

IN THE CROSS-CURRENTS OF THE REFORMATION: CRYPTO-JEWISH MARTYRS OF THE INQUISITION 1570–1670*

It has long been the accepted view that, by the late sixteenth century, heterodox thinking in Spain and Portugal had become vestigial and debilitated. According to this view, Protestant (or ‘Protestantish’)¹ heresy had been eliminated, and whatever heterodox thinking persisted was untouched by powerful new currents elsewhere in Europe. It consisted primarily of folkloristic ‘judaizing’, celestial visions, earthy blasphemies, and the like. The explanation was simple: the post-Tridentine Inquisition effectively suppressed the nonconformist trends of the 1520s to the 1550s and insulated Spain from heterodox ideas circulating elsewhere in Europe.² On the other hand, while it is no doubt true that by the 1560s the Inquisition had successfully suppressed

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¹ By this I refer to the intermingling currents of Erasmian, illuminist, and Protestant thinking in Spain.

² Henry Kamen cites as an example of this ‘now superseded’ view a passage from R. O. Jones, *The Golden Age: Prose and Poetry* (London, 1971) that opens: ‘By 1560 the traditionalists had won: the Spain of Philip II remained closed to the new current of ideas beyond its frontiers’: Henry Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation* (New Haven, 1993), 486 (n. 9). Virtually none of the treatments of Erasmian, illuminist, and Protestant thinking in Spain goes beyond 1560. Marcel Bataillon, in his magisterial work on the impact of Erasmus in Spain, concluded that the Spanish humanist impulse ‘lost its vitality and power to irradiate’ with the advent of the Counter-Reformation under Philip II; he dealt only fleetingly with the residue: Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España: estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI*, 2nd edn, trans. Antonio Alatorre (Mexico City, 1982), 804. Of course the Inquisition continued to prosecute ‘luteranismo’ after 1560, but most of these later cases (when they did not involve foreigners) were cases of casual anticlericalism that were mislabelled in an atmosphere of intense anxiety about Protestantism. See Miguel Jiménez Monteserín, ‘Los luteranos ante el tribunal de la Inquisición de Cuenca, 1525–1600’, in Joaquín Pérez Villanueva (ed.), *La Inquisición española: nueva visión, nuevos horizontes* (Madrid, 1980).

innovative currents within the learned establishment,³ it has become increasingly apparent in recent decades that subversive and heterodox thinking survived at the margins.⁴ A set of Inquisition dossiers that I have recently examined serves to throw new light, I believe, on the complex undercurrents of Spanish life after the Council of Trent. The dossiers point to an unexplored current of 'Protestantish' thinking in post-Tridentine Iberian lands — one that had become enmeshed, interestingly, with crypto-judaizing. These dossiers belong to defiant 'judaizers'⁵ who were burned at the stake in Spain, Portugal, and the Americas. Initially, I examined them for the light they might throw on the phenomenology of martyrdom among the *ex-converso* Jewish population of the Netherlands and Italy. I was puzzled by the fact that only a handful of characters achieved fame among these Jews as martyrs of the Inquisition. This was especially strange, given the fact that, by the seventeenth century, hundreds if not thousands of judaizers had been burned at the stake in Spain, Portugal, and the Spanish Americas.⁶ What distinguished the few whose careers were celebrated?

³ By this I do not mean the 'elite', whatever that may be, but rather learned officialdom, both ecclesiastical and academic. Radical thinking persisted in educated as well as uneducated circles.

⁴ Indeed, some scholars have argued that the post-Tridentine programme of Christianization actually served to stir up subversive thinking among both Old and New Christians. See Nicholas Griffiths, 'Popular Religious Scepticism and Idiosyncrasy in Post-Tridentine Cuenca', in Lesley K. Twomey (ed.), *Faith and Fanaticism: Religious Fervour in Early Modern Spain* (Aldershot, 1997); and see Anne Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* (Minneapolis, 1992), Introduction.

⁵ The Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions were established to eliminate the clandestine perpetuation of Jewish beliefs and practices, or 'judaizing', among forcibly converted Jews and their descendants, all of whom continued to be called *conversos* or 'New Christians'. An 'Old Christian' was a person believed to have no Jewish ancestry on either side of the family.

⁶ Accurate figures are notoriously difficult to obtain. We will never have good figures for the intense early period of the Spanish Inquisition's activity. Andrés Bernáldez reported that in the years 1481–8 more than seven hundred persons were burned at the stake in Castile, suggesting very high numbers: *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel* (Biblioteca de autores españoles, lxx, Madrid, 1878), 601. An impressive effort to obtain numbers from 1540 onward is Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen, 'Forty-Four Thousand Cases of the Spanish Inquisition (1540–1700): Analysis of a Historical Data Bank', in Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (eds.), *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods* (Dekalb, 1986). But this survey yields data for Spain only, and does not specify how many 'judaizers' were burned at the stake. Moreover, even these carefully gathered data are flawed. See Henry Kamen,

Some thumbnail sketches of the martyrs⁷ composed by three major apologetic authors in the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish diaspora suggested part of the answer.⁸ These sketches gave considerable attention to one aspect of the martyrs' careers: their participation in theological disputations with experts summoned by the Inquisition — disputations from which the martyrs emerged, of course, unshaken in their belief in the 'Law of Moses'. The martyr Diogo da Asumpção, wrote Menasseh ben Israel, 'defended himself in the Inquisition against some, who would have reduced him to Christianity'. As for the martyr Lope de Vera, the 'great number of Doctors' could not 'move him from his enterprise'. Similarly, Isaac Cardoso wrote of Diogo Lopes de Pinhanços that 'although the theologians tried to convince him [of the truth of Christianity], he always remained firm in his resolve'. And of Isaac de Castro Tartas he wrote that, seeing Isaac's 'great constancy', the inquisitors 'sent him theologians and learned men to see if they could persuade him to abandon the Law of Moses. But he, like the true sage and great theologian and philosopher that he was, also knew how to dispute and argue with them'.⁹ For these authors, polemical 'victory' was a key element of the martyrdom script — a fact that may explain at least in part why all the celebrated figures were men, and why they were so few in number.

The extant Inquisition dossiers for these figures reveal not only that such disputations actually did take place, but also, more significantly, that in the course of them the martyrs adopted polemical stances that were anything but tired reiterations of

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The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision (New Haven, 1998), 198, 341 (nn. 11–12); Francisco Bethencourt, *La Inquisición en la época moderna: España, Portugal, e Italia, siglos XV–XIX* (Madrid, 1997), 13–14.

⁷ The meagreness of treatment may be due to the reluctance of *ex-converso* authors to indulge in an enterprise that was associated with Catholic saint worship.

⁸ For these sketches (in some cases little more than mention of a name), see Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel: The English Translation by Moses Wall, 1652*, ed. Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon (New York, 1987), 149–50; Isaac Cardoso, *Las excelencias de los hebreos* (Amsterdam, 1679), 323–5; and Daniel Levi de Barrios, 'Memoria de los martires que fueron quemados vivos en diferentes tiempos y ciudades de España por santificar la indivisa unidad del eterno Legislador', in his *Triumpho del gobierno popular y de la antigüedad holandesa* (Amsterdam, 1683–4). Many of the celebrated martyrs are also mentioned in purely literary texts. See Miriam Bodian, 'New Christian Death at the Stake: Views from the Portuguese Jewish Diaspora' [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim*, lxxv (1998).

⁹ Menasseh ben Israel, *Hope of Israel*, 149–50; Cardoso, *Las excelencias de los hebreos*, 324.

ancestral *converso* patterns. Their critiques of the Church drew heavily from humanist and 'Protestantish' quarters. Of course they vehemently rejected the Christology that lay at the heart of Protestant, as well as Catholic, belief. But in their posture and rhetoric, they echoed voices that had become powerful in much of Europe — voices that challenged traditional Catholic notions about such matters as priestly intercession, the presence of Christ in the host, and miracles performed by deceased saints. To be sure, Protestant rhetoric on these particular matters was not inconsistent with venerable crypto-Jewish belief. But the discovery by *converso* nonconformists that basic Jewish objections to Catholicism coincided with objections that were now being disseminated vehemently in an expanding Protestant world would surely have astonished and heartened them.

Some of the martyrs went far beyond this, adopting radical Reformation positions that challenged medieval notions of religious authority and hierarchy. In this respect their 'Judaism' reflected considerable distancing from the spirit of traditional rabbinic Judaism. Indeed, the ethos of exegetical independence and literalism that they cultivated (probably encouraged by Reformation currents, but at least partly a function of the conditions of crypto-Jewish life) was potentially at odds with the institutions of rabbinic and communal authority in the contemporary Jewish world.

The celebrated martyrs were certainly not representative of the crypto-Jewish population as a whole. But neither were they unique creatures who emerged *ex nihilo* on the Iberian landscape. Their dossiers reveal that most, if not all, of them belonged to clandestine circles where their ideas were shared with others. The particular dossiers examined here, while initially selected for other purposes, have proved particularly valuable in providing information about opinion in these circles. This is because defiant polemicizing judaizers, unlike most inquisitorial defendants, openly declared their beliefs to the inquisitors. Other dossiers that support (or modify) the findings presented in this article may well exist, but they are unlikely to be so candid and rich.

I

It is striking that the celebrated judaizing martyrs were clustered chronologically in the period between 1579 and 1665. This may

be explained in different ways, but it was probably not a mere accident.¹⁰ Certainly the explanation is not that there *were* no martyrs before this time. Anecdotal evidence (if not common sense) suggests that deaths of a heroic type occurred from the very beginning of the Inquisition's activity.¹¹ However, earlier conditions did not lend themselves to the kind of prolonged, staged 'combat' between inquisitors and prisoner that mark the careers of the celebrated martyrs. Trials and autos-da-fé were often hasty affairs. In any case, there was little impulse on either side for theological contest. The Spanish Church did not feel vulnerable enough to need to prove itself, and the crypto-Jews, for their part, lacked the confidence and sense of engagement with the Catholic world to seek to provoke the inquisitors polemically.

Sources suggest that, consistent with this situation, 'martyrdom' was conceived differently among crypto-Jews in the early decades of inquisitorial activity than it would be later (although the early conception lingered).¹² According to this conception, the simple fact of having Jewish origins and being burned at the stake, whether or not the accusations of judaizing were true, conferred the status of 'martyr'. It must have seemed hopeless in this period of terror to try to challenge the Church seriously. Rather, justice would come in an approaching messianic age when God would take vengeance on his enemies and reward the faithful *conversos*.¹³

¹⁰ This is not to say that accident did not sometimes play a role in determining who was commemorated and who was forgotten. A case in point is that of Manuel Lopez, a judaizer who debated with numerous theologians and was burned alive at the stake, defiant, in Córdoba in 1625. Knowledge of his career simply did not reach the ex-*converso* communities of northern Europe. See the documentation on his career in Rafael Gracia Boix, *Autos de fe y causas de la Inquisición de Córdoba* (Córdoba, 1983), 391–4.

¹¹ It is hard to know how to interpret information that might offer clues, such as the fact that, of the twenty-one persons executed in Toledo in May 1490, all were reported burned alive except one who died as a Christian and was garrotted before being burned: Jack Weiner (ed.), *Relaciones históricas toledanas por Sebastián de Horozco* (Toledo, 1981), 97–109. In this early, chaotic period, condemned judaizers may not always have been given an opportunity after sentencing to express repentance and merit garrotting.

¹² I am generalizing about behaviour subsequent to the assassination of the inquisitor Pedro Arbués in Saragossa in 1485. On this episode, see Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* [English trans. from Hebrew], 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1961–6), ii, 367–71. But note also the defiant behaviour at the stake of Juan de Madrid in 1486: Fritz [Yitzhak] Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1929–36), ii, 471–2.

¹³ *Converso* messianism was linked to the more general messianic trends in Jewish society in this period. On messianic currents in Spanish-Jewish and *converso* society

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Within this scenario, martyrdom did not have a particularly aggressive or individual face; indeed it was largely invisible.

