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The Origins and Stigma of the Iberian Garment of Shame, the ‘San Benito’

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The 13th century Papal Inquisition was only one step in a process of continual stages of historic abhorrence against the Jewish people; a history which can be traced back to antiquity. In 1492 when the Jewish population in Spain was expelled, the Inquisition in Spain had already been in effect for over a decade. Soon after the expulsion, the intensity in which the Church pursued secretly practicing Jews (Marranos) and New Christians (Conversos) accused of heretical crimes, increased. However, a most unique and scathful punishment, in accordance with early Christian concepts, was to not put the heretic to death—but to publicly humiliate him within his community; thus making him and his family perpetual victims of societal ridicule. In Iberia, implementation of this manner of punishment was through the mandated wearing of a garment known as the san benito. As a subject not previously explored, the origin, historical usage, and significant consequence of this penitential garment of shame is examined here.

All religious minorities have suffered eras of persecution and challenge when their practices were not respected by the majority in which they lived. Out of all minorities that have suffered, no one group has suffered as much as that of the Jews. They historically have been made to feel powerless by being subjected to repeated degrading and humiliating experiences based on prejudice. Prior to the 20th century, no Jewish group had fallen victim to persecution on such a vast scale, than the Jews of the Iberia Peninsula. In both Spain and Portugal, the Catholic establishment set out to destroy what authorities saw as their greatest threat to the true faith. They sought out recently baptized Jews who were continuing to practice Judaism in secrecy. These

New Christians known as Marranos,¹ were considered heretics and traitors.

Over 1500 years prior to the official commencement of an Inquisition on the Iberian Peninsula, the use of public humiliation as a punishment had already been introduced. The genesis of such punishment is attributed here to the early Christian theologian Augustine, and his influence on the later Church Fathers whom he inspired. In the early years of the Christian religion, prior to the rise of scholasticism, documented interpretation of scripture by the religious leadership, was regarded as an extension of the Bible. When the early Church Fathers recorded

¹ literally *swine*

their theories and interpretations, they were understood by the lay people of society to be inspired by God.

Punishment Without Imprisonment

From the opening of his *Expositions of the Psalms*, Augustine (354-430 CE) interprets that the *Book of Psalms* was written by Jews, about the coming predictions of the Christian messiah.² In his 5th century work *The City of God*, Augustine interprets the passage from Psalm 59:12,13, “Do not slay them, lest my people forget; scatter them...” as a literal prophecy. He says, “...They themselves are dispersed among all nations, wherever the Church of Christ is spread abroad. For a prophecy about this thing was sent before in the Psalms...” (Chap. 46:6). His argument is that this passage in Psalms was an early foreshadowing of how the Jews would (and should) be treated by Christians. He implies that Jews should be kept alive, perpetually reminding Christians of God’s law, which they [Jews] do not comprehend, but have in their scriptures.³ Augustine’s argument is clearly built on specific biblical passages, carefully selected to support his position; one that says Jews will eventually live among the world—scattered. Augustine thought he could demonstrate that the ‘prophecies’ recorded in Psalms are true, using the wandering Jewish people as his ‘proof’. This early interpretation would eventually evolve, leading to vast discord against the Jewish people.⁴

Augustine later developed a unique interpretation of Cain from the book of Genesis; this theory of his continued with the general idea of the Jews as a wandering population. Genesis records, “and the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who meets

him should kill him” (4.15). Therefore, all who met Cain throughout his life would regard him with perpetual scorn and contempt. Thus, as Cain was punished to be a mourner and an outcast on the earth, so too are the Jews. This is substantiated by Augustine, “Let them [Jews] live among us, but let them suffer and be continually humiliated” (Flannery 52-53; Marshall 7). With rhetoric such as this being articulated from the lips of the venerated Church Fathers, it is no wonder that Jewish people were continually vilified and mistreated over the centuries by those who resided within the breast of the Church.

