The Sephardic Phenomenon: A Reappraisal

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Preface

The story of the Sephardic Jews in the Americas is part of a saga that began in the Iberian Peninsula under the Roman Empire, if not earlier, and eventually intertwined with the experience of all Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and South America. The Sephardic Jews were instrumental in the transmission of ancient culture, the creation of medieval Iberian civilization, and the development of modern Europe, and from it the modern world. The role of the Sephardic Jews in the New World is understandable only through their prior history, and this history is best understood by following the unfolding of the Sephardic phenomenon from earliest times.

Introduction

The year 1992 marks the quincentenary of the Edict of Expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The edict was issued in the city of Granada on March 31, 1492 by King Fernando of Aragon and Queen Isabel of Castile, the Catholic Monarchs, as they were dubbed by Pope Sixtus IV. It ordered all Jews to leave the territories belonging to the royal couple within four months, precisely by the end of July. According to tradition and perhaps historical reality, the deadline was eventually extended from July 31 until August 2. In the Jewish religious calendar this date corresponded to the ninth day of the month of Ab, the anniversary of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans in the year 70 C.E.

In reality, the Jews were not expelled from any political entity known as Spain. The Catalans in particular liked to call Ferdinand the king of Spain, but the name Hispania remained a geographical designation, and the Portuguese at no time took kindly to its political adoption at the expense of their exclusion. The name Spain for non-

Portuguese Iberia is hardly appropriate before 1512, when King Fernando added cys-Pyrenean Navarre to the dyarchy of Castile and Aragon. The edict of Ferdinand and Isabella consequently referred only to Castile, Aragon and their possessions. The independent Iberian kingdoms of Navarre and Portugal actually opened their doors to at least some Jewish refugees.

The number of Jews in Castile and Aragon at the time of the Edict could hardly have exceeded 100,000. Of these a minority of no more than 15,000 lived in Aragon, and the rest in Castile. At the time the Jewish population of Portugal could hardly have exceeded 30,000 and that of Navarre half that number. The numbers of Jews in Castile and Aragon had been greatly diminished in the previous century. The massacres of 1391 claimed anywhere from 15,000 to 20,000 Jewish lives, while conversions beginning at that time and continuing throughout the fifteenth century claimed several times that number. The number of Jews who left the Peninsula in the wake of the Edict may have exceeded 50,000, although it is possible that only a minority left. The remaining Jews converted to Christianity, as did many who returned in the years immediately following their departure. Of those leaving a considerable number went to Portugal, where they were almost all converted by force or fiat in 1497.

Nevertheless, the Expulsion of 1492 remains one of the watersheds of Jewish history. This is because of its impact upon the psyches of the affected Jews and their descendants, and the resonance of this experience ever since in the Jewish community at large.

The issuance of the decree of Expulsion was the centerpiece of the three major Iberian events in that fateful year. On January 2 the Catholic Monarchs had conquered the Kingdom of Granada, the last independent Muslim polity in the Peninsula. And at dawn on August 3, presumably on the heels of the last refugees, Christopher Columbus, a Christian of possible Iberian Jewish descent and a crew that included Christians of unquestionable Jewish descent, set sail for the Catholic Monarchs on their first and most momentous voyage. Together the three events bespeak a policy of unification and expansion that was to catapult the nation of Spain, once formed, into the vanguard of the modern world.

With rare exceptions, the refugees, like their ancestors, were natives of the Peninsula. Jews had been present in Iberia as far back as the days of imperial Rome. According to legend, they had come even earlier, during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E. and even King Solomon's reign 400 years before. By 1492 the Jews, like the rest of the Iberian population, comprised a racially mixed but distinctively Iberian community. Their small numbers in Roman days had continuously swelled with people of indigenous stock and periodically with immigrants from Africa and Asia.

Their expulsion, therefore, weighed heavily upon these Jews. And although they left their beloved land behind, they long continued to live in it psychologically, clinging to its language, customs poetry, and melodies. In 1906, a Spanish senator, Angel Pulido y Fernández, coming across the descendants of these Jews while he was traveling in the Middle East, was so impressed by the retention of their Iberian identity, that he called them *españoles sin patria*, Spaniards without a country.

To the exiles the Hebrew term *Sepharadi* was now applied. The word *Sepharadi* and its generic plural, *Sepharadim*, are simultaneously nouns and adjectives, meaning "Iberian," or, in the later political sense, "Spanish." As such they were previously applied to all Iberians, non-Jews and Jews alike. Popular usage has typically contracted the words to *Sephardi* and *Sephardim* respectively and created the English adjective "Sephardic." These words are parallels to the terms "Ashkenazi," "Ashkenazim," and "Ashkenazic," referring to German and Eastern European Jews.

The word "Sephardi" derives from the noun *Sepharad*, a biblical place-name which by the eighth century was commonly used by Jews to designate the Iberian Peninsula. The name *Sepharad* appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in the twentieth verse of the Book of Obadiah. There, we read: "And this host of the children of Israel in captivity shall possess Phoenician territories as far as Zarephath, while the exiles of the Jerusalem community who are in Sepharad shall take over the towns of the south."

It is not possible to determine the identity of Zarephath and Sepharad in Obadiah. They appear to be cities: Zarephath in southern Phoenicia and Sepharad in Asia Minor. But in the early centuries of

the present era Zarephath and Sepharad came to be identified with two principal Jewish settlements in Western Europe: Zarephath with the French regions, the Roman Gallia, and Sepharad with Iberia, the Roman Hispania. By the eighth century the identification of Sepharad with Hispania, though apparently still not universal, appears to have been sufficiently common. By that time also the term *Ashkenaz*, in Genesis 10:3, Jeremiah 51:27, and I Chronicles 1:6, originally referring to a land bordering on the Euphrates and Armenia, had come to signify the Germanic areas.

From these original immigrants and their descendants the term *Sepharadi* was gradually extended to denote three other groups: expatriate Iberian Christians who declared themselves Jews; the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula prior to the Expulsion; and Iberian Christians under Spanish or Portuguese rule who were presumed to be secret Jews. From this the appellation "Sephardi" may be further extended to all Iberians of real or presumed Jewish descent who lived and died as non-Jews both in Sepharad and elsewhere. The justification for such extension lies in the fact that in large measure the fate of these people and therefore their options in life were linked to the reality or in some cases the presumption of their Jewish ancestry.

In modern times the term has been further broadened to include Jews of non-Iberian ethnic background who have become part of Sephardic communities, and further, in modern Israel, to many non-Iberians who identify as Sephardim on cultural grounds.

The Expulsion connects the two broad phases of the Sephardic phenomenon, the first transpiring in the Iberian Peninsula and the second in what has felicitiously been called the Sephardic Diaspora. The two phases overlap chronologically. The Sephardic Diaspora may be said to have begun in the wake of the Iberian persecutions of Jews in 1391, a full century before the Expulsion, while the Iberian phase continues long after the Expulsion in the experiences of its Jews who converted to Christianity and the descendants of these converts. The Iberian phase fashioned the distinctiveness of the Sephardic community. The Sephardic Diaspora carried this distinctiveness through much of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. In both Peninsula and Diaspora the Sephardim reflected the world of Europe, medieval and early modern: its products, of which they were creators; its

pathology, of which they were victims; and its promise, of which they were paladins.

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century the Sephardim were more numerous than the Ashkenazim. Historical circumstances have since catapulted Ashkenazic Jewry to numerical superiority in the Jewish world. Today, of the nearly 15 million Jews in the world, no more than 10 percent by the ethnic definition can be called Sephardim.

The quincentenary of the fateful decree provides an appropriate juncture for the reassessment of the Sephardic phenomenon. In the past century and a half, dating back to Elias Hayyim Lindo's still useful *History of the Jews of Spain and Portugal* (London, 1849) and the studies on Spain by José Amador de los Rios, culminating in his *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal* (3 vols., Madrid, 1875–1876), scholarship on the manifold facets of this complex phenomenon has incrementally proliferated. The sheer extraction and publication of archival material can aptly be described as breathtaking. No less importantly, the same period has witnessed the development of sophisticated social scientific techniques for the analysis and reconstruction of the world to which the raw data attest. Cecil Roth, one of the twentieth century's most eminent investigators of the Sephardic phenomenon in all its complexity, often counseled the younger scholars at his side to create new comprehensive visions of the Sephardim. In the process he explicitly urged them to undertake a trenchant critique of all older reconstructions, including that of his own epochal *The History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia, 1931), which he had completed when he was only thirty years old. Indeed, although the discovery of more data, particularly from archival research, in all areas of the Sephardic phenomenon, continues to be as necessary as it is welcome, the need for new reconstructions of their totality occupies an even more pressing priority.

All reconstructions depend upon the interpretation of the available data, and interpretation in turn is a function of the matrix of assumptions with which any phenomenon is approached.

When approached with an assumptive system that ensures a maximum possible detachment from the data and the assistance of current social scientific techniques for coherent and consistent reconstructions, the many facets of the Sephardic phenomenon weave a distinctive pat-

tern. Such an approach helps to puncture three categories of pervasive misconceptions found among historians of Sephardic Jewry.

The first is a racial myth. The myth makes of Iberian Jews, and, indeed, all Jews, a race of Eastern Mediterranean origin. This myth depicts Jews as inherently different and readily distinguishable from all other Iberians. It therefore treats Jews as outsiders whose activities are at best tangential to authentic Iberian experience.

Implicit in this myth is the notion that Jews possess certain traits. Among these are a penchant for commerce and finance, an aversion to soldiering, an obsession for religion, a clannishness and even xenophobia.

Derivative from the myth is the implicit notion of a demonic power possessed by Jews. As a result of this power, Jews, the paucity of their numbers notwithstanding, can control powerful institutions and even entire kingdoms.

Connected to the myth is the conception of a "Jewish problem" nettling every government and requiring special attention. This egregious misconception even leads one author, in connection with the policy of King Egica toward Jews, to speak of it as an effort toward a "final solution."

Accompanying this myth all too often has been what may charitably be called a distanced understanding of Judaism on the part of writers who appear to have had inadequate personal contact with its textual past or its social realities past or present.

The second myth is a religious one. It is the myth of the strength and unity of Roman Christianity in Iberia. The reality was quite different. Roman Christianity in Iberia, as frequently elsewhere, was continually beset by internal conflicts, alternative forms of Christianity, and rooted pagan cults. Its strength, like that of all other forms of Christianity, derived from the towns; the more populous countryside could not be effectively converted prior to the feudal age. In Navarre, fiercely independent, this process was not completed until the twelfth century. If, as appears to be the case, the Roman Church had become the strongest institution in Iberian life by the fourth century, its strength was relative; by conservative estimates, its adherents could at no time prior to the Muslim conquest have exceeded 15 percent of the total

Iberian population. These realities are essential for an understanding of the diverse relationships between Jews and Christians in Iberia.

The third category of misconceptions relates to general methodology. It includes:

(1) the tacit acceptance of documents without analysis of their biases. This results in the objectivization of such biases;

(2) the explanation of historical events by assumed insight into the psychology of the leaders involved. Such explanation is usually ad hoc and little more than a projection of the biases of the writer;

(3) the injection of filiopietism and ethnocentricity, in their various forms, into historical reconstructions, with the resultant distortions of apologetics and polemics:

(4) the confusion of authority and power. This results in the depiction of authority figures, popes and kings included, as

operating independently, capriciously, and even without accountability in their respective institutional settings;

(5) the equation of the promulgation of legislation with its enforcement. This results in the societal reconstructions based upon the false assumption that the behavior patterns demanded by constitutions and decrees constitute societal reality;

(6) the supposition that societal groups, including institutions, are structurally uniform and ideologically monolithic at a given time and even through time. This results in reductive presentations of sociopolitical and socioideological diversity as well as an inattention to variations, however subtle, resulting from differences in sociohistorical context;

(7) the assumption that societal structure is best understood as composed of broadly defined classes, which struggle with one another as solid blocs for primarily or exclusively economic ends. This results in a failure to discern the complexity of all societal spectra, where establishment and nonestablishment elements cut across the Marxist lines of class, and where ideological and political motivations are no less and often more important than the economic;

(8) the conviction that only documentary evidence is fundamental to successful reconstructions of historical situations. This results in a failure to recognize that, even where abundant, documentary evidence alone can never fully describe a historical situation. Documen-

tary evidence regularly presents the position of victors and their successor establishments, and other positions only rarely, and then usually only in proportion to their strength. Wherever possible, the presentors have selected, packaged and promulgated the evidence in the documents through the biases of their assumptive systems. As a result, any effort at the comprehension of historical situations must rely on the restoration of the missing links of societal activity through a typological reconstruction consistent with the available documentary evidence and the evidence of the broader societal context. To be sure, such methodology is not without its own intrinsic biases, but these are theoretically neutral toward the presentor and equally available to public scrutiny and correction.

