

## THE MORALITY OF TAXATION: THE BURDEN OF WAR ON CORDOBA AND JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA, 1480-1515

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It has long been recognised that the major towns and cities of Andalusia contributed massively, and disproportionately in relation to other areas of the Iberian peninsula, in their effort to support the war of Isabella the Catholic and her husband Ferdinand against the Nasrid kingdom of Granada.<sup>1</sup> It appears that, if the advice of one commentator based in the area, Diego de Valera, governor [*alcaide*] of Puerto de Santa María, had been accepted by the Crown in 1482, the war might have lasted much less than ten years. To isolate the Muslim state and bring it to its knees, Valera advocated a blockade of the Straits of Gibraltar (then, as now, easily crossed by surreptitious small boats), and a combined land and naval operation against the port of Málaga, which he rightly saw as the essential economic artery of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> However, as was recognised by chroniclers of the period, the campaigns eventually mounted by Isabella and Ferdinand's government against Nasrid Granada were and are generally remembered as a chivalric crusade, in which Andalusian magnates played the predominant part. Indeed, the parish priest of Los Palacios, Andrés Bernáldez, compared the conduct of the marquis of Cádiz in the Granada campaigns to that of Ulysses in the Trojan wars.<sup>3</sup>

Such impressions are to a considerable extent borne out, not only by individual acts of bravery and leadership on the field of battle as well as in the sieges on which so much of the Catholic Monarchs' success depended, but also by the level of military support given to the war by members of the Castilian upper nobility.<sup>4</sup> During the successive campaigns, Cordoban magnates such as Don Alonso de Aguilar and the count of Cabra were able, on at least eight occasions, to put forces into the field which consisted of two hundred or more cavalry and at least the same number of infantry. Lesser members of the city's seignorial nobility, such as Gonzalo Mejía, lord of Santa Eufemia, and Egas Venegas, lord of Luque, contributed twenty or more horsemen each.<sup>5</sup> In addition, those members of the upper nobility who dominated Jerez de la Frontera and its surrounding area,

<sup>1</sup> HELGARTH, J.N., *The Spanish kingdoms, 1250-1516*, ii, 1410-1516. *Castilian hegemony*, Oxford, 1978, pp. 374-375.

<sup>2</sup> EDWARDS, J., 'War and peace in fifteenth-century Castile: Diego de Valera and the Granada war', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. Henry Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore, London and Ronceverte, 1985, pp. 283-295.

<sup>3</sup> BERNÁLDEZ, A., *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. M. Gómez-Moreno and J. de Mata Carniado, Madrid, 1962, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> For documentary evidence of the military contribution made by the Castilian upper nobility during the war, see LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *Castilla y la conquista del reino de Granada*, Valladolid, 1967, reprinted Granada, 1988, pp. 228-302.

<sup>5</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *Conquista*, pp. 235, 238, 242-4, 246-9, 262-3, 269, 280, 282.

such as the duke of Medina Sidonia, the marquis of Cádiz and the Adelantado of Andalusia, were able to provide contingents of similar or greater proportions.<sup>6</sup> The towns themselves also made massive contributions of manpower during the Granada campaigns. Córdoba was able, on various occasions, to raise up to 750 horsemen and 5,000 infantry, while Jerez produced about 300 horse and 1000 footsoldiers.<sup>7</sup> Although overall population figures remain uncertain, both were evidently large and costly contributions, but many other demands were made on these towns by the Crown, apart from the provision of manpower. Inevitably, some of these burdens were financial, as money was required to support other aspects of the war effort. In 1486, the Crown demanded a loan of a million *maravedís* from Córdoba city council and 300,000 *mrs* from Jerez, while, three years later, the respective figures were 950,000 and 600,000 *mrs*.<sup>8</sup> Towns also had a duty to supply provisions for the Christian armies. In a letter from Córdoba, dated 15 May 1482, Ferdinand and Isabella asked Jerez not only for three hundred lancers (*lanceros*) and a similar number of crossbowmen (*ballesteros*), but also 3000 *fanegas* of flour, 5000 *arrobas* of wine, a hundred cows, five hundred sheep, a hundred pigs, three hundred goats and a hundred *quintales* of hemp.<sup>9</sup> Demands were made in 1483 for eight days' provisions and two hundred cattle, other unspecified animals and 172 oxen with carters, while in 1484 the requirements were 500 pack-animals, 25,000 *fanegas* of flour and a further seventy carts with oxen and carters. In 1485, four hundred loaded pack-animals were asked for.<sup>10</sup> In addition to all this, the Crown demanded extra tax contributions from these towns. In April 1482, Jerez council placed *imposiciones* of three per cent on such commodities as cloth, fruit, shoes, honey, wax and cochineal, in order to raise 150,000 *mrs* for the war, while in June of that year, a *repartimiento* of 407,793 *mrs* was raised from the *alcabala* and *almojarifazgo* of the town. It appears that the money was spent on the billeting of royal troops and on their mule-train.<sup>11</sup> Professor Ladero long ago established that Ferdinand and Isabella achieved considerable success in their efforts, after the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, to increase the revenues of the Castilian Crown and it is evident that, up to January 1492, much of this money was spent on the Granada campaigns.<sup>12</sup> What is less commonly recognised, though, is that the demands of war on towns such as Córdoba and Jerez did not cease when the Nasrid kingdom fell. In March 1496, Jerez was asked for 150 handgunners (*espingarderos*) to join an army being recruited by Ferdinand at Perpignan to fight the French. The town was required to provide the soldiers with two months' pay, and also supply 2500 *cabices* of wheat. The Muslim revolt in the Alpujarras led to a rare general levy of all the able-bodied men of Jerez aged between seventeen and seventy, while in 1503, money was raised once again for war against France. Jerez's share was just over a million *maravedís*. In 1509, further levies of soldiers and artificers were made for Cisneros' crusade to Oran.<sup>13</sup> Córdoba found itself in a similar case during the

