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SOCIAL BONDS, KINSHIP,
AND NETWORKS



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Complicated Lives and Collaborative Research: Mapping the Effects of Conversion to Christianity on Jewish Marriage Practices in Late Medieval Girona

Alexandra Guerson and Dana Wessell Lightfoot*

Abstract: This article explores how our work as collaborative historians has allowed us to map the stories of Jewish families in Girona during the early decades of the fifteenth century—a crucial moment in their history— by pulling together documents from royal, municipal, and notarial archives. Here we focus on the Vidal family—Caravida, his first wife Bonafilla, and second wife Regina—analyzing hundreds of records to tell a tale of polygamy, accusations of theft, the death of a son, conversion to Christianity, divorce, a mixed marriage, and investigation and conviction by the inquisition. Interwoven with our narrative of the Vidals, we discuss some of the tools that have helped us bring together such varied sources. Making all this possible is our use of a relational database which has aided our ability to link together such rich documentation from a variety of archives. Finally, we also consider the role of happenstance in our examination of certain archival sources; specifically, the impact of stumbling across the registers of the local notary who worked with the inquisition on our understanding of the troubles that Jewish and converso families faced as they became caught in conflicts between ecclesiastical, municipal, and royal officials.

* We are grateful to the Medieval Gender Discussion Group run by Michelle Armstrong Partida (Emory University) for reading this article and giving us timely feedback while at the same time keeping us sane and connected during the Covid 19 pandemic. Robin Vose was extremely generous with information on the activities of Catalan inquisitors, and Joaquin Garcia Porcar from the Archives of the Crown of Aragon came to our rescue when we needed to double check a reference. As always, the staff of the Arxiu Històric de Girona made us feel at home during our research there, which was funded by an Insight Grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1415, Bonafilla, the wife of Caravida Vidal, a Jew of Girona, made an appeal to the king, asking him to revoke a license granted to her husband allowing him to take a second wife.¹ Bonafilla insisted that Caravida's reason for this request—that she was too old and unable to have children—was “expressly false” and claimed that she would provide proof of her ability to conceive a child. Bonafilla argued that Caravida's request was not out of a desire for an heir, as his initial petition to the monarch had stated, but instead because of his lust. Within the Crown of Aragon, while polygamy was illegal, Jewish men could take on a new wife in cases of infertility by obtaining a royal license. In response to Bonafilla's request, King Ferran ordered a local judge to investigate the matter according to Jewish law, mandating that if Bonafilla's claims were true, the justice should revoke the previously awarded license. The king also stated that until the investigation was concluded, the license Caravida had been given was suspended.

This royal letter is part of a series involving the couple that were issued by the king and dowager queen, all related to a request made by Caravida in December of 1414 for a license to take a second wife while remaining married to Bonafilla. In what follows, we discuss how our work as collaborative historians has allowed us to map the stories of Jewish families in Girona during the early decades of the fifteenth century—a crucial moment in their history—by pulling together documents from royal, municipal, and notarial archives. Here we focus on the Vidal family—Caravida, his first wife Bonafilla, and second wife Regina—analyzing hundreds of records to tell a tale of polygamy, accusations of theft, the death of a son, conversion to Christianity, divorce, a mixed marriage, and investigation and conviction by the inquisition. Interwoven with our narrative of the Vidals, we discuss some of the tools that have helped us bring together such varied sources. Making all this possible is our use of a relational database, which has aided our ability to link together such rich documentation from a variety of archives. Finally, we also consider the role of happenstance in our examination of certain archival sources; specifically, the impact of stumbling across the registers of the local notary who worked with the inquisition on our understanding of the troubles that Jewish and converso families faced as they became caught in conflicts between ecclesiastical, municipal, and royal officials.

¹ Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó [hereafter, ACA], Reial Cancilleria, Registres, 2393 (February 8, 1415) 214v–215r.

As told through the records of the royal chancery alone, Caravida and Bonafilla's narrative is one of marital conflict over a polygamy license. It is only through a careful combing of the rich notarial evidence from Girona that the considerably more complex details of their family life emerge. As we will see, notarial documents show the couple hiring arbitrators to settle marital conflict, more details about Caravida's second marriage once he succeeds in obtaining his license, Caravida's conversion to Christianity, his brush with the inquisition, his divorce from Bonafilla, and his ultimate failure in producing an heir. In many ways, their story is emblematic of the challenges faced by the Jewish community of Girona during the last decades of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the fifteenth: systemic violence, increasingly oppressive taxation, conversion to Christianity, and interference from municipal and ecclesiastical officials. Caravida Vidal and Bonafilla's marital life, which deals with polygamy and divorce, presents legal practices that were alien to the broader Christian legal culture of medieval Catalonia. That in itself is not unusual in such a legally pluralistic society in which Jews enjoyed legal autonomy and were able to preserve their own legal practices. Yet, in an age of mass conversion, once Caravida Vidal converted to Christianity, family life became a site where the lines between Christian and Jewish laws were blurred. In such spaces, the social and political anxieties of ecclesiastical, municipal, and royal officials proliferated, with significant consequences for family and social networks. Overall, the case of the Vidal family demonstrates the complications that Jewish families faced as they navigated fiscal crises and the increasing numbers of converts which characterized the Jewish community of Girona in the late medieval period.

In the Archives—The Jews of Girona

The city of Girona was the home of the second largest Jewish community in medieval Catalonia, second only to Barcelona, and sources on the Jews abound in its three historical archives: the municipal archives, diocesan archives, and the notarial archives held at the Arxiu Històric de Girona (Historical Archives of Girona, AHG). Of the three, the notarial archives are by far the richest in terms of volume of sources for the period. The Jews of Girona made frequent use of the services of local notaries, who kept their dealings with Jews registered among those with Christians. Finding them requires reading through each register as the documents are not individually catalogued. For the period from 1390–1450, there

are approximately nine hundred volumes of notarial registers. Since each volume contains about 150–200 folios with two to three documents per page, the task of studying the Jewish community of Girona based on this documentation is certainly daunting for any scholar. As our exploration of the Vidal family will highlight, collaborative research and writing can open doors to tackle challenging research projects based on archival sources such as notarial records, knitting them together with documents from the royal chancery and municipal records, allowing us to combine our expertise on different types of sources. Wessell Lightfoot's earlier work on laboring-status women in Valencia was based on notarial records and civil court records, and Guerson's work on Christian–Jewish relations used mostly royal chancery records about Jewish communities from across the Crown of Aragon.² While much has been written about the Jewish community of Girona, collaboration therefore provides us with the opportunity to look more deeply and widely at the extant evidence, pulling together different strands to weave a more complex fabric of Jewish life. At the same time, our combined expertise in gender and Jewish history gives us the theoretical and contextual framework to consider this evidence. So, when Caravida Vidal and Bonafilla fought over his request to marry a second wife in the royal courts, we were able to put those requests within the context of the history of polygamy among Jews of the Crown of Aragon, royal policy on the case, and women's ability to use courts in their conflicts with their husbands.³ Our complementary methodological and theoretical backgrounds are particularly important in examining the Girona Jewish community from the perspective of gender and family history, highlighting the crucial role of Jewish women and conversas in the survival of their families during a period of crisis in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

