

Jafudà Cresques, Jew of Majorcaⁱ

by Jaume Riera i Sans

Translation by Juan Cevaⁱⁱ

Among the mythical figures of medieval Majorca we find the master of mappaemundi Jafudà Cresques. He, in addition to having achieved the banal glory of having a street named after him in the modern city of Palma, is also mentioned in the reference books on the history of science.

Indeed, all the current books of European cultural history mention that Jafudà Cresques, who took the name of Jaume Ribes when he converted to Christianity, became the learned man “*mestre Jacome de Malhorca*” whom prince Henry the Navigator summoned to Portugal. There he taught all Portuguese sailors the art of cartography that enabled them to make the amazing discoveries in the Atlantic, Africa and the Indian Ocean during the XV and XVI centuries. This has been mentioned in all history books since G. Llabrés¹ introduced the hypothesis and G. de Reparaz “proved it”², and who knows for how long it will continue to be mentioned. However, the reality is that the documents that we have today to construct the biography of Jafudà Cresques allow us to maintain that he never went to Portugal and similarly we cannot maintain that he was a learned man in the arts of navigation. Therefore, Jafudà Cresques does not deserve the renown he has earned and it is time to rewrite his biography, thus removing the errors and the unfounded elaborated hypotheses.

This biography cannot be considered the definitive one on Jafudà Cresques since I have not been able to research the archives in Majorca. Nevertheless, I have been able to take inventory of 28 different documents, some already published and some unedited. These include, above all, two documents that mention his death and confirm the impossibility that Jafudà Cresques was the Majorcan learned man that Prince Henry the Navigator summoned to Portugal. Because of this I thought it would be appropriate to share the results of my research in the archives of Barcelona with the hope of reframing the exaggerated figure of this Majorcan Jew.

¹ G. LLABRÉS, *El maestro de los cartógrafos mallorquines*, “Boletín de la Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana”, III (1889-1890), pp. 313-318; *Algo más sobre Jafuda Cresques*, *ibidem*, IV (1891-1892), pp. 158-161.

² G. DE REPARAZ, *Mestre Jacome de Malhorca, cartografo do Infante. Contribuição para o estudo da Cartografica portuguesa*, “Biblos”, VI, n. 3-4 and 5-6 (1930).

I should also mention that in parallel to this biography, I have published elsewhere one about his father, Cresques Abraham, also master of mappaemundi.³ Both biographies complement each other—eleven documents mention them together—therefore, I will refrain from repeating matters already discussed regarding the author of the Catalan Atlas of 1375 [Cresques Abraham].

Biographical Data of Jafudà Cresques (ca. 1350 [1360ⁱⁱⁱ]-1410)

The first thing which we should clarify when we tackle the persona of this universally renowned Jew is the pronunciation of his first name. In the documents that reflect its common pronunciation, we find that it appears seven times as “Jafuda” (o “Jaffuda”), five times as “Jahuda” and two times as “Lahuda”. In the documents that Latinize his name, we find it eight times and declined as “Jaffudanus, -i” (or “Jafudanus, -i”).⁴

Leaving aside the duplication of the *f* as insignificant, we can accept by absolute majority—15 versus 7—the spelling “Jafuda” and accentuate the name as *Jafudà*. We could have established this accentuation a priori given the Catalan pronunciation of the Hebrew name *Yehuda*, that happens to be oxytonic; and we could have established this pronunciation a posteriori given the fact that had the name been paroxytonic, they would have not declined the name as “Jafudanus -i” but as “Jafuda, -e”.⁵ The alternative use of *h/f* to reproduce an aspirated Semitic sound has already been addressed and there is no need to insist upon it.⁶ I believe that the unwonted spelling “Lahuda”, which is no mistake as it repeats itself⁷ and appears in another case also from Majorca,⁸ can be explained by the pronunciation

³ J. RIERA I SANS, *Cresques Abraham, jueu de Mallorca, mestre de mapamundis i de brúixoles, dins L'Atlas Català de Cresques Abraham (Barcelona 1975)*, pp. 14-22

⁴ The form “Jafudinum”, that M. Bonet wondered about in *Cartas sobre Jafuda Cresques, cartógrafo mallorquín (siglo XIV)* “Boletín de la Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana”, vii (1897-1898), pp. 124-126, 148-150, 168-169, 176-177, is a copying mistake.

⁵ Perhaps some expert will not accept taking the Latinized form of the old popular names to derive their pronunciation, maybe because it did not occur to him first. Before dismissing the validity of this approach, I challenge the so-called expert to look for exceptions to this rule among toponyms as well as anthroponyms. I cannot think of any.

⁶ I. GARBELL, *The Pronunciation of Hebrew in Medieval Spain*, inside *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa*, I (Barcelona 1954), pp. 647-696.

⁷ Inside a reproduction document of ACA, Canc, Reg. 1442, fol. 78v-79r (published by A. LÓPEZ DE MENESES, *Documentos culturales de Pedro el Ceremonioso*, “Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón” v (1952), pp. 729-730, doc. 75) and Reg. 1664, fol. 54r-55r.

⁸ Cf. A. PONS, *Los judíos del reino de Mallorca durante los siglos XIII y XIV*, “Hispania” xvi (1956), p. 504 and xx (1960), p. 207.

lleista in Majorca: where the initial sounds of *j* and *ll* are confused and people therefore confuse the spelling.⁹

“Cresques”, the second element of the name of the master of mappaemundi whose biography we are writing, is not a family name but a patronymic: “Cresques” corresponds in fact to the first name of his father, Cresques Abraham, such that “Jafudà Cresques” does not mean “Jafudà (of family name) Cresques” but “Jafudà (son of) Cresques”.

We do not know exactly when he was born. The elements we have to be able to determine it are: the birth date of his father (1325); the date of his own death (1410), prior to his mother’s; and the date of his matrimony (1376). Everything makes us pinpoint his birth date with a high degree of confidence between 1345 and 1355 [the correct year is 1360, see endnote iii].

The first documented news we have of him dates from October 11th, 1377 during the public auction of the possessions of the deceased Jewish physician Lleó Mosconí. There he buys three Hebrew books that cost him one Majorcan pound [*lliura*], 8 Majorcan shillings [*sous*] and 2 Majorcan pence [*diners*]¹⁰: a copy of *Ben ha-mèlek we-ha-nazir*, an adaptation to Judaism of the legend of Buddha written in rhymed prose by Abraham ibn Hasday from Barcelona (XII century), that cost him 11 Majorcan shillings [*sous*] and 8 Majorcan pence [*diners*]; a copy of *Mispaté ha-mazalot*, a very popular work of astrology by Abraham ibn Ezra (XI century), priced at eleven Majorcan shillings [*sous*] and 6 Majorcan pence [*diners*] and a very simple third book that cost him only 5 Majorcan pence [*diners*]. His father spent twice as much in the auction, 2 Majorcan pounds [*lliura*] and 8 Majorcan shillings [*sous*] with the purchase of six books. The amount of money they spent ranks 15th and 17th respectively amongst the twenty nine Majorcan Jews that bought books. The interesting conclusion that we can draw from this book purchase is that Jafudà Cresques had already at the time separate finances from those of his father’s, as would be expected from a married son.

Beyond the aforementioned document, the other seven that mention Jafudà Cresques before the death of his father in March 1387 do not assign him any occupation nor attribute to him any professional activity outside that of his father’s. Furthermore, any favors received from the royal court were either given to him in conjunction with his father, or as a result of the services rendered by his father.

