juncture in Juan de Carvajal’s ecclesiastical progression and accumulation of benefices, both the Santa Marías and Dr. Garci López de Carvajal served as royal advisors and were also associates of de Luna. Alvaro de Luna’s involvement in Juan’s promotion also indicates that the Carvajal family was closely associated with the *converso* faction that circulated in the Castilian royal court.

While he was the Abbott of Holy Mary of Husillos, Juan de Carvajal had his first taste of papal service when, from 1438 to 1440, Pope Eugene IV dispatched him twenty-two times to attend the schismatic Council of Basel (1431-1449).<sup>63</sup> There, along with other advocates of the pope, such as Nicolás de Cusa and Jacobo de Oratoribus, he argued against the conciliarists’ position that the council of cardinals was the true leader of the church and not the pope.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps due to his effectiveness at the council, as well as the loyalty he demonstrated to the papacy, in 1439, Juan de Carvajal entered full-time service as an Auditor of the Vatican *Rota*.<sup>65</sup> In his position as an Auditor, Juan was responsible for assisting in the preparation of papal judgments for legal cases that flowed

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<sup>60</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 410; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 319, Folio 85.

<sup>61</sup> Lino Gómez Canedo, *Don Juan de Carvajal*, 36.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 112

<sup>64</sup> Gómez Canedo, *Don Juan de Carvajal*, 45; Herbermann, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v., “Basle, Council of,” by James MacCaffrey.

<sup>65</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 446-447; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 359, Folios 70v-71.

in from all areas of the Catholic world.<sup>66</sup> These included all issues pertaining to the Holy See, such as “rites and procedures pertaining to beatifications and canonization,” as well as “special cases of civil and canon law, such as annulling marriages.”<sup>67</sup> Juan was likely one of a dozen such auditors. He occupied the seat typically reserved for a Castilian.<sup>68</sup> Within the Vatican, only the ambassadors from the Christian kingdoms had more influence than the auditors.<sup>69</sup>

As in other cases involving Juan’s promotion in the Catholic Church, his assumption of the duties and title of auditor came with a specially crafted papal concession. Although he had attended the University of Salamanca to pursue a degree in canon and civil law, it is likely he never completed these studies.<sup>70</sup> At least Pope Eugene IV had to certify that Juan could assume his new legal post without providing proof of either his academic degrees or church ordination.<sup>71</sup>

After three years of service on the *Rota*, in 1441 Juan entered the pope’s foreign service where he began a thirty-three year career in Rome.<sup>72</sup> From 1441 to 1448, he was a papal legate and emissary to the German princes who had allied themselves against Pope Eugene IV. He reached the pinnacle of his career in 1446, when the crown and pontiff made him Bishop of Plasencia and Cardinal of San Angel. Later, in 1455, he demonstrated his Christian religious zeal when he preached a holy crusade in Hungary to rally support behind efforts to counter the Ottoman Turks.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Philippe Levillain ed. *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2002), s.v., “Auditor, Rota,” by Bernard de Lanversin.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Beltran de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219-1549)*, vol. II: 446-447; Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum (Vatican Secret Archives) Reg. Suppl. 359, Folios 70v-71.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Folio 17v; RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-16, Folio 306.

Because Juan de Carvajal spent so much of his life outside of Plasencia, it appears that he held his title as bishop in absentia. Even though the *Actas Capitulares* speak of him as the bishop and “perpetual administrator of the Bishopric of Plasencia,” he never was present at any recorded meetings of the cathedral chapter.<sup>74</sup> Although he was absent physically from the diocese, he did implement several local church initiatives. For instance, in 1468, Juan founded a local Cathedral Grammar School (*Escuela de Gramatica*) in Plasencia to address what he considered the “ignorance” of local clergy and to revive the study of philosophy, Latin, and theology.<sup>75</sup> To serve as the first chair of the school, Juan selected his relative, Prebendary Dr. Gil Fernández de Carvajal.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps, this focus on local educational training was a recognition of his own educational inadequacies that had become apparent over thirty years earlier when Pope Eugene IV granted him a special exemption pertaining to his legal training.

In the final years of Juan de Carvajal’s term as Cardinal and Bishop of Plasencia, his extended family embarked on several critical family memorial projects. Unlike their previous endeavors, which had primarily focused on the occupational transformation of the clan, these new initiatives aimed to lionize the clan’s noble and religious status. As individuals, as well as through intensively planned collective actions, the Carvajals dedicated the next twenty years to the foundation of a broad array of religious endowments that simultaneously promoted piety as well as their social stature.

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<sup>74</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares Traslado*, Tomo I, Folios 421-424.

<sup>75</sup> ACP Legajo 85, Documento 1; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18v; González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia*, 116; Francisco González Cuesta, “La Catedral de Grammatica de Plasencia (1468-1852),” *Memoria Ecclesiae*, Vol. XII (Oviedo: Asociacion de Archiveros de la Iglesia de España, 1997): 105-125.

<sup>76</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documentos 3 and 12; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18v.

## INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS TO MEMORIALIZE THE CARVAJAL FAMILY

Across Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, both wealthy and modestly endowed noble families highly valued the social currency that they could accumulate by making personal donations to the church.<sup>77</sup> In particular, families utilized religious memorial services to celebrate their clan lineages and ancestors.<sup>78</sup> However, for the purposes of ensuring the stability and improvement of a family's social position, simply possessing attributes of piety and charity was socially irrelevant unless the family publically displayed them in high profile settings. Thus, even though the Plasencia Carvajal family customarily founded memorial services in their local parish churches, like those of St. Nicholas and St. Martín, these efforts provided little public exposure for the family's lineage.<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps recognizing the limitations of their previous religious endowments, during the 1460s the Carvajals focused intensively on making new investments in church institutions. Before this era, the clan made only modest contributions to local parish churches and they had no history of gifting monies to the cathedral of Plasencia. Individuals customarily arranged donations to local churches in their last testament.<sup>80</sup> The most common gifts involved the granting of money or property to a local parish or the cathedral so that the clergy would say memorial masses for their relatives, as well as themselves. Typically, a prosperous knight or their widow would will to the cathedral

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<sup>77</sup> Jorge Díaz Ibáñez, "Las Relaciones Iglesia-Nobleza en el Obispado de Cuenca Durante la Baja Edad Media," *La España Medieval*, n. 20, (Madrid 1997): 312-313; Beceiro Pita, *Parentesco, Poder y Mentalidad. La Nobleza Castellana: Siglos XII-XV*, 43, 90, 98, 100; Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City*, 18-19.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 39; Rahn Phillips. *Ciudad Real 1500-1700: Growth, Crisis, and Readjustment in the Spanish Economy*, 10, 49-51.

<sup>79</sup> For example, in 1455, Diego González de Carvajal established a memorial mass for himself at the Church of St. Nicholas, and another for his deceased spouse, Catalina González, at the Monastery of San Francisco. See: ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter Five's discussion of the cathedral reforms and initiatives that dedicated new clergy to the task of singing memorial masses.

between 200 to 300 maravedis for a single one-time funerary service.<sup>81</sup> For masses that were more elaborate often donors would gift real estate or commit family members to providing continuous yearly payments to the church.<sup>82</sup>

A review of the *Book of Anniversary Masses of the Holy Church of Plasencia*, which is the cathedral's record of funerary masses, reveals that before the 1460s, the Carvajal family had not established any cathedral memorial services for family members.<sup>83</sup> However, during and after the 1460s, the Carvajal clan's purchase of memorial services proliferated, particularly services endowed family churchmen especially members related to Cardinal Juan de Carvajal.<sup>84</sup> (See Table 2: Carvajal Family Memorial Masses Established in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1460s to 1550s.)

Three siblings, Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal, and Sancha de Carvajal, figured among the more prominent family contributions for cathedral memorial services. Over the course of two decades, from the 1460s through the 1470s, these three persons donated multiple properties and monies to the cathedral. The result was that its clergy would sing sixty-five annual funerary masses for their grandparents, parents, extended family members, and themselves. Most of the Carvajals' senior churchmen (cardinals, bishops, archdeacons, and canons) would subsequently continue this tradition into the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>81</sup> For a selection of typical one-time donations to the church, see ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 1v, 2, 3v, 5, 6v, and other unfoliated pages.

<sup>82</sup> ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 2v, 5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 2, 2v, 4, 5v, 7, 10-10v, 12v, and other unfoliated pages; Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 1v-2v, 15-15v; ACP Legajo 13, Documento 9; ACP *Inventario de los papeles del archivo 1 a 174*, Folios 154-154v; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folios 20-22; Antonio Rubio Rojas, *Los Disposiciones Testamentarios de Don Francisco de Carvajal, Arcediano de Plasencia y Mecenas de Cáceres, Su Villa Natal* (Cáceres: Imp. T. Rodríguez Santano, 1975), 30.

No other clan in Plasencia, either in the past or in the future, would make such extensive and elaborate plans for preserving the memory of their families. For almost two centuries, and as detailed in the *Book of Anniversary Masses*, the Carvajal clan fully monopolized the cathedral's attention in these funerary rights. In this manner, the family fully harnessed the church's religious authority and rituals to memorialize the religious devotion of their lineage.

**Table 2: Carvajal Family Memorial Masses Established  
in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1460s to 1550s<sup>85</sup>**

| Year/<br>Decade          | Family Member   | Type of Memorial and Donation   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1460s                    | Sara de Carvajal<br>(mother of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twelve (12) annual masses, twelve (12) annual vigil masses, and twelve (12) annual requiem masses</li> <li>Donation: 100 maravedis and additional monies given to purchase six-parts of the property known as the <i>Heredad de Almendral</i></li> </ul> |
| 1477                     | Sara de Carvajal<br>(Daughter of Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil mass</li> </ul>   |
| 1478                     | Sara de Carvajal and Juan de Tamayo,<br>(parents of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal and Sancha de Carvajal) and Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas and Sevilla López de Villalobos (grandparents of Juan and Sancha) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual mass</li> <li>Donation: One property at the periphery of the city of Plasencia</li> </ul>   |
| 1479                     | Pedro de Carvajal,<br>Archdeacon of Cáceres<br>(Son of <i>Regidor</i> Ruy Diaz de Buezo)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil mass</li> <li>Donation: 300 maravedis of annual income from the property known as the <i>Heredad de Picaroso</i></li> </ul>   |
| Late<br>1470s -<br>1480s | Rodrigo de Carvajal, Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar; Gonzalo García de Carvajal, former Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar; and Diego González de Carvajal.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twenty-four (24) annual masses</li> <li>Donation: 1,500 maravedis and 1/8 part of property known as the <i>Heredad de Cabeza Pardas</i></li> </ul>   |
| 1490s                    | Sancho de Carvajal,<br>Archdeacon of Plasencia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six (6) annual masses and six (6) annual vigil mass</li> <li>Donation: 3,000 maravedis</li> </ul>  |
| 1500s                    | Diego de Carvajal,<br>Archdeacon of Coria<br>(Son of Dr. García López de Carvajal)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil</li> <li>Donation: Houses on <i>Calle de Trujillo</i></li> </ul>  |
| 1510s-<br>1520s          | Francisco de Carvajal,<br>Archdeacon of Medellín  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil mass</li> <li>Donation: 1,500 maravedis</li> </ul>  |
| 1520s                    | Bernardino López de Carvajal,<br>Cardinal and Bishop of Plasencia   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One (1) annual vigil mass</li> <li>Donation: 1,000 maravedis of annual income from the property known as the <i>Dehesa de las Cabezas</i></li> </ul>   |

<sup>85</sup> The individual masses for each Carvajal family member were derived from the following sources: ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 2, 2v, 4, 5v, 7, 10-10v, 12v, and other unfoliated pages; Legajo 282, Doc. 4, “Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477”, Folios 1v-2v, 15-15v; ACP Legajo 13, Documento 9; ACP *Inventario de los papeles del archivo 1 a 174*, Folios 154-154v; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folios 20-22; ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5; Antonio Rubio Rojas, *Los Disposiciones Testamentarios de Don Francisco de Carvajal, Arcediano de Plasencia y Mecenaz de Cáceres, Su Villa Natal* (Cáceres: Imp. T. Rodríguez Santano, 1975), 30.



| Year/<br>Decade | Family Member   | Type of Memorial and Donation   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1546            | Dr. Bernardino de Carvajal,<br>Canon                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil mass</li> <li>• Donation: 1,200 maravedis of annual income from a house and corral on <i>Calle de Santa María</i></li> </ul>      |
| 1550s           | Francisco de Carvajal,<br>Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) annual mass and one (1) annual vigil mass</li> <li>• Donation: 1,200 maravedis of annual income from the property known as the <i>Dehesa de las Cabezas</i></li> </ul> |

Among the most prominent of the family's religious donors were Sevilla López de Carvajal and Sancha de Carvajal. Like other Castilian women during this era, such as those in the nearby city of Ávila, Sevilla and Sancha chose to direct substantial amounts of their personal wealth to religious memorials, endowments, and charity.<sup>86</sup> Their personal initiatives, which their families attentively implemented after their deaths, indicate that the Carvajal family highly valued these striking displays of religiosity. It further demonstrates one of the ways women exercised social power in the Castilian world.

In 1467, Sevilla López de Carvajal conceived of the most ambitious of the family's religious projects when she provided for the founding of the Church and Convent of St. Clare in her last testament.<sup>87</sup> The scope of her endeavor was the first of its kind for any Carvajal in the greater diocese or the Extremadura. Although Sevilla was not a descendant of the primary lineage of the Plasencia Carvajals, she was closely related to them. She was the daughter of Diego Rodríguez de Carvajal and the wife of *Bachiller* Alonso Ruiz de Camargo.<sup>88</sup> Her cousins, among others, included Cardinal Juan de

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<sup>86</sup> Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4; ACP Legajo 89, Documentos 1, 11, 12; Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 117.

<sup>88</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4.

Carvajal and the royal adviser, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, she and her cousins shared the same extended family relations. By the 1460s, both Sevilla and her cousins had intermarried with the Trejo, Buezo, and Camargo, and Villalva clans.<sup>90</sup> The Carvajals' relationship to the Villalvas is particularly intriguing because the Villalvas were also kin of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, these ties provided yet another linkage holding the Carvajal and Santa María families together.

Sevilla's endowment was comprehensive in terms of its approach and the resources dedicated to housing a new religious order in the city. Specifically, her will provided sufficient resources to support twelve to fifteen nuns, a resident abbess, as well as two dedicated chaplains.<sup>92</sup> To house the "Poor Clares", she ordered the construction of a new convent, with its own church, on the grounds of her residence on *Calle del Rey*. However, Sevilla's spouse, Alonso, delayed the erection of the convent until 1474, and chose to build it closer to the cathedral of Plasencia. He situated the convent on *Calle de Santa María*, which the city subsequently renamed *Calle de las Claras*. During the

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<sup>89</sup> Most likely, Sevilla López de Carvajal and her father were the cousins of the late 14th century knight, Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas, who was the progenitor of the Plasencia Carvajals. Although Sevilla López's exact ancestry is unknown, her immediate family intermarried with the Camargo, Trejo, Tapia, Toledo, Villalva, and Diaz de Buezo clans. Among her "cousins" were Estefania González de Carvajal and Mencía González de Carvajal, who were the daughters of the primary knight studied in this investigation, Diego González de Carvajal. Like her cousin, Mencía González de Carvajal was married to a Camargo clansman, Gonzalo de Camargo. Thus, Sevilla López de Carvajal shared close and redundant ties to the main line of Plasencia Carvajals. See: ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4; ACP Legajo 1, Documento 18; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25; ACP Legajo 269, Documento 25; AHNSN Luque C. 160, Documento 9; Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 148-151.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.; The appearance of the Carvajals' multiple interconnections to and intermarriage with the Villalva family are especially key to understanding a major element of this investigation—the depth of the Carvajal-Santa María confederation. This finding, that by the 1460s the Villalvas, Carvajals, and Santa Marías were related, is the outcome of documenting the relationship between Sevilla López de Carvajal and her churchmen cousins. It demonstrates that while other Castilians were targeting high profile and elite *conversos* for exclusion from church and royal positions during the mid-1400s, the Carvajal family was not only strengthening its collaborative relations with their Santa María partners in the cathedral of Plasencia, but the two clans had also advanced their relationship into the area of shared blood relations.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4.

1470s, this section of the city had become a vital focal point of the Carvajals' local presence. Sevilla's husband positioned the convent approximately one block from the cathedral, one block from Cardinal Carvajal's new Cathedral Grammar School (*Escuela Catedral de Grammatica*), and one block from the homes belonging to Dr. Garci López de Carvajal's immediate family.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the immediate zone around the cathedral was increasingly becoming a Carvajal family stronghold.

In her will, Sevilla placed great emphasis on the proper provisioning of the convent, and thus revealed her appreciation of the details of worship and a cloistered life. Among the most noteworthy gifts that Sevilla gave to the nuns were those directly tied to the observance of daily mass.<sup>94</sup> First, she specified that the nuns should celebrate Holy Communion with her gifts of a silver chalice (*calis*), paten (*patena*), and two wine ampoules. To adorn the convent's church altar, she gave the sisters two silver candleholders and two silk altar clothes (*frontales*). To support the chaplains' and nuns' proper performance of mass, Sevilla paid for "the necessary books for the altar and choir."<sup>95</sup> Lastly, the donor wished to attire her nuns suitably, and to this end, she provided instructions to give each of them, "a chasuble, two dalmatics, and a black silk cloak."<sup>96</sup>

To endow the convent with sufficient operational funds, Sevilla granted a mixture of monies, agriculturally productive lands and resources, as well as other real estate. The most substantial of these provisions included an annual income of 15,000 maravedis from her collection of inherited properties as well as two mills, one on the Jerete River near the village of Galisteo and another one near Plasencia's *Puerta de Trujillo*, which produced

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<sup>93</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 1; ACP Legajo 85, Documento 1; ACP *Actas Capitulares Tomo 1 (1399-1453) Traslado*, Folios 208v-209, 217v-219, 252-256, 284v-297.

<sup>94</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

an annual income of 200 *fanegas* of wheat. By guaranteeing a continuous income for the convent, Sevilla ensured that the institution could support itself and be less reliant on other donations.

For all of these gifts, Sevilla López de Carvajal requested and expected the Convent of St. Clare to memorialize her piety in a meaningful manner. After the convent was constructed, she instructed that her grave be moved from the Church of St. Martín to the convent's church and reinterred in a "well-made sepulcher of stone and alabaster."<sup>97</sup> At her new grave, near the convent's church altar, she ordered:

The chaplain is obligated to sing four [memorial] masses—on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—every week for me. Also, on every day he sings a regular mass he is to say the responsorial psalms in front of my grave. He is to do this in a clear voice and in a manner such the nuns in the choir can hear them as well.<sup>98</sup>

In this manner, Sevilla guaranteed that she would remain a constant presence in every mass said at the convent. Mirroring the memorial events occurring inside the convent, Sevilla similarly communicated her family's devotion to the world outside the cloister. Specifically, her family would later integrate the Carvajal and Camargo coats of arms into the front façade of the Convent of St. Clare.<sup>99</sup> (See Figure 2: Carvajal-Camargo Family Heraldry on the Front Façade of the Convent of St. Clare.)

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<sup>97</sup> ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 30-34.

**Figure 2: Carvajal-Camargo Family Heraldry on the Front Façade of the Convent of St. Clare<sup>100</sup>**



Before the Carvajal and Camargo families could secure a papal bull for the convent's foundation, the clans first had to confront their local rivals, the Estúñigas, who in 1472 were in the process of establishing a competing religious institution, the Convent of Ildefonso.<sup>101</sup> In his work, *El Convento Placentino de San Ildefonso*, Domingo Sánchez Loro discusses how Alvaro de Estúñiga and Leonor Pimentel, the Count and Countess of Plasencia and Béjar, actively labored “in bad faith” to take possession of Sevilla López de Carvajal's estate so that her convent would not be built or completed.<sup>102</sup> During the 1470s, the Estúñigas attempted to halt Sevilla's project by convincing Alonso Ruiz de

<sup>100</sup> Photo Source: Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 145.

<sup>101</sup> Domingo Sánchez Loro, *El Convento Placentino de San Ildefonso* (Cáceres: Publicaciones del Departamento Provincial de Seminarios de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1956), 24.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

Camargo's second wife, Beatriz de Monroy, to intervene in Sevilla's estate. As Beatriz and Leonor shared an "intimate friendship", Beatriz was amenable to preventing her predecessor's wishes from coming to fruition.<sup>103</sup> Although Beatriz could not convince her husband, Alonso, to abandon his promise to create the convent, she was able to "distort" the foundation of the Convent of St. Clare.<sup>104</sup>

In 1479, she secured her husband's agreement to accept a papal bull that founded the Convent of St. Clare, but with the provision that it would, in the short-term, house the nuns of the Estúñigas' Convent of Ildefonso, who were still waiting for their convent quarters to be constructed.<sup>105</sup> By temporarily housing the Ildefonso nuns in the Convent of St. Clare, the Estúñigas hoped to utilize them as a tool to incorporate Sevilla's convent into the Convent of Ildefonso.<sup>106</sup> However, the Estúñigas' plan did not come to fruition. Rather, when the Ildefonso nuns' permanent convent was completed, they refused to abandon the Convent of St. Clare.<sup>107</sup> In 1484, after the Estúñigas' efforts to subvert Sevilla's wishes had collapsed, Pope Innocent VIII approved the constitution of the Convent of St. Clare and confirmed its first abbess.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the Carvajals' foundation of the convent not only contributed to public perceptions of their piety, but also was another facet of the multi-layered rivalry between the Carvajals and Estúñigas.

