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Accounts of the Anti-Jewish Riot in Valencia, July 1391

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Introduction

Across Spain in the summer of 1391 Christian mobs attacked Jewish quarters, looted their treasures, and killed or forcibly converted their inhabitants. The violence began in Seville, where the vitriolic preaching of Ferrán Martínez, Archdeacon of Écija, inspired the inhabitants of that city to attack their Jewish neighbors, first during Holy Week and again on June 6.¹ From there stories of the attack spread, inspiring further violence in other cities. By June 28, Queen Violant of Aragon warned the city government of Valencia to take special care of the city's Jews in light of the news from Seville. Nonetheless, on July 9 a mob assaulted Valencia's Jewish quarter. At least a hundred Valencian Jews were killed and most of the rest forcibly converted.

This attack destroyed Valencia's Jewish community. In the months and years that followed, the city council fended off King Joan I's efforts to re-establish a Jewish community in Valencia, and by 1403 had succeeded in banning Jews from the city. In the entire kingdom of Valencia, only the Jewish community of Morvedre (now Sagunto) survived the 1391 attacks. Many other communities in other parts of Spain were also destroyed. These attacks were therefore a pivotal moment not only in Valencian history, but also in the history of Sephardic (Spanish) Jewry.

Among the anti-Jewish assaults of 1391, the one in Valencia was particularly well recorded. Reports of the events of July 9 survive from three independent sources: the king's brother and heir Prince Martí, Duke of Montblanc, acting as the royal governor of the region; the *jurats*, or city council of Valencia;² and Juçeff Abraim, a Valencian Jew who was forcibly converted during the assault. Each of these accounts, however, was written under a particular set of circumstances that shaped its version of the events.

The duke and the councilment were the senior authorities present in the city at the time of the attack. Despite the warnings, they utterly failed to protect the city's Jewish community. Beyond the human tragedy, this was a serious dereliction of their duty to the king. The Jewish community (*aljama*) of Valencia was an official legal entity, and like most Jewish *aljamas* in medieval Spain, it belonged to the Crown. Although it was located within the city of Valencia, therefore, the community was not subject to the rule of Valencia's city government. Instead, the Jews of the *aljama* governed their own internal affairs according to their own laws, subject to the direct authority (and direct taxation) of the king. Because they "belonged" directly to the king just as serfs "belonged" to their lord, Jews under royal control were sometimes known as "serfs (or slaves) of the royal treasury." For most medieval kings, therefore, Jewish communities were a key source of revenue, and authority over Jewish communities was a key source of prestige. This association was so strong that an

¹ See also the *Open Iberia/América* document "Ferrán Martínez's speech at the *Tribunal del Alcázar* in Seville, 19 February, 1388," translated by Maya Soifer Irish: <https://openiberiaamerica.hcommons.org/2021/02/05/ferran-martinezs-speech-at-the-tribunal-del-alcazar-in-seville-19-february-1388/>

² Six *jurats*—four citizens and two noblemen—made up the executive council of Valencia city.



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attack on a royal Jewish community could be a form of anti-royal protest. Even if the king was personally anti-Jewish (as Joan I of Aragon was), an attack on “his” Jews was still a blow to royal power.

When the Duke and the city council each reported the events of July 9 to the king, therefore, they did so knowing that they had failed to protect a valuable royal asset. Both letters make use of Christian religious language, which (as historian David Nirenberg has observed), would place these events in the realm of divine rather than royal justice. While the medieval Catholic Church officially adhered to St. Augustine’s “doctrine of witness,” which held that Jews should be protected from violence and should not be forced to convert, stories of “miraculous” conversions of Muslims and Jews circulated widely in Iberia.³

While both sought to deflect blame, the duke and the city council held different official roles relative to the Jewish community. The duke, as a royal official, was meant to have direct authority over the *jueria* (Jewish quarter): the walled neighborhood officially designated for the Jewish community. The walls of the *jueria* were in theory meant to separate Jews from Christians, but in practice many Jews lived outside the quarter and some Christians lived inside it. More importantly to the councilmen, the *jueria*’s walls and gate (marked since 1390 with the royal coats of arms) delineated a zone outside of the control of the municipal government. This boundary had been a matter of contention in recent years, as the Jewish community had outgrown the old boundaries of the quarter. After several decades of complaints about religious mixing in the surrounding neighborhoods, the Jewish quarter had been expanded by several blocks in 1389. This had been a matter of extreme political controversy within the city; the councilmen elected the year after the extension accused those who approved it of treason. The council’s accounts of the attack of 1391, which place much of the blame on the Jews themselves, must be understood against this backdrop of municipal discontent about the Jewish quarter and its place within the city.

