ASSAULTS, MURDERS, INSULTS AND BLASPHEMIES: RURAL VIOLENCE IN THE FARMLANDS OF CORDOBA IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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ABSTRACT

This work examines violent actions and crimes committed in the farmlands around Cordoba, in the south of the Crown of Castile, during the Late Middle Ages. The first section deals with the sources used in this study, especially Cordoba’s municipal archive and the records of court cases preserved in the archive of the Chancellery in Granada—a hitherto under-exploited source of information for the kingdom of Cordoba. Subsequently, I shall present some examples of personal confrontations that began with insults and threats and often led to physical assaults and murder. Then, I shall examine verbal insults and blasphemies, which were often the origins of more serious affrays, as well as their portrayal in the written record.¹

KEYWORDS

Violence, Castile, Kingdom of Cordoba, Farmlands, Late Middle Ages.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Violentia, Castella, Regnum Cordubae, Agri, Medium aevum ultimum.
1. Introduction

Violence in the Late Middle Ages has received much scholarly attention in various European countries, starting with Great Britain and France in the 1970s. This trend did not begin in Spain until later, but since the 1990s there has been a substantial increase in the number of publications and scientific meetings on the topic, including a number of historiographical overviews. These publications have examined the concept of violence, and have attempted to characterise its different manifestations. Attention has been paid to the most common types of crime committed during the Middle Ages; the circumstances that triggered personal confrontations; the motivations behind criminal acts; the judicial processes; royal pardons; the character of judicial convictions; and the creation of the Hermandad as a policing institution against rural criminality, to mention but a few topics.

1. Used Abbreviations: AchGr, Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Granada; AGS, Archivo General de Simancas; AHPCO, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Córdoba; AMCO, Archivo Municipal de Córdoba; LAC, Libro de Acta Capitular; PNCO, Sección de Protocolos Notariales de Córdoba; RGS, Registro General del Sello.


Works that focus on Andalusia and, specifically, on the kingdom of Cordoba, are few, being restricted to Emilio Cabrera and Ricardo Córdoba’s contributions, although recent publications are beginning to expand our knowledge of different aspects of conflict in the city and its hinterland. Most of these recent works, however, cover the whole of Andalusia and only provide a very general overview of criminality and violence in the kingdom of Cordoba. The aim of this article, therefore, is to examine in more detail the gravity and frequency of violent events in the rural areas of Cordoba, especially in the farmlands to the south of the city. Focus will not be limited to blood crimes, which are relatively well represented in the written sources, but will also extend to the crucial theme of verbal aggression, especially insults and blasphemies. Different types and levels of confrontation will be examined, ranging from mere verbal fights to murder, which will allow us to reappraise the social role of conflict in 15th-century Cordoba and its more violent countryside.


2. The sources

Some years ago, it was argued that studying violence in southern Spain in the Late Middle Ages was a task rife with difficulties. The main problem is the scarcity of documentation for Castile prior to the 15th century, and the indirect nature of the written sources that exist. Unlike other regions, such as Valencia, where the archives are more substantial and provide detailed information, in Castile the record barely allows for the reconstruction of crimes, their perpetrators and circumstances, the sentences passed by the courts and, perhaps more importantly, witness statements and interrogations. As pointed out by Ricardo Córdoba, for the Crown of Castile the historian is to a large extent limited to the Registro General del Sello, Archivo General de Simancas, where the information available is, at any rate, succinct, and to the notarial protocols of Castilian cities, where hardly any documents that predate 1460 exist. In most cases, the information available refers to the mid-or the late 15th century. The documentation includes royal letters of pardon and the Crown’s instructions concerning specific investigations and arrests. Notarial books make sporadic reference to violent events, but the information provided is brief and unreliable, and leaves little scope for a detailed study. Sometimes, municipal archives, in Cordoba and the rest of Castilian cities, keep records of protests filed by the citizens, which occasionally describe violent episodes. For example, in the late 14th century, the inhabitants of the parish of Santiago, Cordoba, refused to pay certain taxes and, after pelting the tax collector Mateo Sánchez with stones and stabbing him, abandoned him to lie on the street. As a rule, however, this source of information is not very eloquent, and only provides a very concise description of events.

Concerning the study of violence in rural areas, which is the specific purpose of this article, the most eloquent sources are those which deal with jurisdictional conflicts between towns and those which are concerned with personal confrontations over the use of economic resources. For the southern farmlands, I shall be using hitherto unused forensic documentation, which is currently preserved in the municipal archive of Cordoba (sections Policía urbana y rural, Terrenos realengos, Términos jurisdiccionales, Predios ríston y Sentencias de términos). Sometimes, these documents describe blood crimes, especially assaults and physical injuries. The court cases stored in the archive of the royal chancellery of Granada, on the other hand, provide much richer information, concerning both physical and verbal attacks. Witness statements, taken from people living near the location of the events, provide us with detailed descriptions of said events; occasionally, these statements come from the victims or the perpetrators themselves. In any case, Ricardo Córdoba pointed out that witnesses were often influenced by the parts and even bribed to give a certain version of events, muddle the truth or exaggerate the facts to ensure that the defendant was met with harsher punishment; thus, we must approach these documents with caution. How often such episodes of corruption happened can be inferred from the general oath that witnesses had to pronounce in front of the judge; after stating their name and age, witnesses declared que no es pariente de ninguna de las partes en ningún grado e que venza el pleito el que tuviese justicia o que no ha sido sobornado ni dadivado ni atemorizado por ninguno dellos para que diga e disponga esta cabsa el contrario de la verdad.

Despite these caveats, these sources greatly contribute to fill the lacunae left unfilled by the notarial protocols and the Registro General del Sello. Unfortunately, records that predate the 15th century are as scarce in the municipal archive of Cordoba and the chancellery of Granada as they are everywhere else, and we can only hope to gain a glimpse of earlier periods on the rare occasions when elderly people recollect events that occurred when they were young.

3. Threats and cartas de seguro

Threats were a common occurrence in the Late Middle Ages, as they were a natural consequence of personal rivalries and confrontations. The ubiquity and intensity of threats at that time may be inferred from the pervasiveness of the co-

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14. Some of these sections have been previously used by other historians, and some of them have been cited above; however, our knowledge of violence in Cordoba during the Late Middle Ages has received little specific attention, especially for the rural areas.
16. “Not to be a relative of any of the parts, and [were] willing for the tribunal to act as is just, giving true testimony driven by neither bribe nor threat from any of the parts”. This is shown in any medieval lawsuit.
called *cartas de seguro* ("letters of security"); these were documents that afforded people some protection against physical violence and murder. Threats attested in the record are generally direct, and were often reinforced by some menacing physical gesture, which aimed to intimidate the victim even further. In rural locations, this gesture often included scattering the victim’s livestock, taking some of his or her possessions, and even attacking him or her with stones or clubs. In 1481, an inhabitant of the village of Santaella, Antón Ruiz de Aguilar, declared that one of his neighbours, Alfon Ruiz de las Infantas, and his relatives, had taken possession of a property —later known as the *cortijo* of Barrionuevo— *por fuerza lo defendían [...] que los corryan y amenazavan y que algunos apaleaban y de tal manera lo fasian que nadie no osava yr por allá ni entrar dentro con sus ganados ni a faser leña (...).” 17 Several years later, Alfon’s descendant, Aldonza de las Infantas, and her husband, Luis Ponce de León, took this attitude even further, stopping the inhabitants of Santaella from entering a royal highway that was traditionally used by locals to fetch firewood. According to Antón García’s account:

For his part, Alonso García de la Fuente recalls that he *envió un moço por leña a los montes realengos e que viniendo cargado con su leña por Barrio Nuevo, salió el mayordomo Aranda a él e que acuchilló las sogas e le derribó las cargas en el suelo e que le tomó un hocino e un capote e una halda e ge las llevó (...).” 19 Antón Ruiz de Juan Esteban claimed that *Luys prendó a este testigo una ves, porque yva por agua a la fuente en un asno y le levó un par de pollos por pena, que una vez por otra, el asno con los cántaros le levó y los cántaros quebró.* 20 Aldonza’s son Martín continued with the “family tradition” of pestering the neighbours. In this case, the threats were made in no uncertain terms.

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17. “Forcefully defended it [...] with such threats and clubbing that nobody dared go there to graze the animals or gather firewood”. AMCO. C-256. doc. 2, f. 109v (30th October 1513).

18. “On [the] orders of doña Aldonça or her husband, the road is closed, and I’ve seen Pedro Ruiz Almogávar’s lad walking that path with some firewood that he’d collected from the royal land, and they took his cloak as punishment and never gave it back (...) and I’ve also seen Juan Chícón, who lives in the village, carrying firewood collected from the king’s estate down that same path, which runs across doña Aldonça’s land, and how they took his cloak too, and he’s never had it back. I’ve heard that they also punish everyone who comes down that road with animals”. AMCO. C-256. doc. 2, f. 109v (30th October 1513).

19. “Sent a lad to the king’s land to get firewood, and as he returned through Barrio Nuevo, the butler Aranda came out, cut the ropes of the firewood bundle and took the lad’s cloak and doublet”. AMCO. C-256. doc. 2, f. 31v (30th October 1513).