By the late 1480s, the competition between the two clans would enter its final phase. In 1488, two significant events occurred: (1) following four decades of seigniorial control by the Estúñigas, the Carvajal family finally politically defeated the Estúñigas

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<sup>103</sup> ACP Legajo 89, Documentos 11 and 12; Sánchez Loro, *El Convento Placentino de San Ildefonso*, 24-25.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 25; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 169.

<sup>106</sup> Sánchez Loro, *El Convento Placentino de San Ildefonso*, 25-26; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 171.

<sup>107</sup> Sánchez Loro, *El Convento Placentino de San Ildefonso*, 25-26.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 169.

when the clan restored the city of Plasencia to direct royal rule, and (2) the Catholic Monarchs overtly recognized the Carvajal family for their continuing royal service by patronizing the Carvajals' religious institutions. Specifically, when King Ferdinand traveled through Plasencia in that year, he visited the nuns of the Convent of St. Clare and presented them with a gift of 17,000 maravedis.<sup>109</sup>

Like Sevilla, Sancha de Carvajal, her cousin, directed her attention and efforts to advancing the family's pious religious persona. Sancha, an unmarried sibling of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, demonstrated a keen interest in the church, which manifested itself through the foundation of multiple memorial masses (*capellanias*), the construction of church chapel (*capilla*), and gifts for the less fortunate. While Sancha did not become a nun or work in the church like her brothers, Juan and Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal, she gave a sizeable portion of her wealth to the church. Her testament, taken on Christmas Eve of 1478, provides not only a strong sense of her religiosity, but also her faithful commitment to preserving the memory of the Carvajal family within the establishment.<sup>110</sup> Although Sancha lived most of her adult life in Bonilla de la Sierra, her father's ancestral city, she maintained property and family connections in her mother's birth city of Plasencia.

Unlike other Carvajal family members in the eras before her, Sancha focused her attention intensely on the Virgin Mary as her personal redeemer. She expressed this belief in her last testament when she stated:

In the name of God. Amen....I Doña Sancha de Carvajal...understand that death naturally calls upon all of us and none of us can escape it. I firmly and reverently believe in the Holy Trinity that is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and that the three are one. That there is only one true God who lives and

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<sup>109</sup> Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia*, 150-153; Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 169.

<sup>110</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5, Folio 2v.

reigns forever. I will that this, my testament, is taken of my own free volition and in the service of God. And I have as my advocate and lady on the celestial court, the very blessed virgin, Holy Mary.<sup>111</sup>

Sancha's attention to Christ's mother was a departure from other Carvajal women like Sevilla López de Carvajal and Catalina González de Carvajal, who in their wills only called upon the Christian Holy Trinity (God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) to intercede on their behalf when they died.<sup>112</sup> Like her brother, Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, she maintained the family's devotion to Mary.<sup>113</sup> Sancha provided the "celestial court" many reasons to rule in her favor, especially in terms of her donations to the needy, churches, and religious institutions in Bonilla de la Sierra and Plasencia.

To sanctify her life and death, Sancha set out specific memorial requirements that spoke to her detailed-oriented character, as well as her knowledge and appreciation of religious rituals. She instructed the church to place her remains in a specific location in the Church of St. Martín (*Iglesia de San Martín*). She ordered the churchmen to inter her, "inside of its choir on the right hand side and inside of one of the lead vases, the better of all the vases, which are in the wall."<sup>114</sup> Likewise, she had an intimate understanding of what types of local masses the clergy said for deceased monks and nuns. Perceiving herself worthy of such services, Sancha requested the chaplains to sing a nine-day religious service (*novena*) for her upon her death. With this request came additional yet modest gifts for locally cloistered nuns and monks. She bequeathed each of them five maravedis.

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<sup>111</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5, Folio 1.

<sup>112</sup> To compare Sancha de Carvajal's approach to will-making and memorial services, I also reviewed the wills of the following extended family members: Gonzalo Lorenzo de Espadero's will of 1395 (AHNSN Ovando, Caja 35, Documento 1993), Catalina González de Carvajal's will of 1431 (ACP Legajo 14, Documento 38), *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal's will of 1455 (ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25), and Sevilla López de Carvajal's will of 1467 (ACP Legajo 14, Documento 4).

<sup>113</sup> Juan de Carvajal's focus on Mary will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

<sup>114</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5, Folio 1-1v.



Like most of her noble family members, Sancha also wished the local clergy to sing a Trinitary of masses (*trinitario*) for her soul.<sup>115</sup> However, typical of her intense interest in religious ritual, she asked that the church sing four, not just the traditional one Trinitary, in her memory.<sup>116</sup> Thus, Sancha asked the community to remember her as a devout sister of the church and to perform those traditional funerary services normally reserved for wealthy noble families. Lastly, and different from other family wills that typically granted funds for a few meals for the poor, Sancha provided the local *Hospital de Santa María* with a greater abundance of gifts. To ensure that the hospital could more adequately care for the poor, she gave useful items such as household furniture, livestock, forty-eight chickens, and twenty-five casks of wheat.<sup>117</sup>

Sancha's most important gifts were those she formulated to preserve not only her own memory, but also that of her family. These bequests included the endowment of recurring memorial services as well as a family chapel that future generations would patronize for years to come. Throughout Western Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was common for noble and wealthy families to establish family chapels, which could entail either constructing a physical chapel within a church or simply having a daily mass said there by a dedicated clergy member.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, Sancha's efforts reflected a common practice in Europe at this time. To this end, she willed:

Likewise, I establish... a chapel and daily memorial mass in the said Church of St. Martín for which I donate five vineyards, an irrigated plain, the property of *Heredad de Arenabillo*, the *Heredad de San Ximenez* near Congosto bridge, and my houses of Pedrahita and all that it contains. Also, Benito Martín, my servant, is requested to bring to these memorial masses the fruits that I have donated for

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Diego González de Carvajal, Sancha's uncle, requested the clergy celebrate one Trinitary. ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>116</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5, Folio 1-1v; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25, Folio 3v-4.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Phillipe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 180.

the church...and place them next to my sepulcher in the said church. Also, I will that Alvaro de Carvajal, my nephew, and those persons that come after him to assume the responsibility of maintaining the chapel and memorial services....[Lastly,] to the Church of St. Martín, I will twelve silver marks for church works...and an additional 36,000 maravedis for the chapel and memorial services.<sup>119</sup>

With the substantial donation of 36,000 maravedis and an extensive collection of vineyards and properties, Sancha purchased her perpetual sanctity and that of her family. With the appointment of Alvaro de Carvajal, her nephew and the first patron of the *capellania*, Sancha de Carvajal also ensured that the church would receive a continuous stream of donations well into the future. In the latter part of her will, she further supplemented her donation to the local clergy in Bonilla with additional bequests pertaining to her deceased parents. Here she instructed:

And I give my inherited property of Navalmaillo, which is in Pedrahita, to the Friars of Santo Domingo de Pedrahita...for my soul and the souls of my parents.<sup>120</sup>

Although Sancha de Carvajal concentrated her *capellania*-building efforts mostly in Bonilla de la Sierra, she also directed some of her resources to the family's traditional locus of power, the city of Plasencia. At the cathedral of Plasencia, she established services to honor the memory of her parents, Sara de Carvajal and Juan de Tamayo, and her grandparents, Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas and Sevilla López de Villalobos. Sancha dictated:

And I will, from my inherited properties that I own at the entrance into the city of Plasencia, a memorial service for the sanctification of Holy Mary. That a mass and responsorial be said for her every day for my soul and for my parents and grandparents.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 5, Folio 2.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Folio 2.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Folio 1v.

Taken together, both Sevilla López de Carvajal's endowment of the Convent of St. Clare and Sancha de Carvajal's initiation of memorial masses and chapel foundations, demonstrate that individual women within the Carvajal clan led key efforts to promote a public image of the family that emphasized generosity and religious devotion. Furthermore, their actions fit into a grander, more ambitious family memorial project that emanated from Sancha's brother, Cardinal and Bishop Juan de Carvajal.

## Chapter Seven:

### Creating Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, 1460s – 1470s

#### **A Poem to Honor Cardinal Juan de Carvajal by his cousin, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, 1460s**

You, Don Juan de Carvajal,  
of grand virtue and knowledge,  
  
we saw you become cardinal,  
carrying the title of Angel,  
  
and prelate of Plasencia,  
through this door you arrived,  
  
and when the Turks came,  
to this royal bridge you headed,  
  
because you believed by crossing it,  
with heaven you would be rewarded.<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

The cathedral of Plasencia found an ideal candidate for lionization in Cardinal and Bishop Juan de Carvajal. As discussed earlier, Juan had spent almost his entire religious career outside the Diocese of Plasencia. When he replaced Gonzalo García de Santa María as the cathedral's new bishop in 1446, instead of attempting to transform the Carvajal-Santa María confederation, he instead continued to support the alliance's existing management of the diocese.

As the years passed, and certainly by the late 1460s, Cardinal Carvajal and the cathedral chapter began to plan for the end of his term as bishop. That uncertainty, which might have had negative consequences for the families' domination of the cathedral,

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<sup>1</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folio 159v; RAH Manuscript L-5. "Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal..." por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v; Domingo Sánchez Loro. *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae. Volumen B.* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural "El Brocense" Diputación Provincial de Cáceres, 1983), 461-462.

prompted the clans to develop a concerted plan to promote the image of the Carvajal family as a noble, devout, and learned Catholic family. Their plan entailed: (1) blending the church's religious practices with an idealized memory of the Carvajals, (2) utilizing church architecture to promote the Carvajals' piety, (3) gifting sacred vessels to the church that incorporated the Carvajals' heraldry, and (4) funding regional public works projects and church improvements.

It appears Juan only contributed a small portion of his personal monies to these initiatives.<sup>2</sup> A potential funding source for these projects may have been the cathedral's collection of church taxes (*diezmos*), which the cathedral chapter did not account for in their financial records during 1460s and 1470s.<sup>3</sup> The confederated clans' rationale for this endeavor was straightforward—a well-respected and admired Carvajal family would represent their best opportunity to maintain control of the cathedral's leadership. It would appear this initiative was partial successful given that the Carvajal family continued to dominate the cathedral chapter deep into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of their loss of control of the bishop's position from the 1470s until the 1520s.

### **Blending Religious Practices with the Carvajal Family Memory**

In the last years of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's role as Bishop of Plasencia, he and the cathedral chapter went to great lengths to establish new daily religious practices that would communicate to future generations the honor and religious fidelity of the Carvajal family. Their efforts fit neatly into the clan's sustained program of religious contributions and church endowments, which began as 1395 when Gonzalo Lorenzo de Espadero, the Carvajals' ancestor, founded memorial masses for Don Vidal (*Capellania de Don Vidal*)

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<sup>2</sup> There are no references in the *Actas Capitulares* or the indexed *legajos* in the Archive of the cathedral of Plasencia that explicitly describes how Juan de Carvajal funded his church projects.

<sup>3</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476).

in Cáceres.<sup>4</sup> However, as discussed earlier, the size of the family's religious endowments did not substantially increase until the 1460s and 1470s, as demonstrated by the donations of Sevilla López de Carvajal and Sancha de Carvajal.

All of these devotional initiatives—memorial services, the construction of a chapel, the establishment of the Convent of St. Clare, and the cardinal's new religious services—were based on the persistent Castilian belief that families could enhance their social position and validate their nobility through religious devotion and contributions.<sup>5</sup> Key to bolstering the Plasencia Carvajals' family honor was the inauguration of new masses in the cathedral of Plasencia that overtly blended religious practice and devotion with the clan's lineage. (See Figure 3: Front Elevation of the "Old" cathedral of Plasencia.)

The first of the family initiatives occurred in October of 1468, when the cathedral chapter assembled in the Chapel of Saint Paul to institute one of Cardinal Carvajal's proposals.<sup>6</sup> Dean and Treasurer Alvaro de Carvajal, the nominal head of the chapter, along with Alfonso Fernández de Cabrerros (a Santa María clansmen) and other members on the chapter enacted a statute that committed the clergy to the singing of a trinity of masses on a daily basis. Each morning the chaplain, deacons, and sub-deacons would first chant a daily mass for the forgiveness of sins (*misa del perdón*) with its responsorial psalms over the tomb of the cardinal's mother, Sara de Carvajal, which was near the main altar. The officiants would subsequently celebrate a second regular mass at this same

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<sup>4</sup> Gonzalo Lorenzo de Espadero was a progenitor of one lineage of the Carvajal and Ulloa families in the Extremadura. See AHNSN Ovando, Caja 35, Documento 1993, unfoliated.

<sup>5</sup> Jorge Díaz Ibáñez, "Las Relaciones Iglesia-Nobleza en el Obispado de Cuenca Durante la Baja Edad Media," *La España Medieval*, n. 20 (Madrid 1997): 312-313.

<sup>6</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 44v.

altar, which had an altar screen (*retablo*) that bore the Carvajal coat of arms.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 4: Diagram of the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia, Points of Interest #1 and #12.) The clergy’s morning duties concluded after they walked from the main altar and through the cathedral’s central aisle (adorned with Carvajal emblems on its pillars) and celebrated a third mass in the Chapel of the Doctors (*Capilla de los Doctores*).<sup>8</sup> The third service most likely served as a tributary and thanksgiving event for scholarly churchmen that had made meaningful contributions to the cathedral, such as the cardinal’s deceased first cousin, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal. Both men shared a great admiration of each other. In his later years, Dr. Garci expressed his high regard for his cousin in a ten-line couplet that he sent to the cathedral. In his poem, he celebrated the major achievements of the cardinal. Specifically, he wrote:

You, Don Juan de Carvajal,  
of grand virtue and knowledge,  
  
we saw you become cardinal,  
carrying the title of Angel,  
  
and prelate of Plasencia,  
through this door you arrived,  
  
and when the Turks came,  
to this royal bridge you headed,  
  
because you believed by crossing it,  
with heaven you would be rewarded.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> RAH Manuscript L-5. “Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal...” por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v; Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae, Volumen B*, 461-462.

<sup>8</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares, Tomo 3 (1459-1476)*, Folio 44v.

<sup>9</sup> RAH Manuscript L-5. “Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal...” por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v; Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae, Volumen B*, 461-462.

The poem communicated key character traits that the family wished to preserve, namely, the cardinal's learnedness, his position as a prince within the church, his identity as a Plasencia Carvajal, and his intense Catholic faith that propelled his crusading sermons in Western Europe.

Unlike traditional memorial and other masses, the chapter placed such a high priority on the cardinal's new religious services that it established considerable penalties if the clergy did not regularly attend to the new trinity of masses. If the chaplain failed to conduct a mass for the cardinal's mother, the cathedral chapter would fine him twenty maravedis.<sup>10</sup> The deacons and sub-deacons similarly faced a penalty of four maravedis and three maravedis respectively if they failed to provide the services. Failure to officiate the second mass at the main altar also carried the penalty of fines.

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<sup>10</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 44v.

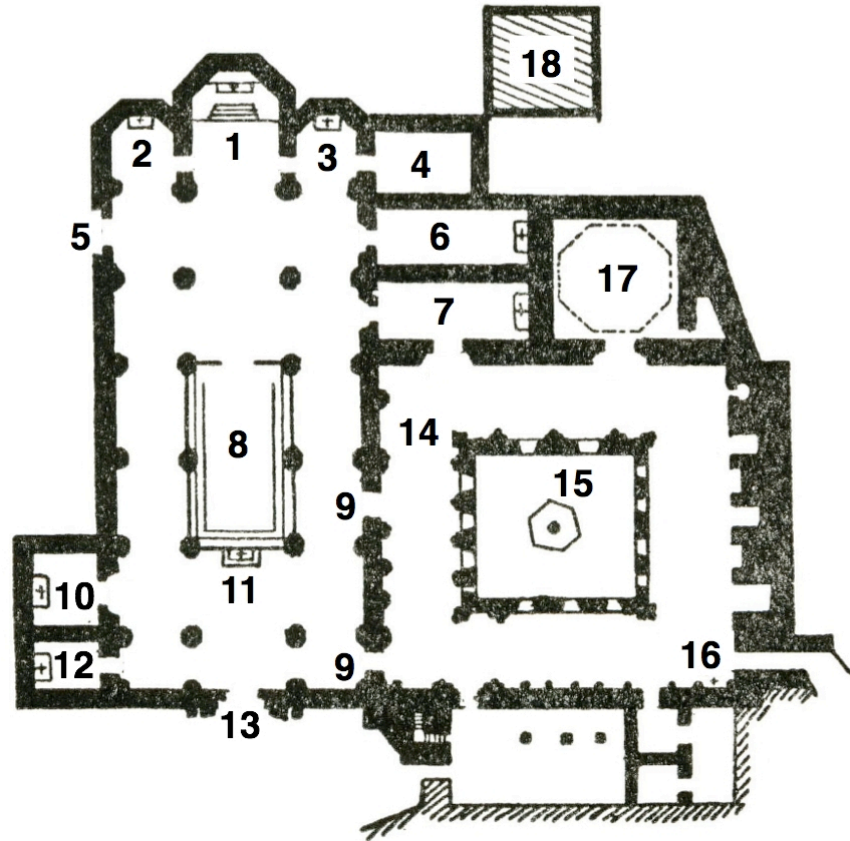


**Figure 3:**  
**Front Elevation of the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia**



*Photography by author.*

**Figure 4:**  
**Diagram of the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia<sup>11</sup>**



**Key Points of Interest**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Main altar                     | 10. Chapel of St. Catherine                             |
| 2. Altar of the Crucifixion       | 11. Altar of the Choir ( <i>transcoro</i> )             |
| 3. Altar of Our Lady of Mercy     | 12. Chapel of the Doctors                               |
| 4. Sacristy                       | 13. Main door   |
| 5. Door of Mercy                  | 14. Cloister  |
| 6. Chapel of St. Vincent          | 15. Patio of the Oranges & Fountain of Juan de Carvajal |
| 7. Chapel of Holy Mary “The Fair” | 16. Altar of Our Lady of the Cloister                   |
| 8. Choir                          | 17. Chapel of St. Paul and the Cathedral Chapter Hall   |
| 9. Doors to the Cloister          | 18. Bell Tower  |

<sup>11</sup> This diagram of the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia is adapted and modified from one published in Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos* (Plasencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Plasencia, 1999), 44.

The cathedral chapter chose to fund this trinity of services—the repentance, the regular mass, and the mass at the Chapel of the Doctors—with an arrangement that mostly relied on church resources and not Cardinal Carvajal’s personal wealth. Although the cardinal was the impetus for these initiatives, and his deceased mother would be a primary beneficiary of the repentance masses, the cathedral chapter did not expect their ecclesiastical leader to shoulder the entire cost. Rather, Dean Alvaro de Carvajal, the cardinal’s first cousin, secured the approval of the chapter to share the expenses with their bishop.<sup>12</sup> Chapter officials contributed 4,000 maravedis from their individual church budgets, as well as an additional 3,000 maravedis from church funds usually reserved for the direct “works of the church”.<sup>13</sup> Cardinal Juan de Carvajal matched these funds with 1,000 maravedis in personal monies. The cathedral chapter’s decision to bear over 87 percent of the costs associated with the three daily masses highlights the extent to which the Carvajal family could marshal church resources for the projection of their clan’s pious Catholic identity.

Likewise, the masses’ emphasis on Carvajal family members also positioned the clan as a primary community intermediary with the Christian God. That is, the daily repentance mass presented Sara de Carvajal not only as a honorable woman worthy of the cathedral’s intercession, but also offered Sara to the Christian God as a communal representative for all Christians seeking atonement and forgiveness for their sins. As penance and repentance were key elements of the Christian faith, on any given day there were likely parishioners that would need to undertake religious acts for the forgiveness of

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<sup>12</sup> Dean and Treasurer Alvaro de Carvajal was the son of *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal and his third wife, Teresa Rodríguez de Yanguas. In addition, Diego had another son serving in the cathedral at this time—Canon Gómez González de Carvajal—who was the son of his second wife, Catalina González de Carvajal. The two half brothers, Alvaro and Gómez, were first cousins of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal. See ACP Legajo 5, Documento 37; ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>13</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48v.

sins. While confession, fasting, prostrations, donations to the church, and other acts could be performed as acts of contrition, one of the more favorable options was to attend mass, especially those in which the psalms were repeated.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the daily morning *misa del perdón* said for Sara de Carvajal served two functions in this respect—it provided a communal avenue for penitential requirements and it presented the Carvajal family as a facilitator of repentance.