In consideration of the services rendered by his father Cresques Abraham, Jafudà Cresques became a familiar of King Pere [Peter the Ceremonious of Aragon] in 1380 and of Prince Joan’s [John I of Aragon] in 1381. Also in consideration of these services, he obtained in 1381 a license to take a second wife after having lived with his first wife for five years without any descendants. Finally, he obtained together with

⁹ Regarding the Catalan *lleisme* see A. BADIA MARGARIT, *Gramática histórica catalana* (Barcelona 1951), pp. 206-210; A. BADIA MARGARIT – F. DE B. MOLL, *La llengua de Ramon Llull*, inside RAMON LLULL, *Obres essencials*, II (Barcelona 1960), p. 1317.

¹⁰ E. AGUILO, *Inventari de la heretat y llibreria del metje juheu Jahuda o Lleó Mosconi (1375)*, “Boletín de la Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana”, x (1903-1904), pp. 80-91, 106-112, 140-151, 196 bis. It is a reproduction of articles with an introductory note published in “Revue des Etudes Juives”, xxxix (1899), xL (1900), xLI (1901).

his father other protections that we will mention later when we address the relationship with the royal household.

The external event most important to his life was his forced baptism during the anti-Jewish pogrom of the summer of 1391. The Christian name he took when receiving his baptism (Jaume Ribes) is the same as the provost [*paborde*] of the Cathedral of Majorca, who probably acted as his protector during the riot days of early August. However, we have not established the relationship between the two of them.¹¹ Similar to Jafudà Cresques, his mother Setaddar together with his sister Astruga were baptized taking the names of Anna and Francesca respectively, and also his wife Dolça who continue to be called Dolça.

The first document that refers to him as “Jaume Ribes” is in the registry mandated by the court of the governor of Majorca regarding the reporting by the new converts of the properties owned in the *Call* [Jewish quarter] and their decision whether to continue inhabiting those properties or to vacate them. Since the *Call* had been looted and essentially emptied of Jews, it had no reason to continue to exist for the new converts, who theoretically had been assimilated among the Christian population. On the other hand, it was necessary to sell the properties to settle the numerous debts of the old *Aljama*. To this effect, on the 21st of October of 1391, the Governor made a public call in the usual places of the city so that all converts would declare all the properties owned in the *Call* within a month. As a result of this call, more than one hundred Majorcan converts came to the court of the governor to declare. On the 30th of October 1391 Jaume Ribes, previously known as Jafudà Cresques, appeared to declare that he owned a large house near the so-called gate “*del Temple*” [Templars gate] with an adjacent garden.¹²

In order to move to Barcelona in the year 1394, Jaume Ribes had to beseech a royal license to travel because King Joan I had banned the converts from changing addresses to avoid their flight.¹³ He also obtained one for his mother Anna in 1399 so she could join him in Barcelona.

We still find him residing in Barcelona in June of 1406 where he describes himself as a citizen [of Barcelona] when he cancels a housekeeping contract established with a convert named Francesca of Barcelona, daughter of the turner Francesc Genestar.¹⁴ We know that he is deceased less than four

¹¹ Jaume Ribes was already provost [*paborde*] of the Cathedral of Majorca in 1381 (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1442, fol. 196r). In the year 1390 (according to A. CAMPANER I FUERTES, *Cronicón Mayoricense* (Palma de Mallorca 1881), p. 77), he obtained the majority in the chapter's election to bishop. However, Pope Clement VII appointed Lluís de Prades, nephew of the cardinal of Valencia Jaume de Prades.

¹² J. M. QUADRADO, *La judería de la ciudad de Mallorca en 1391*, “Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia” ix (1886), pp. 294-312. Reproduced in “Museo Balear”, 2^a época, iv (1887), pp. 281-305, with the title: *La judería de la capital de Mallorca el 1391*, and also as a book in, *La judería en Mallorca en el siglo XIV*, with a prologue study by J. MUNTANER BUJOSA (Palma de Mallorca 1967).

¹³ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1927, fol. 89r. Dated 15 of January 1394, published by J. VINCKE, *Zur Vorgeschichte der spanishchen Inquisition* (Bonn 1941), doc. 146. Cf. also PONS, *op. cit.*, xx, pp. 397 and 405.

¹⁴ AHPB, Notary Mateu Ermengol, *Quartum manuale*, September 19th, 1405 – 19th October, 1406, fol. 18v, published by J. M. MADURELL MARIMÓN, *La contratación laboral judaica y conversa en Barcelona (1349-1416). Documento para su estudio, “Sefarad” xvii* (1957), p. 96. One of the transcription errors in the document has to do

years later because his mother Anna and his widow Dolça were engaged at that point in a lawsuit regarding his estate: the first one alleging that she needed it for her keeping and the second one most likely trying to recover her dowry.¹⁵

Jafudà Cresques and King Pere el Cerimoniós [Peter the Ceremonious of Aragon]

As we already mentioned, Jafudà Cresques did not stand out from his father Cresques Abraham until his (and King Pere's) death in 1387. His father had already received a decree making him royal familiar on 15th April 1368. Twelve years later, on 18th October 1380, we find the young Jafudà Cresques designated as royal familiar when he receives his first royal favor on the coattails of his father.¹⁶ Because this prerogative could not be transferred nor shared, we have to believe that some time before an act of the court had taken place in favor of Jafudà Cresques declaring him a royal familiar. This act could have been an extension of the applicable decree, in a parchment, with a simple inscription in the books of the scribe that documented the proceedings of the court.¹⁷

This first document that Cresques Abraham and his son Jafudà beseeched from the court tried to resolve an economic problem of these royal familiars: a conflict with the secretaries and the distributors of the contributions of the Jewish *Aljama* who had assigned them a [tax] amount to be paid that they thought excessive. The royal request to the secretaries to assign a contribution to the two Jews that would be in accordance with a direct estimation of their goods had no effect, and the two Jews had to present an identical complaint to Prince Joan two months later asking him to resolve the situation.¹⁸

The second and last protection that Jafudà Cresques obtained from the royal court of King Pere el Cerimoniós, again together with his father, was a letter from the King addressed to the Governor of Majorca. In this letter, dated 21st of April, 1382 the Governor is asked to make sure that Cresques Abraham and Jafudà Cresques are able to buy the meat they need from the Jewish butchers, so they can carry on with some of the works and *mappaemundi*^{iv} that they are producing for the King.¹⁹

with the occupation of Francesc Genestar, who was a turner and not a curtain maker; the other transcription error has to do with the date on which contract was made, December 5th, not the 8th.

¹⁵ ACA, Canc, Reg. 2270, fol. 194v, dated February 18th, 1410, and Reg. 2271, fol. 61r-v, dated February 20th 1410, published by RIERA, *op. cit.*, notes 11 and 12.

¹⁶ *Cf.* note 7 above.

¹⁷ One of such cases is mentioned in ACA, Canc, Reg. 931, fol. 64r-v dated 16th of September 1377. Unfortunately we have no news of the preservation of any scribe book from this period containing the proceedings that would allow us to check on the date of the entry pertaining to Jafudà Cresques.

¹⁸ *Cf.* note 7 above.