Chastisement of this type continued over successive centuries within the Church. In 1147 CE, Bernard of Clairvaux revisited Augustine’s idea when he wrote:

God has informed me of my enemies, says [sic] the church: ‘do not kill them lest my people will be forgotten’ The Jews are like the words of the Holy Scriptures, because they forever remind us of the Passion of the Lord. (qtd. in Leclercq 363).

A century later, Peter the Venerable, a foremost Christian Monk—and—financial supporter of the Crusades, sent a letter to King Louis VII of France. He wrote, “God does not will cold blooded murder or outright slaughter” (qtd. in Kritzeck 21). Peter said, “...God does not want them to be wholly exterminated, but to be kept, like the fratricide Cain, for still more severe torment and disgrace” (qtd. in Schaff 4:447).

Pope Innocent III utilized Augustine’s idea of Cain in his 13th century writings, “The Lord made Cain a wanderer and a fugitive over the earth, but set a mark upon him...lest anyone find him should slay him” (qtd. in Moore). This he mentions while referring to the Jews, thus—like Cain—they are to be wanderers, experiencing perpetual shame. This idea of “marking” individuals as outcasts evolved. In 1215 CE Innocent influenced the Fourth Lateran Council (a legislative committee of Church authorities) to decree that all Jews had to visually distinguish themselves from Christians. The 14th

² He goes as far as saying: “let us hear the words of Christ from the Psalm[s].”

³ Psalms

⁴ “Not by bodily death shall the ungodly race of carnal Jews perish. For whoever destroys them in this way shall suffer sevenfold vengeance, that is, shall bring upon himself the sevenfold penalty under which the Jews lie for the crucifixion of Christ. So to the end of the seven days of time, the continued preservation of the Jews will be a proof to believing Christians of the subjection merited by those who, in the pride of their kingdom, put the Lord to death... And the Lord God set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should slay him.” —Augustine of Hippo (400 CE) *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon), XII 12, 13.

century Castilian convention written by Alfonso X known as *Las Siete Partidas* attempted to enforce Innocent's earlier rule by stating, "any Jew who does not bear such [identifying] mark, shall pay for each time he is found without it ten Maravedis of gold; and if he has not the means to do this, he shall receive ten lashes for his offense."⁵ Stemming from this was the mandate obligating Jews to prominently wear a piece of yellow cloth upon their attire, known to antiquity as the "yellow badge of shame" (Schroeder 78-127); this being the forerunner to the yellow star mandated in 20th century by the Nazi regime. Justification of this practice was specified by Innocent who had wrote, "we decree that such Jews...shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress..." (Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 68). By wearing this denigrating mark, the Jews were much more susceptible to scorn, ridicule, and even physical abuse.

Public Penance

Wearing of special clothing and symbols as a method of public penance for heresy, was common long before the Inquisition was *officially* sanctioned in Spain (Lea 1888 1:468); this included the wearing of uncomfortable sackcloth as a demonstration of penance to the Church (Schaff 5:550). Dominic, founder of the monastic Order of Friars in the early 13th century, introduced the idea of wearing a small yellow cross on the outer garment of reconciled heretics (Lea 1888 1:468). Later, authorities in 14th century Spain, mandated convicted—but not jailed—heretics must wear yellow crosses upon their outer garments. Wearing one on their chest, and one on their back, these people (because of their status as heretics) became easy targets of abuse (Given 84,85). It would seem that wearing crosses was easy penance, but as Maycock expressed, "in the eyes of the people the yellow cross was a sign of infamy...and the person who wore it was a plague-spot...living in their midst" (195).