20. “Luys attacked me once, as I was on my way to take some water with my ass (...) and my jugs ended up broken”. AMCO. C-256. doc. 2, f. 70v (19th October 1513).
According to Antón Ruiz de Gálvez, mayor and inhabitant of Santaella, in 1511 Martín stopped Pedro García de Valderrama from coming to the spring, llevándole de pena 4 reales porque entró a beber la dicha agua con los dichos puercos, e que el dicho don Martín en persona, le dijo al dicho porquero que no volviese más allí sino que le mandaría dar de palos (...).\(^21\) Bartolomé Sánchez Ballestero, inhabitant of La Rambla, was told not to enter the estate of Montemayor, which was common property, because otherwise veréis si os valdría la corona.\(^22\) Alonso Rodríguez de Estuñiga confronted one of Pedro Jurado’s guards, who left saying that iba a Montemayor a llamar a Pedro jurado e que juraba por Dios que le avían de llevar a Montemayor maniatado (...) que le avían de alancear.\(^23\) Bartolomé Sánchez, a shepherd and foreman of Juan de Góngora, knight veinticuatro in Cordoba, denounced a servant of justice Bañuelo because he had corrieron a este testigo una manada de ovejas paciendo las hierbas en el término realengo y concejil (...) y se lo echaron fuera de allí; he also claimed he was told quel dicho jurado mandaba faser asý e que amenazaron a este testigo dizíéndole que sy volvía más allí con las dichas ovejas, le prendarian e aun le descalabrarían (...).\(^24\) In another lawsuit from 1510, Andrés Fernández Pastor also testified against justice Bañuelo:

Que estando este testigo e otro pastor guardando vna manada de ovejas en los baldíos de la faça las Marranas e de los Pinedas, las quales dichas tierras no están labradas, vido este testigo cómo vino el dicho jurado Luys de Bañuelo, suyas son las dichas tierras, con ciertos criados suyos e esclavos, a las dichas tierras e echó a este testigo e al otro pastor e al ganado fuera de las dichas tierras, amenazándolos que los avía de prendre sy durmyan allí de noche con el ganado, e que asy mesmo el dicho jurado Bañuelo, no contento con lo suso dicho, vio este testigo como dijo a sus mozos ‘quemaldes todos su fato e las redes’ e que el dicho jurado o sus criados, le tomaron a este testigo e a su compañero, tres pellejos de ovejas mayores e dos pellejos de corderos e la red donde tenía este testigo las dichas ovejas, vido este testigo como en presencia del dicho jurado le pusieron fuego e la quemaron e que los pellejos o los quemaron se los llevaron e que sy no fuera porque dijo vn fijo del dicho jurado que no les quemase todo el hato, se lo quemaran todo e les quebraron los cántaros (...) e que después que se avía ydo de allí el dicho jurado, dijeron los dichos sus moços a altas bozes ‘biba el jurado que otra fiso e salíose por ella e también se saldrá agoara con esta’.\(^25\)

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21. “Taking 4 reales from him, just because he’d gone to drink from the spring with his pigs, and Martín himself told [Pedro] not to come back, or he’d have him beaten up”. AMCO. C-277. doc. 4, ff. 16v-17r (18\(^{th}\) October 1516).
22. “The king himself will not be able to protect [him]”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, no folio (28\(^{th}\) January 1525).
23. “He was on his way to Montemayor to tell Pedro Jurado, and swore by God that they were to take [Alonso] in shackles to Montemayor (...) and he also swore to stab him”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, no folio (28\(^{th}\) January 1525).
24. “A flock of sheep that were grazing in the king’s and the council’s estate disbanded” (…) “the justice decided what could and couldn’t be done on that land, and that if [Bartolomé] dared return, he’d be arrested and even beaten up”. AMCO. C-1027. doc. 31-1, no folio (7\(^{th}\) February 1518).
25. “I was with another shepherd looking after a flock of sheep in the barren lands of faça las Marranas and los Pinedas; these lands were not farmed, but justice Luys de Bañuelo, who owns this land, and some of his servants and slaves, kicked us and our animals out, telling us that if we stayed overnight with the animals we’d be arrested, and not content with this, justice Bañuelo told one of his men to burn all our things, and they took three hides of sheep and two hides of lamb and they set fire to them or took them away. And if one of the men of the justice had not asked him not to burn all our things, we would
Another interesting case was recalled by the shepherd Juan Martín, inhabitant of Villalpando. As he was on his way south, he went through the cortijo of Fuencubierta, in the farmlands, where he was accosted by the farmer Pedro de Hoces:

Lo tomó uno de los dichos arrendadores que se llama Luys Pérez y que iba a caballo con una lanza y le dijo a este testigo que le diese una prenda y el testigo dijo que lo que le plasía, y se le llevó una burra, y dijo como no estaba contento con aquella prenda sino que se avía de debarcalzar los capatos este testigo, y que este testigo que se los descalçó, e los puso en el suelo e que con el fierro de la lanza los alcançó del suelo e se los llevó e dejó descalço a este testigo, e que le dijo el dicho arrendador a este testigo que sy supiera que este testigo syn mandárgelo su amo oviera entrado en el dicho cortijo con el dicho ganado, que a este testigo alantaría allí, e que sy allí tuviera al dicho jurado Uzeda, su amo, que también lo alantaría (...).26

Juan López Crespo was a farmer, and he had another similar case to recount:

Una vez vio que unos pastores de Lorenzo de las Infantas, pasó con su ganado por la cuesta de Abencález e lo quisieron prendar los guardas de Fernán Núñez, y que los pastores de Lorenzo se defendieron y no los prendaron. Después estos guardas fueron a Fernán Núñez e se lo dijeron lo ocurrido a Alonso de los Ríos, señor que era en ese momento de Fernán Núñez. Este envió a dos caballeros suyos para que los aguardasen e los prendasen en la sierra de la cuesta de Abencalez, e los desnudaron hasta dejarlos en camisones e les llevaron las prendas a Fernán Núñez (...).27

As a result of these frequent threats and the intimidating behaviour, many people requested letters of security from the Crown. In the north of the kingdom of Cordoba, 30 inhabitants of Gahețe and their procurator, who were fearful of Vasco Alfonso de Sosa, were granted one such letter;28 in the village of Las Posadas, a Diego Díaz applied for a letter of security because he was scared of two former justices and the family of the mayor Antonio de Benavides.29 In the south of the kingdom, Andrés de

have lost the lot, and our jugs would have been broken (...) and after the justice was gone, some of his men shouted “hail the justice, who gets away with everything and will get away with this too”. AMCO. C-1027. doc. 31-2, no folio (10th March 1515).

26. “One of the tenants, called Luys Pérez, who was on horseback and carrying a lance, asked the witness to give him something as a form of punishment, and the witness said that [Luys] may take what he pleased, and so [Luys] took a donkey, but not being content with that, he asked the witness to take his shoes off. The witness did so, and left the shoes on the ground, where [Luys] picked them up with the lance and left him barefoot. The tenant also told the witness that if he ever saw him again inside those lands without his master’s permission and with the animals, the witness would be speared down, and if [the witness’s] master, justice Uzeda, was there, he would be speared down too”. AMCO. C-171. doc. 15, no folio (8th September 1513).

27. “Once, some of Lorenzo de las Infantas’s shepherds were walking up the slope of Abencález, and the guards of Fernán Núñez tried to arrest them, but the shepherds defended themselves and no arrests could be made. Afterwards, the guards went to Fernán Núñez and told Alonso de los Ríos, who was at the time lord of the village. The lord sent two of his knights to arrest the shepherds at Abencalez; there, [the shepherds] were stripped naked and their clothes taken to Fernán Núñez (...)” . AchGr. leg. 1211, num. 1, no folio (16th century).


29. AGS. RGS, f. 295r (7th March 1494).
Morales was expelled from La Rambla after threatening certain witnesses who were going to declare against him;30 Juan Sánchez de Écija and Martín Sánchez Zahonero were the first to request a letter of security against him,31 followed only a few days later by Gonzalo López Melero, Blas López, Miguel López, Bartolomé Sánchez and Antón Martínez, all from La Rambla.32 According to their testimony, Andrés de Morales accused them of le tienen odio y enemistad y maliçia en su persona, y que si los denunciaba lo mataría, heriría, lisiaría, prendaría o tomaría u ocuparía sus bienes.33 In a similar case, Pedro de Aguilar and Alonso Pérez had been in constant conflict since 1518, until the latter ended up stabbing the former with a lance in 1524.34

These examples demonstrate that, very often, personal confrontations began with threats and insults. Sometimes these invectives did not go any further, but on other occasions they soon evolved into something more serious, and were but the preamble to physical violence and, sometimes, murder.

4. Blood crimes: assaults and homicides

Late Medieval Spanish sources provide abundant information about personal disputes ending in violence. In the 1990s, Emilio Cabrera argued that Andalusia was the Spanish region where more blood crimes were committed between 1475 and 1485. Based on his estimates, during this period one crime was committed in Andalusia per every 4716 inhabitants, followed by the Basque Country, with one crime per 3086 inhabitants.35 The accounts of the Hermandad suggest that many resources were committed to finding and arresting criminals all over the country, but the cities that absorbed the most policing resources were in Andalusia, with Jaén, Seville and Cordoba taking the lead.36 The case files preserved in the Registro General del Sello and studied by Ricardo Córdoba record a total of 570 blood crimes in the period 1476-1496; 283 (49.6%) of these crimes took place in the kingdom of Seville, 158 (27.8%) in the kingdom of Cordoba, and 129 (22.6%) in the kingdom of Jaen.37 This appears to confirm Emilio Cabrera’s argument that Seville and Cordoba, followed by Jerez, Écija, Úbeda, Baeza and Carmona, were the most violent cities in

30. AGS. RGS, f. 104r (19th August 1490).
31. AGS. RGS, f. 157r (2nd July 1490).
33. “Hating him and wishing him ill, and [Andrés de Morales] had sworn to kill them, hurt them, cripple them, and take their property if they reported him”. López Rider, Javier. “Andrés de Morales y la villa de La Rambla...”: 18.
34. AHPCO. PNCO. 14146P, 5, f. 2r (5th April 1522).
the 15th century. Ricardo Córdoba provides further confirmation of this. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of homicides in Andalusia. Seville and Cordoba combined account for almost one-third of the total (349 cases); it seems reasonable that the largest and most populous cities would witness more violent episodes. At any rate, we must take into account that these figures are based on those cases which were reported to the courts, and we presume that further violent crimes, of which we know nothing, were committed.