The final surviving account of the attack was produced under a different sort of pressure. Almost two weeks after the assault, Valencia’s criminal court heard the testimony of Juçeff Abraim, formerly a member of the Valencian Jewish community. Forcibly converted to Christianity during the assault, he was by then going by the baptismal name “Johan Pérez de Sant Jordi.” While the Church frowned upon forced conversion, baptism was considered binding regardless of circumstances. The victims of 1391 were therefore designated as Christians. To complete this process, the authorities later sought to isolate these unwilling converts—known as *conversos* or New Christians—from what remained of the Jewish community. This was one of the Valencian council’s justifications for banning Jews from the city in the years after 1391. Many *conversos* probably did continue to practice Judaism privately, particularly in the first decades after 1391. Old Christian paranoia about the faith of *conversos* and their descendants only increased over the course of the fifteenth century. This paranoia culminated in the establishment of the Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición, commonly known as the Spanish Inquisition; “purity of blood” laws banning the descendants of New Christians from public office; and ultimately the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492.

All three of these accounts of July 9, 1391 are vague or contradictory on matters of key importance. We do not know precisely who made up the mob that attacked the Jewish quarter. Was it a raucous band of youths, “foreigners and vagabonds,” or Valencian citizens? We do not know precisely why this mob turned on a Jewish community that had been part of the city since the Christian conquest of 1238. Were they motivated by religious furor? Economic grievance? Anti-royalist politics? A combination of all three? We do not know precisely how the violence escalated; the accounts differ on the details of the invasion. Both the duke and the councilmen recounted versions of events that shielded themselves from blame, and Juçeff either did not see what happened at the gates or chose not to share what he knew. None of these accounts can be the definitive version the events of July 9, 1391, but all show how the story could be bent to different aims.

³ See, for example, stories in the popular collection *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, and our teaching unit on it available at <https://openiberiaamerica.hcommons.org/2023/11/14/alfonso-x-cantigas-de-santa-maria-como-santa-maria-ajudou-a-emperatriz-de-roma-how-the-virgen-mary-helped-the-empress-of-rome/>

Letter from Prince Martí, Duke of Montblanc, to King Joan I, July 9, 1391⁴

Molt alt etc.

Pochs dies ha passats me foren presentades algunes provisions per vos Senyor fetes en favor de la aljama dels juheus d'esta ciutat. E tantost exeguí aquelles e de feyt ab crida les fiu publicar e fiu parar forques en certs locs de la ciutat.

Aprés, Senyor, huy que es diumenge, stant yo sobre dinar, vingué a mi .i. hom lo qual me dix que fadrins eren venguts a la juheria ab creus dents e cridants 'Muyren los juheus, muyren!' e que per aquelles paraules se justaven molta gent ala dita juheria e que hi havien mort .i. hom. Yo, Senyor, tantost me leví de taula e aní a la dita juheria hon trobí molts dels dits fadrins e alguna altra gent qui's fon justada cridants allí 'Muyren los dits juheus o's facen chrestians!' E sobre açò, yo vinent allí e donant a uns e altres ab una azcona, faheren-me loch tantost e fugiren axí que passà aquella rumor. E lo governador, justícia e jurats sobre açò conseguiren ab mi e, per la gran rumor qui era stada, replegàs molta gent a una part e altra de la dita juheria. Yo, Senyor, per provehir que mal no se pogués seguir, fiu de feyt tancar les portals de la dita juheria e departí los dits governador, justícia, e jurats per los portals d'aquella. E yo anava adés a la una part adés a l'altra, axí que lla on yo venia, tota la gent se'n fugia, mas com era a la una part, ells eren a les altres e de feyt la rumor se estès tant per la ciutat per la gran multitud de la gent qui hi aconseguí, que pus veeren que no podien entrar per los portals e alguns altres locs stablits, entraren de feyt per una claveguera qui no era closa e per alberchs de chrestians e altres part qui responen a la dita juheria. Yo, Senyor, ni los altres per me ordenats a la guarda de les dites portals e altres locs jassia que sentisses

Most high [Lord King], etc.,

A few days ago, certain provisions were presented to me from you, [my] lord, in favor of the *aljama* of Jews of this city. And straight away I enacted [those provisions], publishing them by announcement and putting gallows⁵ in certain places of the city.