<sup>6</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *Conquista*, pp. 235, 237-8, 242, 244, 246-9, 262-3, 267-8, 280-2.

<sup>7</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *Conquista*, pp. 239, 242, 244, 254-5, 258, 261, 264, 271, 279, 284. The figures referred to in notes 5-7 are recorded and discussed in EDWARDS, J., "Córdoba and Jerez de la Frontera in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 1474-1516. A study of the relationship between the nobles and the towns", doctoral thesis, Oxford, 1976, pp. 191, 282-6, and *Christian Córdoba. The city and its region in the late Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 144-5. See also Archivo Municipal de Jerez, Actas Capitulares [AMJ Actas] 1482 fol. 86; 1483 fols 70v, 144v; 1484 fols 32, 84, 147; 1485 fols 166v, 174; 1490 fol. 211v; 1491 fol. 118v.

<sup>8</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *Conquista*, pp. 293, 296, 297.

<sup>9</sup> AMJ Actas 1482 fol. 86.

<sup>10</sup> AMJ Actas 1483 fols 144v, 150v; 1484 fols 10, 59, 78v, 146v, 147; 1485 fol. 174.

<sup>11</sup> AMJ Actas 1482 fols 23, 147, 166, 153.

<sup>12</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *La hacienda real de Castilla en el siglo XV*, La Laguna, 1973.

<sup>13</sup> AMJ Actas 1496 fols 28, 143v; 1500 fol. 167; 1503 fols 290-294; 1509 fols 46, 56, 64.

period following the capture of Granada. As potential conflict with the French was building up in the last days of 1495, the *corregidor* and council received a request for four hundred hand-gunners, with armour, and pay for two months.<sup>14</sup> Thus began a long wrangle between the city and the Crown, over the extent of the requirements for manpower and finance that were to be made by the latter, a dispute which was to highlight existing social tensions in Córdoba. The wider issues will be considered below, but the immediate narrative went as follows, according to the minutes of the meetings of the city council. On 8 January 1496, the *veinticuatro*s voted to pay two hundred *reales* as expenses to Juan Mexía, *jurado* of La Rambla, for him to go to Court to protest at the Crown's demands for war taxation during the previous year, while, on 15 February, the council agreed, after a debate, to appeal against the levy of the hand-gunners. Mexía returned with the news that the troops would be required to assemble by the end of March, but the formation of the royal army was postponed until the end of June, at Almazán (Soria). The council decided that its contingent should gather at Almodóvar del Río on Sunday 19 June.<sup>15</sup> As will become clear, the debate over the raising, and particularly the funding, of these troops was to rumble on through the ensuing months, but in the meantime a further demand was received, on 21 September of that year, for 150 horsemen, 200 infantry, 100 hand-gunners and 100 crossbowmen.<sup>16</sup> The Muslim uprising in the Alpujarras led to military demands on Córdoba as well as Jerez. On 10 September 1499, a request came from Ferdinand, in Granada, for thirty handgunners, twelve master carpenters and twelve master bricklayers. These last were to be men "who know how to lay bricks" [*maestros que sepan asentar ladrillo*], while the carpenters were to be "the wealthiest and richest and should be good masters" [*los más cabdalosos e ricos e que sean buenos maestros*]. Córdoba was told, on 12 September, that the troops should assemble two days later, and that they and the craftsmen should be provided with pay by the city. By December, the situation had so deteriorated, however, that archbishop Hernando de Talavera wrote from Granada asking for a general levy, similar to that demanded at the same time of Jerez.<sup>17</sup> When faced with the traditional Moorish threat, Córdoba showed considerably more fervour than it had done in financing the handgunners for Perpignan, a few years before. Twelve thousand *maravedís* were voted to pay for the horse which was to be ridden by the city's standard-bearer, the *alférez*, while the count of Cabra, as *alguacil mayor*, agreed to pay the municipal trumpeters and drummers.<sup>18</sup> The emergency continued and, on 23 November 1500, the Crown demanded a further hundred handgunners, to be sent within a week, with ammunition and wages, to the kingdom of Granada, while on 18 December a plea was sent for 200 lancers, a similar number of handgunners and 600 crossbowmen, who were to muster, with provisions on Christmas Day.<sup>19</sup> In the following year, the Sierra Bermeja war took place, and once again, Córdoba was asked for forces comparable to those demanded during the earlier war for the conquest of Granada. 800 crossbowmen and 200 handgunners were required, their wages to be paid by the council. Further demands were made for troops in 1502 and 1503, in the first case three hundred handgunners, who were 'to be good and know how to shoot well' [*que sean buenos e sepan bien tyrar*], while in the latter year a series of demands was