¹⁹ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1438, fol. 135r, published per A. RUBIÓ y LLUCH, *Documents per l'Història de la Cutura Catalana Mig-eval*, II (Barcelona 1921), p. 255, doc. 262.

We can conclude the following: that Jafudà Cresques, who was familiar of the King since 1380, worked with his father Cresques Abraham in the making of mappaemundi and other commissions for King Pere since at least 1382.

Jafudà Cresques and King Joan I [John I of Aragon]

With regard to the relations between Jafudà Cresques and Prince Joan—later King Joan I—we have to repeat what we already mentioned before: Jafudà Cresques had no notoriety while his father was alive; it is not until 1394, seven years after the death of his father, when he first receives the title of “master in the art of making mappaemundi and nautical charts”^v.

The first document that establishes the relationship between Jafudà Cresques and Prince Joan is dated in Barcelona July 10th, 1381. There in Barcelona, Prince Joan gives him and his father, who is also present, the title of familiar. This title is given in appreciation for the services rendered and those that he hoped would be rendered.²⁰

Cresques Abraham uses immediately the direct access to the court that this royal familiarity grants him. In just a few days he obtained several protections and privileges for himself, his household and his family.

On July 20th of that same year, Cresques Abraham obtains for himself and his son their removal from the jurisdiction, civil and criminal, of the Mayor of the city of Palma, who is also mayor of the Jewish community. They are placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Governor of the island.²¹ He also manages to have Prince Joan issue a reminder to the secretaries and distributors of the contributions to the *Aljama* of King Pere’s mandate not to tax them excessively and capriciously.²²

Also Cresques Abraham obtained from Prince Joan a license of bigamy for his son. This takes the form of a directive issued by Prince Joan to all royal officers of Majorca: thus, they would not impose any fine or penalty to Jafudà Cresques should he take a second wife, despite the fact that his current wife named Dolça was still alive but had not given him any offspring after five years together.²³

We can deduce consequently that Jafudà Cresques was already married in 1376, but we ignore whether he married a second wife. The document says very clearly that at the time he had only one wife and that

²⁰ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1686, fol. 89v, published by RIERA, *op. cit.*, note 70.

²¹ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1664, fol. 53v, quoted by RUBIÓ, *op. cit.*, I (Barcelona 1908), p. 295, note 2, and extracted by REPARAZ, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²² *Cf.* note 7 above.

²³ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1664, fol. 32v, quoted by RUBIÓ, *ibidem* and published by J. M. SIMON De GUILLEUMA, *De l’ús de les ulleres en els països de la Confederació catalano-aragonesa en le segle XIV*, inside *III Congrès d’Història de la Corona d’Aragó*, I (Valencia 1923), p. 497.

he did not want to deprive himself of the opportunity to take on a second one with the implicit purpose of obtaining an offspring. In the same way that we have no evidence that he ever became legally bigamous, we have no evidence either that he had children with his first wife or a possible second one—despite some documents mentioning them. The evidence that we can gather from later documents suggests a negative response to both questions. This is because in 1410 we find that he is survived by his (first) wife Dolça who was in litigation with his mother who, for this reason, we can surmise was his heiress.

Another matter involving Jafudà Cresques was a directive that his father beseeches from Prince Joan: this directive is addressed to the Governor of Mallorca to prevent Jafudà's mother in law, Haniní, from continuing to insult and threaten the family.²⁴

We have no further document that connects Jafudà Cresques with Prince Joan while Cresques Abraham is still alive. In fact, even when Cresques Abraham dies while working on a commission for the now King Joan I, one of the king's documents seems to ignore that Jafudà Cresques had the same occupation as his father.

Indeed on the 26th of March, 1387, the Vice Chancellor, due to illness of the King, signed and sealed with the common seal a letter to the Royal Solicitor of Majorca. In this letter he tasks him, among other things, to send him immediately the *mappamundi* that the Jew Cresques, whom he knew had died, was producing for him; and should it not be finished, see that it is completed by a “Christian master” resident in Majorca^{vi}, “whom they say is quite able for that work”.²⁵

The anomaly of this silence regarding Jafudà Cresques, who had received the title of familiar of Prince Joan almost six years ago, could be explained if we take into account the following: 1) that he personally had had no relations with the court—the royal court of Prince Joan's, now king; 2) that King Joan, who oversaw personally these artistic matters, was at that time seriously ill.

The indisputable fact is that three months later, on the first day of July of 1387, the King makes the same Vice Chancellor sign on his behalf a certificate for the Royal Solicitor of the Kingdom of Majorca. This certificate documents the purchase he had made from the Jew Jafudà Cresques of a commissioned *mappamundi* that his father had made and that “the aforementioned son had finished” for a price of 60 Majorcan Pounds [*lliures de “mallorquins menuts”*].²⁶

This confession made on the first day of July would indicate that the 60 Majorcan Pounds [*lliures de mallorquins menuts*] that the *mappamundi* cost, were paid by the Royal Solicitor upon receiving it from Jafudà Cresques and of course before shipping it to the King. However, an indirect note taken from the

²⁴ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1664, fol. 52v-53r, quoted by RUBIÓ, *ibidem*, and published by REPARAZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

²⁵ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1944, fol. 36v, published by RUBIÓ, *op. cit.*, I, p. 345, note 1.

²⁶ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1972, fol. 146r, published by RUBIÓ, *op. cit.*, I, p. 345-346, doc. 385. This document has also the anomaly of not designating Jafudà Cresques as royal familiar.

books of the Royal Solicitor's office of Majorca by the erudite provost [paborde] Jaume, tell us that those 60 Majorcan pounds [lliures] plus 8 Majorcan shillings [sous] (of interest?) were not given to Jafudà Cresques until two years later in 1389.²⁷

Seven years pass during which we have several notices of mappaemundi traveling to Joan I²⁸. However, there are no connections between those and Jafudà Cresques who in August 1391 was baptized and took the name of Jaume Ribes.

Jaume Ribes will not establish relations with Joan I until the first months of 1394. His first contact is apparently for two reasons: his financial disputes and the commission of several works for the King.

His economic disputes derive from the consequences of the destruction of the *Call* and the *Aljama* of Majorca. The King, who was the direct owner of the *Aljama*, named a commission to administer the [Jewish] community goods after its devastation²⁹. This administrative commission stipulated with the syndicate of converts that they would pay the King as redemption of his jurisdiction and to liquidate

²⁷ This note was published by J. M. BOVER, *Biblioteca de escritores baleares*, I (Palma 1868), p. 216, and was reproduced by CAMPANER, *op. cit.*, p. 76, column 2. They also reference it LLABRÉS, *op. cit.*, BONET, *op. cit.*, and E. SUREDA, *De la Corte de los señores reyes de Mallorca* (Madrid 1914), p. 80. In this note, the name of the Jew was misrepresented as "Benda Créqs". However, the reference [to the payment] contained within this King's letter "*amb son sagell secret segellada que fou dada en Barcelona a 26 de maig de l'añy 1387*" ["sealed with his secret seal and issued in Barcelona on 26 May of the year 1387"] seems accurate. Nevertheless, after checking all the registries of the Secret Seal of Joan I, I have not been able to locate a letter corresponding to this date. On the other hand, as we saw, the date of the certificate of debit was the first of July [almost to month after the aforementioned 26 of May date]. It would seem to me that a possible explanation [of this date discrepancy] is that due to some bureaucratic difficulty with this certificate or because it was lost, it was ordered to be reissued by the Royal Solicitor. Thus, the certificate was actually [re]issued at a later date and backdated accordingly, and this would explain why the certificate cannot be found in its corresponding place.