Later, my lord, today, which is a Sunday, as I was having lunch,⁶ a man came to me and told me that some youths⁷ had come to the Jewish quarter with crosses, saying and shouting "The Jews must die! They must die!" and that with these words many people had gathered at the Jewish quarter and one man had died. I, my lord, immediately rose from the table and went to the Jewish quarter, where I found many of these youths and some other people who were gathered there shouting "These Jews must die or become Christians!" And with that I came there and, giving blows here and there with a short spear, I quickly got through and they fled, such that this uproar subsided. And the governor, justice, and city councilmen⁸ joined me, and because of the great uproar that had been there, many people withdrew to one part or another of the Jewish quarter. I, my lord, to make sure that no evil could occur, had the gates of the Jewish quarter closed and dispatched the governor, justice, and city councilmen to the gates. And I went first to one place and then to another such that wherever I came all the people fled, but when I was at one place, they were at another, and so the uproar grew so much through the city, because of the great multitude of people who had gathered there, that when they saw that they could not enter [the Jewish quarter] through the gates and some other usual places, they in fact got in through a sewer that was not closed and

⁴ Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Cancillera Reg. 2093, 112r-112v.

⁵ Presumably as a deterrent to crime.

⁶ "Dinar" refers to the main meal, eaten around midday.

⁷ Children were understood as innocents and were granted greater latitude than adults for disorderly behavior and protest. The emphasis on the children's role here may be intended to signify that the attack was spontaneous rather than planned rebellion.

⁸ Both royal and municipal officials.

dins lo call gran rumor, no poguem entrar ni sabíem tanpoch que chrestians hi haguessen entrats, ans pensàvem que la dita rumor fos entre les dits juheus, axí que, de feyt, aquells que [dins] foren entrats ab gran multitud de gent que contínuament hi venia se acoltellejaven ab los dits juheus. An-i morts dels uns e dels altres, però, Senyor, lo nombre no·l sé encara bé; pens que no és gran.

Aprés, Senyor, obriren les portes e yo vehent que chrestians havia dins qui ho havien ab los dits juheus, volguí provehir. E sobre açò tretes e colps de pedres venien tan espeses qui convench lunyarme'n. E veent que molts juheus volien exir dients que·s volien batejar, per veure si poria mitigar la iniquitat dels chrestians, fiu venir allí la creu del crucifix ab molts capellans axí que pus los dits juheus se batejassen, aquelles haguessen rahó de cessar. E axí's seguí, car molts dels chrestians qui eren dins, vahent que dels dits juheus hi havia molts qui de feyt se volien anar chrestianar, cessaren caucom lur persecució, entant que hisqueren molts dels dits juheus de la juheria e, com la present se fahie, ne exien contínuament avants als sglèyes per batejar-se. Son, se'n feyts e se'n fan molts chrestians, en tant que al present ni romanen fort poch per batejar.

Lo dit avolot ha continuat de dinar tro ara que és quart hora del sol post e encara no és del tot passat. Ha s'i feyta e s'i fa encara gran robament, que remey no s'i ha pogut pendre, ans tant com més se squivava e més crexia lo dit avolot. Axí, Senyor, que dretament entén que açò sia solament juhí de Déu e no àls. Yo, Senyor, ab los jurats ensemps entén a fer demà sobre aquest feyta totes aquelles provisions que fer s'i puxen e fer-ne lo càstich que s'i mereix e de tot ço que per avant se seguirà, certificar n'e vostra senyoria, la qual etc.

Scrita en València a ix dies de juliol del any m.ccc lxxxxi

Lo Duc

through the houses of Christians and other places that adjoined the Jewish quarter. I, my lord, and the others under my command who were guarding the gates and other places, although we heard a great commotion within the Jewish quarter, we could not get inside, nor did we know that the Christians had gotten inside, so we thought that the uproar was among the Jews. So, actually, those who got in with a great multitude of people, who continued to come in, fighting the Jews with knives. There were deaths on one side and the other, but, my lord, I do not yet know the number. I think it is not very many.

Afterward, my lord, they opened the gates and, seeing that there were Christians within who were fighting with the Jews, I wished to intervene. But a hail of blows and stones came so thick that I had to withdraw. And seeing that many Jews wished to leave the quarter, saying that they wanted to be baptized, I thought I could mitigate the iniquity of the Christians by ordering a crucifix be brought there with many priests, so that as the Jews were baptized iniquities would have reason to cease. And thus it happened, that many of the Christians who were within, seeing that among the Jews there were many who really wished to go become Christians, ceased somewhat their persecution in such a way that many Jews came out of the Jewish quarter and, as this letter is being written, continue to come to the churches to be baptized. So many of them are, have become, and are becoming Christians that at present there remain very few to baptize.