Both, the mass and service conducted in the Chapel of the Doctors, reaffirmed the bonds between Plasencia's living and deceased. During the later Middle Ages, Christians conceived of themselves as a community of the living and the dead who were brought together through the service of the mass.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it seems plausible that the Carvajal family intended to reinforce the notion that both living Carvajals (Archdeacon Rodrigo de Carvajal) and deceased Carvajals (Sara de Carvajal, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal) were actively leading their respective congregations during devotional services.

In the year after these services began, at least one other community member, *Regidor* Gómez de Soria, perceived the repentance mass as a new avenue to remember his deceased loved one.<sup>16</sup> It suggests that other lower noble families wished to participate in, and possibly emulate, the Carvajals' public display of piety. Rather than establishing a separate memorial mass (*capellania*) for his spouse as was the customary practice for wealthier individuals, instead Gómez donated 500 maravedis to the cathedral to have his deceased wife's soul spoken for each morning. Possibly, he viewed this option as more prestigious because of its connection to the cardinal's three-mass initiative. Likewise, it

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas P. Oakley, "Alleviations of Penance in the Continental Penitentials," *Speculum*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1937): 500.

<sup>15</sup> John Bossy, "The Mass as a Social Institution," *Past and Present*, No. 100 (Aug., 1983): 37.

<sup>16</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48v.

offered a daily mass for his wife, as opposed to a single one-time memorial service, which typical cost between 200 to 300 maravedis.<sup>17</sup>

From the cathedral's perspective, this donation from Gómez was ideal because the chapter had already created an endowment for the cardinal's ceremonies, and thus Gómez's bequest created another opportunity for the chapter to spread its financial benefits to other members of the cathedral organization. Rather than saving Gómez's 500 maravedis contribution for other church works, the chapter awarded these maravedis to its youngest servants, and its future leaders, the thirteen boys and young men in the choir.<sup>18</sup> Among the beneficiaries of this reward, was yet another generation of Carvajals.<sup>19</sup> One of these men included Archdeacon Pedro de Carvajal's son, Gómez de Carvajal, who would join the elite cathedral chapter himself in the late 1490s as a canon.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the cathedral chapter's new religious services for Sara de Carvajal, which were emulated by families like the de Sorias, the cathedral of Plasencia also enhanced its devotional services for the Virgin Mary.

At the direction of Cardinal Carvajal, in the late 1460s, the cathedral chapter enacted a governing statute that required the chaplains and choirboys to chant the "Hail,

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<sup>17</sup> For a selection of typical 200 to 300 maravedis donations for a single *capellania* mass, see *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 1v, 2, 3v, 5, 6v, and other unfoliated pages.

<sup>18</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48v. A note about the value of maravedis: For a boy or a young man, the thirty-eight maravedis would have been a substantial bonus considering the value of the maravedis at this time. With thirty-eight maravedis, one could purchase roughly one of the following: twenty-five pounds of fresh beef, thirteen pounds of rice, or one-and-a-third pounds of sugar. The approximate value of 38 maravedis was calculated using a list of the price of goods from 1462 to 1464. See Liciniano Saez, *Demostacion Histórico del Verdadero Valor de Todas las Moneda que Corrian en Castilla Durante el Reynado del Señor Don Enrique IV, y de su Correspondencia con las del Señor D. Cárlos IV* (Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha, 1805), 509.

<sup>19</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48v.

<sup>20</sup> In 1469, Canon Pedro de Carvajal served in the newly created position of Archdeacon of Cáceres. By 1498, Pedro's son served as a canon in the cathedral. Pedro was the son of Gracia de Carvajal and Fernán Pérez de Ulloa. Pedro's grandfather was Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, the royal advisor and a judge in King Juan II's *Real Audiencia*. See ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48v; ACP Legajo 3, Documento 20; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 4 (1494-1508), Folio 6; J. M. Lodo de Mayoralgo, *Viejos linajes de Cáceres* (Cáceres: Editorial Extremadura, 1971), 14.

Holy Queen” (*Salve Regina*) prayer everyday “just before nightfall” in the cathedral.<sup>21</sup> The *Salve Regina*, composed in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, “was traditionally sung at the Compline beginning from Trinity Sunday through Friday before the first Sunday of Advent.”<sup>22</sup> During the later Middle Ages, devotion to Mary was particularly popular as she was viewed as both “model and guide” to women.<sup>23</sup> By the opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the singing of the *Salve Regina* became increasingly fashionable across Europe. Often, local parishioners supported these services with church endowments, as was the case in the Church of Saint Lorenz in Nuremberg.<sup>24</sup> Within Plasencia, Cardinal Carvajal assumed the role of primary benefactor for the *Salve Regina* prayer. Again, this act, like the other new religious services, further bolstered the community’s perception of Cardinal Carvajal as a patron of the church, especially its Holy Mother.

When chanting the *Salve Regina*, instituted by Cardinal Carvajal, the cathedral’s chaplains and choirboys would sing the verses in antiphon while kneeling at the main altar. In other words, the chaplains would sing one verse and the choirboys the next.<sup>25</sup> The prayer called upon Mary to intercede upon humanity’s behalf. An English translation of the Latin prayer reads:

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope!  
 To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve!  
 To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.  
 Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us;  
 and, after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus!<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Carson and Joann Cerrito, eds. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2003), s.v. “Salve Regina,” by R.J. Snow.

<sup>23</sup> Bonnie J. Blackburn, “‘Te Matrem dei Laudamus:’ A Study in the Musical Veneration of Mary,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Jan., 1967): 57.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 60; ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48.

<sup>25</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 48.

<sup>26</sup> Millie Walker Trainor, “Salve Regina: (Hail Holy Queen),” *Catholic Insight*, Volume 13.11 (December 2005): 38 (1).

As indicated earlier, popular and institutional religious affection for the Virgin Mary was on the rise in Europe. However, the impetus for Cardinal Carvajal's establishment of new religious services for Christ's mother was most likely the Santa María family. As is evident by their surname—Santa María or “Holy Mary”—this family of Jewish converts to Christianity expressed an intense attachment to the Virgin Mary. When the progenitor of the Santa María clan, Bishop Pablo de Santa María of Burgos, passed away in 1435, his sons established their own memorial services to remember their father. Specifically, Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María of Plasencia and Alfonso de Cartagena, who replaced his father as Bishop of Burgos, endowed in the Cathedral of Burgos a perpetual Saturday mass to be said in the name of the Virgin Mary.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to establishing memorial masses for his father, Gonzalo García de Santa María also donated a considerable sum of his own wealth to the cathedral of Plasencia to have similar masses said on his behalf and in the name of Mary every Saturday.<sup>28</sup> In order for Gonzalo's endowment to be self-sustaining, it required the cathedral chapter to utilize his gift of 200,000 maravedis to purchase income-generating lands.<sup>29</sup> Once again, the Carvajals aided Gonzalo García de Santa María with his endowment by selling multiple pieces of family property to the cathedral in return for these gifted funds. In four separate transactions conducted between September 1451 and March 1452, the cathedral chapter used the bishop's monies to purchase lands from Gómez González de Carvajal, Dr. Garci López de Carvajal, Sevilla López de Carvajal,

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<sup>27</sup> Luciano Serrano, *Los Conversos: D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Hebraicos, 1942), 108.

<sup>28</sup> ACP *Calendario o Libro de Aniversarios de la Santa Iglesia Placentina*; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 13, *Calendario de Misas Traslado*, Folios 3-3v; ACP *Extractos del Inventario del Archivo*, Tomo 2, Folios 11v-12; ACP Legajo 133, Documento 17; ACP Legajo 143, Documento 3.

<sup>29</sup> ACP *Extractos del Inventario del Archivo*, Tomo 2, Folios 11v-12; ACP Legajo 133, Documento 17; ACP Legajo 143, Documento 3.

and Sevilla's husband, Luis de Trejo.<sup>30</sup> Gómez and Dr. Garci López were brothers, and Sevilla López de Carvajal (a different Sevilla López de Carvajal than the one discussed earlier in this chapter) was their first cousin.<sup>31</sup> The real estate purchased with Gonzalo García de Santa María's donation consisted of the *Heredad de Valsagrado* and one-fifth of the *Heredad de Carrascals, Gorjadas*, and *Las Mazas*.

Although the record is unclear on the issue, it appears that the deceased bishop directed the cathedral chapter to use his monetary donations to purchase these specific properties from the Carvajal family. If the bishop had not made his intentions clear, then the cathedral families would most likely have used the more customary approach of sharing church spoils—allowing all chapter families to sell properties to the cathedral so that each could extract a portion of the bishop's recently deposited money. Even if the Carvajals had attempted to force the cathedral to purchase only their lands, and provoked a conflict with their familial allies, the Santa Marías could have blocked their effort in the governing chapter. Although the Carvajal family controlled the bishop's position and one of the archdeaconships in the 1450s, the Santa Marías held a plurality of the seats on the decision-making chapter. Yet, no complaints or divisiveness interrupted the flow of funds to the Carvajal family, and the Santa Marías fully supported the new devotional services for the Virgin Mary.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> ACP *Extractos del Inventario del Archivo*, Tomo 2, Folios 11v-12; There is conflicting evidence regarding the identity of Dr. Garci López de Carvajal. The "extracted" records report that Dr. Garci López was the son of Diego González de Carvajal and Sevilla López de Carvajal. Yet, the property transaction records recorded in the *Actas Capitulares* definitively report that Dr. Garci López was the son of Alvar García de Béjarano-Orellana and Mencía González de Carvajal. Because the *Actas Capitulares* are the actual records from the time period, as opposed to the "extracted" records that were compiled sometime after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, I believe the transcriber of the extracts inserted the lineage of Dr. Garci López into the record. Therefore, I report Dr. Garci López and Gómez González de Carvajal as the sons of Alvar García de Béjarano-Orellana.



## Projecting Carvajal Piety Through Material Culture

In addition to the *Salve Regina*, Cardinal Carvajal also commissioned new architectural and altar improvements in the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia. Among the more prominent efforts implemented by the cardinal and the cathedral of Plasencia was the commissioning of a modified main altarpiece (*retablo mayor*).<sup>32</sup> With the addition of Cardinal Carvajal’s *retablo mayor*, the family would position themselves at the cathedral’s spiritual center. Like the cardinal’s *Salve Regina* prayers, this two-panel gilded altarpiece concentrated the parishioners’ attention on a unique depiction of Mary with Christ.<sup>33</sup> (Figure 5: *Retablo Mayor* in the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia, Detail 5.1.) The *retablo*’s upper panel frames a traditional depiction of the Virgin of the Tabernacle (*Virgen del Sagrario*), which shows a child-like Christ figure seated on the lap of the primary subject of the painting, Mary. (Figure 5, Detail 5.3.)<sup>34</sup> The *retablo*’s lower panel integrates a baldachin, or dome-like four-column canopy, over a praying female statue.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18; RAH Manuscript L-5. “Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal...” por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v; Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae. Volumen B*, 461-462; Francisco González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia: Aproximación al Episcopologio Placentino*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> The early 20<sup>th</sup> century historian and churchman, Jose Benavides Checa, explains that this specific altarpiece has occupied the main chapel at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the early 1500s, as the “New” cathedral of Plasencia was being constructed around the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia, several modifications occurred to the existing cathedral’s structure and decorative elements. See: Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos* (Plasencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Plasencia, 1999), 60. Thus, it is difficult to know whether or not this *retablo* is the exact one commissioned and installed by Cardinal Juan de Carvajal.

<sup>34</sup> This portrait of Mary with Christ is heavily damaged as it was carried in outdoor processions throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries during times of drought and following natural disasters. However, most of the damage to the painting is the result of a heavy-handed cleaning with hot water and soap ordered in 1892 by Cathedral Dean Gregorio de la Concha; the process destroyed the portrait’s finish and removed much of its detail. See Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 60.

<sup>35</sup> Charles George Herbermann et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), s.v., “Baldachinum,” by John B. Peterson.

(Figure 5, Detail 5.2.) There are no sources describing the statue and it has no discernable or unique characteristics.<sup>36</sup>

It seems likely that Cardinal Carvajal may have altered the cathedral's existing altarpiece, as this screen appears to be a mixture of late Romanesque and Gothic elements. A comparison with contemporary 15<sup>th</sup> century (1446-1484) altarpieces in Western Europe indicates that Plasencia's altarpiece shares several decorative and motif commonalities. In particular, the Gothic Italian style, which was the dominant artistic method in Spain during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, appears to have had the greatest influence on the Plasencia *retablo*.<sup>37</sup> For instance, the Plasencia altarpiece's gilded, scalloped, and leaf-like decorative elements are similar to Piero della Francesca's *Polyptch of St. Anthony* altarpiece (c.1460-70).<sup>38</sup> (See Figures 6 and 7 for comparative altarpieces.) Like the Plasencia *retablo*, it too dedicates its primary center panel to a depiction of Mary with the Christ child with a surrounding Romanesque rounded arch. In the case of Plasencia's altarpiece, both the upper and lower panels utilize Romanesque arches to frame their two subjects, Mary with Christ and the praying statue. Antonio da Negroponte's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels* altarpiece (c. 1455) also shares this same motif and Romanesque arch, as well as incorporates an urn with vegetation

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<sup>36</sup> Site visits to the *Museo de la Cathedral de Plasencia*, which is located in the "Old" Cathedral, in March 2006 and November 2006 revealed that the museum has no documentation pertaining to the *retablo mayor*. Likewise, texts pertaining to the "Old" cathedral of Plasencia provide no details on this statue, and only limited information about the *retablo*. Each of these relevant texts are cited in this discussion of the *retablo*.

<sup>37</sup> "Frame, §VIII, 1: Spanish medieval (ii) Gothic retables. (a) Establishment of the form. (b) Development." Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, 2 February 2008, <http://www.groveart.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/>; Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Buildings: Biographical, Historical, and Descriptive*. Volume III (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 307-329

<sup>38</sup> Paul Taylor and Caroline Van Eck, "Piero della Francesca's Giants," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 60. (1997): 246.

flowing from the crown of the altarpiece.<sup>39</sup> Both the Plasencia and Negroponte altarpieces display this urn feature. Similar to Plasencia's *retablo*, Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni D'Alemagna's *Triptych of St. Jerome* (c. 1441) and Bartolomeo Vivarini's *Triptych of St. Mark* (c. 1474) display similar wing-like and vegetative elements.<sup>40</sup> The Plasencia *retablo* presents matching pairs of wings on both sides of the lower panel, upper panel, and at its crown. On the *Triptych of St. Jerome* and *Triptych of St. Mark*, similar pairs of wings are attached above each of its three panels. Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni D'Alemagna's *Triptych of Madonna Enthroned* (c. 1446) shares a comparable Mary with Christ child motif, with the child holding the orb, and elaborate vegetative elements.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the Plasencia's altarpiece most hybridized elements are the two columns that frame the lower panel of the altar and the four columns of the baldachin. Although the columns utilize Corinthian capitals, which can be found in Romanesque and Gothic architecture, the shaft of each pillar is covered with elaborate decorations that appear to mimic a stylized amphora. These elements include acanthus leaves and amphora handles in the lower two-thirds of each column, as well as an amphora lid in the upper one-third of each column. A similar use of urns on columns can be found in Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco, *Birth of the Virgin*, in the Capella Tornabuoni at Santa Maria Novella church in Florence, Italy, (c. 1480s) and Benozzo Gozzoli's *Tabernacle of the Madonna della Tosse* fresco (c. 1484).<sup>42</sup> In the case of Gozzoli's fresco, it too depicts an

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<sup>39</sup> Herbert Friedmann, "Footnotes to the Painted Page: The Iconography of an Altarpiece by Botticini," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer, 1969): 17.

<sup>40</sup> Ian Holgate, "The Early History of Antonio Vivarini's 'St Jerome' Altar-Piece and the Beginnings of the Renaissance Style in Venice," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 143, No. 1174 (Jan., 2001): 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> Georg Pudelko, "The Altarpiece by Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Allemagna, Once in S. Moise at Venice," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 71, No. 414 (Sep., 1937): 131.

<sup>42</sup> Jean K. Cadogan, "Observations on Ghirlandaio's Method of Composition," *Master Drawings*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer, 1984): 159, 166.

altar with Mary and the Christ child and is framed with two columns that have Corinthian capitals and acanthus leaves on the pillars.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the commonalities that Plasencia's *Virgen de Sagrario retablo* shares with these seven comparative altarpieces and frescos (1446 to 1484) suggest that this *retablo* is the one Cardinal Juan de Carvajal commissioned and that it incorporated many elements of the Gothic Italian style.

Whereas the lower panel of the Plasencia *retablo* indicates the period in which the altarpiece was created, the upper panel communicates information about its patron. The upper panel of the *retablo* is particularly revealing as its composition appears attuned to Cardinal Carvajal's interest in the Virgen Mary. In this depiction of the *Virgen del Sagrario*, Mary wears a traditional gold-trimmed blue cloak over a scarlet dress.<sup>44</sup> This image of Mary reveals her divine majesty, which is signified by the presence of a heavenly angel and twelve stars that form a halo around her head. The latter elements perhaps represent the twelve apostles. This use of numerical symbolism, found also in Petrus Christus' *The Virgin of the Dry Tree* (c. 1465), was common in religious art.<sup>45</sup> For example, in *Petrus Christus'* portrait, Mary and the Christ child are encompassed by fifteen letter A's hanging from dry tree branches.<sup>46</sup> The gilded letter A's signify, "the first letter of the Ave María; their number, fifteen, has been related to the Mysteries of the Rosary."<sup>47</sup>

Reinforcing the prominent position of Plasencia's *Virgin del Sagrario* was the painter's decision to place the divine orb, which represents the power and authority of

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<sup>43</sup> Diane Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 212.

<sup>44</sup> It shares similar hues to Fra Angelico's *The Madonna of Humility* (c. 1433-1435) and Fra Filippo Lippi's *Madonna and Child* (c. 1452). See Tomás Llorens et al., *Masterworks: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza* (Madrid: Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2000), 28-29; Frederick Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), 705.

<sup>45</sup> Tomás Llorens et al, *Masterworks: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza*, 38-39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Christ, in her right hand, while he positioned the Virgin's left arm gently around the Christ child.<sup>48</sup> This powerful symbolism communicates not only the interceding authority of Mary, but her physical ability to encompass God the Father's divine will, as well as his instrument, Christ. Typically, in other period paintings depicting Mary and the Christ child, if an orb is present, it is Christ who is holding it.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the Mary depicted in Plasencia's altarpiece appears to be acting as the primary intermediary between the parish and the Christian God, which was a motif the Santa María and Carvajal families continuously reinforced in local church affairs.

In addition to the symbolism of the orb, perhaps the most fascinating element of the *Virgen del Sagrario* is the direction of Mary and the Christ child's gaze—both are looking down and to the left into the main altar space. Although there is substantial variation in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century illustrations of Mary and the Christ child, often one is gazing upon the other or they are looking at each other. These types of depictions occur in Piero della Francesca's *Polyptch of St. Anthony*, Antonio da Negroponte's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels*, Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni D'Alemagna's *Triptych of Madonna Enthroned*, and Rogier Van Der Weyden's *The Virgin and Child Enthroned* (c. 1433).<sup>50</sup> In contrast to these works, Plasencia's Virgin and Christ both gaze downward at the altar floor, which was the location of the grave of the cardinal's mother, Sara de Carvajal.<sup>51</sup> This evidence further suggests that this panel of the *retablo mayor*

<sup>48</sup> Alva William Sheffler, *Symbols of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 75.

<sup>49</sup> For example, in Petrus Christus' *The Virgin of the Dry Tree* (c. 1465), the orb is placed in Christ's hand. Also, it should be noted that on the Virgin's right hand, the ring and middle fingers are held together, while the index and little finger are spread outward. Other scholars have suggested this gesturing by Mary may be related to the praying of the rosary, or another religious practice where Mary intercedes upon behalf of humanity. See: Th. P. Van Baaren, "The Significance of Gestures in the Paintings of Hieronymus Bosch," in *Visible Religion, Vol. VII. Genres in Visual Representation*, ed. Werner-Reimers-Stiftung (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 23-24.

<sup>50</sup> See prior footnotes and Tomás Llorens et al, *Masterworks: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza*, 34-35.

<sup>51</sup> ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 3 (1459-1476), Folio 44v.

engaged in a direct and unique relationship with its surroundings and focused the community's eyes, once again, on the Carvajals.

**Figure 5:**  
***Retablo Mayor*** in the “Old” cathedral of Plasencia



**Detail 5.1**  
***Virgen del Sagrario***  
***Retablo Mayor***



**Detail 5.2**  
***Lower Panel with Baldachin***  
***And Praying Statue***



**Detail 5.3**  
***Upper Panel with the Portrait***  
***of the Virgen del Sagrario***

*Photography by author.*

**Figure 6:**  
**Comparative Altarpieces, Group 1**



**Detail 6.1**  
**Central Panel in the**  
**Polyptych of St. Anthony<sup>52</sup>**



**Detail 6.2**  
**Madonna and Child Enthroned**  
**Altarpiece<sup>53</sup>**



**Detail 6.3**  
**Triptych of St. Jerome<sup>54</sup>**

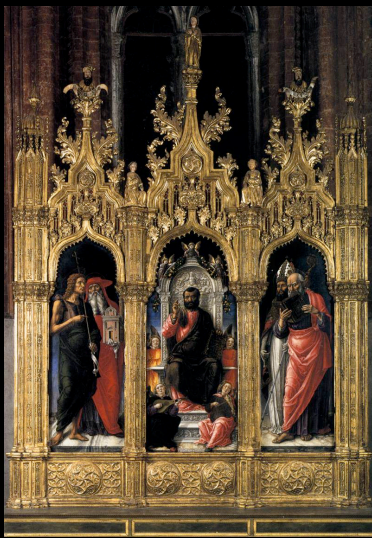
<sup>52</sup> Polyptych of St. Anthony. Piero della Francesca. ca. 1460-70. In Web Gallery of Art [database online]. [cited 20 February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?file=html/p/piero/francesc/altar/anthony.html&find=gothic+altar>).

