

LAD

EXCELENCIAS DE LOS HEBREOS.

Por el Doctor
YSHAC CARDOSO.



Impresso en AMSTERDAM en casa de
DAVID DE CASTRO TARTAS.
El Año de 1679.

From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto

ISAAC CARDOSO:
*A Study in Seventeenth-Century
Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, by
YOSEF HAYIM YERUSHALMI



NEW YORK & LONDON
Columbia University Press

1971

all significance in Portugal after the mass baptism of 1497. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even later, Peninsular presses still sent forth books and tracts directed *contra los judíos de nuestros tiempos* (against the Jews of our times [!]). Alleged Judaizers continued to be penanced or relaxed for burning by the inquisitorial tribunals, and the populace flocked to the public spectacle of the *auto-da-fé*. Long after the last synagogues had been dedicated to the Virgin, Spanish and Portuguese pulpits rang with denunciations of the Jewish perfidy. The "Jew" was still an object of satire on the stage and in the doggerel of urchins in the streets. Rumors of Jewish plots to subvert Spain could yet pass swiftly through the *barrios* of Madrid. A Spaniard or Portuguese who aspired to honors or offices had very much to worry, in presenting his genealogy for inspection, lest a Jew be found clinging to a remote branch of the family tree. The *sambenitos* which had been worn by those reconciled by the Inquisition hung afterwards through decades and generations in the churches where their grandchildren prayed. Broadsides posted in public places still displayed a list of characteristic Jewish ceremonies, and called upon the faithful to denounce those whom they knew to be following the execrable rites of the Law of Moses.

To a Spaniard or Portuguese of the seventeenth century the phrase "Jews of our times" was neither an abstraction nor a euphemism. It might well apply to some of his own neighbors, even though they bore authentic Iberian Christian names, and he saw them regularly at Mass in the cathedral, and the walls of their homes were adorned with the conventional pious pictures. There was no guarantee that this seemingly unimpeachable orthodoxy was not a mere façade, and that among themselves these people did not practice occult Jewish rites. For they were, after all, *cristianos nuevos* (Port., *crístãos novos*), "New Christians," descendants of those many Jews who had been baptized in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century these New Christians still constituted a distinct and important class within Iberian society, and in the popular mind the line between "New Christian" and "Jew" was often blurred. The one seemed merely a metamorphosis of the other. Had not the Inquisition consistently revealed how many of the seed of the original Conversos were still Jews at heart? One might perhaps be somewhat

wary of hurling the epithet *marrano* or *judío* at a person, for this was considered to be so grave an insult as to be prohibited by law. But it did not really matter which term one chose to use. In the consciousness of seventeenth-century Spain and Portugal the "Jew" was not merely an historical reminiscence; he was, in effect, a contemporary. How are we to understand this phenomenon?

THE "PORTUGUESE" IN SPAIN

The long campaign to obliterate Spanish Judaism which began with the pogroms of 1391 appeared, by the latter half of the sixteenth century, to be finally crowned with success. Isolated after the expulsion in 1492 of all professing Jews, the Conversos in the ensuing decades ultimately lost the strength, and perhaps the will, to maintain their Jewish ties in the midst of a ruthless program of persecution and repression. The available evidence, admittedly incomplete, indicates that by this time crypto-Judaism had been atomized by the hammer blows of the Inquisition, and that Spanish Marranism had lost its former élan, except perhaps in certain small and remote localities.¹ Those Conversos who did not flee to other lands, and who had not perished at the stake, appeared, to the degree that they were accepted, largely merged into the general population, and attempting to live as faithful Catholics. From the mid-sixteenth

¹ On the waning of Spanish Marranism in the 16th century see Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* (New York, 1907), III, 234 f. Cf. Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 85 f.; Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea* (Madrid, 1961-), I, 452 f., 460.

An interesting example of the survival of crypto-Judaism in a relatively isolated community is that of Badajoz in Estremadura, near the Portuguese border. The list of *sambenitos* of that town has been published and analyzed by Antonio Rodríguez-Moniño in his "Les Judaisants à Badajoz de 1493 à 1599," *Revue des études juives*, CXV (1956), 73-86. More such instances could undoubtedly be found were it not for the fact that the surviving records of the Spanish Inquisition are quite incomplete. See the remarks of I. S. Révah, "Les marranes," *REJ*, CVIII (1950-60), 35 f. n. 1, noting also the need for a comprehensive study of the Spanish Inquisition up to 1580.

century onward, the Spanish Inquisition turned increasingly from the prosecution of Judaizers to that of Protestant and other heresies. Those nonconformist impulses which still retained some vitality among the offspring of the Conversos seem to have found an outlet in mystical or Erasmian currents within Spanish Catholicism itself.² While the presence of this leaven is of considerable interest for the intellectual history of Spain, the fact remains that in the course of the sixteenth century the Spanish Conversos disappear, progressively, from the ken of Jewish history.

If Spain in the seventeenth century was obsessed once again with a Judaizing heresy, that was due to the massive influx, beginning after 1580, of the Portuguese New Christians.

Both the genesis and the development of the Converso problem in Portugal differed significantly from that of Spain. Lusitanian Jewry had not suffered the slow debilitating process of erosion which their Hispanic brethren had endured from 1391 to 1492. Their inner strength had not been sapped by periodic massacre, waves of conversionist panic, and a culminating expulsion of those who had remained constant. When, in 1497, the death knell sounded for open

² The New Christian share in the propagation of 16th-century Erasmian and allied tendencies has been fully demonstrated by Marcel Bataillon in his study of *Érasme et l'Espagne* (Paris, 1937). Cf. also Eugenio Asensio, "El crasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines," *Revista de filología española*, XXXVI (1952), especially pp. 56-69.

In recent decades Spanish scholars have evinced an ever growing interest in the Converso provenance of various major figures in the spiritual and intellectual history of their country. Thus, it has been ascertained by Abdón M. Salazar that the father of Luis Vives was burned at the stake in 1526, and that before the age of ten the philosopher himself attended clandestine Jewish services. (Cited by Américo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History* (Princeton, 1954), p. 577, n. 42). Similarly, the grandfather of Santa Teresa of Ávila was reconciled for Judaizing by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1485. See Narciso Alonso Cortés, "Pleitos de los Cepedas," *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, XXV (1946), 85-110; cf. H. Serís, "Nueva genealogía de Santa Teresa," *Nueva revista de filología hispánica*, X (1956), 364-84. The real or alleged Converso ancestry of other Spanish luminaries is examined by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la edad moderna* (Madrid, 1955), pp. 155-89, by Castro (*Structure*, pp. 569, 575) and by Caro Baroja (*Judíos*, vol. II, pt. iii, chs. 9-10), all with ample bibliographies.

Jewish life in Portugal, it came in the form of a sudden and total conversion by force of all Portuguese Jewry. The mass baptism decreed by King Manoel engulfed both the native Portuguese Jews and those Jewish exiles from Spain who, some five years earlier, had refused to pay the price of conversion and had sought refuge across the frontier.³

Crypto-Judaism among the New Christians of Portugal was to prove hardy enough to survive for centuries. In attempting to explain this remarkable endurance scholars have usually stressed two factors. In contrast to Spain it is argued that conversion in Portugal, being entirely and literally forced, overcame thousands of faithful Jews and not only the religiously weak, while at the same time it included some of the most tenacious elements from Spain itself. Moreover, after 1497 some four decades were to elapse before the introduction of the Portuguese Inquisition. This respite allowed the Conversos ample time to accommodate themselves to conditions and to create viable forms of crypto-Jewish life.⁴ However, while these factors certainly played a part in the formation of Portuguese Marranism, they are insufficient to explain the phenomenon as a whole. After all, in Spain, at least in 1391, it was not only the weakest elements who were converted. And, while the Portuguese Conversos faced no Inquisition between 1497 and 1536, the same was true of the Spanish Conversos from 1391 to 1478. Moreover, the latter, during all this time, had before their eyes the example of a living Judaism professed in the homes, schools, and synagogues of the *aljamas*. In Portugal, conversion and the extinction of open Jewish life occurred simultaneously.

But perhaps it is precisely here that the key should be sought. What was of decisive import in Portugal was the fact that there the *community itself* was converted, *in toto*, whereas in Spain the

³ Portuguese Jewry in the 15th century is surveyed by Meyer Kayserling, *Geschichte der Juden in Portugal* (Leipzig, 1867), chs. 4-7, and J. Mendes dos Remedios, *Os Judeus em Portugal*, I (Coimbra, 1895), chs. 4-5. A study of Portuguese Jewish history prior to 1497, based on extensive archival research comparable to that which has been lavished on the Jews of medieval Spain, is still a major desideratum.

⁴ See Roth, *Marranos*, pp. 61 f.; cf. Révah, "Les marranes," p. 36.

community had remained throughout, even though eroded and diminished in number, outside the pale of conversion. Schematically, we might outline the progression in both countries as follows:

- In Spain: a) Before 1391 The Jewish community.
 b) 1391-1492 Conversos *plus* the Jewish community.
 c) After 1492 Conversos *minus* the expelled Jewish community.
- In Portugal: a) Before 1497 The Jewish community.
 b) After 1497 A converted Jewish community, minus individual exiles.

In effect, Portugal skipped the intermediate phase through which Spain had passed: the existence, side by side, of Conversos and a normative Jewish community. Consequently, the intervals between conversion and the establishment of the Inquisition (1391-1478 in Spain, 1497-1536 in Portugal) are, although superficially parallel, not at all analogous in the two countries. We must try to envision at least some of the implications of this fundamental datum. It means first that in Portugal, unlike Spain, there was no period of tension between Conversos and professing Jews, for after 1497 all who had been Jews were suddenly converts. Portuguese Jewry thus evaded the corrosive intracommunal and intrafamilial ruptures which conversion had brought to Spanish Jewry, and which had plagued the latter through much of the fifteenth century. Moreover, in Spain, where conversion had engulfed only a part of Jewry, the energies of those who had remained professing Jews were still channeled into the normative community and its institutions up to the very time of the Expulsion. In Portugal all Jewish energies were immediately absorbed in 1497 into the converted community. Individual social ties remained intact. Though formal instruments of social control abruptly lost their force, age-old communal bonds could not be unraveled overnight. Surely in the wake of the great catastrophe the unwillingly baptized rabbis and scholars did not suddenly cease to teach and guide, albeit surreptitiously, nor did the men who had been prominent in the community immediately lose their influence. Undoubtedly there were Jews who had previously lacked only the

initiative or the courage to convert voluntarily as individuals, and who now welcomed the forced mass baptism as an opportunity to live as Christians with a clear conscience. But for the many who remained constant at heart, the possibility of a viable crypto-Jewish life must have been vastly enhanced by the fact that the social base so essential to such a life had been transmuted, but not really obliterated.

Apart from its social consequences, the simultaneous conversion in Portugal of the entire Jewry of the country must have had an even deeper impact on the self-image of the Conversos themselves. We have already noted that the presence in fifteenth-century Spain of an ongoing Jewish community provided the Conversos with an example of living Judaism. Of this the Portuguese convert was deprived. But, by the same token, there was no normative community in Portugal to serve him daily as a visible reminder that he was now outside its fold, or to place his Jewish identity in doubt. Here conversion was, in a real sense, normative for the corporate Jewish group. This was now "Jewry"; there was no other. It is that very corporate character of conversion in Portugal which invested the Portuguese converts with the cohesion and solidarity of having shared one destiny from the very outset. A Spanish New Christian in later times might well speculate whether his forbears had accepted baptism under duress during a pogrom in 1391, or perhaps out of conviction at the time of the Disputation of Tortosa, or in order to remain in Spain at the time of the Expulsion. The Portuguese New Christian was not prey to such ambiguities. He knew, or he could assume, the collective origins of his entire group, indeed of all the New Christians in the land. His fathers had not entered Christianity as individuals; they had been swept up in the common fate of all Jewry. Thus, to a degree not paralleled by the Spanish New Christians, those of Portugal possessed a genuinely historical group character of which, as we shall see, Portuguese society was itself instinctively aware. In terms of sheer number, it may well be that more Jews had been converted in Spain than in Portugal. But the essential difference between conversion in the two countries was not quantitative, but qualitative. Despite the collapse of its traditional structure and institutions, a converted Portuguese Jewry

retained, at least initially, much of the vital force and solidarity of the community itself.