We are not the first historians to discuss Caravida and Bonafilla's conflict over a royal license for polygamy. Jaume Riera mentions Caravida's request in his overview of the Jewish community in Girona from the

² Dana Wessell Lightfoot, *Women, Dowries and Agency: Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Valencia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Alexandra E. P. Guerson de Oliveira, "Coping with Crises: Christian–Jewish Relations in Catalonia and Aragon, 1380–1391" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 2012).

³ Technically, polygamy refers to a spouse of either gender taking more than one partner. Although we use the term "polygamy" throughout, as most scholars, what we refer to here is the Jewish practice of polygyny, a husband taking more than one wife.

twelfth to the fifteenth century.⁴ His purpose is to use this example as evidence of the tension between the ruling king Ferran and the dowager queen Violant over control of the Jewish community and its all-important taxes. In order to build his study of the Jews of Girona, Jaume Riera drew on his extensive expertise with the royal chancery records at the Archives of the Crown of Aragon supplemented by sources listed by Gemma Escribà in her catalogues of documents related to the Jewish community of Girona found in the municipal and diocesan archives of the city.⁵ While Riera's study is extremely useful in helping us understand the history of the Jewish community of Girona, neither he nor Escribà focuses on exploring these documents from the context of social and gender history. Riera's concern is to delineate the complex framework by which the Jewish community functioned as an administrative body and its relationship with the crown. Escribà's aim, in turn, is to catalogue and make available to scholars documents related to Jews during this period, allowing for further study of this important community. The Vidal family of Peratallada and Girona was also the subject of an article written by Santiago Sobrequés Vidal in 1947, using sources from the royal, municipal, and ecclesiastical archives, but his narrative ends in the early fifteenth century when he claims to have lost track of them.⁶ Yet none of these scholars has used the richest source collection available locally: the thousands of notarial records that survive for the medieval period. The AHG has one of the largest notarial collections in Europe, and since Jews made use of local notaries in their daily

⁴ Jaume Riera, *Els jueus de Girona i la seva organització, segles XII–XV* (Girona: Patronat Call de Girona, 2012), 161. Jewish communities in the Crown of Aragon belonged to the royal treasure and as such were under direct royal jurisdiction. Often a ruling monarch passed their jurisdiction to another member of the household as a gift. Dowager Queen Violant had received the rights over the *aljama* of Girona as a wedding gift from King Joan in 1380. There were also a significant number of Jews who lived under nonroyal or seigniorial jurisdiction. For a discussion of that see Thomas W. Barton, *Contested Treasure: Jews and Authority in the Crown of Aragon* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).

⁵ Gemma Escribà i Bonastre, ed., *The Tortosa Disputation: Regesta of Documents from the Archivo de La Corona de Aragón, Fernando I, 1412–1416* (Jerusalem: Hispania Judaica, 1998); Gemma Escribà i Bonastre and M. Pilar Frago Pérez, *Documents dels jueus de Girona (1124–1595): Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Diocesà de Girona* (Girona: Ajuntament de Girona, 1992).

⁶ Santiago Sobrequés Vidal, "Familias hebreas gerundenses: Los Zabarra y los Caravita," *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins* (1947): 68–98.

lives, registers are filled with the mundane pieces of everyday life: contracts of credit, employment, dowry, marriage, as well as wills, donations, arbitration agreements, and others. Our ability to unpack and fully analyze the details and nuances of stories like that of Caravida and Bonafilla is based on working collaboratively, as we will see below, using our respective backgrounds in medieval Jewish and gender history as a framework but also relying on a relational database that allows us to connect individuals with various types of records.

Telling the Tale: Unraveling the Complicated Story of Bonafilla, Caravida, and Regina

The first appearance of Bonafilla and Caravida Vidal in our sources comes from a concession in 1402 in which Bonafilla sold a credit she owned to Bonastruch Desmaestre, an influential member of the Jewish community of Girona.⁷ Caravida is mentioned in the document as agreeing to the sale. The couple are identified as Jews of Girona but from later documents we learn that Caravida was originally from Peratallada, a town located about forty kilometers east of Girona. In fact, he had been banished from that town with his brother Bonet some time before 1400.⁸ Bonafilla was from Girona, the daughter of Roven Nacim, a wealthy member of the Jewish community who held various positions within its administration

⁷ Arxiu Històric de Girona (Historical Archives of Girona; hereafter, AHG) Protocols Notarials, Bernat Pintor, G7: 75 (April 14, 1402) n/f.

⁸ Riera, *El jueus*, 160. In a royal letter from May 25, 1400, King Martí ordered the governor of Catalonia to revoke the banishment of Caravida and Bonet Vidal. The document states specifically that Queen Violant had authorized a remission of their crimes. Unfortunately, he does not indicate what crimes the brothers had committed to lead to their banishment, other than they had involved conflict with another Jew, Boniuha Vidal, their uncle. See ACA, Canc. Reg. 2129 27v–28r (28/5/1400). Indeed, evidence from the royal chancery indicates that Caravida and Bonet Vidal were frequently in conflict with various family members and other people in Girona, Peratallada, and different Jewish communities in Catalonia. A single chancery register from Queen Violant in 1408–1409 includes ten letters involving one or both brothers in issues that ranged from disputes over inheritance, defamation of a young Jewish woman (whose father was a Vidal and likely related to the brothers), and the appeal of a sentence related to a suit brought by a Christian. See ACA Can. Reg. 2033 (March 6, 1408) 6r; (May 18, 1408) 11r; (June 1, 1408) 12r; (June 30, 1408) 14r–15r; (June 30, 1408) 15r; (July 9, 1408) 23r; (July 20, 1408) 24r–v; (July 31, 1408) 28r; (December 19, 1408) 41v; (March 1, 1409) 45r.

and was listed as “disappeared” during the violence of 1391.⁹ In August of that year, Christians from outside Girona marched on the city with the aim of attacking the Jewish quarter.¹⁰ They were emboldened by the systemic violence against Jewish communities across the Iberian peninsula which had begun the previous June in Seville.¹¹ Roven Nacim was one of the many Jews in Girona who were presumed killed during the violent attacks in August and September of that year.¹² Many more Jews were converted to Christianity, either during the violence or in the weeks after the initial attacks.