![Graph 1. Distribution of homicides in Andalusia in 1477-1496.](image)

In any case, it seems that Cordoba suffered from a high crime rate for the size of its population. This is not exclusive to the Christian period. María Arcas collected 20 examples of crimes committed, most of which occurred in the city of Cordoba, during the 10th and 11th centuries, homicides being particularly common. We may linger for a moment on one of these cases dated to the Andalusi period: a man called Ibn Barîha or Burayha was accused of injuring several people, of engaging in cases of corruption and of causing material damages in the farmlands; despite this, only Muhammad b. Kulayb or Kalîb could present evidence against him. After being

40. Figure after data published in Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo. El homicidio en Andalucía...: 33.
sentenced, Ibn Barīha mended his ways, fasting during the month of Ramadan and reading the Quran, which helped him to regain his freedom.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{4.1 Types of assault and murder}

The sources attest to a large number of assaults and murders occurring in the farmlands of Córdoba during the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. These episodes can be divided into different categories. The most common are assaults that caused some bodily harm to the victim, especially to the head and face.\textsuperscript{43} Amputations resulting from injuries caused by lances, daggers, swords, stones or arrows, are also attested.\textsuperscript{44} Juan Gómez el Rogado, an inhabitant of La Rambla, recalled that, when he was in the centre of the village, \textit{hubo ciertas palabras criminosas entre él y Juan de Lucena, vecino de la dicha villa y llegado a efecto Juan de Lucena le hubo herido en la cabeza}; however, he pardoned his attacker because Juan de Lucena had helped him to recover from his injuries with 166 reales.\textsuperscript{45} Head injuries are generally referred to using the expressions \textit{escalabraron} or \textit{descalabraron} (literally, “broken head”). In 1492, Juan de Montilla, an inhabitant of Fernán Núñez, declared that people \textit{que algunas veces quisieron ascalabrar a este dicho testigo porque pasavan los bueyes por su tierra, por cabo el camyno de la Ranbla}.\textsuperscript{46} Martín Ruiz Escribano declared that \textit{unos criados deste testigo, porque entraron a dar agua en la dicha fuente a unas ovejas suyas, los descalabraron por ello y que así se pusieron a defender que no entrasen los dichos ganados a dar agua en la dicha fuente (...).} \textsuperscript{47} Antón López de Almogávar recalled that \textit{una vez por estar el dicho Juan López borracho, en tiempo de agosto, se descalabraron en la segada con unos de Espejo, puede haber nueve años}.\textsuperscript{48} The use of a water spring called Alcoba, in the cortijo of Barrionuevo, was the motivation behind the extreme violence unleashed by a group of men on the orders of Aldonza de las Infantas. Hernando de Palma, inhabitant of La Rambla, claimed that these men not only burned the camp of a group of shepherds who were nearby but also stabbed some of them. A testimony from 1506 explains the circumstances of this case in the following terms:

42. Arcas Campoy, María. “Fuentes sobre los delitos...”: 99.
45. “Had some words with Juan de Lucena, one of his neighbours, and ended up taking an injury to the head”. AHPCO. PNCO. 14131P, 3, f. 37v (13\textsuperscript{th} December 1493).
46. “Tried to \textit{ascalabrar} him several times, for taking his oxen down the road of La Rambla”. AMCO. C-258. doc. 3, no folio (7\textsuperscript{th} December 1492).
47. “Some people who claimed ownership of the water spring \textit{descalabraron} several of my servants who had gone there with some sheep”. AchGr. leg. 2468, num. 8, no folio (1519).
48. “One day during the August harvest, about nine years ago, Juan López and others, on account of being drunk, got into a fight with some people from Espejo, and they \textit{descalabraron} each other”. AchGr. leg. 2468, num. 8. ff. 109v, 114r-114v, 116r and 119v (1519).
Ha visto estar acuchillados a los pastores de Martín Escrivano, vecino de la Rambla, e porque entraban a beber las aguas de Barrio nuevo el alto e del cortijo bajo, que sabe que un Juan de Madrid, vecino de Santaella, teniendo su ganado en el baldío de dicho cortijo el bajo, fueran contra él e sus pastores quatre ombres por mandado de la dicha doña Aldonza, e que ellos asy lo decían que venían en su nombre, e le quemaron el sombrajo e le tomaron una hazada por prenda (...).

Juan Conde, alcalde of the Hermandad and resident of Santaella, was even more explicit. He stated he heard that oído diz que unos pastores del dicho contador del Marqués de Priego, avían acuchillado a otro pastor de un vecino de la Rambla, e que le dieron tales cuchilladas que les parecían la asadura, porque avía estado con sus ganados en la fuente (...).

Juan de la Puente reported Francisco, the servant of Gonzalo Contador, because during the festivity of San Miguel Juan took his sheep to the well at Barrionuevo, but a number of farmhands that were there did not let him. According to the witness, e le echó y defendió que no bebiese de la dicha agua y no contento con lo susodicho le acuchillaron e le dyeron muchas heridas de que llegó a punto de morir. Referring to the same well, Martín Ruiz declared that two of his shepherds who went there to drink, “Juan de la Puente and Pedro de Castilla”, were also stabbed. Sometime later, the attackers apologised and enviaron a rogar a este testigo que fíziese a los heridos que les perdonase e quells querían pagar la cura (...).

Similarly, the confrontation between the inhabitants of the villages of Montalbán and Aguilar, over the use of a meadow for grazing, led to numerous tense situations. On one occasion, Marcos Alonso Doblas the Elder, from La Rambla, declared that, around 1502 un pastor con ganados ovejunos del contador de don Alonso, que entra en la dicha dehesa con las dichas ovejas, y que los dichos labradores y renteros lo fueron a prendar, y que entonces y porque no les quiso dar la prenda, que lo acuchillaron. In the late 15th century, violent confrontations between the people of the manorial village of Montemayor and the royal village of La Rambla were common. For instance, Alonso Cofrade, resident of La Rambla, suffered an attack and was wounded huyendo dellos,

49. “I saw the shepherds of Martín Escrivano, from La Rambla, stabbed because they had entered to drink the water of Barrio nuevo, in the lower cortijo, and a Juan de Madrid, from Santaella, having his animals in the uncultivated part of that cortijo, was set upon by four men on the orders of doña Aldonza, and they burnt his hut and took his cloak as a token”. AMCO. C-242. doc. 57, no folio (20th September 1516).

50. “The shepherds of the purser of the Marqués of Priego, had stabbed another shepherd, working for a resident of La Rambla, and so many times that his guts were showing, for no other reason than going to the well with his animals”. AMCO. C-242. doc. 57, no folio (20th September 1516).

51. “They did not let him in to drink, and not content with that, they stabbed him many times, and caused him so many wounds that he nearly died”. AMCO. C-1031. doc. 5, no folio (30th October 1513).

52. AMCO. C-1031. docs. 5 and 6, no folio (30th October 1513).

53. “Called this witness, to ask for the injured men’s pardon, and to offer to pay for the cure”. AMCO. C-1031. doc. 6, no folio (30th October 1513).

54. “A shepherd leading the sheep of don Alonso, entered the meadow with his animals, and the farmhands and tenants set upon him, and because he refused to go, they stabbed him”. AchGr. leg. 951, num. 3, no folio (11th March 1503).
lo persiguieron con ballestas armadas y por defenderse le dieron una cuchillada en el oreja izquierda, y mostróla, y que le llevaron todas las cosas susodichas.\textsuperscript{55}

Murders and homicides were also common in the farmlands of Cordoba, and some of the murderers attained great notoriety. The charter granted by Ferdinand III to the city establishes two kinds of homicide: those caused by negligence and those caused by malice. Concerning the former:

\begin{quote}
Si algún hombre incurriere en homicidio u otro crimen, sin su voluntad, y lo probare con testigos verídicos, si presentare fiador, no sea recluido en la cárcel; pero si no tuviere fiador, no sea conducido fuera de Córdoba, sino que sea custodiado en la cárcel de la ciudad y pague la quinta parte de la multa nada más. Si se le acusase de muerte sospechosa de cristiano, de moro o judío, y no hubiere testigos verídicos y fieles, júzguenle conforme al Libro de los jueces.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

Concerning wilful homicide, however, the charter stated that quien matare a hombre no apercibido para tal daño, con el mal no hubieren mediado antes palabras injuriosas ni disputa ni contienda, ni en el momento de la muerte ni antes, muera por ello y pierda todos sus bienes y tómelos el Rey.\textsuperscript{57} This definition of homicide remained in place during the reign of Alfonso X, who included it in the Partidas and the Fuero Real, where a distinction is made between homicide por occasion (“incidental or accidental”), and culposo (“committed with full knowledge of the nature of the action”).\textsuperscript{58} The record attests to numerous fights that resulted in death. In 1484, Juan de Lucena tried to obtain a royal pardon for the murder of Antón de Dios in the village of La Rambla by joining the army in Teba and Ardales.\textsuperscript{59} In 1487, Martín de Palma, from Santaella, was granted a privilege and pardon in Antequera after murdering another man in that same city ten years earlier.\textsuperscript{60} A substantial number of murderers were awarded the so-called homiciano privilege, which was a letter, addressed to the Royal Council, from a castle commander or a council official: this letter certified that the murderer had been serving at the frontier and thus had earned the Crown’s pardon. Frontier outposts from which these letters were particularly common include

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{55} “As he ran, but they chased him with crossbows, and when he tried to defend himself, they stabbed him in the left ear, and took all of his possessions”. AchGr. leg. 952. num. 1, no folio (28\textsuperscript{th} January 1525).

\textsuperscript{56} “If someone commits homicide, or some other crime, against his will, and he can prove it with reliable witnesses or a guarantor, he will not be put in jail; should he lack a guarantor, let him not be exiled but locked in, and his fine will be one-fifth of the normal amount. Should he be accused of killing a Christian, a Muslim or Jew, and no reliable witness can be found, let him be judged according to the Book of Judges”. Hurtado de Molina Delgado, Julián. Delitos y penas en los fueros de Córdoba y Molina. Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2003: 214.

\textsuperscript{57} “Whoever killed another without warning, without previous exchange of angry words, or other impassioned exchange, at the time of the death or beforehand, let him be executed and his property pass to the King”. Hurtado de Molina Delgado, Julián. Delitos y penas...: 214-215.

\textsuperscript{58} Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo. “Violencia, delincuencia e inestabilidad...”: 331-332 (Partida VII, título VIII, leyes 2 and 3; and Fuero Real, libro IV, título VII, ley 6).

\textsuperscript{59} AGS. RGS, f. 114r (21\textsuperscript{st} July 1484).