Possessed of this strength, the Portuguese Conversos could take full advantage of the years prior to the establishment of the Inquisition. It is in the period from 1497 to 1536 that the New Christians penetrated into the highest echelons of Portuguese commerce and finance. But it is also during this time that various modes of crypto-Jewish life became firmly entrenched among thousands of them. The group vitality which we have stressed was amply manifested time and again in the elaborate negotiations of the New Christians to prevent the introduction of the Inquisition. Throughout the transactions with king, Pope, and Curia, involving the most arduous diplomatic activity abroad and the raising of huge sums of money at home, the Conversos moved collectively through their spokesmen and representatives. They acted, in fact, as a group in whom the earlier communal traditions of Portuguese Jewry still manifested a considerable measure of their original vigor. It was not for lack of common effort or leadership that the endeavor ended in failure. In 1536 John III obtained papal consent for the establishment of the Inquisition in his domains. The first formal *auto-da-fé* was held in Lisbon in 1540. By 1547, after some temporary setbacks, the Portuguese Inquisition was in full and unimpeded operation. It was often to exceed in ferocity its Spanish prototype and counterpart.⁵

Through an unexpected development in the Peninsula, however, the destinies of the New Christians in the two kingdoms were fated to converge and to attain a new dimension. In 1580 Portugal was annexed to Spain in a personal union under Philip II. The Portuguese New Christians, who had by now endured more than forty years of intense inquisitorial harassment, placed great hopes in the union, though these were not immediately realized. When the Portuguese Cortes met to swear its allegiance to Philip, the estates insisted that no Conversos be admitted to any office. At the same time the latter petitioned the king for the total abolition of legal

⁵ The period 1497-1536 is treated in great detail in Alexandre Herculano's classic, *Da origem e estabelecimento da Inquisição em Portugal* (3 vols., Lisbon, 1854-59).

distinctions between New and Old Christians, and asked also that the Crown intervene to obtain for them a General Pardon from the Holy See. Philip denied both these requests. When he came to Lisbon to be crowned, he personally attended an *auto-da-fé* held on April 1, 1582. All the legal disabilities remained in force.⁶

Nevertheless, the union ushered in a new era. As, periodically, freedom of movement was obtained, there began an ever-increasing emigration of New Christians from Portugal into Spain.⁷ This influx, which eventually reached massive proportions, was doubly motivated. Compared to the radical decline of the Portuguese economy, Spain, wealthier and politically dominant, seemed now a land full of opportunities. Again, relative to the fury of inquisitorial persecution in Portugal, Spain must have appeared, in the eyes of many, almost a refuge. Though Portugal had been annexed, the Portuguese Inquisition was not merged with that of Castile, but remained autonomous. Only the nomination of the Inquisitor General belonged to the Spanish Crown. Between 1581 and 1600 the three Portuguese tribunals held no less than fifty *autos-da-fé*. Most significantly, however, the Spanish Inquisition did not punish crimes against the faith which were committed in Portugal. At least as late as 1630, a decade before Portugal regained its independence, there was still no formal provision for extradition, and Castilian tribunals did not usually honor such requests from the Portuguese inquisitors.⁸

Thus the lure of new economic horizons and the desire to find some measure of relief from religious persecution combined, after 1580, to alter radically the geographical distribution of the Peninsular New Christians. Around 1599 the Spanish Dominican Fray Augustín Salucio, pleading for the elimination of legal discriminations between New and Old Christians, could still muster the

⁶ J. Lúcio d'Azevedo, *História dos Christãos-Novos portugueses* (Lisbon, 1921), pp. 149 f.

⁷ On emigration after 1580 and its effects, see Lea, *Inquisition*, III, 266 f.; Roth, *Marranos*, pp. 85 f.; Domínguez Ortiz, *Clase social*, p. 82.

⁸ Lea, *Inquisition*, III, 265 f., 278.

argument that Judaizers hardly exist in the Spain of his time.⁹ By 1640 the royal chronicler José Pellicer y Tovar cries out in frustration that "one of the calamities which must be considered with the greatest attention and grief is to see Spain filled on all sides with Jews, enemies of our Holy Catholic Faith!"¹⁰ His voice is only one among many. A Spain which, in the late sixteenth century, had thought itself largely freed of Jewish concerns, now found itself in the seventeenth century obsessed once more with the age-old problem. The pendulum, after completing its arc, had swung back to its point of origin. The incursion into Spain of Portuguese New Christians was of such dimensions and impact that, to the Spaniards of the seventeenth century, "Portuguese" was virtually synonymous with "Jew." So close was the identification that in 1646 the Jesuit Sebastián Gonzáles could describe several Portuguese, who had been arrested by the Inquisition in Madrid, as having been imprisoned simply *for what they are*.¹¹ The Portuguese people themselves complained that often, when traveling abroad, they were automatically stigmatized as Judaizers, simply because of their land of origin.¹²

⁹ "Pues quién no vé en cuán diferente estado se halla ahora el reyno, y cuánta seguridad hay en general de la gente que tiene alguna raza?" in Agustín Salucio, *Discurso acerca de la justicia y buen gobierno de España en los estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, printed in *Semanario erudito*, XV (Madrid, 1788), 165.

¹⁰ "De verdad, una de las desdichas que se deben reparar con mas atención y lástima, es ver a España tan llena por todos lados de Judíos, enemigos de nuestra Santa fe Católica," in José Pellicer y Tovar, *Avisos históricos, que comprehenden las noticias y sucesos particulares, ocurridos en nuestra monarquía desde al año de 1639*, in *Semanario erudito*, XXXI (Madrid, 1790), 165.

According to the calculations of Albert Girard there were, around the year 1640, some 2,000 Portuguese merchants in Seville alone, and most of them were New Christians. See his *Le commerce français à Séville et Cadix au temps des Hapsbourg* (Paris, 1932), pp. 39 f.

¹¹ "Tres días ha prendieron también por la Inquisición á siete ú ocho portugueses por lo que suelen" (*Cartas de algunos PP. de la Compañía de Jesus sobre los sucesos de la monarquía entre los años de 1634 y 1648*, in *Memorial Histórico Español*, XVIII [Madrid, 1864], 420; letter of October 23, 1646).

¹² "Portuguezes e judeus já são synônimos," writes the great 17th-century Portuguese Jesuit, Padre António Vieira. See his *Obras inéditas* (Lisbon, 1856), III, 93. For other similar citations see Edward Glaser, "Referencias antisemitas

One of the effects of the entry of the Portuguese New Christians was the recrudescence of the activity of the Spanish Inquisition which, as we have noted, had shown a diminishing interest in Judaizers in the decades prior to 1580. Already in 1595 ninety-eight Judaizers appeared at an *auto* in Seville.¹³ Beginning in 1625 the majority of those charged with Judaizing by the Inquisition of Córdoba were "Portuguese" living in Andalucía.¹⁴ Throughout the seventeenth century no Spanish *auto de fe* will lack them. Most of the accused will be of Portuguese origin and will bear Portuguese names. To some degree, the advent of the "Portuguese" also revived crypto-Jewish tendencies among the Spanish New Christians. In any case, as far as may be learned from the partially preserved records of the Spanish Inquisition, the problem of Judaizing heresies did not recede again until the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁵

"Marranism" in Spain during this second phase thus exhibited a remarkable tenacity. Nevertheless, it should be clear that, although all New Christians may have been generically suspected of Judaizing, they were by no means all of them Judaizers. The "Mar-

en la literatura peninsular de la Edad de Oro," *Nueva revista de filología hispánica*, VIII (1954), 41, n. 5.

The Spaniards themselves often suffered from being called "Marranos" by foreigners. There is abundant material on this in Arturo Farinelli's *Marrano: storia di un vituperio* (Geneva, 1925), especially pp. 67-71. Nevertheless, there was a difference. In the case of the Portuguese the identification as Jews was already so complete that no other epithet was required. "Portuguese" alone sufficed.

¹³ Domínguez Ortiz, *Clase social*, p. 83.

¹⁴ See *Colección de los autos generales y particulares de fé, celebrados por el Tribunal de la Inquisición de Córdoba. Anotados y dados a luz en 1836 por el Lic. Gaspar Matute y Luquin* (Madrid, 1912).

¹⁵ As late as 1720 a secret "synagogue" of some twenty families, whose members had held services since 1707, was uncovered in Madrid. In 1714 they had elected a rabbi, whose name was sent to the Jewish community of Leghorn for confirmation. Probably as a result of this scandalous revelation, there began a new wave of inquisitorial activity in which, between 1721 and 1727, at least 820 cases of Judaizing were tried in Spain. See Lea, *Inquisition*, III, 30 f. Compare now, in greater detail, Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, III, 46-79 ("Los judaizantes de Madrid en los primeros años del reinado de Felipe V"), and 80-118 ("La gran represión final").

ranos" were a *part* of the New Christian group, but were not coextensive with it. Only if we bear this distinction in mind can we hope to arrive at an appreciation of Marranism itself, especially as it was manifested in the seventeenth century.

THE "MEN OF THE NATION"

Let us first examine the larger entity.

Against the background of Peninsular life in the seventeenth century the New Christians confront us, before all else, as a social class which had been compelled, through the generations, to bear the curse and stigma of its Jewish origins. While individual families of Converso descendants in this period could be absorbed successfully into the Old Christian society, the majority remained a separate, unintegrated group. The basic pattern had already crystallized in the fifteenth century with the formulation in Spain of the first statutes of so-called *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood), barring those of Jewish or Moorish ancestry from various offices, titles, and honors. These discriminatory provisions, which can be traced formally to the famous *Sentencia-Estatuto* of Toledo (1449), were themselves the expression of a deeply ingrained resentment of the Conversos. Alien to traditional Christian teaching, essentially subversive of the tremendous missionary effort previously exerted against Spanish Jewry by church and state, the statutes of *limpieza* incarnated the paradoxes posed by the very success of that effort.¹⁶

¹⁶ The most comprehensive study of the statutes, their development, and the debates they engendered is available in Albert A. Sicroff's important monograph *Les controverses des statuts de pureté de sang en Espagne du XV^e au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1960). Much of Domínguez Ortiz, *Clase social*, is devoted to the same subject. Cf. also Caro Baroja, *Judios*, II, 267-323. Américo Castro's contention (*Structure*, pp. 525 ff.) that Spanish ideas on *limpieza de sangre* were a heritage derived from the Jews of Spain is, I believe, effectively refuted by Sicroff (p. 88, n. 98). For another criticism see Caro Baroja, II, 297. Sicroff also rejects the suggestion of Domínguez Ortiz that the antecedents are to be sought in the statutes of certain military brotherhoods of the 13th and 14th centuries, for these were patently

Until masses of its Jews had been brought to the baptismal font, Spain, along with the rest of medieval Europe, had viewed the Jewish problem in one dimension: as a problem of religious conversion. It was precisely when conversion had been achieved on an unprecedented scale that there had ensued a realization of the basic inadequacy of the conversionist solution. For in the eyes of the rest of the population nothing beneficial had been accomplished thereby. Names had been altered, religious allegiances had shifted, but, even discounting the question of religious sincerity, today's Christian was still recognizable as yesterday's Jew. What was even worse, his conversion had only made him more dangerous as a competitor, and, because he could now present a Christian façade, his influence appeared all the more insidious. A comparable reaction followed in Portugal in the wake of the forced baptism of 1497.¹⁷ In both countries the professing Jew had at least been a clearly defined entity. He had lived in his own quarter. He could be hedged about with restrictive laws and be made to pay special taxes. An individual convert could always be welcomed. But, when thousands of Jews had been baptized within the space of a few decades, it seemed to many as though the Jews had been transported bodily, though under another guise, into the very midst of the Christian social fabric. Here was a new and ambiguous breed that fitted into no familiar category, somehow neither Jew nor Christian. Baptism, whether forced or voluntary, appeared to have served primarily to

motivated by political and social, rather than religious and racial, considerations.

An analogue may be found, however, in the discriminatory provisions against Jewish converts in the Visigothic codes. Curiously, none of the aforementioned scholars has seen fit to discuss the Visigothic legislation in this context. Castro's general insistence on the break in continuity between Visigothic and later Christian Spain does not affect the importance of Visigothic legal precedents. Unfortunately, beyond the treatment of the Jews in Visigothic law, we know almost nothing of Jewish life in Spain during that period. For a succinct analysis of all available information on Visigothic Jewry, see Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (2d ed.; New York, 1957), III, 33-46.

¹⁷ Hostility to the Portuguese New Christians reached its initial climax in April, 1506, when violent anti-Converso riots erupted in Lisbon. See Mendes dos Remédios, *Judeus em Portugal*, I, 308-20; D'Azevedo, *Christãos-Novos*, pp. 59 f.

Marranos in the Seventeenth Century

invalidate all the former legal disabilities. The Jewish chronicler Solomon ibn Verga, himself an exile from Spain, undoubtedly reflects the mood of many Spanish Christians in his day when, in a fictitious dialogue, he records the advice allegedly given by a courtier to a king of Spain:

There is nothing to be gained by their conversion. They will rather become overweening against the true Christians, without fear, once they are held to appear as Christians. And the laws of the kingdom which used to be given while they were Jews will no longer be issued.¹⁸

The statutes of *limpieza* must be understood in this context. They originated as an attempt, ultimately successful, to find new juridical means to impose legal restrictions against the Converso, now that the old laws which had been formulated against professing Jews no longer applied. Thus they mark the ironic retaliation of Iberian society against the intrusion of the Jew through a conversion toward which that same society had labored so assiduously.