We do not know when Caravida came to Girona, nor when he and Bonafilla were married. It seems quite likely that their union took place during his banishment from Peratallada, as we think he and his brother moved to Girona during that period. But we can say that this union was crucial in ensuring he would play a pivotal role in the economics of Girona’s Jewish community. By 1408, Caravida Vidal was described as one of its largest taxpayers.¹³ Notarial records from the first decade of the fifteenth century show the couple deeply engaged in the local credit market, but by 1414 something had gone wrong with their relationship. On October 9, 1414 an arbitration settlement was negotiated between the couple related to “various questions, reasons, and causes.”¹⁴ Another docu-

⁹ Riera, *Els jueus*, 151.

¹⁰ Benjamin Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots in the Crown of Aragon and the Royal Response, 1391–1392* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 114–33; Jaume Riera, “Els avalots del 1391 a Girona,” in *Actes de les jornades d’història dels jueus a Catalunya* (Girona: Ajuntament de Girona, 1990), 95–159.

¹¹ For the Crown of Aragon, see Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots*; Jaume Riera i Sans, “Los tumultos contra las juderías de la Corona de Aragón en 1391,” *Cuadernos de Historia: Anexos de la Revista “Hispania”* 8 (1977): 213–25. For the violence in Valencia see Mark D. Meyerson, *A Jewish Renaissance in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 22–64; Hinojosa Montalvo, *The Jews of the Kingdom of Valencia: From Persecution to Expulsion, 1391–1492* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1993), 21–46; for a still persuasive study of the social and economic context of the violence in Barcelona see Philippe Wolff, “The 1391 Pogrom in Spain: Social Crisis or Not?” *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 4–18. Jaume Riera offers a detailed study of the attacks in the city of Girona in “Els avalots del 1391 a Girona”; and see Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1992; originally published 1966), 2:99–102.

¹² Riera, *Els jueus*, 151.

¹³ ACA Canc. Reg. 2033 (July 7, 1408) 22r–v.

¹⁴ AHG G4: 67 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (October 9, 1414) n. f.

ment, from October 24, sheds a bit more light on at least one aspect of this dispute—it seems Caravida accused Bonafilla of stealing money he kept in a particular box. It was later discovered that the money was located in a different box in their house and that Bonafilla was innocent of the theft.¹⁵

While an anecdote of marital strife—we can almost hear them arguing about where he put the money—, the case does seem to indicate a deeper rift considering it required an arbitration settlement involving a third party. Their conflict was also potentially informed by another source of tension and the reason for Caravida's desire to marry a second wife: the supposed death of Vidal Caravida. Who was Vidal Caravida? He was never mentioned in any of the royal chancery records dealing with the petition for a polygamy license or other conflicts involving the Vidal brothers. This is where our ability to integrate the notarial evidence helps us build a fuller picture of the Vidal family. In May 1414, Caravida emancipated Vidal “my son,” aged sixteen, and gave him a house located in the Jewish quarter of Girona alongside a seat in the local synagogue.¹⁶ The next document in the register features Vidal naming Caravida “my father” as legal representative to assist in various matters. A month later, Vidal received payment from a Christian toward a debt owed to him. In an addendum to this document from October 1422, Caravida—now the converso Bernat Vidal—cancelled the debt as “father and *heir* of the *deceased* Vidal Caravida, his son.”¹⁷ None of these documents mentions Bonafilla. Was she Vidal's mother or had Caravida been married previ-

¹⁵ AHG G4: 67 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (October 24, 1414) n. f.

¹⁶ AHG G4: 67 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (May 22, 1414) n. f. Jewish law stated that sons reached the age of majority at thirteen based on physical or sexual maturity but they were still under the control of their fathers and unable to engage in certain kinds of property transactions. Under the *ius commune*, legal emancipation was established through a notarial contract and included gifts of property given to the child by the father, as seen above with Caravida's gift of a house in the Jewish quarter. Julius Kirshner and Osvaldo Cavallar argue that the reasons for emancipation varied. In some cases, it was established to further the interests of the father, such as ensuring that he was not liable for any of his child's debts. In other cases, it was used as a method of protecting aspects of the family patrimony from the father's creditors. Given Caravida's numerous legal entanglements, it seems quite likely that his emancipation of Vidal may have been a strategy to transfer some of his assets away from the reach of potential creditors. See Israel Lebediger, “The Minor in Jewish Law,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 6, no. 4 (1916): 459–93; and Julius Kirshner and Osvaldo Cavallar, *Jurists and Jurisprudence in Medieval Italy: Texts and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 589–90.

¹⁷ AHG G4: 67 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (June 26, 1414) n. f. Emphasis ours.

ously, perhaps to a woman from Peratallada, and Vidal was the product of that union?

Thus, even working together, we are unable to answer all of the questions that arise from our evidence. Vidal Caravida shows up in notarial documents from mid-1414 but the extant documentation does not tell us what happened to him. Remember that Caravida had premised his request for a polygamy license from the king on a lack of heirs. That request was made in December 1414. Chancery records make no mention of Vidal. Presumably he died sometime between summer and autumn of that year. We do know that in October 1414, Bonafilla and Caravida sold a seat in the synagogue to another Jew from Girona, Bonastruch Jucef, for the price of ten pounds.¹⁸ Was this seat the one which Caravida had donated to Vidal during the process of emancipation five months earlier? Vidal's death, alongside the strife present in Caravida and Bonafilla's marriage, appears to have prompted Caravida's request for a license from the king to take a second wife.

As a Jew, Caravida could have simply divorced Bonafilla and remarried but perhaps, considering Bonafilla's family connections and wealth, terminating their union and restituting her dowry was not an attractive option for him. While in the late fourteenth century, King Pere the Ceremonious often included a clause in his licenses to Jews in the same situation that if the current wife objected to remaining married, the husband was to return her dowry in whole and divorce her, we have not found evidence of such requirements in the early fifteenth century.¹⁹ It seems quite likely that, in Caravida's eyes, taking a second wife was a better option. Historically, polygamy, or rather polygyny, had been accepted within Jewish communities, with many precedents in Jewish scriptures. Over time, however, European Jews moved away from the practice as the Christian communities increased emphasis on monogamous and indissoluble unions.²⁰ Jews in Northern Europe officially outlawed the practice

¹⁸ AHG G7: 80 Antoni-Bernat Ferran (October 24, 1414) n. f.