<sup>14</sup> Archivo Municipal de Córdoba, Actas Capitulares, [AMC Actas] 20.12.1495.

<sup>15</sup> AMC Actas 8.1.1496, 15.2.1496, 16.3.1496, 12.6.1496.

<sup>16</sup> AMC Actas 21.9.1496.

<sup>17</sup> AMC Actas 10.9.1499, 12.9.1499, 20.12.1499.

<sup>18</sup> AMC Actas 3.1.1500, 14.2.1500.

<sup>19</sup> AMC Actas 23.11.1500, 18.12.1500.

made for service both in neighbouring Granada, against Muslim rebels, and in distant Perpignan, against the French.<sup>20</sup> In 1505, troops were demanded to be sent to Málaga for the expedition to Mers-al-Kebir, and Córdoba participated with Jerez in the Oran expedition of 1510.<sup>21</sup> On 10 October of that year, a notary in Córdoba recorded the sums which had been paid by the Crown for military service, with appropriate documentation (*albalás de bien servido*) to nearly a hundred of the city's men: the amounts paid ranged between 1150 and 6350 *maravedís*, though most received between 4000 and 5000 *msr*.<sup>22</sup> By that time, though, the political landscape of the city and its territory had changed considerably.

The part paid by the city and area of Córdoba in the turmoil and upheavals of the latter years of the reign of Enrique IV has long been recognised.<sup>23</sup> However, it has since become abundantly clear that whatever efforts had subsequently been made by Isabel and Fernando to restore royal prestige in the region, the authority of the Crown had begun to crumble once more in the early years of the sixteenth century. In the context of growing social and economic difficulties, the local upper nobility began to reassert itself, particularly after Isabel's death in 1504. On 15 June 1506, the system of royally appointed *corregidores* or *pesquisidores* broke down for the first time since 1478. The marquis of Priego and the count of Cabra returned to exercise their former authority as *alcalde mayor* and *alguacil mayor*, respectively. After a long absence, they had been attending council meetings with some regularity since the proclamation of Juana as Isabel's successor on 8 December 1504. Although the first period of 'constitutional' rebellion, in 1506, lasted a mere two months, until Don Diego Osorio was duly installed as the Crown's *corregidor* on 19 August, the habit of governing the city without recourse to such royal officials was easily reacquired by the *veinticuatro*s of Córdoba. Ironically, it had been made possible by a reconciliation between the rival Aguilar and Baena factions, which had largely been engineered by the Catholic Monarchs themselves.<sup>24</sup> A further breakdown of the rotation of *corregidores* in the city, in the latter months of 1507, allowed the marquis and count to take up the reins of power once more, but the culmination of local defiance of the royal government came in 1508 and 1509, when Fernando, as regent of Castile, used fairly massive military force to end a further excursion by the marquis of Priego and his supporters. Thereafter, at the political level, Córdoba remained in sullen obedience to the Crown, up to and beyond the revolt of the *Comunidades* in 1521-1522.<sup>25</sup> Jerez, too, became involved in conflict between nobles and the Crown in this period, owing to its proximity to the disputed town of Gibraltar. In 1467, the powerful duke of Medina Sidonia had conquered this royal possession, which was valuable to him not only because of its strategic defensive position against Islam, but because it possessed valuable tunny fisheries, and fitted well into the chain of ports through

<sup>20</sup> AMC Actas 8.8.1502, 13.8.1502, 1.2.1503, 4.9.1503, 6.10.1503. For a more comprehensive view of the Andalusian response to royal demands at this time, though Córdoba is excluded, see BELLO LEON, J.M., "Andalucía en el abastecimiento del ejército durante la defensa del Rosellón (1495-1503)", *En la España Medieval*, XVII (1994), pp. 213-234.