<sup>53</sup> Madonna and Child Enthroned. Antonio da Negroponte. ca. 1455. In Web Gallery of Art [database online]. [cited 20 February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.wga.hu/html/a/antonio/negropon/madchil.html>).

<sup>54</sup> Ian Holgate, "The Early History of Antonio Vivarini's 'St Jerome' Altar-Piece and the Beginnings of the Renaissance Style in Venice," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 143, No. 1174 (Jan., 2001): 19-20.



**Figure 7: Comparative Altarpieces, Group 2**



**Detail 7.1  
Triptych of St. Mark<sup>55</sup>**



**Detail 7.2  
Central Panel of Triptych of  
Madonna and Child Enthroned<sup>56</sup>**



**Detail 7.3  
Selection from Birth of the  
Virgin<sup>57</sup>**



**Detail 7.4 Selection from Tabernacle of the Madonna della Tosse<sup>58</sup>**

<sup>55</sup> Triptych of St. Mark (Pala di San Marco). Bartolomeo Vivarini. ca. 1474. In Web Gallery of Art [database online]. [cited 20 February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: ([http://www.wga.hu/html/v/vivarini/bartolom/st\\_mark.html](http://www.wga.hu/html/v/vivarini/bartolom/st_mark.html)).

<sup>56</sup> Triptych of Madonna and Child Enthroned. Giovanni D'Alemagna. ca. 1446. In Web Gallery of Art [database online]. [cited 20 February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.wga.hu/html/g/giovanni/alemagna/triptych.html>).

<sup>57</sup> Jean K. Cadogan, "Observations on Ghirlandaio's Method of Composition," *Master Drawings*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer, 1984): 166.

<sup>58</sup> Tabernacle of the Madonna della Tosse. Benozzo Gozzoli. ca. 1484. In Web Gallery of Art [database online]. [cited 20 February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.wga.hu/html/g/gozzoli/6late/2tosse1.html>).



In concert with the portrait's relationship with Sara de Carvajal, another decorative element that conveyed Cardinal Carvajal's patronage of and constant presence in the cathedral was the prominent positioning of his ecclesiastical heraldry at the top of the main altarpiece.<sup>59</sup> The cardinal's heraldry incorporated a wide brimmed red pilgrim's hat with twelve tassels (*galero*) placed over the Carvajal family coat of arms (a sable bend on a gold shield).<sup>60</sup> (See Figure 10: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Cloister Fountain (*Patio de las Naranjas*), Detail 10.2 for an example of Juan's heraldry.) During the late 1490s, when the Carvajal family lost its dominance of the bishop's position, Bishop Gutierre de Toledo had the Carvajal emblem removed from the *retablo*, "without any good explanation, other than it pleased him to do so."<sup>61</sup>

Although the Carvajal coat of arms was removed from the *retablo mayor*, other altarpieces in the "Old" and "New" Cathedrals of Plasencia display how the heraldry of other patrons were incorporated into chapel altarpieces. For example, at the top of the *retablo mayor* in the new cathedral is Bishop Pedro González de Acevedo's ecclesiastical heraldry, a green *galero* over a shield with a holly tree.<sup>62</sup> The bishop had his family's emblems integrated into the altarpiece upon its completion in the 1590s in return for a donation of 20,300 ducats.<sup>63</sup> (See Figure 8: Comparative *Retablos* with Family Heraldry,

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<sup>59</sup> Charles George Herbermann et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), s.v., "Ecclesiastical Heraldry," by A.C. Fox-Davies.

<sup>60</sup> Ecclesiastical heraldry, such as Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's emblem, appears to become a feature of the Christian church in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. The first known integration of a cardinal's *galero* with a family coat of arms is reportedly used on the tomb of Bernard, Cardinal of Longuisel (d. 1290), who is interred at Orvieto. See John Woodward, *A Treatise on Ecclesiastical Heraldry* (Edinburg: W. & A.K. Johnston, 1894), 137.

<sup>61</sup> RAH Manuscript L-5. "Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal..." por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v.

<sup>62</sup> Pedro Cordero Alvarado, *Plasencia: Heraldica, Historia y Monumental*, 72.

<sup>63</sup> Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edicion Facsimilar*, 288.

Details 8.1 and 8.2.) Similar family heraldry for the Herrera and Almaraz clans is incorporated into the *Retablo de la Crucifijo* in the old cathedral. (See Figure 8, Detail 8.3.)

**Figure 8:**  
**Comparative *Retablos* with Family Heraldry**



Detail 8.1 – “New” Cathedral *Retablo Mayor* with Acevedo Heraldry



Detail 8.2  
Acevedo Heraldry with *Galero*



Detail 8.3  
*Retablo* with Herrera and Camargo Heraldry

*Photography by author.*

Bishop Álvarez de Toledo's decision to remove the Carvajal coat of arms was likely due to the tensions that existed between his office and the cathedral chapter, which still remained a locus of Carvajal ecclesiastical power.<sup>64</sup> In the 1490s, Bishop Gutierre de Toledo began efforts to immortalize his own family, the powerful and wealthy *Condes de Alba*, by beginning the construction of a new cathedral.<sup>65</sup> Put simply, the old cathedral of Plasencia, with its extensive Carvajal heraldry, was competition that he would do well to minimize. During this period, the cathedral chapter and the bishop were also at great odds over his demands that the cathedral sell him its properties and rights in the village of Jaraicejo. On this matter, the chapter bitterly complained:

Bishop Gutierre de Toledo has caused great harm to and acted against the will of the cathedral chapter when he took possession of the diocese's fortress and *señorio* of [Jaraicejo]...We do not give it freely. Nor do we grant half of the *señorio*, its property, and its fruits as the donator [Gutierre de Toledo] demands. Now, we authorize the Dean to conclude this agreement with the bishop.<sup>66</sup>

Before Bishop Gutierre de Toledo removed the Carvajal's coat of arms from the *retablo mayor*, the Carvajals added other architectural and structural elements to the cathedral that conveyed the family's honor and status. While the replacement of the church's floor with new stone slabs or paving (*losado*) was a functional improvement, the addition of new stone pillars with the Carvajals' shield was a point of family pride.<sup>67</sup> However, like the fate of the altar screen, Bishop de Toledo removed the family's heraldry from the stone pillars during his administration of the diocese. Even though the

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<sup>64</sup> At the opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the following Carvajals were on the cathedral chapter: Garci López de Carvajal II (Archdeacon of Plasencia), Diego de Carvajal (Archdeacon of Coria), Bernardino de Carvajal (Archdeacon of Trujillo), Rodrigo de Yanguas (Canon and descendent of *Caballero* Diego González de Carvajal), and Gómez de Carvajal (Prebendary). See ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 4 (1494-1508), Folios 6-9.

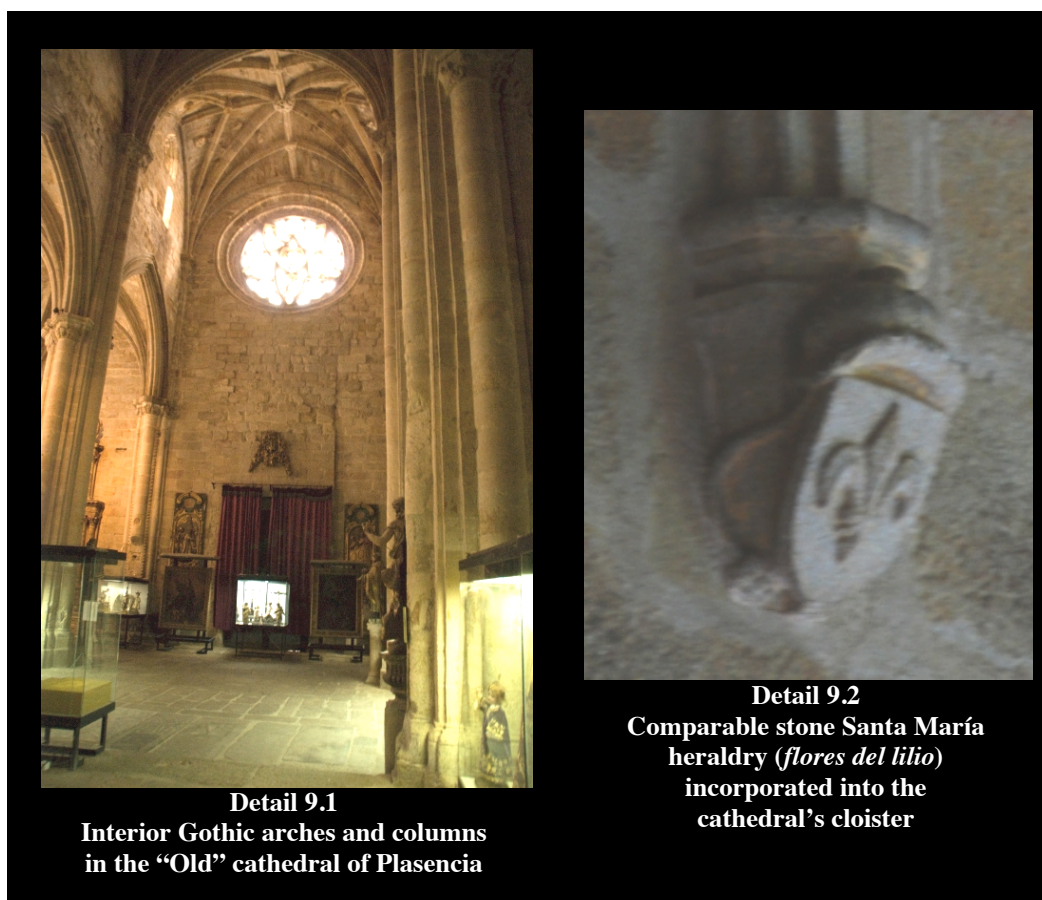
<sup>65</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 19v.

<sup>66</sup> See ACP *Actas Capitulares*, Tomo 4 (1494-1508), Folios 6bis-6bis vuelto.

<sup>67</sup> RAH Manuscript L-5. "Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal..." por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v.

Carvajals were successful in securing royal support for the restoration of their heraldry on the pillars, the bishop had the stones destroyed before the clan could replace them.<sup>68</sup> Prior to its destruction, it is likely that the Carvajals' heraldry was incorporated into the old cathedral's pillars in a manner similar to the Santa María clan's emblem, the *floris de lilio*, which was displayed in the cathedral's cloister. (See Figure 9: Cathedral Interior and a Cloister Heraldic Detail, Details 9.1 and 9.2.)

**Figure 9: Cathedral Interior and a Cloister Heraldic Detail**



*Photography by author.*

<sup>68</sup> RAH Manuscript L-5. “Vida del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor don Juan de Carvajal...” por Bachiller Diego Martínez, Folio 106v.

One of Cardinal Carvajal's most striking architectural additions to the cathedral, which symbolically expressed fundamental Christian tenants relating to life, death, and resurrection, was a Gothic water fountain placed in the center of the cathedral's enclosed courtyard.<sup>69</sup> (See Figure 4 and Figure 10: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Cloister Fountain (*Patio de las Naranjas*), Detail 10.1 and 10.2.) The carved stone fountain, geometrically shaped as a dodecagon, displayed Juan de Carvajal's ecclesiastical shield on one of its decorative faces. Perhaps intentionally, the twelve-sided geometry of the structure corresponds to the stone-carved representation of the cardinal's *galero*, which has twelve tassels. This fountain, in the Patio of the Oranges (*Patio de las Naranjas*), is one of the few physical enhancements to the cathedral spared from Bishop de Toledo's defacements of the Carvajal family's heraldry.

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<sup>69</sup> Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 58.



**Figure 10: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Cloister Fountain (*Patio de las Naranjas*)**



**Detail 10.1**  
**Gothic fountain in the Patio of Oranges**



**Detail 10.2**  
**Heraldic Details**

*Photography by author.*

The water feature was exceptionally communicative in terms of Christian symbolism. According to Gerhart B. Ladner, during the Middle Ages, Christians viewed “symbols...[as] objects or events which have a wider meaning that reaches beyond stories and their structures.”<sup>70</sup> Ladner quotes Hugh St. Victor’s twelfth century commentary on the *Areopagite*, to strengthen this position. On symbols, St. Victor wrote, “[a] symbol is a collecting of visible forms for the demonstration of invisible things.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, the placement of the fountain (a water feature) among a courtyard of orange trees (a garden) likely conveyed multiple religious meanings. In Europe, especially within the

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<sup>70</sup> Gerhart B. Ladner, “Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism: A Comparison,” *Speculum*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Apr., 1979): 231

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

surrounding context of a church, water was the dominant symbolism of Christian baptism.<sup>72</sup> Resurrection through immersion in water was considered a shared experience with Christ.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, in Carolingian France, the baptismal font was “equated with...fountains of water.”<sup>74</sup> Encompassing the cardinal’s fountain were trees, which tie into Judeo-Christian and Islamic visions of the Tree of Life and a garden paradise.<sup>75</sup> In particular, Christians associated orange trees with the Tree of Life.<sup>76</sup> Thus, when viewing Cardinal Carvajal’s fountain in this setting, parishioners and churchmen would likely have contemplated Christian baptism, life, death, and resurrection. In this way, once again, the cardinal and the cathedral chapter integrated the Carvajals’ presence into religious life in Plasencia.

The artifact that most completely represents the Carvajal family’s deep integration into the cathedral’s practices as well as their ever-present devotion to Mary was the gothic monstrance given by Cardinal Carvajal (*custodia*).<sup>77</sup> (See Figure 11: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal’s Monstrance.) A monstrance is a vessel used to display the Eucharist and it is used during the *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament*, a religious service in which the priest blesses the Eucharist and places it inside the vessel’s glass tabernacle.<sup>78</sup> This ritual is usually held after Vespers, Compline, or the Stations of the Cross, and involves parishioners kneeling and venerating the Eucharist.<sup>79</sup> A typical *Benediction of the Blessed*

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 239-240.

<sup>75</sup> Zofja Ameisenowa and W. F. Mainland, “The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography,” *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Apr., 1939): 333.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 338.

<sup>77</sup> ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18; Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 70.

<sup>78</sup> Charles George Herbermann et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), s.v., “Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament,” by Herbert Thurston.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

*Sacrament* ceremony included the praying of the *Litany of Loreto* and the singing of popular hymns devoted to Mary.<sup>80</sup> In particular, the *Litany of Loreto* emphasizes Mary as the intercessor of the faithful congregation and cites her divine qualities through the use of a series of invocations.<sup>81</sup> During the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the cathedral's churchmen carried this monstrance with the Eucharist during the community's *Feast of Corpus Christi* processions.<sup>82</sup> Like the cardinal's altarpiece and *Salve Regina* services, this gothic monstrance was further evidence of the Carvajal family's explicit devotion to Christ's mother.

Reportedly, Juan de Carvajal commissioned the silver-gilt vessel during his long absence from the diocese and later sent it as a gift to the cathedral.<sup>83</sup> The vessel is divided into five primary sections. These sections, viewed from top to bottom, include: a crucifix, an enclosed octagonal chapel, an open octagonal chapel enclosed with glass ("the tabernacle"), a three-tiered church structure, and a four-petal base.<sup>84</sup> Although it is difficult to ascertain the monstrance's exact origin, it is likely that the cardinal selected a craftsman for the object from one of the many European regions he visited during the 1440s and 1450s. Juan routinely traveled as Pope V's papal legate from 1447 through 1455 to Bohemia, Hungary, Florence, Venice, and Milan.<sup>85</sup> Later, he performed similar services for Pope Calixto III from 1456 to 1458 when he traveled to Germany, Hungary,

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Jose Benavides Checa, *Prelados Placentinos*, 70.

<sup>83</sup> ACP Legajo 129, No. 11, Folios 18-18v.

<sup>84</sup> Overall, the artifact measures 32.7 inches (83 centimeters) in height, 11.8 inches (30 centimeters) wide at the tabernacle, and 12.6 inches (32 centimeters) at its base. See: Anonymous, "Custodias," Exhibit card. *Museo de la Catedral de Plasencia*, Plasencia, Spain.

<sup>85</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-16, Folio 306; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 10, Folio 18; Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*, 103-104; Francisco González Cuesta, *Los Obispos de Plasencia: Aproximación al Espiscopologio Placentino*, 111-112.



and Bosnia to preach a crusade against Muhammad II, who captured Christian Constantinople in 1453.<sup>86</sup>

Although the cardinal's monstrance shares commonalities with five others produced during the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and Bohemia (i.e., ornamental spires with crockets, ornamental foliated cresting, chapel structures, human figurines placed around the tabernacle, and a petal-shaped base), the object was unique to Plasencia.<sup>87</sup> Specifically, the Carvajal monstrance includes references to distinctive architectural features of the cathedral of Plasencia. In comparison to the other monstrances produced during this period, the use of an eight-sided tabernacle appears to be a defining characteristic of the Carvajal piece. Other similar 15<sup>th</sup> century German and Bohemian vessels utilized either circular or square tabernacles to enclose the Eucharist. For example, Jan van Eyck's painting of the Ghent Altarpiece (1390-1440) and another vessel designed by Wenzel von Olmutz (c. 1481-1500) show the Eucharist enclosed in a square tabernacle.<sup>88</sup> (See Figures 12 and 13 for comparative monstrances.) Three other monstrances from this era used minimalistic circular glass tubes to display the Eucharist

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> The five comparative monstrances include: Jan van Eyck's painting of the Ghent Altarpiece, Wenzel von Olmutz's design for a monstrance, Alart du Hamel's design for a monstrance, a German monstrance with the Relic of St. Sebastian, and a Bohemian monstrance. See: Ghent Altarpiece: Reference: Miraculous host in Monstrance, ms. 31240, fol 21. Jan van Eyck. 1390-1440. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York. For details on Wenzel von Olmutz's design see: Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Volume 9 Commentary, Part 2 (New York: Abaris, 1981), s.v. "Early German Artists," by Jane C. Hutchison; William Hughes Willshire, *Catalogue of Early Prints in the British Museum* (London: Longmans, 1883), 314-317; Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Volume 9 Commentary, Part 2 (New York: Abaris, 1981), s.v. "Early German Artists," by Jane C. Hutchison; Monstrance. Anonymous. ca. 1400-1410 In ARTstor [database online]. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York; Anonymous. Monstrance with a Relic of Saint Sebastian, ca. 1475. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. ARTstor: CMA\_.1931.65.

<sup>88</sup> For details on Jan van Eyck's painting see: Ghent Altarpiece: Reference: Miraculous host in Monstrance, ms. 31240, fol 21. Jan van Eyck. 1390-1440. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York. For details on Wenzel von Olmutz's design see: Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Volume 9 Commentary, Part 2 (New York: Abaris, 1981), s.v. "Early German Artists," by Jane C. Hutchison.

within the tabernacle. Among these were a design for a monstrance by Alart du Hamel (c.1450-1516), a German monstrance with the Relic of St. Sebastian (c.1475), and a Bohemian monstrance (c. 1400-1410).<sup>89</sup> These findings suggest that Cardinal Carvajal tailored his gift to a specific audience, namely, the Diocese of Plasencia. Juan de Carvajal's commissioning of a monstrance that architecturally paralleled the cathedral of Plasencia explicitly and materially bonded the Carvajal family to the Placentino religious community.

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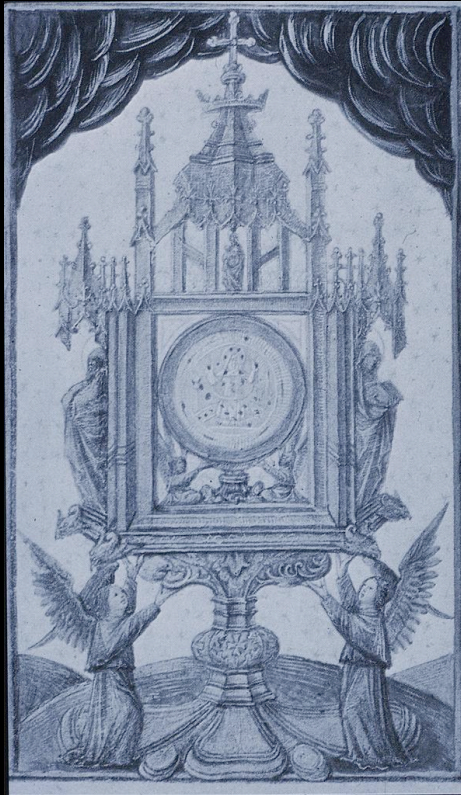
<sup>89</sup> For details on the Alart du Hamel monstrance see: William Hughes Willshire, *Catalogue of Early Prints in the British Museum* (London: Longmans, 1883), 314-317; Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Volume 9 Commentary, Part 2 (New York: Abaris, 1981), s.v. "Early German Artists," by Jane C. Hutchison. For details on the Bohemian monstrance see: Monstrance. Anonymous. ca. 1400-1410 In ARTstor [database online]. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York. For details on the German monstrance with the Relic of St. Sebastian see: Anonymous. Monstrance with a Relic of Saint Sebastian, ca. 1475. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. ARTstor: CMA\_.1931.65.