¹⁹ ACA C 937: 197v (22/11/1380, Huesca). See a discussion of this case in Guerson de Oliveira, "Coping with Crises," 136–39.

²⁰ For an overview, see Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), I:112, 347; II:223ff., 409ff.; on Jewish polygamy in earlier times see S. Lowy, "The Extent of Jewish Polygamy in Talmudic Times," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 9 (1958): 115–38; among Ashkenazi Jews see Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 32–38; Avraham Grossman,

in the second half of the twelfth century through Rabbenu Gershom's ban. In Southern Europe, the ban was not immediately adopted by all Jewish communities. As we noted above, in the Crown of Aragon, Jewish men could apply for a special license to take new wives, even if polygamy was technically not allowed. While in the thirteenth century, Jews just had to mention that the practice was legal within Jewish law to get a license, by the late fourteenth century it had become limited to cases of infertility in which the husband had to show they had been married for an extended period of time and had still not had any children.²¹ So when Caravida Vidal approached the king for a license, he was doing what other Jews did at this time, alleging he needed a second wife because of infertility. But, as we know, Bonafilla refuted his claims of infertility. By May 1415, the local authorities in Girona had completed their investigation of Bonafilla's protestations and the royal court decided in Caravida's favor, renewing his license.²² A month later, Caravida concluded a dowry contract with Regina, the daughter of the deceased Bonsenyor Samuel. Her dowry of five thousand sous, a considerable sum, was donated by the bride's widowed mother and two brothers.²³ Much like his marriage to Bonafilla,

Pious and Rebellious: Jewish Women in Medieval Europe (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 68–101. On Mediterranean Jewry, see S. D. Goiten, *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), III: passim; M. A. Friedman, "The Monogamy Clause in Jewish Marriage Contracts," *Perspectives in Jewish Learning* 4 (1972): 20–40. On Spain, see especially Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213–1327* (Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997), 146, 257, 261–65, 277, 320; and "The 'Ordinance of Rabbenu Gershom' and Polygamous Marriages in Spain," *Zion* 46, no. 4 (1981): 251–77; see also Ze'ev W. Falk, *Jewish Matrimonial Law in the Middle Ages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 33. For more on polygamy in Barcelona see Robert I. Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders: Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 214–15; Baer, *Jews*, 1:254; Isidore Epstein, *The "Responsa" of Rabbi Solomon Ben Adreth of Barcelona (1235–1310) as a Source of the History of Spain* (London: K. Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1925), 87.

²¹ Guerson de Oliveira, "Coping with Crises," 135–39. Jews in Crete could also practice bigamy in cases of infertility but there they did not need a license. See Rena N. Lauer, "In Defence of Bigamy: Colonial Policy, Jewish Law and Gender in Venetian Crete," *Gender & History* 29, no. 3 (2017): 570–88.

²² ACA Reial Cancilleria, Registres 2034 (May 23, 1415) 35v–r.

²³ AHG G4: 68 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (June 26, 1415) n. f. Thus far, we have found over forty notarial documents related to Jewish marriage contracts from 1391 to 1424. Dowry amounts range from 240 sous to 10 000 sous, with the majority under 2,000 sous.

Caravida's union with Regina had allied him with a wealthy and powerful family from the Jewish community of Girona.²⁴

It is at this moment of his second marriage that Caravida's story takes an interesting turn. Not long after his marriage to Regina, for unknown reasons Caravida promised ecclesiastical authorities in Girona that he would convert to Christianity. In January 1416, the vicar general, who was also the local inquisitor, requested his imprisonment for failing to fulfill this promise.²⁵ There had been a wave of conversions by influential members of the Jewish community in the 1410s, particularly after the Tortosa disputation in 1414.²⁶ A year later, in January 1417, Caravida

The Jewish women and conversas whose dowries were in the same range as Regina's all came from elite families who played central roles in the administration of the Jewish community and were deeply embedded in the credit market as moneylenders. The dowries of Christian women were of similar size during this period, equally dependent upon the status of the family and its ability to marshal resources. See Teresa Vinyoles i Vidal, *Les Barcelonines a les Darries de l'Edat Mitjana (1370–1410)* (Barcelona: Fundació Salvador Vives Casajuana, 1976), 84–85. To understand the relative value of these dowries, the salary of a city councillor (*jurat*) in Valencia was approximately 12 000 sous in 1415. Such a position was similar to that held by Regina's father in the *aljama* of Girona. See Earl J. Hamilton, *Money, Prices, and Wages in Valencia, Aragon, and Navarre, 1351–1500* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 271.

²⁴ Regina's father, Bonsenyor Samuel, was named a councillor of the *aljama* by Queen Violant in 1394. He was also a very prominent moneylender in Girona and frequently engaged in business with some of the city's wealthiest inhabitants—Jewish, Christians, and conversos. See Riera, *Els jueus*, 155–57.

²⁵ Escribà i Bonastre and Frago Pérez, *Documents dels Jueus*, 236.

²⁶ Starting in February of 1413, Jewish communities from across the Crown of Aragon were asked to send representatives to the city of Tortosa for a papal-sponsored disputation with Christian representatives. The disputation, which went on until December of 1414, led to the conversion of some Aragonese rabbis and representatives, and generally marked the beginning of increasing pressure on the Jews of the Crown of Aragon. For an overview of the literature see a recent overview of this historiography in Jeremy Cohen, *A Historian in Exile: Solomon ibn Verga, Shevet Yehudah, and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 37, and Baer, *A History of the Jews*, 2:170–243. For our own discussion of the disputation from the point of view of the Girona community, see Alexandra Guerson and Dana Wessell Lightfoot, "Mixed Marriages and Community Identity in Fifteenth-Century Girona," in *Women and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Alexandra Guerson, Dana Wessell Lightfoot, and Michelle Armstrong-Partida (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020) and "A Tale of Two Tolranas: Jewish Women's Agency and Conversion in Late Medieval Girona," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 12, no. 3 (2020): 352–53.

converted to Christianity, taking the name Bernat Vidal.²⁷ While Bernat's conversion was likely heralded by the local ecclesiastical authorities, given the prominent place he held in the Jewish community, there was the question of his two wives. As a Christian, Bernat was confined to monogamy and therefore had to divest himself of one spouse. That spouse was Bonafilla. We do not know the exact date of their divorce, although it must have come before or soon after his conversion. The first mention of Bonafilla as "the former wife" of Caravida Vidal is in a notarial contract dated February 7, 1418—a full year after his conversion.²⁸ Determining the timeline of their divorce is important from a legal perspective as canon law indicates that in cases where a Jew has two wives and converts to Christianity, he is to stay married to the first wife since neither divorce nor polygamy is legally possible in Christianity.²⁹ Did Caravida divorce Bonafilla first and then convert to Christianity? Or did the dissolution of their union come at the same time or shortly after his conversion? Further analysis of the Girona notarial records might allow us to find a more precise date for the dissolution of their union and perhaps answers to these questions.

