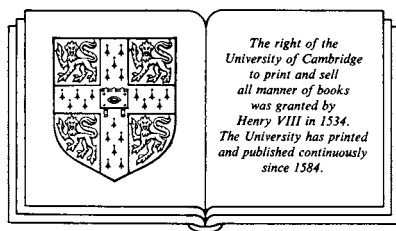


# Frontiers of Heresy

The Spanish Inquisition from the  
Basque Lands to Sicily

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## The Castilian Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, 1484–1530

Venian a fer la Inquisición con el deshorden que lo han fecho en Castilla, y aquellas mismas reglas y extremos trayan inquisimas y contra toda disposicion de derecho.

City of Teruel to Saragossa, 1484 (Floriano, in *BRAH*,  
87 (1925), p. 241).

Así permitió Nuestro Señor que cuando se pensaba extirpar este santo oficio para que se resistiese y impidiese tan santo negocio, se introdujese con la autoridad y vigor que se requeria.

(Zurita, *Anales de Aragon*, VIII, p. 507).

Grandissimo e antichissimo odio è poi fra castigliani e aragonesi, e lo vanno benissimo conservando; e se non fosse . . . il gran timore di quest'offizio dell'Inquisizione, fra loro seguirano disordini di grande importanza.

Venetian *relazione*, 1563 (Firpo, *Relazioni*, VIII, p. 410).

The Spanish Inquisition, like such other important innovations of Ferdinand and Isabella as the Santa Hermandad or the *corregidores*, was born in Castile. The chroniclers of the Catholic monarchs, whether Old Christians like Bernaldez, *conversos* like Pulgar, or Aragonese like Zurita, all agreed on this point. Indeed, a careful search uncovers signs that Castilian prelates and noblemen had proposed a *concordia* with Isabella's predecessor Henry IV, "the Liberal," enabling the king to sponsor the pursuit of *converso* heretics, and to confiscate their property, as early as 1464–65. Early in Isabella's reign, before any bulls had been sought in Rome to create an Inquisition under royal control, the episcopal vicar at Llerena burned two Judaizers alive for heresy, penanced two women and ordered their house destroyed. As Bernaldez remarked, "in the first years of the reign of the very Catholic and Christian Ferdinand and Isabel, this heresy was so exalted that educated men were on the point of preaching the Mosaic law, and ordinary men could not hide being Jewish."<sup>1</sup> Such precedents made it easier for Torquemada and other Castilian Dominicans to persuade the queen to seek inquisitorial powers from the Papacy in 1478.

The public Judaizing of *conversos* in Seville, which was much discussed when the royal couple visited the Andalusian capital for the first time in 1478, led

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas López Martínez, *Los Judaizantes castellanos y la Inquisición en tiempo de Isabel la Católica* (Burgos, 1954), pp. 162, 203, 241–42, 413–14.

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Isabella and Ferdinand to put these powers into effect. They rapidly created and staffed a royal Inquisition for Castile; because the monarchs rather than the Pope named the Inquisitors, Castile's Holy Office marked a new and momentous departure in both Spanish and Christian history. During its first years this organization remained exclusively Castilian in scope and personnel. Its first tribunal set to work in Seville, quickly earning a reputation for exceptional ferocity. The *converso* chronicler Pulgar complained that the new institution was directed exclusively against baptized Jews and spoke of 300 people killed in Seville, including several first offenders who had made full confessions. He added that most of the 3,000 *converso* householders in the archdiocese of Seville had fled to foreign lands, but noted that the queen, when notified of the enormous damage to Seville's prosperity, "paid very little attention to the diminution of her income and wished to cleanse her kingdom of that sin of heresy ahead of all private interests, because she understood that it was in the service of God and herself."<sup>2</sup> Similar language would soon be heard in Ferdinand's hereditary domains.