The riot has continued from lunchtime to now, which is four hours after sunset, and still it is not entirely finished. Much has been, and continues to be, stolen, for which there is no remedy, for the more I tried to avoid it the more the riot grew. This, my lord, should rightly be understood as the judgment of God and nothing else. I, my lord, with the councilmen, intend tomorrow to enact all the provisions we can to punish those that deserve it. And for everything that occurs we will inform your lordship, whom [God preserve], etc.

Written in Valencia July 9, 1391

The Duke

Account of the Riot of July 9 in the Records of the City Council of Valencia, July 10, 1391⁹

The city council produced a total of seven accounts of the assault between July 9 and September 2. Their official story evolved over the course of this period. On July 9, the councilmen wrote a letter to the king that described the assault in much the same way as Prince Martí's letter, although it omitted the account of the baptisms and stressed the precautionary measures that the council had put in place in advance of the assault.¹⁰ By the next day, however, the council recorded this, somewhat different, version of events in its own records.

E fo recitat en lo dit consell ab gran desplaer, segons apparia, lo cas orrible qui en lo dia prop passat era esdevengut en aquesta ciutat del insult, esvaïment, e robament de la juheria d'aquella e alcunes morts d'aquí seguides fet e fetes per alcunes e moltes malvades persones. E a certificació dels presents e memòria dels esdevenidors, volch lo dit consell que'l dit fet e los seus accidents s'escrivissen en lo present libre segons que ja' hir breument emperò e cuytada, n'era stat escrit al Senyor Rey de part dels dits jurats e segons la veritat del fet pus largament recitada e concordada en lo present consell sots tal forma en acabament.

Veritat és que en dies passats del present any en alcunes ciutats e viles del Realme de Castella per los habitants d'aquelles eren estats fets insults, esvaïments, robament, e morts en o contra les juheries e juheus de les dites ciutats e viles ...

... Seguís que 'hir dicmenge en hora de comun dinar, una companya de minyons de .xl. en .l., partints del mercat ab .i. penonet croat e ab alcunes creus de canyes vengueren a .i. dels portals de la juheria qui es prop la plaça de la figuera. E cridants als juheus quel 'Arcepestre de Sibília venia ab sa creu e que se batejassen, sinó morrien' o semblants

And it was recounted in the Council with great displeasure, it appeared, the horrible case that the previous day happened in the city: the insult, invasion, and robbery of the Jewish quarter, and some murders that ensued all this was done by some evil persons. And by the certification of those present and for the memory of those to come, the Council wishes that the event and its particulars be written in the present book,¹¹ in accordance with what yesterday was already, though briefly and hastily, written to the Lord King by these councilmen and according to the truth of the event recounted at greater length and agreed in the present Council in the form that follows:

It is true that in recent days in some cities and towns of the Kingdom of Castile the inhabitants have committed insults, invasions, robbery, and murder against the Jewish quarters and the Jews of the said cities and towns ...

With this in mind, the officials of Valencia took various precautions to protect their city's Jewish quarter, including suppressing news of the violence and alerting the city guards. The council claims that the Jews themselves were satisfied with these precautions.

... It happened that yesterday (Sunday), at lunch time, a group of forty or fifty youths left the marketplace with a small banner marked with a cross and various crosses made of reeds, and came to the gate of the Jewish quarter which is near the Square of the Fig Tree,¹² shouting to the Jews that

⁹ Archivo Municipal de Valencia, Manuals de Consells, A-19 fols. 242r-245v.

¹⁰ Archivo Municipal de Valencia, Lletres Missives, g3-5 fols. 19r-20r.

¹¹ The official record of the council proceedings.

¹² The main gate of the Jewish quarter.