The removal of these impediments and the application of contemporary social scientific methodology pave the way for a more comprehensive analysis of the Sephardic phenomenon. From such analysis the Sephardic phenomenon emerges as the distillate of the progressive interaction betweeen individuals and groups we can retrospectively label as Sephardic with the total environments of which they formed an integral part. In this light every culture in which the Sephardim were active participants becomes indispensable for an understanding of the totality of Sephardic experience. So too every phase of this experience becomes indispensable to an understanding of its unfolding.

The Sephardic phenomenon is divisible into seven major phases: (1) its foundation, from its beginnings until the Muslim conquest in 711–715; (2) its formation, in Muslim Iberia until the Almoravid conquest around 1150; (3) its "Occidentation," in Christian Iberia until around 1360; (4) its bifurcation, in Christian Iberia until 1497; (5) its rationalization, in Christian Iberia and its colonies; (6) its consolidation, in the Eastern Sephardic Diaspora and (7) its universalization, in the Western Sephardic Diaspora.

In every one of these phases, in varying forms, four constants appear: an impressive variety of Sephardic economic and political activity in the community at large; a high degree of Sephardic integration into the broader community; the numerical growth of Sephardic Jewry through the absorption of non-Jews; and, in addition to devoutly religious components in the Sephardic community, the

presence of considerable numbers characterized by tepidity toward their traditional faith.

The Foundation of the Sephardic Phenomenon

The Sephardic phenomenon was first contoured by the geography of the Iberian Peninsula. As the westernmost point of Mediterranean Europe, Iberia was long believed to be the *finis terrae*, the end of the earth. As such it provided a natural goal for Rome's dreams of western expansion. Roman subjects settled in Iberia, as they did in Gaul and Germania, as early as the third century B.C.E. Among the early Roman settlers were Jews, who, like others, were particularly attracted to Iberia's southern lands and Mediterranean littorals.

The presence of these Iberian Jews is marked by tombstones. Yet aside from these slabs they left little trace during the heyday of imperial Rome. The original Jewish settlers may have included Roman prisoners as well as voluntary immigrants. The emigration of the latter from places where Jewish communities were almost certainly larger makes it reasonable to assume that for at least some the maintenance of the Jewish way of life in the fullest was subordinated to other motivations.

By the middle of the first century, however, the Jews had apparently attained sufficient importance to induce Paul of Tarsus, who had been preaching his message to Jews in many other parts of the Greco-Roman world, to consider a visit to the Iberian Peninsula.

No literary sources dealing with Jews appear in the Iberian Peninsula before the fourth century and none from Jewish hands before the ninth. Yet, individually and in their totality, the surviving documents testify to the numerical growth of the Jewish population, the integration of the Jews into the general society, and the importance of the Jewish community to both establishments and anti-establishments in the political process.

The earliest sources, all in Latin and of Catholic derivation, consist of conciliar canons, royal decrees, polemical tracts and historical works like Isidore of Seville's *History of the Goths*. A few of these documents derive from the Roman period, which may be said to have continued until the Visigothic assumption of a tenuous hold over the

Peninsula during the fifth century. In general, the documents exude an anti-Jewish hostility which derives from the earliest Christian literature and is enshrined in the Roman Catholic legislation that culminated in the Theodosian Code of 438.

This spirit is evident in the canons of the Council of Elvira, a pan-Iberian conclave of prelates that met sometime during the first decade of the fourth century, when the Roman Catholic Church was well on its way to becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. Four canons of the council seek to curtail contact between the faithful and the Jews: they forbid Christians to marry Jews (nos. 16 and 78), have their fields or crops blessed by Jews (49) and eat at the same table with Jews. (50).

Though scant, all evidence reveals the importance of Jews in Iberian society. Jews were active in agriculture and viticulture, in crafts, trades, commerce and the professions. They mingled freely with non-Jews and married them, doubtless with the prior conversion of their partners to Judaism. They appear to have proselytized with more than a modicum of success. Above all, Jews held public office, received high titles, bore arms and served as trusted garrisons. A valuable glimpse into Jewish life in the early fifth century is preserved in a letter purportedly written by Bishop Severus of the Balearic island of Minorca. The letter recounts the miraculous conversion of Minorca's entire Jewish community through some of the recently discovered relics of the martyred St. Stephen. It depicts the Jews as acculturated and integrated into Minorcan society, with Greek names and titles, wealth and status, high honors and important offices. Some scholars claim that this document was a forgery retrojected to the early fifth century by a later writer for his own polemical battles. Even if so, its obiter dicta on the Jews, one of the fulcra of its claims to authenticity, are credible for the earlier period and additionally reflective of the later.

The spirit that pervaded the Council of Elvira is evident in the pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Visigoths, beginning with King Reccared (586–601) from the time of his conversion in or shortly before 589 and continuing with some of his successors, notably Sisebut (612–621), Sisenand (631–639), Receswinth (649–672), Erwig (680–687) and Egica (687–702). Their decrees and those of the church

councils heaped restrictions upon the Iberian Jews. For all their variations, these fall primarily into seven categories: (1) the manumission of slaves owned by Jews; (2) the exclusion of Jews from public office and witness against Christians; (3) the prohibition of marital or concubinary unions between Jews and non-Jews, and the compulsory baptism of the issue of such unions; (4) the diminution of Jewish rights in court, travel and worship; (5) the forced conversion of the Jews, explicitly or implicitly with the alternative of exile; (6) the imposition of penalties against Jews and Christians for aiding the religious recidivism of Jewish converts; and (7) on the basis of the actual or putative religious recidivism of some converts, the generic attribution of recidivist inclinations to the converts as a group and the resultant preemptive imposition of disabilities upon them. Among the more ignominious disabilities was the *placitum*, or compulsory profession of religious fidelity, first imposed in Toledo by King Chintila (636–640) in December 638 upon converts from Judaism to Christianity. In this statement, the former Jews solemnly renounced their erstwhile beliefs and practices, promised to surrender their Jewish books, and swore to stone any backsliders among them.

Far from supporting an unrelieved Jewish adversity beginning with Reccared's conversion, the reiteration of this legislation betrays the difficulty of its enforcement. Contributing to the difficulty was the apathy or opposition to anti-Jewish legislation by several Visigothic monarchs after Reccared, notably Swintila (621–631) and Chindaswinth (641–649), and possibly also Liuva II (601–603), Witteric (603–610), and Gundemar (610–612). Such opposition cannot be responsibly dismissed by the occasionally proferred contention that these monarchs were "Arianizers." Besides, as the anti-Jewish legislation itself attests, Roman Catholic laity and clergy, including bishops, often supported the Jews, encouraged the return of exiled Jews, and even assisted Jewish converts to Christianity in their reversion to Judaism. Enemies charged these Roman Catholics with selling out to Jewish money. But this allegation, with its irresponsible imputation of corruption to large segments of the church, not to speak of its reductive appraisal of Jews, is nothing more than the excrescence of partisan hostility. Hardly surprisingly, it finds support in neither direct nor circumstantial evidence. It does, however, effectively divert atten-

tion from the deeper causes of the rift within the Iberian church and, indeed, all of Iberian society.

The rift exemplified the perennial and ubiquitious conflict between the advocates and the resisters of change, between an Old Guard zealous to preserve its power and prerogatives and a New Guard seeking to harness them to new power sources within its reach. In Iberia, in its simplest terms, the Old Guard supported strong regional autonomy, ecclesiastical and lay, while the New Guard promoted strongly centralized lay and ecclesiastical control. In this struggle, clergy, nobility, and laity were ranged on both sides of the issue, and on each side along a spectrum of visible and typological diversity, within which the principal political issues of the time and all auxiliary issues can be understood. In all phases of the struggle religious ideology was regularly put to the service of political agendas.

Aside from obvious political gain, the centralizers could not have overlooked the military and economic advantages of unification, especially as the Visigoths absorbed other independent enclaves and even finally, under Swinthia (622–631), the Byzantine foothold in the southeastern part of the Peninsula. The apparently incremental growth of Roman Catholicism, particularly among the native Iberian population, provided the paradigm for unification. The goal of unification is discernible in the unsuccessful efforts of King Leovigild (568–586), an Arian, to join Roman Catholics and Arians in a unified Christianity, under the control of the Arianism, or, as the Arian bishops called it, "our Catholic faith." It is seen as well in the revolt of Leovigild's son, Heremenegild, a Roman Catholic with both Arian and Roman Catholic support. Though unable to effect it politically, the Visigoths achieved unification legally by eventually extending Visigothic law over the entire Iberian polity. This took place under King Recenswinth (649–672), who completed the monumental revision of Visigothic law begun by his father Chindaswinth (642–653), with whom he had shared the crown for four years. Prior to Receswinth Iberia's two principal communities, the Visigothic ruling minority and the Roman subject majority, each lived under separate laws. The Visigoths iived under King Euric's (466–484) formulation of Visigothic law. The Romans were guided by a digest of the Theo-

dosian Code arranged by the Visigothic King Alaric II (484–507) and known as the Alaric's *Breviary* (*Breviarium Alaricianum*).

The continued turmoil in Visigothic Iberia suggests that its Old Guard blocked the implementation of Receswinth's code as well as all other efforts at centralization. It suggests as well that the opposing attitudes of Iberian leadership toward the Jews were a function of this struggle. In this struggle the support of Jews and converts from Judaism by the Old Guard nobility, clerics, and laity implies that the Jews, far from being a thorn in an otherwise united society, were in effect a plum of surpassing importance in an internecine struggle for political power. On the other hand, the opposition to the Jews corresponds to the determination of the centralizers to separate them from the Old Guard.

The effort at separation consisted in prying Jews from their traditional identity and principal occupations. Conversion to Christianity made Jews religiously and, at least in theory, politically equal to the Old Guard. It therefore, in most of their activities, reduced the indispensability of their reliance on Old Guard protection. Besides, since the power derived from their activities was generally far less than that of the Old Guard, the converts who chose to break with the Old Guard tended to fall into the camp of the New Guard. The removal of recalcitrant Jews from their principal occupations, agriculture and viticulture, sought to undermine the benefits to the Old Guard of Jewish productivity in these areas. It was, of course, accomplished through the prohibition against Jewish ownership of Christian slaves. The prohibition carried a transparent tender of freedom for slaves converting to Roman Catholicism and an equivalently transparent admission of the existence of more than a few who were not Roman Catholics. Jews who converted kept their slaves, but, like other converts, could bolt from their dependence upon the Old Guard.

A political perspective thus fully explains why the centralizers preferred the Jews' conversion over their exile and their exile over their maintenance of the status quo. It also explains why the Roman Catholic clergy, nobility, and laity of the Old Guard, in order to retain the status quo, favored Jews and helped converts return to Judaism.

It is difficult to ascertain how many Jews converted under the pressures of the Catholic Visigoth monarchs, how many fled the country

not to return, how many converts remained Jewish secretly, and how many returned to Judaism when they had an opportunity.

The internecine political struggles in the Peninsula and the apparent entrenchment of the Old Guard under Erwig and Egica explain as well the dynamics behind the invitation to the Muslims to enter the Peninsula. Clearly the New Guard invited the Muslims as allies, and Jews allied with the New Guard could not have been unhappy at their arrival. But the myth of collective Jewish responsibility for the Muslim invasion of an implicitly united Christian Peninsula must be categorically rejected.

