



# ROOM 11

## The Expulsion

At the endings of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in Catalonia, the amount of people who had converted to Christianity had increased a lot. Nevertheless, the majority of those who had converted to Christianity continued living in the Catalan cities and villages, and maintained a close relationship with their former co-religionists. That was, according to the inquisitors, a great danger since it still allowed unconverted Jews to indoctrinate and remind the converts of the old practices of the religion that was now prohibited for them. Thus, they could frequently and easily proselytise the converts.

With this foundation as a basis, and promoted by inquisitor friars, the Catholic Royalty signed on 31 March 1492, an edict which gave the Jewish population in all their kingdoms three months time to embrace the Christian faith. If said term arrived and they persisted in their “mistaken” faith, they would have to leave the cities, villages and towns where they had been born and where they had lived for generations.

In Girona, the courts received a letter dated 20 April 1492 in which King Fernando, referred to the edict of expulsion of all

the Jews and Jewesses, and ordered the courts to protect all of them during the time of their exit, to avoid attacks and excessive acts of violence.

At the beginning of July of that year, the Jewish community of Girona put the synagogue, the ritual bath, the children’s school, the meeting place, the butcher’s and the slaughter house up for sale. Everything was sold for the pittance of 30 pounds of common currency. The old sites, which for so many centuries had lodged ancient prayers and rituals, were turned into just another part of the urban, and Christian, tangle of the city of Girona.



■ Jewish People was expelled from several parts of Europe during the medieval centuries. *Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 14r. Catalonia, s. XIV. Facsimile. MHJ, Girona.*



# The persecutions

The attacks of 1391 and the prohibitions and orders to deprivation induced the majority of Jewish population to accept the baptism to try to overcome the life and the goods, and to live with certain, almost always fictitious, calmness. The lay people had to be confronted to new although not smaller difficulties. They were badly seen and worse accepted by the Christian society, which often accused them of opportunism and falseness. The Jewish community, on its part, accused them of having betrayed the faith of their ancestors. Still to make it more difficult, since they received a formation insignificant and in a complete way insufficient in subjects of religion and Christian tradition, they committed errors of practice, of thought or of doctrine, so they continued behaving consciously or unconsciously according to the law and the Jewish tradition in which they had appeared and grown.

To control that population the Tribunal of the The Inquisition, a repressive organism that according to its creators was destined to safeguard the pureness of the Christian faith, was created in 1480. The inquisitorial system, the deployment of one authentic “repressor machinery” and the persecutions that were unchained created situations

of authentic terror and fanaticism. The sentence could be of different ways; the maximum sentence was to die in the bonfire. When the person had avoided the city, sentence was dictated *in statue*, what consisted in burning a doll of straw that represented the condemned one. There were also the different *penitenciamientos*, punishments and humiliations that entailed the confiscation of goods. Any person that fell in the hands of the The Inquisition remained marked forever, and not only she, but all its family, even the descending generations.

Joana Libiana was daughter of a converted family from Gerona. On the 23rd of February 1496 she was taken in Barcelona together with

her sisters Marquesa and Caterina. They had been accused of carrying out Jewish practices in secret and of following “The Law of Moses”: the shirt being changed on Saturdays, not eating pork, or celebrating some Jewish holidays as Passover, the New Year or Yom Kippur. They suffered hard interrogations, and ended up confessing. All the furniture goods and properties were confiscated them, and were excommunicated and confined in life imprisonment.



■ Jueus cremant a la foguera. Extret del libre *Il capello a punta*, pàg. 38, imatge 18.