An episode from 1499 serves to illustrate the point. In that year a *converso* 'prophetess', Inés of Herrera, reported a vision of ascent to heaven — a common enough phenomenon in early modern Spain.¹⁴ During her ascent, she heard the 'burned ones' (*quemados*) — apparently all of them, without distinction — making sounds high above the saints (*santos*), whom she saw seated on thrones of gold.¹⁵ In a similar vein, in 1511, a woman had a vision in which her husband, who had been burned at the stake, was 'with the innocents'. She was accused of having called him a 'martyr' and of stating that 'all those who were burned for heresy by the Inquisition were martyrs and died as martyrs'.¹⁶ A few years later another Inquisition widow was reputed to have said that, at the auto-da-fé, all the condemned were 'like martyrs', following her husband, 'who was like a meek ram leading the others to the slaughterhouse'.¹⁷ If these women made no distinction between those who died defiantly and those who did not, it may have been because, in addition to the reality of indiscriminate

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around the time of the Expulsion, see Alisa Meyuhás Ginio, 'Las aspiraciones mesiánicas de los conversos en la Castilla de mediados del siglo XV', *El Olivo*, xiii (1989); Isaiah Tishby, *Messianism in the Time of the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1985).

¹⁴ Visions of ascent to heaven — not infrequently by young girls — were part of the popular culture of rural Castilian villages like Herrera and Chillón, as William Christian has vividly shown. See William Christian, Jr, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, 1981). In the wake of Inés's vision, a few other *conversos* in the region also reported visions: Yitzhak Baer, 'The Messianic Movement in Spain at the Time of the Expulsion' [in Hebrew], *Me'asef Zion*, v (1933), 68–9. On the general entanglement of Christian and Jewish expectations in this period, see David Ruderman, 'Hope against Hope: Jewish and Christian Messianic Expectations in the Late Middle Ages', in Aharon Mirsky, Avraham Grossman and Yosef Kaplan (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora* (Jerusalem, 1991).

¹⁵ Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, ii, no. 423, 528–9. The different accounts of Inés's vision vary in content and detail. The episode has been studied by Baer, 'Messianic Movement in Spain', 66–70; Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, ii, 356–8; Haim Beinart, 'The Prophetess Inés and her Movement in her Hometown, Herrera' [in Hebrew], in Yosef Dan and Yosef Hacker (eds.), *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy and Ethical Literature* (Jerusalem, 1986); Haim Beinart, 'Conversos of Chillón and the Prophecies of Mari Gómez and Inés, the Daughter of Juan Esteban' [in Hebrew], *Zion*, xlviii (1983); Renee Melammed Levine, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (New York and Oxford, 1999), ch. 3.

¹⁶ 'que todos los que avian quemado por hereges en las Inquisiciones yvan martires e murian como tales martires'. See *Records of the Inquisition in Ciudad Real and Toledo, 1494–1512*, ed. Haim Beinart, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1974–80), ii, 193, 197.

¹⁷ Beinart, 'Prophetess Inés', 502 (n. 3).

terror, they shared a late medieval sensibility that elevated patient suffering over human striving. The faceless heavenly chorus of Inés's martyrs does seem evocative of such a sensibility.

The isolation of the crypto-Jews of this generation certainly contributed to their sense of helplessness. They had been abandoned not only by the Jews who left Spain at the time of the Expulsion, but also, in a more subtle way, by the *conversos* in their midst who chose the path of accommodation to Catholic society. Partly because of the latter, many of the exiles came to regard *all* those who converted and stayed behind as opportunists or renegades.¹⁸ This rather severe attitude is reflected in Samuel Usque's quasi-historical work of 1553, *Consolations for the Tribulations of Israel*.¹⁹ While Usque dwelt at length on the great ancient Jewish martyrs,²⁰ he rather pointedly refrained from depicting *conversos* killed by the Inquisition in the same terms. (By the seventeenth century, western Spanish and Portuguese Jews would have no such inhibitions.) For Usque, it was only fitting for *conversos* to submit to the chastisements of the Inquisition, an instrument God had chosen to 'apply the cautery to heal you'.²¹

No doubt the Spanish exiles would have maintained ties with *conversos* left behind if they could — certainly with family members. But inquisitorial surveillance made such contact dangerous, and it occurred rarely. Further compounding the isolation, there was as yet no vehement opposition to the Inquisition from Christian quarters in Europe — no audible voice protesting the simple injustice of the Inquisition's secret trials. This would come only in the late sixteenth century with the diffusion of the so-called 'black legend', the fierce Protestant defamation of Spain and the Inquisition.

¹⁸ Our information on this admittedly comes from the rabbinic elite. But the opinions of this stratum must have had echoes in other sectors of Jewish society. See Simcha Assaf, 'The *Conversos* of Spain and Portugal in the *Responsa* Literature' [in Hebrew], *Me'asef Zion*, v (1933), 19–60; Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain from the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century, According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 3rd edn (Ithaca, 1999).

¹⁹ Usque was not himself one of the Spanish exiles, but was apparently born to exiles from Spain who had fled to Portugal, only to be forcibly baptized in 1497. He himself was probably born close to the time of the forced baptisms. He later fled Portugal and settled in Ferrara as a Jew.

²⁰ Samuel Usque, *Consolaçam às tribulaçoens de Israel* (Coimbra, 1906), Segundo diálogo, fos. 7^v–11^r.

²¹ 'curarte com os botões de fogo': *ibid.*, Terceiro diálogo, fos. 51^v–52^r.

The crypto-Jews of Spain were, therefore, in the early decades of the sixteenth century, a dwindling, stigmatized group of 'apostates' faced by a Spanish Church and monarchy at the height of their power and prestige, with no supportive audience, no vital sources of ideological inspiration to draw from, and little hope for collective release through any kind of action. By the late sixteenth century, however, conditions had changed dramatically. By this time, crypto-judaizing in Spain was moribund. But a population of Portuguese *conversos*, descended for the most part from Spanish exiles, began to infiltrate Spanish lands (including overseas territories), particularly in the wake of Spain's annexation of Portugal in 1580.²² For reasons that have been discussed by various scholars, many of the Portuguese *conversos*, in contrast to those of Spain, were active crypto-Jews.²³ They moved about the Spanish empire with relative freedom in response to economic opportunities, taking with them crypto-Jewish traditions that had been transmitted and preserved over two or more generations.

Some of them fled Iberian soil when opportune (or when the Inquisition threatened). This emigration proved to have unanticipated benefits for the crypto-Jews who remained behind. The émigrés joined Jewish communities established by Spanish exiles, or joined the waves of northbound emigration whose members built primarily *ex-converso* Jewish communities in commercial

²² The various prohibitions barring *conversos* or some subset of them (Portuguese *conversos*, *conversos* reconciled by the Inquisition, etc.) from settling in the overseas territories were enforced with great unevenness, and frequently evaded. See Eva Alexandra Uchmany, 'The Participation of New Christians and Crypto-Jews in the Conquest, Colonization, and Trade of Spanish America, 1521–1660', in Paulo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York, 2001), 187–95; Günter Böhm, 'Crypto-Jews and New Christians in Colonial Peru and Chile', *ibid.*, 205–10.

²³ The important differences between the experience of the two *converso* populations, in a nutshell, were these: the Portuguese *conversos* experienced a far less traumatic passage into nominally Christian life than the *conversos* of Spain; their collective 'conversion' was a quick deception, cruel but bloodless, that left them free of the internal cleavages and conflicts that marked Spanish *converso* society. Further, their mass conversion was followed by a period of more than three decades during which the Portuguese *conversos* were able to develop and consolidate a crypto-Jewish way of life before being faced with inquisitorial persecution. While the external forces have long been understood, much still needs to be elaborated on the internal processes involved in the different development of these two populations. See I. S. Révah, 'Les Marranes', *Revue des études juives*, cviii (1959–60), 36–9; Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, 2nd edn (Seattle, 1971), 4–5.

centres like Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Rotterdam. In the seventeenth century, these well-organized and wealthy northern communities undertook initiatives to provide crypto-Jews in Iberian lands (and south-west France) with moral and material support, as well as with a powerful tale of crypto-Jewish triumph.²⁴

The northward emigration of Portuguese *conversos* reflected profound changes in the religious, economic, and political topography of Europe. The Catholic Church was now on the defensive and Spain was in decline, if not on the brink of collapse. The self-image Spain had cultivated in the reign of Charles V — that of a monarchy with a providential mission, basking in conquest and the possession of a global empire, assured of its moral superiority — seemed more and more phantom-like. In these circumstances (to simplify complex matters), the Spanish suffered a crisis of confidence that is magnificently suggested in Cervantes's deflating masterpiece *Don Quixote*.²⁵

It is in this context that the 'meek rams' gave way, as it were, to valiant Samsons — to use an image of the crypto-Jewish martyrs much invoked by *ex-converso* *littérateurs* in seventeenth-century France and the Netherlands. In contrast to the rather abject martyrs of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the celebrated figures of the post-Tridentine period were sustained by a grasp of Spain's weakness and vulnerability. Ironically, the Inquisition itself provided some of the conditions that favoured a defiant posture. First, it provided an impressive stage for the martyrs, with its increasingly grand and elaborate autos-da-fé. For a judaizer with sufficient fortitude, these mass spectacles offered an incomparable opportunity to embarrass the inquisitors and to make a lasting impression on the audience.²⁶

Second, at a time when Catholic teachings and the authenticity of the Vulgate were under assault from Protestant quarters, the Church developed a more polemical and combative stance towards

²⁴ See Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington, 1997), 132–46.

²⁵ There is an enormous literature on the 'decline of Spain'. See R. A. Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain: A Study of the Spanish System, 1580–1720* (London, 1981), bibliographical prologue.

²⁶ For a detailed history and description of the auto, see Consuelo Maqueda Abreu, *El auto de fe* (Madrid, 1992). On the symbolic power and dramatic impact of the auto, see Maureen Flynn, 'Mimesis of the Last Judgment: The Spanish *auto de fe*', *Sixteenth Century JI*, xxii (1991). Flynn evokes the impact of the auto on a public susceptible to suggestion; the perception of the proceedings by a defiant, provocative, and contemptuous heretic would have been quite different.

nonconformists in general. The Inquisition thus made great exertions to bring about the outward submission of openly defiant judaizers, even when their fate was already sealed. Francisco Maldonado de Silva, for example, was sentenced to be handed over to the secular arm in January 1633, but it was only six years — and many conversionist ‘disputes’ — later that he was burned at the stake.

The most extravagant efforts to bring about a change of heart were made in cases that involved so-called ‘pertinacious dogmatizers’ (*dogmatistas pertinaces*) — judaizers who were educated in Catholic theology, possessed polemical skills, and had usually proselytized prior to their arrest. The presence in Inquisition cells of self-confident, Bible-literate critics of the Church aroused anxieties among the inquisitors concerning not just the religious purity of Peninsular society, but the robustness of the Church’s claims to the truth. In cases that involved such ‘dogmatizers’, inquisitorial tribunals were prepared to summon multiple experts and to conduct theological disputations behind closed doors that might drag on for months or even years. (The luxury of such long trials was made possible by the dwindling overall number of cases.) This in some ways played into the hands of judaizing propagandists, who seemed to revel in irritating their opponents by underscoring what everyone knew only too well, that the Catholic Church was losing ground in its struggle for interpretive control of the Hebrew Bible.