Culmination of these doctrines and regulations regarding public humiliation and shaming of Jews

⁵ *Las Siete Partidas* (Seven Part Code) Laws on Jews, Law XI.

peaked in the sixteenth century. This idea of physically distinguishing individuals by means of unique dress, matured on the Iberian Peninsula into the utilization of a garment of clothing known as a *san benito*.⁶ The *san benito* manifested into high favor by the Catholic authorities as an instrument of punishment in both Spain and Portugal. In Spain, the garment was often referred to by the peasant folks as the *zamarra* (Plaidy 152), but in the documents of the Inquisitional Tribunal, it is recorded for infamy as the *penitential habit* or *abito*.⁷ This article of clothing drew incredible shame upon those who were forced to wear it as a form of punishment.

Both the 15th century Inquisitor Eymeric, and the 17th century Church historian Paramo believed that the first act of heresy was committed by Adam and Eve. Sabatini declared that Paramo would agree, "Is it proper to impose a garment of shame upon those convicted of lesser heresies...Adam and Eve wore skins after their fall, and [so he] implies that this is a proper precedent for the *san benito*" (149). "The sentence of prison with its bread and water diet may be relaxed; but never the *san benito*...[considered by Eymeric as] the most salutary of penances for him that undergoes it, and the most edifying to the public..." (qtd. in Sabatini 154). All of the above suppositions were later taken by the masses, and misused for centuries as a pretext for escalating the public misery of the Jewish people, short of taking their lives.

The Shameful Garment

In the early days of the Inquisition, the *san benito* was designed as a knee length robe, fashioned similar to a tunic. Introduced officially into monasteries during the sixth century, the tunic was mandated for all monks by Benedict (530 CE) in his *Rule* of legislative codes (No. 55). Hence, the *san benito* originates both in appearance and in name from the Christian monk (later 'Saint') Benedict. The garment was that of a standard design, with the exception of the decorative

⁶ Variations include: *sanbenito*, *sam benito*, *sambenito*, *sambenitillo*, *saco bendito*

⁷ Variation includes *samarra*

customization put forth on an individual basis; this depending on the subject's sentence. Accordingly, a person who was convicted of heresy would have worn a san benito that was embellished differently—than that of a person who was sentenced to be burned at the stake. Over time the garment evolved into a hooded long robe or scapular (Sabatini 225), this being the idea of Torquemada, the Inquisitor General (Plaidy 153).

Both the tunic and robe were made of a coarse fabric (mention has been made of wool) that covered the front and back of the wearer generally only long enough to cover the knees. The panels were connected over the top, and an opening was accessible for the wearer's head. Depending on the style fabricated, the garment would occasionally remain open at both sides. Separate from the mental anguish which accompanied the attire, the san benito was not physically comfortable—thus it was never meant to be. Considering heretics were forbidden to wear nothing but the coarsest clothing, the vesture was fabricated out of sackcloth or other rough material (Plaidy 153). A Spanish Jew once wrote, "Instead of the rustle of silk, we were compelled to wear miserable clothing that only drew further contempt and revulsion upon us" (qtd. in Sachar 51). "It was composed of brown stuff, with a scapulary which had two yellow crosses fastened on it" (Llorente 24-29). In some instances, persons forced to display the garment would not be allowed to wear any undergarments or footwear, and were paraded, sometimes in chains, throughout the city.

The san benito was often accompanied by a tall miter, not much different than a traditional dunce cap. This headdress was made of thick pressed paper, and was known as *la coraza* (Defourneaux 125), which was essentially the "fool's armor." There were two variants of this head covering. The first was a tall hat with two peaks on top, one rising in front, and one in back. The second variation had a single tall tapered conical point. At present there is no worthy explanation on why two different variants were utilized, however, the literature reflects the latter hat was instituted more frequently. This miter—accompanied with—the

san benito, made up the complete penitential costume. Painted on both the miter and san benito, were the alleged crimes the suspected heretic was being charged with (Kedourie 104). A journal passage written by an unidentified 16th century individual demonstrates an encounter with the san benito and the Inquisitional authorities:

Bringing with them [a] certain fools' coats, which they had prepared for us, being called in their language, san benitos, which were coats made of yellow cotton, and red crosses upon them both before and behind. They were so busied [sic] in putting on their coats about us...that they did not once suffer us to sleep that night (Carey 113).