The Formation of the Sephardic Phenomenon

Under Muslim rule the Jews of Sepharad became the premier Jewish community of Europe. In the process they evolved many of the traits that thereafter generally characterized all Sephardic communities.

The Muslims, under a captain named Tarik, invaded Iberia in 711 near the promontory thereafter known as the Rock of Tarik (Gibral-Tarik; Eng.: Gibraltar). By 715 they had occupied Iberia's south-central and northeastern areas and, except for some Pyrenean pockets, tributized the rest. The Muslims called the Peninsula al-Andalus, an enigmatic name sometimes derived from the hypothetical "Vandalicia," land of the "Vandals," after the Germanic tribes that had preceded the Visigoths into the Peninsula. Crossing the Pyrenees, the Muslims pushed northward until 732, when they were finally defeated between Tours and Poitiers by Eudes of Aquitaine and Charlemagne's grandfather, Charles, who earned the sobriquet Martel ("Hammer") for his prowess.

The occupation of Iberia, followed in the ninth century by the subjugation of Sardinia and Corsica and the gradual conquest of Sicily, climaxed the conversion of the Mediterranean into a Muslim lake. The Muslim world then inaugurated a period of spectacular achievement while Western Europe, landlocked, entered the provincialism of the feudal age.

The history of Muslim Iberia or al-Andalus is divisible into seven segments: (1) the chaos: 715–756, characterized by continuous internecine struggle, largely between Berber and Arab tribes; (2) the

emirate: 756–929, promoted by coalitions successful in the gradual, if spasmodic, advance of peace, order, and productivity; (3) the caliphate: 929–1031, proclaimed by the erstwhile emir Abd-ar-Rahman III (912–961), which propelled al-Andalus to its greatest political centralization and inaugurated its cultural Golden Age; (4) the taifas, "party states," or city-state emirates: 1031–1086, often in struggle with one another but collectively reaping the harvest of the Golden Age; (5) the Almoravid province (1086–1147), appended to the Almoravids' West African headquarters and marking the onset of Al-Andalus' cultural decline; (6) the Almohad caliphate (1148–1238), which suffered extensive territorial losses to the Christians and witnessed the end of al-Andalus' cultural hegemony; and (7) the principality of Nasrid Granada (1232 or 1237–1492), a homogeneous and culturally productive remnant which capitulated to the Christians in 1492.

In al-Andalus the Muslims developed a unique society with a considerable degree of political, economic and social rationalization. Its population, possibly exceeding 7 million, was highly urbanized, and its cities, often built on Roman sites, were the largest and cleanest in Europe. Foremost among them was Cordova, home to 100,000 people by the caliphal period, and the capital of Emir/Caliph Abd-ar-Rahman III (912–961) until he built his majestic palace city of Madinat az-Zahra ("the Golden City") three miles away. The Muslims' wealth derived from their exploitation of al-Andalus' limited (and not, as often stated, generally abundant) resources with advanced scientific techniques. The Muslims introduced new crops and innovative irrigation. They stimulated mining, manufactures, and commerce. They built a fleet that plied the Mediterranean and connected with the Middle Eastern trade routes to India. It carried the raw materials and finished products of al-Andalus, including its vaunted silk cloth, and brought back the riches of these lands, not least among them the gold of the Sudan. Many of the Arabic terms related to these activities are retained in the vocabulary of Christian Iberia.

The economy of al-Andalus generated increasing wealth through much of the caliphate. This wealth in turn gave rise to increasingly self-indulgent courtiers and intellectuals. The courtiers, the caliph and his successors foremost among them, turned to the patronage of

culture. The intellectuals, schooled de rigeur in Koran and Tradition (*hadith*), and as well in the scientific pursuits of the time, not the least medicine, increasingly invested their leisure in cultural creativity. In their growing worldliness both groups began to reassess the traditional world-view of their heritage, thus inaugurating in Europe what has been called, if somewhat infelicitously, the confrontation between reason and revelation.

As is always the case, this confrontation was resolved in one of three ways: the rejection of reason, the rejection of revelation, or a synthesis of the two. The rejection of reason was politically secure and could be publicly trumpeted, given the fact that society and government were grounded in Islam's revealed texts and sacred traditions. The rejection of revelation was politically most dangerous, since it courted punishment for treason, and therefore compelled all but its doctrinaire proponents to remain intellectually closeted. The intermediate solution of synthesis strove for the compatibilization of reason with revelation in such a way as to support the societal structure while permitting a rational understanding of its underlying ideology. Articulated by and on behalf of people uneasy with the traditional coordinates of revelation, this solution generated the creative philosophical syntheses of al-Andalus.

The artistic renaissance is justly called the Golden Age of al-Andalus. Its beginnings may at least symbolically be dated with the arrival of Ziryab the singer from Baghdad during the emirate of Abder-Rahman II (822–852) and its climax in the melodious poetry and sophisticated philosophy of the caliphate and taifas. The poetic florescence was pedestaled on scientific studies of the Arabic language. Grammar, philology, and lexicography uncovered Arabic's natural rhythms and directed its linguistic creativity. The philosophical counterpart couched the inherited tradition in the forms of ancient Greek philosophy, especially Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism. It culminated in the works of the Aristotelian Averroes (1126–1198).

In al-Andalus a new Jewish community came into being. The community was composed of three strata: the Jews of Visigothic Iberia, those overrun by the Muslim advance, and those subsequently returning from exile; immigration from elsewhere in the Muslim world, particularly as al-Andalus prospered and other Muslim lands declined;

and, in all likelihood, the continued adoption of Judaism by non-Jews, comparable to the massive non-Muslim adoption of Islam, particularly in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Concentrated in the newer cities, especially in the south, the Jewish community of al-Andalus, with a population by the end of the caliphate of 150,000 and possibly more, was by far the largest in Europe.

As elsewhere under Islam, the Jew of al-Andalus was a *dhimmi*, or "protected person." As dhimmis, Jews were regarded to be inferior to the Muslims and subjected to heavier taxes. Yet Jews lived with far greater physical and emotional comfort in al-Andalus than in any other country, Muslim or Christian, of the time. In al-Andalus they engaged in the widest range of occupations and professions. They were landowners and farmers, artisans and craftsmen, local and international merchants, physicians and scholars. They served the community at large as administrators, diplomats, and even soldiers, beginning with their garrisoning of captured cities in the early days of the conquest. In many of these activities Jews had regular contact with Muslims professionally and, especially in the higher echelons of society, intellectually and socially as well.

In their communities, or *aljamas*, as they were called, the Jews of al-Andalus, as elsewhere, lived quasi-autonomously under talmudic law. The heads of their communities were typically Jewish courtiers approved if not appointed by the Muslim leadership. In the early caliphate, when Abd-er-Rahman III strove to centralize his domains, he selected his body physician, Hasdai (sometimes called Hisdai) ibn Shaprut as prince (*nasi* in Hebrew) of the entire Jewish community of al-Andalus. Hasdai was also one of the caliph's principal diplomats, distinguishing himself not only with Muslims, but with the Christians of imperial Germany, the Byzantine Empire, and the Iberian state of Asturias-León. In the case of Asturias-León, he added his medical knowledge to his diplomatic skills when he provided a remedy for the obesity of its monarch, Sancho the Fat (956–966). As nasi of the Jewish community, Hasdai went to the rescue of beleaguered Jews in foreign lands and established contact with the Jewish kingdom of the Chazars in Russia.

The advent of the party states provided Jewish administrators with more abundant opportunities for preferment, and even titles which

were not attainable during the caliphate. In one of these states, the emirate of Granada, a Jew named Samuel (Ismail) ibn Nagdela (993–1055 or 1056), rose meteorically to become commander of the army and even vizier. He headed the Jewish community of Granada with the title of *naggid*, or "leader." He composed works on halakhah and Hebrew poetry of distinction, including poems from the battlefield. Like Hasdai and other Jews in the service of the court, Samuel spoke and wrote Arabic, and like many another Jew he was versed in the Koran. But he also wrote on the Koran, composed poetry in Arabic, began a biblical lexicon in Arabic, and translated from Arabic sources into Hebrew.

In the light of these realities it is only natural that the impress of its Muslim surroundings should have broadly pervaded the Jewish life of al-Andalus. Revealing this influence were the dress, institutions, and architecture of the Jews and even the chants and prayer mats of their synagogues. The influence was evident as well in the fact that the Jews' language of daily discourse was Arabic, which for internal use they apparently generally wrote in Hebrew characters. The Muslim parallel is also reflected formally in the Jews' focus on their own heritage: in their emphasis on scriptural commentaries, legal compilations, grammatical and related studies, religious and secular poetry, and philosophical syntheses between reason and revelation.

The Muslim influence is apparent as well in the mechanisms of Jewish governance. Until the caliphate the Jewish courts and academies of al-Andalus were subordinated to the Jewish legal establishment in Baghdad and the presiding scholar, known as the gaon ("excellency") of its academy of Sura. When the caliphate estabished its independence from Baghdad, the Jewish community of al-Andalus acted correspondingly. Although it continued cordial contact and not infrequent support of the geonic institutions, it proceeded to create an independent legal structure.

The architect of the transition was Hasdai ibn Shaprut. Toward the goals of autonomization and centralization, Hasdai stimulated legal studies. He purchased talmudic manuscripts abroad, thereby significantly increasing the copies available in al-Andalus, and revamped the Jewish legal establishment by importing an Italian scholar, unencumbered by the Jewish factionalism of al-Andalus and beholden to no one

but the nasi, to preside over the leading talmudic academy at Cordova. The scholar, Moses ben Enoch, is one of the principals in the famous Legend of the Four Captives, which seeks to repair the rupture of legal continuity between the geonic center and its Diaspora offshoots, both in al-Andalus and elsewhere. The legend presents the founders of the major secessionist academies as emissaries of the geonic academies who were captured by a Muslim pirate and cast off onto the shores of the lands where their leadership was soon established.

Although the fragmentation of the caliphate into party states decentralized the legal systems of both Muslims and Jews, the principle of unity appears to have been retained. This was achieved through the influence of the major centers of the succeeding emirates and the occasional moves toward the organization and codification of halakhah, or talmudic law, and the corpus of its pertinent applications. The process of halakhic organization produced distinguished legal compilations, beginning with the long-influential *Sefer ha-Halakhot* of Isaac of Fez (Alfasi; 1013–1103) in Lucena and culminating nearly two centuries later, outside of the Peninsula, with the *Mishneh Torah* of the Cordovan Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides; 1135–1205), whose father had studied at Lucena under Alfasi's successor.

The Muslim influence carried over as well into the Jewish culture of al-Andalus. Following their Muslim counterparts, courtier Jews like Hasdai, Samuel ibn Nagrela, and their colleagues created and sustained al-Andalus' Jewish Golden Age. Beginning with the grammarian poets Menahem ibn Saruk and Dunash ibn Labrat in Hasdai's time, the study of grammar led to the classic articulation of the triliteral Hebrew root by Judah ben David Hayyuj (ca. 945–ca. 1000) and the grammatical masterpieces of Jonah ibn Janah (first half of 11th cent.). Out of these sciences came a rich Hebrew poetry, secular and religious, that paralleled its Arabic counterpart in variety and beauty. The creativity of world-class poets like Solomon ibn Gabirol (ca. 1020–ca. 1057), Moses ibn Ezra (1055–1135 or later), and Jehuda Ha-Levi (ca. 1070–ca. 1141) ranks with the finest in any language.

The great poets were also engaged actively in medicine and other scientific disciplines. They were often also involved in creative religious scholarship in halakhah and biblical commentary, as well as linguistic studies and philosophy.