<sup>21</sup> AMC Actas 19.7.1505, 21.7.1505, 30.10.1505, 9.1.1510, 30.1.1510.

<sup>22</sup> Archivo Histórico Provincial de Córdoba, Protocolos, office 33 vol.1, fols 307r-308v.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, LADERO, M.A., *Andalucía en el siglo XV. Estudios de historia política*, Madrid, 1973, pp. 123-139.

<sup>24</sup> EDWARDS, J., *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 133-138; YUN CASALIJA, E., *Crisis de subsistencias y conflictividad en Córdoba a principios del siglo XVI*, Córdoba, 1990, pp. 195-208.

<sup>25</sup> EDWARDS, J., *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 158-161 and "La révolte du marquis de Priego à Cordoue en 1508: un symptôme des tensions d'une société urbaine", *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, XII (1976), pp. 165-172; YUN CASALIJA, E., *Crisis*, pp. 195-196; EDWARDS, J., "La noblesse de Cordoue et la révolte des *Comunidades* de Castille", in *Bandos y querrelas dinásticas en España al final de la Edad Media* [= *Cuadernos de la Biblioteca Española*, II, Paris, 1991, pp. 135-155.

which the Guzmán traded with Breton and Flemish merchants, among others. At the beginning of Isabel's reign, the duke was given the title of marquis of Gibraltar, in recognition of her need for his support, but it was inevitable that, once the conquest of Granada had been achieved, attempts would be made to regain this royal possession. This duly occurred in 1501-2, and, in 1503, Gibraltar was placed under the authority of the corregidor of Ronda and Marbella, Luis Venegas. After Isabel's death, the new king favoured duke Juan with the title of captain-general of Andalusia, Granada and Murcia, but, after Felipe followed his mother-in-law to the grave, on 25 August 1506, the duke was ungrateful enough to attack Gibraltar with a significant force, consisting, according to the subsequent royal investigation, of 900 cavalry and a thousand infantry. It seems that Jerez, like other towns in the area, was glad to respond favourably to the *corregidor* of Ronda's request for help to resist this attack. On 3 October 1506, the town council gave thirteen *cabices* of wheat to an *alcalde* of Gibraltar for the relief of the town's inhabitants, though there is no reference in the municipal records to the sending of troops. In the event, only legal action was taken against the duke, and it was an attack of plague, contracted in Seville, which was to inflict upon him the supreme punishment.<sup>26</sup>

The revival of the power of the Andalusian nobility in the first ten or twenty years of the sixteenth century brought to renewed prominence those partially feudal social and political groupings known as "bands" (*bandos*). These units of individuals went beyond the ties of allegiance which were involved in being the vassals of great lords, or members of their families or lineages (*linajes*), to form far more amorphous and complex alliances, often known as *parcialidades*.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Córdoba, the fifteenth-century conflict between the houses of Aguilar and Baena had been replaced, in the difficult and unstable first decade of the sixteenth by opposition between the marquis of Priego, in alliance with the bishop of Córdoba, Don Juan Daza (1505-1510), on the one hand, and the faction led by the *alcalde de los donceles*, Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba, on the other.<sup>28</sup> In the case of Jerez, the town fell into the sphere of influence of the rival Guzmán and Ponce de León families.<sup>29</sup> However, the main interest here is in the middling ranks of the nobility, which provided the core of these *bandos*.

Much work has been done, in recent years, on the various ranks of noble and knight which were to be found in late medieval Castile.<sup>30</sup> The resulting categorisation is as follows. At the top of the social scale were the upper nobility, the fewer than a hundred lineages which were to be classified, in the reign of the emperor Charles V, as the *grandes*. The rest of the approximately ten per cent of the Castilian population which was recognised as having noble rank in the period of the Catholic Monarchs was, according to Marie-Claude Gerbet, divided into two main parts, the middling nobility (*moyenne noblesse*), or *hidalgos*, and the urban knights (*caballeros villanos*).<sup>31</sup> In the specific case of Córdoba, however, while the *grandes* or *títulos*, for example the leaders of the *bandos*, were easily

<sup>26</sup> EDWARDS, J., "Córdoba and Jerez de la Frontera", pp. 232-234.

<sup>27</sup> EDWARDS, J., *Christian Córdoba*, p. 152; QUINTANILLA RASO, M.C., "Estructuras sociales y familiares y papel político de la nobleza cordobesa (siglos XIV y XV)", *En la España Medieval*, III/2 (1982), pp. 331-352 and "Estructura y función de los bandos nobiliarios en Córdoba a fines de la Edad Media", in *Bandos y querrelas*, pp. 157-184. For a more general discussion, see GERBET, M.-C., *Les noblesses espagnoles au Moyen Age (XIIe-XVe siècle)*, Paris, 1994, pp. 171-177.