Ceremonial Sentencing

When a person was found guilty of any degree of heresy, or other *crime* by the Church, his sentence would be prepared by an Inquisitional court. The sentences and penances for those who confessed or were found guilty, were pronounced together at an event known as a *sermo generalis*. The sentencing portion of the *sermo generalis* was termed *auto-da-fé*. This translates literally to *act of faith*, "for it was intended to strengthen the orthodoxy of the people" (Durant 782). These were the grand ceremonies, filled with fanciful pageantry, at which judgment was pronounced on those convicted of heresy. Even though a horrifying event, for aficionados of the macabre, the auto-da-fé was great theater. The service took place in public squares, where platform seating was erected for the crowd. Sometimes these ceremonies were treated as municipal holidays, attracting people to the event from miles around (Crow 183; Schaff 5:550). John Lilburne the 17th century radical English politician made mention:

The auto-da-fé took place on a Sunday, or festival-day, and all of the other churches were closed, that the concourse of people might be greater in that where the ceremony had to be performed (Llorente 24-29).

During the 16th and 17th centuries, attendance at these gatherings reached as high as the attendance at bullfights. In an effort to present a extraordinary spectacle for the masses, at the start of each auto-da-fé, these enemies of the Church were forced to walk in procession. With a noose around their neck, each of them holding a long tapered green candle in their hands, they marched in shameful humility. Upon their bodies each wore a san benito embroidered with their name, as well as the crime they were accused of committing (Sabatini 270). It was through the use of this garment that the alleged crimes and violations of these treasonous individuals were proclaimed to the world.⁸

The Inquisitional courts prescribed a wide range of punishments that affected its victims both physically, as well as psychologically. Penalties ranged from compulsory visits to churches, wearing a cross, or imprisonment. These sentences were sometimes for life, but were known to be commuted. Nonetheless, if the accused parties did not renounce their heretical beliefs, they would be considered obstinate impenitents, and put to death (Walsh 226). Both the idea of imprisonment, as well as humiliating penances such as wearing of the san benito, fell into the category of *paenitentiae confusibiles*—the humiliating penances (Lea 1888 1:462; Maycock 193). The use of this category of punishment was common in the middle ages, as the use of prison sentencing was not yet widespread. Maycock says in his work *The Inquisition*:

Imprisonment was not regarded in quite the same manner as in our own time...it was a new thing, and monastic in origin and primarily penitential in purpose.... Escape was treated not as a defiance of authority, but as a wilful [sic] rejection of the loving chastisement of the Church—an act of rebellious ingratitude! (187).

It was common for those convicted to be mandated to wear the san benito for prolonged sentences, for some, it was to be worn whenever he was in public.

⁸ Interesting to note, in Spain about 1,000 years earlier, the Visigothic Christian King Egica accused Jews of treason. In response, their property was confiscated, Judaism was made illegal, and Jews were declared slaves and distributed them as gifts among Christians. The children were taken from them at age seven and raised as Christians.

So pervasive in Spanish history, the san benito is mentioned in both historical accounts, as well as fictional stories. This is exemplified in Elliot's Spanish tale of the Spanish Armada, *The Gold of Guadirra*, "...as a penitent heretic you may escape the fire.... To wander Spain in the san benito—the robe of shame..." (167). The following are examples of sentences involving the san benito that were handed down by 18th and 19th century Inquisitional courts:

"And inasmuch as he emitted no confession under his torture, he was condemned, not as one convicted, but suspected of Judaism, to wear the San Benito, or habit of infamy, for two whole years."⁹

"Sentenced to imprisonment at the option of the Holy Office and wearing of the sambenito at the auto-da-fé."

"Sentenced to perpetual wearing of the sambenito [sic] and imprisonment without remission; also to wear a painted pasteboard miter with the mark of a heretic and a dogmatist...."