\textsuperscript{60} AGS. RGS, f. 249r (15\textsuperscript{th} October 1487).
\end{footnotesize}
Santa Fe, Salobreña, Jimena, Íllora, Alhama and Xiquena, among others.\textsuperscript{61} There is also evidence for Good Friday pardons, which were quite common in Castile.\textsuperscript{62} A document from 1493 grants this pardon to Pedro de Santaella, who was accused of having killed a vna mujer del partido que se llamaba la Cardeñosa in 1491.\textsuperscript{63} Duels were not an unknown way to settle personal differences. In the testimony of Juan Ruiz de Gálvez, the following was noted:

\begin{quote}
\emph{Puede haber veinte años que vió este testigo en el anoria que está a los olivares de la Ranbla, que el dicho Martín Gómez, tinajero, e Juan de Salamanca Capano, vesynos de la Ranbla, se desafiaron e se salieron a acuchillarse a la dicha anoria e allí vió que el dicho Martín Gómez dio una cuchillada al dicho Juan Salamanca en la garganta que sobre esta herida que murió en la dicha villa, e que oyó decir, que el dicho Martín Gómez mató otro hombre en Lucena.}\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

Several more residents of La Rambla confirmed this account. According to Pedro Jiménez de Laguna:

\begin{quote}
\emph{Que hace 20 años o más, que vió enterrar a un vecino de la Rambla que no se acuerda de su nombre, que falleció de ciertas heridas que oyó decir en la dicha villa, que le había herido el dicho Martín Gómez Tinajero, y le vió este testigo andar ausentado de la dicha villa y que oyó decir este testigo que mató a otro hombre en Lucena.}\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

Alonso Gómez del Horno and Gonzalo Sánchez Granado also confirmed the murder and the subsequent disappearance of the murderer. In the words of the latter:

\begin{quote}
\emph{El dicho Martín Gómez Tinajero hirió a uno que se dice Juan Salamanca, vecino de La Rambla de una herida en el pescuezo de que murió porque este testigo lo vio herido y lo vio que murió de la dicha herida y le ayudó a enterrar y le vió al dicho Martín Gómez andar
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{63} “A local woman known as la Cardeñosa”, AGS. RGS, f. 12r (13\textsuperscript{th} April 1493).

\textsuperscript{64} “[It] Could be 20 years ago, that this witness was near the waterwheel by the olive groves of La Rambla, and saw Martín Gómez, potter, and Juan de Salamanca Capano, who were both residents in La Rambla, challenging each other with knives near the waterwheel, and Martín Gómez got Juan Salamanca on the throat, and he died soon after in the village; I’ve also heard that Martín Gómez also killed a man in Lucena”. AMCO. C-257. doc. 1, no folio (17\textsuperscript{th} January 1519).

\textsuperscript{65} “It was 20 years or more that a man from La Rambla, I forget his name, died of some wounds that, according to the rumours, were inflicted by Martín Gómez Tinajero, who disappeared from the village afterwards, and I also heard that this same person had killed somebody else in Lucena”. AMCO. C-257. doc. 1, no folio (17\textsuperscript{th} January 1519).
Also in La Rambla, there is evidence for an investigation, carried out in 1495, concerning Antón Ruiz de la Rambla, who was accused of having killed a man in 1492. Also in the 1490s, two men from La Rambla — Pedro Fernández Ballestero, better known as Pedro Zamarrón, and Diego Posero — were accused of having committed a murder at the very entrance to the church of the village of Fernán Núñez. Alfon Gómez de Juan Montilla, declared that he had heard in Fernán Núñez that Pedro Fernández Ballestero, also known as Pedro Zamarrón, and Diego Posero, sacaron de la eglesia desta villa a vn onbre que se desçía Esteban Sánchez e que sacado, el dicho Diego Posero lo mató. Afterwards, the witnesses clarified that he knew all this because he had heard it from Miguel de Aguilar, who vio todo aquello siendo mozo porque estabae en esos años sirviendo en la citada iglesia. The most detailed information was provided by Antón Gómez:

Sacaron de la yglesia desta villa, con palabras, a un ombre que se llamaba Esteban Sánchez de Cabra, que estaba retraído en la dicha yglesia, disiendo que lo querían llevar a Montemayor, y él salió con ellos pensando que desçía verdad e que salido de la yglesia conoció que era engaño que le hacían e que se volvió corriendo a la dicha yglesia. At this point Pedro Zamarrón tackled him and held him, while Esteban Sánchez stabbed him and killed him. I know this because barely an hour later I went with some other residents of the village and found Esteban Sánchez dead outside, and some people who had witnessed the events told us what had happened.

Finally, in a witness account dated to 1514, Juan Ruiz declares knowing Juan Ruiz Pacheco que es homeçida que mató vn hombre.
4.2 Weapons

In the examples presented in the previous section, most criminal actions were committed with knives or daggers. It was, however, not uncommon for other weapons to be used in violent actions: for example, lances, crossbows and stones.72

Juan Alonso de Dueñas, resident from Santaella, declared that when he was a young man el padre deste testigo dijo vna vez al dicho Alfon Ruiz de las Ynfantas, que por qué defendía los montes del Rey, que le dio vn contomazo con vna lança e le fyso callar que no ose desir más nada.73 In 1492, three farmhands (“Antón, known as Carcelero’s son, his servant, and Juan Castellano, a servant of Chacón”) used their lances and knives to wound Antón de Ávila, a shepherd at the service of Juan de Écija, and scattered his animals, near cortijo del Tocino. The most detailed account of these events came from the victim and includes the following:

Que él yendo cuyo domingo a la hora del mediodía, poco más o menos, con su ganado, que guardaba del dicho Juan de Écija y cercándolo por el cortijo que dicen del Tocino, que vinieron a él tres hombres, los dos con dos lanzas y el otro con el puñal y que llevaba piedras en las manos dándose fama el uno al otro y que lo cual otro a otro y a otro, llegaron a este dicho testigo, y el primer que llegó que se llamaba Antón, fijo del Carcelero de la Rambla, y le echó un bote y entrole por el brazo en la mano que no llegó a la carne salvo entre la camisa y la carne y diola un palo con la dicha lanza, y el otro su criado le dio de palos hasta que quebró la lanza en la mano y que este dicho testigo les decía que lo dejases y tomasen la prenda que pregonado estaba (...) y que no la quisieron sino que lo había dejar tendido allí, y que después dijeron ellos a este que degollase él una oveja allí, y que él quiso, diciendo que antes no quería, que la degollasen ellos si querían, a fin que anduvieron de tomar un cencerro y se lo quitaron y que echaron al ganado a menudo de su tierra y que porque unos con del dicho Juan de Écija, su amo, había dicho que por qué corrían el ganado, le dieron de palos hasta que dieron con él en suelo.74

Other residents of La Rambla declared that they were being attacked by certain people from Montemayor. Lázaro Calderón declared that hace poco tiempo el concejo
de Montemayor a puesto guardas que defienden los dichos caminos e entradas en las dichas heredades.\footnote{75} Later he added that:

Un guarda que se dice Pedro Jurado, anda a caballo con una lanza y unas corazas vestidas y corre a los vecinos desta villa que tienen las dichas heredades. Y hace 5 días, este testigo fue a su viña con sus tres hijos a hacer gavillas y que se venía por el camino real a esta villa y vino el dicho Pedro Jurado, guarda a caballo y armado con una lanza, y corrió tras ellos echándoles botes.\footnote{76}

The previously mentioned Alonso Rodríguez de Estúñiga also claimed to have had an altercation with another of Montemayor’s guards, who threatened to arrest him in Pedro Jurado’s name. The guard asked Alonso for a hoe that he was carrying, and because Alonso refused la dicha guarda terció su lanza para le dar un bote de lanza y la dicha guarda viendo que este testigo se ponía en gelaquitar ge la dejó (...).\footnote{77} This time, Alonso was victorious and managed to walk away unharmed; Antón Ruiz Escobar was not so lucky. He declared that, a year or so before his statement, he was hunting in a vineyard with his crossbow, but all of a sudden Pedro Jurado turned up and:

Pedro Jurado, vecino de Montemayor, cabalgando en una yegua de silla y hablóle a este testigo, y este testigo a él y desque emparejó con este testigo púsole la mano a la llave de la ballesta y soltóla el dicho Pedro Jurado, y dijole a este testigo así se caza la tierra y tomóle la ballesta, e demandó la gafa, e este testigo no se la quería dar, y en esto vio este testigo otro hombre que venía con el dicho Pedro Jurado y llegó a ellos con una ballesta armada y el dicho Pedro Jurado le acometió con una lanza y este testigo les dio la gafa y llevósle la dicha ballesta y gafa (...).\footnote{78}

Pedro de Aguilar also suffered a lance injury at the hands of Alonso Pérez. They had been quarrelling since 1518, and insults and threats were commonly exchanged. One night, in June 1524:

Estando el dicho Pedro del Águila en la dicha villa de la Ranbla, en la calle que dizen la plaçuela de Polvadera, el dicho Alonso Pérez salió y vino contra el dicho Pedro del Águila con una lanza en las manos en cuerpo y una espada y un broquel y un guante y un caxquete con ánimo e yntinçión de matar al dicho Pedro del Águila, y le tiró con la dicha lanza muchos

\footnote{76. “A guard known as Pedro Jurado rides around with lance and armour, and pesters the residents of [La Rambla] that he sees near those estates. And 5 days ago this witness was on his way to his vineyards with his three sons and Pedro Jurado made for them on their horse, and forced them to flee”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, no folio (28th January 1525).}
\footnote{77. “The guard prepared his lance for thrusting, which [Alonso] tried to take away from him”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, no folio (28th January 1525).}
\footnote{78. “Pedro Jurado, from Montemayor, riding on a saddled mare, confronted this witness, who talked back to him, and put his hand on the witness’s crossbow, and tried to take it from him, while also demanding he be given the witness’s hooks, but the witness refused; at this point, a companion of Pedro Jurado turned up with a loaded crossbow, while Pedro Jurado thrust with his lance, so [that] the witness was forced to let go of the crossbow and the hooks”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, no folio (28th January 1525).}
botes de los quales le dió vna lanzada en el muslo derecho que le cortó el cuero y carne y le salió mucha sangre.\textsuperscript{79}