In 1483 the Catholic monarchs decided to extend this new institution to the lands collectively known as the Crown of Aragon. These territories possessed some of the oldest Inquisitions in Europe, dating from the thirteenth century. From the Crown of Aragon had come the thirteenth-century inquisitorial adviser and saint Ramón de Penyafort; equally Catalan was the author of the great fourteenth-century handbook for Inquisitors, Nicholas Eymeric. Propagandists for Ferdinand and Isabella insisted that these venerable institutions had become almost totally inert by the mid-fifteenth century; but it is undeniable that the Popes continued to appoint Inquisitors for the various parts of the Crown of Aragon – the Kingdom of Aragon, the Principality of Catalonia, and the Kingdom of Valencia – in the 1400s. It is equally certain that these papally commissioned Inquisitors continued to conduct heresy trials in King Ferdinand's day. Indeed, stimulated by recent developments in Castile, they may even have increased their activities a bit.<sup>3</sup>

When the Catholic monarchs obtained permission from Innocent VIII to name Torquemada as Inquisitor-General for the Crown of Aragon in addition to that of Castile, they therefore anticipated – and got – far stiffer political

<sup>2</sup> Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. J. de Mata Carriazo, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1943), ch. 120 (I, pp. 430–40; quote, p. 440).

<sup>3</sup> A. Ubieto Arteta, "Procesos de la Inquisición de Aragón," in *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 67 (1959), pp. 549ff. Scattered among the trials conducted by the Diputación of the Kingdom of Aragon, whose notaries also worked for the Inquisition, is one inquisitorial trial from the 1470s and four from 1482 to 1483, followed by ten from 1484 to 1485 as the new institution began work. For Valencian trials from the mid-1460s, see Ytzhak Fritz Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien. Erster Teil*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1936; reprint 1970), II, pp. 437–44 (#392), and especially Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inq. Valencia, Legajo 537/#5 with fifteen trials from the 1460s, one of whom was condemned to death. See Ricardo García Cárcel, *Orígenes de la Inquisición española. El tribunal de Valencia, 1478–1530* (Barcelona, 1976), p. 38 n. 7.



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resistance than in Castile. A prominent Aragonese *converso* complained that "this Inquisition was only made to in order to steal people's property; the queen and the Castilians created this Inquisition in order to destroy this kingdom, although our king is a good guy (*mozo*) and a good Christian."<sup>4</sup> His bewildered indignation was shared by many Aragonese Old Catholics, who generally admired their ruler's energy and shrewdness but could not understand this particular policy. King Ferdinand knew exactly what objections to expect from his hereditary subjects. First and foremost, they put forth the argument that a royal Inquisition was totally unnecessary, since the Papal Inquisition had kept heresy under control for the previous two centuries. Secondly, they claimed that the new tribunals introduced dangerous legal innovations. At first glance, the second objection resembled complaints from Isabella's kingdom; but in the Crown of Aragon such complaints carried more force, because of the importance of local legal privileges, the famous *fueros* of its component territories.

The first objection was the more serious, but also the more easily overcome by diplomacy in Rome. Ferdinand did not try to by-pass the established Inquisitors in the north, or to subject them to orders from his new royal Council of the Inquisition. Instead, he profited from his credit with the Papacy, stemming from his long and expensive wars against the Moors, to have the old commissions revoked and clear the way for Torquemada (rather than the Pope) to name new Inquisitors. By the spring of 1484, Torquemada had attended a meeting of the Aragonese Cortes and had named new Inquisitors for all three parts of the Crown of Aragon. He even found time to attend a small public *auto de fe* in Saragossa, during which four heretics were penanced, before returning to his duties in Castile.

#### EARLY ARAGONESE OPPOSITION AT TERUEL

Ferdinand and his new Inquisitors understood both the importance of legal privileges (*fueros*) and the public success of converted Jews throughout the Crown of Aragon; Ferdinand himself employed several well-educated Aragonese *conversos* in important offices at his court. They decided to begin their operations suddenly, before the *conversos* and their political allies could organize resistance to the new institution. Although Torquemada's new appointees held two quick *autos* in Saragossa and even managed to hang a Judaizer in June 1484, by mid-summer public displays of hostility had brought their public activities to a standstill in Aragon's capital. In fact, the first major effort of the new Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon was to be made in the small city of Teruel, located in the most remote southern corner of the Kingdom of Aragon, to which it claimed only a tenuous attachment (when circumstances warranted it, Teruel's officials claimed they were autonomous or even part of Castile). Here

<sup>4</sup> Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien*, II, p. 466 (#397).