²⁸ On the 27th of April, 1390, the King issued a certification to the *mestre racional* [Royal Accountant] of the court. In this document, he directs him to borrow from his chamberlain and *merino* [appointee with ample territorial jurisdiction] in Saragossa Lope Sánchez Dahuero 60 *florins* to cover the expenses incurred by the King in the purchase of a mappamundi whose provenance and destination are unknown (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1959, fol. 33r). On the 19th of January, 1391 while the King is in the Aragonese village of Borja, where he had gone to meet the King of Navarra, he writes to his chamberlain telling him amongst other things: "*E digats a-n Berthomeu de Castre, cambrer nostre, que decontinent nos trameta los nostre mapamundi e les taules de navegar a les sextes; e fets-li haver una atzembla que ho port*" ["and tell my chamberlain Berthomeu de Castre ... to send my mappamundi, the navigational tables, and the pair of dividers..."] (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1959, fol. 154v, published by RUBIÓ, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 363-364, doc. 309). [The correct document number in RUBIÓ is 409.] On the 29th of May, 1391, the King writes to his librarian in Barcelona to bring him "*lo mapamundi qui és en taules*" ["the mappamundi that is in on boards"]. Most likely this is the same *mapamundi* that three days later the King sent together with other scientific instruments to Gastó III Febus, Count de Foix (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1961, fol. 8v, 8v-9r).

²⁹ On January 7th, 1392 the King appoints from Barcelona Bernat Calopa, Jaume Pastor and Guillem de Montbrú as commissioners for the administration of the communal possessions of the destroyed *Aljama* of Majorca and the vacant estates of those deceased Jews (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1995, fol. 35r-36v).

debts incurred by the *Aljama*, four Majorcan shillings [*sous*] per Majorcan pound [*lliura*] (that is to say, 20%) of the value of their estates. The way the lawyers of the converts³⁰ proceeded against Jaume Ribes (who was still familiar of the King) and his possessions triggered him to appeal to the King; whence, between February 10th and May 25th, 1394^{vii} we find eight documents requested by King Joan to be issued in favor of his familiar Jaume Ribes. All documents deal with royal commissions made to Jaume Ribes and a boisterous lawsuit he has with the lawyers of the community of converts of Majorca.

The first of this set of eight documents is in fact a one-year stay of proceedings and executions dictated by Joan I on the 10 February, 1394.³¹ The reason to issue the stay derives from the need of the King to have the convert Jaume Ribes—known as Jafudà Cresques prior to his baptism, master in art of the production of navigational charts and mappaemundi, domestic and familiar of his—finish soon some pending businesses, using ‘his art’. The stay applies to all lawsuits and proceedings carried against Jaume Ribes and his estate, in particular those lawsuits related to the debts of the former Jewish *Call* of Mallorca.³²

The second document, dated on March 19th, is a letter close from the King addressed to the solicitors of the community of converts of Majorca. The solicitors are admonished for having interfered via lawsuits and pressures with the trip of Jaume Ribes to the royal court to deliver a work much needed by the King; and because he still had to deliver another one, the King not only asked them not to prevent him with pressures and lawsuits from making it, but to extend him favors and lend him help. In the beginning of the document there was already a reference to a notary act that Jaume Ribes had had drafted in Majorca to justify in front of the King his tardiness in submitting a work of art he had commissioned some time ago—we do not know exactly when.³³

³⁰ In 1392 we find as solicitors for the converts Pere Salvador, Miquel Fuster, Joan Amat, Joan Fontcoberta, Bernat de Requesens, Joan Bo, Antoni ses-Portes and Joan Fuster (PONS, *op. cit.*, xx, p. 534). In 1395 we find as solicitors or acting in this capacity Jaume Portell, Berenguer de Cortilles, Daniel Requesens and Pere Onís (MUNTANER, *op. cit.*, p. 18).

³¹ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1885, fol. 113r; ARM, *Cartes reials* [Royal Correspondence], 1393-1397, fol. 93, according to BONET, that published the document (*op. cit.* pp. 125-126) together with the notary act of its submission to the Lieutenant Governor by Pere de Fontanet, solicitor of Jaume Ribes, on the 13th of March, 1394.

³² A peculiar end note in the Registry of the Chancery informs us that the stay had to be issued twice, as the first copy was lost during a shipwrecked passage to Mallorca. Because of this, Pere de Fontanet, solicitor of Jaume Ribes in Mallorca (from which we can deduct that Jaume Ribes was probably in the [Iberian] peninsula, probably in Valencia) could not present the stay order to the Lieutenant Governor of Majorca until the 13th of March.

³³ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1885, fol. 152r-v: “*Pro eodem [Jacobo Ribes]. Lo Rey. Segons en una còpia d'una protestació a vosaltres fete per lo feel de casa nostra Jacme Ribes, convers, havem vist contenir, vosaltres haver empatxar lo dit Jacme per presons de persona et en altra manera que tro ara poch ha no és pugut venir a nós ab alguna obra que gran temps ha nos devia haver aportada, la qual nós de tot en tot volíem e havíem molt necessària, de la qual cosa, si axí és, sots digne[s] de grant reprehensió e castich; e com lo dit Jacme haie a fer per nós altra orbra assats notabla, la qual molt desijam e havem necessària, per ço us dehim a manam expressament e de certa sciència sots encorriment de la nostra ire e indignació que-l dit Jacme en fer e espatxar la dita obra no embarguets per presons de persona ne en altre manera, ans si menester serà li*

The third and fourth documents are both dated the 22nd of March, three days after the previous letter close, and are both addressed to the Governor of Majorca.

One is an order to the Governor (under the risk of incurring the wrath of the King and a fine of 500 golden *morabatins*) not to allow Jaume Ribes to continue to be vexed by the judiciary and have “his” possessions impounded because of this matter [of taxation]. [The King considers that the matter should be settled] given the certification of the donation that Francesca (previously known as Astruga, and wife of Marzoch Mediní) has made to her brother Jaume Ribes (familiar of the King) of her dowry and other goods, and the certification of the willingness of Jaume Ribes to pay the corresponding tax prevailed upon Francesca by the solicitors of the converts for the goods that her husband had overseas.

On the other document of March 22nd, the King, or on his behalf the Regent of the Chancery, motivated for some reason not specified, ordered the Governor to resolve swiftly and summarily, all the matters including civil and criminal lawsuits pertaining to his familiar convert Jaume Ribes, his wife, his children, his family and his possessions.³⁴

It seems that all the aforementioned documents were beseeched from the court by Jaume Ribes and he himself produced them to the Lieutenant Governor of Majorca on the 22nd of June (that is to say, three months later), together with another one dated on the 25th of May. However in the meantime, the Royal Chancery was issuing more documents on his behalf.

With only one day of difference, on the 24th and 25th of March of 1394, King Joan issued him two more documents. The first one and more important was issued for 4 florins (or 44 Majorcan shillings [*sous*]), and the other for 5 Majorcan shillings [*sous*] to cover the [royal] seal fees.