The Muslim milieu is also strikingly evident in the philosophical synthesis of Jewish al-Andalus. Indeed, the oldest extant synthesis in al-Andalus is the *Keter Malkhut* ("Royal Crown"), a long Hebrew poem by Solomon ibn Gabirol, in which the coordinates of Jewish theology are Neoplatonically framed. The *Keter Malkhut* is the only major Jewish synthesis of al-Andalus to have been composed in Hebrew. The others, including the Neoplatonic *Hovot ha-Levavot* ("Duties of the Heart") by Bahya ibn Pakuda (second half of 11th cent.), the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian *Cuzari* by Jehuda Ha-Levi, the Aristotelian *Emunah Ramah* ("Exalted Faith") by Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1110–1180), whose historical work the *Seder* (or *Sefer*) *Ha-Kabbalah* ("Book of Tradition") carries the Legend of the Four Captives, and the Aristotelian *Moreh Nevukhim* ("Guide of the Perplexed") by Moses Maimonides, were written with Hebrew characters in Arabic prose.

Though differing in form, approach, and purpose, the common effort of all these works to articulate the Jewish revelational system through the framework of another system ineluctably results in procrusteanization. Even a cursory reading of the Jewish philosophy of al-Andalus reveals alterations in the philosophical priorities of the thought of the inherited Jewish tradition and the details of their articulation. Thus, in different degrees, all these works effect changes in the inherited understanding of God, creation, providence, election, revelation, Torah, mitzvah, sin, atonement, reward and punishment, immortality, resurrection, and Messiah. Not surprisingly, this parallels the syntheses of the Muslim philosophers.

To be sure, such philosophical lucubrations were intended primarily for a small circle of intellectually conflicted believers. Aside from these and other intellectuals, including those positionally opposed to their efforts, there was no reading public, as some contemporary scholars occasionally imagine. However, this small circle constituted an influential group, who doubtless by nonverbal example as much as by articulated ideas modeled patterns of thought and behavior for the lower echelons of Jewish society. Although opposition could not have failed to mount from the beginning, the aggregate following of this synthetic thought, Muslim as well as Jewish, could not, for a variety of reasons, have been negligible. To the extent to which the syn-

thesizers enjoyed establishment support, their philosophical positions, even if not majoritarian, must be called societally tonal.

Perhaps the classic literary example of the acculturation of the Jews of al-Andalus is to be found in Gabirol's other philosophical work, of which there remain only fragments in Hebrew and a Latin translation, titled *Fons Vitae* ("Fountain of Life"). The original of this work, occasionally presumed to be in Hebrew, could just as easily have been in Arabic. Grounded in Neoplatonism like the *Keter Malkhut*, the *Fons Vitae* differs in its avoidance of all biblical, talmudic, or other religious terminology or allusions. Though forgotten among Jews in al-Andalus as Aristotelianism became their philosophical fashion, the *Fons Vitae* enjoyed a popularity among Christian scholastics, who believed that its author, his name now corrupted to Avicebron or Avicebrol, was a Muslim or even a Christian!

The Jewish Golden Age in al-Andalus reached its apogee in Moses ben Maimon, known as Maimonides or by the acronym Rambam. Maimonides lived in al-Andalus for little more than the first thirteen of his seventy years. He and his family left Cordova in the wake of the Almohad arrival and wandered through Christian Iberia, Muslim North Africa, and the Middle East before settling in Egypt. But Maimonides carried the culture of al-Andalus and spent the rest of his life in its energetic expression. The comprehensiveness of his activity is evidenced in his work as as a physician (he served Saladin's powerful vizier, al-Fadil, in this capacity), as leader of the Jewish community, and as a prodigious writer in Arabic on medicine, and in Arabic and Hebrew on a variety of dimensions of Jewish law and philosophy.

All these writings are models of precise organization and unambiguous clarity. So are at least the first two of his three monumental works: the *Luminary* (1168), his commentary to the Mishnah, in Arabic, known as the *Maor* in Hebrew; and the *Repetition of the Torah*, 1180, his code of Jewish law in Hebrew, known as the *Mishneh Torah* and also the *Yad ha-Hazakah* ("Strong Hand"). But his third and culminating work, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (1190), his synthesis of Jewish revelation and Aristotelian philosophy, in Arabic, known as the *Moreh Nevukhim* in Hebrew, appears to have a double meaning, one apparent from a superficial reading, and the other, as Maimonides himself tells us, attainable by individuals grounded in philosophy

through the careful juxtaposition of critical elements seemingly scattered in various chapters.

That the synthesis of reason and revelation in the *Moreh Nevukhim* is thoroughly Aristotelian is beyond any cavil. Aristotle's influence pervades Maimonides' treatment of all Judaism's theological coordinates. But what appears to be uncertain is Maimonides' real position on Aristotle's belief in the eternity of matter, with its obviously implicit denial of creation out of nothing and its challenge to corollary concepts. Maimonides was fully aware of the centrality of eternity of matter to Aristotle's thought. Yet, though he unequivocally accepted Aristotle's other fundamental propositions, he appears to hedge on the full acceptance of the eternity of matter into his synthesis.

Indeed, Maimonides' possible attraction to the eternity of matter was not lost on the commentators supportive of the *Guide* in the three centuries following its publication, for example, those of Shem Tob ibn Falaquera (ca. 1225–1295), Joseph ben Abba Mari Ibn Kaspi (1279–1340), and Moses ben Joshua ben Mar David of Narbonne (d. 1362), also known as Narboni. Kaspi went so far as to claim that, appearances notwithstanding, Maimonides had not refuted the doctrine of the eternity of the world. Nor was it lost on the commentaries that challenged the position of the *Guide*, among them most prominently that of Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov (ca. 1390–ca. 1441).

But whatever their views, the commentaries implicitly attest to the impact of Maimonidean thought and the cogency of its articulation for a environment that foreshadowed Jewish society in the modern world.

The "Occidentation" of the Sephardic Phenomenon

The distinctive characteristics of Sephardic life in al-Andalus were transferred to a Christian environment with the unfolding of Christian Iberia. This unfolding is known as the Reconquista, or the Christian reconquest of the Peninsula.

In retrospect, the Reconquista may be said to have begun in 722, when a Visigothic nobleman named Pelayo successfully skirmished with the Muslims near the village of Covadonga. It did not end until the annexation of the emirate of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs seven centuries and seven decades later. Legend romantically depicts

the Reconquista as an irrepressible and heroic crusade against the infidel. Yet, in reality, it consisted of desultory campaigns, fueled by material prospects, in which Christians and Muslims often fought side by side. At one time the emir of Zaragoza was aided by the greatest Christian hero of the Reconquista, Rodrigo Díaz del Vivar, who has been immortalized by his Castilian-Arabic sobriquet, El Cid.

Chronologically the Reconquista falls into three major phases. The initial expansion culminated in a rout of the Almohads at Navas de Tolosa in 1212. It produced a Christian Iberia that stretched from below the Tagus River on the Atlantic to some fifty miles south of Barcelona on the Mediterranean. The intermediate period comprised four electrifying decades, through the middle of the thirteenth century. During this time Christian forces occupied the heartland of southern Iberia, leaving al-Andalus with the kingdom of Granada and a small pocket on the southern coast. In the final phase, the pocket was absorbed in the fourteenth century and Granada in 1492.

The Reconquista carved out various Christian kingdoms: Asturias in the west; six counties in the east: Aragon, Sobarbe, Ribagorza, Urgel, Pallars, and Barcelona; and between them the fiercly independent kingdom of Navarre. Eventually from Asturias there emerged Portugal and León-Castile; the six counties fused into Catalonia and Aragon, which in the twelfth century were brought together under a single crown, though with separate administrations; and Castile, once an outpost, had definitively absorbed León under King Fernando III "the Saint" of Castile (1217–1252) and León (1230–1252).

Around a Visigothic residue the Christian population of Reconquista Iberia grew through the absorption of mozarabs, mudejar converts, and, by no means least, adventurers from across the Pyrenees. Known as the Franks in Christian Iberia, these adventurers informed the Reconquista with the biblical faith and crusading militancy of feudal Christianity.

The Reconquista generated a social order based on military achievement. It comprised two strata: warrior-leaders, developing into an aristocracy, and their raggedy followers. With the advance of the Reconquista the warrior-aristocracy diverged toward two extremes: the older and more comfortable, and the newer and more ambitious. To the constellations of warrior-leaders around these

extremes the terms "Old Guard" and "New Guard" may be respectively applied.

At this point a further word about the terms "Old Guard" and "New Guard" is in order. Like so many others, these useful terms are arbitrary labels. They refer to the opposing segments a sociopolitical spectrum and cover a wide variety of positions on either side, each with its own agenda and lesser alignments. These constellations, like their constituent components, become activated in direct proportion to their need for political or military confrontation, at which point they bank their differences and federate against the common foe. It is important to bear in mind that although the conservative and liberal perspectives on the sociopolitical spectrum labeled Old Guard and New Guard remain unchanged, the historical context and ideological content of these positions are always undergoing modification, as is obviously the case with the identity of their personnel. It thus can happen that today's New Guard position becomes the position of tomorrow's Old Guard. In addition, both constellations, and their individual components, strive to co-opt prospectively useful noncentrist elements of their opposition, even at the expense of some internal strife and even the restructuring of their own groups.

In Iberia, the distinctions between Old Guard and New Guard were expectedly more defined in its more settled areas and more fluid at the frontiers.

Jews in Reconquista Iberia are documented from the beginning of the ninth century. Their presence therefore may be presumed to be earlier. The Jewish population in Reconquista Iberia derived from four principal sources: established communities overrun by Christians, refugees from al-Andalus, immigrants from across the Pyrenees, and, not least, converts into Judaism. By the heyday of the Reconquista, Jewish communities of 50 to 100 families were to be found throughout the Peninsula. Such communities were sparser in the west and north of Iberia and more abundant in the south, center, and east. Large concentrations, of 200 or more families, included Valencia, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Huesca, and Toledo. Toledo's Jewish community' the largest, may have reached 350 families, though not the thousands of people reported by legend.

As they did in al-Andalus, Jews in Reconquista Iberia enjoyed quasi-autonomous political status under talmudic law. But in Reconquista Iberia, with its multiple polities, the Jewish communities were not centralized. Typically, every major city had independent jurisdiction, and, customarily, some degree of control, often loosely structured, over its neighboring settlements. It is of note that although Aragon was progressively centralized, its Jewish communities, despite various efforts, at no time achieved a central organization.

As in other lands, Jewish social and political structures in Reconquista Iberia revealed the influence of their environment. The Jewish community comprised two strata: the populace at large and the aristocracy. The Jewish aristocracy, however, derived not from military prowess, but from knowledge and and skills which were put to the service of their Christian overlords. Politically the Jewish communities were headed by a royal favorite who appointed the chief rabbi or chief judge, or served in this capacity himself.

The Jews of Reconquista Iberia were heirs to the world-view that had pervaded al-Andalus. Sophisticated, elitist, rationalistic, and decidedly acculturative in its articulations, this world-view fostered strong currents of religious tepidity and skepticism that variously affected nearly all of Jewish society. Throughout Reconquista Iberia almost to the eve of the Expulsion from Aragon and Castile, Jewish moralists fulminated against these currents and often indicted them for the ethical and moral corruption in their midst.

The influences of this world-view informed the rich Jewish literature of Reconquista Iberia. Though often fused with the literature of the Jewish Golden Age in al-Andalus or relegated to secondary status, this creativity, in the absence of its predecessor, would have sufficed to locate Iberian Jewry among the most innovative in history. This Silver Age of Iberian Jewry continued the forms of grammar, poetry, and philosophy developed in al-Andalus, but not without significant modifications. In language, Hebrew became the standard idiom, its rabbinic and medieval components blending with the biblical idiom dominant in the Golden Age. In poetry the conventions of al-Andalus were modified by greater topicality, specificity, and even preciosity, and the Hebraization of new genres, like the *maqama*, the Arabic dramatic dialogue in poetry and prose. And in philosophy the

rational structures of Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism were harnessed to the defense of the Judaism of tradition.

The traditionalists in Jewish society attributed its erosions of faith and moral laxity to the blandishments of Aristotelian thought. To the followers of its teachings they frequently gave the appellation Averroists. They employed this term pejoratively, and often in lieu of the term "Maimonidean" (or "Maimunist"), referring to a follower of Maimonides, who rather than Averroes, represented the culminating link between Aristotle and Judaism. The opposition to the Maimonideans by the traditionalists, or anti-Maimonideans, formed the basis of a prolonged and at times incandescent struggle. Begun before the death of Maimonides, it continued for three centuries in Castile, Aragon and Provence, until it was stilled by the decree of the Expulsion.