"Sentenced to perpetual wearing of the sambenito with marks of fire and imprisonment without remission and five years in the galleys."

"Sentenced to imprisonment and perpetual wearing of the sambenito without remission with the insignia of fire...."

"Sentenced to perpetual imprisonment and wearing of the sambenito and the painted pasteboard miter, and holding a candle; also imprisonment at the option of the Holy Office in the prison of the Holy Inquisition...."

Specific Attributes

⁹ Section 7 of "The Inquisition of Spain; with anecdotes of some of its more illustrious victims," *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. XX, (July 1826), pp. 70-89.

San benitos were generally fabricated in a sulfur-yellow or black fabric, although there are accounts of the garments being prepared with green cloth (Charles 15). Variations of the embellishments placed on the individual san benito, represented the specific sentence of the convicted heretic. The yellow tunic was used throughout the peninsula, with the exception being the Kingdom of Valencia which used one of a green type (Haliczer 82). The St. Andrew's cross diagonally transversed both front and back, the cross being either black, green, or red. Cardinal Ximenes (Grand Inquisitor ten years after the death of Torquemada) implemented the use of the St. Andrews cross, because he felt, "the secret enemies of the Church should not be allowed to wear the Savior's cross" (qtd. in Walsh 228). The literature reflects six major variations of the san benito; three kinds being assigned to *accused* heretics, and three for *convicted* heretics. Differences in subtle variations of the san benito are demonstrated in the classic *Candide*:

Eight days afterwards they were each dressed in a sanbenito, and their heads were adorned with paper mitres. The mitre and sanbenito worn by Candide were painted with flames reversed and with devils that had neither tails nor claws; but Dr. Pangloss's devils had both tails and claws, and his flames were upright. In these habits they marched in procession, and heard a very pathetic sermon, which was followed by an anthem, accompanied by bagpipes. (Voltaire 14).

The cloth vestment itself was thought to possess bad fortune. Plaidy wrote, "For they [towns people] quickly came to believe that there was evil in the hideous yellow garment (153)." The sort of contempt the dress carried was widespread throughout the peninsula. This is agreeably demonstrated by the words of Ribeiro Sanchez, a converted, (but secretly practicing) Jewish physician of Portugal. Sanchez was from the Penamacor, a district of Castello Branca,

Portugal.¹⁰ Recorded in his memoirs was a story that perfectly described the public feeling towards the penitential habit. He told how on one particular Sunday, a crowd attempting to leave a Lisbon church encountered a mass of people so large they could not exit. In an effort to get through the crowd, one person, "took off his san benito and advanced, waving it about him.... So great was the popular fear of being contaminated by its touch that there was a general stampede, and the path was completely cleared (Roth 110)." British Reverend Richard H. Barham under the pen name 'Ingoldsby,' makes mention of the garment in his once popular 19th century book of legends. In the lengthy rhyming story, *The Auto-Da-Fé: A Legend Of Spain* he croons:¹¹

No matter for that -- my description to crown,
All the flames and the devils were turn'd upside down
 On this habit, facetiously term'd *San Benito*,
 Much like the dress suit
 Of some nondescript brute
 From the show-van of Wombwell, (not George,) or Polito.
 And thrice happy they,
 Dress'd out in this way
 To appear with *éclat* at the *Auto-da-fé*,--
 Thrice happy indeed whom the good luck might fall to
Of devils tail upward, and 'Fuego revolto.'
 For, only see there,
 In the midst of the Square,
 Where, perch'd up on poles six feet high in the air
 Sit, chained to the stake, some two, three, or four pair
 Of wretches, whose eyes, nose, complexion, and hair
 Their Jewish descent but too plainly declare,
Each clothed in a garment more frightful by far, a
Smock-frock sort of gaberdine, call'd a *Samarra*,
With three times the number of devils upon it,--
 A proportion observed on the sugar-loaf'd bonnet,
 With this farther distinction -- of mischief a proof --
 That every fiend Jack stands upright on his hoof!
While the pictured flames, spread
Over body and head,
 Are three times as crooked, and three times as red!

