CHAPTER THREE

HOW THE JEWS CAME TO BE DISDAINED AND HUMBLED

Pope Gregory XIII\(^1\) ordered by means of a Bull that the Jews were not to work as doctors because of the hatred and abhorrence in which they hold us. In both civil and canon law it is decreed that they must not occupy prestigious or public positions. Furthermore, in the Sacred Canon they are forbidden from collecting taxes and in the Council of Toledo (distinction 54, chapter 9 \textit{cum sit de lude, Cap. Sarra}) from trading in seaports.\(^2\) Cardinal Baronius\(^3\) claims that in ancient times they were not allowed to deal in any other merchandise than baskets, low quality goods, clothing and old junk. Malvana\(^4\) tells us that they only sold broken glass and other similar items. He laments this and says: “How appropriate it would be to treat them in the same fashion now and seize their property from them, as the Emperor Honorius\(^5\) did as well as King Philip of France in the year 1183”. It is notorious amongst those who have read books that a rich Jew hurts the poor in much the same manner as a lion devours hapless animals.

Martial\(^6\) recalls that a man named Priscus asked him what he thought he would be like if he were rich. He replied: “Ask me what you would be like if you were rich? Tell me, what sort of lion would you be? Do you know what you would do? You would tear men to pieces and eat the poor before finally wishing to rise up and possess everything”. This was the case of the

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\(^1\) Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585). The Bull \textit{Multos adhuc ex Christianis} was issued on 30 March 1581. For the text of the Bull see Christoph Heinrich Freiesleben, \textit{Corpus iuris canonici} (Basel, 1757), II, cols. 125–6.

\(^2\) A reference to the sixteenth Council of Toledo (AD 693), in which Jews were prohibited from conducting business in \textit{catablos}, a term of Greek origin indicating ports.

\(^3\) Cardinal Caesar Baronius (1538–1607), author of the \textit{Annales ecclesiastici a Christo nato ad annum 1198}, a history of the first twelve centuries of the Christian Church, published in twelve volumes between 1588 and 1607.

\(^4\) It has not been possible to identify this author. Torrejoncillo's source, however, is clearly João de Ceita who mentions Malvana and includes the same passage in his \textit{Sermão da fee pregado em o acto, que o Sancto Tribunal de Evora fez em a mesma cidade no anno de 1624 a 14 de Julho} (Évora, 1624), fol. 18v.

\(^5\) The Roman Emperor Honorius (AD 395–423), who ruled the western half of the Roman Empire.

\(^6\) The Roman poet Marcus Valerius Martialis (c. AD 41–c. 102), who wrote of the exchange reported here in his \textit{Epigrams} (Book XII, Epigram 92).
lions described by Pierio (book 1 of *de leone*). After the Oracle had told Alexander that he was the son of Jupiter, the princes and lords determined to send him some consignments of *escudos* and other coins in the hope of ingratiating themselves. As the pack train loaded with this gift was travelling on a road, the lion, who possessed a few coins of his own, met it and asked where it was going. They told it that they were taking this present to Alexander because he was the son of Jupiter. The lion replied: “Well, I am going to meet him too and I have been very fortunate to meet you, perhaps you could do me the favour of adding my money to yours as I have not been taught to carry loads on my back and I am tired”. Full of sympathy, the mule drivers agreed and they all made their way onwards together. After having gone some way, the lion (who had already premeditated what he was going to do) told them the following: “Friends, I can go no further with you as you are walking too quickly. Pray return my money as I wish to stop and rest here a few days”. They opened the bag where they had placed the money in order to give it to him. The lion started to count it and said “What are you doing? Why are you moving off, you villains? All this money belongs to me and I have to take it away since my *escudos* begat the remainder that are there. See how they resemble one another and bear the same symbols!” As he said this, he uttered a roar that filled the rest with terror and rendered them helpless. The lion seized all the money and the mule drivers were left only with the pain of having lost their wealth.

This is what the rich Jews do every day to poor Old Christians. They deprive them of their means of sustenance and if, by some chance, the poor remonstrate with them they utter a roar just as lions do in order to terrorise them. To prevent this from happening, it would be better to subdue and humiliate them.

Suetonius refers to the fact that the Romans treated the Jews badly and held them under their yoke to such an extent that they even levied taxes upon the trees and woods that they planted. The Jews only retained their hay and baskets as their sole wealth and merchandise. If one of them denied being a Jew in order to avoid paying the tribute, they took his clothes off and, having been betrayed by his circumcision, he was forced

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7 Piero Valeriano Bolzani (1477–1558) was an Italian humanist author. Torrejoncillo refers here to his discussion of the lion in his work *Hieroglyphica* (Basel, 1556).
8 The *escudo*, or ‘shield’, was a unit of currency traditionally used in Portugal.
9 This passage is from the account of the reign of the Emperor Domitian (*Domitian* 12.2) written by the Roman historian Suetonius (c. AD 69–c. 122).