**Figure 11: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance**

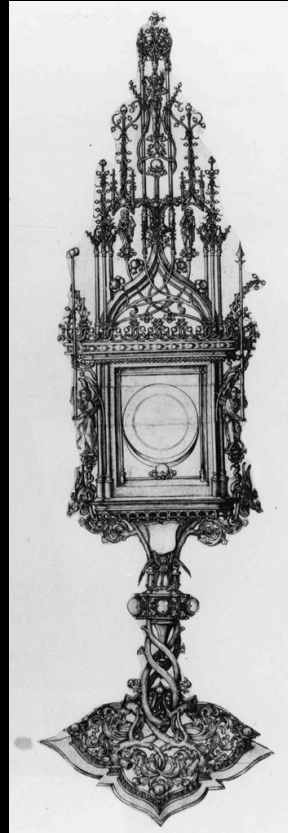


*Photography by author.*

**Figure 12: Comparative Monstrances, Group 1**



Detail 12.2  
Ghent Altarpiece:  
Miraculous Host in Monstrance <sup>90</sup>

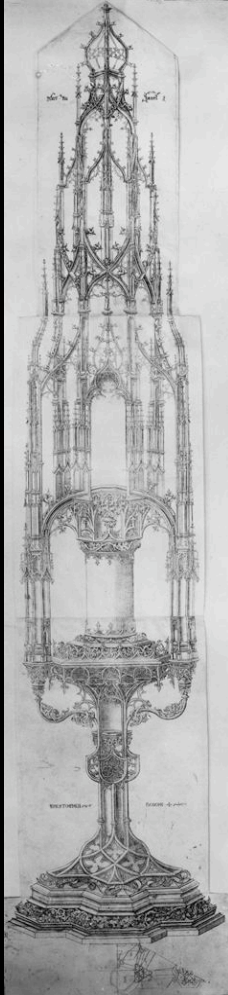


Detail 12.2  
Monstrance, Wenzel von Olmutz <sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Ghent Altarpiece: Reference: Miraculous host in Monstrance, ms. 31240, fol 21. Jan van Eyck. 1390-1440. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York.

<sup>91</sup> Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Volume 9 Commentary, Part 2 (New York: Abaris, 1981), s.v. "Early German Artists," by Jane C. Hutchison.

**Figure 13: Comparative Monstrances, Group 2**



Detail 13.1  
Monstrance,  
Alart du Hameel<sup>92</sup>



Detail 13.2  
Monstrance with  
Relic of St. Sebastian <sup>93</sup>



Detail 13.3  
Bohemia Monstrance<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> William Hughes Willshire, *Catalogue of Early Prints in the British Museum* (London: Longmans, 1883), 314-317.

<sup>93</sup> Monstrance. Anonymous. ca. 1400-1410 In ARTstor [database online]. [cited 5 February 2008]. Available from ARTstor, Inc., New York, New York.

<sup>94</sup> Anonymous. Monstrance with a Relic of Saint Sebastian, ca. 1475. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. ARTstor: CMA\_.1931.65.

The monstrance's dominant architectural reference is to the Chapel of St. Paul, which is where the cathedral chapter would routinely meet to conduct church affairs. Situated along the enclosed cloister walkway, the octagonal Chapel of St. Paul is one of the oldest structures in the cathedral's complex of buildings and by far the most important in terms of ecclesiastical governance. (See Figure 4.) Both of the vessel's chapel structures, the enclosed eight-sided chapel and the tabernacle, utilize the octagonal form and thus suggest that Juan de Carvajal had a role in dictating the structure of the monstrance. The octagonal chapel roof is composed of sixteen individual vaults. (See Figure 14: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance and the Chapel of St. Paul, Detail 14.1 and Figure 15: Architectural Cross-Section of the Octagonal Chapel Structure.) Thus, for each wall of the chapel there are two ceiling vaults that are separated by three ceiling ribs. This exact configuration is repeated in the exterior and interior of the cathedral's Chapel of St. Paul—eight walls and sixteen vaults. (See Figure 14, Details 14.2 and 14.4.) Likewise, the monstrance's tabernacle, the receptacle of the Eucharist, matches this roof and wall layout. (See Figure 14, Detail 14.3.)

Similarly, there is a shared language of ornamentation that integrates the monstrance's chapel and tabernacle and the Chapel of St. Paul. All three structures utilize hip knobs (circular and spiked) along their exterior roof ribs. (See Figure 16: Ornamental Comparisons, Details 16.1 and 16.2) Furthermore, the monstrance tabernacle and the Chapel of St. Paul both display multiple spires with crockets. Lastly, the tabernacle and cathedral chapel incorporate quatrefoils, or four-lobed, window-like openings. (Figure 16, Details 16.1 and 16.3.) These convergences of geometry and ornamentation could indicate that Cardinal Carvajal perceived the Chapel of St. Paul and its cathedral chapter as symbolic corollaries of the monstrance tabernacle and the Eucharist. Put simply, just

as the tabernacle housed the Eucharist so did the Chapel of St. Paul hold the cathedral chapter and its members. Thus, in the Diocese of Plasencia, the Dean, Archdeacons, Canons, and Prebendaries represented the physical body of Christ (the Eucharist) and as such, embodied the Christian God's authority and leadership.



**Figure 14:**  
**Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance and the Chapel of St. Paul**



**Detail 14.1 – Monstrance octagonal chapel**



**Detail 14.2 – Roof line of the Chapel of St. Paul**



**Detail 14.3 – Monstrance tabernacle**

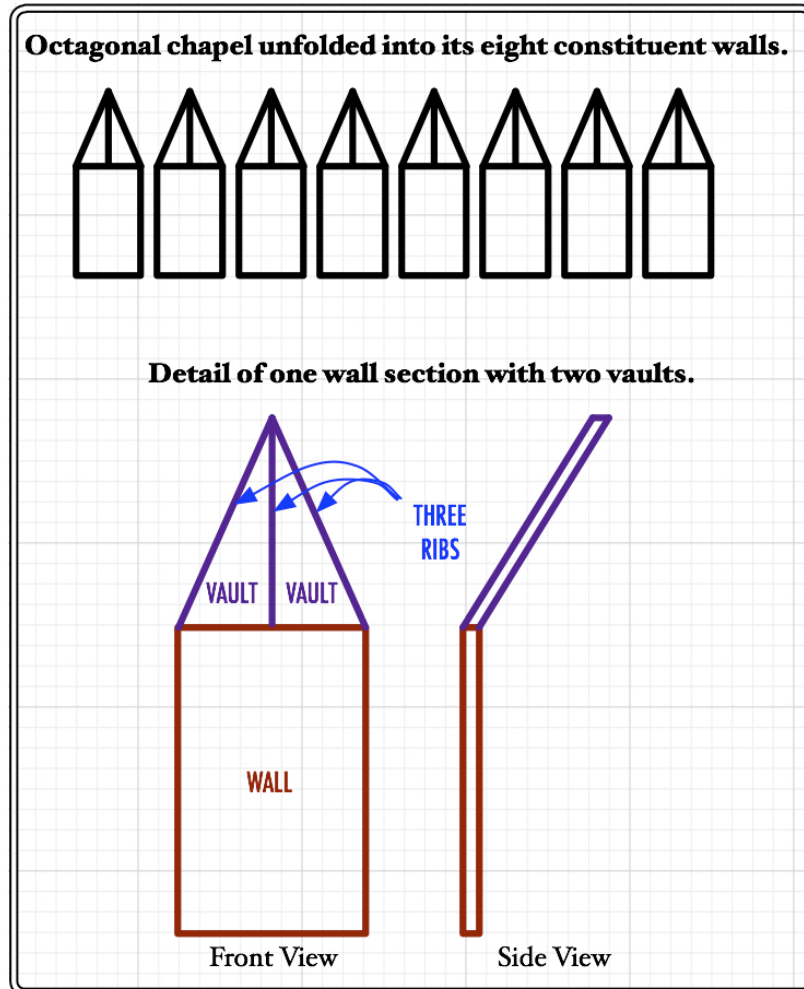


**Detail 14.4 – Interior vaults of the Chapel of St. Paul**



*Photography by author.*

**Figure 15:**  
**Architectural Cross-Section of the Octagonal Chapel Structure**



**Figure 16: Ornamental Comparisons**



**Detail 16.1 – Tabernacle roof**

Quatrefoil openings above the image of the man and crockets applied to spires



**Detail 16.2**

Crockets applied to spires



**Detail 16.3**

Quatrefoil opening at the top of the peaked arch

*Photography by author.*

Like the architectural similarities that link the Carvajal monstrance to the cathedral of Plasencia, the vessel's petal-like base and tabernacle also reveal the identity

of its patron, as well as associate that patron with a learned religious past. On each of the four metallic petals of the base there is a finely etched badge. (See Figure 17: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance Base.) Two of these discs, placed on opposite sides, present the cardinal's ecclesiastical heraldry—the *galero* and the Carvajal coat of arms. (See Figure 18: Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance – Heraldry and Iconography, Detail 18.2.)

The iconography on the other two badges of the base appears to be two different Christian saints. On one badge a bearded man wearing a bishop's miter holds a book in his right hand and a quill in his left. The other image is of a different bearded man who also holds a book and quill. (See Figure 18, Details 18.3 and 18.4.) Similar to these badges on the foot of the monstrance, the tabernacle also holds several discs, only one of which is clear enough to identify. This badge shows a third unique depiction of a bearded man with a book and quill. (See Figure 16, Detail 16.1 and Figure 18, Detail 18.1.) Because the monstrance adheres to strict geometries and symmetries, it seems likely that the tabernacle has two badges with images of saint-like men.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Because the monstrance is placed in a sealed museum display, the backside of the tabernacle is not visible, thus obstructing the view of the fourth badge.

**Figure 17: Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance Base**

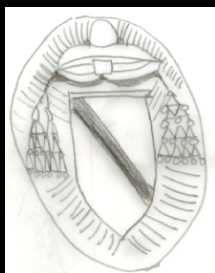


*Photography by author.*

**Figure 18: Juan de Carvajal's Monstrance – Heraldry and Iconography**



**Detail 18.1 –  
Ornamental badge on  
tabernacle. Also see  
Figure 16.**



**Detail 18.2 –  
Ornamental badge  
on base**



**Detail 18.3 –  
Ornamental badge  
on base**



**Detail 18.4 –  
Ornamental badge  
on base**

*Tracings by author.*

Although none of the saints on the silver-gilt badges are clearly identifiable, their distinctive individual depictions indicate the patron wished to reference several learned Christian leaders commonly associated with books and the quill at this time. Perhaps, as there are as many as four saints depicted on the monstrance, two on the tabernacle and two on the base, these are the four fathers of the Latin Church—St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and St. Jerome.<sup>96</sup> Augustine and Ambrose were two of the more prominent saints identified with book and quill symbols. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430), a North African convert from Arianism to orthodox Catholicism, was a renowned scholar and philosopher.<sup>97</sup> In his most important works, *City of God Against Pagans* and *Confessions*, he defended Christianity and discussed his conversion for the purpose of evangelization.<sup>98</sup> During the Middle Ages, Augustine was so well-known that his writings, “were second only to the Bible in popularity, particularly among the learned.”<sup>99</sup> The man that brought Augustine into the orthodox Catholic Church was none other than Ambrose, who personally baptized Augustine, as well as advocated a tolerant approach toward the Arians.<sup>100</sup>

These saints epitomized the key religious counterweights of fervent piety and tolerance—both pressing issues in late 15<sup>th</sup> century Catholic Castile, which was struggling to accept its own *conversos*. The craftsman’s decision to use the symbols of

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<sup>96</sup> John Oliver Hand, “‘Saint Jerome in His Study’ by Joos van Cleve,” *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1990): 3.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 3, 380.

<sup>98</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God Against Pagans*, trans. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xi; Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 11.

<sup>99</sup> F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 289.

<sup>100</sup> Charles George Herbermann et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), s.v., “Augustine of Hippo,” by Eugene Portalie.

the book and quill on the monstrance's badges seems a part of his strategy to reference other contemporary artistic works that also contained images of Augustine and Ambrose. In Benozzo Gozzoli's 1460s frescos depicting the life of St. Augustine in the Church of Sant'Agostino (San Gimignano, Italy), the artist presents the bearded saint with his miter placed on his worktable, a book in its stand, and a quill in the saint's hand.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, in other period artworks, a bearded Ambrose appears with a book and quill.<sup>102</sup>

The Carvajals' focus on Ambrose and Augustine extends into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the mid-1500s, the Carvajal family of churchmen chose to incorporate statues of Augustine and Ambrose into their clan's chapel in the new cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>103</sup> The Carvajals commissioned and dedicated this family chapel to Canon Martín González de Carvajal (d. 1580), and utilized the heraldry of the Carvajals (the sable bend on a gold shield) and, curiously, what appears to be the coat of arms for the *converso* Santa Marías (a gold *flores de lillio* on a blue shield).<sup>104</sup> (See Figure 19: Chapel of Canon Martín González de Carvajal, "New" cathedral of Plasencia.) On the chapel's front façade are statues of Augustine and Ambrose. It therefore appears that Cardinal Juan de Carvajal's monstrance and the chapel of Martín González de Carvajal demonstrate a long-term family identification with these two saints. At minimum, it shows that the family wished

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<sup>101</sup> Diane Cole Ahl, "Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes of the Life of Saint Augustine in San Gimignano: Their Meaning in Context," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 7, No. 13 (1986): 35-36.

<sup>102</sup> John Oliver Hand, "'Saint Jerome in His Study' by Joos van Cleve," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1990): 4; Charles George Herbermann et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), s.v., "St. Ambrose," by James F. Loughlin.

<sup>103</sup> ACP Legajo 13, Documento 7.

<sup>104</sup> It should be noted that the Plasencia-based Carvajal family previously never used this emblem in any of their family chapels. In addition, there is evidence suggesting the Carvajal and Santa María families shared extended families relations by the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century (through the Villalva family). However, there is no archival documentation supporting the theory that the families directly intermarried. However, this family monument suggests that the two families may have indeed intermarried. For a discussion of the families' shared relations through the Villalvas, see the earlier discussion of Sevilla López de Carvajal's foundation of the Convent of St. Clare.

local parishioners to believe that, like Augustine and Ambrose, the Carvajal family was an orthodox and learned collection of church leaders.



**Figure 19:**  
**Chapel of Canon Martín González de Carvajal, “New” cathedral of Plasencia**



Upper View of Chapel



Statue of St. Augustine



Chapel and Grave



Statue of St. Ambrose



Exterior Coats of Arms



Interior Coats of Arms

*Photography by author.*



## Public and Pious Initiatives in the Greater Diocese

Further enhancing the community's perception of the generosity and religiosity of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal were additional public and pious architectural works in the greater Diocese of Plasencia. Among those improvements to the regional infrastructure attributed to Juan were the Bridge of the Cardinal (*Puente de Cardinal*) over the Tajo River and the Bridge of the Cardinal over the Almonte River.<sup>105</sup> The Tajo River Bridge improved the North-South movement of people and goods between the city of Plasencia and the village of Torrejon (the home of Dr. Garci López de Carvajal's immediate family) and the village of Trujillo (the ancestral home of the Carvajal family). According to the 16<sup>th</sup> century historian and churchman Juan Correas y Roldán, the construction of the bridge "was of an enormous cost because it was necessary to quarry the stone from mountains very far away."<sup>106</sup> Another report suggests the makers of the bridge mined its stone from a location "over seven leagues away."<sup>107</sup> The Plasencia city council's *Book of Acts* states, albeit highly unlikely, that the bridge was constructed from 30,000 stones at a cost of 282,352 reales and 32 maravedis.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, during the Peninsular War of 1808-1814, the Tajo River Bridge became a casualty of hostilities.<sup>109</sup>

On the other hand, the second bridge, which spanned the Almonte River and connected the village of Trujillo with the village of Jaraicejo, still stands today. (See Figure 20: Cardinal Carvajal Bridge (Almonte River and Jaraicejo, Spain).) The bridge is

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<sup>105</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folios 156v-157; ACP Legajo 129, Documento 11, Folios 18-18v.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folio 159.

<sup>108</sup> This estimate of costs appears to be highly inaccurate as the cathedral of Plasencia's entire income from rents, which does not include *diezmos* taxes, was only 373,712 maravedis in 1473—a sum significantly less than the 282,352 reales. It seems unlikely that the cardinal and cathedral chapter paid this sum. See ACP *Actas Capitulares, Tomo 3 (1459-1476)*, Folios 62- 66v; Domingo Sánchez Loro, *Historias Placentinas Ineditas. Primera Parte Catalogus Episcoporum Ecclesiae Placentinae, Volumen B*, 456, note 3.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

a simple Romanesque style with nine barrel-vaulted spans.<sup>110</sup> Where the bridge spans the most active portion of the river, the structure depends on heavy buttresses.<sup>111</sup> Not only did the bridge improve trade and movement, but it also provided the Carvajal family of knights in Trujillo with a direct route to Jaraicejo, which was consistently a focal point of regional conflicts over natural resources.<sup>112</sup>

One of Cardinal Carvajal's last contributions to public and pious works in the greater diocese were architectural enhancements to the church in his father's native village of Bonilla de la Sierra.<sup>113</sup> Although Juan made multiple changes to the existing *Iglesia Colegiata de San Martín* in Bonilla, the most important from the standpoint of family status was the addition of his ecclesiastical heraldry above the church's main entrance. (See Figure 22: *Iglesia Colegiata de San Martín*, Bonilla de la Sierra, Details 22.1, 22.2, and 22.3.) This emblem publically marked the extent of the Carvajals' reach into the periphery surrounding Plasencia.

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<sup>110</sup> Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Buildings: Biographical, Historical, and Descriptive, Volume III* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 968.

<sup>111</sup> In addition to the main bridge, on the Trujillo-side of the river an unusual secondary ramp connects perpendicularly to the bridge. This ramp, which straddles the river's banks, appears to allow secondary access to the bridge. Utilizing satellite imagery of the structure, one can estimate the length of the bridge to be approximately 350 feet in length. (See Figure 21: Map of Cardinal Carvajal Bridge (Almonte River and Jaraicejo).)

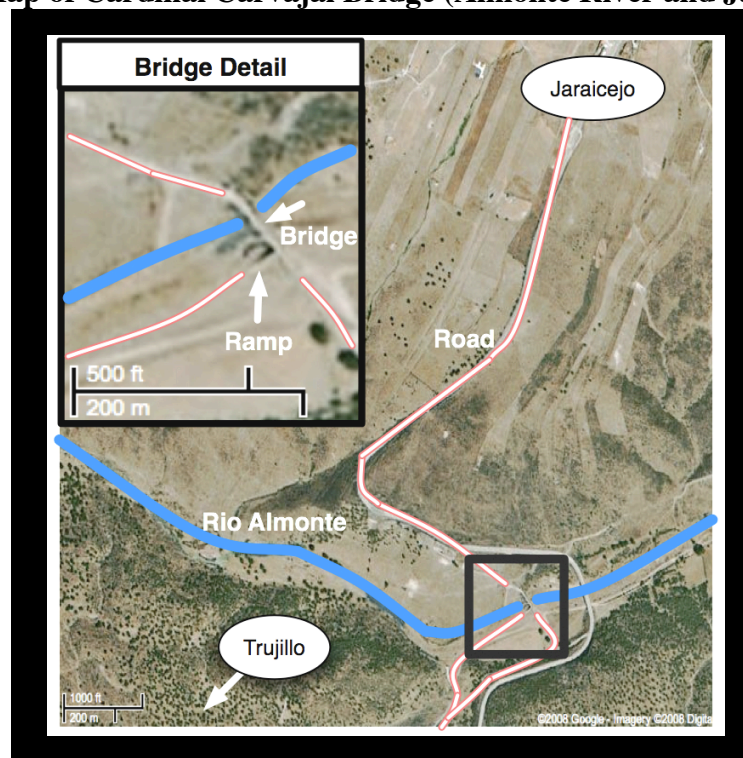
<sup>112</sup> See AMP Sin Legajo. "Pesquisa hecha por Miguel Sánchez de Sepulveda *corregidor* de la ciudad de Plasencia, en razon de las terminus y otras cosa. Fecha en 3 de septiembre de 1431, ante Martín Fernández de Logroño, escribano de esta ciudad"; ACP *Actas Capitulares, Tomo 4 (1494-1508)*, Folios 6bis-6bis vuelto.

<sup>113</sup> RAH Colección Salazar y Castro C-12, Folio 160.