The internal struggles beweeen Maimunists and anti-Maimonideans in Iberia had been preceded by an international struggle following the appearance of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. There the center of opposition was Baghdad, the seat of the gaonate, whose followers correctly understood the *Mishneh Torah* as a frontal attack on the gaonate's claim to leadership of the Jewish world. In Europe also the Maimonidean controversy was ignited by the *Mishneh Torah* because of its challenge to the Jewish establishment, and, with the publication of the *Guide for the Perplexed*, for its underlying philosophy as well. But it was the Aristotelianism of the *Guide* that became the battle line in Europe. The struggle had two peak moments. The first came in 1233 or 1234, when, by order of the Dominicans and possibly at the instigation of the anti-Maimonideans, the writings of Maimonides were burned in the public square of Paris. The second occurred in 1305, when the sage of Barcelona, Solomon ibn Adret, issued a ban against the study of the sciences, except for medicine, and metaphysics by any Jew below the age of twenty-five. Besides their philosophical substance, the struggles all had decidedly political dimensions. What was at stake was nothing short of the control of the direction of the regional and even universal Jewish world.

Not unconnected to the anti-Maimonidean position was the bloom of intellectual mysticism in Reconquista Iberia. In Aragon-Catalonia this occurred in the second quarter of the thirteenth century in the city

of Gerona. A circle of mystics, formed around the legendary Isaac the Blind, wrote sophisticated mystical works, like those steeped in Neoplatonism scripted by Isaac's disciple Azriel. In Castile a parallel movement culminated in the 1280s with the completion of the *Zohar* ("[The Book of] Splendor"). The cardinal work of Jewish mysticism, the *Zohar* is a collection of a number of tracts, which, with the exception of two, penned shortly thereafter, were the work of Moses ben Shem Tob (ca. 1240–1305) of León. The intellectuals connected to these works often reflected the ascetic tendencies of traditional Judaism, which, along with popular mysticism, were particularly in evidence in times of sociopolitical stress. But the works themselves were of the highest philosophical caliber. They were clearly intended for the cultured few in their struggle to shore up support for their position and countervail that of their opponents. In their address of social and moral issues, including their criticism of religious and moral laxity, these works are therefore reflective of the realities of their society and are not to be studied, as they sometimes are, independently of this context.

The gradual assumption of political ascendancy by the anti-Maimonideans in Reconquista Iberia reflected the dominance of the traditional, God-irrupting view of the world nurtured by feudal Christianity and enshrined in the epics, poetry and drama of medieval Christian Iberia. This world-view survived the challenges of Christian scholasticism. Yet at the same time scholasticism's Hellenic heritage struck receptive chords among Iberia's growing Christian elite, whose sophistication, worldliness, skepticism, and religious apathy gave them much in common with their counterparts among the Jews.

Jews in Reconquista Iberia continued the manifold activities of their involvement in al-Andalus. They helped to repopulate numerous conquered areas. In Cordova, Seville, Valencia, Majorca, and elsewhere they were given land and houses. They cultivated fields and vines, crafts and trades, local and international commerce. They served militarily in a variety of capacities, especially the defense of captured towns. They excelled in medicine, astronomy, and eventually cartography. Their scholars studied science, law, and language. Their legists were often consulted by royal jurists on the laws of the land. A most illustrious consultant was the Catalonian Isaac bar

Sheshet Perfet (1326–1408), known acronymically as the Ribash. Along with Muslims and Christians, Castilian Jews were among the Translators of Toledo, rendering Greek and Arabic scientific classics into Latin for Alfonso X (1252–1284), the Wise.

Above all, they Jews were prominent in administration and diplomacy. They were charged with the organization of royal finances and the collection of taxes. Their familiarity with both Christian and Muslim culture made them invaluable for diplomacy. They were often sent on sensitive political missions, as in the case of Don Meir ibn Shoshan for Ferdinand III of Castile and León. Jews served as ambassadors, court physicians, astrologers, secretaries, and interpreters. The alfaquim, or court physician, was often simultaneously the principal royal counselor. In Portugal, he held a seat on the royal council. Throughout Reconquista Iberia such Jews formed a courtier class. As such they often wielded enormous power not only in the Jewish community but in the polity at large.

Unlike other lands of the Christian feudal world, the Jews of Reconquista Iberia enjoyed considerable professional, social, and cultural contact with their non-Jewish neighbors. Jewish thinkers, even mystics like Azriel, were in contact with Christian scholasticism. And, among the earliest Iberian vernacular poetry are verses from a number of Hispano-Jewish poets, among them Jehuda Ha-Levi (ca. 1070–after 1141), whom the distinguished Spanish polygraph, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, calls the first Castilian poet. The contact between Jews and Christians was greatest among the aristocracy, but it was far from absent among the ordinary people. The greater social openness of Reconquista Iberia is evident from the patterns of Jewish residence. The Jews of Reconquista Iberia did not live in restricted communities. Some cities had predominantly Jewish quarters which facilitated the accessibility of communal institutions, but elsewhere, particularly in smaller towns, Jews were to be found in many neighborhoods.

More importantly, Jews and Christians, primarily from the secularized strata, were drawn to one another by their increasingly convergent outlooks on life. And their greater propinquity, geographical, occupational, cultural, and religious, facilitated the transfer of religious commitment from one group to the other. Although few names

survive of converts to Christianity, and these usually belong to important personalities, especially scholars like Solomon ha-Levi of Burgos, who became Paul of Burgos, and eventually bishop of that city, it is likely that the converts were not limited to the Jewish aristocracy. Nor is it unlikely, reciprocally, that there was no movement on the politically more perilous road of conversion from Christianity to Judaism.

Leading princes throughout Reconquista Iberia thrived on Jewish service. Though zealous Christians, they issued Jews charters of privilege that were at least tacitly and often explicitly supported by the church. These charters, generally typical of those issued to Jews throughout the feudal world, placed the Jews under the protection of their benefactors. They assured fair treatment for Jews in litigation with Christians and frequently gave them the right to inflict capital punishment.

Jews were especially useful as well because they were powerless and therefore dependent upon the goodwill of their patrons. At the same time, the service they rendered to establishments made Jews an impediment to non-establishment leaders. These therefore spared no opportunity to arouse the populace against them. For this purpose they summoned the farrago of anti-Jewish canards that had accumulated during the Middle Ages. Most vicious were the charges of host desecration, well poisoning, and ritual murder. These myths were continually exploited to siphon popular discontent onto the Jews. Such exploitation was always possible because of the perennial and ubiquitous existence of popular discontent. It proved successful and enduring in direct proportion to the spread and continuity of such discontent, particularly during times of drought, disease, wars, and inflation. Establishments, ecclesiastical no less than lay, vigorously defended Jews against such charges, out of justice in all likelihood and self-interest certainly. But when their own security was threatened, these establishments frequently took over the leadership in the scapegoating of the Jews in order to derail their adversaries' momentum.

As the Reconquista unfolded, the clamor against Jews became more persistent. Reflective of the intensification of sociopolitical stress, this clamor also formed the background for the creation of a

new political horizon in Iberia and a radically new direction in the history of its Jews.

The Bifurcation of the Sephardic Phenomenon

By the the fourth quarter of the thirteenth century, Navarre, Portugal and Aragon-Catalonia had completed their respective territorial expansions, leaving the culmination of the Reconquista to Castile. These events were to prove profoundly significant for the fate of Iberian Jews. They were to prove no less significant for the history of all Iberia, and, beyond, the trajectory of Western European civilization.

The kingdom of Navarre was active in the Reconquista only until the middle of the eleventh century. Its participation ended in the reign of Sancho III "the Greater" (1004–1035), when Navarre essentially reached its final boundaries, no less at the expense of nearby Christian lands in León, Ribagorza, Sobarbe and Aragon than the disintegrating Muslim caliphate. At the time Navarre was Iberia's principal Christian state. But its primacy did not survive the reign of Sancho's eldest son and successor, García (1035–1054), as it was quickly overshadowed by its neighbors, Aragon and Castile.

The remaining Christian polities in Iberia completed their major roles in the Reconquista around the same time. Portugal, having achieved its most spectacular gains under Sancho II (1223–1246), rounded out its boundaries under his brother, Afonso III (1246–1279). Aragon-Catalonia completed its section of the Reconquista under Jaume I (1213–1276), and Castile its principal phase under Fernando III. In all three the process occasioned dramatic transformations in the interrelationsips of their respective Old and New Guards.

Until the conclusion of the Reconquista, New Guards could anticipate their aggrandizement through the further pursuit of the Reconquista, especially since the farther south its penetration, the richer the Muslim territories became. The impending termination of the Reconquista exhausted such prospects. It therefore put the New Guards in each advancing realm on a collision course with their Old Guards. Unable to generate additional power through the desiccating Reconquista, the New Guards faced two alternatives: to wrest power forcibly from the Old Guard or to generate new and potentially deci-

sive sources of power. The implementation of the first alternative was the more difficult, because of the sensitivity of the entrenched Old Guard to any disquieting move. The second, initially not as confrontational, but at no time without its own attendant risks, comprised the centralization of the polity with the help of noncentrist elements of the Old Guard, and its expansion through territorial conquest. Centralization entailed the rationalization of the prerogatives of each polity ultimately under a single regime, while territorial expansion offered the prospect of incalculable wealth through the exploitation of conquered territories. The New Guard quite naturally preferred the second alternative.

If the Old Guards of the various Iberian Christian polities perceived a threat to their dominance in this process, they could not have failed to realize its potential for the enrichment of their states, and the maintenance of their competitiveness against one another and equivalently ambitious politics outside the Peninsula. Considerations such as these inevitably led to struggles within the Old Guard, all the while that it was maintaining a fragile unity against the common New Guard adversary. Basically two distinct positions emerged within the constellation of the Old Guard: one favoring the status quo and an unrelenting campaign against the New Guard; and the other recognizing the decisive power potentially derivable from New Guard activities and therefore interested in the fashioning of a new political scenario. This scenario would include the promotion of sociopolitical rationalization and territorial conquest by the state in accordance with the New Guard agenda. But at the same time it would create mechanisms to ensure that the power deriving from these activities was diverted toward the Old Guard, or, more precisely, a coalition within it. This coalition would therefore do everything within its power to control the New Guard. It would supervise its enterprise, reward its achievement, and incorporate some of its people into its midst as it deemed desirable or necessary. But at the same time it would not hesitate to block any New Guard thrusts toward dominance with every means at its disposal. The Old Guard coalitions which promoted this scenario of controlled modernization were the first of their kind in Western Europe. On them the label "Modern Old Guard" may be affixed.

The emergence of the Modern Old Guard was neither swift nor easy in any polity. In all it came about only after continuous and often violent struggles. These struggles were fought not only between the Old Guard and New Guard constellations, but among elements within each, depending upon their perceptions of threat or opportunity. A Modern Old Guard at no time achieved dominance in Navarre. In the other polities the constellational advantage shifted continually. A Modern Old Guard finally established itself in Aragon-Catalonia in the mid-fourteenth century, in Portugal in the early fifteenth, and in Castile in the mid-fifteenth. Thereafter these Modern Old Guards managed, often, however, only with great difficulty, to retain their establishment status against continuous and often relentless New Guard opposition until the end of the eighteenth century in Portugal and the nineteenth century in Spain.

The struggles of the Modern Old Guard were of varying intensity, depending on the polity. In Aragon-Catalonia the emergence of the Modern Old Guard is traceable to the reign of Jaume I (1213–1276); its consolidation to the attainment, by the broader constellation of the Old Guard, of the "General Privilege" under Pere the Great (1276–1285); and its primacy to the political understanding after the military defeat of a more conservative coalition of the Old Guard in 1348 by Pere the Punctilious (1336–1387). By the middle of the thirteenth century, the rationalization of Aragon-Catalonia sociopolitically and its expansion militarily and economically were well under way, led by Catalonia, its more advanced component. For a variety of reasons, including war, famine, and financial collapse, Aragon-Catalonia declined rapidly and irremediably by the end of the fourteenth century.