¹⁰ Sanchez, with many coreligionists, escaped from the persecutions in Portugal and went to Holland, where he studied medicine. He later became a high-ranking government physician in St. Petersburg then a pauper in Paris.

¹¹ The excerpted passage is presented here with its often-unconventional spelling, however bold emphasis has been added by the author of the paper.

All, too, **pointing upwards**, as much as to say,
‘Here’s the real *bonne bouche* [A delicious morsel] of the

Auto-da-fé.’ (n.p.)

Charge	Level	Embellishment	Additional
Heresy, Accused	<i>Levemente</i> (Slight)	One Stripe of the St. Andrew’s Cross Color: Yellow (Green in Valencia)	-
Heresy, Accused	<i>Vehemente</i> (Moderate)	One Stripe of the St. Andrew’s Cross Color: Yellow (Green in Valencia)	-
Heresy, Accused	<i>Violenter</i> (Extreme)	Full St. Andrew’s Cross Color: Yellow (Green in Valencia)	-
Heresy, Convicted	Repent	Full St. Andrew’s Cross Color: Yellow (Green in Valencia)	Sentenced to wear a [plain] Miter
Heresy, Convicted	Repent but Relapsed	Full St. Andrew’s Cross, Flames Downward ¹ Color: Yellow (sometimes Black)	Sentenced to wear a Miter with Flames
Heresy, Convicted	Non-Repent – Impenitent ³	Full St. Andrew’s Cross, Flames Upward ² In addition the San Benito was adorned with paintings of the devil and dragons Color: Yellow (sometimes Black)	Sentenced to wear a Miter with Flames
<p><i>1 Signified the individual was going to be burned after death (death by immediate garroting at the stake)</i> <i>2 Signified the individual was going to be burned alive.</i> <i>3 Known as a “Negativo”</i></p>			

Table 2. Variations of the Representation of the San Benito Garment
Depending on Charge. (Source: Haliczzer 82; Plaidy 154; Sabatini 226; Roth 109)

The notorious *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* tells of the handling of a merchant who was forced to bear the san benito prior to his flaming execution. They brought him:

Into the city of Seville, to a place where the said inquisitors sat in judgment which they called *auto*, with a canvas coat, whereupon in divers parts was painted the figure of a huge devil, tormenting a soul in a flame of fire, and on his head a copping tank of the same work.¹²

Posthumous Castigation

Not only in life was the person humiliated, but too after his death. Though convicts had to wear the shameful garment right up to moments before death, it was removed most of the time from the person prior to them being tied to the stake. This is because the san benitos of the scorched were retained by the Church as a bizarre memento of their “win in battle over heresy” (Sabatini 279).¹³ This garment

¹² Ch. V.

¹³ Barham make a comical rant of the auto-da-fé in his *Legends*: “Says the King, ‘That’ll do! pooh! pooh!—burn a Jew? Burn half a score Jews—burn a dozen—burn two—Your Grace, it’s a match! Burn all you can catch, Men, women, and children—pooh! Pooh!—great and

was the key to perpetuating public humiliation on the family of the deceased. For it was a custom of the Inquisition to mandate that after the victim's death, his personal *san benito* be hung from the rafters and on the walls of his town church—a very severe (and perpetually lasting) punishment for the sentence of heresy (Charles 24). There, inscribed with his family name, crime, and punishment, it would serve as a reminder of the crime perpetuated against the Catholic religion, as well as continuing to bring about shame to the entire town where the condemned lived (Haliczer 83; Kamen 1985 50; Lea 1922 24). This dramatic exhibit of the *san benito* helped perpetuate the memory of the victim, thus keeping their descendants from ever holding honorable titles, public office, or respectable trades (Lea 1907 3:172-179). In 1561 CE this was set into formal policy by the Inquisitional Tribunal with the words:

All the *san benitos* of the condemned, living or dead, present or absent, be placed in the churches *where they used to live...in order that there may be perpetual memory of the infamy of the heretics and their descendants* (qtd. in Kamen 1997).