Yet, even though Caravida had fulfilled his promise to convert, within two years, as the converso Bernat Vidal, he came to the attention of local inquisitors. Inquisition records for medieval Catalonia are difficult to find and not many survive, particularly locally.³⁰ This is where we need

²⁷ Riera, *Els jueus*, 172. Caravida's brother Bonet Vidal also converted at this time, taking the name Guillem. Much like his brother, Guillem faced numerous confrontations with ecclesiastical and municipal authorities as his wife and children remained Jewish after his conversion. See Historical Archive of the City of Girona, RE 28 UI 9179 Ordinacions dels Jurats 65v (July 10, 1419).

²⁸ AHG G4: 71 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (February 7, 1418) n. f.

²⁹ See, for example, Ramon de Penyafort, *Summa on Marriage*, trans. Pierre Payer (Toronto: PIMS, 2005), 52. Asked what to do if an unbeliever with many wives converts to Christianity, whether he can keep his wives or has to choose one, de Penyafort answered that "say that only the first is the wife and so he can keep her alone" since it was "never licit to have many wives at the same time." He goes on to say that if the unbeliever repudiates his lawful wife according to his own rites, that repudiation should be accepted and the new convert cannot remarry while the previous wife is still alive. It seems not all canonists agree, however. Innocent III, for example, allowed converts to choose which wife they wanted to retain post-conversion. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 380.

³⁰ By the early fifteenth century, inquisition cases appear to be quite rare in Catalonia. Indeed, the leading scholar on this topic, Eufemia Fort i Congul, states that by this

to credit chance as much as collaboration in unraveling this story, since we were able to find the registers of the local notary that worked for the inquisition among other notarial registers. While going through the registers of the notary Berenguer Ferrer Sasala, who was active from 1410 into the 1450s, we stumbled upon records he kept of the actions against Bernat Vidal, which Berenguer recorded for the local inquisitor. These records were interspersed with contracts of daily life from Jews and Christians of Girona. Another example of happenstance is that it was through the will of another Jew, seemingly unrelated, that we were able to discover who Bonafilla's father was and thus understand more about her background.³¹

Our first document from Sasala's registers dealing with Bernat Vidal's brush with the inquisition is a notarial contract dated July 30, 1419, in which he promised the inquisitor he would not "enter, stay, eat, or drink" in Jewish households and that he would only do such things with conversos "who had Christian wives."³² He also agreed to attend a calendar of Christian masses held at various churches throughout the year. Bernat's promise, however, rings somewhat false, given that he himself had a Jewish wife: Regina. She had not converted alongside her husband, which was not unusual for the converso community in Girona during the 1410s and 1420s. We have numerous examples of conversos with Jewish wives in notarial contracts for this period; a situation that likely influenced Bernat's conflict with the inquisitors. Indeed, inquisitors had been actively trying to prevent conversos from living with their Jewish spouses

period inquisitorial activity had essentially ended. Our analysis of the Girona notarial records from Berenguer Ferrer Sasala, who worked with the inquisitors, uncovered dozens of documents related to their activities. These documents discuss not only conversos but other heresy cases as well. It's clear that the local bishops, Dalmau de Mur (1415–1419) and then Andreu Bertran (1419–1429), were greatly involved in the inquisitors' actions. One inquisitor, Pere Ermengol, was also appointed as the vicar general of the bishopric in 1417. For more information on the activities of the papal inquisition in Catalonia, see Eufemia Fort i Cogul, *Catalunya i la Inquisició: Assaig d'un coneixement desapassionat de la institució* (Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1973). We are grateful to Robin Vose for his guidance on this topic.

³¹ AHG G4: 81 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (September 15, 1420).

³² AHG G4: 75 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (July 30, 1419) n. f. This request to not eat and drink with Jews has precedence in canon law, which considered socializing over food more dangerous than simply talking. Johannes Teutonicus stated "The reason for this difference ... lies in the face that there is greater familiarity in eating food than in talking together: one is more easily deceived between courses." James Brundage, "Intermarriage between Christians and Jews in Medieval Canon Law," *Jewish History* 3, no.1 (Spring 1988): 27.

and children. In 1419, King Alfons had written twice to ecclesiastical and judicial officials in Girona chastising them for their molestation of certain conversos and their Jewish wives and children.³³ This group of conversos included Bernat Vidal and his brother Guillem. Despite such royal complaints, local inquisitors continued to insist that conversos either abandon their Jewish wives or ensure their conversion to Christianity. We see an example of such mandates in a document from December 1420, where the inquisitor ordered seven conversos—Pere March, Pere Joan Falco, Asbert Falco, Joan Sagostana, Bernat Morer, Francisc Serra, and Francisc Miron—to abandon their Jewish wives and refrain from eating, drinking, living, and engaging in business with them as well.³⁴

Despite intervention on his behalf by King Alfons, less than one year after Bernat had promised to refrain from personal engagements with Jews, in May 1420, he was formally accused of continuing to practice Judaism and ignoring the inquisitor's previous requests.³⁵ In October of the same year, Bernat was condemned by the inquisition and fined one hundred florins.³⁶ Notarial records from 1421 indicate that Regina did convert to Christianity, taking the name Elionor.³⁷ It seems quite likely that her conversion was a condition of Bernat's settlement with the inquisitors. In late 1422, however, Bernat was still dealing with the inquisitor regarding his connections within the converso and Jewish community of Girona. In a document from November of that year, Bernat was forbidden by the inquisitor and local bishop from entering into the house of any Jew as well as any conversos who retained Jewish wives.³⁸ It also seems that Bernat's entanglement with the inquisition affected his health. In early May 1422, he had his testament drawn up, indicating that he was in "great infirmity" at the time.³⁹ The conditions of his will show that Bernat's desire for an heir was not fulfilled. While there are clauses outlining what should happen to his goods "if his wife, Elionor is pregnant and if that

³³ AHG G4: 74 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (June 16, 1419); AHG G4: 75 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (October 13, 1419).

³⁴ AHG G4: 79 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (December 3, 1420).