paraules. Entrà una partida dels dits minyons dins lo portal dessus dit, e juheus qui allèn eren tancaren a colp les portes del dit portal, e puys dels altres de la juheria, romanents dins aquella la dita partida de minyons. E l'altre partida stant de fora e sentint remor dels altres dedins, començ·a cridar e dir quels juheus mataven als fadrins qui eren dins. E com en la dita plaça se tengues e tenga taula d'acordar per lo passatge de Sicília, e fossen allí molts dels dits acordats e altres vagabunts e strangers, e gent de poqua e pobra condició, corregeren als crits dels dits minyons e los juheus encadenaren e fermaren mils les portes, e ab allò la opinió de la mort dels minyons de dins més crexia en les gents de fora, e d'aquí s'escampà e cresqué la remor per la ciutat. Los jurats e altres oficials de la ciutat, sentints la dita remor, lexant lur dinar vengueren a la posada del senyor duc de Muntblanch, frare e general lochtinent del senyor rey, lo qual senyor duc era e es ací, e ab ell ensemps vengueren al dit portal, on trobaren sobres de gent e de remor, sens emperò tot esvaïment com fossen sens armes. Hoc e alguns circumveïns dels dits portal e plaça estaven descints e descalços segons que stants a lur dinar eren sortits e venguts a la remor. Lo dit senyor duc manà als juheus del dit portal que li obrissen, declarant que ho volia a dues fins la una perquè fes exir los minyons e, vists aquells, la gent perdés la opinió recebuda de la mort dels dits minyons, e s'assuavàs. E l'altre, que stablert aquell portal d'alcú dels oficials reyls ab companya covinent, ell ab los altres e ab l'altra gent de cavayll discorregués per la juheria faent entrar e tancar los juheus cascuns dins lurs cases, e guardant als altres portals que alcú no entràs e que fes tancar aquells si tancats no eren bé, car açò se guardaria mils dins que defora. E les gents sabents que'l dit senyor e oficials e bons hòmens de cavall fossen dins la juheria, duptarien d'entrar-hi majorment faent-hi crides penals, per les quals a fer ja havien tramès per lo trompeta o crida públich de la dita ciutat.

“the archdeacon of Seville¹³ was coming with his cross and that they must be baptized or die,” or some similar words. Some of the youths went inside the gate, and the Jews who were there banged the gate shut, and then closed the other gates of the Jewish quarter, so that that group of youths remained inside. And the others were outside and, hearing the commotion of those within, started to shout that the Jews were killing the boys who were inside.¹⁴ And in that square the enlistment table was set up for the passage to Sicily,¹⁵ and many of the enlisted men were there, along with other vagabonds and strangers, and people of poor and low condition. They all ran toward the cries of the youths, and the Jews chained and secured the gates, and with that the rumor of the murder of the youths within grew even more among the people outside, and from there the uproar spread and grew throughout the city. The councilmen and other officials of the city, hearing the uproar, left their meal and came with the Lord Duke of Montblanc, brother and lieutenant of the Lord King, who was and is here [in the city]. And together with him they went to the gate, where they found too many people and commotion, but no assault because they were unarmed. And indeed, some neighbors from around the gate and the square were without belts and unshod because they had come straight out from their lunch to the uproar. The Lord Duke ordered the Jews at the gate to open it, declaring that he had two aims. First, he wished to bring the youths out, so that the people, seeing them, would let go of the rumor of their murder, and would calm down. And second, that with the gate under the guard of some royal officials and sufficient men, he [the duke], with the others and with other men on horseback would ride through the Jewish quarter trying to bring the Jews in their homes and have them close themselves inside, and guarding the other gates so that no one would enter, and secure those that were not well closed, because they could guard better from within than from without. And if the people knew that the duke and officials and good men on

¹³ Ferrán Martínez.

¹⁴ The councilmen here seem to be evoking “blood libels,” or conspiracy theories about Jewish ritual murder of Christian children. Christians made such accusations across Europe in the fourteenth century, although they were more likely to receive official support in northern Europe than in the Crown of Aragon.

¹⁵ Prince Martí, Duke of Montblanc was at that time organizing an armada bound for Sicily.

E los juheus desastruchs, duptants de peior o per quesque fos, no volgueren obrir e per açò la remor cresqué. E molts per terrats d'alberchs de chrestians contigües a la juheria e alguns per lo vayll veyll dejús lo pont e tanques d'aquell, esvaïren la dita juheria que·ls dits senyor e oficials e jurats e altres bons hòmens no y pogueren entrar ne vedar-ho, majorment, car los juheus en la partida del dit vayll havien a començament mort .i. chrestian e tolt lo dit a .i. altre, lo cors del qual mort e lo dit foren portats e mostrats al senyor duc. E en poc espay de temps, la dita juheria fon dissipada e robada, morts d'aquí en l'esvaïment quesque cent juheus entre uns e altres en diverses e maneres ...

horseback were within the Jewish quarter they would hesitate to enter, particularly given the warnings that the city crier had proclaimed throughout the city.

But the unfortunate Jews, fearing something worse or for whatever reason, did not want to open the gates, and for this reason the uproar grew. And many, via terraces of Christian houses adjacent to the Jewish quarter and some via the old gated moat below the bridge, invaded the Jewish quarter, which the Lord Duke and officials and councilmen and other good men could not enter or see. And further the Jews near the old moat had at the start killed one Christian and cut the finger of another. The corpse and the finger were carried and shown to the Lord Duke. And in a short space of time the Jewish quarter was destroyed and sacked, and some 100 Jews were killed in the assault in various ways ...