In 1486, Cristóbal Cubero was attacked in cortijo La Culebrilla, near Santaella, by a group of farmhands armed with lances. The victim declared that:

Que el martes pasado en la noche, primer día de agosto, pasando por el cortijo de la Culebrilla en término de Córdoba, Cristóbal Cubero y Cristóbal de Esmero, ambos de la dicha capitania y otros dos hombres de la capitania de don Francisco, dijeron a los que estaban en el dicho cortijo que les acogiesen allí por sus dineros dos o tres horas para que durmiesen allí. Y que luego más de 25 o 30 hombres labradores que estaban en el dicho cortijo salieron al dicho Cristóbal y a sus compañeros con lanzas, diciendo “a los putos ladrones” muchas veces, y que a la hora le dieron al dicho Cristóbal dos lanzadas en la espalda y otras dos lanzadas a un caballo rucio arrodado que traía, el cual caballo está a punto de muerte o cree que es muerto, por cuanto lo dejó en Écija, y pidió al dicho alcalde que le haga cumplimiento de justicia contra los sobredichos.\textsuperscript{80}

Fuencubierta de Guadalmazán was violently claimed by Pedro de Hoces and his men, who victimised the shepherd Benito Ruiz, from Cordoba, who declared that Pedro de Hoces’s men were always scaring and threatening the shepherds who were trying to graze or drink in the land of the cortijo, and that:

A este testigo lo han defendido muchas veces y le han corrido los ganados y le han atemorizado para que no entrasen a beber las aguas o pastar las hierbas (...) y vio un criado del dicho Pedro de Hoces, el nombre del cual no se acuerda, defendió tres días el cortijo encima de un caballo con una lanza, un ballesta y un puñal, y que oyó decir que el dicho criado avía prendado y penado en el dicho cortijo a un pastor del jurado Uzeda.\textsuperscript{81}

At other times, when there were no other weapons to hand, people used stones. We can illustrate this point with two examples, dated to the late 15\textsuperscript{th} and the early

\textsuperscript{79} “Pedro del Águila was in the village of La Rambla, in a street known as Plaçuela de Polvadera, when Alonso Pérez arrived and attacked Pedro del Águila with a lance”. He was also armed with a sword, a shield, a gauntlet, and a helmet, and his intentions were to kill Pedro del Águila. And he thrust many times, and he once got [Pedro del Águila] in the thigh, and cut his skin and flesh, and much blood came out”. AHPCO. PNCO. 14146P, 5, f. 2r (5\textsuperscript{th} April 1522).

\textsuperscript{80} “Last Tuesday night, first day of August, as they were walking past cortijo la Culebrilla in the municipality of Cordoba, Cristóbal Cubero and Cristóbal de Esmero, (...) and another two men (...) offered some money to those in the cortijo for a few hours of shelter. But then 25 or 30 farmhands that were in the cortijo came out armed with lances, shouting “the dastardly thieves” repeatedly, and Cristóbal was stabbed twice with lances, and a horse that he had was stabbed twice as well, and the horse, which he left in Écija, is nearly dead or dead, and he has asked the city’s mayor to punish the attackers”. AHPCO. PNCO. 13666P, f. 506r (7\textsuperscript{th} August 1486).

\textsuperscript{81} “This has happened to this witness many times; he’s had his animals scattered; he’s been threatened not to enter for water or pasture (...) and he’s seen a servant of Pedro de Hoces, whose name he cannot remember, defend the estate on horseback for three days, armed with a lance, a crossbow and a dagger, and that this same man had set upon a shepherd at the service of justice Uzeda”. AMCO. C-171. doc. 15, no folio (8\textsuperscript{th} September 1513).
16\textsuperscript{th} centuries. In 1498, Diego de Jerez recalled that, a month before he made his statement, he was walking the road between the village of La Rambla and the inn of Castañeda, él y otros tres que con él iban, hubieron cierta cuestión y ruido con Pedro de Mora, pastor, y con otros gañanes, en el cual dicho cuestión dio a Pedro de Mora una pedrada en la cabeza, que ha estado mal hasta hoy en el hospital de la Santa Caridad de Jesucristo desta ciudad.\textsuperscript{82} In the end, however, it seems that the injured party forgave the culprit. In a similar example, Miguel Fernández, resident of La Rambla, declared that:

\begin{quote}
Vio guardando su ganado en el dicho cortijo e a la redonda deste e apacentándolo, que un boyero que guardaba los bueyes de los labradores de la dicha doña Aldonza, que solían en el dicho cortijo de Barrio nuevo, que no sabe cómo se llamaba, defendió a un cabrero que se dize Andrés de la Rambla, guardando un rebaño de cabras suyas e trayéndolo para beber a la dicha fuente, que el de dicha fuente, la defendió que no entrase a beber con las dichas cabras que an traído a la dicha fuente, e que por ello, los vio andar a pedradas dezenando el uno que avía de entrar a beber el otro que no lo avía de entrar, e hasta que se dieron cada dos o tres pedradas en las costillas, pero que en fin no bebió el agua con los dichos ganados (...).\textsuperscript{83}
\end{quote}

The evidence suggests that most blood crimes perpetrated in the farmlands near Córdoba were committed with bladed weapons. This hypothesis is also reflected in the notarial records analysed by Ricardo Córdoba, which attest to the use of swords, daggers, knives, lances or javelins, but also, though less often, to stones and work tools.\textsuperscript{84}

### 4.3 Crime scenes

Crimes happened everywhere: cities, roads, fields and meadows could easily become a crime scene. According to Muchembled, 17\% of the crimes committed in Artois occurred on the streets and the roads,\textsuperscript{85} while Ricardo Córdoba argues that, in Córdoba, one in four criminal cases took place in a rural setting; the evidence for Ronda suggests a similar proportion in this municipality.\textsuperscript{86} Juan Miguel Mendoza

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{82.} “Along with another three men; [and] they had some altercation with the shepherd Pedro de Mora and a few more oafs like him, and Pedro de Mora was hit on the head with a stone, and to this day he remains in a bad way in the hospital of Santa Caridad de Jesucristo, in this city”. AHPCO. PNCO. 14137P. 3, f. 14v (5\textsuperscript{th} January 1498).

\textsuperscript{83.} “He took his animals to said cortijo, when an ox driver in the service of Doña Aldonza, whose name he doesn’t know, intercepted a shepherd who was on his way with his goats to the spring, and compelled him to go away by lobbing stones at him, and I saw both of them lobbing stones at one another, and they hit each other in the ribs several times, and in the end the shepherd and his goats went away without drinking”. AMCO. C-242. doc. 57, no folio (20\textsuperscript{th} September 1516).

\textsuperscript{84.} Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo. \textit{El homicidio en Andalucía...}: 61-69. 62\% of the crimes attested were committed with bladed weapons, 31\% with projectile weapons such as javelins, and 7\% with other weapons.


\textsuperscript{86.} Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo. \textit{El homicidio en Andalucía...}: 35-36 and Espejo, Juan Luis. “Sobre conflictividad social urbana, Violencia y agresión en Ronda a fines de la Edad Media”, \textit{Las ciudades...}
has emphasised the prominence of isolated and solitary places, such as fields, remote hills and faraway roads, where the victim could not ask for help. 87 Places where a floating peasant population congregated following the agricultural cycle also feature prominently in the record as crime scenes. Farmhouses, inns, springs, flourmills, and other such locations were often witness to altercations, owing to the forced coexistence of a largely itinerant population; under these conditions, murders were not at all rare. This is what Inaki Bazán referred to as the “sociability of violence”. 88

Sometimes, the criminal acts stretched over the territory of different villages and the municipal territory of Cordoba. For instance, in 1478, Andrés de Morales veinticuatro in the city council of Cordoba, started raiding the vicinity of La Rambla. Juan de la Cruz, resident in Cordoba, claimed to be afraid of Andrés de Morales and requested a letter of security because se teme y se recela de Andrés de Morales, vecino desta dicha cibdad, de ciertas feridas que ciertos hombres suyos, por su mandado, le avian dado (...). 89 In 1490, a number of residents of La Rambla filed a collective complaint against the excesses committed by Andrés de Morales and his men. They claimed that:

Defiende las tierras y montes que son comunes y realengos, como sí fueran dehesas, prendándolos por entrar en ellas, y no queriendo devolver las prendas que así les hace, y además, no contento con esto, dis que va a la dicha villa e los desonrra pública mente. E asy mismo fasen ayuntamiento a alcaldes (...) e los corre e ençierra en sus casas. 90

These complaints against Andrés de Morales did nothing but increase throughout the 1490s; some even claimed that les entran en las casas a la medianoche. 91 In 1504, however, it was Andrés de Morales who reported Juan de Mesa, a junior bailiff, for vna noche deste mes, le dio a un hijo del dicho Andrés de Morales una cuchillada en el brazo de que lo mancó. 92 Something similar occurred in 1489, when Vasco González, from Castro del Río, declared he had an open quarrel with Juan Zapatero concerning ciertas heridas que hubo dado a su hijo y por las que quedó manco. 93

89. “He is afraid of Andrés de Morales, a resident of Cordoba, and of some of his men, who had hurt him”. AGS. RGS, f. 78r (8th December 1478) and López Rider, Javier. “Andrés de Morales y la villa de La Rambla...”: 16.
90. “[Andrés de Morales] claims common and royal land for himself, taking the possessions of whomever dares enter this land, and doesn’t give them back, and not content with this, he follows them to the village and humiliates them in public. And he does this even to the town mayors (...) whom he chases until they hide in their homes”. AGS. RGS, f. 233r (14th August 1490).
91. “His gang were entering houses in the dark of the night”. López Rider, Javier. “Andrés de Morales y la villa de La Rambla...”: 16.
92. “Entering his house during the night and stabbing Andrés de Morales’s son in the arm, which is now crippled”. AMCO. LAC, no folio (11th September 1504).
In Santaella, Martín Tamayo and his wife were the subject of attempted murder. According to their testimony, four months previously, comendador Noguera, Martín de Noguera, his brothers-in-law, Juan de Alarconcillo, her cousin, Alfon de Sosa, his father-in-law and others, for instance Domingo López de Castillo, from Palma, presented themselves in his home vna noche, dos oras de la noche.\textsuperscript{94} They asked him to come out to talk and he did: él salió salvo e seguro que se abraçó con todos ellos e dis que el comendador descabalgó de un caballo en que venía a que como se abraçó con él le tovo abrazado y en ese momento intentó clavarle un puñal que llevaba pero se escapó.\textsuperscript{95}