³⁵ AHG G4: 77 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (May 9, 1420).

³⁶ AHG G4: 81 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (October 10, 1420).

³⁷ AHG G10: 67 Berenguer Vidal (May 28, 1421).

³⁸ AHG G4: 82 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (November 28, 1422).

³⁹ AHG G4: 203 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (May 8, 1422) 6r–7v.

child survives,” he ultimately named his brother Guillem Vidal as universal heir. Notarial evidence from 1423–1427 indicates that Bernat survived his illness as he was actively involved in both the credit market and as a merchant in those years. But by the second half of 1427, Bernat was dead. A credit contract from 1430, where his brother Guillem states his status as “heir of Bernat Vidal, my brother,” provides evidence that Caravida’s strategy of taking a second wife to obtain an heir sixteen years previously had failed.⁴⁰

Prior to her husband’s death, Elionor was active in the credit market, both on her own and with Bernat. There are numerous contracts, for example, where Elionor is receiving amounts of wheat as payment toward loans from various Christians in Girona and the surrounding area.⁴¹ Elionor’s participation in the credit market is not in itself unusual. Jews and Christians, men and women, used various tools to lend and borrow money in Girona. While Jews faced increasing competition from Christian lenders in Girona by the late fourteenth century, they still dominated that market in the smaller communities surrounding Girona, and we can see that in the transactions involving Elionor.⁴² Women did play a smaller role in that market, as Sarah Ifft Decker has shown,⁴³ but we have found through the use of our database that Jewish women in Girona in the early fifteenth century were particularly active in what we call the secondary credit market, which is the trade of credit instruments in which a lender can sell part or the whole credit they have with a specific borrower. This is a topic we hope to explore in more detail in an upcoming book and one we have not seen discussed in the literature on the Iberian credit market at all.

Our knowledge of Bernat’s death comes from a contract in October 1427 which features the converso March Furtian of Perpignan appointing a procurator from Perpignan to assist in the recovery of the dowry and counter-gift for his “sponsa,” Elionor, the widow of Bernat Vidal.⁴⁴ In the following document, Elionor appoints her brother, Francesc Vidal, also a converso, as her procurator to assist in this matter. Shortly thereaf-

⁴⁰ AHG G4: 102 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (January 4, 1430).

⁴¹ For example, see AHG G4: 95 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (June 9, 1427).

⁴² Christian Guilleré, “Juifs et Chrétiens à Gérone Au XIV^{ème} Siècle,” in *Jornades d’Història dels Jueus a Catalunya* (Girona: Ajuntament de Girona, 1990), 45–65.

⁴³ Sarah Ifft Decker, “The Public Economic Role of Catalan Jewish Wives,” *TAMID: Revista Catalana Anual d’Estudis Hebraics* 11 (2015): 45–66.

⁴⁴ AHG G4: 95 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (October 4, 1427).

ter, Elionor is referred to as the wife of March Furtian. Elionor is not the first conversa we have seen who remarried quickly after the death of her husband. In 1392, Blanca, the widow of Pere de Banyoles who was converted alongside her husband in the aftermath of 1391 violence, married Ferrer de Montcada, a converso from Barcelona, two months after Pere's death.⁴⁵ Her first husband's family had tried to intervene in her second marriage because she also held the position as guardian of her son Miquel and usufructuary of the vast inheritance from his father. Blanca appealed to the king, who affirmed her position as guardian and usufructuary, even with her quick remarriage.⁴⁶ In Elionor's case, we do not know if Bernat's family resisted her remarriage, but given the couple did not have children, and Bernat's brother Guillem was heir, it seems unlikely they would have done so. The terms of Bernat's will from 1422 restored Elionor's dowry and counter-gift to her, but did not go beyond these legal obligations. The appointment of procurators by both March and his new bride with the specific task of recovering her dowry and augmentum could indicate they expected difficulty in doing so. Unfortunately, unlike Valencia where the civil court records for the fifteenth century abound with dowry restitution cases by widows, such records do not survive for Catalonia.⁴⁷ And what of Bonafilla? Evidence from the 1420s shows her as an active participant in the credit market, always referred to as the "former wife" of Bernat Vidal.⁴⁸

Using Relational Databases to Unlock the Economic and Social Life of Jewish Families

Mapping out the story of Bonafilla, Regina/Elionor, and Caravida/Bernat Vidal was no easy task. The absence of any court documents or records related to a potential dissolution of marriage between Bonafilla and Caravida/Bernat hinders any effort to unravel this complex family

⁴⁵ For more information on Blanca and her conflict with Pere's family, see Alexandra Guerson and Dana Wessell Lightfoot, "Jewish Families, Conversion, and the Creation of Stepfamilies in Girona after the Anti-Jewish Violence of 1391," in *Stepfamilies in Europe, 1400–1800*, ed. Lyndan Warner (London: Routledge, 2018), 20–37.

⁴⁶ AHG G5: 416 (December 7, 1392) 203r–204v.

⁴⁷ For Valencia, see Dana Wessell Lightfoot, *Women, Dowries, and Agency: Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Valencia* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013), 151–88.

⁴⁸ See AHG G4: 88 and 90 Berenguer Ferrer Sasala (1425–1426).

history dealing with the impact of conversion on what was once an influential Jewish family. Our reconstruction of the challenges they faced in the early decades of the fifteenth century was carried out by a thorough analysis of dozens of notarial registers from a number of different notaries, supplemented by royal and episcopal letters, alongside correspondence between the municipal authorities and the crown. But, as the story above indicates, the bulk of our knowledge comes from piecing together references in mundane, everyday financial records found in notarial registers. While individually these records do not tell us much, once we enter them into our relational database and combine them with records from other archival collections, we can start weaving a fuller chronology of the tale of Bonafilla, Elionor, and Bernat.

As R. J. Morris has noted, historians of the family have long used databases to catalogue family and household relationships.⁴⁹ Perhaps the most famous example of such use is David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber's foundational work *Tuscans and their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*.⁵⁰ Shannon McSheffrey has also highlighted the value of such databases for her work on heresy, marriage, and family life in late medieval England.⁵¹ In her 2017 monograph, McSheffrey demonstrated how such tools can be used to analyze subjects beyond family history or social networks, in this case examining sanctuary seekers in England from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.⁵² Most recently, Justine Firnhaber-Baker has reconfigured our understanding of the Jacquerie revolt of 1358 in France, bringing together data from a huge range of source material in a relational database to examine the social background of those who participated in these revolts.⁵³ For our project

⁴⁹ R. J. Morris, "Document to Database to Spreadsheet," in *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 147.