Letter from the City Council of Valencia to King Joan I, July 17, 1391¹⁶

On July 17, the city council wrote to the king to “correct” their original account from July 9. This letter stresses what the councilmen claim are the crucial points of the story.

A la Molt Alta Magestat de nostre Senyor lo Rey
Molt Excellent Senyor,

Jassia a la vostra magnificència tantost que fo fet l'esvaïment e robament de la juheria, scrívísem de la manera e accidents d'aquell, però, Senyor, ab lo torbament e desplaer subiran que havíem, no poguem scriure'n tan bé e ple com se meresquera. E per ço, Senyor, e per satisfer e respondre a una letra de la Vostra Senyoria que ara havem reebuda responsiva a nostra primera letra e axí mateix per intimar a vos, Senyor, ço qui enaprés se és seguit, certificam la Vostra Excel·lència de ço qui's segueix per orde:

Veritat és, Senyor, que aquell mal fet hac començament per minyons, segons que a Vostra Senyoria fem ja saber. Enaprés dixeren alguns que·ls

To the Highest Majesty of Our Lord King
Most Excellent Lord,

Immediately after the invasion and sack of the Jewish quarter occurred, we wrote to Your Magnificence about the manner and circumstances of it,¹⁷ but, Lord, with the disturbance and great unpleasantness that was going on, we were not able to write as well and fully as it merited. And for this reason, Lord, and to respond to a letter from Your Lordship that we have just now received in response to our first letter, and also to intimate to you, Lord, what happened afterward, we want to make Your Excellency certain of what here follows in order:

It is true, Lord, that this evil deed was begun by youths as Your Lordship already knows. And afterward some said that these youths were taught

¹⁶ Archivo Municipal de Valencia, g3-5, Lletres Missives, fols. 23r-24r.

¹⁷ Letter written on July 10: Archivo Municipal de Valencia, g3-5, Lletres Missives, fols. 19r-20r.

dits minyons foren instruïts e amonestats per majors. D'açò saber s'és entramès lalt infant lo duch, vostre frare, e nosaltres. E encara ell o nos no havem pogut entrar a la veritat, bé que'ns parega per algunes conjectures e versemblances que axí sia, specialment per tal car la partida d'on vengueren los dits minyons, ço és lo mercat, era axí com comunament és e majorment als dies de ladonchs, plena d'òmens acordats de galees, d'alcavots, de vagabunts, d'estrangers, e d'altres de poque e pobra condició, los quals en veritat són estats cas e començament del dit esvaïment e robament, ajudant-hi altres coses dejús declaradores.

Specialment, qu'els juheus, a la venguda dels minyons, tancaren totes les portes de la juheria, romanents dins aquelles alguns dels dits minyons e alguns e poch chrestians que ja enans per lurs affers eren dins la juheria. E lo primer crit de la concitació fon veu deïnt qu'els juheus mataven als minyons e als chrestians qui eren dins la juheria, e majorment cresqué la dita concitació per tallament de dits e per mort d'un hom chrestia feta prop les rexes del vall vell. Al primer crit, l'alt infant lo duch e ab ell nosaltres e d'altrae part los officials reyals correguem a la dita juheria. E si los juheus haguessen ubertes les portes axí com lo duch los manava, e los officials axí mateix, foren-se'n seguides versemblant dues coses. La una, que la gent haguera vist o haüda presumció que no fos ver de la mort dels minyons, e dels altres chrestians e fora's assossegada. E l'altra, que'l duch, els officials e nosaltres ab los hòmens de bé que eren ab tots ells, e nos a cavall, haguérem descorreguts e establerts tots los carrers e alberchs mellors de la juheria, e haguérem fet exir la gent ferin o encara matan-ne algunes que exir non volguessen, e no s'i haguera robat ne guastat res, o almenys fora poch. Mas los desastruchs juheus, per dupte de peior no volgueren obrir les portes e lo duch e los officials e nosaltres ab nostres companyes no y poguem entrar. E la remor crexent, alguns per terrats d'alberchs contigües a la juheria e altres per lo vall vell, trencades les rexes, entraren la dita juheria. D'allí avant no y fora bastant a dar-hi remey sinó Déu. E és ver, Senyor, que al dit esvaïment, entrament e robament se mesclaren alguns hòmens

and instructed by older people, as the Lord Duke your brother and we have been told. And still neither he nor we have been able to arrive at the truth, but it appears to us by some speculations and appearances that this is the case, particularly because the place where these youths came from—that is, the marketplace—was, as it commonly and usually is these days, full of men enlisted to the galleys¹⁸ and procurers and vagabonds and foreigners and others of little and poor condition, who were in truth the cause and origin of the invasion and sack, along with other things explained below.