After this, Tamayo declared that they all took possession of his house and took his wife away, to Cordoba. Domingo López de Castillo and Pablo de Ortega, who were in the comendador’s party, went away perturbed by the fera trayción lo que fasya that was being committed.\textsuperscript{96} Martín Tamayo claimed that de las feridas estuvo dos meses e más tiempo en cama e que como él se levantó se fue a la cibdad to demand the liberation of his wife.\textsuperscript{97} When he presented himself at the house of one of the perpetrators, who was a court official, they said that they did not have his wife. At that juncture, Martín Tamayo confronted the son of the official:

\begin{quote}
Salió con una espada sacada e una adaraga tyrándole cuchilladas fasta que le ovo de encerrar en la iglesia de San Myguel e que des que vido quedándose seguro por su defender a viéndole muchas veces requerido que le dejase, puso mano que una espada que traya e defendiéndose de los dichos golpes que le tyrava retamatzando ferió de una muy pequeña ferida en la cabeza de la cual dis que fue sano, estando diez días por lo cual dis que le covyno encerrado en la dicha iglesia el dicho jurado (...).\textsuperscript{98}
\end{quote}

According to the record, a substantial proportion of criminal actions took place during the night, which is hardly surprising: the dark concealed the identity of perpetrators and facilitated their escape; witnesses were fewer and succour was harder to come by. This is especially the case in the countryside. The direct relationship between criminality and the hours of darkness has been emphasised by multiple researchers, such as Rafael Narbona, Juan Miguel Mendoza, Iñaki Bazán, Fernando Lojo and Ricardo Córdoba.\textsuperscript{99} This relationship between darkness and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{94} “In the second hour of the night”. AGS. RGS, f. 150r (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1485).
\item \textsuperscript{95} “Thinking himself safe, he hugged all of them; the comendador then got off his horse and while he was hugging him, he tried to stab him with the knife that he was carrying”. AGS. RGS, f. 150r (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1485).
\item \textsuperscript{96} “Treasonous act”. AGS. RGS, f. 150r (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1485).
\item \textsuperscript{97} “The wounds had kept him bedridden for two months, and finally when he was better he got up and went to the city”. AGS. RGS, f. 150r (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1485).
\item \textsuperscript{98} “He pulled out a sword and a leather shield, and tried to stab him repeatedly, until [the official’s son] found refuge in the Church of San Myguel. After repeatedly asking [Martín] to leave him alone, he finally got out a sword that he had and defended himself, until he injured [Martín] slightly on the head, which took ten days to heal”, AGS. RGS, f. 150r (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1485).
\end{itemize}
criminal activity also existed in the rest of Europe. According to Robert Muchembled, three-quarters of all the murders committed in Artois took place after dusk; in the whole of France, the proportion was 80%, according to Claude Gauvard; and in 14th-century England, the figure stood between 86% and 90%, as noted by Bárbara Hanawalt. The evidence presented by Jacques Chiffoleau also confirms this direct link between night and violence.100 In Cordoba, carrying arms was prohibited in many circumstances, especially at night. The council regulations established that if anyone sacare armas e las toviere desnudas e queriendo con ellas ferir o matar, e alguacil llegare a los prender, aya las tales armas.101 Similarly, if the bailiff, during his rounds, sy fallare armas algunos de noche, que ge las tome e aya para sy and que ningunos non traygan espadas ni cuchillos ni otras armas vedadas en esta cibdad porque los ruýdos e muertes se escusen (...)102 These measures were intensified on special occasions; for the procession of the Corpus Christi, it was established that que ninguno non sea osado de traer armas por las calles donde aduviere la dicha processyón, estarán veynte días en la cárcel pública desta cibdad.103

4.4 Causes and protagonists

As demonstrated by the evidence that has been presented, blood crimes were not rare in the farmlands to the south of Cordoba. These crimes, which ranged in degrees of intensity, from mere aggressions to grave assaults and, in the most extreme cases, murder, were a reflection of conflict but also of the internal mechanisms of society; crime and its recurrence was a proxy for the wider social dynamic. Obviously, the evidence presented has no statistical value, and cannot be used to claim that medieval man was involved in constant disputes. Blood crimes and personal confrontations did not happen every day. As pointed out by Ricardo Córdoba, a dramatic outcome was the result of a certain set of circumstances; in a context in which tension was rife, the tiniest spark could flare a confrontation, resulting in physical damages and even murder.

101. “Took arms out with the intention of wounding or killing, the bailiff could confiscate these arms”. González Jiménez, Manuel; Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo; López Rider, Javier; Criado Vega, Teresa; García Martínez, Antonio Mª Clarret eds. El libro primero de Ordenanzas del concejo de Córdoba. Edición y estudio crítico. Madrid, Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 2016: 134.
102. “Should find arms at night, he should confiscate them” and “nobody should carry forbidden swords and knives, so that deaths are avoided”. González Jiménez, Manuel; Córdoba de la Llave, Ricardo; López Rider, Javier; Criado Vega, Teresa; García Martínez, Antonio Mª Clarret eds. El libro primero de Ordenanzas...: 134.
One recurrent motivation behind many of the unlawful acts that we have been examining are jurisdictional conflicts between seignorial and royal land. The precise location of the boundaries between these jurisdictions was often behind fights —fights which frequently resulted in some personal tragedy, especially if the use of some valuable economic resource was at stake. As such, violence was common around the boundary lines that separated La Rambla, Santaella and the city of Cordoba, as well as around those lines separating Montemayor, Fernán Núñez and Montalbán. The record is full of guards and servants who claimed possession of the countryside, generally upon their masters’ orders. Parties that stopped others from using springs, meadows and roads were involved in constant, and sometimes severe, scuffles. The actions of the Las Infantas family, the tricks deployed by Andrés de Morales and the measures implemented by the lords of Aguilar over Montalbán are sufficient indication of how far some people were willing to go to protect their personal interests. The victims were often residents of the area, who were carrying out their everyday duties; they were shepherds, lumberjacks and peasants who needed to use the area’s resources or, simply, to travel the roads, and were not allowed to do so by the servants of the oligarchy (who often resorted to unrestrained violence). That said, it is important to note that physical violence, let alone murder, was not an inevitable outcome; many times, confrontation went no further than the exchange of sharp words.

5. Verbal aggression: insults and blasphemies

Verbal insults are abundantly documented for the Late Middle Ages, a period in which personal dignity and honour were considered paramount, and in which, therefore, publicly disgracing rivals by means of insults and slander was a universal feature of personal confrontations. Juan Miguel Mendoza argued that verbal aggression was un arma de gran efectividad cuyo uso, en manos de quien sepa manejarla, puede causar más daño a las personas que un golpe o una pedrada, porque los golpes se curan con el tiempo, pero la honra atacada no hace sino deteriorarse aún más. In order to work to their full effect, these insults had to be full of wit and ingenuity; indeed, senseless and empty words held no power over the victim.

105. “An effective instrument, which, if skilfully used, could cause more damage than a punch or a stone, because these are bruises that go with time, but time does nothing to injured honour, except to deteriorate it even further”. Mendoza Garrido, Juan Miguel. “Sobre la delincuencia femenina en Castilla a fines de la Edad Media”, Mujer, marginación y violencia entre la Edad Media y los tiempos modernos, Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave, ed. Cordoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2006: 75-126, 101-105.
5.1 Insults and slander

Normally, insults and slander were spread in public places (squares, churches, markets, festivities) where a large audience was assured. According to Iñaki Bazán, in the Basque Country most public brawls, which sometimes ended in physical injury or death, were the result of a previous public insult. Verbal offences occupy a prominent place in the records of the chancellery; they are the third-most commonly reported offence, totalling 422, between 1495 and 1510—a figure only behind robberies and assaults. In La Mancha, they amounted to 14% of all offenses reported between 1495 and 1507. Again, the situation in Europe is similar. Claude Gauvard argues that, in France, 86% of conflicts leading to murder began with an exchange of insults, while, according to Muchembled, 50% of murders committed in Artois began with such an exchange. Verbal offences totalled 5.3% of all offences reported in Todi in the second half of the 13th century, 6.7% of those filed in Avignon in the 14th century and 8% of reported cases in Stockholm and Arboga in the 15th and 16th centuries.

In southern Castile, insults and slander were also often the origin of fights. For instance, we can cite examples of palabras feas e injuriosas (“ugly and insulting words”) being used in Ronda (Malaga) and Pilas (Seville) in order to publicly dishonour the neighbours. Mercedes Borrero has attested that, in Pilas, men called each other puto (“faggot”) or cabrón (“cuckold”), while women se estaban llamando la una a la otra y la otra a la una de putas muchas veces, bellaca, ruzia y puta después de casada, (...).

Sometimes the insults were a lot sharper; a woman called Catalina accused another...

References

108. Mendoza Garrido, José Miguel. Delincuencia y represión...: 258.
one, called Antonia que solía andar escogiendo los mangos gordos entre los delgados e que ahora se hacía la buena, e otras cosas muy feas que no son de decir para mujeres.  

Concerning Cordoba, insults also feature prominently in the record among all social classes, with those directed at undermining the reputation of the recipient being the most common. In the countryside, where communities were small and generally poor, most insults aimed to besmirch the character, personality or habits of the victim. Iñaki Bazán and Juan Miguel Mendoza have listed a long repertoire of insults, including traidor (“traitor”), falso (“cheat”), mentiroso (“liar”), ladrón (“thief”), pobre (“beggar”), borracho or beodo (“drunk”), perro (“dog”), ruin (“miser”), cobardé (“coward”), vil (“villainous”), sucio (“filthy”), sapo (“toad”) and logrero (“profiteer”).