Though bitter and often bloody, the struggles between the constellations were least devastating in Portgual. This was because Portugal had been the least feudalized of the three large Iberian polities. It had been pointed toward centralization with the separation of its first ruler, Afonso Henriques (ruled 1128–1185), from the hegemony of Castile. Signposts indicating the emergence of its Modern Old Guard are evident in the systematization of Portuguese law under Afonso II (1211–1223), the sociopolitical rationalization under Diniz the Farmer (1279–1325), and Pedro the Justicer (1357–1367), and the massive restructuring of power alignments under João I (1384–1433), by

which time a Modern Old Guard had clearly risen to dominance. The Modern Old Guard successfully met new challenges at the end of the fifteenth century and reestablished its dominance on a firmer basis by the middle of the sixteenth.

Castile was the last of the surviving Iberian states to emerge. Though destined to outstrip its neighbors in territory, population, and power, its modernization was later and slower than the others' and the struggle between its Old and New Guards was longer and more bitter. By the culmination of its Reconquista, Castile had generated an overwhelmingly feudalized Old Guard and a rapidly growing New Guard eager to assume control of the kingdom. The emergence of a Modern New Guard is discernible in the sociopolitical rationalization under Alfonso X the Wise (1252–1284) and Alfonso XI (1312–1350) after his thirteen-year minority, but its empowerment was long obstructed by the right wing of the Old Guard. With the growing power of the New Guard, and the unrest brought on by the epidemics and economic disasters of the first half of the fourteenth century, the struggle between the Old Guard and the New Guard kept the specter of civil war continually over Castile through the third quarter of the fifteenth century.

The first major confrontation came late in the reign of Pedro I (1350–1369) when, under Pedro, the New Guard came to the fore and the Old Guard constellation aligned itself behind Pedro's halfbrother, Count Enrique of Trastámara, whose platform included the strong anti-Jewish components traditional for Iberia's anti-establishment positions. Aragon and France entered the fray on Enrique's side, while Edward, England's "Black Prince," came to Pedro's aid. The Black Prince actually turned the tide of battle in Pedro's favor in 1367, but when he suddenly withdrew, the Old Guard forces moved in for the coup de grace. The war culminated spectacularly with Enrique's capture and murder of his royal half-brother.

The war was devastating. It sapped Castile's resources and decimated the aristocracy on both sides of the conflict. It also left unresolved the underlying problems of Castilian society, including the unremitting pressure for its modernization.

When the count of Trastámara mounted the throne as Enrique II (1369–1379), he replenished the old Guard with military officers and

family members. He also mitigated his former anti-establishment position toward the Jews. If by these actions he sought to develop a Modern Old Guard, he was frustrated by the conservative Old Guard. The policies it promoted under the Trastámaras permitted it to accumulate nearly half the land of Castile. This kept the Modern Old Guard relatively weak and played into the hands of the New Guard, leading to the recurrent threat of New Guard dominance and civil war.

But neither Enrique nor his son, Juan I (1379–1390), could quell the turbulence of their realm. Powerless against the economic crises of Western Europe which reverberated most emphatically in the Aragonese crash of 1381, and the disaffection of the populace throughout Castile, the Castilian leadership, Old Guard and New, stood again on the brink of civil war and mutual destruction. If civil strife did not abate for many decades, full-scale civil war was for the nonce averted. In the process the Modern Old Guard grew in strength.

In the struggles between the Old Guard and the New and the emergence of the Modern Old Guards, the Jews in the various polities played a seminal role. For all the differences that existed in detail, Jews in all these areas had one critical element in common: in all they were traditionally engaged in New Guard activities but were predominantly under the protection of the Old Guards. The Old Guard sought to keep them as Jews precisely as the Old Guard in Valencia sought to preserve the Muslims in their religious identity. If for no other reason this was because their conversion to Christianity would tend to add to the numbers of the New Guard and therefore threaten their power. But Modern Old Guards, in line with their efforts at rationalization and consolidation of their control, pursued a different policy once they had become dominant in the Old Guard and begun to subordinate the New Guard. This policy promoted the conversion of the Jews, the admittance of a small number into the Old Guard, and the relegation of the rest to the controlled New Guard.

As in the case of the Catholic monarchs among the Visigoths, the conversionist policies of the Modern New Guard corresponded as least as much to a secular political agenda as it did to religious zeal.

In Navarre, which had been centralized since Sancho el Mayor, the Modern Old Guard is discernible in the concerted efforts at international commerce, albeit on a small scale, during the reign of Juana I

(1274–1305). The Jews of Navarre played an important role in these activities. Yet Navarre remained basically a feudal country with dominant power vested in a feudalized Old Guard.

In Portugal, the Jews were also few. Prior to the last decade of the fifteenth century, their numbers could not have exceeded 30,000. With the comparatively smooth transition to the primacy of the Modern Old Guard, the Jews continued to work under the protection of the various segments of the Old Guard constellation. They were molested only by the fringes of the sociopolitical spectrum, and most notably in the difficult, plague-ridden reign of Afonso IV (1325–1357), who was constrained to pass disabling legislation against Jews in the face of New Guard pressure and popular unrest.

In Aragon, where the number of Jews probably approached 100,000 in the thirteenth century, the Modern Old Guard clearly pursued a conversionist policy toward them. The implementation of this policy may have begun early in the second quarter of the century, when the Dominicans became the chief missionaries for the church in Provence and Aragon. Evidence of the zeal of the Dominicans is attested by the Disputation of Barcelona in July of 1263. Convoked under the aegis of King Jaume and the Aragonese anti-Pope Benedict XIII and paid out of their budgets, the disputation ostensibly set out to resolve the shopworn questions of the Messiah's identity, nature, and arrival. But the real agenda was to support the pope and the secular centralizers and, in the process, to induce conversions of Jews. The disputation relied on the Dominicans' study of rabbinic literature in support of Christian doctrine. This study led a dozen years later to the completion of the *Pugio Fidei* ("Dagger of Faith") by Raymund Martí, one of the participants in the Disputation of Barcelona. This massive Latin work was clearly intended to provide Christian missionaries with material for their conversionist activities. Aided by royal enactments, like that of Pedro III in 1279, requiring Jews to hear conversionist sermons, these activities continued steadily and successfully through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In Castile the Modern Old Guard also adopted the conversionist policy. But, because of Castile's later development and more difficult ascendancy, this policy was implemented more slowly than in Aragon. Despite scant information on its origins, the policy is inferable from

Christian polemicists like the former Jew, Abner of Burgos, whose activity in the second quarter of the fourteenth century leaves little doubt about their conversionist intentions. Conversion may well have also been the motive behind the call for the expulsion of the Jews by Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo, the majordomo of Alfonso XI (1312–1350). Opposed by other leading Christians, the expulsion did not take place. But not a few Jews converted to Christianity at that time and subsequently, especially during and after the Castilian civil war.

Further indicative of a conversionist policy was the anti-Jewish preaching of Ferrán Martínez beginning in 1378. Martínez was the archdeacon of Ecija, judicial representative of the archbishop of Seville, and confessor to Queen Leonor. Hardly fortuitiously, his preaching was concentrated in Seville, Castile's wealthiest Jewish community and a major New Guard center. Martínez's connection with the establishment is evidenced by his undiminished vitriol despite repeated orders to desist obtained by the frightened Sevillian Jewish aljama and its supporters from the pope and even the king. This suggests that the papal bulls were rendered ineffective; that the royal documents were mere formalities and that Martínez, as he himself intimated, enjoyed the support of Castile's highest echelons. Martínez continued undisturbed in his activity for seventeen years. He was finally arrested in 1395 by order of King Enrique III "the Sickly" (1390–1406) in response to circumstances unclear to the chroniclers of the time. But even then his punishment appears to have been little more than a slap on the wrist.

In addition to conversions, Martínez's preaching could not have failed to contribute to the violence against the Jews of Castile which began in March of 1391 and by the summer had spread throughout Castile, Aragon, and the Balearic Isles. These events occurred at a time of heightened unrest in both Castile and Aragon. Castile was reeling from its defeat at the hands of the Portuguese at Aljubarrota in 1385, a depleted treasury, a disoriented populace, and incandescent tensions between the Old Guard and the New Guard, with the New Guard making progress and another devastating civil war on the horizon. Aragon, in the meantime, was not faring much better, as it strove to overcome the ravages of a decade of economic turbulence,

revolts in its Mediterranean possessions in 1391, and mounting problems of dynastic succession.

In many places, beginning with Seville, the massacres were stopped by royal orders. These were issued only after enough destruction had taken place to suggest that total destruction was not an impossibility. As in the case of the pogroms against the Jews in Russia 490 years later, there is every likelihood that the eruptions of 1391, which at first glance appeared spontaneous, had been contoured by the establishment and executed with the collusion of important nonestablishment power sources in both Castile and Aragon.

The extent of the losses in life or property during these assaults cannot be accurately determined. Nor can the number of refugees they created. But there can be no question about the magnitude of the numbers or the resultant disorientation of the Jewish communities throughout Iberia. In view of the considerable acculturation and religious ambivalence within the Jewish community, it is not surprising that the violence generated massive conversions to Christianity from all echelons of Jewish society. The number of conversions in all probability exceeded the combined total of Jewish casualties and refugees. Many Jewish communities were decimated, and some, including Barcelona, were closed for lack of Jews.

The sudden governmental termination of the violence and the approved, if not sponsored, conversions in both Castile and Aragon lead ineluctably to the conclusion that in neither country did the leadership wish to destroy all its Jews. Indeed, the massacres of 1391 served a dual purpose: to defuse the impending civil war through the calculated diversion by societal leadership of popular anger and fanaticism onto the Jews, and, at the same time, to make conversion, now as an escape hatch, all the more palatable. Unconverted Jews in Aragon and Castile, though diminished numerically and circumstantially terrorized, retained their communities, self-government, prerogatives, and protection.

Significantly, despite anti-Jewish traditions in both Navarre and Portugal, and the existence of elements ready to turn them into political action, both countries remained comparatively quiet during this period.

That conversion was the official policy of Castile and Aragon is evident from the intensification of conversionist efforts after the massacres. Conversionist preaching was particularly evident in Aragon in the first two decades of the fifteenth century under the fiery Dominican, Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419). Connected to the highest echelons of state and church, and in a position at least twice to call for Pope Benedict's abdication, Ferrer spent the last two decades of his life as an itinerant apostolic preacher in Iberia, France, Lombardy, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. Within this activity, he devoted considerable efforts to the missionization of the Jews.

Ferrer's were also turbulent times, marked by an uneasy political stalemate between the death of King Martí (1395–1410) without issue and the enthronement of the Castilian regent, Fernando de Trastámara, as his successor. An outsider, Fernando was tied to no Aragonese power source aside from the Modern Old Guard establishment. Yet the successes of Fernando I (1412–1416) and the prosperity under Alfonso V (1416–1458) were insufficient to resolve Aragon's deeper sociopolitical problems. This was evidenced by the Catalan revolt under Juan II (1458–1479). Encompassing all of Peninsular Aragon and the Balearic Isles, the revolt was a complex web of civil strife, urban and rural, with intricate shifts of Old and New Guard elements. By the end of the century Aragon, drained and debilitated, was no match for its more populous neighbor, Castile.

Stemming from Ferrer's activity was the Disputation of Tortosa. Convoked by Benedict XIII in 1413 and continuing to November of 1414, the disputation's official agenda comprised a discussion of the Messiah's nature and the Talmud's alleged hostility to Christianity. But here, too, the real agenda of the disputation appeared to be the stimulation of conversions and thereby the enhancement of both Benedict's papacy and the secular establishment.

Appreciable numbers of Jews converted during the disputation and in its wake. By 1415 the Jewish community of Aragon was only a pathetic shadow of its former self. In his philosophical chef d'oeuvre, the *Ikkarim*, completed that year, Joseph Albo reflects the defensiveness of the Jewish community in the wake of the disputation by classifying the belief in the Messiah not as a root but as a derivative principle in Judaism.