The one on the 24th of March is a very ample concession, rarely awarded by the court, at least in a single document. This document takes the form of a letter patent that grants a license to travel, a safe-conduct, a moratorium and a special royal safeguard. Jaume Ribes is referred to in the letter as familiar of the King, convert and resident in the city of Majorca. Furthermore, he has received all the aforementioned things because he has to create some works that please and are necessary to the King, who has specially requested them and are to be carried out in a short period of time.

donets favor e ajuda tantes vegades com ne serets requests en tal manera que la dita obra haje bon e prest espatxament, certificant-vos que del contrari pendriets ten gran càrrech que no seria bon per portar a vosaltres. Dada en València a XIX dies de març del any M CCC XC IIII. Rex Johannes. / Dominus Rex mandavit michi Bernardo de Jonquerio. / Probata. / Dirigitur procuratoribus comunitatis conversorum Majoricarum“.

³⁴ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1997, fol. 59v; *Cartes reials* [Royal Correspondence], 1393-1397, fol. 159, according to BONET, that publishes the document (*op. cit.* pp. 168-169), together with the notary act of its submission to the Lieutenant Governor by Jaume Ribes himself on the 22nd of June, 1394. In this document and in the following document we find the only reference, and a rather generic one, to the “children” of Jaume Ribes. It is my impression that we are dealing with a purely formulaic expression and that such references cannot be interpreted as reality. We could as a confirmation of this opinion point to the fact that his sister, whom we know from the previous document to be involved in the lawsuit, is not mentioned explicitly. That is to say, the expression is deliberately standard.

Despite the prohibitions and inhibitions to the contrary he is granted the right, together with a Jewish companion of his choosing, to move freely and relocate to any country within or outside the royal dominions. For this reason, he is given a two-year safe-conduct and a moratorium covering any crimes, debts and obligations of any kind, as well as offenses and requests made by any person, even if in fulfilling these obligations he had renounced to take advantage of any safe-conduct or moratoria. Furthermore, royal protection and custody is awarded to him and his wife, children, family and his possessions so that no one could overrun them, injure them, arrest them, fine them or brand them for any offenses or debts.³⁵

The next day, as if the previous rescript gave no guarantees on Jaume Ribes' liberty of movement, the King signed another letter close addressed to the Governor of Mallorca. In the letter the King endorses his familiar Jaume Ribes, convert and resident of the city of Mallorca, who has some "business" to carry

³⁵ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1885, fol. 151v-152r: "*Pro Jacobo Ribes. Johannes Dei gratia etc. dilecto et fidelibus gubernatori, vicariis, bajulis et aliis officialibus nostril civitatis et regni Majoricarum ceterisque officialibus vel eorum locatenentibus presentibus et futuris ad quos spectet et presentes pervenerint, salutem et dileccionem. Cum fidelis de domo nostra Jacobus Ribes, habitator civitatis Majoricarum de cecitate judayca ad fidem catholicam non est diu conversus aliqua opera nobis grata et necessaria pro nobis et de nostro speciali mandato facere habeat infra breve et ob hoc motu nostro proprio sibi concesserimus quod non obstantibus quibusvis inhibicionibus quantumcumque penalibus mandato nostro vel alias factis, cum uno alio converso ipsum concomitante quem semel et pluries elegerit seu eligere voluerit, possit ad quascumque partes tam intra quam extra nostrum dominium accedere et ad regna et terras nostras redire semel et pluries pro libito voluntatis, propterea guidaverimus et elongaverimus eundem Jacobum ab omnibus et singulis criminibus, debitis et obligacionibus judicialibus et extrajudicialibus quantumcumque fortibus pro quibus qualitercumque posset ex officio vel ad quarumvis personarum instanciam quibusvis causis seu rationibus in judicio vel extra judicium conveniri, violariis censsualibusque mortuis dumtaxat exceptis, hinc ad duos annos a data presentis continue secuturos, eciam si in obligacionibus ipsis ad capcionem persone se submisserit e guidaticis aut elongamentis nostris renunciaverit ac eis non uti promisserit cum adiectione penarum, et ulterius ipsum Jacobum et eius uxorem, filios, familiam et bona sua receperimus et posuerimus sub nostris proteccionem, custodia et guidatico speciali, sic quod nullus cuiusvis status, gradus, condicionis aut legis palam vel occulte audeat vel presumat per se vel alium seu alios, sub pena quingentorum morabatinorum auri de bonis cuiuslibet contrafacientibus nostro erario irremissibiliter aplicandorum, predictum Jacobum Ribes, uxorem, filios, familiam aut bona sua quecumque invadere, ledere, capere, detinere, pignerare aut marcere culpa, crimine vel delitis alienis nisi in eis fuerit principaliter vel fideiussorio nomine obligatus nec eciam in hiis casibus nisi si et in quantum jus, racio aut franquesie Majoricarum fieri hoc permittant; ideo vobis et cuilibet vestrum prout ad uniuscuiusque vestrum spectabit officium dicimus et districte precipiendo mandamus expresse et de certa sciencia sub ire et indignacionis incursu et pena quingentorum florenorumm auri de Aragonia quantinus concessionem, guidaticum et elongamentum ac proteccionem et custodiam nostras huiusmodi ac omnia alia supradicta firmiter teneatis et observetis ac teneri et observari faciatis et non contraveniatis nec aliquem contravenire permitatis aliqua racione, vobis et vestrum cuilibet ad cautelam faciendi contrarium abdicantes omnimodam potestatem. Data Valentie sub nostro sigillo secreto vicesima quarta die marcii anno a nativitate Domini millesimo nonagesimo quarto. Rex Johannes. / Dominus Rex mandavit michi Bernardo de Jonquerio. / Probata."*

out in front of the Governor. The King hopes that this way, Jaume Ribes can quickly start work on some works that are necessary to him and are needed to be finished soon.³⁶

Fifteen days later, on April 9th, 1394, the King writes to the Solicitor of Majorca and the collector of the monies originating from the [outcome] of the riots that took place in 1391 against the *Aljama* of Majorca so they would not demand any payment for a house he owned. The King had promised Jaume Ribes, convert and master of mappamundi, in exchange for a certain amount of money that he owed him, to exempt the house he owned in the old *Call* of Majorca from payment of any property taxes.³⁷

The aforementioned document was approved by the Regent of the Royal Chancery despite the fact that it was in contradiction to a promise made by the King not to issue individual donations or exemptions regarding the assets belonging to the creditors of the old *Aljama*.³⁸

In any event, when this Royal decree is presented on May 12th by Jaume Ribes' solicitor, Pere de Fontanet, to the Royal Solicitor and his deputy, the Royal Solicitor opposed it.³⁹ Because of this refusal,

³⁶ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1885, fol. 152r; "*Pro eodem [Jacobo Ribes]. Lo Rey. Governador. Com lo feel de casa nostra en Jacme Ribes, convers habitant en la ciutat de Mallorques, haja de fer per nós algunes obres les quals havem necessàries e volem que per ell sens intermissió de temps sien continuades, e segons exposició sua ell haja a ffer davant vós alguns offers seus, manam-vos expressament e de certa sciència que-ls dits offers seus li expatxets tant com justícia puxa soferir, en altra manera hajats aquell com a domèstich e familiar nostre per recomanat en tal manera que rahonablement se'n deja contentar. Dada en València a xxv de març del any de la Nativitat de nostre Senyor M CCC XCIII. Rex Johannes. / Dominus Rex mandavit michi Bernardo de Jonquerio. / Probata. / Dirigitur gubernatori regni Majoricarum.*"

³⁷ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1997, fol. 75r-v; ARM, Cartes Reials [Royal Correspondence] 1393-1397, fol. 106, according to BONET, who publishes the document (*op. cit.* pp. 148-149) together with the notary act of its submission to the addressees by Jaume Ribes' solicitor, Pere de Fontanet, on the 12th of May, 1394, adding that the Lieutenant Solicitor of the King showed opposition. On the 1st of March, 1392, the King had appointed Jaume Pastor and Guillem de Montbrú as collectors of the possessions of the destroyed *Aljama* of Majorca, the restitution monetary settlement with the responsible party for the riots, and the agreement with the converts (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1963, fol. 42r-v).