<sup>28</sup> EDWARDS, J., *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 146-161, 175; YUN CASALUA, B., *Crisis*, pp. 221-224.

<sup>29</sup> EDWARDS, J., "Córdoba and Jerez de la Frontera", pp. 199-206, 231-236.

<sup>30</sup> For an up-to-date overview, see GERBET, M.-C., *Les noblesses espagnoles*, which compares all the Spanish kingdoms in this regard. An example of a relevant Andalusian study is SÁNCHEZ SAUS, R., *Caballería y itraje en la Sevilla medieval*, Seville, 1989.

<sup>31</sup> GERBET, M.-C., *Les noblesses espagnoles*, pp. 225-226.

distinguishable, it may be preferable to classify somewhat differently those who were below them in the hierarchy of nobility and knighthood. The distinction between *hidalgos* and *caballeros* was to become a source of controversy, particularly in Córdoba, in this period, but it also seems necessary to distinguish those nobles, or *hidalgos*, who possessed lordships (*señoríos*) from others who, though possessing noble status, may have had few economic resources. The seignorial nobility seems not to have been the target of the *caballeros de contía y gracia*, or *de premia*, in Andalusian towns such as Jerez and Córdoba: their concern was the 'poor *hidalgos*'.

On the face of it, the qualifications required for the status of *hidalgo* were so specific that they ought not to have caused great difficulty. To be recognised as noble, a man had to possess a fixed family residence and was, by the fifteenth century, increasingly required to marry within his peer-group. The concept of *linaje* was thus becoming increasingly important in the obtaining and the retention of *hidalguía*. Apart from social status, the possession of nobility also had legal, social and economic implications. In terms of the law, a *hidalgo* had a personal relationship with the ruler, and could only be arrested on his or her express order. In recognition of his military calling, his horses and weapons were exempt from seizure for debt or any other cause, and because of his supposed virtue and purity of blood, he might not be judicially tortured. Affairs of honour between *hidalgos* could be settled by a duel, and if a noble suffered the death penalty, this was by beheading not hanging. These privileges naturally applied to the titled nobility as well. In social and economic terms, a *hidalgo* was severely restricted, at least in theory, in how he might earn his living. 'Base and vile offices', not proper for a nobleman, included, according to legislation of Juan II, those of tailor, tanner, carpenter, stone-cutter, digger, cloth-shearer, barber, spice-merchant, retailer and shoe-maker.<sup>32</sup> Those found to be practising such jobs and crafts would immediately be returned to the *jurados*' tax-lists and become contributors to direct taxation (*pecheros*). As about three quarters of the royal revenue in the late fifteenth century came from indirect taxation and particularly from the *alcabala*, which did not allow for exemptions, the economic gain to be obtained from being a *hidalgo* outside the titled nobility was not great. The symbolic importance of such status was, however, clearly demonstrated by the growing conflict, in Andalusian towns such as Córdoba and Jerez, between *hidalgos* and *caballeros de premia*, or *de gracia y contía*, which developed in the 1490s and the first two decades of the sixteenth century, particularly in the former town.

The writer and military man Diego de Valera had a clear view of the distinction between knighthood and nobility. For him, knighthood could not, according to Roman law, confer nobility on a man, unless he became a papal knight.<sup>33</sup> In other words, he retained the earlier notion that to be a knight was a function, rather than something that could be inherited through the possession of 'blue' blood. It was on this concept that the institution of the 'urban' knight was based. The ancestors of the *caballeros* who occupied this category in towns such as Córdoba and Jerez were the *caballeros villanos* of towns further north, in earlier stages of the Reconquest. They had originally been induced to maintain the necessary equipment of a knight, in particular a horse, and display it at regular intervals on public parade, by the offer of exemption from *monedas*, which formed a relatively minor part of royal direct taxation in the fifteenth century. However, the link

<sup>32</sup> EDWARDS, J., *Christian Córdoba*, pp. 132-133; MONTALVO, A. D. DE, *Leyes de España*, Zaragoza, 1485, part 4 title 1 law 9.

<sup>33</sup> VALERA, D. DE, "Espejo de la verdadera nobleza", *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, CXVI, p. 116a.

between knighthood and wealth, rather than noble descent, was to prove strong in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and in the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, Andalusian males were required by law to serve as *caballeros* in this category if their property was worth more than 50,000 *maravedis*.<sup>34</sup> The records from Jerez and Córdoba show that individuals often found it difficult to reconcile their economic and military vocations.