The older Jewry laws had been predicated on a distinction in religion. The Jew belonged to a different community of faith which was tolerated within the Christian state, but for which a special body of legislation was necessary and justifiable. If new barriers were to be erected they could no longer be based on a divergence of faith which, theoretically, at least, no longer existed. Though it might conceivably be embellished with theological rationales, the only foundation remaining for special legislation against the Converso and his descendants was necessarily an *ethnic* one. Not faith but *blood* was to be the decisive factor. In subsequent centuries apologists for the statutes would try to justify them by general allegations concerning the heretical proclivities of the descendants of the Jews. But significantly, *anyone* of known Jewish ancestry, regardless of his personal piety, belonged automatically to the class of those subject to the statutes. *Limpieza de sangre* came to overshadow *limpieza de fe*.

Despite the alarm over the Converso threat Spain did not easily

¹⁸ Solomon ibn Verga, *Shebet Yehudah*, ed. A. Shohat (Jerusalem, 1957), no. 64, p. 129.

accept the statutes of *limpieza* in the initial phases. For a religion which had come into the world proclaiming its indifference to the distinction between Jew and Greek, the theological objections were obvious. In addition, some authorities sensed immediately the potential dangers of such laws for a land in which Christian, Jewish, and Moorish blood had mingled for centuries. When the *Sentencia-Estatuto*, excluding persons of Jewish extraction from municipal offices in Toledo, was passed in 1449 at the instigation of the *alcalde mayor* Pedro Sarmiento, the subsequent outcry caused it to fall into abeyance. It was opposed by the king, by the Pope, and by prominent clergy and statesmen. But although the controversy over *limpieza de sangre* was to continue for centuries in both Spain and Portugal, the progress of the statutes was inexorable. The century following 1449 saw a gradual multiplication of the statutes, adopted sporadically by various corporate bodies in Spanish society.¹⁹

The most serious impetus came in 1547, when a new statute, instituted by the archbishop Juan Martínez Silíceo, was promulgated in the Cathedral Chapter of Toledo. Again, as before, there was considerable vocal opposition. But this statute was destined to stand and, indeed, to serve as the classic model. In 1555 it was ratified by Pope Paul VI and a year later it was upheld by Philip II, thus setting the seal of royal and papal approval on a practice that was already firmly established.²⁰ It is noteworthy that this development took place just at the time when the last discernible vestiges of crypto-Judaism were disappearing and the Spanish New Christians seem to have been on the threshold of complete assimilation. Yet from this point on *limpieza de sangre* rapidly became an official requirement for entry into almost any important honor or office in Spain. As the network of statutes multiplied, it was hard to find a significant area of Spanish public life which did not require of the candidate *pruebas de limpieza*, certifying him to be free of the stain of Jewish or Moorish blood. From Spain the statutes passed to

¹⁹ On the *Sentencia-Estatuto* and the reactions to it see Sicroff, *Controverses*, pp. 32-62. The proliferation of statutes of *limpieza* up to 1547 is traced *ibid.*, pp. 88-94. Cf. Domínguez Ortiz, *Clase social*, pp. 26-50.

²⁰ Sicroff, *Controverses*, ch. III, pp. 95-139.

Portugal. When the Portuguese New Christians began to flow into Spain after 1580, they found the statutes rampant everywhere. By the seventeenth century the corporations in Spain with requirements of *limpieza* included: the military orders (Santiago, Calatrava, Alcántara, and others); judicial tribunals, among them the Inquisition itself; cathedrals and Chapters; various religious orders; the *colegios mayores* at the universities; certain provinces and towns; public and municipal offices; brotherhoods and confraternities.

The statutes, and the mentality they represented, perpetuated the distinction between New and Old Christians for centuries. They thus helped to maintain a class consciousness even among those descendants of the original Conversos whose Jewish awareness had atrophied. The fact is that few of them were able to forget their origins completely, even if they may have wished to do so. The statutes were as forceful a reminder of their Jewish extraction as the insults to which they were often subjected in daily life. For the term "New Christian" was both a social stigma and a legal category. The two pressures reinforced one another sufficiently to mark the entire group as a class apart.

But there was also another factor which contributed significantly to the self-awareness of this class. If legal disabilities and social barriers provided the negative impulses, the economic sphere provided a positive catalyst.

It is no accident that in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Portugal one of the recurring synonyms for *crístãos novos* is *homens de negócios*—"Men of Affairs." The phrase is a terminological witness to the fact that in the Portuguese mind the New Christians were, above all, the men of business and commerce.²¹ This appraisal was not unjustified, for in these centuries the New Christians were ubiquitous in every area of Portuguese commerce and high finance.

²¹ A striking parallel is to be found in Southern Italy several centuries earlier. There, subsequent to the mass conversion of Jews in 1290-93, official usage tended to designate the descendants of the converts not merely as *neofiti* but, synonymously, as *mercanti*. See Vito Vitale, "Un particolare ignorato di storia pugliese: neofiti e mercanti," in *Studi di storia napoletana in onore di Michelangelo Schipa* (Naples, 1926), pp. 233-46.

At times, indeed, they seemed in a position of almost total control.²² Much of overseas trade was in their hands. They virtually monopolized the traffic in sugar, slaves, spices, and other colonial commodities.²³ Their commercial links extended to the mercantile colonies of New Christian *émigrés* scattered throughout the world, as well as to the Jewish centers of Europe and the Near East. Often these also proved to be family ties. Various members of the same families could be found living in Portugal as New Christians, in France as "Portuguese," and in Holland, Italy, or the Ottoman Empire as Jews. Far from being an obstacle, the dispersion and diverse religious affiliations of the various relatives often gave them all a decided advantage over their commercial rivals in the international arena.²⁴

Within Portugal itself the New Christians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be regarded as approximating a bour-

²² "Porque esse poco o mucho dinero que tiene el Reyno, ellos [i.e., the New Christians] lo manejan . . ." writes Duarte Gómez Solís in 1622 in his *Discurso sobre los comercios de las dos Indias*, ed. Moses Bensabat Amzalak (Lisbon, 1943), p. 20. Speaking of the Portuguese empire, he continues: "Y de todo esto es el nerbio el comercio, que solo se sustenta entre los mercaderes de la casta Hebrea, que con sus industrias lo ilustraron, y sin ellos quedavan todos los comercios perdidos, y acabados, porque la nobleza de los cristianos viejos no se precia de mercaderes, ni quando lo sea no tiene la industria de los de la casta Hebrea." (*Ibid.*, pp. 120 f. My italics.)

²³ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Política y hacienda de Felipe IV* (Madrid, 1960), p. 127.

²⁴ An instructive example of the worldwide dispersion of one family with an extreme diversity of religious commitments will be found in I. S. Révah's genealogical reconstruction of "Une famille de 'Nouveau-Chrétiens': les Bocarro Francês," *REJ*, CXVI (1957), 73-87. The complex networks of many New Christian mercantile enterprises may now be examined in Hermann Kellenbenz's massive study of *Sephardim an der Unteren Elbe: Ihre wirtschaftliche und politische Bedeutung vom Ende des 16. bis zum Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1958). Focusing mainly on the Sephardic communities of Hamburg, Glückstadt, Altona, and some lesser satellites, Kellenbenz has been able to trace their lines of commercial contact with the Iberian Peninsula and around the world. Particularly rich in genealogical information, the book should serve as a model for much needed economic histories of other Sephardic centers in Holland, France, and Italy.

geoisie. They were, classically, the urban middle class.²⁵ After the union of 1580 they came to occupy a similar position in Spain. In both countries the New Christians were particularly suited to fill the vacuum between a peasantry which could not rise and an aristocracy whose disdain for all forms of commercial activity was proverbial. From this vantage point, we should also understand an aspect which has perhaps not been sufficiently stressed—that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the New Christians performed an economic function and occupied a socioeconomic position somewhat analogous to that of their Jewish forebears in the Middle Ages. The *homem de negócios*, whether a modest tradesman, tax farmer, or court financier, was descended by more than blood alone from the Jew of the *aljama*.²⁶

Bonds of economic interest and endeavor must have enhanced significantly the sense of group cohesion among the New Christians of the Peninsula. Though representatives of all occupations were to be found among them, and a considerable number were simple artisans and petty merchants, they were on the whole a prosperous class. Some, indeed, amassed huge fortunes. Although their wealth was a perpetual subject for attack and propaganda by their enemies,

²⁵ On the generally urban and bourgeois character of the New Christians see Domínguez Ortiz, *Clase social*, pp. 143-45; Frederic Mauro, "La bourgeoisie portugaise au XVII^e siècle," *XVII^e siècle* (Bulletin of the Société d'Étude du XVII^e Siècle), no. 40 (1958), pp. 235-57; A. J. Saraiva, *História da cultura em Portugal*, III, 30. Saraiva's thesis that the Portuguese New Christians were *exclusively* a socioeconomic entity, with no real religious or ethnic significance of their own, is analyzed and rejected by Révah, "Les marranes," pp. 47-52.

²⁶ One is tempted to speculate further that this continuity of economic function may contribute to an understanding of the different fates suffered by the Jews of Spain and Portugal in the climactic last decade of the 15th century. In the final analysis Ferdinand and Isabella may have found it *possible* to expel all professing Jews from Spain precisely because the large Converso group would still remain to fulfill the traditional Jewish economic roles. By the same token, Manoel's reluctance to expel the Jews from Portugal becomes more comprehensible in view of the absence of a Converso class in his realm. His final decision to enforce mass baptism resolved the dilemma, for, while destroying open Jewish life in his realm, it enabled him to retain his Jews. Certainly it was only because they were indispensable to the economy that the New Christians of the 17th century did not share the fate of the *Moriscos*, expelled by Philip III in 1609.

the New Christians were very much aware that their economic usefulness and power constituted their greatest safeguard. Privileges and pardons affording them some respite from the Inquisition, or granting them permission to emigrate, had to be bought from the Crown, and money was essential to any negotiation. As in their general position within the economy, so in their particular relation to the royal treasury, the position of the New Christians as a class was not without parallel to that of their medieval Jewish forebears.²⁷

But in the final analysis the essence of the group is not to be grasped through the role it played, nor can it be defined merely within a sociological framework. The economic, social, and even religious configurations of the Conversos, are but the variables which derive from a fundamental substructure, whose character is conveyed with particular force in the use of another term throughout the Portuguese documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The equation *crístãos novos* = *homens de negócios* yields simply: *homens da nação*—"the Men of the Nation."²⁸ No qualifying adjective

²⁷ The granting of such privileges to the New Christians in the 16th century, their periodic revocations and renewals, and the fiscal manoeuvres which attended the transactions, are described by Herculano, *Origem, passim.*; cf. J. Mendes dos Remédios, "Os Judeus e os perdões gerais, de D. Manoel ao Cardeal-Rei," *Biblos*, I (1925), 631-55, reprinted as ch. 2 of his *Judeus em Portugal*, II (Lisbon, 1928), 43-67. In the 17th century, during the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV, the avarice of the Crown in exploiting the Pardons became even more obvious. See *infra*, ch. II.

²⁸ Variants: *gente da nação*, *os da nação Hebréa* (or merely *os da nação*), etc. For the interesting conflate *os da nação dos cristãos novos*, see the edict of 1579 issued by Dom Henrique in Mendes dos Remédios, *Judeus em Portugal*, II, 60.

A preference among the Conversos themselves to be called *homens da nação* is alleged by one of their most virulent adversaries in the 17th century, the Portuguese Vicente da Costa Mattos. (He claims that they avoid the use of *crístãos novos* because they abhor any form of the name "Christian".) See his *Breve discurso contra a herética perfídia do iudaísmo* (Lisbon, 1623), pp. 148 f. Though the reason adduced by him is suspect, he may have been correct about the practice itself. In an anti-inquisitorial tract of the 17th century, often erroneously attributed to Padre Vieira, we are told of a conversation between several New Christians after a peasant had offered to sell them some hares and one of them had refused to buy. His friend wanted to know the reason, and said to him: "*Todos somos de uma nação; bem podeis dizer porque não quisestes aquellas lebres.*"

was necessary. Everyone understood what was meant. If the term *cristãos novos* had a theological ring to it, and *homens de negócios* emerged directly from the economic realm, the phrase *homens da nação* had an exclusively ethnic impact. The "Nation" is the Jewish nation, understood in Portugal as including anyone of Jewish origin. No more eloquent testimony is needed to demonstrate for us that the primary category with which we are dealing is an ethnic one, though it is conditioned by socioeconomic factors.²⁹ Here, then, is the profounder meaning of that conversion of the total community in Portugal, whose significance in another context we have already remarked. As the medieval Jewish community represented a "national" unit of a nation in exile, so the converted community is not a mere agglomeration of individuals. It continues in the eyes of the Portuguese to possess a national characteristic, which indeed it bequeaths to subsequent generations.³⁰

(*Notícias reconditas do modo de proceder da Inquisição com os seus presos*, in António Vieira, *Obras escolhidas*, ed. António Sérgio and Hernâni Cidade, IV [Lisbon, 1951], 211. My italics.)