The conversions cohered with the official Christian program for the missionization of the Jews and the acceptance of all converts as neonates, fully cleansed of all their past shortcomings. This explains why, on conversion, the erstwhile Jews, now known as *conversos* or New Christians, a term which eventually acquired a distinctive connotation, found unimpeded opportunity in all areas, including marriage to Old Christian aristocracy and high office in both secular callings and the hierarchy of the church. Politically, the massive conversions strengthened the ranks of the New Guards and stimulated the empowerment of Modern Old Guards.

Indeed, conversion appears to have underlain the clamor for the expulsion of the Jews by both New Guard and Modern Old Guard and for the major expulsions edicted in the closing decades of the fifteenth century: the expulsion from Andalusia in 1483 and from all Castile and Aragon in 1492.

By the time of the Edict of Expulsion, the Modern Old Guard had clambered to the top of a precarious power ladder in Castile. This came about through four temporally overlapping steps: the integration into the New Guard of the majority of the converts beginning in 1391; the struggles of the New Guard, thus strengthened, with the dominantly feudal Old Guard throughout the nearly six decades betrween 1391 and 1449; generated by this clash, the realignments within the Old Guard that favored the growth of its modern component; and, beginning in 1449, late in the reign of Juan II (1406–1454), when the New Guard was enjoying a brief period of dominance, the implementation of a new policy under the aegis of the Modern Old Guard.

In that year a decree issued in Toledo and known as the *Sentencia-Estatuto* ordered all conversos, by which it intended not only the converts of 1391 and those of subsequent years but all their descendants as well, to be removed from any public offices they might hold and to be henceforth ineligible to occupy them.

The rationale given was that none of these people could be trusted as Christians and that all were actual or potential practitioners of Judaism. The expression of Judaism by Christians through deed or word was, of course, as it always had been, heresy. The *Sentencia-Estatuto* explained the New Christians' proclivity for Judaism by the assertion that as descendants of Jews they could not be *cristianos lin-*

dos, complete or perfect Christians. Through this assertion, the *Sentencia-Estatuto* gave an impetus to the promulgation of the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre*, "blood cleanness," or perhaps more precisely, "blood purity." *Limpieza de sangre* was taken to be the mark of a true Christian. It was regarded as absent from the Christian descendants of Muslims, and especially, judging from its more common application and emphasis, the Christian descendants of Jews.

The doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* injected a bifurcated definition of Jewish identity into the Iberian Peninsula. Henceforth there were two definitions of the Jew: the traditional definition denoting the open adherents of the Jewish faith who lived under Jewish law, and the new definition, covering the converts from Judaism and their descendants, who, though baptized or presumed to be, and though officially Christian, were suspected, by virtue of their Jewish ancestry, of being irremediably bound to their ancestral faith.

For the apprehension and punishment of the heretics among the New Christians, a call was immediately issued for the creation of an Inquisition. Permission for the establishment of such an Inquisition, with unusually broad powers, was given by Pope Nicholas V in 1451. But nothing was done for its implementation. However, advocacy for an Inquisition continued strong, and in 1478, papal permission was granted again, and the Inquisition was established two years later.

The inquisitorial pursuit of the New Christians' heresies was not a tangential eddy in the stream of Iberian history. On the contrary, it represented a critical part, if not the centerpiece, of the policy by which eventually all the Modern Old Guards of Iberia, despite continuing opposition, managed to retain control of their respective regimes for centuries.

The struggles between the Old Guard, the New Guard, and the growing Modern Old Guard continued during the tumultuous reign of Enrique IV (1454–1474), when again Castile found itself on the brink of civil war. Once again the impasse was solved by compromise: the marriage of Princess Isabel of Castile, not originally in line for the throne, to Fernando of Aragon and the cession of effective power to the Modern Old Guard. Under the Catholic Monarchs, as they came to be called, Castile and Aragon retained their distinctiveness and autonomy, and their leadership, in both cases Modern Old

Guard, with the help of the subordinated New Guard, again sought peace, stability, and the development of their dyarchy in line with the New Guard agenda. In the process their Catholic subjects of Jewish descent were to play a prominent role.

The Rationalization of the Sephardic Phenomenon

Under its two identities, internal and imposed, Sephardic Jewry was swept into the vortex of political, economic, social, and ideological rationalization throughout its dispersion in the Western world.

Through this process of rationalization, the Catholic Monarchs catapulted Castile-Aragon and its successor state of Spain into the forefront of the modern world. To be sure, their polity was not the first in Europe to embark on modernization. By the usual definitions of the term there were precursors, as early as twelfth-century Flanders, thirteenth-century Italy, perhaps thirteenth-century Aragon-Catalonia, and certainly early-fifteenth-century Portugal. But Spain enjoyed a superiority over the other states in population, material, and intellectual resources, and not least, a sense of manifest destiny toward "the glorious age in which heaven promises one flock and only one shepherd," in the words of the sixteenth-century poet Hernando de Acuña, the age when there will be "one king, one empire, and one sword."

The Catholic Monarchs also, though in this case unintentionally, catapulted Sephardic Jewry into the modern world through expulsion, conversions, *Limpieza de sangre,* and Inquisition.

The impulse to rationalization explains the efforts by the Catholic Monarchs and their predecessors to unite their polities religiously through the conversion of their Jews, whose contributions they did not wish to lose through expulsion. So, too, their reliance on *limpieza de sangre* to mark the potential for heresy and on the Inquisition to extirpate its actualization fully coincide with their agenda for unification.

Traditionally, *limpieza de sangre* and Inquisition have been regarded as primarily, if not exclusively, religious institutions created to confront the New Christians' irrepressible tendency to judaize. Indeed, appearing to testify to pervasive clandestine Judaism are thousands of inquisitorial dossiers of New Christians often generations and centuries removed from ancestral conversion, and hundreds of inquisito-

rial martyrs for Judaism. Appearing to testify to the irrepressibility are not only its continuity but its powerful reemergence years and even decades after its apparent extirpation in places like Peru, Mexico, and most dramatically, Majorca and its residual continuity among contemporary Christians in various parts of the Iberian world.

Jews have often lionized the New Christians arrested by the Inquisition as paladins of faith, and have exalted the opprobrious term *marrano*, meaning "pig," popularly hurled against the New Christians, particularly of Spain, into a badge of Jewish religious fidelity. They have even composed stirring fictional reconstructions of secret Judaism, like the one in the Hebrew trilogy *Shelomo Molkho* (1928–29) by the novelist A. A. Kabak. So, too, Christian defenders of the Inquisition have regarded the institution primarily as an instrument designed to protect the purity of the faith against various infractions and heresies, not least the heresy of New Christian judaizing.

Jews and Christians with views focusing on the Inquisition's religious role have tended to treat its activity, however important they may have regarded it, as tangential to the general history of the Iberian empires.

However, a closer look at the vast records of the Inquisition and the related records of imperial Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition's lengthy duration suggests that while rationalization was clearly a critical goal, and *limpieza* and Inquisition were clearly directed toward this goal, their function was quite different from its traditional portrayal.

Pointing to this conclusion are at least thirty-six major anomalies which challenge the traditional view. These challenges may be arranged in seven categories, as follows:

Category A. If Jewish blood carried an indelible stain and compulsion to Judaism,

1. Why was there such eagerness to convert Jews at all times and places, and especially in the Iberian Peninsula in the late fourteenth century and throughout the fifteenth?

2. And why did nearly six decades elapse between the mass conversions of 1391 and the promulgation of the *Sentencia-Estatuto?*

3. And why, certainly for at least the first three of these nearly six decades, were there almost no notices of judaizing practice or com-

plaints about the political and ecclesiastical promotion of people with impure blood?

4. And why, throughout the Iberian Peninsula, did many Old Christians, especially aristocrats, marry New Christians, with the result that by the end of the fifteenth century few noble families in Castile and Aragon retained *limpieza de sangre?*

5. And why was the principle of *limpieza de sangre* conventionally disregarded for descendants of Jews who converted prior to 1391, thus sparing as Old Christians, incidentally, the entire Spanish monarchy descended from King Fernando II of Aragon, who issued the Decree of Expulsion and whose Jewish ancestry came through his mother, Juana Enríquez?

6. And why, for conversions after 1391, was the principle of *limpieza de sangre* only selectively applied to the nobility and on occasion even formally nullified through royal certification of Old Christian status, some of the most dramatic nullifications coming from King Manuel of Portugal in the wake of the conversions of Jews to Christianity in 1497?

7. And why did the organizations adopting *limpieza de sangre* constitute only a relatively small number, thus leaving many segments of Iberian society exposed to New Christian infiltration?

8. And why did the authorities not seriously prosecute the industry of false genealogies which further muddled the lines between Old Christians and New Christians?

9. And why did so many New Christians live exemplary Christian lives, among them nuns, monks, priests, bishops, and cardinals?

10. And why, in the case of New Christian religious deviation, was this deviation so often expressed not through Judaism, but through marginal Catholicism, heterodox Catholicism, Protestantism, Deism, and skepticism?

11. And why did the vast majority of New Christians in the Iberian empires leave no record whatsoever about their religious activities, thereby suggesting, in view of the presumably strict inquisitorial vigilance, that there is no responsible basis for regarding this group as in any way divergent from official Catholic practice and belief?

12. And why, instead of punishing the New Christians for engaging in religious practices that were hematicly induced, did the

authorities not follow the often-proffered advice to expel all New Christians from their domains instead of favoring their retention and even at times prohibiting their emigration?

13. And why are there examples of individuals certified, known, or believed to be Old Christians who were prosecuted for judaizing?

Category B. If inherent in Jewish blood there resided an impulse to passionate and even sacrificial devotion to Judaism, then

14. Why, prior to 1492, and particularly in the last two centuries, do the Jewish communities of Iberia appear to have been riddled with considerable apathy and secularization?

15. And why, in reaction to the massacres of 1391 and the conversionist preaching before and after that date, did such a large number of Jews chose conversion over the available alternative of martyrdom, which, incidentally, many New Christian judaizers preferred?

16. And why, after leaving in 1492, did many Jews return to the Iberian Peninsula and embrace Catholicism?

17. And why, when the opportunities did exist for emigration from Spain and Portugal, did the majority of New Christians opt to remain in the Peninsula?

18. And why, among those who did leave, did so many migrate to lands within the Spanish and Portuguese orbit and therefore subject themselves anew to *limpieza de sangre* and the Inquisition?

19. And why, among those who did not migrate to Spanish and Portuguese colonies, did so many go to other Catholic lands, where, even though there was no Inquisition, they could not openly practice Judaism?

20. And why, in lands like Italy, where they had the option of living openly as Jews, did so many New Christians hesitate to do so?

Category C. If the New Christians' devotion to Judaism secretly preserved the Jewish faith, then

21. Why, even in the early days of the Inquisition, did their secret Judaism manifest a dramatic and, in many instances, almost total discontinuity from the traditional Judaism of Iberian Jews?

22. And why did the contacts between New Christians and authentic Jews in Iberia prior to 1497, and thereafter in various parts of the world, including Iberia, leave only desultory reflections of authentic Judaism in crypto-Jewish liturgy and practice?

23. And why, above all, does an astonishing correlation appear between the details of the New Christians' crypto-Judaism on the one hand, and, on the other, aside from the influence of the Vulgate, the eclectic catalogue of presumed Jewish practices and beliefs found in the Edicts of Grace that were promulgated with the advent of an Inquisition to a new seat and the Edicts of Faith issued periodically thereafter for reinforcement?

Category D. If the New Christians were the enemy, then

24. Why did *limpieza de sangre* encounter powerful opposition from the moment of its promulgation, from sources as high as the king and the pope, who pointed to its contradiction of canon law?

25. And why, from that moment on, did it elicit a spate of condemnatory tracts seeking the abolition of the principle of *limpieza de sangre*, or at least its modification?

26. And why did this opposition elicit spirited defenses of *limpieza de sangre*, culminating in the early 1670s in the *Centinela contra judíos* ("Sentinel Against Jews") by the Franciscan friar Francisco de Torrejoncillo, which contained a hefty catalogue of canards against Jews, with whom New Christians were fully identified?