³⁸ On the 27th of January, 1392, the King had issued a mandate to all the solicitors and commissioners to receive personal property, confiscations, condemnations and restitutions due to the [outcome] of the riots that took place in the City and the Kingdom of Majorca. The totality of the received quantities would be given to the merchant Berenguer de Cortilles of Saragossa [who had lent and would later lend great amounts of money to the crown], drawing 3/5 from the Treasurer of the King and 2/5 from the Treasurer of the Queen (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1995, fol. 50v-51v). Also, on February 2nd, 1392 the King had signed a notary document in which he promised Berenguer de Cortilles without exception all the monies originating from the restitutions, settlements and condemnations deriving from the previous year's riots in order to settle the debt he had with him (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1980, fol. 106v-108v).

³⁹ The position of Royal Deputy Solicitor of Majorca was created and its functions delineated by royal decree on August 6th, 1392 (ACA, Canc, Reg. 1995, fol. 137v-138r). The first one to be appointed to this position was Mateu de Loscos, who received a five-year tenure and an annual salary of 150 Majorcan Pounds [*lliures mallorquines*].

the King dispatched another decree to the same recipients where he had transcribed the previous letter and admonished them for not complying for “*rahons colorades*” [“*bogus reasons*”] and demanded from them, under risk of enraging him and of being discharged from their offices, that they clear the house of Jaume Ribes [from taxation].⁴⁰

The lack of further news about this affair makes us think that the matter was resolved in line and in accordance with the interest of Jaume Ribes. Llabrés states, without citing any documents, that in the same year of 1394, Jaume Ribes sold his house to a notary.⁴¹

Therefore, in summary, the relationship between Jafudà Cresques [Jaume Ribes] and King Joan I, who together with his father had named him familiar in 1381, focuses on the payment of a mappamundi that Cresques Abraham had started and Jafudà Cresques finished in the year 1387, and other commissions in the year 1394.

Jaume Ribes and King Martí [Martin of Aragon]

Upon the death of King Joan on May of 1396, his brother King Martí succeeded him. He continued to consider Jaume Ribes his familiar. Jaume Ribes, for his part, continued to be embroiled in lawsuits.

Accordingly, on January 9th, 1399, the Royal Vice Chancellor signed a stay of prosecution. This extended for the period of a year and covered any civil and criminal cases, ex officio or petitioned, against the following converts: Jaume Ribes, familiar of the King and master of nautical charts, known prior to his conversion as Jafudà Cresques; against his mother Anna, previously known as Setaddar; against Lluís sa-Granada, previously known as Jafià Natjar; and against Pere Mercader, previously known as Jucef Azbilí, all of them residents of the city of Mallorca.⁴²

⁴⁰ ACA, Canc, Reg. 1997, fol. 103v-104r; ARM, Cartes Reials [Royal Correspondence] 1393-1397, fol. 160, according to BONET, who publishes the document (*op. cit.* p. 169) together with the notary act of its submission to the Royal Deputy Solicitor by Jaume Ribes himself on the 22nd of June, 1394.

⁴¹ “*A tal extremo llevó el su entusiasmo el rey [Joan I] por su protegido, que al verse con insistencia llamado a la corte {l’any 1394?} maese Jaime vende su casa al notario Pera de Sant Pera y se ausenta de la Isla*” [“*the enthusiasm of the King {Joan I} was such that when his protégée finds himself summoned to the court with such insistence, he [Jafudà] sells his house to the notary Pera de Sant Pera and leaves the island*”]: LLABRÉS, *op. cit.*, p. 310. Llabrés also says: “*Don Martín seguía protegiéndole en 1409 a juzgar por una carta suya que hemos visto*” [“*Don Martín continued as his protégée in 1409 judging from a letter of his that we have seen*”], However, I have examined the registries of the ACA in different categories corresponding to this year and I have not been able to find any mention of Jaume Ribes.

⁴² ACA, Canc, Reg. 2171, fol. 68v-69r; ARM, Ordres Reials [Royal Decrees], 1398-1400, fol. 191, according to BONET, who publishes the document (*op. cit.* pp. 176) together with the notary act of its submission to the Lieutenant Governor by Jaume Ribes’ solicitor, the notary Gabriel Garcés, on the 13th of February, 1399. We can deduce from the fact that they are mentioned together that Lluís sa-Granada (Jafià Natjar) and Pere Mercader (Jucef Azbilí) were also relatives of Jaume Ribes. We have no records of Jucef Azbilí or Pere Mercader beyond what this stay of

The same day, the same vice chancellor signed a new license to travel. This license is addressed to all the officers of Majorca. It communicates to them the concession made to the convert Anna, [resident] of Majorca, mother of the convert Jaume Ribes, known before her conversion as Setaddar, that allows her to travel to Barcelona where her son resides, or to any other place of the overseas dominions of the

King without incurring any dictated penalties or inhibitions to the contrary. We do not know whether the convert Anna was able to join her son in Barcelona.⁴³

These are all the documents that relate King Martí with Jaume Ribes. We are not aware that the King commissioned any works from him.

Jaume Ribes and Baldassare Ubriachi

That same year of 1399 Jaume Ribes received a commission for a singular mappamundi from Baldassare Ubriachi, a Florentine pearl and precious-stone dealer. Ubriachi was in close connection with the regional office of the firm Datini de Prato in Barcelona, where he had an open account and where he was a personal friend of the director of this plant of de Prato, Simone d'Andrea Bellandi.

This matter has been known for some time and recently it has been presented and commented on in an erudite manner by Skelton.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, I do not want to forego making a personal comment that includes the small new contribution of an unpublished document and highlights the role that Jaume Ribes played.

The matter starts with the decision of Baldassare Ubriachi to have a small stock of mappaemundi at his disposal. Given that he was an artist himself and that he had the intention of using these mappaemundi as presents for prominent figures—that probably included among others, the kings of Aragon, Navarra and England—he buys some and commissions others while on travel in Barcelona on the spring of 1399. He leaves those he bought, well wrapped, in deposit and custody with his friend Simone d'Andrea while he awaited the others he commissioned to be made by the masters of mappaemundi of Barcelona, not according to their likings but his own. Having to leave on travel to Saragossa, he gives his friend Simone d'Andrea a signed invoice with the order completely specified: from the dimensions, the coverage and content of the interior illustrations, to the terms of payment to the artist, as well as the terms of the

prosecution gives us. Jafià Natjar is the same person that we find next to Jaume Ribes' mother upon his death (*cf.* note 15 above).

⁴³ ACA, Canc, Reg. 2171, fol. 68v; ARM, Ordres Reials [Royal Decrees], 1398-1400, fol. v. 191, according to BONET, who publishes the document (*op. cit.* pp. 177) together with the notary act of its submission to the Lieutenant Governor by the notary Gabriel Garcés, solicitor of Jaume Ribes and his mother Anna, on the 13th of February, 1399.