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about 600 households of Mudejar artisans, Jewish and *converso* traders, and Old Christians lived in turbulent coexistence. Although Teruel's fifteenth-century riots and guerrilla wars had political rather than religious motives, such fratricidal quarrels had caused many *conversos* to flee only seven years before the Inquisitors first arrived in May 1484.<sup>5</sup>

Given its remoteness, its size, and its sizable Jewish population, Teruel may have looked like an ideal place for the new Inquisition to start its work in Aragon; but choosing it proved to be a serious mistake.<sup>6</sup> Surprise favored the Inquisitor and his official staff, who arrived in Teruel only three days after the city's delegate to the Aragonese Cortes of 1484 – himself a lawyer of Jewish ancestry – had returned and reported that new Inquisitors had been appointed for Aragon. Local reactions were therefore spontaneous, but also dominated by lawyers (several of them *conversos*) who were highly suspicious of all outside interference. Their first official public meeting with the young Basque Dominican, Fray Juan Solibera, prefigured the rupture which soon ensued. "The whole council, unanimously and concordantly, answered that it was a just and holy thing," but immediately added "that the Inquisition be done on the articles of faith and on the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures (if there be anyone who interprets them in another way than the Holy Ghost interprets them), and not over any other thing in any manner." Moreover, "the said Inquisition must be done properly, according to the pure style of canonical constitutions, by suitable, good, honest, upright and just ministers." Finally and most importantly, "they may not pass one iota beyond, or do anything repugnant to the liberties, *fueros*, privileges, usages and good customs of the present city." With slight variations, this tune was played by local authorities throughout Ferdinand's lands, though usually by more exalted representatives with much more time to prepare their remarks. Teruel's officials could not understand why their city had been chosen for this dubious honor, since Aragon contained "other greater cities with more people than this, . . . which is at the very end of the kingdom and nearly half empty."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition in Spain* (hereafter Lea), 4 vols. (New York, 1906–08), I, p. 593, on Saragossa's 1484 *autos*. For Teruel, see especially Antonio Floriano, "Teruel en el siglo XV. La vida económica y la cuestión monetaria," in *Boletín de la Real Academia de Historia*, (hereafter *BRAH*), 88 (1926), pp. 785–824. We still need a comparable work on Teruel's violent political history, particularly its quarrels with the smaller surrounding communities in its *comunidad*.

<sup>6</sup> The basic narrative of Teruel's conflict with the Inquisition in 1484–85 is Antonio Floriano, "El tribunal del Santo Oficio en Aragón: Establecimiento de la Inquisición en Teruel," in *BRAH*, 86 (1925), pp. 544–605, followed by a documentary appendix in *ibid.*, 87 (1925), pp. 173–260. As municipal archivist, Floriano never left Teruel, so his work must be complemented by Legajos 533–46 of the Valencian Inquisition trials at the AHN. See Manuel Sanchez Moya and Jasone Monasterio, "Los judaizantes turolenses en el siglo XV," in *Sefarad*, 32 (1972), pp. 105–40, 307–40; 33 (1973), pp. 111–44, 325–56; also J. Angel Sesma Muñoz, *El establecimiento de la Inquisición en Aragón (1484–1486)* (Saragossa, 1987), #128–29, 137, 160, 175 (pp. 166, 174, 195–96, 211).

<sup>7</sup> Floriano, "Teruel," in *BRAH*, 87 (1925), pp. 175, 181 (quotes).

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Within three days, Teruel's government had hamstrung their new Inquisitor by questioning his credentials. They claimed a dozen irregularities and illegalities in his official powers, and were adamant that they would do nothing until all their complaints had been settled. Led by its most eloquent lawyer, *micer* Camañas, Teruel pasted together its *excepciones de jure*, or official legal complaints. As Teruel remarked next month to Saragossa's city officials, indignantly denying they had arrested any servants of the Inquisitors, "the defense of this city is ink and paper and laws."<sup>8</sup> But with such weapons Teruel's lawyers had intimidated Fray Solibera from preaching his official inaugural sermon and thus starting his Inquisition. For three weeks he remained immobilized in a convent, then abruptly moved his base to a nearby hamlet called Cella. From here he thundered excommunications against Teruel, while the city sent secret agents to other parts of Aragon and a public embassy to their king. Within two weeks of his departure, Torquemada's new Valencian Inquisitors passed through Teruel and were lavishly entertained. Municipal officials even invited them to conduct Teruel's Inquisition, meeting the expected polite refusal with hypocritical regrets.