According to Marta Madero, doubts about the masculinity of the victim were common, with constant references to impotence and homosexuality, which is often referred to using the expression fodido or fududunculo. This expression, however, is rarely attested in Cordoba; there are only two instances: one involving a member of the Church and one involving a case of adultery. Other common topics are sexual morality —puta (“whore”), puto (“faggot”), cornudo (“cuckold”) and alcahueta (“go-between”)— the family —hijo de..., judío, moro (“son of a ... Jew, Moor, etc.”)— religious beliefs —hereje (“heretic”), hechicera (“witch”)— economic conditions —pobre (“beggar”)— harapiento (“ragbag”)— and illnesses and physical and psychical defects —loco (“madman”), sarnoso (“mangy”), jorobado (“hunchback”), orejotas (“big-ears”), etc. For instance, Ferrán Sánchez Robles was called que es cornudo e lo a seydo e lo consintió e vendió los cuernos e adulterio que su mujer le fizo por dineros como honbre sin vergüenza (...) que vendió por dineros su honra e cuernos e los perdona como sabidor inábil e infame. In 1493, a number of residents in La Rambla pointed to Andrés García Bermejo as a pobre, raes, de liviana opinión y borracho que se hace con vino y nunca dice ni trata verdad. Others also accused him of being andar en tranpas y mentiras con ellos. Others were picked on because of their mental weakness: Pedro Gil de Ávila, from Santaella, was described as persona muy pobre, miserable y raes y borracho que se hace con vino y hombre de poco tiento que no sabe lo que dice y se hizo juez en

114. “Of choosing the fat handles rather than the thin ones while pretending to be virtuous, and doing other ugly things that do not become ladies”. Borrero Fernández, Mercedes. “Violencia entre vecinos...”: 145-158.


118. “A consenting cuckold, who sold his own horns consenting to his wife’s adultery for the money, as a man who has no shame (...) for money he infamously gave away his honour and pardoned his horns”. AMCO. C-1018, doc. 44.1, no folio (28th December 1519).

119. “Poor person, of little import and a drunk; the moment he gets his hands on wine, you cannot get him to tell the truth”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).

120. “A cheat, always involved in dodgy dealings”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
esta causa y fue amojonar la dicha tierra sin mandamiento de juez y estuvo preso por ello.\footnote{121} Antón Martín de Ávila was characterised as \textit{onbre que no tiene juicio en la dicha villa (...) por su mala memoria y mengua de juicio}, and Juan Alfon el Rico, was described by a neighbour as \textit{onbre muy viejo y que le ha visto decir palabras desatentadas con la mucha edad que tiene así en la plaza como en la iglesia de la villa de la Ranbla, tales que muchas veces se reían de él}.\footnote{122} Pedro Alfon Arroyo was accused of being \textit{pobre, vil y raes, muy grande borracho y perjuro (...) lo ha visto jurar en falso en un dicho que le fue tomado}. A man named Juan Francisco was called “a cheat and a liar”, and it was added that he was \textit{tranposo y onbre de mala verdad y lo saben porque vieron tras él a algunas personas para lo que les debía}.\footnote{123}

There are also allusions to “\textit{puteros}” (“brothel-goers” or “pimps”), such as Juan Ruiz Prieto, who lived in La Rambla but later moved to Estepa. Some of his former neighbours in La Rambla said that \textit{entraba en el mesón donde estaban las mujeres del partido y las besaba y abrazaba}. Others, more explicitly, stated that \textit{va a las mujeres del partido en la villa de Estepa, donde vive, y les echa mano de la barba y burla con ellas (...) que es de edad de 80 años y más tiempo}.\footnote{124} Pedro de Jaén was described as a \textit{rufián, adúltero y difamador de mujeres casadas}; Pedro admitted that his life was not like everyone else’s: he admitted to having spent 13 years \textit{andando por el mundo tratando mujeres del partido}.\footnote{125} Martín Morales confirms this, claiming that he was always \textit{sienpre lo vio vivir entre putas y rufianes}.\footnote{126} Some of Pedro’s neighbours were even blunter. Juan López de Benito García declared that \textit{era rufián e traía mujer al partido, lo sabe porque lo a visto traer a esta villa de Montemayor, e que ahora, ha oído decir que es padre de las mujeres del partido de la villa de la Rambla}.\footnote{127}

\begin{quote}
Ahora que tiene una casa suya en que están las dichas mujeres del partido en la Rambla. Lo sabe porque lo ha visto en esta villa e en la villa de la Rambla tener mujeres del partido que
\end{quote}

\footnote{121. “Poor and miserable, and a drunk, who doesn’t know what he is saying when he is drunk, and [he] also took justice into his own hands, and went to plant some boundary stones in that estate without a court order”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
122. “A man with no judgment (...) little memory and even less judgement” (...) “a very old man, who’s been known to say ludicrous things in the square and church of La Rambla, because of his old age, to the glee of everyone”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
123. “Poor, villainous, a great drunk and a perjurer”. “He’s been known to swear falsely”. “Being chased by people to whom he owed money”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (25th February 1492/14th June 1495).
124. “He frequented the inn where the whores were, and kissed them and hugged them”. “He goes to the whores in Estepa, where he lives now, and gropes them, and fools around with them (...) although he is 80 or more”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, ff. 143r-151r (25th February 1492/14th June 1495).
125. “A ruffian, and an adulterer and a slanderer of married women”. “Wandering the world, going with whores”. AMCO. C-1017, doc. 30-1, no folio (10th October 1496).
126. “Among whores and ruffians”. AMCO. C-1017, doc. 30-1, f. 78r (10th October 1496).
127. “[Pedro] is a ruffian and deals in whores, and the witness knows because he’s seen him bringing them to Montemayor, and now he’s heard it said that he owns the whores in La Rambla”. AMCO. C-1017, doc. 30-1, f. 98r (10th October 1496).}
le ganaban dineros públicamente, e que siempre lo vio usar de bellaquería siendo hijo de un hombre honrado e bueno e tío deste testigo (...).128

Juan Sánchez, barber, added the following:

Fue rufián y deformador de mujeres casadas (...) porque en el dicho tiempo, ahora puede haber veinte e cinco años e antes e después, fue rufián e le vio en esta villa de Fernán Núñez tener mujer en la mancebía a ganar dineros en la mancebía públicamente e porque llevó en el dicho tiempo vna mujer casada desta villa e aún era la mujer que llevó, mujer de Bartolomé Zamorano, vesyno desta villa.129

In the context of a long lawsuit on the usurpation of royal lands, several people accused a man called Pedro Alonso del Arroyo of habla de oídas y creencias y lo hace de mal tiempo y que se beoda muchas veces y juegan los muchachos con el infame, que muestra sus vergüenzas en la plaza públicamente, y alocado a las vergüenzas públicamente en la iglesia con una soga a la garganta por su mala lengua.130 Antón Ruiz, from La Rambla was called palabrero y mentiroso que no dice verdad.131 In a document dated to the early 16th century, Hernán Ruiz, from La Rambla, is described as es onbre bien borracho y que se beoda muchas veces y juegan los muchachos con el infame, que muestra sus vergüenzas en la plaza públicamente, y alocado a las vergüenzas públicamente en la iglesia con una soga a la garganta por su mala lengua.132 Pedro Moyano declares that, after spending a good while playing cards and drinking, Bartolomé Ruiz Prieto salió de allí borracho y salió a la plaza y como hombre fuera de tiento, mostró sus vergüenzas en la plaza a muchas personas que reían y burlaban con él y esto vio este testigo y otras muchas personas.133 Gonzalo Gómez Cabello and Alonso Sánchez, from Fernán Núñez, are described in similarly insulting terms; they are defined as onbre revoltoso y levantador de pueblos.134 Two lawsuits (one to the north and the other to the south of the kingdom of Cordoba), make explicit allusion to unruly behaviour. Diego Hernández, an old man, is described as onbre syn tiento e desvariado e desvergonzado e como tal onbre e persona que seyendo más mozo que avía de tener más tiento, se meó en vn cuerpo públicamente e andaua

128. “Now he owns a house in La Rambla, where his whores are kept. The witness knows because he’s seen him in La Rambla whoring some women out openly, being used to this sort of wretched behaviour, despite his father being a good and honest man, who was the witness’s uncle”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, f. 142v (25th February 1492).
129. “He was a ruffian and a perverter of married women (...) and after all this time, which could well be 25 years, he was seen in the village of Fernán Núñez, where he whored his woman out publicly, and this woman was the wife of a Bartolomé Zamorano, from [La Rambla]”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, f. 122r (25th February 1492).
130. “Speak[jing] without foundation, especially when he’s been drinking, for he frequents taverns”. AchGr. leg. 1615, num 8, no folio (13th April 1496).
131. “A gossip and a liar that cannot speak truth”. AchGr. leg. 1615, num 8, no folio (13th April 1496).
132. “A drunk, and the plaything of the young lads, and he is always showing his private in the square, and he’s been brought to church with a rope around his neck, to punish him for his poisonous tongue”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, ff. 78r-79v (1575).
133. “Left the place drunk, and went into the square like a madman, showing his privates to everyone around, to the delight of all the onlookers, who made fun of him, and [the witness] saw this and many other people saw it too”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, f. 91r-v (1575).
134. “Rowdy and peace-breakers”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, f. 91r-v, (1575).
mostrando su natura a las mujeres e diciendo no haceys vosotras lamien (...) 
135 Following a ruling against them, the residents of Montemayor did not hesitate to insult the judge and threaten him. Pedro Jiménez Escribano overheard a conversation between Juan Albertos, Diego de Baena and the surgeon Alonso de Lorca while on the road to Montemayor; Juan Albertos first said that en chancillería había hecho burla desque supieron que el juez de términos había entrado en la fortaleza de Montemayor y no le habían trabucado con un cabestro de las almenas abajo. 136 Juan Albertos agreed, adding that juro a Dios que si ese hi de puta judío dese juesejo o esa basura, no estoviera asy, que no se obiera revuelto nada de lo que asy se a revuelto, que ello a revuelto todo. 137 Pedro Jiménez then warned them: juro a Dios que lo abéis de hallar juez e bien grande e por tal lo envían. 138 After this, Diego de Baena replied that sino oviese bellacos en medio no se harían estas cosas, que andan destos términos para contra el juez. 139 Juan Gil likewise heard that Don Martín había 15 días que estaba en la corte y que si estuviera en Montemayor, no se hubiera hecho lo que el juez ha hecho, que de los adarves abajo lo avían de echar. 140 Don Alfonso de Aguilar, for his part, had no qualms about insulting his own farmhands, for hindering the neighbours of the nearby castle of Montalbán from using a meadow. He asked his farmhands and tenants for their complaints, and they said that the people from Montabán que muy grande que les comían su dehesa y les vebían las aguas; Don Alonso’s answer was clear: fides putas villanos non guardarles su dehesa y non les bebáis las aguas. 141 Sometimes, insults targeted the physical or mental defects of the victim or their lifestyle. 142 For instance, a person was nicknamed Juan Myntrón because was muy mohatro e virtuoso hablador e sinvergüenza e persona a quien no le dan fe ni crédito como onbre valdío e de liviana opinión e por tal que le llamaban. 143 In La Rambla, Juan Sánchez was known as Patinotes because he had very large feet, and Antón Martín de Ávila