⁴⁴ G. LIVI, *Dall'Archivio di Francesco Datini mercante pratese, celebrandosi in Prato addi XVI d'agosto MDCCCCX, auspice la pia casa de'Ceppi, il V centenario della morte de Lui* (Firenze 1910); J. M. MADURELL, *Un cartógrafo genovés en Barcelona*, in *Barcelona. Divulgación histórica VII* (Barcelona 1952), pp. 140-144; R. A. SKELTON, *A contract for world maps at Barcelona, 1399-1400, "Imago Mundi"*, xxii (1968), pp. 107-113.

production of the works. The masters of mappaemundi chosen—despite having different orders—are Jaume Ribes and Francesco Beccà, the former a Majorcan convert, the latter a Genovese, and both temporarily residing in Barcelona.

Jaume Ribes receives the commission to create a single mappaemundi that as we will see was special and unique. This commission was received—probably after first having some discussion with Baldassare Ubriachi himself—under a notarized contract stipulated by Simone d’Andrea (director of the Datini regional office who had to execute the payments). We know nothing about the terms of the contract, but what we have left is the notarial deed between Francesco Beccà and Simone d’Andrea executed on June 7th 1399. The document does not mention Jaume Ribes, but it says that the commission of four mappaemundi that the Genovese cartographer has accepted will be based on the exemplar that Simone d’Andrea will provide him—that we will see is the one that Jaume Ribes was already working on. In the deed it is mentioned that the executors only stipulate this deed to have a public record, because the agreements were made verbally. That is to say, Francesco Beccà accepted the clauses of the invoice signed by Baldassare Ubriachi and produced on his behalf by Simone d’Andrea. Taking advantage of being in front of the notary, the Genovese cartographer acknowledges having received 192 florins of the 320 promised by Simone d’Andrea as payment for the set of four mappaemundi (60 florins per each small mappaemundi and a 100 for each large mappamundi); he also agrees not to leave the territory of Barcelona until he has them completed as they were urgently needed.

Those 192 florins paid by Simone d’Andrea cannot be verified against the accounting books of the firm Datini in Barcelona. They have only found the payment note of 111 florins against the account of Baldassare Ubriachi between 19th June, 1399 and 21st April, 1400—73 of which were given to “*maestro Riba, cristiano novello, maestro di charte da navichare*” [“*master Riba, new Christian, master of nautical charts*”] and 38 to “*maestro Francescho di Genova, dipintore di charte da navichare*” [“*master Francesco of Genova, painter of nautical charts*”].⁴⁵

On the 14th of July, Baldassare Ubriachi is in Saragossa near the royal court⁴⁶. He tells in a letter to his friend Simone d’Andrea, who is in Barcelona, to continue to keep the already-packed mappaemundi he had entrusted him and to see that the other ones commissioned are completed soon (“*si faccino bene e il più tosto si può*” [“*done well and as fast as possible*”]). In the conclusion of the letter, he sends regards to the cartographers (“*saluti tutti i nostri e mastro Giame Riba, e Gabbriello,*⁴⁷ *i mastro Francesco*

⁴⁵ LIVI, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52, note 2.

⁴⁶ On July 10th, 1399 the King appointed Baldassare Ubriachi his counselor and familiar (ACA, Canc, Reg. 2193, fol. 6r-v) and the next day awarded him a safe-conduct (Reg. 2170, fol. 166r, note for which I am grateful for the courtesy of Ms. M. T. Ferrer i Mallol, to whom I am also indebted for the document transcribed in note 52).

⁴⁷ We ignore who this Gabriel is. One would think that because his name is placed between two cartographers that it may be Gabriel de Vallseca. But if is true that apparently this famous but not well- documented Majorcan cartographer issued his will in 1467, he would have been too young in the year 1399 to be in the mind of a rich Florentine merchant. [Indeed, we now know due to the research of Ramon Pujades that Gabriel de Vallseca was likely born around 1391 dying sometime between 8th July 1471 and 1478. RAMON PUJADES, *La Carta de Gabriel de Vallseca de 1439*, with English translation, (Barcelona, 2009), pp. 318 and 327.]

Beccha ["regards to all our people, and to master Giame Riba, and to Gabriello, and master Francesco Beccha"]). He also asks him to write to Perpinyà to obtain the parchment for the two large maps that the Genovese cartographer had yet to start—this way they could gain some time (*"sicchè non si perda tempo"* ["such not to waste time"]). And still in the post scriptum, he mentioned that he was also writing directly to Francesco Beccà so he would hurry in the making of those works, making him understand (*"dandoli intenzione"* ["making him aware of the intention"]) that by the end of that very month he needed the first mappamundi to show it to the King of Navarra, where he was going next, and then make it arrive in the hands of the King of England. Because of this, he begged Simone d'Andrea to insist with this same excuse (*"e cosi gli dite boi prechè più tosto e meglio la facci"* ["and you tell him in this same manner so he would make it as fast as possible and better"]).⁴⁸

Five weeks later, none of the mappaemundi commissioned were finished. In a letter from the Florentine jeweler, who was still in Saragossa, to Simone d'Andrea dated on August 20th, he tells him to appeal to the cartographers so they would finish in any way possible the two mappaemundi they had started before his departure—naturally one by Jaume Ribes and the other by Francesco Beccà; and if Jaume Ribes had already finished his, to give it to the Genovese cartographer so he could complete his based on it (*"che pigli le forme gli mancano"* ["to take the shapes he lacks"]). This way when he would come in secrecy to Barcelona, he could take Francesco Beccà's map together with the other kept by Simone d'Andrea (but not the mappamundi finished by Jaume Ribes because it had to serve as model for the other three that Francesco Beccà had to make next).⁴⁹

On the first day of October, upon his departure from Barcelona, Baldassare Ubriachi signed a memorandum containing a number of errands for Simone d'Andrea: to pay 15 florins to Jaume Ribes and the rest upon the completion of his mappamundi, as it was stipulated (*"come dee stare secondo le scritte"* ["as it should be according to what was documented"]); to give 8 florins to Francesco Beccà now that he says that he will finish the first mappamundi in mid-October, and to pay him 6 florins each month while working on the second one and the others; to pay him also for the gold, the blue and the other colors that will be part of the paint composition; and to pay for a collaborator painter should he want to take one. Separately, Ubriachi asked d'Andrea that when Jaume Ribes had finished his mappamundi (*"quello me dee fare"* ["that one he has to make for me"]), to give it secretly to the Genovese cartographer so he could complete his (*"prenda le forme gli bisogna"* ["take the shapes that he needs"]) and to keep it also secretly upon completion.⁵⁰

The month of May of the following year Baldassare Ubriachi had to return to Barcelona. Francesco Beccà had only made two of the small mappaemundi. It took six months to finish the first one, completed in December, and four months to finish the second one. The expenses according to him, just for the first one, were of 117 florins, 7 Majorcan shillings [sous] and 8 Majorcan pence [*diners*], and the Florentine merchant had only offered him 60 [florins], despite the fact that he had promised him verbally that

⁴⁸ LIVI, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, doc. 16.

⁴⁹ LIVI, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, doc. 17.