By July 1484 stalemate had set in. Although Solibera's excommunication was soon lifted by rival authorities, he had acquired an invaluable ally: a Teruel *hidalgo* named Juan Garces de Marcilla, scion of one of the region's principal families, now provided him with an armed guard and a safe base in the rural *comunidad*, which had waged bloody wars against its capital only a generation ago. The city's ambassadors met violent refusals at court, where they were unable to present their petition and fled in order to avoid arrest; Teruel's agent in Saragossa was arrested by order of the Inquisition and kept imprisoned for a month. In October 1484 Ferdinand deposed Teruel's municipal officials and rebuffed protests from Aragonese parliamentary deputies. But the legal war escalated slowly and bloodlessly during the next few months.

Inquisitor Solibera formally appealed to the secular arm, and King Ferdinand responded in February 1485 by outlawing Teruel's officials, ordering all Aragonese officials to assist in their capture, and naming a commander – none other than Juan Garces de Marcilla – to seize Teruel and install the new Inquisition. Garces de Marcilla ambushed one of Teruel's former ambassadors to the court, who had been attending a wedding across the border in Valencia. After learning this news, some of Teruel's jurists finally counselled obedience to the king, because their legal obstructions had been exhausted. But it took another seven weeks and a peculiar exploit by Garces de Marcilla, who paid a nocturnal visit to the city in order to visit his sick wife, to end Teruel's resistance. Inquisitor Solibera made his second entry ten months and two days after his first, as most of Teruel's leading *conversos* fled.

After capitulation came repression. Ferdinand appointed Garces de Marcilla

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

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as Captain of Teruel, with dictatorial powers. The Inquisitors had been collecting testimony from Catholic servants of Teruel's *conversos* during their exile at Cella; now they set to work in earnest. By August 1485 they held their first public *auto de fe*, at which they burned the effigies of *micer* Gonzalo Ruiz, the city's deputy at the 1484 Cortes, and his son, together with the bones of a well-known *converso* merchant who died recently. Gonzalo's wife was the sister of Jaime Martinez Santangel the elder, Teruel's richest *converso* usurer. This man, who boasted that one of his relatives had become a Cardinal, had engineered Teruel's appeal to the Pope in August 1484. Appeals to Rome were frequent at this phase of inquisitional history; the first important *converso* to be arrested by Garces de Marcilla in September 1484 asked his lawyer son (Teruel's secret agent whom the Inquisition had arrested at Saragossa) to carry his appeal to the Pope. The father was finally executed at Teruel in January 1486; the son was never captured, although he was executed in effigy at Saragossa a month later.<sup>9</sup>

The Santangel patriarch stayed in Teruel and was arrested in May 1485. He became the star heretic executed at Teruel's greatest public *auto* on January 7, 1486, burned together with six other men, two women, and two effigies. Santangel's four sons experienced remarkably different fates. One of them, Luis, was arrested with his father; despite his appeal to Rome, he was ultimately executed in person, together with his wife, at Teruel's next public *auto* two months later. Another son, Alfonso, fled when his father was burned and was later executed in effigy at Teruel's final *auto* in July 1487, together with many other fugitive or deceased *conversos*. A third son, Jaime the younger, fled from Teruel when the Inquisitors attempted to arrest his wife; he was subsequently captured at Saragossa, where he was tried and finally burned at an *auto* in May 1488.<sup>10</sup>

A fourth son, Joan, remained in Teruel and by 1488 had been coopted by the Inquisition's receiver of confiscated property to collect various debts owed to local *conversos* who had been killed. As his royal patent noted, Joan "had many relatives and friends in the said city," making him an ideal person to track down

<sup>9</sup> See Sanchez and Monasterio, "Los judaizantes turolenses," 32, pp. 308-12 (Francisco and Juan Martinez de Rueda); *ibid.*, 33, pp. 111-14, 120-22 (Gonzalvo Ruiz and his son Gil de Gonzalvo), 330-33 (Berenguer Ram). See Lea, I, p. 594 (*auto* #5, case 6), for Juan Martinez's ritual execution.