²⁹ While there was considerable intermarriage at various times, the ethnic continuity of the New Christians was generally reinforced by endogamous tendencies, especially among those who Judaized. See the evidence in Révah, "Les marranes," pp. 49-50, and Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, I, 395-403. The subject is also treated in rabbinic responsa of the 17th century. Thus Yom Tob Zaḥalon asserted that, if a Converso family in the Peninsula was found to intermarry with Old Christians, it was ostracized by the others. See his *Responsa* (Venice, 1694), no. 148. A similar opinion was held by Joseph ibn Leb (d. 1579), *Responsa* (Amsterdam, 1762), I, no. 15, adding that, though reluctant to marry Christians, many Conversos had Christian paramours. Joseph Trani, *Responsa* (Venice, 1645), Eben ha-'ezer no. 18, agreed that the Conversos were largely endogamous, but insisted it was simply out of fear that an Old Christian spouse would betray their secrets.

³⁰ That there is some fundamental reality of the Jewish nation which may survive religious conversion was already grasped intuitively by Isaac Abravanel, though he discussed the implications only in a messianic context. See, *inter alia*, his *Mashmi'a yeshu'ah* (Offenbach, 1767), fols. 24v, 52v-54r, and Commentary on Isaiah 43:2-7. In effect, according to Abravanel, religious conversion cannot bring about the ethnic assimilation of the Jews, and the Conversos are by no means removed from the collective destiny of the Jewish people. That destiny continues to be shared by all who are of Jewish *origin*, i.e., "the Ingathering shall

It should be stressed that this survival of the ethnic "national" group provided the very ground on which Marranism might flourish, and that without it the phenomenon of Marrano religion would have been ephemeral at best. In other words, it was the continuing existence in the Peninsula of a metamorphosed Jewish "nation" which was basic to the very possibility of a metamorphosed "Judaism," in whatever form that might assume.

MARRANISM:

SOME METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

That a secret Judaism indeed existed among the New Christians, and that many of the "Men of the Nation" were really crypto-Jews, has generally been accepted as axiomatic in Marrano historiography. It is only in recent years that some voices have been raised to deny radically the very notion of the Jewish character of the Marranos. Marranism, it is claimed, died out very rapidly among the Conversos, actually in the first generation. The Spanish Inquisition was only the instrument employed in an attempt to destroy the Converso class, and it fabricated the charge of crypto-Judaism in fifteenth-century Spain merely in order to proceed against the Conversos. At most, inquisitorial persecution may have stimulated a short-lived revival of Jewish awareness. On the whole, however, what we call "Marranism" was a fiction deliberately created and retained as a weapon by the enemies of the New Christians.³¹

Though I firmly disagree with these propositions, the present

be for the Children of Israel who are called Jacob, and also for the Marranos who are of their seed (Comm. ad Isa. 43:7). (My italics.) Cf. the remarks of Yitzhak Baer, *Galut* (New York, 1947), p. 64, and B. Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Philosopher* (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 203 f.

³¹ So Ellis Rivkin, "The Utilization of Non-Jewish Sources for the Reconstruction of Jewish History," *JQR* (N.S.), XLVIII (1957-58), especially pp. 191-203. "The documents of the Inquisition cannot be used as evidence for the religious life of the Conversos, but as a source only for what the Inquisition wanted the people to believe about the Conversos" (*ibid.*, p. 191). (My italics.) See the critique of Rivkin's

study would derive scant benefit from a detailed polemic on the reality of Marranism in the fifteenth century.³² Even if it were demonstrated conclusively that the Spanish Marranos had effectively shed their Jewish identity prior to the establishment of the Inquisition, this would by no means rule out the existence of a clandestine Judaism in subsequent periods. Conversely, I assume that no array of evidence for a genuine Marranism in the seventeenth century will necessarily persuade the proponents of the thesis as to its existence in the fifteenth. For the fact is that any crypto-Jewish phenomenon after 1478 is automatically attributed by them to the stimulus of the Inquisition itself.³³ Nonetheless, the thesis does have implications for the later periods as well. Despite the obvious differences between the fifteenth- and seventeenth-century situations, such methodological problems as the comparative reliability of rabbinic responsa and inquisitorial documents are common to both.³⁴ Above all, the question of defining so essentially vague a

construction by Révah, "Les marranes," pp. 45-47. The most serious and thorough attempt to sustain such a thesis is B. Netanyahu's exhaustive study of *The Marranos of Spain from the Late XIVth to the Early XVIIth Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources* (New York, 1966). A companion volume on non-Hebrew sources is in preparation.

³² The reader is referred to the review of Netanyahu's book by Gerson D. Cohen in *Jewish Social Studies*, XXIX (1967), 178-84, with whose strictures my own generally coincide.

³³ E. g., Netanyahu, *Marranos of Spain*, p. 3: "It was not a powerful Marrano movement that provoked the establishment of the Inquisition, but it was the Inquisition that caused the temporary resurgence of the Spanish Marrano movement." Cf. *infra*, n. 62.

³⁴ Netanyahu recognizes that the forced conversion of Portuguese Jewry in 1497 introduced a new configuration to the Marrano problem. However, since he makes no real distinction between Spanish and Portuguese Marranism, he argues that this new "cycle" of Marranism ended "a century later with the same evaluation of the Portuguese Marranos that we found expressed regarding their Spanish predecessors when the former were about to complete *their cycle*" (*Marranos of Spain*, pp. 74 f.). As proof he cites the denial of the Jewishness of the Marranos by R. Jacob de Boton and by R. Isaac Gershon. With the exception of R. Joseph ibn Leb, he neglects to mention other equally prominent 17th-century rabbis who regarded the Marranos as Jews (see, e.g., *infra*, nn. 37, 39, 42). In any case, the problem of evaluating the responsa, be they pro or contra, remains.

term as the "Jewishness" of the Marranos merits our close attention, if only because it forces us to consider the nature of Marrano religion, and the peculiar circumstances of Marrano life.

Let us recognize at the outset that few phenomena can be more elusive of historical scrutiny than a secret religion whose subterranean life has been documented largely by its antagonists. In the case of Marranism we are, of course, largely dependent on the inquisitorial dossiers preserved in the Spanish and Portuguese archives. Here are recorded myriad interrogations and confessions of New Christians which are replete with the most minute details concerning their Jewish beliefs and practices. On the other hand, there exist also a considerable number of responsa written by rabbis of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which impugn the Jewish character of the Marranos, or regard them as total Christians. How are these conflicting testimonies to be properly evaluated and reconciled?

The basic credibility of the inquisitorial documents is the more easily established, and to do so it is not necessary to enter into the controversy on the original aims of the Spanish Inquisition itself. We can easily concede that its purposes were not exclusively religious but were mixed with certain political and pragmatic considerations. Still, one fact is germane: the archival records of the Inquisition were kept in the very strictest secrecy for the use of inquisitors alone, and remained so until the abolition of the Holy Office in the nineteenth century. To regard these documents as a means of spreading the fiction of crypto-Judaism for propaganda purposes presents a strange dilemma. It would mean that, in recording the details of Judaizing practices into the dossiers of the accused, the inquisitors were purposely transcribing a tissue of lies for the perusal of other inquisitors who were engaged in the same conspiracy. But this is manifestly absurd. Certainly we must approach these documents critically, bearing in mind the possibility of false denunciations, motives of confiscation, confessions extracted under torture, and similar factors. This is merely an invitation to the exercise of scholarly caution. It cannot possibly justify an a priori rejection of masses of inquisitorial documents spanning some three centuries and ranging from Spain and Portugal to Goa in the east and Chile in

the west. Of distortions there may be many, but the recording of Judaizing confessions was not an intramural game.³⁵ To view the inquisitors as involved in what amounts to a universal conspiracy of fabrication is to ignore the mentality of men of a bygone day, and to flatter them with Machiavellian intentions and capabilities somewhat beyond their reach. Indeed, in one seventeenth-century case which I shall analyze in detail in chapter III, that of the so-called *Cristo de la Paciencia*, there seems to be little doubt that the victims were innocent of the specific charge on which they were convicted. However, that conclusion is to be derived not from a generic dismissal of the reliability of inquisitorial documents but, quite to the contrary, by examining the internal evidence contained in the comprehensive dossiers so meticulously assembled in the case. As we shall see, the inquisitorial notaries did not level the recorded testimonies of witnesses to conform to one another, nor did they omit or disguise the doubts which even some of the inquisitors themselves entertained as to the guilt of the accused. Even in this case, where justice was perverted, the documents were not.

The problem of the rabbinic Responsa is more complex.³⁶ One can certainly present an array of rabbis, from Spanish exiles of the fifteenth century to Turkish authorities of the seventeenth, who expressed their dismay at the Marranos of Spain and Portugal and denied that they were to be any longer considered as Jews. One can also point to a significant number who thought otherwise.³⁷ But

³⁵ For a similar approach to the reliability of Jewish information recorded in the 13th and 14th centuries by the Papal Inquisition, see my study, "The Inquisition and the Jews of France in the Time of Bernard Gui," *Rutgers Hebraic Studies*, I (1965), especially pp. 34-60 (on the Jewish information in Gui's *Practica Inquisitionis*).

³⁶ The standard surveys of the Responsa literature bearing on the Marranos are H. J. Zimmels', *Die Marranen in der Rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1932), and Simha Assaf, "The Marranos of Spain and Portugal in the Responsa Literature" (Hebrew), *Me'assef* (of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographical Society), V, 19-61; reprinted in his *Be-'oholey Ya'akob* (Jerusalem, 1943), pp. 145-80.

³⁷ See, e.g., Samuel b. Abraham Aboab (1610-94), *Debar Shemuel* (Responsa; Venice, 1702), no. 45, fol. 18 f. Asked whether the descendants of the original Conversos are apostates, Aboab replied that this was true only of those who had

before one marshals a wealth of citations from rabbinic literature on either side, one should really consider that these sources have only a limited bearing on the Marrano situation in the Peninsula.

When the rabbis of the Sephardic diaspora dealt with the question of the "Jewishness" of the Marranos in their Responsa, their frame of reference was quite clear. They were almost invariably preoccupied with the very real problem of the *legal* status of the Marrano *as it affected their own communities*. They were forced to deal with the concrete problems which arose whenever Marrano emigrants arrived in a Jewish center and difficult cases had to be settled concerning marriage and divorce, levirate ties, inheritance, and a host of other legal complications. In assessing, whether positively or negatively, the Jewish status of the Conversos who were still in Spain or Portugal, each rabbi must have had in mind the practical consequences of his broad definition for the specific cases which came before him. The rabbinic evaluations of the Jewishness of the Conversos were therefore derived from a consideration of the problems of the emigrants interacting with the diaspora communities, rather than an objective appraisal of Marrano life within the Peninsula. This, in turn, often presented the rabbis with a frustrating alternative. For what might seem to be leniency and tolerance with regard to the theoretical status of the Conversos who remained in Spain and Portugal might necessarily mean an unmitigated harshness toward those who fled and returned openly to the Jewish fold.

To give but one common example: It frequently occurred that a Converso woman whose husband had died, and whose brother-in-law remained in the Peninsula, would arrive in an Italian or

a personal knowledge of Judaism and knew that "idolatry" is forbidden. But their children, who never knew the light of the Torah, are no different from Jewish children who live captive among non-Jews or among Karaites, whom Maimonides treats leniently. Cf. Yom Tob Zahalon, *Responsa*, no. 148, emphasizing the constancy of the Marrano women of Portugal, "from whom Torah and Judaism shall yet go forth!" (On this Responsum see *infra*, n. 39.) By far the harshest voice in the 17th century is that of Jacob de Boton (d. 1687), who claims that the Spanish Conversos are worse than Christians, and are to be treated more severely than ordinary apostates. See his *'Edut be-Ya'akob* (Salonika, 1720), no. 72, fol. 222.

Turkish Jewish community and desire to remarry. Should the rabbinic authorities put forth the view that the Conversos of Spain and Portugal were still considered as Jews, the results for this woman could be disastrous, for then she would still be subject to levirate marriage with the brother of her deceased husband. If he should refuse to leave the Peninsula and perform the ceremony of release (*haliṣah*), she might remain an *'agunah* for the rest of her life, unable ever to marry according to Jewish law.³⁸

Can one really doubt that such practical and humane considerations, rather than sober historical appraisals, were prominent in the minds of those rabbis who ruled the Marranos to be Christians? These negative Responsa are of great value for the study of the impact of Marrano emigration in the Jewish world from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries; they are most often irrelevant to an understanding of the realities of Marranism within the confines of the Peninsula itself. If Responsa be used at all, greater weight in the discussion may well be given to those of the rabbis who, *despite* the legal hazards involved, persisted in regarding the Peninsular Conversos as Jews. It is hard to conceive that rabbis such as Yom Tob Zaḥalon in the seventeenth century insisted on the Jewish status of the Conversos out of asperity toward those who fled and returned to open Jewish life.³⁹ If these rabbis were willing to risk a harsh

³⁸ Such cases in the 17th century are widely recorded. Partial references in Zimmels, *Marranen*, p. 14, n. 7.

The problem of the force of levirate ties was, of course, contingent on the more basic question of the validity of Converso marriages performed in the Peninsula. The answer to either of these problems would necessarily require taking a stand on the general issue of defining the theoretical status of the Peninsular Conversos in Jewish law.