⁵⁰ David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and Their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁵¹ See Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420–1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); and *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁵² Shannon McSheffrey, *Seeking Sanctuary: Crime, Mercy, and Politics in English Courts, 1400–1550*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). As a companion for the book, McSheffrey has made spreadsheets of some of her data available online for scholars to access. See <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/984599/>.

⁵³ Justine Firnhaber-Baker discusses the importance of such relational databases in

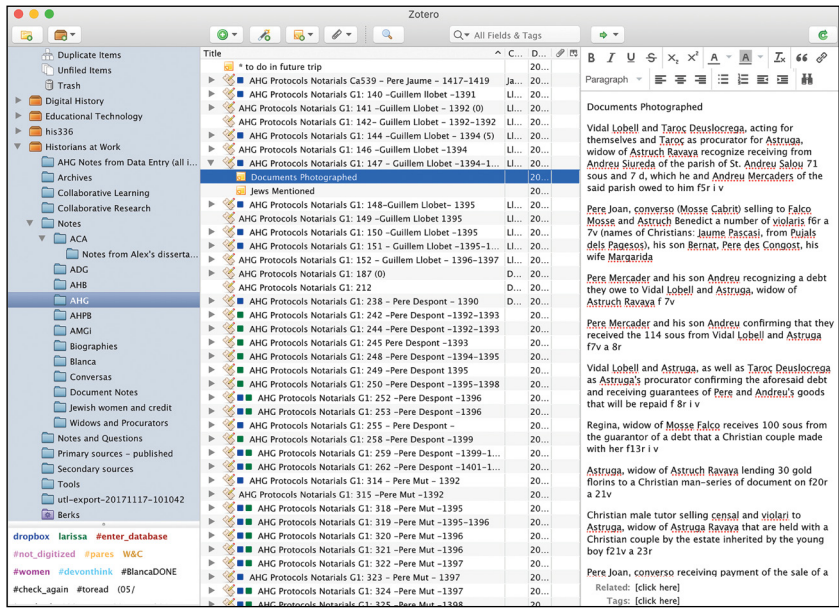


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Zotero group library shared by Alexandra Guerson and Dana Wessell Lightfoot.

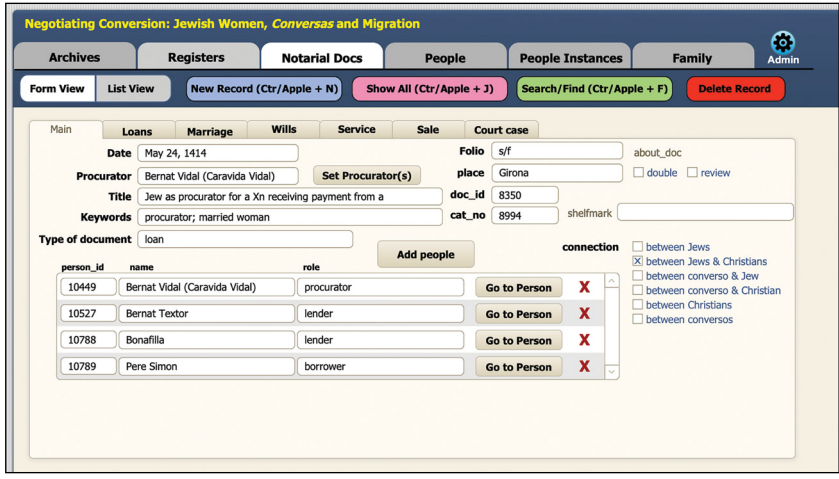


Figure 2. Screenshot of FileMaker Pro database of notarial documents. This relational database includes data about archives, registers, notarial documents, and individual people and was designed by C. Knudsen and A. Guerson.

on Jewish women and *conversas* in late medieval Girona, we have used a number of different types of databases—we have kept records on each of the registers we consulted at various archives through a shared Zotero library, we entered records related to women in Girona in a relational database designed with FileMaker Pro from which we can export relevant data as spreadsheets, and more recently we have been processing much of this data by keeping notes in DevonThink, a database that allow us to tag and track information of all kinds and uses Artificial Intelligence to allow us to search across different types of data.

Thus working collaboratively and using databases have allowed us to explore two topics that are neglected in the historiography of Jews in medieval Catalonia: the experiences of Jewish women and the impact of conversion on family life. Our FileMaker database now contains over a thousand documents involving more than 250 Jewish women that we can identify. Considering that the Girona Jewish community had about a thousand inhabitants before the violence of 1391, this is a significant proportion of the adult female population. This number will likely increase, as we still have over one hundred registers that need to be catalogued. While these registers were not entered in our relational database, we kept notes on each register we examined in a shared Zotero database where we note what has been photographed and where those images are stored (see figure 1). Most of our notarial documents are financial contracts—largely related to credit transactions between Jews and Christians but also among Jews, as we see in figure 2. For the most part, these documents are very brief and contain only the names of those involved in the loan, the type of loan (short or long term), the amount of money involved, and the terms of the loan contract. We have other types of notarial records, such as marriage contracts and wills, but overwhelmingly our documents are these loan contracts. On its own, a single loan contract does not mean much, and this is where our database became invaluable. We have been able to map out the activity of certain women over time, and certain families over generations. By cross-referencing data from multiple sources, we have been able to identify individuals and their family relationships more precisely, even correcting previous scholarship on some individuals. The entry for Bonafilla in figure 3, for example, shows links on the bottom-right corner to every document we have entered that mentions her in any capacity.

allowing us to view information “in some ways that were not available to earlier scholars” in “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358,” *Speculum* 95, no. 3 (2020): 695.

Negotiating Conversion: Jewish Women, Conversas and Migration

Archives Registers Notarial Docs People People Instances Family Admin

Form View List View New Record (Ctr/Apple + N) Show All (Ctr/Apple + J) Search/Find (Ctr/Apple + F) Delete Record

Person ID: 10788 sex: male female

Name: Bonafilla

religion: Jewish Profession: _____

civil status: married widowed single n/a Conversion: _____

spouse: Caravida Vidal (Bernat Vidal)

Day of birth: _____ Month of birth: _____ Year of birth: _____

Day of death: _____ Month of death: _____ Year of death: _____

Place of birth: _____ Place of death: _____

Place of: Girona Other places: _____

Family: Family_id: _____ Choose Family

Family Name: _____

Siblings: Nacim Roven

Father: Roven Nacim

Mother: Regina

Grandfather: Nacim Roven

Grandmother: _____

Children: _____

Notes: Bonafilla appears to have divorced Caravida/Bernat by 1418. Her father was a judge, part of the Beth-Din. He was killed in the violence of 1391. She seems to be active into the 1420s.