In particular, [among the causes]: that the Jews upon the arrival of the youths closed all the gates of the Jewish quarter, with some of these youths remaining inside along with various Christians who had been inside the Jewish quarter on business. And the first inciting shout was the cry that the Jews were killing the youths and the Christians who were in the Jewish quarter. And this incitement was increased by the amputation of fingers and the killing of a Christian man near the gate of the old moat. At the first outcry the Lord Duke and us with him and the royal officials all ran to the Jewish quarter. And if the Jews had opened the gates as the Duke and the officials commanded, immediately two things would have happened. One is that the people would have seen or heard at once that the supposed killing of the youths and the other Christians was not real and would have been calmed. And the other is that the Duke, the officials and we, with worthy men who were with us, would have ridden through and secured all the streets and better houses of the Jewish quarter, and we would have driven out the savage people or even killed those who did not wish to leave, and they would not have robbed or destroyed anything, or at least much less. But the unfortunate Jews, fearing worse consequences, did not want to open the gates, and the Duke and the officials and we and our companions could not enter. And as the commotion grew, some entered the Jewish quarter via the terraces of the adjacent houses and others via the old moat (having broken the bars of the gate). And from that point no one but God could

¹⁸ Men who had enlisted in Prince Martí, Duke of Montblanc's armada, bound for Sicily.

de paratge e escuders e companyes de casades e altres, jassia alcunes d'elles meten escusa que ho fahien per estalviar o salvar persones e béns d'alcunes cases de juheus lurs conexents. De tot se sabrà la veritat, Déu ajudant.

... Però, Senyor, per les coses dejus deïdores que açò sia misteri divinal, specialment per evidents experimentats e provats miracles fets en lo creximent de la crisma, la qual en la seu e en les parròquies, per la gran pressa dels batejats sens nombre, era del tot despesa, e los curats estaven en ànsia d'on haurien crisma. E a una hora, totes les crismeres foren trobades plenes de vera crisma. E axí fo experimentat per lo official e, daquèn, scrites cartes públiques de tal e tant miracle, e d'alcunes altres specials d'aquesta raó que serien longues de recitar...

remedy the situation. And it is true, Lord, that in the invasion, entry, and sack some men of noble lineage, squires, and members of their households and others joined in, although some of them gave the excuse that they were there to save persons and goods from certain Jewish houses of their acquaintance. This is all that is known of the truth, so help us God.

The councilmen recount their unsuccessful efforts to apprehend the perpetrators and recover the stolen goods, and how they and the duke stopped an attack on the city's Muslim quarter the following day.

... But, Lord, the matters described below suggest that this was a divine mystery, particularly because of the evident, tested and proven miracles that occurred in the growth of the chrism.¹⁹ Because of the great rush of converts without number, the chrism in the Cathedral and in the parish churches had all run out, and the priests were in a panic about where to get chrism. And at once all the chrismatories²⁰ were found full of true chrism. And this was tested by the official, and later public records were made of such a miracle, and of some other particulars of this proof which would be long to recite...²¹

¹⁹ Consecrated oil used in the ritual of baptism.

²⁰ Vessels for containing chrism.

²¹ The council's later letters also describe miraculous lighting of lamps in the former synagogue, which was converted after the assault into a church dedicated to St. Christopher. This church was supposedly named for another miracle: as the assault began, a Jew saw above it a vision of a large man with a child on his shoulders (as St. Christopher was usually depicted). This miracle only appears in accounts of the attack after King Joan announced his intention to re-establish the *jueria* of Valencia.

Testimony of Johan Pérez de Sant Jordi, formerly Juçeff Abraïm, July 21, 1391²²

Juçeff Abraïm gave testimony in Valencia's criminal court as part of the investigation that followed the attack. Despite this investigation, almost no one was ultimately prosecuted for the crimes committed on July 9.