This is not to say that the Inquisition scored no victories. When after a marathon struggle a ‘conversion’ *was* achieved, it was regarded as a great coup. Take the case of the judaizer Antonio Gabriel de Torres Zevallos in Córdoba in 1722, as reported in the official Inquisition account. He had remained ‘pertinacious up to the time of the reading of his sentence’. But upon hearing his death sentence at the auto, he

repented with such copious tears and acts of contrition that everyone was touched. With death approaching, he voluntarily made loud protestations of our holy faith, testifying to the mercy of God and the Holy Office. He refused to let the executioner kiss his feet,²⁷ and, ordering his confessor to obey, told him [his confessor] to kiss the feet of the executioner. He begged to be burned alive (which was not conceded him [since this punishment was reserved for the unrepentant]), holding that this would

²⁷ Apparently an act of seeking forgiveness. For a similar scene, see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression* (Cambridge, 1984), 43.

be little enough pain to atone for his grave sins, and he commended his soul to God, to the great joy and edification of the people.²⁸

Similarly, much was made of the purported last-minute conversion (or, possibly, breakdown) of Luis Carvajal, who had followed a path of defiant and self-conscious martyrdom for twenty-two months until he arrived at the stake and witnessed the garrotting and burning of his mother and two sisters.²⁹

On the other hand, cases in which the prisoner did not succumb to pressure and was burned alive as an unrepentant heretic were a great propaganda coup for the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish world. This explains why Isaac Cardoso offered such loving detail about the martyrdom of Francisco Maldonado de Silva, in an otherwise quite abstract work defending Judaism:

The theologians and inquisitorial officers summoned him many times in order to convince him, but he disputed with them by word and in writing. He wrote many treatises in his cell, joining together many old pieces of paper from various wrapped items that he requested, and he did it so ingeniously that they seemed all of one piece. He made the ink from charcoal, the pen out of a chicken bone that he cut with a knife made from a nail, and he wrote in a hand that seemed as if it were printed.³⁰

Since burnings at the stake were a very public spectacle, there was little the Inquisition could do to prevent news of a ‘successful’ martyrdom from spreading, except to put its own spin on the event — which usually meant harping on the exceptional power of the devil over the ‘stubborn apostate’. But crypto-Jews preserved and transmitted their own version of events. Not surprisingly, they also sought out information about what had occurred behind prison walls prior to sentencing (the ‘secret cells’ of the Inquisition were rather porous). Pamphlet accounts of the major autos-da-fé, published and hawked in the streets, were rich sources of information. Cardoso gleaned his details about Maldonado de Silva’s improvised writing tools from just such an account, published in Madrid in 1640.³¹

²⁸ Gracia Boix, *Autos de fe*, 506, 601, 629–36.

²⁹ There is some ambiguity about what actually happened. See the account of Luis Carvajal’s last-minute ‘conversion’ in 1596 by Fray Alonso de Contreras, the friar who accompanied him: ‘Ultimos momentos y conversion de Luis de Carvajal’, *Anales del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía*, iii (1925), and the analysis of Martin Cohen, *The Martyr: The Story of a Secret Jew and the Mexican Inquisition in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1973), 257–9.

³⁰ Cardoso, *Las excelencias de los hebreos*, 323–4.

³¹ *Auto de la fe celebrado en Lima a 23. de Enero de 1639* (Madrid, 1640), fo. 21^v.

More significant than the inevitable literary posturing was the triumphalist behaviour of the judaizing martyrs themselves in their confrontation with the Inquisition. The martyrs had in their favour a theology that was powerfully literalist and untrammelled by the compromises of institutionalized religion. They sensed the opportunities for provocation provided by what J. H. Elliott has referred to, in a narrower context, as 'the stockade mentality in Castilian society'.³² Their opponents tended to be members of a clerical bureaucracy, beaten into conformity by the perils of a career in the post-Tridentine Church. The confidence of the dogmatizers when they appeared before the inquisitors was such that they sometimes entertained fantasies not only of vanquishing but even of *converting* these opponents (or at least shaking their belief). Thus the aspiring martyr Luis Carvajal, burned at the stake in Mexico City in 1596, insisted that he had agreed to debate with learned Jesuits not because he had any doubts about Mosaic Law, but 'in order to confound and convert them'.³³ Similarly, according to the inquisitors, the prisoner Diogo da Asumpção, causing 'much scandal to those who heard him', tried in 1599 'to teach and persuade the inquisitors, ecclesiastics, and learned men who were trying to guide him in matters of salvation'.³⁴ Such efforts, and the conviction of superiority they imply, reflect a dramatic shift in psychological power relations, compared with the situation a century earlier.

II

A word about the sources. It need hardly be restated that the Inquisition dossiers on which this study is based are problematic. The inquisitors controlled the questioning. The notaries did not necessarily understand the defendants' arguments properly or record them accurately. Statements considered too scandalous to record were omitted. Still, because the inquisitors were interested

³² J. H. Elliott, 'Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain', *Past and Present*, no. 74 (May 1977), 60.

³³ 'sino por confundirlos y convertirlos'. Indeed, Carvajal saw such debate as a religious duty prescribed by Psalm 118 (of the Vulgate) which stated (see Ps. 119:46): 'I will also speak of thy testimony before kings, and shall not be put to shame'. According to Carvajal, this meant he was obligated to debate with the inquisitors, 'whose power came from the pope and king': *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal (el Mozo)*, ed. L. González Obregón (Mexico City, 1935), 294. And cf. *ibid.*, 417, 453.

³⁴ Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (hereafter ANTT), Inquirição de Lisboa, processo no. 104, fo. 212'.

in producing an effective rebuttal of the defendant's arguments — they often submitted parts of the trial record to theologians brought in for that purpose — they had an interest in recording his responses accurately. As for the defendant's declarations, it is not always possible to know when they were made for primarily strategic or theatrical purposes. But self-incriminating statements and positions repeated over many months of questioning, articulated in different ways yet consistent, do tend to have the ring of truth.

Most of the dossiers examined here are known to scholars.³⁵ They have been studied individually to one degree or another, though with remarkably little analysis or consideration of context, and never in conjunction with one another. In its basic goals, scholarship on the subject has often been a handmaid of Jewish martyrology, with an emphasis on gathering cherished evidence and/or recounting dramatic stories.³⁶ As a result, data has accumulated, but there has been almost no effort to use it to study crypto-Jewish martyrdom in its complex human and historical dimensions. For the most part, the martyrs have been depicted by scholars as 'simply' crypto-Jews who rejected Catholicism. The state of scholarship on this subject is particularly lamentable in view of the many suggestive, sophisticated studies produced in recent years on other episodes of martyrdom, in both Christian and Jewish contexts.³⁷

I have chosen to present a series of case studies rather than treat the dogmatizing martyrs as a group. Much of the richness of their careers would be lost by treating them collectively. They did not share a single polemical strategy or theological approach.

³⁵ The only one that has not been examined heretofore is the fragmentary and badly damaged dossier of Diogo Lopes de Pinhanços.

³⁶ Such a view has roots in Jewish (as well as Christian) traditions, which regard the history of martyrdom as a history of timeless repetition. A vivid example of the transference of this point of view to a scholarly treatment of crypto-Jewish martyrdom is Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, ii, 443. Scholarship on crypto-Jewish martyrdom goes back at least to 1896, when George Alexander Kohut published a lengthy article on 'Jewish Martyrs of the Inquisition in South America', *Pubns Amer. Jewish Hist. Soc.*, iv (1896).

³⁷ For a sense of the terrain, see, in the Christian realm, Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999); Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford, 1993). In the Jewish realm, see Robert Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (Berkeley, 2000); Haym Soloveitchik, 'Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example', *Assoc. Jewish Studies Rev.*, xii (1987).

On the contrary, they came from widely differing environments, with access to different crypto-Jewish traditions, and their careers reflect this reality. To present them en bloc would obscure the idiosyncratic ways in which they shaped their thinking and behaviour, and would misleadingly suggest uniformity of belief. What they shared was the experience of a common cultural environment and system of repression, and access to varied sources of anti-Catholic thought. It is these that make for the striking parallels in their careers.³⁸

III

The earliest case is that of Luis Carvajal the younger. Carvajal did not, as fate would have it, become a celebrated martyr. This is almost certainly due to the fact that when he was burned at the stake in Mexico City in 1596, he either showed token contrition at the last moment (and was garrotted before being burned), or was wrongly reported to have done so. Yet he was unquestionably one of the great *dogmatista* martyrs. Moreover, his Inquisition dossier is complete and, uniquely among these figures, he left a rich and revealing record of his own.

³⁸ Three of the four I have chosen were celebrated martyrs who were burned alive at the stake; the exception is Luis Carvajal, who appears to have been garrotted before being burned (though the record is not entirely clear: see n. 29 above). I have included Carvajal for two reasons: first, because he openly chose the path of martyrdom shortly after his second arrest and maintained that posture until very close to the end, and second, because we have a wealth of documentation on his career. On the other hand, I have not included the celebrated martyr Tomas Treviño de Sobremonte, despite the fact that we possess his dossier, because this figure denied judaizing throughout his trial and chose to die defiantly as a Jew only after his sentencing; he thus does not fit the type of the polemicist-martyr (I have studied a transcription of his dossier in the G. R. C. Conway Collection at the Library of Congress). Five other celebrated martyrs were not (or could not) be included: Diogo Lopes de Pinhaços, apparently burned at the stake in Coimbra in 1579, whose dossier fragments are virtually unusable (ANTT, Inquisição de Coimbra, processo no. 634); Isaac de Castro Tartas, burned alive at the stake in Lisbon in 1647, whose voluminous dossier is virtually complete, but who spent many years in his youth in the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam and was thus conditioned by direct experience in both a Jewish and an anti-Catholic Protestant environment (ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo no. 11.550); and three figures tried in Córdoba and burned alive at the stake in 1655 or 1665, whose trial records have not survived. On the three Córdoba martyrs (two members of the Bernal family and Abraham Athias = Jorge Méndez de Castro), see Cecil Roth, 'Abraham Nuñez Bernal et autres martyrs contemporains de l'Inquisition', *Revue des études juives*, c (1936); Gracia Boix, *Autos de fe*, 435–7, 444–64, 493.

Carvajal was the nephew of a conquistador and governor of the New Kingdom of León (in what is today Mexico). By the 1580s, the young Carvajal was an aspiring entrepreneur in his uncle's territory. Unknown to his uncle, however, he was also active in a circle of local judaizers. The leader of this circle was a university-educated physician of Portuguese *converso* origins, Manuel (Abraham) de Morales.³⁹ The creed Morales taught was not based, as was much of the judaizing in Iberian lands, on orally transmitted traditions that relied on ancestral authority.⁴⁰ Morales placed a singular value on written texts. He provided his protégés with manuscript copies of critical texts prohibited by the Inquisition: the Ten Commandments in Spanish translation, crypto-Jewish prayers in Spanish, and, to a few, a complete Spanish translation of the book of Deuteronomy. He taught the members of his circle to rely on a literal reading of key biblical proof texts to 'see for themselves' the falsifications of the Church, in a way that prepared them to engage confidently with orthodox Catholic believers.

This explains why hand-copied notebooks figure so conspicuously in Luis Carvajal's valuable *Memoirs*, a text he composed after his first arrest. (It was seized and preserved by the Inquisition.)⁴¹ Whether or not Luis and his brother were as incessantly occupied with Bible reading as his *Memoirs* suggest, it is significant that he chose to portray the two of them in this way.⁴² It is also significant that one of Carvajal's sisters possessed

³⁹ Morales was tried by the Mexican Inquisition *in absentia* and burned in effigy in 1593. See José Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México* (Santiago de Chile, 1905), 88. On Morales's life, see Cohen, *The Martyr*, 71–2, and *passim*. According to the none-too-reliable Alfonso Toro, Morales's father-in-law had been burned alive at the stake for judaizing: Alfonso Toro, *La familia Carvajal*, 2 vols. (Mexico City, 1944), i, 80.

⁴⁰ See Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 36–43, 99–103.

⁴¹ The *Memoirs* have been published twice in the original Spanish: *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 461–96; Toro, *La familia Carvajal*, ii, 315–39. For an English translation, see Seymour Liebman, *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo* (Coral Gables, 1967), 55–84.