Tensions of this kind are evident in Jerez from early in the fifteenth century. The acts of the town's council of thirteen in 1409 include the recognition, on 11 December, of six individuals as *caballeros de contía*, in the parishes of San Juan, San Salvador and San Marcos.<sup>35</sup> A parade of knights was ordered to take place on 12 January, but it emerged from this that many of them were not maintaining the requisite equipment and weapons.<sup>36</sup> A surviving list of *caballeros de contía*, recorded by the *jurados* and received by the council in April 1426, gives a brief impression of their social profile: they included cloth and linen merchants, as well as blacksmiths.<sup>37</sup> Later records indicate that a parade of *caballeros de gracia y de contía* was ordered to take place at 1 p.m. on Palm Sunday 1455. It may be revealing, however, that on this occasion the council asked for the attendance of 'any other persons who have horses', while all those who failed to attend were to be fined 600 *mrs* each.<sup>38</sup> Similar desperation may be indicated by the granting of the rank of *caballero de contía* to the porter of the council chambers, in March 1459.<sup>39</sup>

In the case of Córdoba, the records are best from the 1490s and after. In the period following the conclusion of the Granada war, parades (*alardes*) of *caballeros de premia* were held with some regularity, for example on the last Sunday of May in 1495, on the Sunday at the end of Easter week in 1496 [*postrero día de Pascua primero que viene*], for All Saints' day [1 November] 1497, for the last Sunday of May 1500 and, after some interruption during the troublesome years experienced by the city in the early sixteenth century, on All Saints' day 1515.<sup>40</sup> A subsequent discussion in the city council suggests that all did not go well on the day. Half of the *caballeros de premia* did not appear on parade, and those that did were not properly equipped. In other cases, sons and servants were sent as substitutes, "and those who did sally forth were in as great disorder as those who stayed in the aforesaid city".<sup>41</sup> The tension between the desire to achieve knightly status and the economic difficulty of retaining it was evident in a number of cases. The town clerk [*escribano del concejo*] of Córdoba recorded the recognition, during these years, of various individuals as *caballeros de premia*. The matter was not, however, uncontroversial. At its meeting on 19 October 1496, during the dispute over social status and military service which had been precipitated in the city by the Crown's demands for troops to defend Catalan territory against the French, Juan de Arguñano, the lieutenant of the *alférez* of Córdoba, chaired a discussion on the proper procedure for designating *caballeros de premia*. According to the current possessors of that rank, this duty fell traditionally to the

<sup>34</sup> LADERO QUESADA, M.A., *La hacienda real de Castilla en el siglo XV*, pp.199-211; EDWARDS, J., "Politics and ideology in late medieval Córdoba", *En la España medieval*, IV (1984), 277-303, p.288; GERBET, *Les noblesses espagnoles*, pp.227-228.

<sup>35</sup> AMJ Actas 11.12.1409.

<sup>36</sup> AMJ Actas 8.1.1410, 5.2.1410.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>38</sup> "E otras qualesquier personas que tovieren cavallos."

<sup>39</sup> AMJ Actas 29.3.1459.

<sup>40</sup> AMC Actas 4.5.1495, 29.2.1496, 25.8.1497, 27.3.1500, 26.9.1515.

<sup>41</sup> AMC Actas 12.11.1515 ["e por ellos sus hijos e nietos, e por la mucha desorden...que en ello se uvo, asy en los que salieron como en los que quedaron en la dicha ciudad"].

magistrates [*justicia*], the *alférez*, and one *veinticuatro* designated by his colleagues, as well as the *jurados* of the city parish or outlying town in which the candidate resided. The result of the discussion was to remove the *jurados* from the process, leaving it to the *justicia*, the *alférez*, and the designated *veinticuatro*, in this case Sancho Carrillo.<sup>42</sup> Subsequent admissions to the rank of *caballero de premia* included the lawyer Bachiller Alarcón, who was recognised at the council meeting on 6 February 1497, even though he lacked the requisite wealth, in recognition of his legal services.

"They agreed that his payment of taxes should be suspended until he has the wealth to be a *caballero de premia*".<sup>43</sup>

By 1499, though, the council seems to have been taking a more severe view of applications for this category of knighthood. In January of that year, the *veinticuatro* Luis de Angulo was put in charge of the hearing of such petitions, and, in the following March, the application of 'De la Boneda, father of the archdeacon', was referred to the High Court [*Chancillería*].<sup>44</sup> In December 1501, Alonso Gutiérrez of Santaella was deputed to investigate the wealth of two individuals in that town who aspired to become *caballeros de premia*, while in 1503, in contrast to their earlier exclusion, the *jurados* of Córdoba were appointed to sit with the *corregidor*, the *alférez*, and the *veinticuatro*s Gonzalo Cabrera and Cristóbal de Mesa, to consider further applications for admission to that rank.<sup>45</sup> However, the method of nominating *caballeros de premia* was apparently still controversial, and became caught up in the troubles of the city during the succeeding years. In January 1506, the *alférez* felt it necessary to issue a formal order [*requirimiento*] that no innovation should be made in the system of appointment, 'for the sake of what concerns his office as *alférez* of Córdoba, which is that it is good that there should be *caballeros*'.<sup>46</sup>