<sup>10</sup> See Sanchez and Monasterio, "Los judaizantes turolenses," 32, pp. 325-49 (esp. Santangel genealogy on p. 326); *ibid.*, pp. 118-19, for his daughter Violante, who abjured *de levi* on March 3, 1486, the day one of her brothers was burned. For Jaime Martinez Santangel the younger, mistakenly identified by Sanchez and Monasterio (*ibid.*, 33, p. 118) as never arrested but in reality executed at Saragossa in May 1488, see the mid-seventeenth-century "Memorial de diversos autos celebrados en Saragossa (1482-1502)," purchased by H. C. Lea and preserved among his papers at the Lea Library in Philadelphia (*auto* 30, #1), confirmed by the *Libro Verde de Aragón* (hereafter *Libro Verde*), ed. Isidro de las Cagigas (Madrid, 1929), p. 137. His trial, opening in May 1487, is also preserved at Saragossa: see Ubieta, "Procesos de la Inquisición de Aragón," p. 554 #23.

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such hidden assets; he was therefore permitted to travel as far as Perpignan, to which many of Teruel's *conversos* had fled, and was promised half of all such debts he was able to collect. History records that he collected a great deal during the next fourteen months, much of which had been owed to his father and brother.<sup>11</sup>

What makes the tragedy of the Santangel clan so poignant is that the sick wife whom Garces de Marcilla visited secretly in March 1485 was Brianda Santangel, daughter of Jaime Martínez Santangel the elder. In other words, the fanatical supporter of the Inquisition and virtual dictator of Teruel had married into the city's richest *converso* family, thus becoming the "secular arm" responsible for carrying out the Holy Office's death sentences against his wife's father and brother. Garces' wife was also accused but never convicted, at least not until 1518 when she was imprisoned by the Valencian Inquisition.<sup>12</sup>

Ferdinand reprimanded Garces de Marcilla in January 1487 after learning that Garces' nephew had violently attacked the Inquisition's jailer. This unfortunate man was trying to arrest the daughter of Gonzalo Ruiz (the 1484 deputy to the Cortes), who was also the wife of Jaime Santangel the younger; Garces' nephew was married to their daughter, who was therefore the niece of Garces' own wife. The young man fled to his Santangel in-laws in Valencia in a futile attempt to escape arrest by the Inquisition. Flight brought no guarantee of safety for Teruel's prominent *conversos*, some of whom were condemned either in Saragossa or in Valencia.<sup>13</sup>

One hears much about intermarriage between Old-Christian noblemen and daughters of *converso* lawyers and merchants (Teruel's principal *conversos* often combined both functions), and also about the narrowness of urban elites. Both phenomena occurred throughout the Crown of Aragon. But it is impossible to imagine them so vividly combined as at Teruel, where the Inquisition became a lethal and ultimately double-edged weapon in settling family quarrels. The duration of repression in this small city was relatively brief: a dozen public executions, another twenty public recantations, many condemnations of dead and fugitive *conversos*, affecting Teruel's principal *converso* clans. Four public *autos*, held between August 1485 and July 1487, formalized the Inquisition's

<sup>11</sup> On Joan, see Ramon Ferrer Navarro, "Aspectos economicos de la inquisición turolense a fines del siglo XV," in *Ligarzas*, 7 (1975), pp. 301 (his patent, dated January 15, 1488), 280-83 (assets owed to his father collected by him), 288-89 (assets of his brother Luis collected by him). A similar case occurred in Sicily in 1502, when a *receptor* employed the son of a condemned Jewish *neofito* to serve as his agent in collecting debts: see Pietro Burgarella, "Diego de Obregon e i primi anni del Sant'Uffizio in Sicilia (1500-1514)," in *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, 3rd ser., 20 (1970), p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> Brianda Santangel's trial, with others, has been published by Manuel Sanchez Moya, "La Inquisición de Teruel y sus judaizantes en el siglo XV," in *Teruel*, 20 (1958), pp. 145-200; also *Archivo del Reino de Valencia*, Maestre Racional 8354bis, fols. 93, 131v.

