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Michael Hatch 4/18/2011

Vicente Ferrer and the Kings’ Jews: Reassessing the Modern Image of a Medieval Dominican

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Abstract

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In recent years, the historiography of the persecution of late-medieval Iberian Jewry has shifted towards an emphasis on local economic, social, and political pressures, rather than a teleological understanding of persecution as a constant. However, Vicente Ferrer, a preacher from Valencia, is singled out as one of the principal figures in the persecution of Jews across Iberia, and this image ignores the influence that communal pressures had on the Jewish experience. Historians emphasize too much the impact of Ferrer’s preaching, and this investigation aims, with an emphasis on sermons delivered in Castile from 1411-12, to more accurately interpret Ferrer’s impact on Iberian Jewish communities.

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