While there seems to have been a steady demand for the status of *caballero de premia* in Córdoba in this period, lack of wealth increasingly meant demotion. In June 1496, Diego de Uceda was removed from the list by the council, after information on his economic state had been provided by the *alcalde mayor*, Diego Muñiz de Godoy, and the *alférez*. After 1500, however, such cases seem to have become more frequent, and voluntary, in the sense that individuals now actively sought to be removed from the list. Thus Juan Barzuelo asked to be removed from the list in 1502, because of lack of money, while on 1 August of that year, two others were struck off because their wealth amounted to less than 40,000 *mrs* each, when the qualification was 50,000 *mrs*, as was Juan Fajardo later in that month, and Pedro de Montilla in September of the same year. Domingo Muñoz of Torremilano was removed for a similar reason in 1504.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, Juan Pérez, a dealer [*mercader*] of the parish of San Nicolás del Ajerquia, was admitted as a *caballero de premia* on 4 November 1506, because he did have sufficient wealth.<sup>48</sup> The role of the *caballeros de premia* of Córdoba in the political conflicts of the city and region in the years around 1500 has been subjected to careful scrutiny.<sup>49</sup> What

<sup>42</sup> AMC Actas 19.10.1496.

<sup>43</sup> AMC Actas 6.2.1497. "Acordaron que este suspendida su pechería fasta que tenga contía para ser caballero de premia."

<sup>44</sup> AMC Actas 2.1.1499, 4.3.1499.

<sup>45</sup> AMC Actas 22.12.1501, 15.9.1503.

<sup>46</sup> AMC Actas 30.1.1506 ["por lo que toca a su oficio de Alférez of Córdoba, que es bien que aya cavalleros"].

<sup>47</sup> AMC Actas 1.6.1496, 22.1502, 1.8.1502, 19.9.1502, 5.1.1504.

<sup>48</sup> AMC Actas 4.11.1506.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, EDWARDS, J., 'Politics and ideology', pp. 298-293 and "La noblesse de Cordoue", pp. 143-144; QUINTANILLA RASO, M.C., "La caballería cordobesa a finales de la Edad Media: análisis de un conflicto urbano", in *Villes et sociétés urbaines au Moyen Age. Hommage à M. le Professeur Jacques Heers* [= *Cultures et Civilisations Médiévales*, xii, Paris, 1994, pp. 121-132.



has not always been considered is the economic motivation that seems to have lain behind much of the political, religious and social strife in Córdoba, as in other Andalusian cities, in this period.<sup>50</sup> To conclude, the intention here is to focus not on specific taxes, and debates about their relative merits as methods of raising revenue, but rather on the discussions that took place in Jerez de la Frontera, at various times during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Evidence of such debates survives in the minutes of the meetings of the respective municipal councils, and their background was the continuing weakness of public finances, when compared with the wealth of some individuals. One consequence of this was the growing tendency of councils to place assizes [*sisas*], or indirect taxes, on consumer products, which sometimes included foodstuffs.<sup>51</sup>

In May 1438, Jerez town council heard a petition from two citizens, complaining about various abuses in the government of the town. They urged that no official should grant himself a tax exemption on his own authority, and that the allocation [*repartimiento*] of tax contributions should henceforth be carried out by a committee in each parish, consisting of its *jurados* and three citizens. Although the town clerk, Juan Román, left the council chamber during the ensuing debate, it appears from negative evidence that the magistrates, and the three *veinticuatro*s present, persuaded the petitioners not to proceed with their demands to the king.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that the complainants had identified what was perhaps the main flaw in the Castilian taxation system in the later Middle Ages, and one which greatly strengthened the desire of individuals to obtain exemptions from their duty to contribute to the public purse. This was that most of the powerful subjects of the Castilian Crown, who were generally the most wealthy, instead of making a larger contribution than their fellow citizens to the royal income, made no direct contribution at all. In addition, as the 1438 articles pointed out, there was no practical method of relating the contributions of those who did pay *pechos* to their real wealth. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Jerez petitioners, Juan de Cuadros and Fernando Ruiz, claimed that they had been called "troublemakers and scandalmongers" [*bolliciaadores e escandalisadores*] by the magistrates and councillors. Although Cuadros and Ruiz did not propose anything so radical as an end to the exemption of rich and powerful citizens from direct taxation, but confined themselves to seeking a juster sharing of the burden among the *pecheros*, the articles were potentially subversive, and the alarm of the magistrates and councillors, all of whom, as *exentos* by virtue of their office, stood to lose if they were put into effect, is understandable.