**Figure 20: Cardinal Carvajal Bridge (Almonte River and Jaraicejo, Spain)<sup>114</sup>**



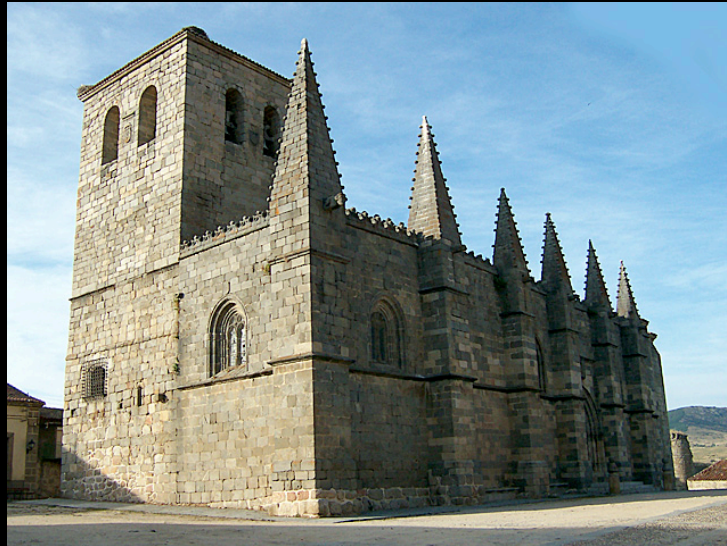
**Figure 21: Map of Cardinal Carvajal Bridge (Almonte River and Jaraicejo)<sup>115</sup>**



<sup>114</sup> Carmen Candiotti López Pujato et al., *Banco de Imágenes*. Madrid: M.E.C., Centro Nacional de Información y Comunicación Educativa (28 January 2008), URL: <<http://recursos.cnice.mec.es/bancoimagenes2/buscador/imagen.php?idimagen=31696&expresion=%22Jaraicejo%22>>

<sup>115</sup> *Google Maps* (28 January 2008), URL: <<http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Jaraicejo,+Spain&ie=UTF8&ll=39.652491,-5.820436&spn=0.019627,0.039225&t=k&z=15&om=0>>

**Figure 22:**  
***Iglesia Colegiata de San Martín, Bonilla de la Sierra***<sup>116</sup>



**Detail 22.1**

**Off-center view of the bell tower (left) and main entrance (right)**



**Detail 22.2**  
**Main entrance**



**Detail 22.3**  
**Carvajal heraldry over  
the church's main entrance**

<sup>116</sup> Photography courtesy of the Ayuntamiento de Bonilla de la Sierra, Spain.

Collectively, each of these initiatives—the enhancements to the church at Bonilla, the construction of the Tajo River Bridge and Almonte River Bridge, the modifications to the cathedral of Plasencia’s architecture and religious practices, and the donation of the Carvajal monstrance—contributed to the Carvajals’ goal of advancing their social status in the noble circles of the Castilian world. By publicly promoting the piety, devotion, and generosity of Cardinal Juan de Carvajal during the late 1460s and 1470s, the family ensured they would be remembered as regional leaders and influential supporters of the Catholic Church. Further, the complimentary efforts of Sevilla López de Carvajal and Sancha de Carvajal’s religious foundations bolstered this public image and positioned the family to advance as a leader among its noble peers as the 15<sup>th</sup> century came to a close.

## Chapter Eight: Carvajal Family Leaders, 1470s-1516

### **Papal Bull Granting the Americas to Spain, The *Inter Caetera* of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1493**

We have indeed learned that you...discover[ed] certain lands and islands remote and unknown and not hitherto discovered by others, to the end that you might bring to the worship...of the Catholic faith their residents and inhabitants... Moreover, as your aforesaid envoys are of opinion, these very peoples living in the said islands and countries believe in one God, the Creator in heaven, and seem sufficiently disposed to embrace the Catholic faith and be trained in good morals...we...give, grant, and assign forever to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, all and singular the aforesaid countries and islands thus unknown and hitherto discovered by your envoys and to be discovered hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

### **INTRODUCTION**

Although their partners, the Santa María family, would experience an unrelenting political and religious freefall due to Castilian discrimination against *conversos*, by the 1490s the Carvajals would emerge at the center of European and early American affairs. In little more than two decades, from 1488 to 1511, this Plasencia clan would field an impressive collection of noblemen who guided royal and papal affairs. Four generations after the family patriarch, Diego González de Carvajal y Vargas, multiple clansmen would find themselves directed into learned careers. The last of the noteworthy Carvajal knights of Plasencia was Francisco de Carvajal, the *Señor de Torrejon*. Under his leadership, the Francisco would forcefully remove the city of Plasencia from the seigniorial rule of the Estúñigas and returned to the direct royal rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel.

Francisco did not encourage his children to continue in his *caballero* footsteps, he advanced his sons into administrative and church positions while also arranging for his

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<sup>1</sup>Frances Gardiner Davenport, *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648* (Washington, D. C.: The Carnegie Institution Of Washington, 1917), 61-62.

daughter, Ines, to marry Francisco de Vargas, the Royal Treasurer of Ferdinand and Isabel. Francisco's eldest son, Garci López de Carvajal y Sande, was not the most illustrious of his children, but he did carry his father's title and served as the Spanish Ambassador to Portugal during the 1490s. Garci's did not marry into another *caballero* family, as was the clan's traditional marriage alliance practice, but was instead linked to a church family. Garci's spouse, Francisca de Valderrabano, was the sister of Placentino Bishop Rodrigo de Ávila (1470-96). Francisco de Carvajal's other two sons pursued church careers. The son that was his namesake served as a respectable administrator in the cathedral of Plasencia and also as the Archdeacon of Medellín as early as the 1500s. His other religiously focused son, Bernardino López de Carvajal, far exceeded his humble Extremaduran origins and eventually rose to the position of Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church.

Cardinal Carvajal would ultimately secure papal bulls that named Ferdinand and Isabel the *Reyes Católicos* and guaranteed Spanish claims in the newly discovered Americas. His younger cousin, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, would later advise the Catholic Monarchs (*Reyes Católicos*) on royal and American affairs, as well as censor and sanitize the Castilian royal chronicles to further solidify the monarchs' political legitimacy and lineage. Both of these men would effectively harness their positions to obtain personal and familial rewards unimaginable to previous generations. Among the benefits they realized were unfettered access to the king and queen, leadership roles in pivotal European affairs, participation in the formulation of early Spanish policies for the Americas, and most extraordinarily, the opportunity to grasp the papacy.

## FORMING ELITE LEADERS, 1470s-1480s

In 1472, two of the Carvajal family's most impressive leaders—Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal and Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal—made their first appearances in the Castilian world. In this year, Bernardino completed his bachelor's degree in theology and began to serve as a substitute professor at the University at the Cathedral of Salamanca.<sup>2</sup> In that same year, Archdeacon Diego de Carvajal fathered and Juana de Galindez gave birth to Lorenzo. Although Lorenzo was born out of wedlock, he ascended later to the highly desirable position of judge on the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid (*Real Chancilleria de Valladolid*).<sup>3</sup> During the 1480s and 1490s, these two men circulated within Spain's most desirable royal administrative and ecclesiastical circles.

The University at the Cathedral of Salamanca (hereafter referred to as “the University of Salamanca”) was among the most critical institutions to shape the professional futures of Bernardino López de Carvajal and Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal. According to Isodoro L. Lapuya, Castilian King Alfonso X “The Wise” (1252-1284) established the university during the Iberian Peninsula's age of “warriors and wars”.<sup>4</sup> One of the outcomes of the *Reconquista*, the Christian kingdoms' political and military initiative to retake Iberia from the Muslims, was the recapturing of lands governed by different Christian, Islamic, and Jewish legal traditions. Recognizing that this patchwork of laws was problematic, Alfonso X elected to overhaul Castile's existing use of the

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<sup>2</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 134; AUS *Libro de Claustro* 1, Folio 253; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez. *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 182.

<sup>3</sup> RAH *Colección Floranes* Tomo B-16, Folios 257-258; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, C-20, Folio 214.

<sup>4</sup> Lapuya, Isodoro L, “La Universidad de Salamanca y la Cultura Española en el Siglo XIII.” In *Conferencia Inaugural (Primera de las de lengua castellana)*, in Paris, France, December 8, 1897, by the Sorbonne. Paris: Sorbonne, 1900, 28.



Visigothic legal code, as well as address the novel situations generated by the commingling of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Kingdom of Castile, through the creation of his own legal code, *Las Siete Partidas*.<sup>5</sup>

Embedded within *Las Siete Partidas* were the foundational components for the University of Salamanca. The new legal code established a framework for the university primarily out of intellectual need. Prior to the creation of the Salamancan school, Castilian students pursued legal and scholarly studies outside of Spain, particularly in Bologna, precisely because there was no equivalent Castilian institution.<sup>6</sup> After the implementation of *Las Siete Partidas*, which the crafters completed in 1268, Castile recognized it could no longer do without its own comparable educational institution. To properly maintain and implement the king's new legal code, Castile needed to produce its own legal scholars and jurists.

Although by 1143 a rudimentary Castilian university existed in the city of Plasencia, the church later moved it to Salamanca. The church did not create the University of Salamanca until 1200.<sup>7</sup> Even after its foundation, the university did not offer sufficiently rigorous legal training to properly prepare jurists until 1254, the year that King Alfonso X granted the university a new charter. This was just fourteen years before the completion of *Las Siete Partidas*. The charter established that the enhanced university would consist of "two professors of law, three of canon law, two of logic, two

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<sup>5</sup> Homer J. Herriott, "A Thirteenth-Century Manuscript of the Primera Partida." *Speculum*, Volume 13, Issue 3 (November 1929), 280.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> George M. Addy, *The Enlightenment in the University of Salamanca*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), xvii; Isidro L. Lapuya, "La Universidad de Salamanca y la Cultura Espanola en el Siglo XIII." In *Conferencia Inaugral (Primera de las de lengua castellana)*, in Paris, France, December 8, 1897, by the Sorbonne. Paris: Sorbonne, 1900, 26.

of grammar, and two of physics.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the king’s *Siete Partidas* included several sections relating to the administration of the University of Salamanca.<sup>9</sup> Title 31 of the second part of the legal code is devoted to the operation of universities, including Salamanca, and defines the nature of general academic studies, the qualifications of professors (*maestros*), and the regulation of students and their examinations.<sup>10</sup>

Among the most crucial elements of the legal code was Law Eight, which pertained to the rights of “doctors of law” graduates.<sup>11</sup> These privileges established doctors as an elite cadre of men and by the late 1400s, the Castilian monarchs would promote these individuals in their royal administration and judiciary. Not only did doctors enjoy preferential titles, compensation, exemption from royal taxes and military service, the legal code also ensured they had preferential access to the king.<sup>12</sup>

Law Eight specified that, “the doorkeepers of emperors, kings, and princes must allow the doctor to enter into the presence of the ruler at any time except when affairs of great secrecy are being discussed, and even then, his call must be announced.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, when Bernardino López de Carvajal completed his studies at the University of Salamanca in the 1470s, and then became a member of its faculty and administration, he embedded himself in an institution and intellectual profession that would radically remake the Castilian royal administrative world in the 1480s. Likewise, his cousin, Lorenzo

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<sup>8</sup> Homer J. Herriott, “A Thirteenth-Century Manuscript of the Primera Partida.” *Speculum*, Volume 13, Issue 3 (November 1929), 279.

<sup>9</sup> Charles S. Lobingier, “Las Siete Partidas in Full English Dress.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Volume 9, Issue 4 (July 1938), 536.

<sup>10</sup> George M. Addy, *The Enlightenment in the University of Salamanca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), xviii; Homer J. Herriott, “A Thirteenth-Century Manuscript of the Primera Partida.” *Speculum*, Volume 13, Issue 3 (November 1929), 279.

<sup>11</sup> Homer J. Herriott, “A Thirteenth-Century Manuscript of the Primera Partida.” *Speculum*, Volume 13, Issue 3 (November 1929), 280.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Galindez de Carvajal, would directly benefit from the ascent of elite educated men that would dominate King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel's royal bureaucratic service by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Inside the University of Salamanca, he Bernardino López de Carvajal built an ecclesiastical career based on superior academic performance and the assistance of well-placed patrons. At the age of twenty-five, he secured his first opportunity to demonstrate his intellectual talents. In the spring of 1475, Pedro de Caloca, a member of the Franciscan order, was absent from Salamanca and unable to teach his theology course.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing that Bernardino had already "proven" he had passed this theology coursework in 1474, Schoolmaster Juan Ruiz de Camargo appointed him to temporarily teach Professor Caloca's course.<sup>15</sup> Although Bernardino was sufficiently qualified to do so, it seems highly likely that the schoolmaster selected him because the Ruiz de Camargo and Carvajal families of Plasencia were intermarried and a part of the same church patronage network.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Juan Ruiz de Camargo was such a trusted member of the Carmargo-Carvajal extended family that in 1465, Cardinal Juan de Carvajal named him as conservator in his will and made him responsible for the disposition of his assets and possessions.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Bernardino's family connections most likely played a key role in this critical ecclesiastical opportunity.

Over the course of the late 1470s, Bernardino López de Carvajal circulated among Spain's emerging intellectual elite and continued to climb the university's academic

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<sup>14</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 2, Folio 37; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez. *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3. (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 207; Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1218-1549)* *Introducción* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1966), 169.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> For evidence of the intermarriage between the Ruize de Camargo and Carvajal families, see ACP Legajo 14, Documentos 1 and 4 and ACP Legajo 14, Documento 25.

<sup>17</sup> ACP Legajo 45, Documento 41, Unfoliated.

ladder. After securing his temporary professorship, Bernardino served on the university's leadership council, the Cloister (*Claustro*). As a member of this body, he participated in the oversight of the university along with his relatives, Dr. Martín de Ávila, who was both a professor at the university as well as the Bishop of Ávila, Schoolmaster Camargo, and the *converso* Humanist, Antonio de Nebrija.<sup>18</sup>

During this era that Spanish Humanism was finding its footing in the Iberian Peninsula. In particular, the University of Salamanca; the church leaders of the Dioceses of Plasencia, Ávila, and Salamanca; the Hieronymite Monastery at Guadalupe; and the Military Order of Alcántara were all responsible for the development of Spanish Humanism, or the revival of the study of classical philosophy, science, art, and poetry, as well as for the corollary preservation of "Hispano-Judaic culture".<sup>19</sup> Bernardino successfully secured a series of eight temporary teaching positions between 1475 and 1479, and was able to assume increasingly well-respected roles in the Salamancan church.<sup>20</sup> By 1479, he was a prior, or a monastic leader, in the Convent of St. Steven (*Convento de San Esteban*), and in the following year, his colleagues named him Rector of the University of the Cathedral of Salamanca.<sup>21</sup>

In precisely the same year Bernardino López de Carvajal became the university's rector, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel instituted a significant shift in the Castilian

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<sup>18</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 2, Folio 94v; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 234-235.

<sup>19</sup> Helen Nader, "'The Greek Commander' Henan Nunez de Toledo, Spanish Humanist and Civic Leader," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Winter, 1978): 463, 469; Américo Castro, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History*, trans. Willard F. King and Selma Margaretan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 486.

<sup>20</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 2, Folio 54v; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 215.

<sup>21</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folios 66, 125v; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 280, 307.

royal government that would ultimately favor university graduates. In 1480, the Spanish Monarchs fundamentally transformed the membership of their most important advisory council, the royal council (*consejo real*). Before this period, aristocratic *caballero* families populated a majority of the seats on the royal council.<sup>22</sup> After the king and queen's reforms, the re-amalgamated advisory council reserved seven of its twelve seats for a new class of administrative elites in Spain, the university-educated *letrados*, thereby disenfranchising aristocratic *caballero* families like the Mendozas.<sup>23</sup> Helen Nader, author of *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, rightly argues that the *letrados* brought substantial changes to the royal council. On this point, she states:

The *letrados* in the royal council of Fernándo and Isabel brought to their positions a coherent and rational concept of the goals of the government and of their role in it, the concept developed by don Alfonso de Cartagena [the brother of Bishop Gonzalo García de Santa María of Plasencia] and his students long before the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. This *letrado* concept of the history and nature of the Spanish monarchy, based on medieval scholastic political theory and Roman law, formed a sharp contrast to the assumptions of previous royal councils.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, this new professional class of *letrados*, whose rise linked to the earlier administrative prowess and efforts of the *converso* Santa María family, would form a critical keystone in the Spanish royal government after the 1480s. Additionally, the favoritism the monarchs showed university-educated men occurred in concert with corollary improvements at the University of Salamanca.

Over the course of two years (1480-1481), Rector Bernardino López de Carvajal served as a powerful catalytic agent for readying the university to produce Spain's new bureaucratic elite. For example, he collaborated with Doctor Zamora and Diego Alonso

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<sup>22</sup> Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 128-130.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 130.

Benavente to tighten the regulations relating to students' education and graduation.<sup>25</sup> Of concern was the practice of allowing students to complete their educational training with external faculty or at other universities. Rather than allowing this to continue, and thus "open the door to the chance that no one would ever graduate from here [the University of Salamanca]," the cloister elected to require their students to matriculate in Salamanca.<sup>26</sup> This measure ensured that all students met the university's requirements for graduation, as well as positioned the university to compete against other emerging Spanish educational institutions. A likely beneficiary of Bernardino's efforts at the University of Salamanca was his younger cousin, Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, who in less than ten years would arrive on campus to pursue his doctorate in law. In addition to his work on university regulations, when the university faced an acute shortage of qualified instructors of theology in December 1480, Rector Bernardino López de Carvajal and *Licenciado* Diego de Burgos agreed to teach these required classes.<sup>27</sup> Of course, because this teaching duty was in addition to his responsibilities as the university rector, the cloister handsomely compensated Bernardino with a supplemental salary of 25,000 maravedis.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps most telling of Bernardino's role inside the expanding university were his financial responsibilities and his lobbying of Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza to establish a new college within the university. As rector, Bernardino was the keeper of one of the five different keys needed to open the university's strongbox that held its deposits

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<sup>25</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folio 128; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 308.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folio 129v; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 309.

of gold and silver *ducados*, *reales*, and *maravedis* coins.<sup>29</sup> However, Bernardino was not only trusted with access to the university's actual monies, but also with the responsibility of negotiating with the Cathedral of Salamanca regarding the university's funding. As the university was a component of the local church, the educational institution was dependent on it for a portion of its financial support. Working alongside Dean Alvaro de Paz, Doctor Martín de Ávila, and Canon Rodrigo Álvarez, Bernardino led a group of church officials and professors in the university's financial settlement over the sharing of church tax (*diezmos*) revenues.<sup>30</sup>

Simultaneously, in December 1480, the University of Salamanca cloister dispatched Bernardino to lobby his ecclesiastical patron, Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza, to found a college at the University of Salamanca.<sup>31</sup> Although the cloister had sent a letter to Cardinal Mendoza in 1479 communicating their unanimous support of his interest in endowing a new college and providing multiple scholarships to fund students' studies, the cloister had not received an affirmative reply from the cardinal.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, Bernardino was unable to convince Cardinal Mendoza to place the college at the University of Salamanca, and instead Mendoza elected to form his College of the

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<sup>29</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folio 130; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 309.

<sup>30</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folios 128v, 131; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 308-309.

<sup>31</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folios 128v; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 309.

<sup>32</sup> AUS *Libro de Claustro* 3, Folio 78; Florencio Marcos Rodríguez, *Extractos de los Libros de Claustros de la Universidad de Salamanca, Siglo XV (1463-1484)*. Tomo VI, Num. 3 (Salamanca: Graficas Alfer, 1964), 86-87; F. Javier Villalba, *Colección Diplomática del Cardenal Mendoza (1454-1503)*, Cuadernos de Historia Medieval, Sección Colecciones documentales, I (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1999), 91.

Holy Cross (*Colegio de Santa Cruz*) at the University of Valladolid.<sup>33</sup> Even though Bernardino López de Carvajal's mission proved fruitless for the university, it did provide a personal reward as he likely utilized his time with Mendoza to further ingratiate himself with the cardinal. Only two years later, Mendoza, then the Bishop of Sevilla, granted Bernardino a canonship in the Cathedral of Sevilla.<sup>34</sup>

During the remainder of the 1480s and into the 1490s, the Carvajal family's involvement in the University of Salamanca's administration declined. Rather than invest all of their vital energies in the development and growth of the institution, the family used the university as a stepping-stone to better ecclesiastical and royal bureaucratic opportunities. After several years of service to the university, Bernardino transitioned through a series of increasingly important church appointments and papal positions.

In 1484, Bernardino launched his career in the Vatican when he delivered an erudite and passionate sermon to Pope Sixtus IV, a Franciscan, and the College of Cardinals on the relationship between the Passion of Christ and the circumcision of Christ.<sup>35</sup> On this point, Bernardino argued, "truly...the human flesh of Christ has been most fully demonstrated by his circumcision."<sup>36</sup> It seems likely that Bernardino selected this theological topic emphasizing the humanity of Christ, a belief strongly held by Franciscans, so that he could play to his primary audience—Pope Sixtus IV.<sup>37</sup> Catholic leaders were so impressed with his oratory, that shortly after his sermon, Pope Innocent

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<sup>33</sup> Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 143.