⁴² Carvajal noted, for example, that on a trip with his uncles to some recently discovered mines, he carried with him a notebook into which had been copied the fourth book of Esdras, a late first-century Jewish apocalypse that is not part of the Vulgate, but to which he ascribed an important role in his earlier conversion. 'Not having the sacred Bible with him', he wrote (referring to himself in the third person), 'he spent his time reading Esdras in that land of savage Chichimecas': *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 465–6. Luis's brother Baltasar, while hiding from the Inquisition, spent his time 'holed up with the Holy Bible and other holy books the Lord provided him; their assiduous reading was his sole occupation' (475).

a notebook that he had prepared for her, with his own translations of passages of Scripture, Psalms, and other texts.⁴³ This would reinforce the impression that the ethos of the Morales circle was one that encouraged unmediated access to Scripture for all.

At some point after Morales left New Spain for Europe in 1584, Carvajal managed to buy a printed copy of the Vulgate from a cleric, which he studied while occupied as a merchant in the mining town of Pánuco, near Zacatecas.⁴⁴ In his *Memoirs*, which are written in the third person,⁴⁵ he recorded the impact of his first reading of the book of Genesis: ‘In the course of his assiduous reading [of this Bible] in the solitude [of Pánuco]’, he wrote, ‘he came to understand many divine mysteries; and one day he happened to read Chapter 17 of Genesis where the Lord commanded Abraham to circumcise himself’. Reading the passage with due attention, Carvajal was struck by ‘those words that said that the soul who went uncircumcised would be blotted out of the book of the living’.⁴⁶ Terrified, he immediately sought out a place where he would not be discovered and, ‘with burning desire to be inscribed in the book of life, which is impossible without this holy sacrament (*este sacramento santo*)’, he circumcised himself with scissors. What Carvajal certainly wanted to convey in his rendering of the episode was that he was not moved to action by someone else’s example or by simple knowledge of the precept (of which he was certainly cognizant), but by his encounter with the authentic scriptural source.

⁴³ This notebook merited mention in the *Memoirs* because on one occasion it had been lost in a public place, sending the family into a panic: *ibid.*, 487.

⁴⁴ The obtaining of a new text was evidently an event worthy of mention. On one occasion, Carvajal and his elder brother visited an elderly and ailing crypto-Jew in Mexico City, with whom Morales had left a copy of his translation of Deuteronomy into Spanish. The Carvajal brothers borrowed it and were especially impressed by ‘the chapter that contains the curses of the Holy Law. We saw that those truths had been fulfilled “to the letter” (*a la letra*): *ibid.*, 470. No doubt he was referring in particular to Deut. 28:64–7, ‘The Lord will scatter you among all peoples . . . and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone’, a *locus classicus* among crypto-Jews. On another occasion the Carvajal brothers obtained a manuscript book with some Hebrew prayers translated into Spanish and Portuguese, from a New Christian merchant who had escaped from the Peninsula to Italy: *ibid.*, 471–2.

⁴⁵ Such use of the third person was a characteristic of spiritual memoirs written in early modern Spain by mystics and *alumbrados*. See Melquiades Andrés, ‘Alumbrados, Erasmians, “Lutherans”, and Mystics: The Risk of a More “Intimate” Spirituality’, in Angel Alcalá (ed.), *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind* (New York, 1987), 457.

⁴⁶ This is an interesting rendering of Gen. 17:14. The Vulgate reads: ‘masculus cuius praeputii caro circumcisa non fuerit delebitur anima illa de populo suo’.

Remarkably, Carvajal resorted to another passage from Scripture to reassure himself that his surgical effort, though slightly imperfect, would nevertheless be acceptable to God. In this passage, Solomon states that his father David ‘had it in mind’ to build the Temple, but desisted after God said to him: ‘You did well to consider building a house for my name; nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name’.⁴⁷ This passage would not, for most early modern Bible readers, have suggested a theological point with important practical implications. For the crypto-Jew Carvajal, however, it had particular resonance. The fact that God credited David for his *intention* to carry out the plan implied authority for the belief that it was sufficient to perform precepts ‘in one’s heart’.⁴⁸

The thrill of independent exegetical discovery was coupled, for Carvajal, with contempt for the Church in its policy of wilfully denying lay members access to the biblical text. (In prison he renamed himself Joseph Lumbroso,⁴⁹ a name suggesting his superiority to Catholics who lived in ignorance.) Accordingly, resort to Scripture was a key technique in his proselytizing. This is evident in his account, not necessarily accurate, of his attempt, together with his judaizing brother Baltasar, to convert his brother Gaspar, a Dominican friar. He reported that the effort began with a disingenuous question. Was it true, he asked, that God himself inscribed his commandments on the Tablets of the Law? Gaspar turned to the relevant passage in Exodus (presumably Ex. 32:15–16) and showed it to his brother, thereby giving Luis the opportunity to remark that the Law of Moses must then be the Law one must observe. To this Gaspar replied by invoking the dogma that while it had once been the Law, it was now superseded. Luis’s brother Baltasar then retorted by citing yet another text (albeit not a Jewish one):

The Gospels themselves relate that your Crucified One⁵⁰ said, ‘Do not think that I came here to annul the laws or the prophets and their holy and truthful prophecies!’ for thus he said, ‘Surely it is an easier thing for

⁴⁷ 2 Chr. 6:7–9; *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 465.

⁴⁸ See Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 100–1.

⁴⁹ *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 445.

⁵⁰ Baltasar surely did not actually use this derogatory Jewish epithet to refer to Jesus. Luis employs it in his *Memoirs* for polemical effect.

the sky or the earth to be absent than for a jot or tittle of his holy law to pass away or be changed'.⁵¹

Gaspar refused to be swayed, although Luis assures us, in typical polemical fashion, that he was confounded. Undeterred, Luis suggested that Baltasar and Gaspar spend a few days studying together. Gaspar declined, explaining, according to Luis's account, 'that his law forbade him to inquire and to increase his knowledge'.⁵² It seems unlikely that Gaspar actually made this statement; most likely Luis attributed it to him, for a didactic purpose, situating Gaspar in an ethos in which knowledge *was* viewed with suspicion and anxiety, in contrast to the ethos of Scripture-searching Luis espoused.⁵³

In 1589, the Inquisition arrested Luis and other members of his family. Once in prison, according to the *Memoirs*, Luis began a discussion of religious matters with the only person available — his cell-mate, a Franciscan and an Old Christian.⁵⁴ This is not in itself entirely surprising. The *dogmatista* martyrs tended to proselytize not only among *conversos* but among Old Christians as well — a striking indication of their expansive attitude, in contrast to the ethnic exclusivism more typical of crypto-Jews.⁵⁵ In any case, the conversation between Luis and his cell-mate lasted for 'over eight days', during which Luis related to the friar 'some of the holy stories' and instructed him in the basics of Jewish dietary law. The friar was persuaded by Luis's arguments,⁵⁶ and, wrote Luis, overwhelmed by his awakening, supposedly cried: 'Would

⁵¹ A paraphrase of Matt. 5:17–18.

⁵² *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 472–3 (my emphasis).

⁵³ For a discussion of shifting early modern attitudes concerning access to knowledge about momentous matters, see Carlo Ginzburg, 'The High and the Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the 16th and 17th Centuries', in his *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1989).

⁵⁴ This was Francisco Ruiz de Luna, arrested for performing sacraments with falsified authorization. See Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 83–4. Luis Carvajal alluded to his lack of Jewish ancestry in his *Memoirs*, in which he referred to the friar as an 'hombre de estraña nacion' — a 'man of foreign ancestry': *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 486.

⁵⁵ The dogmatizing martyrs' sense of engagement with the Christian world parallels that of the major polemicists in western Sephardi communities, who were strongly prepared, but also eager, to spar with Christians in theological debate. For an impression of the richness and diversity of such contacts, see Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan and Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *Menasseh ben Israel and his World* (Leiden, 1989); and see also Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, ch. 8; Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Oxford, 1989), chs. 9–10.

⁵⁶ Indeed, he was subsequently tried for judaizing and reconciled. See Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 86.

that I had been enlightened (*alumbrado*) in the truth of God . . . while I was still in the monastery, where there are open libraries with the Holy Scriptures and many other good books!⁵⁷

After his release from prison in 1590, Luis was employed during his period of involuntary penance as a secretary and copyist at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, a school for the indoctrination of Amerindians. (With his Jesuit education, intellectual attainments, and fine handwriting, he was certainly suitable for the job.) One wonders whether he was not tempted to question Indian students at the school about their thoughts on difficult points of Catholic theology. Be that as it may, he did take advantage of the *colegio* otherwise, particularly its library. Notably, he discovered a translation of Maimonides's thirteen Articles of Faith in a sixteenth-century biblical commentary by the Dominican Jerome Oleaster. (He promptly copied it.) He also took advantage of the ready supply of paper, pens, and books to make copies of important passages from the Prophets, and prepared at least one copy of Psalms in Spanish translation, perhaps using a breviary.⁵⁸

As his penitential period neared an end in early 1595, and as he contemplated a way to leave New Spain, Luis was arrested a second time. As a *relapso*, his future was grim. This knowledge surely contributed to his decision to cease dissimulating and to assume the role of defiant judaizer. He was soon engaging in polemics with more powerful adversaries than he had confronted before. Over the course of ten months, he engaged in four debates with various theologians summoned by the Inquisition.⁵⁹ At the final debate, Luis invoked the formula invariably invoked by the *dogmatista* martyrs, stating his intention to live and die in the Law of Moses.⁶⁰

One might argue that the reliance of Carvajal on Scripture was only natural in an educated judaizer. But this would be to miss the novelty of his outlook. From a crypto-Jewish perspective, it was unusual to place such value on the possession of 'Jewish'

⁵⁷ *Procesos de Luis de Carvajal*, ed. Obregón, 478–9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 481–2.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the notary revealed almost nothing of the content of these debates, each of which lasted several hours. For the first three, on 30 and 31 October, and on 4 November, 1695, two learned Jesuits were summoned by the Inquisition to debate with him: *ibid.*, 289–92. In August 1596, two Augustinian friars were brought to 'remove his doubts', as the notary put it (405–6).

⁶⁰ According to the notary, he said he 'wished to believe, live and die in the Law that God our Lord gave to St Moses': *ibid.*, 405.

texts. For one thing, they posed a severe danger. Moreover, in an environment in which most people did not possess sacred texts, crypto-Jews did not usually feel a need to own ‘counter-texts’, relying instead on a set of beliefs and pithy remarks enshrined in family memory. But even from a rabbinic point of view there was novelty in Carvajal’s text-centred creed. While rabbinic Judaism encouraged innovation in the reading of Scripture, it did so in a highly controlled fashion. A person was free to arrive at an unmediated interpretation as long as it did not contradict basic tenets of belief; but such a reading had no authority, and was not likely to be valued. Authority was vested in persons who had undergone extensive training in rabbinics, a form of study that enmeshed Hebrew Scripture in later legal and homiletic texts to such a degree that Scripture lost its spare, independent existence. Carvajal’s approach, in contrast to the rabbinic, assumed the existence of a self-evident ‘true’ reading of the text, accessible to anyone. According to his reading, such verses as ‘True are all His commandments, confirmed forever’ (Ps. 110), or ‘Ye shall not add unto the word which I command, neither shall ye diminish from it’ (Deut. 4:2), constituted empirical proof, as it were, that Christianity was in error.⁶¹ To argue in the face of such verses that the Law of Moses was no longer valid, he argued, was as if to say that the sky had fallen or the sun ceased to shine.⁶² The Church was trying to prove ‘that snow is not white and that there are no nights, only days’.⁶³ The exegetical underpinnings of his faith were closer to what could be found in conventicles of the Swiss Brethren, say, or to certain illuminist trends in Spain,⁶⁴ than to what could be found in any contemporary *beit midrash* (place of study in a Jewish community).

IV

Three years after Carvajal was burned at the stake, a young Capuchin monk in Portugal, Diogo da Asumpção, was seized by

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 294.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 415.