Die veneris XXI.^a mensis julii any a nativitati donimi MCCCXCI. En la cort del justícia criminal y davant la presència de En Pere de Luçà advocat asesor delegat per sa Senyoria per rebre noves e fer enquesta del robament e esvaïment de la juheria... comparech Johan Pérez de Sent Jordi olim Juseff Abarim [sic] juheu convers e requerit per lo susdit En Pere de Luçà digués què'n sap, dix:

Que al mij jorn, poc més, del dia 9 de juliol proppasat, essent lo reclamant en s'alberch, foren tancades les portes de la juheria ab gran remor e clamors de juheus. E tanquà sa porta e ans tres hores esvai lur mur per lo vall 10ell e altres parts la gent de la ciutat. Enaxina ésser la sua endresada de forts e greus claus, derrocaren-la a fustades e esvaïren l'alberch pus de vint homes adresats de espasas, bastons e coltells, alguns mascarats en caperons. E tantost romperen e esclafaren les caxes, escritoris e armaris, e se'n portaren juxt als matalaffets des lits sens deixar clau en pared, tot estimat en pus de tres mília florins d'or. E resmenys, una caxeta de jinibre ab vori hon eren los albarans e cartes devitòries en summa de pus de trenta mília florins dor.

E per més, donaren de coltellades per lo coll a son germà Nachor que'ls foragitaba ab una ballesta.

E més encara, aquells malnats sens pavor de Déu forçaren a Lisa, neboda sua e muller de Isaar Lobin, e a Sober, esclava, dida de son fill.

Friday, July 21, in the year of Our Lord 1391. In the court of the Criminal Justice and in the presence of Master Pere de Lluçà advocate, advisor deputized by His Lordship to receive news and conduct an inquest into the sack and invasion of the Jewish quarter... Johan Pérez de Sent Jordi, formerly Juçeff Abraïm, converted Jew summoned by the aforesaid Master Pere de Lluçà to say what he knew, presented himself and said:

That just after midday on the 9th of July just past the claimant [Johan] was in his house when he heard the gates of the Jewish quarter shut with great uproar and shouting of Jews. He shut his door and within three hours the people of the city stormed their wall via the old moat and other places, and although his door was fitted with strong and heavy nails, they battered it down and more than twenty men armed with swords, sticks, and knives invaded his house, some masked and with hoods. And then they broke and smashed chests, desks, cupboards and carried off even the mattresses on the beds, without leaving a nail in the wall, in total an estimated more than three thousand gold florins. And besides, [they took] a small box of juniper wood with ivory where the accounts and loan documents were, in the sum of more than thirty thousand gold florins.²³

And besides they stabbed his brother Nachor in the neck as he fought them off with a crossbow.

And what is more, these godforsaken bastards raped his niece Lisa,²⁴ wife of Isaar Lobin, and Sober, slave and wetnurse of his son.

²² Archivo del Reino de Valencia. Transcribed in F. Dánvila, "El robo de la judería de Valencia en 1391," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, vol. 8, 1886, p. 390, doc. 25.

²³ Juçeff, like many medieval Jews, seems to have supported himself at least partly through moneylending. Most of the recipients of his loans were probably Christians.

²⁴ Diminutive of Elisabet.

E més encara, com el reclamant es planyguera del dany y del scàndel gren rebut, lo cap dels malfeytors li donà de bastonades, nafran-li un bras e darrere l'ouit.

And what is more, because the claimant [Johan] complained of the damage and the great insult that he had received, the leader of the malefactors beat him with a stick, wounding him in the arm and behind the ear.

E requerit digués si sap o vol més e si coneixia als faedors del esvaïment e forçadors de les dones dix que per paraules e ayxí mateix per una empresa d'or qui portaba u dels mascarats, sospita d'alcun home de condició, sins que'l faça cert.

And when he was asked if he knew or wished to say more and if he knew the instigators of the assault and the rapists of the women, he said: that from some words and also from a gold emblem that one of the masked men was wearing, he suspected a certain man of standing, but he was not certain.

E requerit si sap o vol més, dix que no sap ni vol més.

And when he was asked if he knew or wished to say more, he said that he did not know or wish to say more.

E oïda e entesa per lo honrrat En Pere de Luçà la comparecència de Johan Pérez de Sent Jordi, òlim Juseff Abarim, manà sia rebuda en tantum quantum etc.^a presents testimonis Mosèn Johan de Bàsquez, alguatzir, e En Andreu Mora, ciutadà.

And the appearance of Johan Pérez de Sant Jordi, formerly Juçeff Abraïm, heard and understood by the honorable En Pere de Lluçà, ordered and received in *tantum quantum* etc., present witnesses Master Johan de Bàsquez, *alguatzir*²⁵, and Master Andreu Mora, citizen.

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²⁵ A type of court official.