<sup>34</sup> BN Mss. 23129-8, Folio 1.

<sup>35</sup> Teodoro Fernández y Sánchez, *El Discutido Extremeño Cardenal Carvajal* (Cáceres: Institución Cultural «El Brocense» de la Excma. Disputacion P. de Cáceres, 1981), 17; Harvey E. Hamburg, "Rosso Fiorentino's Descent from the Cross in a Franciscan Context," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), 589.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 589.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 589-590.



VIII named Bernardino a papal nuncio, or papal ambassador, to Naples in 1486. In 1487, the pope would name him as a papal ambassador to Spain in 1487.<sup>38</sup> His first high-level Spanish post was as the Bishop of Astorga in 1488, which he quickly followed with his appointment as the Bishop of Cartagena in 1489.<sup>39</sup>

### **SETTLING AFFAIRS IN PLASENCIA**

In 1488, in precisely the same year that the Spanish Monarchs and Pope Innocent VIII made Bernardino López de Carvajal the Bishop of Astorga, the Carvajal clan of Plasencia settled tense familial and royal affairs with the Estúñiga family, the *Condes de Béjar y Plasencia*. In an act of intense loyalty to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel, the Carvajals would serve as the monarchs' weapon to relieve the Estúñigas of their title as the Counts of Plasencia. The Carvajal family's actions demonstrate both how the Spanish monarchy utilized its noble families against one another, as well as showcases the rewards the crown was willing to bestow upon its most loyal servants.

Since Castilian King Juan II had granted the Estúñigas the city of Plasencia in 1441 as a portion of their seigniorial lands, the Placentinos and the Carvajal family had aggressively disputed the secular rule of the *Condes de Béjar y Plasencia*. Throughout the mid- to late-1400s, the Carvajal-Santa María confederation had routinely intervened in the Estúñigas' rule of the city using their confederation's authority in the cathedral, as well as utilizing their seats as *corregidores* on the municipal council.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, in 1472, the Carvajal family engaged the Estúñigas in a judicial battle over local and regional property claims.<sup>41</sup> The political deadlock between the Carvajals and Estúñigas

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<sup>38</sup> Teodoro Fernández y Sánchez, *El Discutido Extremeño Cardenal Carvajal*, 17-18.

<sup>39</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 134.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapters Five and Six for a discussion of the Carvajals' continuous struggles with the Estúñigas from the 1430s through the 1470s.

<sup>41</sup> In 1472, *Conde* Alvaro de Estúñiga pursued a legal claim against Estefania González de Carvajal and her spouse, Luis de Trejo, regarding a property in Plasencia. See: ACP Legajo 1, Documento 44.

reached its end in 1488 when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel instructed Bernardino López's father, Francisco de Carvajal, to terminate the Estúñigas' secular rule over Plasencia.<sup>42</sup> As the Estúñigas were in a weakened state due to the death of *Conde* Alvaro de Estúñiga in June of 1488, the Spanish Monarch's utilized this opportunity to act quickly against the count's inexperienced grandson son, also named Alvaro de Estúñiga.<sup>43</sup>

The Plasencia Carvajals, who lacked a sufficient number of *caballeros* due to the clan's transition into learned careers, called upon roughly four-dozen extended relatives in Cáceres, who had remained *caballeros*, to support the family's military operation to evict the Estúñigas from Plasencia.<sup>44</sup> As Alvaro de Estúñiga anticipated an attack by royalist *caballeros*, he had secured the city's gates, while his uncle, Juan de Estúñiga (the Master of the Order of Alcántara) fortified the city's castle.<sup>45</sup> Led by Francisco de Carvajal and his son, Juan de Sande Carvajal, the royalist *caballeros* entered the city by breaking through the *Puerta de Trujillo*. As the Carvajals rode into the city on horseback, the men yelled, "Plasencia! Plasencia! For King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel!" and proceeded to fight and win a three-day "bloody battle in the streets and plaza" against the Estúñigas and their men.<sup>46</sup>

The Carvajal clan's restoration of the city to royal rule not only demonstrated the family's fidelity to the Spanish Monarchs, but these events also highlight how the king

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<sup>42</sup> The tensions between the Carvajals and the Estúñigas were likely exacerbated by the War of Succession (1475-1479). At this time, the Estúñigas had allied with Juana "la Beltraneja" instead of Isabel. Sources: Francisco de Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de la Orden y Cavalleria de Alcántara* (Toledo: Imprenta "en casa de Juan de Ayala", 1572), 54; Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edicion Facsimilar* (Madrid: Cicon Ediciones, 1627), 151.

<sup>43</sup> Vicente Paredes y Guillén, *Los Zúñigas, Señores de Plasencia* (Cáceres: Tipografia, Encadernacion y Liberia de Jiménez, 1903), 142.

<sup>44</sup> Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edicion Facsimilar*, 151.

<sup>45</sup> Francisco de Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de la Orden y Cavalleria de Alcántara*, 54.

<sup>46</sup> Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edicion Facsimilar*, 151.

and queen compensated the Carvajals for their service. In October 1488, when King Ferdinand traveled to Plasencia to commemorate the Carvajals' victory, he passed through the *Puerta de Trujillo* and there he ordered the city to carve the royal coat of arms, as well as the Carvajals' shield, into the gate's stone façade.<sup>47</sup> As a reward for their leadership and their engagement of the Estúñigas, the Placentino Carvajal family received their first seigniorial title, that of the *Señores de Torrejón*.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the king applied the title retroactively so that Francisco de Carvajal, the son of Dr. Garci López de Carvajal (the royal judge), was to be known as the second *Señor de Torrejón* and as "The Subduer of Plasencia."<sup>49</sup>

Significantly, the critical community leaders serving as witnesses to the king's pronouncement in Plasencia were not the knights from Cáceres, but the Plasencia Carvajals' churchmen and royal administrators, the source of the clan's growing local and kingdom-wide authority. Among them were Garci López de Carvajal y Sande, a Spanish royal ambassador, and Sancho de Carvajal, the Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar.<sup>50</sup> Thus, while the Cáceres clansmen that provided the armed forces to take the city from the Estúñigas, the Plasencia Carvajals' received the royal rewards of patronage and honorific titles.

While the Carvajal family improved their position in Spain's aristocracy, their allies, the Santa María churchmen in Plasencia, fell into relative obscurity. By the end of the 1480s, the Santa Marías had lost the cherished Archdeaconship of Trujillo and Medellín, as well as the Cantor's position, which occurred when Ruy García de

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 152; RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folios 116.

<sup>48</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, C-20, Folio 213.

<sup>49</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folios 113-114v.

<sup>50</sup> Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*, 152.

Salamanca retired from the cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the only Santa María clansman present at the king's October 1488 commemoration was Juan Fernández de Cabrerros, also known as Juan de Cabrero.<sup>52</sup> As the cathedral's notary, Juan de Cabrero was a minor churchman and not a significant actor in Plasencia's new history. In the 1490s, only the Carvajals and the Villalvas (an extended family relation of both the Carvajals and Santa Marías) served as ecclesiastical leaders in the cathedral of Plasencia.<sup>53</sup> (See Table 1: Carvajals and Santa Marías in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1470s-1500s.)

The decline of the Santa María family was tied to the increased social and religious hostility directed at all persons with a Jewish ancestry, even those *conversos* that had been born and raised as Christians. Within Plasencia, although the Carvajals appear to have retained their friendly relationships with the Santa María clan, by the 1490s, the family no longer adhered to the Carvajal-Santa María confederation's prior patronage system. Rather, the Carvajal-controlled cathedral chapter chose only to award church positions to themselves, the two clans' shared family relations (i.e. the Villalvas), and those Santa María clansmen (i.e. Juan de Cabrero) that did not carry easily identifiable *converso* pasts.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> ACP Legajo 282, Doc. 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 2-8. By 1490, the only Santa María participating in the cathedral chapter was Juan Fernández de Cabrerros who was a public notary.

<sup>52</sup> Alonso Fernández, *Historia y Annales de la Ciudad y Obispado de Plasencia. Edición Facsimilar*, 152.

<sup>53</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folios 93-93v.

<sup>54</sup> As the Santa María, Gutiérrez de la Calleja, and Fernández de Cabrerros surnames were known as *converso* names in Plasencia, it appears that the family chose to change their names to begin the process of masking their *converso* identity. In Plasencia, the descendents of the Santa María lineage adopted the surnames "Cabrerros" and "Cabrero" during late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. See: ACP Legajo 282, Documento 4, "Libro III. Viejo de Actas Capitulares. Cabildos celebrados desde 1459 al 1477", Folios 4v-8; ACP Legajo 282, Documento 9, "Traslado de los autos hechos en lo de septiembre de 1524 por el Juez Lic. Gonzalo Campo, que pretendió quitar los balcones de las ventanas de las casas de Plasencia", Folios 1-1v.

**Table 1: Carvajals and Santa Marías in the cathedral of Plasencia, 1470s-1500s<sup>55</sup>**

| Decade   | Bishop | Archdeacon of Plasencia and Béjar | Archdeacon of Trujillo and Medellín        | Archdeacon of Coria | Cantor                  | Treasurer              | Vicar General (appointed by bishop) |
|--|--------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1470s  | NR     | Sancho de Carvajal                | Ruy García de Salamanca                    | Diego de Carvajal   | Ruy García de Salamanca | Alvaro de Carvajal     | NR                                  |
| 1480s  | NR     | Sancho de Carvajal                | NR   | Diego de Carvajal   | Ruy García de Salamanca | Alvaro de Carvajal     | NR                                  |
| 1490s  | NR     | Sancho de Carvajal                | Juan Castellanos de Villalva               | Diego de Carvajal   | NR                      | Alvaro de Carvajal     | NR                                  |
|  |        | Garci López de Carvajal II        |  |                     |                         |                        |                                     |
| 1500s  | NR     | Garci López de Carvajal II        | Bernardino de Carvajal (Arch. of Trujillo) | NR                  | NR                      | Bernardino de Carvajal | NR                                  |
|  |        |                                   | Francisco de Carvajal (Arch. of Medellín)  |                     |                         |                        |                                     |
| Key: Santa María family (orange cells), Carvajal family (green cells), Villalva - interrelated with both the Santa María and Carvajal families (purple cells). NR = Not related to the Carvajal or Santa María families. |        |                                   |  |                     |                         |                        |                                     |

During the 1480s and 1490s, at the inception of the Spanish Inquisition and at the beginning of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, Plasencia's *converso* and Jewish histories began to disappear.<sup>56</sup> These dramatic shifts in social and religious fortune felt by Plasencia's *conversos* and Jewish community were not shared by the Carvajal family. Rather, at the opening of the 1490s, the Carvajals found themselves participating in Spanish leadership circles as a middle-tier family and who would serve as notable actors in pressing European and early American affairs.

#### AT THE CENTER OF EUROPEAN AND EARLY AMERICAN AFFAIRS, 1490s-1510s

Perhaps more than any other event of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christopher Columbus' encounter with the Americas in 1492 unequivocally transformed and blended the historical trajectories of Spain, Europe, and the Americas. In their

<sup>55</sup> This chart was created by reviewing all five surviving books of the cathedral of Plasencia's *Chapter Acts*, or *Actas Capitulares*, for the years 1390 to 1510. This includes *Tomos* 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. ACP Legajo 282, which is a collection of transcriptions from the *Actas Capitulares*, was also consulted.

<sup>56</sup> Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 224, 306.

capacity as ecclesiastical leaders and royal administrators, the Carvajal family of Plasencia performed indispensable and vital duties on behalf King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel in the monarchs' early efforts to protect their rights and claims in the Americas. Bernardino López de Carvajal labored to collect papal bulls to verify the Spanish Monarchs' rights in America, while his brother, Garci López de Carvajal y Sande, negotiated an independent Spanish treaty with Portugal to divide the Americas between the two Iberian kingdoms. As these two men guided Spanish affairs for the crown during the 1490s, their younger cousin, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, was completing his legal degree at the University of Salamanca and readying to join the royal court in Valladolid as a judge.

Four years before Columbus encountered the Americas, Bernardino (then the Bishop of Badajoz) returned to Rome as King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel's ambassador to Pope Innocent VIII.<sup>57</sup> Once there, Bernardino found himself heavily engaged in the communications flowing between the monarchs and the pope. In 1488, in a papal bull congratulating the Spanish Monarchs on their victories over Islamic Granada and their capture of the palace and fortress of the Alhambra, the pope was keen to note that their "beloved son", Bernardino, had been the one to communicate the good news to him.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, when Pope Innocent VIII passed away in 1492, Bernardino communicated news of the pope's death and the election of Pope Alexander VI to Ferdinand and Isabel.<sup>59</sup>

At the papal court, Bernardino was one of the critical Spanish leaders attempting to secure the pope's blessing of Spanish discoveries in the Americas. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gonzalo Martínez Díez, *Bulario de la Inquisición Española* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1997), 241; AHN Cod. I, Folio 45.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-11, Folios 50-51.

of 1493, Ambassador Bernardino López de Carvajal and other Spanish officials at the papal court obtained the *Inter Caetera* bull from Pope Alexander VI, as well as two other bulls that granted Spain the authority to “certain lands” not possessed by Christians.<sup>60</sup> Specifically, the May 3<sup>rd</sup> *Inter Caetera* communicated the pope’s recognition and approval of Spain’s discoveries and economic interests in the New World, however it also included stipulations. It required Spain to teach Christianity to the lands’ inhabitants, as well as re-certified Portuguese claims in Africa and Guinea. On these issues, the papal document addressed to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel read:

We have indeed learned that you...discover[ed] certain lands and islands remote and unknown and not hitherto discovered by others, to the end that you might bring to the worship...of the Catholic faith their residents and inhabitants...Moreover, as your aforesaid envoys are of opinion, these very peoples living in the said islands and countries believe in one God, the Creator in heaven, and seem sufficiently disposed to embrace the Catholic faith and be trained in good morals...we...give, grant, and assign forever to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, all and singular the aforesaid countries and islands thus unknown and hitherto discovered by your envoys and to be discovered hereafter, provided however they at no time have been in the actual temporal possession of any Christian owner...And under penalty of excommunication...we strictly forbid all persons...to dare, without your special permit...to go for the sake of trade or any other reason whatever to the said islands and countries after they have been discovered and found by your envoys or persons...And inasmuch as some kings of Portugal, likewise by apostolic grant made to them, have similarly discovered and taken possession of islands in the regions of Africa, Guinea...we through similar accord...grant to you...the islands and countries thus discovered and to be discovered by you.<sup>61</sup>

After further lobbying on the part of the Spanish ambassadors to Rome, a superseding May 4<sup>th</sup> *Inter Caetera* was prepared to enhance and distinguish the rights and privileges of Spain vis-à-vis Portugal. This bull, which repeated much of the first document’s wording, added:

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<sup>60</sup> AGI Patronato, Legajo 1, N. 3, R. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Frances Gardiner Davenport, *European Treaties bearing [sic] on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648* (Washington, D. C.: The Carnegie Institution Of Washington, 1917), 61-62.

And, in order that you may enter upon so great an undertaking...we...give...all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic pole, namely the north, to the Antarctic pole, namely the south, no matter whether the said mainlands and islands are found and to be found in the direction of India or towards any other quarter, the said line to be distant one hundred leagues towards the west and south from any of the islands commonly known as the Azores and Cape Verde. With this proviso however that none of the islands and mainlands, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, beyond that said line towards the west and south, be in the actual possession of any Christian king or prince up to the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ just past from which the present year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three begins.<sup>62</sup>

With this additional papal authorization, Spain secured all lands west of the Azores and Cape Verde islands, and Portugal captured all lands to the east of these islands. This Spanish-Portuguese demarcation, depicted in Alberto Cantino's world map of 1502, granted Spain all of North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and most of South America. On Cantino's map, the possessions of the "Rey de Castella", or the King of Castile (i.e. the seas and territories to the west of the Azores and the Cape Verde islands) are depicted.<sup>63</sup> (See Figure 2: Selection from the Cantino Planisphere.)

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>63</sup> Map and Image Source: Carta da navigar per le isole novamente trovate in la parte de l'India (Carta del Cantino) Ms. membr., sec. 16. (ca. 1502). Segnatura: C.G.A.2. Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena. Accessed online [28 February 2008] from [<http://www.cedoc.mo.it/estense/img/geo/Cantino/index.html>]



**Figure 2: Selection from the Cantino Planisphere<sup>64</sup>**



Pope Alexander VI's personal sympathies, allegiances, and family interests likely influenced his favorable treatment of Spanish claims. First, it appears that Alexander VII was partial to Spain as he was originally from the Kingdom of Aragon, and at the Roman Curia, he tended to surround himself with Spaniards.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Bishop Bernardino López de Carvajal was a pontifical favorite, and thus he likely had significant influence on the collection of the American papal bulls for Spain.<sup>66</sup> In June 1493, Bernardino, the

<sup>64</sup> Map and Image Source: Carta da navigar per le isole novamente trovate in la parte de l'India (Carta del Cantino) Ms. membr., sec. 16. (ca. 1502). Segnatura: C.G.A.2. Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena. Accessed online [28 February 2008] from [<http://www.cedoc.mo.it/estense/img/geo/Cantino/index.html>]

<sup>65</sup> H. Vander Linden, "Alexander VI. and the Demarcation of the Maritime and Colonial Domains of Spain and Portugal, 1493-1494," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Oct., 1916), 13.

<sup>66</sup> Frances Gardiner Davenport, *European Treaties bearing [sic] on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648* (Washington, D. C.: The Carnegie Institution Of Washington, 1917), 56.

preferred Castilian ambassador at the Vatican, had the privilege of personally presenting the pope with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel's gift of gold from the Americas.<sup>67</sup> Alexander VI used a portion of these American monies for his own interests, specifically to patronize his titular church. At the time of the Spanish encounter with the New World, the pope was funding the restoration of the Santa María Maggiori's church ceiling, which bore his family's coat of arms.<sup>68</sup> The pope's family previously had enjoyed other benefits extended by the Spanish Monarchs. Several years before the discovery of the Americas, in 1485, King Ferdinand had generously "invested" the pope's eldest son, Pedro Luis Borgia, with the Duchy of Gandia near Venice, thus making Pedro a superior member of the nobility.<sup>69</sup>

Shortly after presenting the Spanish Monarch's monetary gift to Pope Alexander VI, the Carvajal family's prominence in international affairs reached new heights. In the fall of 1493, the pope named Bernardino López de Carvajal the Cardinal of San Pedro and Marcellinus, and the Spanish king and queen dispatched Ambassador Garci López de Carvajal y Sande, Bernardino's brother, to the Portuguese royal court to begin negotiations with King Juan on the division the Americas.<sup>70</sup> While Garci López's embassy fell short of its goals, namely securing a Spanish-Portuguese treaty to validate the papal *Inter Caetera*, Garci López's diplomatic efforts contributed to a yearlong dialogue that produced the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494.<sup>71</sup> This treaty reset the division of Spanish and Portuguese lands in the Americas "at the distance of 370 leagues west of

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<sup>67</sup> Leonardo Olschki, "The Columbian Nomenclature of the Lesser Antilles," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3. (Jul., 1943): 413-414.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>69</sup> H. Vander Linden, "Alexander VI. and the Demarcation of the Maritime and Colonial Domains of Spain and Portugal, 1493-1494," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1. (Oct., 1916): 13.

<sup>70</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 136; 1997. "Treaty of Tordesillas." *Treaty of Tordesillas* 1, no. 1: 84. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 1, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

the Cape Verde Islands” and established a collaborative endeavor to map the boundary by qualified ship pilots, astrologers, and sailors.<sup>72</sup>

Key to the Carvajals’ ability to participate in these crucial historical events in the Americas and Europe was Cardinal Carvajal’s access to insiders in the Spanish royal court and his involvement with international leaders. In the 1490s, Cardinal Carvajal routinely exchanged correspondence with Canon Pedro Martir de Angleria of the Cathedral of Granada, who had routine access to the Spanish Monarchs who resided at the Alhambra.<sup>73</sup> Pedro Martir owed his position to Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza, his mentor.<sup>74</sup> Pedro Martir served as the chaplain to Princess Juana “La Loca”, and subsequently as chaplain to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel.<sup>75</sup> From Pedro Martir’s letters, it is discernable that Bernardino was also a close associate of Pedro González de Mendoza, who in early 1495 was near death and would soon relinquish his title as Cardinal of the Church of Santa Croce en Gerusalemme in Rome.<sup>76</sup> When Pedro Martir wrote to congratulate Bernardino on Pope Alexander VI’s recent appointment as the new Cardinal of Santa Croce en Gerusalemme, Pedro Martir stated, “in front of our king and queen, Cardinal Mendoza...stated he preferred you, among all others, to receive the red cardinal’s hat (*cabelo*).”<sup>77</sup> Thus, Roman Catholic Church leaders and Spanish courtiers both knew of and respected Bernardino’s position in papal and state affairs.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Jose Luis González Novalin, “Pedro Mártir de Anglería y sus ‘triunviros’ (1506-1522)”, *Hispania Sacra*, Vol. 33, No. 67 (1981): 148.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>76</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 136v; Jose López de Toro, *Documentos Ineditos Para La Historia De Espana, Espistolario, Pedro Martir De Angleria*, Vol. IX (Madrid: Imprenta Gongora, S.L., 1953), 298-299.