Generally speaking, disputes over exemptions and contributions to *pechos* were no more than isolated attempts by individuals to improve their own social and financial possibilities, but the general issues were far from dead after 1438. Thus Jerez council returned to the subject in 1508-9, as a result, it appears, not only of the tensions caused by the burdens of the Granada war, but also those of the subsequent campaigns already detailed.<sup>53</sup> In 1508, as so often, the municipal budget of Jerez was in a poor state. The traditional remedy in such a case was to place *sisas* on commodities such as foodstuffs, which were not normally subject to municipal taxation, but the council was reluctant to do so on this occasion, because it realised that the burden of indirect taxation fell disproportionately on the poor. If the *sisas* had been placed on luxury goods, such as imported cloth, the

<sup>50</sup> The most notable exception is YUN CASARILLA, B., *Crisis*.

<sup>51</sup> EDWARDS, J., "Córdoba and Jerez de Frontera", pp. 157-160.

<sup>52</sup> AMJ Actas 23.5.1438.

<sup>53</sup> AMJ Actas 5.1508, fol.25 and 24.9.1509.

rich would have been more affected, but taxes on basic foodstuffs inevitably made less distinction between rich and poor, whose consumption of necessities differed much less than their purchase of luxuries. The weighting of impositions on food against the poor was increased by the fact, which was also observed by Jerez's councillors, that many of the wealthy bought little food in the market, because they produced what they needed for themselves and their households on their own estates. In this way, those best able to pay the tax were able to avoid it. The council was also concerned that *hidalgos* escaped direct taxation, thus adding to the burden on poorer taxpayers. Councillors admitted that many claims to exemption were false, but claimed that it lacked the finance to contest them in law. Because of this, and not surprisingly, little was done either in Jerez or in Córdoba, despite the good intentions that were expressed in the council chamber. The old system continued in both towns, and exemption from direct taxation continued to be regarded as the natural accompaniment to political, social and financial success. The burden of war may have precipitated the occasional crisis of conscience, but the desire for wealth and privilege overcame them with little difficulty. The role of taxation in the political and social problems of towns such as Córdoba and Jerez de la Frontera in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries should not be underestimated.

### Appendix One

*Caballeros de contía* in Jerez de la Frontera  
 Declaration to the council (*concejo*) of Jerez de la Frontera by its parish councillors  
 (*jurados*) of the names of the *caballeros de contía* then resident in their parishes.

Parish of San Dionisio -  
 Alfonso Fernández, parish councillor  
 Martín Sánchez de Galdames  
 Juan González, linen-drapeer, of Rota  
 Diego Sánchez, cloth-merchant  
 Alfonso Ruíz, cloth-merchant  
 Alfonso Rodríguez de Vejer, cloth-merchant  
 Antón Martín Meqelim  
 Antón Martín, blacksmith  
 Francisco García, blacksmith  
 Fernando Díaz de Villacreces  
 Manuel Fernández de Carmona

#### *San Mateos*

Bartolomé de las Casas,  
 Martín García, son of Fernando García de Gatayta  
 Antón García, son-in-law of Pedro Gómez de la Partera  
 Lásaro Martín de Mora  
 Francisco García, son of Juan  
 García de la Carpintería

#### *San Juan*

Juan de Cuenca, *jurado*  
 Cristóbal Martínez de Morla  
 Alfonso Díaz de Espinosa  
 Fernando Velázquez de Cuéllar

#### *San Marcos*

Fernando Alonso and Juan López, *jurados*  
 Bachiller Diego de Herrera  
 Antón Sánchez

### Appendix Two

*Recorded occupations of Caballeros de Premia of Córdoba who paraded in the Campo de la Verdad on 5 November 1497*

[AHPC Protocolos, Oficio 14 tomo 31 cuaderno 22 fols. 304v-306r, Pedro González, escribano]

#### *La Magdalena*

Labrador [farmer]	1
Trapero [cloth-merchant]	1
Hortelano [gardener]	1
Silvanero [woodman]	1

#### *San Nicolás del Axerquía*

Curtidores [tanners]	7
Pelijero [skinner]	1
Sillero [chair-maker]	1
Fustero [fustian-maker]	1

#### *Santiago*

Salinero [salt-seller]	1
Tintoreros [dyers]	2
Alcalde [municipal official]	1

#### *San Bartolomé*

Meleros [honey-dealers]	2
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#### *San Pedro*

Caldereros [coppersmiths]	2
Traperos [cloth-merchants]	3
Mercaderes [merchants]	2
Merchantes [general dealers]	2
Sillero [chair-maker]	1

#### *Santa María*

Carnicero [butcher]	1
Joyero [jeweller]	1
Platero [silversmith]	1
Tejero [weaver]	1

#### *San Nicolás de la Villa*

Labradores [farmers]	2
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#### *San Lorenzo*

Labradores	4
Herrero [blacksmith]	1
Hortelano [gardener]	1
Meleros [honey-dealer]	2
Yuntero [ploughman]	1