⁶⁴ On interpretation of the Bible among non-mystical *alumbrados*, see José C. Nieto, ‘The Nonmystical Nature of the Sixteenth-Century Alumbrados of Toledo’, in Alcalá (ed.), *Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitional Mind*; José C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdés and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation* (Geneva, 1970), esp. 239–55.

the Inquisition.⁶⁵ This curious (and possibly unbalanced) figure had little if any Jewish ancestry.⁶⁶ He had fled from his monastery (during a plague epidemic, which is possibly significant), and was seeking to find passage to the Netherlands, or elsewhere, 'to live as he liked, in freedom', as he later confessed.⁶⁷ Initially he sought out a New Christian merchant named Gaspar Boccarro to supply him with non-clerical clothing and money, but the latter referred him to an Old Christian *fidalgo*, a stranger in whom the fugitive rashly confided.

The *fidalgo's* testimony offers a somewhat disconnected but vivid description of the beliefs held by Frei Diogo, and is corroborated by the friar's own testimony days later.⁶⁸ According to the *fidalgo*, Frei Diogo told him he had come to the conclusion that 'everything among the friars is a pack of lies, falsehoods, and deceptions'. He added that 'he could demonstrate [this] with documents that he carried with him', promptly drawing from his habit three or four small notebooks into which he had copied passages from books in the monastery library.⁶⁹ The term 'Christ', he said, meant 'anointed king'; Jesus, who had never been anointed king, was thus a fraud. The 'law of Christ' had been fashioned by the rabble around Jesus, and adopted by ignorant gentiles who did not know Scripture. God had made it plain in Deuteronomy 'that His words were not to be misinterpreted, nor

⁶⁵ The dossier of his trial is in ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo no. 104. Extracts have been published in A. J. Teixeira, *Antonio Homem e a Inquisição* (Coimbra, 1895–1902), ch. 11, edited to conform to modern usage. Menasseh ben Israel possessed a copy of the Inquisition's *sentença* (summary of trial and sentence), very likely the copy found by L. D. Barnett in the British Museum and published in his 'Two Documents of the Inquisition', *Jewish Quart. Rev.*, xv (1924–5), 221–9; it differs somewhat from the *sentença* found in the dossier, which Teixeira published with the aforementioned extracts.

⁶⁶ The efforts of the tribunal to gather genealogical information yielded only rumours that a paternal great-grandfather had been baptized as an adult ('baptizado em pee'); see ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo no. 104, fos. 26^r–40^v. Frei Diogo himself gave conflicting evidence, always insisting that he was raised 'as a gentile', but at certain points stating that he was an Old Christian (*ibid.*, fos. 101^r, 111^r), while at others that his mother was part or all New Christian (*ibid.*, fos. 42^r, 124^r). The idea that his mother was descended from Jews appears unfounded.

⁶⁷ 'pera la viver a sua vontade e em sua liberdade' (*ibid.*, fo. 103^v). According to the testimony of a *fidalgo* he approached after his escape, he mentioned the Netherlands and England, not France.

⁶⁸ For the *fidalgo's* testimony, see *ibid.*, fos. 3^r–6^r, 9^r–21^v. For Frei Diogo's corroborating testimony, *ibid.*, fos. 101^r–114^r.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 11^r. Frei Diogo's notebooks and papers were seized by the Inquisition (*ibid.*, fo. 19^v), but have not been preserved.

were they to be given any sense but the literal'.⁷⁰ Christians, however, treated Scripture 'like a nose of wax you could push this way and that'. Moreover, their innovations defied reason. Aristotle had declared that a living being could generate only another being of its own kind — a horse another horse, and so on. How was one to believe God could be transformed into a piece of bread? And if Mary had given birth not only to Jesus but to his brothers, how could one believe she remained a virgin? At this, the scandalized *fidalgo* nearly lost his temper, but managed to hold his silence. The friar, emboldened, took from his habit a small book 'about the sacraments', and mockingly read a passage in Latin which specified what was done in a case when a rat happened to eat a consecrated host. In such a case 'they' (not specified) caught the rat if they could, burned it, and placed the ashes in the sanctuary (*sacrario*). The friar repeated the words 'if they could' pointedly, adding: 'And if they couldn't, God would be running about in the body of a rat!' It is easy to understand why this conversation, which continued at length, was recalled by the *fidalgo* in detail.⁷¹

However frenzied and colourful Frei Diogo's speech, it was far from incoherent. He was a rationalist critic of the Church, like many others. It is not clear, however, that he was a crypto-Jew. His criticisms of the Church were not formulated from a specifically Jewish point of view. In the course of his trial he argued, for example, that

it was not necessary to petition saints, but only God; and that the popes and councillors did not understand Scripture, creating and following human laws and calling them divine; and that the [holy] orders were not [divinely ordained] orders, nor was the mass a sacrament, nor was the sacrament of communion more than bread . . . nor was a man obligated to confess to another man but only to God, and that everything [else] was the invention of men.⁷²

He did not worship images or the cross, he said, which were nothing but wood: there were so many Holy Roods that the supply of wood was in danger of running out. Given his outlook, it is not surprising to find this unusual 'judaizer' invoking the name of Martin Luther. Luther, he maintained, held that 'who-

⁷⁰ 'q Deos mandava no Deuteronomio q as suas palavras se não trocessem nem lhe dessem outro sentido mais q o literal': *ibid.*, fo. 12^r, and cf. fo. 117^r.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 11^r–13^r.

⁷² *Ibid.*, fo. 208^r.

ever invented the sacraments was an enemy of Jesus'.⁷³ But he concluded that although the Reformers had for good reason rejected Catholicism, they, too, were fraudulent. 'Because [the Reformers] found that [the Church's] Law had no basis', he said, 'they left it [the Church]; and being illustrious men they fashioned new sects to hold onto their fame'.⁷⁴ That is, the Reformers devised new creeds that were, like Catholicism, human inventions. Moreover, Diogo denied that the Gospels were revealed texts. 'The four evangelists', he claimed, 'did not write and did not hear [what they wrote] from God'.⁷⁵ Still, this did not make him a judaizer. It seems noteworthy that when he sought to flee the Peninsula, it was not with the intention of going to a place with an established or openly practising Jewish community.⁷⁶ In the months he spent in prison before his formal trial began, he underwent, by his own admission, an 'illumination'.⁷⁷ Apparently scepticism gave way to conviction, and his literal reading of Scripture led him to the 'logical' conclusion that Hebrew Scripture — as it was read, non-christologically, by the Jews — was the only true, pure revelation. It was from this point onwards that he assumed the role of a judaizing polemicist martyr.

It is difficult to know whether Frei Diogo had actual contacts with crypto-Jews before or during his imprisonment. There is no evidence that other members of his family were suspected of judaizing. Naturally, he denied having been instructed by other persons, but there is also no evidence that he had mentors.⁷⁸ The

⁷³ *Ibid.*, fo. 14^r.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, fo. 5^r, and see fo. 14^v.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 207^v.

⁷⁶ See n. 67 above. At the time of his flight, there was as yet no organized Jewish community in the Netherlands, and Judaism could not be practised openly in France or England. Perhaps Frei Diogo intended to follow in the footsteps of other heterodox monks who had fled the Peninsula to join Protestant communities. See Paul Hauben, 'Reform and Counter-Reform: The Case of the Spanish Heretics', in Theodore Rabb and Jerrold Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton, 1969), 164. Antwerp in particular was an important place of refuge for Spanish Protestants; this has been pointed out by John E. Longhurst, 'Julián Hernández, Protestant Martyr', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, xx (1960).

⁷⁷ He made a point of clarifying that he had never said, before his arrest, that he was a Jew; he had only condemned the sacraments: 'Respondeo q elle nunqua disse antes q fosse preso nestes carceres q era Judeu, somente he verdade q reprovava os sacramentos': ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo no. 140, fo. 124^v.

⁷⁸ Frei Diogo's testimony about the books that influenced him requires further scrutiny. One of these books, by his account, was devoted to reconciling difficulties in the interpretation of Scripture, but left Frei Diogo unconvinced. See *ibid.*, fos. 102^r, 109^r, 116^v.

fact that he was commemorated by Jews outside the Peninsula after his death at the stake in 1603 does not in itself prove that he had connections with a crypto-Jewish network. One would, however, like to know why he turned, after he fled from the monastery, to the New Christian merchant Gaspar Bocarro (about whom the dossier reveals little). And one wonders whether he did not have indirect ties with the *conversos* who founded a judaizing confraternity in his memory in Coimbra after his death (it was uncovered by the Inquisition).⁷⁹

Even if not directly, Diogo was probably influenced by Iberian judaizing currents — perhaps just knowing that they existed — in a way that reinforced his growing hostility to the Church. In Portugal at the time, crypto-Jews were virtually the only ‘networked’ group disseminating a compelling counter-Catholic teaching. In the absence of a rooted Protestant movement in the Peninsula, a person with doubts about Church doctrine and practice might well be attracted to crypto-Judaism — or to a notion of Judaism that relied on lore about crypto-Judaism.⁸⁰ It was only after his ‘illumination’ in prison, however, that Diogo da Asumpção began to observe precepts of Jewish law as he understood them from his reading of the Vulgate. He began observing such biblical precepts as resting on the sabbath and refraining from eating the fat on meat he was served.⁸¹ Rather than taking an oath on the Gospels, he insisted on swearing in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁸²

Imprisonment may have eroded his already shaky grip on reality. In particular, he revealed a belief, in certain audiences, that he himself was the Messiah prophesied in Scripture. (He scandalized the inquisitors near the end of his trial by signing ‘Christus Dominus’ instead of his name, at the foot of the notary’s

⁷⁹ There is no apparent evidence that any of the founders had known Diogo personally. See J. M. de Almeida Saraiva de Carvalho, ‘The Fellowship of St. Diogo: New Christian Judaizers in Coimbra in the Early Seventeenth Century’ (Univ. of Leeds Ph.D. thesis, 1990), 43–79; Teixeira, *Antonio Homem*, 155–9, 161–4, 184–7, 206.

⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that two such Spaniards who left the Peninsula found social and ideological support in Spanish Protestant conventicles abroad, before returning to Spain, where they were burned alive as defiant Protestants. See Longhurst, ‘Julián Hernández’, and José I. Tellechea Idigoras, ‘Francisco de San Román, un mártir protestante burgalés (1542)’, *Cuadernos de investigación histórica*, vii (1984).

⁸¹ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo no. 140, fos. 121^r, 135^v.

⁸² *Ibid.*, fo. 122^v.

record.)⁸³ The inquisitors repeatedly raised the issue of his sanity. It is hard to know how to interpret the fact that they invariably determined him to be of sound mind. But whatever his mental state, Frei Diogo's basic theological outlook remained stable, coherent, and reasoned. To be sure, what it meant to him to be 'a Jew' was unusual even for a crypto-Jew. It was consistent, however, with the efforts of a questioning, disenchanted friar in a Portuguese inquisitorial prison to arrive at a creed he could accept.

V

More than a generation later, in 1639, the *converso* physician Francisco Maldonado de Silva was burned alive in Lima as an impenitent judaizer. He had spent twelve years in prison and had engaged in lengthy disputations with theologians summoned by the Inquisition. His theatrical career and death made a great impression on the *ex-converso* diaspora, and contributed not inconsiderably to the emerging image (and self-image) of the celebrated judaizing martyr.⁸⁴

Maldonado's first experience of the Inquisition was the arrest of his father, a Lisbon-born surgeon, when he was eight years old. A year later, his older brother was arrested. During the years his father and brother were in prison, Francisco was under the tutelage of his Old Christian mother, an orthodox Catholic; after being released, his father apparently maintained a strict veneer of conformity.⁸⁵ According to Maldonado, what brought him to judaize was a critical reading at the age of eighteen of *Scrutinium Scripturarum*, a conversionist work by the fourteenth-century baptized Jew Pablo de Santa Maria addressed to his ex-

⁸³ *Ibid.*, fo. 181^r.