<sup>77</sup> Jose López de Toro, *Documentos Ineditos Para La Historia De Espana, Espistolario, Pedro Martir De Angleria*, Vol. IX (Madrid: Imprenta Gongora, S.L., 1953), 298-299.

Through correspondence with Pedro Martir, the strength of Bernardino's character and his interconnectedness with Spanish and papal affairs becomes apparent. In Pedro Martir's eleven letters to the cardinal, sent from 1495 to 1500, Bernardino received congratulations on his personal accomplishments, news on the royal family, and Spanish insights on international affairs. Pertaining to the royal family, this correspondence to Bernardino included details of the unusual character of Spanish Princess Juana (who was later known as "The Mad"). These included Queen Isabel's concerns about her daughter's health, as well as the marriage of the princess to Felipe "The Handsome" (*El Hermoso*), who was the son of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I.<sup>78</sup> Regarding state affairs, Martir relayed notes about embassies sent from Milan and Naples to Spain, royal concerns about the quality and "disorder" of Spanish troops protecting the frontier against a hostile France, and French King Charles VIII's military plans to take Naples.<sup>79</sup>

Likewise, from five of Pedro Martir's letters penned from June 1495 to September 1497, Bernardino learned fascinating elements of what Columbus had experienced in the Americas. The letters spoke of Admiral Columbus' reports from Cuba, as well as Hispaniola, where the admiral believed he had located the gold mines of King Solomon.<sup>80</sup> No aspect of either the real or fantastic escaped the written communications to Bernardino. From correspondence he received directly from Columbus, Pedro Martir described that it had taken Columbus "seventy natural days" to sail from Spain to "these coasts." Further, that "in this immense region a great diversity of rivers emptied into the sea: some cold, others hot, many with sweet water, and others of different tastes." In addition, Pedro Martir explained to Cardinal Carvajal that there was "a grand abundance

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<sup>78</sup> Jose López de Toro, *Documentos Ineditos Para La Historia De Espana, Espistolario, Pedro Martir De Angleria*, Vol. IX (Madrid: Imprenta Gongora, S.L., 1953), 317-319, 324-325, 331-332.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 298-300, 400-401.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 306.

of fish...shells of the type that bare pears...[and] all the seas...were filled with turtles.” Thinking that he had located the “Continent of India” and its Ganges River, Columbus believed “the interior...[was] populated with gigantic animals.” However, despite these positive reports that seemed to indicate Columbus had found a western passage to India, Pedro Martir also reported the curious lack of civilization and the fact that “the inhabitants they [Columbus and his men] encountered, were nude.”

Pedro Martir’s correspondence pertaining to the Americas also demonstrates the substantive nature of the intelligence that Bernardino regularly received. Although Pedro’s letters did contain many inaccuracies, they constituted the best knowledge available at the time. Pedro’s reports, developed from his personal relationships with Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Cortes, Magellan, and Cabot, allowed him to publish, *Decades of the New World* (*Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*), one of the very first chronicles describing the New World.<sup>81</sup> In fact, in his letter of October 1496 to Cardinal Carvajal, Pedro Martir explained he was already drafting *Decades of the New World*. On this endeavor, Martir wrote, “All of this will be included with more detail in the books that I am writing, which are exclusively about these discoveries.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, Cardinal Carvajal not only had access to routine news about the Americas, but he also had a direct link to the most knowledgeable and reliable information sources of that era.

Along with the reports contained in these letters came praise for Bernardino, thereby revealing the growing stature of the Carvajal family.<sup>83</sup> In a short note to

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<sup>81</sup> Donald Thompson, “The ‘Cronistas de Indias’ Revisited: Historical Reports, Archeological Evidence, and Literary and Artistic Traces of Indigenous Music and Dance in the Greater Antilles at the Time of the ‘Conquista,’” *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 14, No. 2. (Autumn - Winter, 1993): 185.

<sup>82</sup> Jose López de Toro, *Documentos Ineditos Para La Historia De Espana, Espistolario, Pedro Martir De Angleria*, Vol. IX (Madrid: Imprenta Gongora, S.L., 1953), 318.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 298-299.

Bernardino, Pedro wrote about meeting the cardinal's brother, Garci López de Carvajal y Sande. He stated:

Garci López, your brother, came to visit us at the royal court not too long ago. He is a distinguished man and of clear talent...He composed in our native language some delicious verses, oozing with dense juices and weighty ideas. It has satisfied me very much to get to know him. However, I do not hold him in great esteem just because of your personal merits or because he is your brother. Nor does he think of me as a lesser, as he can see I am devotedly yours, especially as...he instructs me how you have forged...your own talents.<sup>84</sup>

With these brief phrases, Pedro Martir negotiated a delicate balance between bestowing praise on the cardinal's brother while also continuously reaffirming his loyalty and admiration of the cardinal. Pedro, a creature of the royal court himself, demonstrated that Cardinal Carvajal was a man worthy of generous words, especially because the cardinal could dispense favors to his friends and associates. In fact, in the same year that Carvajal assumed Pedro González de Mendoza's title as Cardinal of Santa Croce en Gerusalemme as well as the title of the Bishop of Sigüenza, Bernardino also appointed Pedro Martir as his personally representative, his Vicar and Provisor, in the Diocese of Sigüenza.<sup>85</sup> Bernardino also extended patronage positions to his own family members. As the Cardinal of Santa Croce en Gerusalemme, Bernardino named Rodrigo de Carvajal, his nephew, the patriarch of his titular church in Rome.<sup>86</sup> Ultimately though, Bernardino owed his elevated ecclesiastical status and his access to lucrative patronage opportunities to Pope Alexander VI.

Bernardino proved to be a good investment for the pope, especially in January 1495 when he defended the papacy from French King Charles VIII's demands for

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-11, Folios 82-84; RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 136v; Jose Luis González Novalin, "Pedro Mártir de Anglería y sus 'triumvros' (1506-1522)", *Hispania Sacra*, Vol. 33, No. 67 (1981):149.

<sup>86</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo C-20, Folio 212.

property and treasure in return for not attacking Rome.<sup>87</sup> Chronicled in Bachiller Andres Bernaldez's early 16<sup>th</sup> century work, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, the events of early 1495 reveal that it was in Bernardino's nature to confront unusually difficult odds. To a great extent, Pope Alexander VI was the instigator of his conflict with the French. In his endeavor to conquer the Kingdom of Naples, the pope first turned to France to assist him.<sup>88</sup> However, after French troops entered the Italian Peninsula and it became apparent that Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, the pope's rival and eventual successor, had the ear of the French, Alexander VI became increasingly concerned that French King Charles VIII would turn on him.<sup>89</sup> The pope's suspicions of the French were valid, eventually prompting him to make peace with Naples.

Unfortunately for the pontiff, he was unable to prevent the French army from entering Rome.<sup>90</sup> In January 1495, before Alexander VI could form a defensive "Holy League" to shield himself from the French, he first had to confront the forces that were ransacking much of the Italian countryside and threatening to destroy Rome.<sup>91</sup> With the French blockading Rome by land and sea, combined with the poor military performance of the allied Neapolitan troops, King Charles VIII demanded Pope Alexander VI to surrender the Castle of San Angelo in Rome, as well as the papacy's treasury.<sup>92</sup> Faced with an imminent French invasion of the city, the pope sent Cardinal Carvajal as an

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<sup>87</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, eds. Manuel Gómez-Moreno and Juan de M. Carriazo (Madrid: Blass, S.A. Tipografica, 1962), 345; John Emerich et. al., *The Cambridge Modern History*, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), 110-11.

<sup>88</sup> John Emerich et. al., *The Cambridge Modern History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), 109-10.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 113-14.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 110; Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 345.

<sup>91</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 345; Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), 143-144.

<sup>92</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 347; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 5 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1902), 445-46.

ambassador to meet King Charles VIII. In addressing the French king, Bernardino defiantly argued:

He [Charles VIII] had promised through his faith to neither anger the Church nor demand a single thing from the Church...that his demands are against the Holy Mother Church and what he wanted could not be given to him...In no way or in any manner could he have the Castle of San Angelo nor the Church's treasury because the castle belongs to the Church and the treasury is made up of crosses, chalices, and saintly bodies.<sup>93</sup>

After hearing Bernardino's statement, Charles VIII replied, "My Barons will acquaint the Pope with my will," and the king promised, if necessary, to take the castle by force of artillery.<sup>94</sup> Yet, within days, Charles VIII and Alexander VI prevented the crisis from worsening when they came to an agreement that produced little for the French but preserved the papacy's power and protected its assets.<sup>95</sup> Two months after Bernardino's bold stand, the pope formed a defensive alliance with the Italian kingdoms, the Austrian Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, and the Spanish Monarchs intended to shield the Italian Peninsula from further harassment by the French as well as the Turks.<sup>96</sup>

After demonstrating his unyielding loyalty to Pope Alexander VI during the papal conflict with the French, Bernardino conceived of himself as a key participant in the major events of his time. Increasingly, international leaders also perceived of him as a critical actor in European affairs. In 1497, the pope granted Bernardino the privilege of notifying King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel of his decision to extend a papal bull certifying the Spanish king and queen as "the Catholic Monarchs" (*Los Reyes Católicos*), perhaps the single most iconic title the Spanish crown ever received.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, in the

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<sup>93</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 348.

<sup>94</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 348; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 5, 453.

<sup>95</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 5, 458.

<sup>96</sup> Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 143-144.

<sup>97</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-11, Folios 139-140.



1490s and 1500s, Bernardino advised the Catholic Monarchs in multiple letters of the need for them to commit additional armies to fight the French.<sup>98</sup> In other cases, Bernardino wrote to Ferdinand and Isabel to inform them of papal bulls relating to the Spanish conquest of the Canary Islands, as well as to arrange for the pope to have an audience with them.<sup>99</sup> In this manner, he was consistently involved as an intermediary and advisor in multiple aspects of Spanish affairs of state.

Bernardino would especially need these influential relationships when his friend, Pope Alexander VI, died in 1503. When his successor, Pope Julius II, came to power, political and military turbulence rattled Europe. Specifically, constantly shifting state alliances between the papacy, Ferdinand and Isabel's Spain, Louis XII's France, and Maximilian I's Holy Roman Empire characterized the period.<sup>100</sup> Yet, in 1508, these four crucial European powers forged a short-term alliance, the League of Cambrai, against Venice.<sup>101</sup> The military successes of the league came to fruition in less than a year. After the league forced Venice to capitulate and cede many of its territories to the victors, the alliance quickly fell apart.<sup>102</sup> In 1509, Pope Julius II decided it was better to have a weakened Venice than one annihilated by French occupation forces.<sup>103</sup> As a result, the pope left the league and joined forces with his former enemy, Venice, so that the papacy

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-11, Folios 63-65, 428-429; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-12, Folio 61.

<sup>100</sup> John Emerich et. al., *The Cambridge Modern History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), 126, 129.

<sup>101</sup> William Carew Hazlitt, *The Venetian Republic: Its Rise, Its Growth, and Its Fall 421-1797*, Vol. II (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900), 149-153; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1902), 299.

<sup>102</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1902), 316.

<sup>103</sup> Philippe Levillain, ed. *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, Volume III (New York: Routledge, 2002), s.v. "Wars of Italy, France (16<sup>th</sup> Century)," by Ivan Cloulas; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1902), 318.

could prevent France from overtaking all of the Italian Peninsula.<sup>104</sup> It was within this politically contested environment that Cardinal Carvajal found the opportunity to challenge his old nemesis, Pope Julius II, for the papacy.

Bernardino's dislike for Pope Julius II (1503-1513), and perhaps his willingness to confront him, had roots that heralded back to Pope Alexander VI's tenure (1492-1503).<sup>105</sup> Julius II, born Giuliano della Rovere, was a consistent rival of Bernardino's friend and papal patron, Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia). As discussed previously, Julius II (then Cardinal Rovere) convinced French King Charles VIII to march on Alexander VI's Rome in the 1490s.

Cardinal Carvajal acted against Pope Julius II after a series of key conflicts weakened the pope's position with Spain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire. Since 1507, the Spanish monarchs had repeatedly disputed the pope's authority to appoint bishops in Spain.<sup>106</sup> King Ferdinand was so displeased with Pope Julius II over this issue and other matters, that in 1507, while in route to Savona, Italy, the monarch refused to stop in Ostia to meet with the pope.<sup>107</sup> Rather, King Ferdinand preceded to Savona to meet French King Louis XII, where the two monarchs renewed their temporary peaceful relations.<sup>108</sup> Further complicating the weakened position of the pontiff in 1510, and generating a previously unexpected opening for Cardinal Carvajal to act to advance his own interests, was the encroachment of French armies on Italian soil.<sup>109</sup> As the French were cognizant of "the pope's wish to divide" Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I from

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 321.

<sup>105</sup> John Emerich et. al., *The Cambridge Modern History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), 110.

<sup>106</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6, 291.

<sup>107</sup> RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, Tomo A-12, Folio 61; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6, 291.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Philippe Levillain, ed. *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, Volume III (New York: Routledge, 2002), s.v. "Wars of Italy, France (16<sup>th</sup> Century)," by Ivan Cloulas.

his ally, King Louis XII, the French were ready to support a new candidate for the papacy—Cardinal Carvajal.<sup>110</sup> Likewise, as Cardinal Carvajal was “one of Maximilian I’s most faithful friends at the Roman Court,” it seems likely that the Holy Roman Emperor backed the cardinal.<sup>111</sup>

At the Council of Pisa in 1511, Bernardino López de Carvajal aspired to attain the family’s greatest title, Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, thus completing the clan’s successful rise in the Castilian as well as the European world.<sup>112</sup> Bernardino convened the schismatic Council of Pisa, along with Cardinals Borgia, Bricconnet, de Prie, and Sanseverino, in hopes of convincing other ecclesiastical leaders and monarchs to support the initiative to unseat Pope Julius II.<sup>113</sup> At the council, Bernardino accepted the office of pope (or “antipope”).<sup>114</sup> In the city of Pisa, the local residents referred to him as “Papa Bernardino.”<sup>115</sup> However, due to unforeseen political circumstances, including the rapid recovery of Pope Julius II from a nearly fatal illness and Spanish King Ferdinand’s abandonment of Cardinal Carvajal’s endeavor, the council failed to force the pope out of office.<sup>116</sup> Further, although Emperor Maximilian I had initially supported Bernardino’s grasp for the pontificate, he too renounced the actors at the Council of Pisa.<sup>117</sup>

Unable to hold a viable coalition together, the French and Cardinal Carvajal’s co-conspirators concluded the Council of Pisa without success. To penalize the five schismatic cardinals for their actions, Pope Julius II excommunicated each of them at the

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<sup>110</sup> Christine Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 246.

<sup>111</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6, 295.

<sup>112</sup> RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 140.

<sup>113</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 571; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6, 334-335.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 367, 372; Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 572.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 375.

Fifth Lateran Council of 1512.<sup>118</sup> Although the pope deprived Bernardino of his ecclesiastical titles and his income from the Diocese of Sigüenza for a short period, in 1513, Bernardino and his associates rehabilitated themselves when Pope Julius II died and Pope Leo X assumed the mantle of the papacy. Pope Leo X reconciled Bernardino and the four other men to the church, and restored them to their status as cardinals.<sup>119</sup>

Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal's unsuccessful quest for the papacy, and his subsequent restoration as a cardinal, reveals both the limits and the nature of political alliances in Spain and Europe. Without the concerted and cohesive efforts of King Louis XII of France, Emperor Maximilian I of the Holy Roman Empire, and King Ferdinand of Spain, the pope could not be ejected from office. Further, due to the constant shifting of European alliances during this period, Bernardino had to traverse a political quicksand to reach the papacy. Faced with these difficulties, his initiative demonstrates that no individual or family was an island unto itself and that only with a broad network of social and political support could individuals attain their goals.

During the 1510s Bernardino returned to a vigorous life as a cardinal. He participated as a critical actor in the conclaves that elected Popes Adrian VI and Clement VII as well as overseeing the Spanish monarchs' construction of the *Basilica de San Croce de Jerusalem* in Rome. Meanwhile, a new generation of Plasencia Carvajals were just beginning to make their presences felt in Spain.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 374; RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 142.

<sup>119</sup> Andres Bernaldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 643-645; Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 7 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1902), 44-45; RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4070, Folio 143.

<sup>120</sup> G.A. Bergenroth, *Calendar of Letters, Despatches [sic], and State Papers, relating to the Negotiations Between England and Spain, preserved in the Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere*, Vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, & Dyer, 1866), 381, 384-393, 592-594; Claudio Varagnoli, *S. Croce in Gerusalemme: La basilica restaurata e l'architettura del Settecentro romano* (Roma: Bonsignori Editore, 1995), 32; Luisa F. Humanes, *Restauración en el Templo de Bramante-Roma* (Madrid: Construcciones Angel B. Beltran, 2002), 22-23.

These new family leaders of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were consummate creatures of the Spanish royal court and Roman Catholic Church, who, while ambitious, never overextended their roles as loyal servants to the Spanish crown. These included Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal (royal judge and member of the *Consejo de Indias*), Juan Suarez de Carvajal (future Bishop of Lugo and member of the *Consejo de Indias*), and Gutierre Vargas de Carvajal (future Bishop of Plasencia).<sup>121</sup> During the remaining years of the 1510s, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez would shoulder the task of serving the Spanish Monarchs, while also advancing the interests of the Plasencia Carvajals. In his capacity as an advisor to the Catholic Monarchs, the doctor would standardize and mediate the Castilian royal chronicles, such as the *Anales Breves de los Reyes Católicos*, *Cronica de Juan II*, and *Cronica de Enrique IV*, into an official state history.<sup>122</sup> Further, Dr. Lorenzo would use these histories, like the text, *Adiciones Genealogias de los Claros Varones de Castila de Fernán Pérez de Guzman*, to incorporate the Carvajal family lineage and history into Spain's memory of its elite noble families.<sup>123</sup> As a critical counselor to the Spanish monarchy, the doctor would advance the bureaucratic class of administrators (*letrados*), like himself, at the expense of elite noble *caballero* families, like the Mendozas, that had traditionally populated the royal administration.<sup>124</sup> Lastly, as the *Correo Mayor* of the *Consejo de Indias*, Dr. Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal would help define early Spanish-American policies and promote the placement of his own family

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<sup>121</sup> AGI Patronato 170, R. 18; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4842, Folio 265; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4837, Folios 57v, 77; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4851, Folios 53-53v; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, A-29, Folio 553; RAH *Colección Pellicer*, Tomo 9/4080, Folios 135-137v.

<sup>122</sup> RAH *Colección Floranes*, B-16, Folios 256-296v; BN Mss. 11.174; Juan Torres Fontes, *Estudio sobre la "Cronica de Enrique IV" del Dr. Galindez de Carvajal* (Murcia: CSIC, 1946), 9-24; BN Mss. 13.261; RAH *Colección Salazar y Castro*, G-17.

<sup>123</sup> BN Mss. 10.677, Folios 72-73.

<sup>124</sup> Vicente Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica en la Opinion de Españoles y Extranjeros, Siglos XV al XX, Tomo I* (Valladolid: Instituto "Isabel La Católica" de Historia Eclesiástica), 1970), 108.

into key exploration and conquest roles in the Americas.<sup>125</sup> Thus, by the opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Carvajal family of Plasencia had thoroughly and collectively transformed themselves into an elite lineage of royal and ecclesiastical decision-makers in Spain.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This dissertation regarding the Carvajals of Plasencia examined their fifteenth century transition from a low noble family into one whose members would lead ecclesiastical affairs in Plasencia, participate in matters in the Vatican, and hold a variety of royal positions. Through this occupational change, the Carvajals improved their social status, economic well-being, and political stature in Castile. The archival record demonstrated that the Carvajals' rise occurred at the same time that they formed a family alliance with the *converso* Santa Marías. The two families worked together in the cathedral of Plasencia in order to garner economic resources and patronage opportunities for their respective clans. Thus, this study explored the collaborative practices of both clans, despite the anti-*converso* sentiment that permeated fifteenth century Castile. Throughout this period and counterbalancing the financial and political interests of the two families were the Estúñigas, the Counts of Béjar and Plasencia, a powerful clan of high nobles. This study demonstrated that the three families utilized Plasencia as a jurisdictional battleground during an era of overlapping seigniorial, political, and ecclesiastical authority. In summary, this rich archival investigation provided detailed documentation of the familial, business, and church networks as well as the processes that facilitated the ascent of a low noble family in fifteenth century Castile.

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<sup>125</sup> RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4839, Folios 29, 152, 269-270, 293v; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4837, Folio 5; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4851, Folio 82; RAH *Colección Muñoz*, Tomo 9/4852, Folios 5-5v, 10-10v, 12v, 15v, 17v, 20, 24, 26, 27-27v, 46v-48.

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