³⁹ One of the most comprehensive discussions in the 17th century of the Jewish status of the Marranos is to be found in Yom Tob Zaḥalon's *Responsa*, no. 146, fols. 123r–125r. Written sometime between 1604 and 1615, it contains summaries of the literature on the subject until that time, and, what is more important, reflects the divergent opinions of contemporary rabbinic authorities.

The question brought before Zaḥalon had already been treated by several rabbis, and its tone reveals the opinion which had already been formed by those who asked it: "There were two brothers among the Marranos of Portugal who already these past 120 years are born outside the Faith, and [Jewish] rites of

decision in the individual case in order to sustain the general principle, it at least suggests that they considered the Jewishness of the Iberian Marranos to be a reality which could not, in all conscience, be ignored.

But the relevance of the Responsa to Peninsular realities is also suspect on the theoretical plane. Even a casual reading reveals immediately that the rabbis who regarded the Conversos adversely were judging them by traditional canons of Jewish behavior and observance. From the Responsa one can generally abstract three major considerations which moved many rabbis to deny the entire Converso group a place in the House of Israel. They are: a) the progressive decline of Jewish observance; b) the violation of Jewish law not only in public, but also "in private, where there is no fear";

marriage have been forgotten by them, for they do not marry [Jewishly] at all, and they serve idols, and violate the Sabbath in public. And one of the brothers came from there with his wife and married her in our presence according to the laws of Moses and of Israel, and died childless. And the unfortunate young woman wrote to her levir [i.e., the brother-in-law] to come here [Venice?] since the door is open to come without fear, for the Marranos have paid a large sum of money to the king for permission to emigrate where they please. And the brother replied that he does not desire to come. . . ." Is such a woman subject to her levir (and hence to a *haliṣah* which cannot be obtained)?

Isaac Gershon, to whom the case was first presented, cited all the authorities who held that the Marranos are no longer Jews and ruled that, since the original marriage was invalid, the woman had no levirate ties. Two colleagues, Moses Galante and Abraham Gabriel, attached their approbations to this decision.

Zaḥalon, however, rejected all their arguments, and concluded that the Marranos in the Peninsula are Jews "even unto a thousand generations," that their marriages are valid, and that their levirate ties must be sustained. There is no suspicion that they intermarry with Christian women, for such instances are extremely rare.

Sometime before Zaḥalon's decision was received, the woman remarried. The question now arose as to whether the couple should be forced to separate. In reply, Zaḥalon wrote another Responsum (no. 201, fol. 157r) in which he accepted this marriage as a fact and ruled that, while efforts should continue to bring the levir from Portugal to perform *haliṣah*, the woman might remain with her husband. Thus, in the final analysis, even Zaḥalon felt obliged to ignore his theoretical position out of concern for the plight of the woman. For further details on both responsa, cf. Zimmels' *Marranen*, pp. 152 ff.

c) failure to emigrate from the Peninsula at those times when the means and opportunity were present.

The artificiality of these criteria is readily apparent. They are based on fixed categories from which the human and psychological dimensions are entirely absent. Undoubtedly, within the framework of that which the Jewish *halakha* expects of a professing Jew, the Conversos and their descendants were very poor Jews indeed. But is observance of precepts a realistic standard by which to judge them? Surely, if they were renegades from the point of view of a contemporary rabbi, this still does not mean that they could not also have been heretics in the eyes of an Inquisitor. “Public” and “private” also hardly provide an illuminating distinction in an atmosphere of universal fear where even children intentionally or unwittingly betrayed their own parents to the Holy Office. As for the pragmatic test of emigration and flight, we can apply it only *in retrospect* to those who actually took the step. For those who remained behind this test is inadequate. It glosses over the complexity of human motivations, and displays little tolerance for human frailties.

We have but to apply the rabbinic standards to Marrano figures in the seventeenth century of whose Jewish aspirations there is no doubt. Thus, it is relatively easy to perceive the “Jewishness” of those who had already emigrated, simply by considering their subsequent Jewish careers. But how would the rabbinic criteria avail us in assessing the life of the very same persons *prior* to their emigration? Had Uriel da Costa been apprehended before reaching Amsterdam, could these standards enable us to make any positive statement about his Jewish character? We should find no external manifestation of Jewish behavior in the young man who was treasurer of a church in Oporto and who, as he himself later wrote, was “educated in the Catholic Faith and observed all its precepts.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ “Institutus fui, quemadmodum mos est illius regni, in religione Christiana Pontifica; et cum jam essem adolescens ac valde timerem damnationem aeternam, cupiebam exacte omnia observare.” (Uriel da Costa, *Exemplar Humanae Vitae*, printed as an appendix to Philip van Limborch, *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* [Gouda, 1687], p. 346.)

But at the same time we should also have no inkling of the stirrings and yearnings in his troubled soul, which finally led him to reject Christianity and flee to Holland. By the same token, Isaac Cardoso emerges in the ghetto of Verona as a major Jewish figure. But as Dr. Fernando Cardoso in Madrid he would hardly be considered a Jew, if tested by the norms of some of the Respona.⁴¹

What are we to say then, of the thousands of New Christians who did not take the decisive step of emigrating from the Peninsula? How many other Da Costas or Cardosos were there who did not have the courage to leave? Surely this does not of itself prove anything as to their secret beliefs and hopes. There were numerous factors behind this reluctance to depart which, though perhaps inadequate in the view of many rabbis, were still real enough. The universal hesitation of human beings to uproot themselves and brave the unknown is too obvious to require comment. The deep attachment of the Spanish and Portuguese New Christians to the lands of their birth should also come as no surprise when we ponder the tenacity and nostalgia with which Sephardic Jewry itself perpetuated its Iberian heritage through the centuries and throughout the world.

But there were also mundane problems which must be taken into serious account. The real dangers to be faced in attempting to flee the Peninsula are underscored both by those who took the step and by some of the rabbis themselves.⁴² So pervasive was the fear of

⁴¹ Abravanel certainly understood that no outward signs of Jewish observance were to be expected from the Marranos, but rather the fulfillment of “with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deut. 6: 2). See *Mashmi'a yeshu'ah*, p. 54r: ובקשתם משם — ר' ל, מתוך אותה העבודה שתעשו מפני האונס תבקשו את ה' אבל לא יהיה זה במעשה המצוות, מפני הפחד, כי אם בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך.

⁴² Da Costa, *Exemplar*, p. 347, speaking of his flight from Portugal: “Itaque navem adscendimus, non sine magno periculo, (non licet illis qui ab Hebraeis originem ducunt a regno discedere sine speciali Regis facultate). . . .” (My italics.)

In a Responsum written in 1655, Jacob Sasportas speaks of “those [Marranos] whose entire effort is to come [to a Jewish community], and who have risked their lives and endangered themselves . . . and the ‘Uncircumcised’ detected them and caught them like thieves in the act, and decreed death upon them . . . and they gave up their lives for the sanctification of His Name.” See his collected Respona, *'Ohel Ya'akov* (Amsterdam, 1737), no. 3.

Marranos in the Seventeenth Century

inquisitorial reprisal that, even at those times when royal permission to emigrate was granted, we hear that some did not take advantage of the opportunity lest it prove a deliberate trap to expose them as Judaizers.⁴³ Considerations of livelihood and family were even more important. There were New Christians who desired to leave, but who persuaded themselves that it would be best first to amass a sum of money, so they would later have the means with which to begin a new life in another land. We hear even of some who, through their commercial contacts, managed periodically to transfer funds to Italy or Holland in preparation for their eventual departure.⁴⁴ We may regard their caution as misguided and their prudence as lacking idealism, but such behavior is essentially no different from that manifested by Jews in other times and places. Certainly the family problem provided the most emotional and heartbreaking alternatives, especially when the impulse to flee was not shared by all. Sometimes the spouse was of Old Christian stock, and the problem all the more acute. In a Responsum of the seventeenth century we read of a Converso whom "they requested to come three times, and he could flee without fear, but he does not desire to come, saying, 'I love my wife and children who are Christian.'"⁴⁵

⁴³ Assaf, *Be'oholey Ya'akov*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ The physician Felipe de Nájera, reconciled for Judaizing by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1610, affirmed that the goal of many Portuguese New Christians was to make a fortune of eight or ten thousand ducats in Spain, and then to flee to a Jewish community abroad. See Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, I, 458. His trial is discussed *ibid.*, II, 197–206. On Marranos transferring funds to Italy see the Responsa of Rafael Meldola (d. 1748), *Mayim rabbim* (Amsterdam, 1737), II, no. 30.

Of unusual interest is the case of Manuel Cortizos de Villasante, perhaps the most powerful and influential of the "Portuguese" at the court of Philip IV, and a *Caballero* of the Order of Calatrava, who died in 1651. In the inquisitorial proceedings which were then begun, it was discovered that he had been a Judaizer well known to the Amsterdam community, and had even deposited there a fund of 600,000 *escudos* to be held for him in trust. For his career see Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, II, 103–22.

⁴⁵

« וקראוהו לבא זה שלש פעמים ויכול למלט נפשו בלי פחד, ואינו רוצה לבא, באומרו »
 « אהבתי את אשתי ואת בני שבגויות... »
 (Yoni Tob Zahalon, *Responsa*, no. 148). On the case, see *supra*, n. 39.

In the absence of any other information about such a man we are simply not in a position to judge him categorically as totally bereft of Jewish consciousness. Nor can we pronounce this verdict over the many who, even though married within the New Christian group, were faced with a similarly painful choice.

If we are to perceive the meaning of Marranism in the seventeenth century, we must not approach the problem with preconceived notions as to what constitutes "Jewishness" nor, least of all, with legalistic definitions. Rather than superimpose external criteria which derive from traditional Jewish life and behavior, thereby ignoring the genuine peculiarities of the Converso position, we should try to confine ourselves to an inductive method.

PERSISTENCE OF MARRANISM

That Marranism was not a figment of the inquisitorial imagination, but a living current of crypto-Judaism, first becomes evident when we contemplate what the Marranos contributed to the Jewish world of the seventeenth century. Any student of the period must encounter at every step a galaxy of illustrious Jewish personalities who were either themselves born as New Christians in the Peninsula, or who had New Christian parents. To give a full and detailed account of a long and impressive list would be an idle venture. Suffice it to say that the catalogue would include eminent rabbis, physicians, polemicists, communal leaders, men of letters, grammarians and scholars, mystics and messianic enthusiasts. But even then it would include only the famous, those who left a marked imprint on Jewish life. Around them were the anonymous, the thousands who came from the Peninsula to various Jewish centers, whose biographies have not been preserved. Traces of their migration may be found in the Responsa literature itself. To be sure, some fled for fear of their lives or because of harassment by the Inquisition. But others came of their own volition, out of an active desire to live as Jews. Had they sought only safety, they could have found it as well outside the ghetto or the Jewish street. Certainly at the

time of their arrival their Jewish knowledge was often minimal and distorted. Yet the yearning which impelled them to seek the God of Israel in Amsterdam, Venice, or Constantinople, remains difficult to understand unless there existed a continuing crypto-Jewish tradition in the Peninsula itself. If, between one hundred and two hundred years after the extinction of the last vestiges of organized Jewish life in Spain and Portugal, this force was still strong enough to graft these withered branches back onto the trunk of the Jewish people, it must have been considerable.⁴⁶

This and more. If the emigration of New Christians was motivated solely by fear or convenience, we should expect that, once across the border, the emigrants would have been content to live in the various Christian lands as Catholics. Clearly, there were many individuals who chose this path. Beyond the Peninsula there were no statutes of *limpieza* to vex them.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ In this connection we should also consider the dramatic discovery in the twentieth century of Marrano communities in northern Portugal. However atrophied or distorted their Jewish beliefs and practices, the very existence of these pathetic remnants of Portuguese Jewry is a monument to the power of the original impulses, which did not completely die out despite the ravages of more than four centuries. On these communities see Samuel Schwarz, *Os Cristãos-Novos em Portugal no século XX* (Lisbon, 1925); Nahum Slouschz, *Ha-anusim be-Portugal* (Tel-Aviv, 1932); J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *Etnografia portuguesa*, ed. M. Viegas Guerrero, IV (Lisbon, 1958), ch. 4: "Cristãos-Novos do nosso tempo em Trás-os-Montes e na Beira" (pp. 162-255).

⁴⁷ There is ample material in rabbinic and general sources of the 17th century on Converso emigrants who continued to live as Catholics. This was so even in cities where there existed open Jewish communities. For example, Joseph ibn Leb (*Responsa*, no. 19) refers to such persons not only in "Flanders," but in Venice itself:

אין טומכין על העדויות של האנוסים בהיותם בניית בפלאנדיש או בוויניציה.

Jacob Sasportas tells of a Marrano who fled with his three sons to Amsterdam. Both he and the two youngest returned to Judaism. The oldest son, however, remained a Christian even then. See Sasportas, *'Ohel Ya'akov*, no. 59:

ראובן מאנוסי הזמן העיר ה' את רוחו ובא הוא ושלשה בניו לעיר אמסטרדם יע"ה להתיחד ולקבל עליהם עול מלכות שמים. וכן עשה הוא ושני בניו הקטנים, כי הגדול לעומת כשבא כן הלך משוך בערלתו וחזר לסורו...