⁸⁴ Fittingly, much of the documentation of his trial has been published not once but twice. The full dossier of the Lima tribunal is not extant. The summary sent to the *Suprema* and three letters by the prisoner were first published in L. García de Proodían, *Los judíos en America* (Madrid, 1966), appendix 26; they were published subsequently, along with some additional records pertaining to the case, in Günter Böhm, *Historia de los judíos en Chile*, i, *El Bachiller Francisco Maldonado de Silva, 1592–1639* (Santiago de Chile, 1984), 219–325.

⁸⁵ There was no reason for Maldonado to be untruthful in this testimony to protect his father, since by the time of his arrest his father had been dead for a decade.

coreligionists.⁸⁶ Perhaps the many unanswered questions in his family history impelled him to open this book, which was apparently in his father's library.⁸⁷ The title itself (from John 5:39, 'scrutamini scripturas', that is, 'search the Scriptures') may have stirred the curiosity of this intelligent youth, whose environment discouraged any such enterprise. The structure of the work (a dialogue between Paul, the Christian, and Saul, the Jew) allows Saul to ask some pointed questions: for example, how a Law that had been given to the Jews 'forever' could be abrogated, or how Christians could obey the first injunction of the Decalogue (the prohibition of worshipping graven images) while worshipping the crucifix. By his account, Maldonado was dissatisfied with the replies of Paul. He later related that when he questioned him, his father took the opportunity to reveal that he had never abandoned his Jewish beliefs, but had been 'reconciled' only out of fear of death. Father and son began crypto-judaizing.

Maldonado was denounced to the Inquisition fourteen years later, in late 1625, by his sister, to whom he had just revealed his beliefs.⁸⁸ The fact that he underwent self-circumcision at about the same time suggests that this was a period of intense religious development in his life. Perhaps he was already weighing martyrdom. In any case, he immediately chose a course of martyrdom upon his arrest in 1627. Only days later, when questioned in prison by a friar, he announced he had resolved 'to live and die in the Law of Moses'.⁸⁹ At his first audience he refused to take an oath on the crucifix, declaring: 'I am a Jew, *señor*, and profess the Law of Moses, and for it I will live and die, and by it [alone] I will swear'.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ This was one of the works that the *converso* physician Isaac Cardoso would examine in Spain a generation later, as part of his own Jewish self-education: Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 288. Interestingly, it was also studied by the antitrinitarian heretic Michael Servetus: see Jerome Friedman, *Michael Servetus: A Case Study in Total Heresy* (Geneva, 1978), 129.

⁸⁷ A copy of the *Scrutinium* was listed in the Inquisition's inventory of the books he possessed, confiscated after his arrest in 1627: Böhm, *Historia de los judíos en Chile*, i, 231. This was probably one of the books which Francisco inherited from his father at the latter's death in 1616, an inheritance he himself mentioned; his father may have brought the book with him to the Americas from Lisbon. Francisco had a remarkable memory (of which he boasted), and a good knowledge of Latin.

⁸⁸ For the notary's account of his sister's testimony, see Böhm, *Historia de los judíos en Chile*, i, 281–2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 282–3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 285.

After his second audience he began requesting audiences himself. Inquisition procedure required granting such requests. He thus established a pattern according to which he was able to exercise a degree of control — a persistent aim on his part. The pretext on this occasion was the wish to confess more fully (though he remained impenitent) the beliefs he had shared with his sister — beliefs so blasphemous that they were not recorded. He also ‘confessed’ to having circumcised himself in order to fulfil the precept in Genesis 17. (He recited the passage verbatim.)

To achieve the conversion of a learned and pious figure like Maldonado de Silva would have been quite a propaganda victory for the Inquisition. Thus when he asked to be allowed to debate with ‘learned persons’, hinting that he might be persuaded he was in error,⁹¹ the Inquisition acceded to the request. Francisco Maldonado was soon debating with a panel of high-ranking theologians for the Inquisition (*calificadores*) — a priest, a Franciscan, a Dominican, and a Jesuit, ‘*maestro* of all the learned men in this realm’.⁹² Over the course of two days, he discussed his ‘doubts and difficulties’ with these men, but declared at the end that he wanted to die in the Law of Moses. By now he appears to have been exquisitely aware of the power he wielded within the constricted orbit of the prison and tribunal. He had succeeded in putting the Inquisition on the defensive: it was up to them to prove the truth of Catholic doctrine.

There were to be fourteen more *disputas* with theologians, some held at Maldonado’s request. All appear to have ended with the prisoner’s declaration that he wanted to live and die in the Law of Moses. After the eleventh debate, the *calificadores* understandably concluded that the prisoner was requesting these meetings ‘more to make an arrogant display of his ingenuity and sophistries than out of a desire to convert to our Holy Catholic Faith’.⁹³ Not long thereafter, in early 1633, the Inquisition ruled that Maldonado should be transferred to the secular arm. But it seems the inquisitors were still hoping for his conversion, for when he again asked for a meeting with the *calificadores* the request was granted.

Between debates, Maldonado produced numerous theological writings in Latin and Spanish that were duly handed over to the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁹² For details on these figures, see *ibid.*, 91.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 290.

theologians to examine.⁹⁴ The single piece of writing that has been preserved is a late sample of his thinking, reflecting years of rumination and strategizing.⁹⁵ (Interestingly, the reason the inquisitors saved it was to retain a record of how a prisoner might ‘create’ a sheet of paper by joining together small scraps.) While this little treatise reflects Maldonado’s considerable biblical knowledge, it is not innovative. Indeed, it is strikingly scholastic in character, with citations from Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra, and Aristotle in support of technical arguments refuting the Trinity and the messiahship of Jesus. Unlike the other *dogmatista* martyrs discussed here, Maldonado seems to have had no inkling of humanist and Protestant criticisms of the Church.

His activist inclinations — possibly loneliness as well — led him to plan an escape from his cell in 1634. Prison discipline being slack, he was able to fashion a rope from corn husks and lower himself from a window, gaining entrance to nearby cells. There, according to the notary’s bland record of events, ‘he persuaded the inmates to follow his Law’. It is hard to know what to make of this. Maldonado himself ‘confessed’ to converting two of the prisoners. He did, at least, persuade these two inmates — neither imprisoned on charges of judaizing — to accept copies of a letter in Latin that he had written to ‘the synagogue of Rome’, to deliver after their release.⁹⁶ He had undoubtedly already gained a reputation among the prisoners, which his escape surely magnified.⁹⁷

The letter to Rome (both copies were seized) throws some light on the self-perception of this major polemicist martyr. While briefly apologetic about having lived for years as an outwardly compliant Catholic, Maldonado viewed himself vis-à-vis the wider Jewish world as a model of uprightness and self-sacrifice, worthy of attention and emulation. In this, he was cultivating to

⁹⁴ Unfortunately, the summary of the case to the *Suprema*, which is all we have, is terse about the contents of the debates, at best noting their general subject. More unfortunate still, all but one of Maldonado’s writings were lost or destroyed by the Inquisition (some were burned with him at the stake).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 295–301. It was composed in November 1638.

⁹⁶ Both copies of the letter, neither complete to the end, are preserved in the dossier. They are published with a Spanish translation, *ibid.*, 305–25.

⁹⁷ He knew at least one of them, Tomé Cuaresma, personally. Cuaresma was burned at the stake along with Maldonado de Silva at the great auto-da-fé in 1639. After 1635, there were many Portuguese *conversos* in the prison, rounded up in a wave of arrests of suspected judaizers. On the slack discipline in the Lima secret cells, see *ibid.*, 129–32.

the point of grandiosity a self-image shared widely by his generation of crypto-Jews, one that distinguished them from, and elevated them above, the Iberian society that stigmatized them.⁹⁸ Maldonado believed crypto-Jews had an obligation not only to adhere to the Law of Moses, but also to ‘attack the impious with the truth’ — to go on the offensive and confront the Church and the Inquisition polemically. He viewed his own action as exemplary. ‘Since the day I was arrested’, he wrote, ‘I have promised to die fighting for the truth with all my power by refuting the enemies of His Law, as well as by observing [this Law] up to the very altar of fire that they are (so I gather) preparing for me’.⁹⁹ Such words reflected the belligerent style that was cultivated by, and expected of, religious martyrs across a wide spectrum of belief in Reformation Europe.

How can we explain that this man, who was so attuned to the spirit of Reformation martyrdom, was nevertheless so isolated and uninformed about intellectual trends in Europe? In part, this may have been a consequence of the frontier existence he led in Callao and Santiago de Chile. He seems also to have been surprisingly uninformed about the *converso* world, despite the considerable *converso* presence in Peru. It is puzzling that he addressed his letter not to the *ex-converso* communities of Amsterdam or Venice, but to ‘the synagogue of my Jewish brothers in Rome’, and that he recounted in his letter fundamental facts about the fate of *conversos* in Spain and Portugal under ‘Philip King of Spain’ — facts that were well known in Europe.¹⁰⁰ It is less surprising that he seemed quite oblivious of the existence of post-biblical rabbinic literature. (He boasted to his brothers in Rome that he knew by heart all the biblical prophecies, the psalms, and many of the proverbs of Solomon ‘and his son Sirach’ — in Latin, of course.)

⁹⁸ For a description of the psychological factors involved, see Miriam Bodian, ‘“Men of the Nation”: The Shaping of *Converso* Identity in Early Modern Europe’, *Past and Present*, no. 143 (May 1994), 60–3.

⁹⁹ Böhm, *Historia de los judíos en Chile*, i, 305 (Spanish trans., 311–12).

¹⁰⁰ He explained that ‘one who openly confesses to being a Jew and asserts that there is no true God but the God of Israel is cast into the ravages of the fire and his entire estate is confiscated, and if by chance he has children, they have absolutely no compassion for them; on the contrary, they remain in perpetual opprobrium. If [judaizers] convert and become Christians, all their possessions are confiscated, and they are viewed with perpetual opprobrium. Although they must wear the garment

(cont. on p. 95)

Ironically, Maldonado de Silva became famous in some of the most cosmopolitan centres of Jewish life in Europe. His detachment from the life of those centres is reflected in the fact that in prison, where he assumed the uncommon Hebrew name 'Eli', he took the biblical Nazirite vow¹⁰¹ — an act very rare in the early modern Jewish world.¹⁰² On the other hand, this vow hints strongly at Maldonado's identification with that activist biblical 'martyr' Samson, who was not by accident the focal figure of a great Reformation age epic, as well as a symbol of *converso* martyrdom in the commemorative literature of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews.¹⁰³

VI

In 1644, yet another judaizer from an Old Christian family¹⁰⁴ was burned alive, in Valladolid, and he too joined the ranks of the

(n. 100 cont.)

known as the *sanbenito* over their clothing for only a certain period of time, nevertheless the disgrace of their opprobrium stays in their blood and that of their children generation after generation, and neither they nor their children can fill public office in [these] Christian realms': *ibid.*, i, 305–6.

¹⁰¹ The biblical source is Num. 6: 1–21. The account of the auto-da-fé at which Maldonado was sentenced indicates that he did grow his beard and hair — one of the obligations undertaken with the vow: *Auto de la fe celebrado en Lima*, fo. 21^v.

¹⁰² See Samuel Morell, 'The Samson Nazirite Vow in the Sixteenth Century', *Assoc. Jewish Studies Rev.*, xiv (1989), esp. 230–2.

¹⁰³ Interestingly, the *converso* poet Antonio Enríquez Gómez used the image of Samson to eulogize not Maldonado de Silva, but Lope de Vera. See his *Romance al divín mártir, Judá Creyente [don Lope de Vera y Alarcon] martirizado en Valladolid por la Inquisición* (London and Toronto, 1986), 148. It is likely that Enríquez Gómez drew upon a pervasive Christian tradition which represented Samson as a martyr — a tradition which was thriving in early modern Europe. See Joseph Wittreich, *Interpreting 'Samson Agonistes'* (Princeton, 1986); Watson Kirkconnell, *That Invincible Samson: The Theme of Samson Agonistes in World Literature with Translations of the Major Analogues* (Toronto, 1964). Enríquez Gómez may well have been familiar with the dramatic poem by Juan Pérez de Montalván, *El valiente Nazareno*, printed in Madrid in 1638 — a poem that was sufficiently popular to be translated into Flemish and printed in Brussels in 1670. Enríquez Gómez himself published a poem in this vein entitled *Sansón Nazareno* (Rouen, 1656).