<sup>13</sup> Gil Gracian was tried and penanced at Saragossa in January 1489: Lea, "Memorial de diversos autos," #7 of *auto* 35.

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actions. Barely two years after his triumph in early 1485, Garcés de Marcilla fell from power, while at the same time Solibera and his staff abandoned Teruel for a more permanent base in Valencia.

By 1502 King Ferdinand had declared a moratorium of debts from confiscated properties of Teruel's *conversos*, while closing its mosque that year in accordance with Castilian policy (no other mosques were closed in the Crown of Aragon). The forced baptism of Teruel's Moslems changed the face of local heresy. By 1504 the Valencian tribunal negotiated a financial agreement with representatives of Teruel's newest group of terrified *nuevos conversos*; the city which had the sad distinction of being the first part of the Crown of Aragon to sacrifice its Jewish *conversos* to the new Inquisition was also the first to see its Moriscos harassed. Teruel's fratricidal political quarrels persisted after 1500, and the Holy Office continued to profit from them. The Papacy displayed polite concern to the Spanish ambassador about the Inquisition's activities in Teruel as late as 1572; the city's Moriscos were still using the Inquisition to settle their domestic rivalries during the 1580s.<sup>14</sup>

#### ARAGONESE ASSASSINATION AND CATALAN CHICANERY

Inquisitor Solibera left Teruel for several months after his triumph in 1485 in order to help with an emergency in Aragon's capital. At Saragossa the main conflict between the Inquisition and Aragonese liberties took a sudden and dramatic twist late in the summer of 1485, because of events which completely changed the Inquisition's entire history in the Kingdom of Aragon and promoted its acceptance throughout Ferdinand's territories. What began as a sharp constitutional conflict between closely matched rivals ended with a decisive victory for the Holy Office in its new form, all because of a catastrophic miscalculation by Aragon's *conversos*.<sup>15</sup>

After Torquemada's return to Castile, the new Inquisition was scarcely more successful in Saragossa than it had been in Teruel. The great Aragonese chronicler Geronimo Zurita (himself a longtime official of the Inquisition) admitted that public riots broke out in Aragon's capital after the Edict of Faith was first proclaimed. The malcontents were of course led by *conversos*, but they also included "many gentlemen and leading citizens, publishing that its mode of procedure was contrary to the laws of the kingdom." Specifically, they objected

<sup>14</sup> See J. Caruana Gomez de Barreda, ed., *Indice de pergaminos . . . en el Archivo de la ciudad de Teruel* (Madrid 1950), p. 231 (*perg.* #278, *doct.* 489), on the 1504 *acordados*; *Archivo General de Simancas. Catálogo XIV: Estado, Negociación de Roma 1381-1700* (Valladolid, 1936), p. 61 (*Legajo* 919), on the 1572 issues; and below, pp. 206-7, on Teruel's Moriscos in the 1580s.

<sup>15</sup> The classical account of the Inquisition in Aragon in 1484-85 is in Geronimo Zurita's *Anales de Aragón*, 9 vols. (Madrid 1974-77), VIII, pp. 501-07. For the legal opposition, see Jose Sesma Muñoz, *La Diputación del Reino de Aragón en la época de Fernando II* (Saragossa, 1977), pp. 329-54, 406-29, and Sesma's *Establecimiento*, #48, 51-63 (pp. 85-87, 89-102).