The reluctance of some New Christians to embrace Judaism even after emigration was often the subject of intense propaganda activity by Sephardic Jews, of whom many were themselves former Marranos. See, e.g., the letters of Elijah

It is therefore all the more impressive to see how groups of New Christians, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in all parts of the world, strove successfully to establish *Jewish communities*, often through great hardships and perseverance. The pattern is almost everywhere the same. At the end of the sixteenth century the small group of New Christians who arrived in Amsterdam took immediate steps to found a real Jewish community which was rapidly to become one of the glories of the Jewish world. Again, in Hamburg, or in Leghorn, Jewish communities were established. In the south of France, in Bordeaux, Bayonne, and other localities, the New Christian immigrants entered into a protracted struggle to erect their synagogues, over the vehement opposition of the Church. In Brazil the New Christians of Pernambuco took immediate advantage of the Dutch conquest to emerge as professing Jews. After the Portuguese reconquest the exiles who came to the West Indies and to New Amsterdam again established Jewish communities. The examples can be multiplied. The phenomenon as a whole must seem strange indeed unless we recognize that, however we define them, there existed intense Jewish motivations among thousands of New Christians in the seventeenth century.⁴⁸

Montalto to Dr. Pedro Rodríguez in St. Jean de Luz (Cecil Roth, "Quatre lettres d'Elie de Montalto: contribution à l'histoire des marranes," *REJ*, LXXXVII (1929), 137-65), and the similar efforts of Immanuel Aboab among the New Christians in Southern France and Antwerp (Roth, "Immanuel Aboab's Proselytization of the Marranos," *JQR* (N.S.), XXIII (1923-33), 121-62. There is only a partial truth in Padre Vieira's sweeping assertion that, once abroad, even the sincere Catholics among the New Christians invariably succumb to Judaism: "porque, saindo de Portugal muitos que eram verdadeiros cristãos . . . vendem e perdem a Fé . . . porque é certo que uns resistem seis meses, outros um ano e dois, e quase todos andam primeiro vacilando entre uma e outra crença, até que finalmente se rendem e se circuncidam con grande triunfo do Demônio e da perfidia, e afronta do baptismo e Fé católica de Cristo" (*Obras escolhidas*, ed. António Sérgio and Hernâni Cidade, IV (Lisbon, 1951), 30 f.).

⁴⁸ On the Marrano beginnings of the various communities see the following For Amsterdam: J. S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Joden te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1925) and, for later and more specialized studies, the "Literatuurlijst" in Hk. Brugmans and A. Frank, eds., *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, Pt. I (Amsterdam, 1940). For Hamburg: A. Cassuto, "Neue Funde zur ältesten

The New Christian panorama, however, was as large and variegated as life itself. Within the Peninsula the situation differed according to time and place. The Spanish Conversos of the fifteenth century, recently baptized, and in contact with open Jewish communities, can hardly be equated with those of a century or two after the Expulsion. The Portuguese New Christians in the early sixteenth century, prior to the introduction of the Inquisition, faced a different array of forces than did their contemporaries in Spain. At any time, the life of the New Christians in the large cities was different from that in the more remote rural areas where they formed smaller but more compact clusters.

One can also broadly distinguish several different types among the descendants of the original Conversos with reference to the degree of their assimilation. Many New Christians in the seventeenth century were convinced Catholics and sought nothing more than to fuse quietly into the general population. Others, though equally sincere in their Catholic convictions, were subjected to inquisitorial pressures and fled abroad, where they continued by choice to live as Christians. Some were simply opportunists, indifferent to religious or ideological issues, whose actions were determined exclusively by practical self-interest. Of this category some even left to join Jewish communities and later, having failed to make their fortunes, returned to Spain or Portugal to be reconciled to the Church. Both among the convinced Catholics, at home and abroad, and among the cynics there were always those who did not hesitate to serve as informants for the Inquisition.⁴⁹

Geschichte der portugiesischen Juden in Hamburg," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, III (1931), 58 ff.; Cecil Roth, "Neue Kunde von der Marranen-Gemeinde in Hamburg," *ibid.*, II (1930), 278 ff.: further literature in the rich bibliography to Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der Unteren Elbe*. For Leghorn: Cecil Roth, "Notes sur les marranes de Livourne," *REJ*, XCI (1931), 1-27. For Bordeaux: Théophile Malvezin, *Histoire des juifs de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1875). For Bayonne: Henry Leon, *Histoire des juifs de Bayonne* (Paris, 1893). For Brazil: Arnold Wiznitzer, *The Jews of Colonial Brazil* (New York, 1960).

⁴⁹ A striking instance of a New Christian who returned to the Peninsula, after living abroad as a Jew, and who delivered important information to the Inquisition, may be found in Cecil Roth's, "The Strange Case of Hector Mendes Bravo,"

Finally, many New Christians were "Marranos." But here again we are not dealing with a uniform or static image. The Marrano is himself a complex variable. What has been termed the "religion of the Marranos" displays only a few fundamental traits which can be isolated.⁵⁰ One may speak at best of common *conditioning* factors—primarily, the need for secrecy, the general absence of Jewish books or actual models of normal Jewish life, and the pervasive influence of generations of Christian education and environment. As for expression, one can point to an inner deprecation of Christianity as idolatrous and a consequent rejection of its salvational claims; the atrophy or disappearance of traditional Jewish observances; a fairly obvious syncretism, natural under the circumstances; a reliance on the Old Testament as the most readily available textbook of Judaism; a tendency toward messianism. Beyond this point it becomes increasingly difficult to generalize, and one finds that even the characteristics already mentioned must be modified to take account of many individual cases which do not fit such patterns. My study of Cardoso, for example, ultimately forced me to open afresh the question of how much postbiblical Jewish information was available to certain Marranos in the Peninsula, in a way that I did not at all anticipate when I began. But here, precisely, lies the value of studying the individual Marrano.

For Marranism, though arising out of a common matrix, and apparently subject to a given set of limitations, expressed itself in many ways. We can all too readily concede that by the seventeenth century most Marranos were completely cut off from an organic Jewish tradition. But we are thereby ignoring those who were exposed to some Jewish life and teaching during business trips

Hebrew Union College Annual, XVIII (1934-44), 221-45. In 1617 Mendes Bravo presented to the Inquisition of Lisbon a denunciation of Portuguese living as Jews in Venice, Hamburg, and Amsterdam, with a detailed list of names. Cf. the important denunciations given in 1635 to the Inquisition of Toledo by Capt. Estevan Ares da Fonseca in Caro Baroja, *Judios*, III, App. xxix, pp. 332-36.

⁵⁰ Information on religious practices and beliefs may be found scattered through almost any study of the Marranos. Cecil Roth's "The Religion of the Marranos" (*JQR*, N.S., XII (1931), 1-35) remains the only monograph devoted entirely to the subject, but synthesizes data from a span of more than three centuries.

abroad.⁵¹ The Marrano prayers which have come down to us show that, while there was a heavy reliance on the Psalms, other prayers seem to have been created by Marranos themselves, and there were also some prayers which mirrored various texts of the traditional Jewish liturgy.⁵² In the midst of the decay of Jewish observances, some rituals showed a surprising resiliency, at times long after their

⁵¹ The possibilities inherent in such excursions are vividly illustrated by the testimony of Diego Nuñez Silva before the Inquisition of Toledo in 1661. Nuñez Silva farmed the royal rents in Ávila, but had traveled on occasion to Bayonne in France. There he had been present at various Jewish ceremonies and services, notably those in the house of Diego Rodríguez Cardoso, a leader of the Marrano community. In his testimony (published in part by Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, III, App. xxxvi, pp. 350-52) he was able to recall almost verbatim many passages from the liturgy, especially from the 'Amida. Cf. the case of Gonzalo Báez de Paiba who, after being released in 1657 from an inquisitional prison, determined to go to Rome. On the way he stopped in Bayonne, where his sister, in an effort to bring him to Judaism, had him read the Ferrara Bible and various other Jewish works in Spanish. On him see *ibid.*, I, 470-74.

Undoubtedly there were a significant number of other Spanish and Portuguese Conversos who were exposed to similar experiences when visiting cities which contained Jewish communities. That there was considerable mobility back and forth across the French border can be amply documented. Cf., in this connection, Z. Szajkowski, "Trade Relations of Marranos in France with the Iberian Peninsula in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *JQR* (N.S.), L (1959-60), 69-78.

⁵² In his deposition of 1624 to the Inquisition of Goa, António Bocarro Francês stated that the Psalms and the "Song of the Three Children" ("trium puerorum," from the apocryphal Additions to Daniel, placed in the Vulgate after ch. 3) are popular prayers among the Portuguese Marranos. See Pedro A. d'Azevedo, "O Bocarro Francês e os Judeus de Cochim e Hamburgo," *Arquivo histórico português*, VIII (1910), 189. From the same testimony we have an example of an original Marrano prayer, to be recited in Church while the Host was raised ("Solo altissimo domino Deo Israel debetur omnis honor et gloria, quia ipse est Deus super omnes Deos . . ." etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 187.) Cf. also the moving prayers of Brites Henriques, a twenty-one-year-old girl, recorded in 1674 by the Inquisition of Lisbon. (Schwarz, *Os cristãos novos*, pp. 95-105.) The following prayer to be said upon rising in the morning, recorded in 1590 by the Inquisition of Toledo in the case of one Juan López de Armenia, may contain an echo of the traditional *Modeh 'Ani*: "Alabado sea el Señor que me a amanecido bivo y sano y seguro y en paz de la tiniebla de la noche; me de su luz y vida y gracia para que le sirva. Amen." (Cited by Caro Baroja, *Judíos*, I, 423.)

original meaning had been forgotten.⁵³ The rite of circumcision represented the utmost danger, as it was potentially an indelible death warrant for its bearer. We may therefore confidently assume that most Marranos refrained from the practice. And yet—both inquisitorial and Jewish sources insist that even in the seventeenth century there were still cases of circumcision in the Peninsula.⁵⁴

⁵³ An especially intriguing example is that of "sweeping the house the wrong way" (*varrer a casa as avessas*), i.e., sweeping the dirt from the entrance toward the inside of the room, rather than out through the door. In his valuable analysis of the Portuguese sermons preached at *autos-da-fé* ("Invitation to Intolerance," *HUCA*, XXVII [1956], 353 f.), Edward Glaser has noted that this is the Judaizing rite most frequently discussed and ridiculed by the inquisitors. Glaser found no explanation for the practice in the sermons and could only cite, with some misgiving, the assertion of Francisco Manoel de Mello that "the Jews sweep toward the inside of the house so that they shall not . . . throw out their possessions."

However, the real origin of the rite is clearly stated in a contemporary Jewish source. Referring to the inquisitorial allegation, Moses Hagiz (1671-1750) explains that long ago it was a custom of the Spanish Jews not to sweep through the doorway *out of reverence for the "mezuzah" on the doorpost*. See his *Mishnat hakhamim* (Wandsbeck, 1713), p. 53r:

מנהג קדום היה בספרד שהיו נוהרים מלכבד הבית מלפנים ולחוק, אלא מן הפתח היו מתחילין לכבד את הבית ומוליכין האשפה לפנים, לכבוד המזוזה. ומטעם זה עד עכשו בפורטוגל כומרי החקירה אחת מהאשמות שמטילין על האנוסים כדי לחייבם הוא זה, שאומרים להם שיש עדות שהם מכבדים את הבית מן הפתח ולפנים.

If the Marranos really observed this custom long after there were no *mezuzot* to be seen on their doorposts, and if they were at all aware of its original intent, its retention seems particularly poignant.

⁵⁴ The grave risks incurred through circumcision in the Peninsula are self-evident. Certainly every suspected Judaizer brought before the Inquisition was physically examined as a matter of routine. In three cases before the Inquisition of Toledo, during a span of some eighteen years, we find the name of the same examiner, which suggests that this may have been part of his permanent function. Thus in 1652 the surgeon Pablo Collaço (or Collazos) examined the aged Manuel Cardoso for circumcision, with negative results (Caro, *Judíos*, I, 469). In 1656 he examined Juan López de Castro, accused of spitting at an image of the Virgin (*ibid.*, I, 463). Again, in 1670, he examined Fernando Gil de Espinosa, and found him circumcised (*ibid.*, I, 476, n. 54).