Related Documents

doc_id	date	doc_type	role		
8350	1414/5/2	loan	lender	go	X
8453	1418/2/7	loan	lender	go	X
8460	1418/3/1	general	general	go	X
8474	1418/5/5	debt	lender	go	X
8857	1402/4/1	sales	seller	go	X

Figure 3. Screenshot of the form view of an individual person's entry in the database.

A key part of our broader project on the experiences of Jewish women and conversas in the late medieval period is considering their economic roles in the credit market. It is through these records that Bonafilla first came to our attention, not because of her economic activity but through how she was identified in a notarial record. In a typical credit contract laying out the repayment of a debt, women are usually referred to as either the daughter, wife, or widow of a man. Bonafilla, as we noted above, was referred to as the former wife (*olim uxor*) of Bernat Vidal, starting in 1418. We had never seen this particular identifying phrase before and were unsure of exactly what it implied. It was only after we saw this reference that we started looking for more information about her and came across Jaume Riera's mention of Caravida Vidal's request for a polygamy license. From there, we started patching together the different strands of Bonafilla's story behind that single reference as *olim uxor*.⁵⁴ It is precisely in reconstructing the history of women such as Bonafilla that notarial records become crucial. As we mention elsewhere, notarial records

⁵⁴ Sarah Ifft Decker also found the use of the term *olim uxor* in notarial records related to Jewish divorce in the earlier fourteenth century. See "Jewish Divorce and Latin Notarial Culture," in *Boundaries in the Medieval and Wider World: Essays in Honor of Paul Freedman* (Belgium: Brepols, 2017), 37–56.

chronicle women's access to and control of dowries, testamentary bequests, credit instruments, business transactions, and domestic service salaries. They demonstrate the central roles that women played in terms of marriage negotiations, the credit market, the protection and expansion of kin networks, the transference of familial assets, and the creation of neighbourhood and community ties. For uncovering the lives of Jewish women and conversas, notarial records can provide key information about mixed family dynamics, conflicts over religious conversion, and the shifting boundary between Jewish and Christian.⁵⁵

This importance becomes particularly clear in the case of Bonafilla, who does not appear at all in documents from the ecclesiastical and municipal archives in Girona. Yet, when one turns to the notarial records, there are several dozen documents featuring Bonafilla engaged in all sorts of activities from loan contracts, to inheritance documents, to the inquisition records mentioned above, giving us a fuller sense of her life and how it was affected by the changes the Jewish community of Girona went through in the early fifteenth century.⁵⁶

Furthermore, our careful combing of notarial registers and use of the relational database are particularly important when it comes to mapping Jewish family life during the period of mass conversions in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Much of the historiography on conversos relies on the rich sources provided by the Spanish Inquisition, which meticulously kept records on conversos, often allowing identification for several generations. But the mass conversions of 1391 happened nearly a hundred years before the creation of the Spanish Inquisition, leaving much about the experiences of this first generation of conversos unexplored. While there were papal inquisitors before then, their activity in the Crown of Aragon was limited at best and the sources that survive are few and far between.⁵⁷ Without documents related to their conversion, it

⁵⁵ Alexandra Guerson and Dana Wessell Lightfoot, "Digging through the Archives Together: Collaborative Research in Late Medieval Gender and Jewish History," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2019): 96.

⁵⁶ We should note that the documents we have collected on Bonafilla date from 1402 to the early 1420s. For the latter period, we have only begun examination of the notarial registers and expect to find many more documents involving her.

⁵⁷ For the period prior to the fifteenth century, see Paola Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, 1250–1391* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). See also Damian Smith, *Crusade, Heresy and*

is also difficult to identify conversos in later records unless they were investigated by ecclesiastical authorities. Jews who converted to Christianity adopted a Christian name after the conversion, and while initially they are identified as conversos in contracts and other documents, and in some cases their Jewish names were also included, after some years that practice was dropped, making it difficult to identify conversos with any precision after a generation. This is where the notarial records become essential. Our discovery of the inquisition documents buried in the notarial registers of Berenguer Ferrer Sasala has allowed us to uncover a transitional moment for Jewish and converso families when mixed families were not uncommon and faced many challenges, as our discussion of the Vidal family demonstrates.⁵⁸ Indeed, our research has demonstrated that a number of wealthy and powerful Jewish families in Girona from 1416 to the early 1420s were led by a converso whose wife and children had not converted. Our collaboration has allowed us to explore the nuances that characterized mixed Jewish and converso families as they navigated the decades after the systemic violence of 1391 and the fiscal challenges of the Jewish community in the 1410s and 1420s.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Our collaboration offers new perspectives for a period still understudied by historians. As our examination of Caravida/Bernat Vidal, Bonafilla, and Regina/Elionor has demonstrated, attending to the experiences of women allows us to provide a considerably fuller narrative of the challenges faced by this mixed family during a period of crisis for the Jewish community of Girona. Without the notarial evidence detailing Caravida/Bernat's brush with the inquisition, Caravida and Bonafilla's argument over the box of money, and Elionor's conversion to Christianity, this story becomes one of conflict over polygamy involving spouses, one of many Guerson has found in the royal registers of King Pere III and King Joan. But working together gave us the opportunity to sketch out a consider-

Inquisition in the Lands of the Crown of Aragon, ca. 1167–1276 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and Fort i Cogul, *Catalunya i la Inquisició*.

⁵⁸ We explored this issue in more detail in Guerson and Wessell Lightfoot, "Mixed Marriages."

⁵⁹ This tension between an earlier wave of conversion in 1391 and later in the 1420s is explored in Guerson and Wessell Lightfoot, "A Tale of Two Tolranas."

ably more complex story reflective of many other Jewish and converso families in Girona during this period. Crucial in this analysis is our use of notarial records. While institutional documentation from the royal and ecclesiastical archives maintains the patriarchal view of medieval society, centered on the actions of Caravida/Bernat Vidal, with only the briefest of glimpses of Bonafilla's appeal to the king to prevent his acquisition of a royal license to take a second wife, it is only through the use of notarial evidence which deals with the more mundane aspects of daily life that the histories of Bonafilla and Regina/Elionor are recovered. Here we find both Bonafilla and Regina/Elionor as active players in the local economy and as defenders of their marital assets. Such activities by women are still often neglected both in the history of medieval Girona and of Jewish communities in medieval Iberia more broadly. Our work, therefore, highlights the importance of the inclusion of women's experiences in understanding the history of Jews in late medieval Iberia.