¹⁰⁴ There was evidently some testimony indicating that Lope de Vera had a minor degree of Jewish ancestry, but the summaries are vague about this. It is interesting that, despite his own claims to the tribunal that he was an Old Christian, he was reported to have said to one of the witnesses against him that he 'felt great sorrow that all his blood was not Jewish, which was the most noble in the world' (my emphasis). A version of this statement appears four times in the summaries; only once does it read 'that his blood was not Jewish'. A scholar who has studied the relevant Inquisition material has overlooked the positive evidence in it of Jewish ancestry, and has cited only the latter version of Lope de Vera's statement: Haim Beinart, 'The Convert Lope de Vera y Alarcon and his Martyrdom as Judah Creyente'

(cont. on p. 96)

celebrated martyrs.¹⁰⁵ This was Lope de Vera, who was denounced and arrested in 1639, at the age of nineteen, as he was competing for a chair in Hebrew at the University of Salamanca.¹⁰⁶ His intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew Bible and his recognition of the inadequacy of the Vulgate (apparently as a result of reading works by Erasmus), along with his contacts with heterodox Portuguese *conversos* studying at Salamanca, seem to have been critical in raising doubts in his mind about the teachings of the Church.

The first of the two major witnesses against Lope de Vera depicted him as a rather typical judaizer, opposing the worship of images and crucifixes, denying that Jesus was the messiah, and praising the Jews and the Hebrew language. The second, however, depicted him in a more complex way, as a rationalist who was weighing the comparative merits of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. According to this witness, Lope de Vera had told a group of students that Catholicism required belief in ‘many things that were difficult to believe’. He found other religions, he said — namely Islam and Judaism — ‘more in conformity with natural reason’. It would be foolhardy to accept either witness’s testimony at face value; but the second portrayal does seem more accurate in view of the later testimony of ‘Don Lope’ himself.

Having guessed that the Inquisition had testimony against him from one or more Portuguese students, who were almost certainly

(n. 104 cont.)

[in Hebrew], in Zvi Malachi (ed.), *Aharon Mirsky Jubilee Volume* (Lod, 1986), 38 (n. 28). On the other hand, Francisco Torrejoncillo, writing thirty years after Lope de Vera’s death, felt compelled to hold the milk of a New Christian wet-nurse responsible for Lope de Vera’s apostasy; he clearly believed Don Lope to be of pure Old Christian lineage. See Francisco Torrejoncillo, *Centinela contra los judíos* (Barcelona, 1731), 214.

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, we do not possess the original trial documents but only the summaries sent to the *Suprema* each year during the course of the trial: AHN Inquisición, Legajo 2135, no. 15, fos. 49^r–51^r; no. 16, fos. 15^r–19^r; no. 17, fos. 24^v–31^r; no. 18, fos. 4^v–6^r, 12^v–22^r; no. 19, fos. 5^v–7^r. Each summary repeats the contents of earlier summaries, sometimes, however, offering greater detail. The summaries were found and studied by Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols. (New York, 1966), iii, 294–5.

¹⁰⁶ Possibly academic politics played a role in his denunciation; it would not have been the first time at Salamanca. The scholastic backlash against humanist learning at the University of Salamanca in the second half of the sixteenth century resulted in a series of inquisitorial trials in the 1570s. Among the theologians tried was the eminent *converso* Fray Luis de León. On these trials, see Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, iv, 149–68; Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *Procesos inquisitoriales contra los catedráticos hebraístas de Salamanca: Gaspar de Grajal, Martínez de Cantalapiedra, y Fr. Luis de León* (Madrid, 1925); Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *Proceso criminal contra el hebraísta salmantino Martín Martínez de Cantalapiedra* (Madrid, 1946).

conversos, Lope de Vera decided to confess to what were presumably actual (and highly damaging) conversations he had had with these persons. His line of defence, for the next eight months, was that ‘everything he had confessed . . . he had said by way of disputation, as a curious person who knew Hebrew’, or ‘by way of argument, as the rabbis did, though he did not agree with them’.¹⁰⁷ If we strip away this artificial defence, the Lope de Vera of these conversations appears a rather extreme person with rationalist inclinations and a strong sense of intellectual autonomy. In one conversation, for example, he and a Portuguese student had pondered the impossibility of God being ‘three and one’, incarnate, and present in the Host. His companion cited a verse from Psalms to support their independent judgement on the subject: ‘Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding’ (Ps. 31:9) — meaning, as Don Lope told the inquisitors, ‘that God said we need not subjugate our reasoning, in the manner of a horse or a mule, to things that seem impossible to the mind’.¹⁰⁸

After many audiences, several *calificadores* were asked to evaluate the prisoner. One wrote that he was ‘a confused Babylon’ (*una confusa babilonia*), favouring other religions and rejecting only the true Catholic faith, which he held to be contrary to reason and even impossible.¹⁰⁹ To clarify his mind, it was decided in October 1640 to apply torture. Under the circumstances, it was the prisoner’s good luck to fall ill with quartan fever, which afflicted him all winter, leaving him too weak to endure torture when he recovered. By April 1641, his mind had clarified. From this point onward, he adopted the posture of a defiant dogmatizer. He revoked everything he had said in prior audiences. In the fashion of the classic martyr, he made a solemn declaration of faith, saying that he ‘wanted to be a Jew and to hold and believe everything that the tribe of Judah, scattered throughout the world, held and believed’ and that he ‘wanted to live and die in the Law of the Lord which Scripture calls *el pentateuco torat adonay* [*sic*]’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ AHN Inquisición, Legajo 2135, no. 16, fo. 18^r; no. 17, fo. 27^v.

¹⁰⁸ ‘el dho complice trajo un lugar de un salmo que dice nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectu [*sic*], el qual declaro diciendo que dios decia que no abiamos de subjetar el entendimiento sicut equus, et mulus, a las cosas que parecen inpusibles al entendimiento’: *ibid.*, no. 17, fo. 25^v.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 28^r.

¹¹⁰ ‘the Pentateuch, God’s Torah’ — an odd and redundant mixture of Spanish and Hebrew terms: *ibid.*, fos. 28^v–29^r.

Theologians summoned by the Inquisition made repeated efforts to convince Lope de Vera of his error. But by June 1641, these experts came to the conclusion that ‘because of his learning, wickedness, and knowledge of the Hebrew language, his remaining in Christianity would be pernicious for all who came in contact with him’. It is characteristic that this *calificador* singled out the prisoner’s ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge of the Hebrew language’ as dangerous (no doubt in conjunction with his ‘wickedness’). For his part, Lope de Vera’s stated wish to see the pope¹¹¹ may have reflected his exasperation with the rigidity and obscurantism of the Inquisition’s theologians.

In the little world of the tribunal and prison Lope de Vera was now a powerful presence. He began observing Jewish law in his cell, and refused to take an oath on a crucifix. It was reported that he was trying to proselytize among his fellow prisoners. In a debate with experts in July, Lope de Vera alleged, among other provocative remarks, that ‘in the Vulgate there were more than ten thousand errors’.¹¹² Summoned to an audience on a Saturday, he refused to come, saying he would not violate the sabbath; if they wanted to see him, they would have to tie a rope around his neck and take him by force.¹¹³ He also underwent the ordeal that seems to have become a hallmark of the polemicist martyr. He succeeded in circumcising himself in his cell with a chicken bone, and renamed himself Judah. It is possible that he drew inspiration from reports about Francisco Maldonado de Silva, who had died at the stake just a year and a half earlier.¹¹⁴

Stepping up the pressure, Lope de Vera began refusing to speak with the theologians brought to convert him, and dismissed

¹¹¹ It may be that he was here influenced by his reading of David Reuveni’s diary, which describes the latter’s appearance before the pope. For a certain kind of grandiose ‘heretic’ whose sense of self-importance was stimulated by the attention of the inquisitors, it was natural to want an opportunity to confront the highest authority of the Church. The sixteenth-century miller of Friuli, Menocchio, also wanted to see the pope during his trial for heresy. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York, 1989), 9.

¹¹² Among other things, he confessed to having read the ‘*Anotaciones* of Erasmus’, i.e., the *Anotaciones in novum testamentum*: AHN Inquisición, Legajo 2135, no. 17, fo. 50^r.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, fo. 30^{r-v}.

¹¹⁴ Maldonado de Silva was burned at the stake on 23 January 1639; Lope de Vera was arrested in June of that year. Given the notoriety of Francisco Maldonado de Silva even before his death, it is possible Lope de Vera knew details of his prison career before his own arrest.

his guardian and ‘advocate’. This presented the inquisitors with a dilemma. The prisoner was clearly an incorrigible heretic, but the Inquisition needed a ratification of his confession to bring the trial to a conclusion. In audience after audience Lope de Vera refused to reply to questions, exploiting the Inquisition’s scrupulous adherence to correct procedure. Efforts by the Inquisition to obtain a written statement from him led to further acts of harassment. Corporal punishment (he was given fifty lashes in June 1642) did not induce him to speak either. Summoned to an audience in September, he refused either to speak or to write, and covered his ears with his hands. At length, the *Suprema* (the body with authority over local tribunals) ended the farce by ordering an end to the trial. Lope de Vera was, at last, relaxed to the secular arm. To minimize the scandal, he was ordered to appear at the auto-da-fé with a gag (*mordaza*) — a symbol of the Inquisition’s approach that the prisoner would surely have appreciated.

The apologete and poet Daniel Levi de Barrios in Amsterdam possessed a copy of a most interesting letter by an inquisitor touching on this case. It draws into relief the gulf in sensibility that separated Lope de Vera and the men who tried him. It reads:

In the first year of his imprisonment he circumcised himself, and took as his name Judah Creyente; and from that time he never named or signed himself in any other manner; and for more than a year and a half he did not speak . . . but would only write. Innumerable masters and *calificadores* spoke with him, trying by all means to bring him back, judging that at such a tender age, with God’s help, it might be permitted to win him back. But it was time wasted, for he told them all *that they were ignorant and did not understand the versions (traduciones), and that all (the versions) had been set up contrary to the true [meaning] of the text.* All his trouble came to this unhappy man because of his not paying regard to the excommunication that he incurred by reading prohibited books.¹¹⁵

VII

As in the cases of Luis Carvajal, Diogo da Asumpção, and Francisco Maldonado de Silva, Lope de Vera’s resistance to the Church was nourished by an awareness of powerful voices outside the Peninsula, voices which held that it was manifestly wrong to withhold knowledge — especially knowledge of Scripture itself —

¹¹⁵ The letter was found in the British Museum and published in the 1920s: see Barnett, ‘Two Documents of the Inquisition’, 235–9 (quotation from p. 236; my emphasis).

in the name of ecclesiastical authority. These men, along with other radical truth-seekers in Iberian lands, turned to Scripture to affirm and justify their nonconformity. Despite the diversity of their beliefs, all of them rejected the right of Church authorities to enforce belief in a dogmatic ‘truth’ whose erroneousness seemed self-evident to them. Discussing their beliefs as they did in clandestine circles (in the case of Frei Diogo apparently within monastery walls), they experienced an intellectual freedom that they refused to relinquish even under the greatest of pressures. It must have seemed natural in these circumstances to associate freedom of thought with Judaism itself.