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to the Inquisition's confiscation of property of convicted heretics and the secrecy of prosecution witnesses, "which were two very new things, never practiced, and very prejudicial to the kingdom."<sup>16</sup>

They immediately decided to persuade the Justicia, the appellate court of Aragon, to declare any confiscations invalid. Meanwhile they attempted to offer a large donation to the monarchs, especially the queen since "she was the one who showed most favor to the general Inquisition." However, both tactics failed. Aragon's acting chief justice, Tristan de Laporta, refused to accept their arguments; to try to bribe Isabella on such a matter was utterly useless. Accordingly, by December 1484 the malcontents shifted their bribery to the court of Rome, where money spoke more loudly. At the same time, they sent an embassy from the Diputados of the Aragonese Parliament to the Spanish court, choosing an Augustinian monk and an Old-Christian lawyer to present their complaints.

Although King Ferdinand treated these Aragonese deputies with far more courtesy than he had shown to Teruel's agents a few months earlier, he still remained inflexible on this issue. His official answer, dated from Seville in January 1485, refuted their arguments point by point, denying that the Inquisition's procedures were novel and claiming that the repression of heresy overruled ordinary Aragonese legal privileges. Unveiling an ironic argument which he would also employ elsewhere in his hereditary lands, Ferdinand observed that "if there are as few heretics in this kingdom as you say, we marvel all the more that the Inquisition is so feared and that they oppose it by calling it unconstitutional (*contrafuero*)."<sup>17</sup>

Legal deadlock therefore ensued. The new Inquisition itself displayed little more activity than its predecessor; one of the two Inquisitors named by Torquemada died in Lérida, reportedly poisoned by *conversos*. The Justicia's court still refused to overrule the Inquisition, and the king's support for the Holy Office was certain. However, in the late spring of 1485 matters took a new and fatal turn. Advice reportedly came from one of Aragon's leading *conversos* at court, treasurer Gabriel Sanchez, in a coded letter to his brother in Saragossa claiming that the Inquisition would be finished in Aragon if a few of its prominent officials, particularly Pedro Arbués, the remaining Inquisitor, were killed. Strategy meetings were held at the homes of prominent Saragossa merchants, lawyers, and priests of *converso* ancestry, attended by the abbot of Aragon's leading monastery and some other prominent Old Catholics. Rumors reached Ferdinand that assassins were being hired. Attempts were made that spring and summer to throw a key inquisitorial official into the Ebro river and to enter the

<sup>16</sup> Zurita, *Anales de Aragón*, VIII, p. 503 (quote). As Lea remarked (I, p. 245), both confiscation and secrecy were the "veriest commonplaces" of the medieval Inquisition, so that the startled and earnest reaction of Aragonese lawyers in 1484 indirectly proved just how moribund the old Inquisition had actually become.

<sup>17</sup> Sesma, *Establecimiento*, #74-75 (pp. 112-14, quote 112).

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Inquisitor's room at night. Despite such ominous warnings, Arbués, a native Aragonese, refused to take special precautions. He proved a fairly easy target for the half-dozen masked assassins, led by the French servant of a recently arrested artisan, who surprised him at midnight prayers in Saragossa's Cathedral on September 14, 1485. They wounded him so badly that he died three days later.

Saragossa's *conversos* had committed the worst blunder imaginable. Instead of eliminating the Inquisition, they had given it unshakable legitimacy by providing it with a martyr and possible saint (Pedro Arbués was finally canonized in the nineteenth century, after the Inquisition had been abolished). They had managed the difficult task of making the Inquisition momentarily popular in Aragon and provoked the worst anti-Semitic riots in the city's history, which the local archbishop (King Ferdinand's illegitimate son) finally managed to calm. Constitutionalism evaporated; the assassins were to be hunted down "with utmost rigor, ignoring the *fueros* and customs of the kingdom," with the full consent of Aragon's Parliament.<sup>18</sup> Solibera was summoned from Teruel to serve as interim Inquisitor. Last but far from least, Ferdinand moved the Inquisition to new quarters in Saragossa's royal fortress of the Aljafería, where it would be well protected against future threats.