135. “Man with no judgement and little moral restraint, whose age should make him know better. He went around pissing publicly and showing his privates to women and asking them to do likewise”. AMCO. C-1018, doc. 44-1, no folio (28th December 1519).
136. “In the chancellery there are jokes circulating about the judge taking over the fortress of Montemayor, when all he deserves is to be lobbed out of the tallest tower”, AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, ff. 29v-58r (28th January 1525).
137. “I swear to God that if it wasn’t for that Jew son of a bitch, that filth, things wouldn’t be as muddled as they are”, AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, ff. 29v-58r (28th January 1525).
138. “I swear to God you’ll come up against the judge, and you’ll regret it, for he was sent for a reason”, AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, ff. 29v-58r (28th January 1525).
139. “That wouldn’t happen if there were fewer ruffians around here, because with good reason is the district up in arms against the judge”, AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, ff. 29v-58r (28th January 1525).
140. “Has been at court for these 15 days, but had he been in Montemayor the judge wouldn’t have done what he’s done, and he would be in the fortress no longer”. AchGr. leg. 952, num. 1, ff. 29v-58r (28th January 1525).
141. “Did them much harm, because they ate much of their pasture and drank their water” (…) “sons of a bitch and villains, do not close their meadow and do not stop them from drinking water”. AchGr. leg. 951, num. 3, no folio (11th March 1503).
143. “A mohatro, a chatterbox and a rascal, a man whom nobody trusts because his opinions are worthless”. AMCO. C-1018, doc. 44-1, no folio (28th December 1519).
was made fun of because he suffered es enfermo de perlesía y tiene la lengua turbada (...) que habla que a duras penas se le entiende, hombre con la mala lengua que tiene.144 Others said that he was loco y sordo y borracho y menguado de juicio or had de mal juicio y de poco tiento adding that razón que le dicen responde otra y no tiene memoria ni razón de hombre cuerdo.145 Finally, Juan Alfon was called Maxmordón because he was onbre que no tiene mucho tiento.146 We have to stress the use of words no longer used in Spanish, such as mohatro (“fraudster”), perlesía, to refer to some weakness of the mind or the body caused by old age, and maxmordón, to refer to a person lacking in judgement.

5.2 Blasphemies

The record also conveys the quarrels between the Church and individual citizens, who are forthwith defined as blasphemous enemies of the Catholic faith. A clear example is that of Juan Muñoz de Coria, from La Rambla, who was found guilty of blasphemy in the city of Cordoba. According to the record, as he passed the image of Our Lady of Consolation, he was addressed by Diego Jiménez, brother of Alonso de Antequera, with the words vamos a ver a Dios, to which Juan Muñoz replied: ir vos que yo no quiero ver al diablo.147 On a different occasion, while in the village square, Miguel del Río said buena entra esta luna, to which Juan Muñoz replied: cágomes en la luna y en lo demás que está en el cielo.148 Juan Muñiz accused him of muchos remilgos e blasfemias.149 They both were in a meadow when, for no particular reason, Juan Muñoz started yelling descreo de Dios, dime vos, ¿no me prometiste a mí de hacer buen tiempo, cómo no cumplido la palabra?150 Hernando de Baena was a similar case. A sacristán from Montemayor declared that:

Sabe que es pobre y entra en las tabernas muchas veces a beber y que siguele tomar vino, porque estando este testigo un domingo en la iglesia de la dicha villa diciendo la misa mayor, estaba en ella el dicho Hernando de Baena, junto al clero de la dicha iglesia donde estaba este testigo y otros clérigos, y vomitó y echó por la boca mucha cantidad de comida y bebida que olía de vino, de tal manera que quedó amortecido, de tal manera que la gente allí estaba

144. “Perlesia and his tongue is all tied up (...) it is hard to follow what he says”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
145. “Mad, or dumb, or drunk, or slow” or had “no judgement” adding that “if you talk to him about something, he answers about something else, and has no memory or judgement, like sane men do”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
146. “Short of judgement”. AchGr. leg. 535, num. 3, no folio (14th June 1495).
147. “Come to see our Lord”, “You go, I’d rather not see the Devil”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, f. 78r-v (1575).
148. “We have a good moon today”, “I shit on the moon and everything else in heaven”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, f. 78r-v (1575).
149. “Being full of complaints and blasphemies”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, f. 78r (1575).
150. “I don’t believe in you, God, did you not promise me good weather?”. AchGr. leg. 875, num. 1, ff. 78r-79v (1575).
tomaron en brazo y lo sacaron fuera de la dicha iglesia, y después de sacado volvió a vomitar (...)\textsuperscript{151}

A remarkable case saw a Church member from Fernán Núñez being accused of pederasty and homosexuality in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. The residents of the village declared that their lord, Fernando de los Ríos, used to execute judicial sentences on his own authority. One of these sentences was especially famous in the town. According to the statements, the lord ahorcó y quemó a un santero de la ermita de San Sebastián, situada en el camino desta villa hacia Córdoba, for being a puto ("fagot").\textsuperscript{152} Alonso López Cañadilla statement says that he vió quemar a un santero de la ermita de San Sebastián, que está en el ejido y término de esta villa (...) que lo quemaron porque se decía que con un muchacho que tenía en la dicha ermita, que había dormido o dormía con él.\textsuperscript{153} Finally, slander and blasphemy are rarely found in written form. The most paradigmatic case concerns a resident of Cordoba, who was accused of writing a defamatory letter and nailing it to the door of a house. She was sentenced to 100 lashes, to pay the court expenses, and to go into exile. Upon appeal, the amount to be paid was increased, but her exile was suspended.\textsuperscript{154}

This evidence illustrates that, sometimes, verbal aggression was as harmful as physical assault; indeed, many of the incidents that led to physical harm or even death began with an exchange of insults. The more explicit the cause of dishonour, the more it undermines the prestige of the target of the insult, and thus there is a higher chance that the injured party will take matters into their own hands and physically attack the other. This is, of course, a reflection of the moral values that prevailed in Castile in the Late Middle Ages; different insults had very different results, and the status of the target was also an important factor, as the examples involving the Church amply demonstrate.

6. Conclusions

Based on the information conveyed by the archival record, Cordoba was no exception to the violence that peppered everyday life in the Crown of Castile. The types of crime detected in the kingdom of Cordoba are the same as those attested

\textsuperscript{151} “He is a beggar, he spends his day drinking wine in the tavern; the witness was in the church one Sunday, saying mass, and said Hernando de Baena was out in the square, and in the presence of the witness and other clerics he threw up much food and drink, reeking of wine, and afterwards lost consciousness; some people lifted him and brought him out of the church, at which point he threw up again”. AchGr. leg. 324, num. 2, f. 54r-v (1557).

\textsuperscript{152} “Hung and burnt a hermit of the chapel of St. Sebastian, on the road to Cordoba”. AchGr. leg. 1211, num. 1, no folio (16\textsuperscript{th} century).

\textsuperscript{153} “Saw a hermit from the chapel of St. Sebastian, which is in the term of this town, burnt (...) because it was said that he slept with a young man who lived with him in the chapel”. AchGr. leg. 1211, num. 1, no folio (16\textsuperscript{th} century).

\textsuperscript{154} Mendoza Garrido, Juan Miguel. “Sobre la delincuencia femenina...”: 104-105.
in the rest of the Crown. In the 15th century, physical violence was not rare, and murder was relatively common. The most common type of murder was committed with bladed weapons and during the night. Verbal insults and blasphemies were also common. In most cases, these insults alluded to the lifestyle, the physical defects and, to a lesser extent, the sexuality and religious beliefs of the recipient. One absence is remarkable, although this may be explained by the very nature of the Late Medieval record: there are hardly any reports concerning robberies and theft. This is particularly noticeable in the countryside, where one would expect animals, crops and tools to be a prime target. The closest crime akin to theft that may be found in the record was the taking of a token item (for example, a cloak), but this cannot be considered a theft in the full sense of the word, but rather a sort of security or punishment for a given action. Sometimes, in fact, the item was eventually returned to the victim. The record clearly conveys that violence was generally a projection of everyday activities; the causes of violent episodes were as a rule very prosaic, such as the use of a spring or a meadow, or the desire of some aristocratic families to protect their private interests. On other occasions, the causes reflect internal family quarrels: for instance, the undesirable marriage of Martín Tamayo.

In short, physical and verbal violence were regular features of life in the countryside. The main causes behind these forms of violence were the normal quirks of coexistence and conflicts over the use of valuable natural resources. Some of these were legally open to all, but in practice seignorial encroachments of common land were very frequent. Competition over the use of these natural resources often led to a violent outcome, especially through the action of agents of powerful social groups, particularly the aristocracy. Conflict provides us with insight into Andalusian society in the 15th century, especially in relation to how far some were willing to push their personal interests without regard for possible legal consequences.