The Inquisitors supposition was that perpetual shame would be brought upon a family and their descendants by marking them with a *san benito*, and this would have much more of an impact in the long run.¹⁴ Heresy was a crime in the eyes of the state, and a sin in the eyes of the Church, and though the division between the two was blurred, neither would let an accused heretic off easily. Even after death it was not uncommon for the Catholic Church to exhume bodies of persons later 'discovered' to be heretics, dress them in *san benitos*, and commit them to the fire. During one particular *auto*, straw figures were made and painted with "hideous grimaces" of the faces of people who had already died (Plaidy 156). Their decomposing corpses were set upon the stake, dressed in their badge of heresy, the *san benito*. For those whom had already been committed to the earth, their bones were painted with flames, and transported to the event in trunks (Kamen 193). This spectacle has been described in gross detail by the British historian John Addington Symonds, "the pageant [*auto-da-fé*] was enhanced by processions of exhumed corpses and heretics in effigy...hailed to the huge bonfire, side by side with living men... all of them a like were enveloped in the same grotesquely ghastly *san benito*...(qtd. in Roth 119)."

Closing

Specific numbers of persons condemned to wear the *san benito* are not known. However, recorded for history are particular cases that were incredibly grand. One 15th century case records that 200 people were summoned to Toledo and were sentenced to, "wear a *san benito* over their ordinary garments for a year...another 700 came to be reconciled on 15 January 1487 CE, and yet another 1200 on 10 March" (Sabatini 279). In this latter group, some were wretchedly mandated to wear the garment for life.

The garment was used as an instrument of punishment by the Church for over half a millennium. Though in Spain the religious authorities served as the driving force for its use, the secular authorities no less assisted the Inquisitional process by providing funds for the cloth to produce the *san benitos*, as well as the accessories such as painting of effigies, candles, and hats for use during the ceremonies. Seventeenth century records from Seville demonstrate authorities spent over 137,000 *Maravedis* [\$7400 modern USD] during two separate *auto-da-fés* to punish these traitors to the faith (Kamen 196). As Eskenazi stated, the value of gold has changed drastically, nearly fifteen fold in the 20th century

small—old clothes—slippers—sealing-wax— Pooh!—burn them all! For once we'll be gay, Grand *auto-da-fé* Is much better fun than a ball or a play! So the warrant was made out without more delay, Drawn, seal'd, and delivered, and (Signed) YO EL RE!"

¹⁴ Cf. *The Mark of Cain*

alone, so it is safe to conservatively assume a twenty-fold change since the Spanish Diaspora (30). Knowing this, the amount contributed for the san benitos and supplies was an extraordinary amount, considering an average annual salary for a contemporary member of the Spanish working class was only 14,500 Maravedis [approximately \$785 USD]. Thus in this case from Seville, the amount spent for san benitos and supplies is calculated in today's dollars to near \$31,000, almost 40 years of salary for a man of the 17th century (Lawrence, Statistical 38).

It is well documented in the literature that with the late 15th century expulsion of the Jews and the total confiscation of their property, the Church amassed a monumental fortune. It is because of this that the supposition may be alluded to that it was Jewish funds which went into the development and implementation of the autos' as well as the san benitos which assisted the Church in punishing both secretly practicing Jews and insincere Conversos. This may shed light on the substantially increased number of elaborate auto-da-fés and increased use of the san benitos which took place in the 16th century.

The use of the san benito is well documented in the literature up until the mid-18th century. After this, the san benito fell into general disuse. Few of the san benitos that once hung from the rafters of the Iberian churches still survive today. The fragmented memory of this garment is left to history as a remnant of its once unfortunate existence.