According to the denunciation delivered on May 15, 1635, by Capt. Estevan Ares de Fonseca (*supra*, n. 49) certain rich "Jews" in Madrid had contracted with a "master of circumcision" in Amsterdam named Isaac Farque to come to the capital and perform the operation on their sons. Farque came under the assumed

Some Marranos kept their Jewish feelings locked in their hearts. Others appear to have met together for regular liturgical services.⁵⁵ There were Marranos who managed successfully to rationalize their religious position by evolving what might be termed a theology of secrecy.⁵⁶ On the other hand, others were prey to an overwhelming

name of Antonio de Aguiar and allegedly received much money for his services. For further information along these lines see Roth, *Marranos*, p. 390, n. 1. That some Marranos circumcised while still "in the land of their foes" was asserted in 1604 by Joseph Trani (*Responsa*, 'Eben ha-'ezer, no. 18) although they transgressed many other commandments because they read the Bible without its oral interpretation. Cf. Assaf, *Be'oholey Ya'akob*, p. 147, n. 13; Zimmels, *Marranen*, p. 79, n. 1; Solomon Amarillo (d. 1722), *Kerem Shelomo* (Salonika, 1719), no. 27, on an eight-day-old child circumcised in the Peninsula despite the great danger. One must, however, also entertain the possibility that, due to the risks involved, some circumcisers may not have performed an actual circumcision, but may have merely drawn a drop of blood (*hatafat dam berit*). For allegations concerning such a practice in receiving adult proselytes in 14th-century France, see my study of Bernard Gui, pp. 58-60.

⁵⁵ Such was the group discovered in Coimbra in the early 17th century, in a case which achieved wide notoriety. In 1619 Antonio Homem, famous as a preacher and professor of canon law at the university, was imprisoned by the Inquisition and accused of being the high priest of a crypto-Jewish congregation formed since the Pardon of 1605. The alleged practices of the group show an extreme degree of syncretism, and included a confraternity patterned after the Catholic cult of the saints, to revere the martyred Judaizer Fray Diogo da Assumpção. Homem was garroted and burned in 1624. The case has been studied extensively. See especially António José Teixeira, *António Homem e a Inquisição* (Coimbra, 1895), and António Baião, *Episódios dramáticos da Inquisição portuguesa*, I (Porto, 1919), 109-29.

⁵⁶ This rationalization assumed various forms. According to Diego de Simancas (Pseud.: Didaco Vclásquez), *Defensio statuti Toletani* (Antwerp, 1575), fol. 70 f., the Conversos explained their not having chosen martyrdom by citing Deut. 5: 30 ("so that ye may live"), which is indeed a *locus classicus*. More elaborate was the typological use of the Book of Esther which transformed the Jewish queen, hiding her true faith in order to save her people, into the archetypal Marrano. See Roth, "Religion of the Marranos," pp. 26 f.

Similar use was made of the Apocrypha. Samuel Aboab (*Debar Shemuel*, no. 45) states that the Marranos hold Christianity to be forbidden only as *belief*, but that when one believes in one's heart that this idolatry is nothing, there is no divine punishment for the external observation of its rituals. The proof text for this notion was the "Letter of Baruch ben Neriah" (i. e., the so-called *Epistle of Jeremy* in the Apocrypha, especially vv. 5-6). This interpretation is discussed at length

sense of guilt which accompanied them even long after they had returned to Judaism elsewhere in the world.⁵⁷

The "religion of the Marranos" thus ran the entire gamut, from the most attenuated awareness of Jewish roots, to a readiness to endure martyrdom for the "Law of Moses."⁵⁸ Perhaps the most felicitous term for the phenomenon as a whole has been proposed by I. S. Révah. He has called Marrano religion "a potential Judaism, which entry into a Jewish community transformed most often into a real Judaism."⁵⁹ This characterization is certainly valid. Its only deficiency lies in beginning at the point when the Marrano is already "Judaizing" in one form or another. I believe that, with a slight shift of emphasis, we should go back farther. Paraphrasing Professor Révah's statement, it is perhaps even more fundamental to recognize that, even before he began to Judaize, every New Christian was a

and vigorously combated by Immanuel Aboab in his *Nomologia* (Amsterdam, 1629), Pt. II, ch. 18, pp. 213-17. That, given conditions in Spain, dissimulation of religion was a necessity, is categorically maintained by another prominent Jewish figure who had undergone the Marrano experience, Isaac (Balthasar) Orobio de Castro. See Limborch, *De veritate religionis christianae*, p. 178.

⁵⁷ On penances sought by former Marranos see the references in Assaf, *Be'oholey Ya'akob*, pp. 179 f. Cf. the example of the former Marrano Isaac b. Nahmias, who habitually signed his name as *ba'al teshubah* (The Penitent), *REJ*, LXXXVII, 216.

The penitential personality is particularly manifest in the wealthy Abraham Israel Pereyra (d. 1699), at one time president of the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam, who was born Thomas Rodríguez Percyra in Madrid. See the moving invocation in his *La certeza del camino . . . dedicada al Señor Dios de Israel, en lugar de sacrificio sobre su Ara, por expiación de peccados del autor* (Amsterdam, 1666), and especially pp. 141 ff. ("De la miserable vida de los que viven en idolatria").

⁵⁸ Admittedly most Judaizers convicted by the Inquisition chose, if possible, to be reconciled and penanced. Yet the 17th century produced its real martyrs as well. See the section entitled "Testigos de la unidad de Dios" in Isaac Cardoso's *Las excelencias de los hebreos* (pp. 316 ff.), and my discussion *infra*, ch. VIII.

⁵⁹ "En réalité . . . le 'Judaisme' des marranes était essentiellement un Judaisme *potentiel* que l'entrée dans une communauté juive transformait le plus souvent en Judaisme réel." ("Les marranes," p. 55). Révah has found this idea already adumbrated in the 16th century by the Portuguese writer João de Barros. See his edition of the latter's *Ropica Pnema*, I (Lisbon, 1952), 123.

potential Marrano, whom any of a variety of circumstances could transform into an active Marrano.

An examination of the lives of seventeenth-century Marranos reveals how different the stimuli could be. Even New Christians who were, from childhood, the products of a thoroughly Catholic education, and who regarded themselves as Catholics, could be suddenly awakened to reclaim their Jewish birthright. The Inquisition itself certainly had a ramified effect in this regard. Many who might have been content to live undisturbed as Christians were moved to despise the Christian faith after they had experienced inquisitorial persecution. In his poetic paraphrase of the Psalms, written in the safe haven of Amsterdam, David Abenatar Melo (d. ca. 1646) declared that the Inquisition and its prisons were "the school where he was taught the knowledge of God."⁶⁰ The grim drama of the *autos-da-fé*, though a festive occasion for most of the crowd, could well lead the more sensitive to reject a religion in whose name such horrors might be unleashed. There were also many who, finding their way into the mainstream of Spanish society blocked by the statutes of *limpieza* or by other forms of discrimination, proceeded out of this negative collision to a positive examination and acceptance of their ancestral roots. Others rejected the Christian faith on intellectual and ideological grounds. Once this occurred, it was natural for these New Christians at least to entertain the possibility of the Jewish faith as a viable alternative.

Finally, there were those who possessed an active family tradition of crypto-Judaism. The poet João' (Moseh) Pinto Delgado speaks movingly of his parents in Portugal, who "planted in my soul the trees of the Most Holy Law, whose fruits were late in coming."⁶¹

⁶⁰ "La Inquisición había sido para él escuela a donde se le había enseñado el conocimiento de Dios." See José Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los Judíos en España* (Madrid, 1848), pp. 521 ff.; Meyer Kayserling, *Sephardim: Romanische Poesien der Juden in Spanien* (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 169 ff.

⁶¹ "Por aver ya mis progenitores plantado en mi alma los árboles de la Santissima Ley, de que tardaron los frutos." (I. S. Révah, "Autobiographie d'un Marrane: édition partielle d'un manuscrit de João [Moseh] Pinto Delgado," *REJ*, CXIX [1961], 93).

We shall see that there is reason to suppose some such family tradition in the upbringing of Isaac Cardoso as well.

In sum, the Marrano potential existed in any New Christian of the seventeenth century, so long as he was even barely aware that he was of Jewish extraction. Given such an awareness, no matter whence it derived nor how minimal it was, the potential could be activated at any time by either positive or negative forces, often by a combination of both. To be sure, hatred of the Converso played an important part. But it is futile to speculate as to how much Marranism owed to external pressures or to inner impulses. It surely varied with the individual. To state blandly that the Inquisition or the statutes of *limpieza* preserved Marranism in the Peninsula is merely to offer a new twist to the old theory that hatred alone has preserved the Jewish people.⁶² Already the ancient Talmudic parable

⁶² That discrimination against the New Christians preserved crypto-Judaism in the Peninsula was already a favorite dogma of those who, from the 16th to the 18th century, argued for the abolition of the statutes of *limpieza* (see *infra*, ch. III). The same notion was advanced on other grounds by Spinoza in a well-known passage of the "Theological-Political Treatise." There it was used as an illustration of his general principle: "quod autem Nationem odium eos (i.e., the Jews) admodum conservet. . . ." Ignoring, whether willfully or by inadvertence, the statutes of *limpieza* in Spain, Spinoza wrote: "Cum Rex Hispaniae olim Judaeos coegit Regni Religionem admittere, vel in exilium ire, per plurimi Judaei pontificorum Religionem admiserunt; sed quia iis qui religionem admiserunt, omnia Hispanorum naturalium privilegia concessa sunt, iique omnibus honoribus digni existimati sunt, statim ita se Hispanis immiscuerunt ut pauco post tempore nullae eorum reliquiae manserint, neque ulla memoria. At plane contra iis contigit quos Rex Lusitanorum religionem sui imperii admittere coegit, qui semper, quamvis ad religionem conversi, ab omnibus separati vixerunt, nimirum quia eos omnibus honoribus indignos declaravit." (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, in *Opera*, ed. Carl Gebhardt, III (Heidelberg, 1926), ch. 3, pp. 56 ff.).

Yet it is precisely the presence of intense social discrimination and inquisitorial terror in both countries which raises the question as to why the fate of Marranism was different in each. One cannot have it both ways. If the statutes or the Inquisition preserved Marranism, then Marranism should not have declined in Spain. Conversely, if Marranism was destroyed by the Spanish Inquisition of the 15th and 16th centuries, why could not the Portuguese Inquisition accomplish the same in the 16th and 17th? Since the external pressures were similar, one must assume an *internal* difference in the very genesis and character of the two New Christian groups.

had compared the Jews to the olive which only when beaten and crushed yields its oil. While such adages may serve a homiletic purpose, they do not really illumine a specific historical situation which, when it confronts us with the concrete individual, seems both to sustain and confute the rule.

THE EMIGRANTS

The vicissitudes of those Marranos who emigrated to other lands were quite as variegated as their experience in the Peninsula itself, and had ramified effects on the Jewish communities which attempted to integrate them.

For the general history of the seventeenth century, the extreme importance of exiles has long been appreciated. "In every country in Europe," writes Sir George Clark, "were men driven from home by the persecution of their religious beliefs . . . with their own ideas striking against those they found in their foreign homes like steel on flint." Within Jewry, the great era of exiles and wanderers had commenced even earlier with the cataclysm of the Spanish expulsion, and was augmented during the next two hundred years by an ongoing exodus of Spanish and Portuguese Marranos. While some of these became the vanguard of Jewish resettlement in Western Europe or the pioneers of Jewish colonization in the New World, thousands of others were absorbed by the established communities of the now far-flung Sephardic diaspora.

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the arrival of the Spanish exiles and their interaction with local Jewries had often been fraught with difficulties. Wherever they came, the Sephardic Jews constituted a new and dynamic element which generated considerable friction and generally gained a rapid ascendancy. But, after all, those exiles had been professing Jews who arrived and mingled with other Jews from whom they differed only in custom and culture. A much more volatile potential was represented by the Marranos who came in their wake to return to Judaism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bringing with them ideas and attitudes which derived, not merely from a different Jewish

environment, but from a life lived in a totally gentile world. It was through these emigrants that Marranism became a critical factor in Jewish history.

For Jewry, no less than for Christendom, the seventeenth century was an era of profound ideological ferment, in which the effects of forces unleashed during the previous century became ever more manifest. The great trauma of the Spanish expulsion had been spiritual as well as physical, and had affected not only the Sephardic Jews but the entire people. At the very core it had raised the perennial problem of Jewish exile and suffering to a new level of urgency. Jews in the sixteenth century had groped for a new understanding of the ancient enigmas, and had responded with novel departures in historiography, mysticism, and messianism.⁶³ In the seventeenth century the messianic passion stimulated earlier by the spread of Lurianic Kabbalah would finally erupt in the worldwide explosion of the Sabbatian movement, with its concomitant anti-nomian elements. In the social and economic spheres wealthy merchants with international horizons and allegiances already chafed at the provincial limitations of a corporate Jewish community which retained its medieval structure and character. Nor was Jewry immune to the raging intellectual conflicts of the age. Within the communities of Holland, France, and Italy were individuals and small groups of Jews who had been deeply affected by the rationalist and skeptical currents of the times, though they did not often risk excommunication by avowing their ideas in public. At the same time even those who remained firmly within the bounds of tradition and community often revealed a decidedly modern intellectual and cultural orientation. The secular culture of many Dutch and Italian Jews anticipated the Berlin Haskalah of the eighteenth century and was, in some respects, more naturally acquired, mature, and broadly based.⁶⁴

⁶³ For some of these developments see Baer, *Galut*, pp. 69 ff.; Abraham Neuman, "The Shebet Yehudah and Sixteenth Century Historiography," in *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, English Section (New York, 1954); Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (3d ed.: New York, 1954), pp. 245 ff.