The backlash from this single act lasted for years. Fourteen different public *autos* were held in Saragossa during 1486, ten more in 1487, seven more in 1488. Several of the principal plotters behind Arbués' murder fled up the Ebro to Tudela in the independent Kingdom of Navarre, only to be forcibly extradited by Aragonese officials; several notables from Tudela were captured with them and forced to appear in an *auto* late in 1487. One of the major plotters managed to escape to France. Despite attempts by Aragonese students to have him arrested by the Parlement of Toulouse, he was freed through written testimony from other Saragossa *conversos*. He soon died; but his son was required to make an expiatory pilgrimage to Toulouse to exhume his father's body after he had been executed in effigy, while five Saragossa *conversos* whose testimony had helped gain his release were heavily fined and publically penanced. The principal assassins were all captured alive and given suitably frightful executions.<sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere in the Crown of Aragon, legal opposition to the new Inquisition followed the same general lines as in the Kingdom of Aragon, insisting on its radical incompatibility with local *fueros*. In the Kingdom of Valencia, which had no standing committees of deputies, the struggle was sharp but brief. "There was great opposition by the military branch [nobility] to admit the Inquisitors,"

<sup>18</sup> Zurita, *Anales de Aragón*, VIII, p. 506 (quote).

<sup>19</sup> See Lea's "Memorial de diversos autos" (partly printed by Lea, I, pp. 592-611), and compare the *abecedario* printed in the *Libro Verde*, plus the less-complete *Somario de relajados* (pp. 111-33, 135-38).



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noted Zurita, adding immediately that their resistance "lasted three months." Although the Valencians, like the Aragonese, sent an embassy to Ferdinand in the autumn of 1484, the Inquisition was able to start its official operations with an Edict of Grace in November 1484 and a more successful one next summer at which 350 *conversos* confessed their heresies. These amnesties served as a form of indirect taxation on Valencian *conversos*, who were exempt from the heavy direct taxes imposed on Jewish *aljamas* to help finance the Moorish campaigns of the Catholic kings. The fines imposed at Valencia were applied directly to the expenses of the war against Granada, as Isabella had done previously with the money collected from *conversos* in Seville.<sup>20</sup> In 1486 another 350 Valencian *conversos* were reconciled in a new Edict of Grace, while others were denounced by frightened *conversos* in Saragossa during the aftermath of the Arbués murder.

In Valencia, effective resistance to the introduction of the new Inquisition lasted about three months; Catalonia employed the same kind of legalistic objections but kept Ferdinand's Holy Office out for three years. The Catalans, proverbially shrewd legalists, had two advantages over their neighbors: first, they had a special Papal bull, dated 1461, appointing their own Inquisitor, who was still nominally at work a quarter-century later; second, unlike the Valencians, they had not sent deputies to the Tarazona Cortes in April 1484. Thus when they heard in the summer of 1484 that Torquemada had named new Inquisitors for Barcelona, they reacted swiftly against the proclamations of the new institution which "have reportedly been made in Valencia and attempted in Saragossa and other places in Aragon." By July they sent a special embassy to their king; a month later they had created the first of several special committees to coordinate their resistance to Ferdinand's new Inquisition.<sup>21</sup>

Catalan authorities insisted that the threat of a Castilian Inquisition would provoke the "total depopulation" of Barcelona, although it had no ghetto and its *conversos* were not heretics. Their fourth letter to Ferdinand in December 1484 claimed that "everyone is frightened by the news we have of the executions and procedures which have reportedly been done in Castile, which causes a justified fear and flight from such rigor." But Ferdinand's earlier answer to them outlined his inflexible policy: if they had a legal right to prevent foreigners from becoming Inquisitors, they had to show it to him; if they had no heretics anyway, they need not fear the Inquisition; and if the new institution would cripple Barcelona's commerce, that was an unfortunate necessity. As he told his son and Viceroy, "before we decided to establish this Inquisition in any city of our kingdoms, we carefully considered all the damages and inconveniences which might ensue to our royal rights and incomes. However, our firm intention and

<sup>20</sup> Zurita, *Anales de Aragón*, VIII, p. 503 (quote); for a somewhat inflated opinion of the Valencian opposition, see García Cárcel, *Orígenes de la Inquisición española*, pp. 47-61.

<sup>21</sup> The best account of Catalonia's struggle with King Ferdinand over the Inquisition is in Jaime Vicens Vives, *Ferran II i la ciutat de Barcelona 1479-1516*, 3 vols. (Barcelona, 1936), I, pp. 373-424 (quote, p. 373).