In such a context, it is not surprising to find nonconformist Old Christians for whom crypto-Jewish polemical arguments and rhetoric resonated powerfully. We might include among them such Old Christians as Gregorio López in Mexico and Bartolomé Sánchez in Castile, who expressed an affinity for Judaism — without, in their cases, abandoning the foundations of Christian theology.¹¹⁶ In the cases of Diogo da Asumpção and Lope de Vera, it would appear, the persuasiveness of a ‘Jewish’ polemical reading of Scripture led to the outright adoption of a Jewish creed.¹¹⁷

Scholars have long known that *conversos* were prominent among the figures who contributed to ‘Protestantish’ opinion in Spain.¹¹⁸ But the careers of the celebrated judaizing martyrs suggest complex interactions of another kind: between educated crypto-Jews and nonconformist Catholics (whether *converso* or Old Christian). It would seem that as inquisitorial persecution of Old Christians intensified, dissatisfied Old Christians showed greater readiness to view with sympathy crypto-Jewish victims of the Inquisition and their theological objections to Catholicism. Moreover, by the

¹¹⁶ See Martin Cohen, ‘Don Gregorio López: Friend of the Secret Jew’, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, xxxviii (1967); Sara Nalle, *Mad for God: Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete* (Charlottesville, 2001).

¹¹⁷ It is worth noting that Lope de Vera’s father, while not a judaizer, was apparently of doubtful orthodoxy himself: see Juan Blazquez Miguel, *San Clemente y la Inquisición de Cuenca* (Madrid, 1988), 61. Interestingly, after Lope de Vera’s death, his brother Pedro evidently considered becoming a Jew. We learn this from a formal rabbinic *responsum* he sought while he was in Venice, on an issue concerning what he referred to as ‘la Ley de la verdad’ for which his brother had died. See Ets Haim Collection, Amsterdam, MS 48A11, 99–108.

¹¹⁸ The list of such *conversos* would include Juan Luis Vives, the brothers Juan and Francisco de Vergara, Isabel de la Cruz, Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, Alonso Gudiel, Alfonso de Zamora, Luis de León, and quite possibly Juan and Alfonso de Valdés.

second half of the sixteenth century, clandestine judaizing possessed a certain advantage over heterodox Christian thinking: first, because of its ethnic underpinnings (its deeply rooted kinship networks, which made it difficult for the Inquisition to eradicate); and second, because of the greater antiquity of its foundations, which made it less vulnerable in the face of radical scrutiny of the Gospels.

To some degree, the situation in Iberian lands thus parallels that elsewhere in Europe, where, in the cacophony of innovative voices, Jews (particularly *ex-conversos*) and nonconformist Christians found so much to discuss.¹¹⁹ In two notable cases outside the Peninsula, radical Christian seekers actually crossed religio-ethnic boundaries and embraced Judaism: the Italian Giovanni Laureto di Buongiorno¹²⁰ and the Frenchman Nicolas Antoine.¹²¹ More common was cross-pollination from behind these boundaries, which occurred in a variety of contexts.¹²²

In Amsterdam, a haven for both nonconformist Christians and *ex-conversos* who had reverted to Judaism, conditions would seem to have been especially favourable for the exploration of unorthodox ideas. But the leaders of the *ex-converso* Jewish community, rabbinic and lay, would not tolerate radical voices in their own

¹¹⁹ See, *inter alia*, Jerome Friedman, 'The Reformation and Jewish Antichristian Polemics', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, xli (1979); Jerome Friedman, 'New Religious Alternatives', in Raymond Waddington and Arthur Williamson (eds.), *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After* (New York and London, 1994), 19–40. See also essays in J. van den Berg and E. G. E. van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Dordrecht, 1988); Richard Popkin and Gordon Weiner (eds.), *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews* (Dordrecht, 1994).

¹²⁰ Laureto, who joined antitrinitarian Anabaptist circles in Italy, fled at one point to Thessalonica, where he joined a community of Sephardi Jews and was circumcised. (He was soon disillusioned by rabbinic Judaism, however, and eventually recanted before the Venetian Inquisition in 1553.) See George Williams, 'The Two Social Strands in Italian Anabaptism, ca. 1526–1565', in Lawrence Buck and Jonathan Zophy (eds.), *The Social History of the Reformation* (Columbus, 1972), 179–84.

¹²¹ Antoine was born a Catholic in France but converted to Calvinism in his youth. His Hebrew and Old Testament studies (which included discussions with rabbis in Metz) led him to adopt Judaism of a sort, but he was rejected by cautious communal leaders when he sought to join a Jewish community in Italy. He died at the stake in Geneva in 1632. See Julien Weill, 'Nicolas Antoine', *Revue des études juives*, xxxvii (1898). My thanks to Joseph Davis for bringing this case to my attention.

¹²² See, *inter alia*, Robert Dán, 'Isaac Troky and his "Antitrinitarian" Sources', in Robert Dán (ed.), *Occident and Orient: A Tribute to the Memory of A. Scheiber* (Budapest, 1988); Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 51–107.

ranks, for reasons I have discussed elsewhere.¹²³ They considered acceptance of traditional rabbinic Judaism a *sine qua non* for the re-establishment of Jewish life outside the Peninsula. Thus, the very kind of individualistic judaizing that sustained *converso* resistance to the Inquisition in Iberian lands came into conflict with Jewish community-building and rabbinic controls when transplanted to northern Europe. This is vividly illustrated by the cases of Uriel da Costa, Juan de Prado,¹²⁴ and Daniel Ribera (an Old Christian judaizer),¹²⁵ whose careers may well have contributed to Spinoza's break with Judaism. Da Costa, Prado, and Spinoza were excommunicated from the Jewish community of Amsterdam; Ribera would have been had he lingered.

The question of the relationship between defiant judaizing in Iberian lands and radical dissent in émigré Jewish communities can be examined here only briefly and by way of conclusion. Four decades ago, I. S. Révah pointed out the apparent discrepancy between the account Uriel da Costa gave of his own conversion to crypto-Judaism in Portugal, on the one hand, and his family history as reflected in Inquisition documents, on the other.¹²⁶ The crypto-Judaism in Da Costa's family was, in Révah's words, 'marranisme normale' — an ancestral and unselfconscious creed that promised salvation. In contrast, Uriel da Costa portrayed himself as a solitary seeker of truth. A brief citation will convey the spirit of his account. He found himself, he wrote, unable 'to find that [spiritual] satisfaction I wanted in the Romish

¹²³ Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 96–125. On the various cases of conflict, see Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, 122–59; Miriam Bodian, 'Amsterdam, Venice and the Marrano Diaspora in the Seventeenth Century', *Dutch Jewish History*, ii (1989), 51–8; and on Spinoza, recently, Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge, 1999), ch. 6.

¹²⁴ It is significant that Juan de Prado seems to have made a shift from crypto-Jewish beliefs to a deistic form of scepticism while still in the Peninsula. According to inquisitorial testimony given by Baltasar Orobio de Castro in Seville, Prado had by 1643 adopted a sceptical view towards all revealed religions, including Judaism; he was safely beyond the reach of the Inquisition at the time of the testimony. See I. S. Révah, 'Aux origines de la rupture spinozienne: nouvel examen des origines, du déroulement et des conséquences de l'affaire Spinoza-Prado-Ribera', *Annuaire de Collège de France*, lxxii (1972), 650–1.

¹²⁵ Originally José Carreras, a Catholic priest with no apparent Jewish ancestry, he converted to Judaism in Amsterdam in 1655, preached his radical ideas there, and apparently left before he could be excommunicated. He went to England where he became a Protestant. See I. S. Révah, 'Aux origines', *Annuaire de Collège de France*, lxx (1970), 563.

¹²⁶ I. S. Révah, 'La Religion d'Uriel da Costa, Marrane de Porto', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, clxi (1962), 72–5.

Church'. Yet he was 'desirous to attach myself' to an established religion. Driven by discontent and longing, he turned to Scripture: 'I went through the books of Moses and the Prophets, wherein I found some things not a little contradictory to the doctrines of the New Testament, and there seemed to be less difficulty in believing those things which were revealed by God himself'.¹²⁷ Révah adumbrated (probably correctly) a scenario according to which both ancestral and individual intellectual factors were at work in Da Costa's peninsular career. We now know what Révah only suspected: that Da Costa had contacts with educated crypto-Jews during his studies at the University of Coimbra. (He was acquainted with António Homem, professor of canon law at Coimbra and leader of a crypto-Jewish confraternity named in honour of Diogo da Asumpção.)¹²⁸ In a manner reminiscent of Luis Carvajal, Da Costa apparently mobilized his personal, relatively sophisticated 'discovery' of the true (Jewish) interpretation of the Bible to persuade members of his family to revive dormant crypto-judaizing traditions.¹²⁹ He himself, however (like Carvajal and the dogmatizing martyrs in general), was not primarily motivated — at least not consciously — by the accidents of ancestry.

When Da Costa arrived in Amsterdam in 1615, he thus brought with him a theology that was somewhat detached from the visceral ethnic loyalties that motivated so many of the émigrés. His thinking, like that of the dogmatizing martyrs, possessed something of the radical Reformation spirit: fiercely independent, bibliocentric, literalist, and anticlerical. Perhaps there was also an oppositional bent to his character. In any case, when he encountered rabbinic Judaism, with its reverence for traditional authority, its coercive powers, and its elaborate system of exegesis, he encountered a tradition that was not just unfamiliar, but contradictory in prin-

¹²⁷ *Exemplar humanae vitae*, trans. John Whiston (London, 1740), in Uriel da Costa, *Examination of Pharasaic Traditions*, facsimile edn, ed. and trans. H. P. Salomon and I. S. D. Sassoon (Amsterdam, 1624; Leiden, 1993), appendix 3. The authenticity of this work has long been questioned, but while the text may have been tampered with, there is reason to accept its basic authenticity. See Révah, 'La Religion d'Uriel da Costa', 45–56.

¹²⁸ Carvalho, 'Fellowship of St. Diogo', 33, 199 (n. 50). Homem was burned at the stake in 1624.

¹²⁹ An aunt and half-sister of Da Costa's mother was burned at the stake in Coimbra in 1568 for judaizing, a fact that must have been alive in family memory. Other family members were also tried by the Inquisition. See Révah, 'La Religion d'Uriel da Costa', 56–60.

ciple to his creed.¹³⁰ He wrote an attack on the entire post-biblical rabbinic tradition, which was, he believed, a human fabrication. As a result he was excommunicated by the Jewish communities of Venice and Hamburg in 1618. He retaliated with a furious and wide-ranging attack on rabbinic Judaism which he published in Amsterdam in 1624.¹³¹ This brought him into a protracted struggle with the leaders of the Amsterdam community which resulted in two excommunications and two insincere recantations. He ended his tormented existence in 1640 by suicide — martyred, in his view, not by the Inquisition but by the Jewish communal authorities.¹³²

If there is a resemblance between the careers of the famous Amsterdam ‘heretics’ and those of the celebrated judaizing martyrs, it is not as paradoxical as it may seem. Evidence indicates that careers of both kinds entailed the mobilization of individualistic patterns of thought and behaviour — patterns that were a natural outgrowth of crypto-Jewish life — together with elements of thinking from a broader Reformation orbit. It has commonly been argued that Iberian crypto-Judaism was an impoverished and somewhat stagnant pool of beliefs and practices. In some cases it was that. But in others it was a rather lively current, running parallel to and sometimes intermingling with the waters of European religious dissent. However far it may have been from their minds, the martyrs were thus participating in an upheaval that had repercussions far beyond the Christian–Jewish conflict — an upheaval that would eventually challenge European ecclesiastical authority everywhere and, inevitably, rabbinic authority as well. To some extent, then, the judaizing martyrs were among the harbingers of the shift in early modern Europe from the battle between well-defined orthodoxies to the battle for freedom of conscience.

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¹³⁰ See Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 299; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Marrano of Reason* (Princeton, 1989), 47–8.

¹³¹ Da Costa, *Examination of Pharasaic Traditions*, ed. and trans. Salomon and Sassoon, 246–8.

¹³² For a brief account of Da Costa’s life, see H. P. Salomon’s ‘Introduction’, *ibid.*, 1–24.