⁵⁰ LIVI, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52, doc. 18.

should he make it more “elaborate”, he would increase the pay proportionally. Francesco Beccà demanded the payment of the balance. Baldassare Ubriachi excused himself from fulfilling the promise by alleging that he was not punctual in the completion of the delivery. The Genovese cartographer pursued the legal route, starting and filing a notarial requisition to claim what he had been promised.

Since matters were getting murky and to be cautious, Simone d’Andrea, who all this time had taken care of all the orders and payments in the name and under verbal orders of Baldassare Ubriachi, issued a power of attorney to his friend Baldassare Ubriachi. This way Baldassare Ubriachi could demand and receive [directly] from Jaume Ribes, convert and Francesco Beccà, Genovese, masters of nautical charts, all the ordered mappaemundi and any money they owed him. With this power of attorney dated 17th May, 1400 the legal rights to claim and demand from the Genovese—but apparently not from the Majorcan—to meet the conditions stipulated in the contract returned to Baldassare Ubriachi.⁵¹

Therefore, recapitulating, it seems that there was no real relationship between Jaume Ribes and Francesco Beccà. Baldassare Ubriachi was the one that linked them “secretly” in a joint task when he wanted the Majorcan cartographer to make one single mappamundi of special characteristics, unknown to us, that Francesco Beccà would reproduce in the four mappaemundi he had commissioned him.

The occupation of Jafudà Cresques

To this date among the 28 documents, published or new, that mention the name of Jafudà Cresques or Jaume Ribes, only six make mention of his professional group. In one document it is called “master in the art of making nautical charts and mappaemundi”, in other “master of mappaemundi”, and in four others “master of nautical charts”.

Beyond those six, there are still another seven that talk about him: 1) as collaborator of his father in mappaemundi and royal commissions; 2) as the one to finish a high-priced mappamundi that his father left unfinished when he died; 3) as the author of some “works” judged to be necessary to King Joan; 4) as the author of a special mappamundi for the merchant Baldassare Ubriachi that another “master of nautical charts” or “painter of nautical charts” had to reproduce in part.

We concluded in the study published on Cresques Abraham, after analyzing his activities, that he was a painter, and not much more than a specialized painter in compasses and mappaemundi. It would seem that the continuation of the same pictorial atelier would correspond to his son Jafudà Cresques.

However, Jafudà Cresques is no longer called, like his father was, “*bruixoler*” [compass maker], but on the other hand, he is designated five times as “master of nautical charts”, when we have no document

⁵¹ AHPB, Notary Tomàs de Bellmunt, Manual 2, fol. 99v: “*Simon de Prato predictus nomine meo proprio constituo vos, honorabilem Baltasarium de Hubriaquis, florentinum, ad petendum, exigendum et recipiendum pro me et nomine meo a Jacobo Rippis, converso, et Francesco Beca, januensi, magistris cartarum navigandi, omnes mapamundos quos ab ipsis habere debeo et quasvis peccunie quantitates quas michi ipsi et uterque ipsorum debent instrumentis et componere et ad causas et substituere etc. — Testes proxime dicti [Jacobus March, garbellator specierum, civis Barchinone, et Benedictus Vilahur].*”

from his father that establishes a relationship in the making of nautical charts. Hence, these facts seem to contradict the hypothesis of the generational continuation of the same pictorial atelier.

A hypothesis that would reconcile all the data would suggest that Jafudà Cresques mastered more drawing techniques than those of illumination. After the death of his father, an eminent painter, he had no option but to abandon the painting of compasses, and without fully abandoning the illumination of mappaemundi, he would focus on the serial production of simple nautical charts, noticeably cheaper. But these are all hypotheses that would only be confirmed if we had some document that would indicate the price of normal nautical charts belonging to the mastery of Jafudà Cresques. This way we could corroborate that he devoted himself to two very different things: uncolored charts (inexpensive) and charts richly illuminated (expensive).

Until we find a document to the contrary, we can say that despite the fact of having the double title of master of nautical charts and master of mappaemundi, we cannot find any documented activity of Jafudà Cresques' other than maker of luxurious mappaemundi; and that Jafudà Cresques far from being a wise scientist, was nothing but a specialized painter that continued to exploit a brilliant finding of his father Cresques Abraham: to take nautical charts and convert them by illuminating them into luxurious mappaemundi.

Because of all this, should the Town Hall of [the city of] Palma want to make justice to all the illustrious Majorcans, it should dedicate the painter Cresques Abraham a wider, longer and nicer street than the one dedicated to his son Jafudà Cresques. And on a different front, if the books of the history of science wanted to be accurate, they should start removing the name of Jafudà Cresques or Jaume Ribes because he cannot be identified as the "mestre Jacome de Malhorca" of the Portuguese chronicles.

Translator's Notes

ⁱ English translation of “Jafudà Cresques, jueu de Mallorca” Randa 5 (Barcelona 1977) pp. 51-66.

ⁱⁱ I wish to thank Father Gabriel Llopart and Jaume Riera for their kind agreement to have me translate this and other documents into English and their assistance throughout the process. These translations were done with the idea of promoting their important research in the English-speaking world. I have done my best to stay faithful to the original text in Catalan. Where clarifications or cross references seemed pertinent, I have added those in brackets and endnotes. I have left names in Catalan such as names of kings in the original. The Latin and Catalan text that appears in some of the footnotes have also been left un-translated as it represents the transcription of the original source documents. Any mistakes or omissions introduced in this translation are my own. Similar to the original, the following abbreviations have been utilized in the translation:

ACA *Arxiu de la Corona de Aragò*

AHPB *Arxiu Històric de Protocols de Barcelona*

ARM *Arxiu del Regne de Mallorca*

Canc. *Cancelleria*

Cf. Confer

doc. document

fol. folio

IEB Institut d'Estudis Baleàrics

n. Number

op. cit. *opus citatum*

p. page (and *pp.* for pages)

r. recto

Reg. *Registre*

v. verso

ⁱⁱⁱ Thanks to the research of G. Llopart we now know that he was born in 1360. G. LLOMPART, *El testamento del cartógrafo Cresques Abraham y otros documentos familiares*, *Estudis Baleàrics* 64/65, Institut d'Estudis Baleàrics (IEB), June 1999-January 2000, p. 101.

^{iv} Jaume Riera mentions in his biography of Cresques Abraham that one could interpret that the meat was needed to make colors or other illumination techniques. However, he also mentions that he is not aware that meat was used in the fabrication of colors or for illumination, unlike honey, eggs and urine. J. RIERA I SANS, *Cresques Abraham, jueu de Mallorca, mestre de mapamundis i de brúixoles*, dins *L'Atlas Català de Cresques Abraham* (Barcelona 1975), p. 19

^v Thanks to the later research of Jaume Riera and Gabriel Llompart, we now know that the title was already in use in 1390. See, G. LLOMPART and J. RIERA, *Jafudà Cresques is Samuel Corcós. Més documents sobre els jueus pintors de cartes de navegar (Mallorca, segle XIV)*, *Bolletí de la Societat Archeologica Luliana*, 40 (1984), p. 347.

^{vi} This able Christian master is probably none other than Guillem Soler—a Christian chart-maker active in Mallorca at this time. See R. PUJADES I BATALLER, *Les cartes portolanes: la representació medieval d'una mar solcada*, (with English translation), Barcelona, 2007, p. 285.

^{vii} The typographical error “1384” in the original has been replaced with the correct year “1394”.