⁶⁴ In a stimulating discussion of what he has termed "Italian and Dutch Haskalah," Salo Baron has stressed that "all the fundamentals of the Haskalah . . .

Marranos in the Seventeenth Century

In all the welter of competing ideas the Marrano emigrants played an unusually vital role. Against the backdrop of an age which produced a number of significantly "modern" developments in Jewry, they stand out as perhaps the first modern Jews. By virtue of the years each had spent in the Peninsula, these former Marranos constituted the first considerable group of European Jews to have had their most extensive and direct personal experiences completely outside the organic Jewish community and the spiritual universe of normative Jewish tradition. Moreover, as nominal Christians in Spain and Portugal they had enjoyed full access to the mainsprings of Western theological, philosophic, and scientific learning. In a time when Jews were barred from most European universities, or allowed only sporadic attendance at some, many former Marranos were alumni of Coimbra, Salamanca, Alcalá, or even Toulouse and Paris. Their emotional, religious, and educational experiences as Marranos were hardly calculated to prepare them for life in a Jewish society which, despite the cracks and breaches in its spiritual ramparts, still preserved largely intact the integrity of its traditions. In the return of Marranos to open Jewish life these antitheses were bound to produce interesting, and sometimes violent, repercussions.

The problematics inherent in the reaction of Marrano emigrants to Jewish life were clearly perceived by Orobio de Castro, and stated by him with the force of one who had himself stepped forth from Marranism into Judaism:⁶⁵

had become more and more marked in Italy and Holland long before Mendelsohn." See his *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, II (1st ed.: New York, 1937), 205-12, 139 f., n. 13).

⁶⁵ The passage appears in the prologue to his *Epístola invectiva contra Prado*, written at the end of 1663 or early in 1664.

Dr. Juan de Prado, the object of Orobio's polemic, was a physician and former Marrano who had fled from Spain and had become a Deist while in Antwerp. He arrived in Amsterdam around 1655 and soon succeeded in gathering about him a small group of young men from the Yeshiva to whom he expounded his ideas. Twice, in 1656 and in 1657, Prado was censured by the *Mahamad*, the second time being placed under the Ban. Unwilling, for personal reasons, to sever his ties with the community, he formally recanted his views, though continuing to hold them in private. Thanks to the researches of Carl Gebhardt and I. S. Révah we

Those who withdraw from Idolatry⁶⁶ to the Provinces⁶⁷ where liberty is granted to Judaism are of two kinds:

Some who, upon reaching the desired haven and receiving the seal (of circumcision), direct all their will to love the Divine Law and try to learn, within the grasp of their understanding, that which is necessary in order to observe scrupulously the sacred precepts, laws, and ceremonies, which they and their forefathers had forgotten in Captivity. They humbly listen to those who, raised in Judaism and having learned the Law, are able to explain it. As soon as they can, they make themselves proficient, each one according to his state and capability, in the laudable modes, traditions, and customs, which Israel observes throughout the world, so as to order their lives in the service of God and avoid the errors which were formerly caused by ignorance. They come, ill with ignorance, but, since they are not accompanied by the horrible sickness of pride, they recuperate easily, tasting the holy and healing medicine which the compassion of their brothers offers to them. For, when they arrive, all of the latter, from the greatest rabbi to the most minor layman, try to teach them so that they shall not err in the observance of the Divine Law.

Others come to Judaism who, while in Idolatry, had studied various profane sciences such as logic, physics, metaphysics, and medicine. These

now know that he exerted a marked influence on Spinoza in the critical period preceding and following the latter's excommunication. It was Gebhardt who recognized the importance of the *Epístola invectiva* and of Prado himself for an understanding of the heterodox circles in the Jewish community of 17th-century Amsterdam, and for the impact of this milieu on the young Spinoza. In 1922 he published excerpts from the *Epístola* in his *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa* (= Bibliotheca Spinozana, vol. II), pp. 242 f. He cited it again in his special study of "Juan de Prado," *Chronicon Spinozanum*, III (1923), pp. 271 f. The entire relationship has now been reexamined and amplified with new documentary and literary materials by Révah in his *Spinoza et le Dr. Juan de Prado* (Paris, 1959). In my translation I follow Révah's Spanish text (*ibid.*, pp. 89 f.).

For a strikingly similar passage in a letter of Abraham Cardoso, see *infra*, ch. VII.

⁶⁶ In Marrano apologetics and polemics, "Idolatry" commonly denotes Catholicism.

⁶⁷ Probably the United Provinces of the Netherlands are specifically meant here. In any event, Orobio's remarks would hold true for any Jewish community to which Marranos made their way.

arrive no less ignorant of the Law of God than the first, but they are full of vanity, pride, and haughtiness, convinced that they are learned in all matters, and that they know everything; and even though they are ignorant of that which is most essential, they believe they know it all. They enter under the felicitous yoke of Judaism and begin to listen to those who know that of which they are ignorant, [but] their vanity and pride do not permit them to receive instruction so that they may emerge from their ignorance. It seems to them that their reputation as learned men will diminish if they allow themselves to be taught by those who are truly learned in the Holy Law. They make a show of great science in order to contradict what they do not understand, even though it be all true, all holy, all divine. It seems to them that, by making sophistic arguments without foundation, they are reputed themselves to be ingenious and wise. And the worst of it is that they also spread this opinion among some who, because of either their youth or bad nature, presume themselves clever, and who, even though they don't understand a thing of that which the foolish philosopher says against the Law of God, act nonetheless as if they understood him, in order not to admit that they do not understand him, and thus still to be regarded as understanding. These succeed in making such a philosopher even more prideful. His pride grows, and so does his impiety, so that without much effort the ignorant philosopher, as well as those who hold him in affection, falls into the abyss of apostasy and heresy.

So much for the basic cleavage. In reality, however, the responses of Marrano emigrants betrayed a number of additional subtleties. Orobio himself goes on to enumerate three subdivisions among the heretics. The worst are labeled "atheists," and defined as those "who dare deny Sacred Scripture, although they exculpate themselves by admitting a First Cause." Then there are Jews who "believe in God, give their assent to the Sacred Text, but hold in abomination the explanation which God Himself, in His supreme providence, has given to the Law." Finally, those who believe in both the written and the Oral Law, but who reject the "hedged" of ordinances which the rabbis erected around the Law.⁶⁸ To these categories we must add at least one other, that of the Marranos who found their deepest

⁶⁸ The text in Révah, *Spinoza*, pp. 126 f.

spiritual affinity with Jewish mysticism, most notably the heretical mysticism of the Sabbatian movement.⁶⁹

Orobio's observations were made in the heat of a polemic in which there was no room for empathy with those he attacked, nor any attempt to evaluate their underlying motivations. It is at this point that he fails us. For the collision of many Marrano emigrants with traditional Judaism was clearly due to more than mere pride or perverse obstinacy. If we recall their Peninsular background, we must recognize that the problem of adjusting to their new lives within the Jewish community was truly enormous. The Marrano who arrived as an adult had not only to undergo circumcision, but also to acquire rapidly a large fund of Jewish skills and knowledge without which even minimal participation in the life of the community would be impossible. The habits, ideas, and attitudes which other Jews had inherited naturally, and in which they had been educated during their formative years, had now to be compressed and assimilated by mature men in a very short time.

To help meet this critical need there arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an extensive literature whose central aim was to make the storehouse of Jewish knowledge available in the Spanish and Portuguese languages.⁷⁰ It was the first large corpus of Jewish

⁶⁹ On the Marrano element in Sabbatian ideology, especially after the conversion of the messiah, see *infra*, ch. VII.

⁷⁰ Since the pioneering efforts in the mid-19th century of Amador de los Ríos (*Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos en España*) and Kayserling (*Sephardim*), both antiquated in many respects, there has been no attempt at a comprehensive study of Hispano-Portuguese Jewish literature. Much spadework still needs to be done even in bibliography. An exhaustive and scientifically ordered bibliography of printed books and pamphlets with complete collations would be a boon to scholarship. There is an even more serious need for a catalogue of the manuscripts scattered in libraries and collections around the world.

At the moment Kayserling's *Biblioteca Española-Portuguesa-Judaica* (Strasbourg, 1890) remains the standard guide. It is to be supplemented by J. S. da Silva Rosa, *Die spanischen und portugiesischen gedruckten Judaica in der Bibliothek des Jüdischen Portugiesischen Seminars Els Haim in Amsterdam: Eine Ergänzung zu Kayserling's Bibliotheca*, etc. (Amsterdam, 1953). See also the additions to Kayserling by Antonio Elías de Molíns in *Revista crítica de historia y literatura*, VI (1901), 210-18. The serious student must still have recourse to some of the great older Spanish and Portuguese bibliographies, which often contain more ample information.

thought to be rendered by Jews into a modern European tongue, and covered a wide range of material. Included were translations of the Bible, of classical rabbinic literature, and of the major philosophic works of the Middle Ages. From Jewish law and liturgy there were translations of the prayerbook, treatises on the 613 commandments, halakhic manuals, and abridgments of the *Shulhan 'Arukh*. In general we may regard the ends to which this literature was addressed and the method it applied as the reverse of those which were later to characterize the Berlin Haskalah. For if the disciples of Mendelsohn employed Hebrew as a means to spread secular enlightenment among the Jews of Germany, here the secular Spanish and Portuguese vernaculars were being used to spread Jewish enlightenment among the returning Marranos.

The Hispano-Portuguese literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not confined to translations and summaries of classics. Original works were produced in history and theology. Belles-lettres were represented by poetry and drama on Jewish themes. But by far the most important creation was in the area of polemics and apologetics. Here the needs of the day and the special qualities of Marrano experience combined to produce a contribution of unusual force and relevance. The polemics were aimed simultaneously in several directions. While actually intended to refute the claims of Christianity and often addressed to Christian adversaries, they could serve at the same time as an arsenal from which to convince wavering Marranos of the need to embrace Judaism fully and openly. If the writer was himself a former Marrano, his critique of Christianity was in essence also a personal testimonial, a justification of his own choice of Judaism. The defense of Judaism was also conducted on two planes, for while it was important to vindicate the Faith in the eyes of the outside world, it was sometimes even more imperative to defend the Oral Law from the attacks to which it was subjected within Jewry itself. In any case, the issues which were hammered out in Spanish and Portuguese were not the subjects of an academic exercise, but the burning problems of thinking and feeling men. If the Marranos had so large a share in this apologetic and polemical activity, that is because they were themselves the bridge which had brought the age-old confrontation

between Jewry and Christendom to a new pitch of intensity and intimacy. The Jew who had been born in Lisbon and now lived in the Amsterdam Jodenbreestraat, or he who had spent his childhood in Madrid and now worshiped in the Scuola Spagnuola in the Venetian Ghetto, spanned both worlds. Certainly there had been Jewish apologists and polemicists in the past who displayed wide erudition in Christian sources (though not quite comparable to that of seventeenth-century Marranos who had studied theology under Spanish Jesuits). But the novelty of Marrano apologetics and polemics goes far beyond the relative degree of its Christian learning. The knowledge which these writers had of Christianity was derived not merely from books, but from their own personal experience of Christian life, ritual, and liturgy. They are thus the first body of Jewish writers *contra Christianos* to have known Christianity from *within*, and it is this which endows their tracts with special interest.

In Marrano apologetics and polemics we have a mirror to the turbulence of the age and the difficulties of the Marrano adjustment to Jewish life. Orobio de Castro was dismayed that the encounter engendered heretical reactions among the emigrants. We must look at the matter differently. That these Marranos often found it impossible to make the transition to a Judaism alien in so many respects to their experience and expectations is in no way remarkable. The real marvel is that some Marranos were able, despite their background, to embrace a complete Jewish orthodoxy, to immerse themselves thoroughly in Jewish tradition, and to become intellectual and communal leaders in seventeenth-century Jewry. Our astonishment should be elicited not by the discontented, the disillusioned, the "heretics," but rather by those who managed "to direct all their will to love the Divine Law."

Isaac Cardoso is a prime case in point, and in choosing him as the object of my study I need hardly emphasize that he is representative of only one segment in the broad spectrum of seventeenth-century Marranism. Nevertheless, the stage on which his life unfolds will prove to be wide indeed. His is an odyssey which will lead us through two seemingly irreconcilable civilizations: those of Iberian Catholicism and Italian Judaism. We shall have to pause along the way to enter some of the bypaths of Peninsular science, medicine,

Marranos in the Seventeenth Century

and philosophy, of courtly and literary circles in the Spanish capital, of Jewish messianism, of ghetto life in the city of Romeo and Juliet. We shall encounter Spanish grandees and men of letters, rabbis and antisemites, and Marranos whose lives followed different courses than his. Throughout, we shall try to keep attuned to the changing nuances in Cardoso's personal evolution, and yet bear in mind that he who ultimately wrote one of the most eloquent and passionate of Jewish apologia is the same man who in his youth had commemorated, in elegant Castilian verse, the death of a bull in the arena. Insofar as we are able, we must try to uncover the factors of continuity which made the transition possible. It is an intricate way from the one to the other. Let us begin the journey.