27. And why, when New Christians were attacked by mobs, especially in 1449, 1467, and 1472, were they successfully defended by strong forces whose numbers had to have been larger than the number of New Christians unless the New Christians' numbers were already unusually high?

28. And why, similarly, did the introduction of the Inquisition in all four Iberian kingdoms encounter powerful opposition that often spilled into violence?

Category E. If the Inquisition was concerned with the extirpation of heresy, then

29. Why did it accept damaging evidence that was flimsy, uncorroborated, or patently concocted?

30. And why did it operate with an a priori assumption of guilt which blocked defendants from knowing their accusers and their inquisitorially approved lawyers from presenting an objective defense?

31. And why did it create an environment that induced false denunciations out of vengeance by enemies or fears of torture or death by prisoners under duress?

Category F. If the judaizing of the New Christians, vigilantly pursued by the Inquisition, was widespread, then

32. Why, in view of the ever-growing number of New Christians, which increased with the progeny of every marriage between New Christians and Old, was the number of New Christians prosecuted for judaizing by all the Inquisitions, though cumulatively large, surprisingly small in percentage, even in the periods of the Inquisitions' intensest activity?

32a. And why, between the first auto-da-fé in Seville in 1481 and the abolition of the last Inquisition in 1834, could the total number of individuals indicted for judaizing by all the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, by conservative estimates, not have exceeded 5 percent of the total number of available New Christians, this term defined inclusively as all individuals with any Iberian Jewish descent beginning with the conversions of 1391?

32b. And why, for the same period, and by the same inclusive definition and conservative estimates, could the total number of individuals burned at the stake for judaizing not have exceeded 1 percent, from which there would have to be subtracted a significant number of convicts: those safely ensconced in lands beyond the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, who paid their supreme penalty in effigy; and the dead, both those whose bones were within reach of the Inquisition and could be incinerated in retroactive punishment and those whose remains were beyond the Inquisition's reach and were, like the absent living, punished in effigy?

33. And why were the majority of those convicted for Judaism reconciled to the church, and, except for a minuscule percentage, never heard from again, unless these former heretics, whose activities were presumably closely scrutinized for recidivism, gave no further evidence of deviation from strict Catholic orthodoxy?

34. And why, if the New Christians' compulsion toward Judaism was genetic and irrepressible, were there in many places feverish peaks of inquisitorial activity followed by decades of relative inactivity, of which the Balearic Islands furnish the classical example, or even

total inactivity, as in the case of Spain after 1530, when records of judaizing all but disappear until after the influx of Portuguese New Christians with the union of Spain and Portugal in 1580?

35. And why, if the New Christians were, by virtue of their lack of *limpieza*, unfit for political office, beginning with the very promulgation of the *Sentencia-Estatuto*, were New Christians appointed to the universities, church hierarchies, and some of the highest offices of state, even by monarchs and popes?

Category G. Above all, if there was a focused dedication to the identification and extirpation of Judaism, then

36. Why do the records appear repeatedly to suggest the utilization of alleged judaizing in cases of transparently political significance, against individuals regarded as dangerous to the establishment, as is dramatically exemplified by the indictment, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, of Father Miguel Hidalgo y Castilla, one of the two principal martyrs in the Mexican war for independence, who, in addition to Judaism, was accused of Lutheranism, Calvinism, atheism, and materialism, and not least, liberalism and sedition?

The anomalies can all be resolved. Their resolution must begin with the fundamental recognition that, although overlaid with religious language, the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* is a societal myth. Like all other societal myths, the myth of *limpieza de sangre* is generic, simplistic, reductive, and affective. In a society where Christianity functioned as the fundamental unifier and anti-establishments trumpeted Judaism as the Enemy before the popular consciousness, *limpieza de sangre* declared that all New Christians were Jews; that as such they were irremediably different from the Old and true Christians, hostile to them, unassimilable into their society and, in a society where demons and spirits roamed the human imagination, even demoniacally dangerous because of their Christian camouflage. The New Christians were, indeed, the Enemy of the people. *Limpieza de sangre* is therefore, purely and simply, in the full sense of the term, a racist myth.

Like all other such myths, *limpieza de sangre* was created for societal control. The Inquisition was the instrument for this control. To be sure, the Inquisition possessed a religious function, both historically and canonically, and the inquisitorial establishments pursued their duties with religious perspective, texts, and customs. But, and this is

the critical element, in both the Spanish and Portuguese empires, the Inquisition was subordinated from its start to a nonreligious political agenda.

Defenses of *limpieza de sangre* regularly equated the New Christians with unconverted Jews. The culmination of this equation in Torrejoncillo marks a straight-line development from the first major literary defense of *limpieza.* This was the *Fortalitium Fidei,* completed in 1459 by another Franciscan monk, Alfonso de Spina. In this work, dedicated in part if not primarily to the dissemination of the *limpieza* myth and intended as a vademecum for preachers, Spina issued the first call for an Inquisition against the judaizing heresy.

The myth's underlying agenda readily unfurls. The percentage of judaizers indicted in the 350 years of what may justifiably be called worldwide inquisitorial activity may have been small, and the percentage executed far smaller, but the terror that accompanied the Inquisition's selectivity was pervasive. It was reinforced by the continuous fear of denunciation, the spectacles of the *autos-da-fé* and the display in churches of the signs of family obloquy. All of this leaves little doubt that the goal of the Spanish and Portuguese authorities ultimately pulling the strings of their respective Inquisitions was not the destruction of the entire New Christian community, but its intimidation and subordination. On the other hand, the rejection of expulsion as an obvious solution to their New Christian problem, coupled with the often draconian measures for the retention of the New Christians, leave little doubt of the considerable importance of the New Christians as a group to Spanish and Portuguese society. The myth of *limpieza de sangre* was clearly utilized to control the entire New Christian community by selectively prosecuting some and keeping the rest insecurely dangling in unrelieved vulnerability.

But the control of the New Christian community meant as well the subordination of the entire New Guard through the myth of *limpieza de sangre* and the institution of the Inquisition, since the New Guard had become so interlaced with New Christians as to be functionally coterminous with them. Formally inaugurated with the *Sentencia-Estatuto* less than sixty years after the beginnings of the massive conversions of Iberian Jews to Christianity, this policy appears to have been conceived at least in principle long before that time, and possi-

bly as early as the beginning of the Trastámara dynasty. Because of the large New Christian presence in the New Guard, and because, contrary to the myth, the New Christians had, aside from their societal roles, become increasingly indistinguishable from all other Christians, it was possible for the Old Guard to identify all New Guard elements as hematicly impure, or to imply that any conspicuous group within the New Guard, like its large-scale merchants, was composed entirely of "Jews." It could in the process, without regard to genealogical truth, create "Jews" by race at will. By focusing on such New Guard groups, it was derivatively possible to declare all New Christians to be wealthy, powerful, and exploitative of all Old Christians. In reality, through the Inquisition, fear was sown throughout the New Guard, from its courtiers to its writers, from its scientists to its artisans, among everyone indeed whose position of wealth, creativity, or political preference was at any given moment perceived as a threat to the power of the Old Guard establishment. This fear was enhanced by the realization that the Inquisition could at any time choose to strike or not to strike based largely on its own internal agenda, a factor that best explains the apparent waves of recurrent judaizing in various parts of the Iberian world. At the same time the unclean blood of Old Guard aristocrats was conveniently overlooked, except if aberrantly they proved to be religiously maverick or politically incorrect.

Also on the basis of political incorrectness the Inquisition at different times pursued New Guard individuals who could not be identified as judaizers, but were Erasmians, Protestants, mystics, Jansenists, Freemasons, devotees of the Enlightenment, and others at odds with official Catholic thinking. That the Inquisition's perception in such cases was colored by political realities is dramatically evident in the eighteenth century, when it stigmatized as heretical and "Jansenist" a variety of expressions that were perceived as challenges to Ultramontanism, the doctrine of papal supremacy. It is evident as well in the prosecution of distinguished Catholics like Talavera and Carranza, whose prosecution was motivated primarily by political considerations. The inquisitorial tactics in such cases were summed up by the eminent sixteenth-century religious and belletristic writer Fray Luis de León, when from his inquisitorial cell he declared: "Here envy and

falsehood have kept me imprisoned" (*Aquí la envidia y la mentira me tenían encerrado*).

The Inquisitions of Spain and Portugal were modeled after the Papal Inquisition that had been established in the second quarter of the thirteenth century to extirpate the Cathari, or Albigensians, as they soon came to be called. This heresy and later ones that attracted this Inquisition, like the heresies of the Franciscan Spirituals and the Waldensians, were reflections of dissatisfaction with the church which had deep social, political, and economic roots, as well as ideological. Heresy, of course, was nothing new to the church. Heresy is always someone else's view on a subject, and it becomes institutionalized into the Enemy whenever there is an Orthodoxy. Prior to the thirteenth century, however, the correction of heresy through *inquisitio*, or inquiry, into matters of faith, was the responsibility of the local bishop in accordance with the procedures of canon law. The Papal Inquisition, placed largely in the hands of the newly formed Dominican order, was freed from canon law and followed new procedures which, with some modification, became the norm for the Iberian Inquisitions.

The arrival of an Inquisition was preceded in all places by an Edict of Grace, urging all who had committed or abetted heresy to confess their wrongdoing within a specified period of time. The Edict of Grace was subsequently periodically reinforced by the Edict of Faith, which specified all the punishable heresies and other wrongdoings. The Inquisition gathered its evidence and, wherever possible, made its arrests in secret. It assumed its prisoners to be guilty unless proven innocent, but hobbled their defense by withholding the identity of their accusers and appointing defense counsels whose main purpose was to secure their confessions. It subjected its prisoners to torture to extract confessions and information, though it could not have failed to be aware that the information thus elicited was frequently false and given primarily to satisfy the torturers and end the infliction of pain. Voluntary confessors and repentant prisoners were reconciled to the church with a variety of penalties, while the unrepentant and the second offenders were sentenced to death at the stake, with the possibility of being garroted rather than burned alive if they repented prior to execution. Technically the Inquisition, as a religious institution, did not inflict the supreme penalty. Instead, it delivered, or, in its

language, "relaxed," the condemned to the secular authorities for appropriate action. The secular authorities at no time misunderstood the implications of such delivery. To have done so would have invited the Inquisition's scrutiny of their activities.

The Papal and the Iberian Inquisitions were religiously grounded and, like all other institutions, were politically directed. There were, however, major differences between them in two areas: ultimate control and primary targets. For the Papal Inquisition ultimate control rested in Rome; for the Iberian Inquisitions it rested with the state. For the Papal Inquisition the original primary targets, the Cathari and their positional successors, were, with rare exceptions, connected by physical proximity; in the Iberian Inquisition their counterparts, the New Christians, were connected by putative genealogy.

To the question in the Iberian Inquisitions of *cui bono*, who benefited from their formulation and imposition of political correctness, the answer could not be clearer. It was the Old Guard, under the leadership of the Modern Old Guard, which, in order to preserve its power against the encroachments of the New Guard, created the myth of *limpieza* as the primary ideology of political correctness and the Inquisition as its general instrument of control.

The recognition of this role for the Inquisition explains the nature and extent of the opposition to it from the very beginning of its Iberian existence. Within this opposition it explains as well the presence of a large number of clergy who publicly and eloquently advocated the limitation or elimination of the Inquisition, often at the price of personal subjection to its mercy.

In detail the implementation of this process differed from place to place and period to period. Yet its fundamental trajectory and discernible purpose with respect to the New Guard was in every place the same. This can be appreciated by a division of the Inquisition's tonal activity into five chronolgically ordered periods:

period 1: 1481–1492, in which the New Guard's political ascendancy in Castile and Aragon is braked;

period 2: 1492–1580, in which the New Guard in Spain is effectively subordinated, and the process of its control in Portugal is begun;

period 3: 1580–1640, in which the ascendancy of the Spanish New Guard, reinvigorated with the invited arrival of Portuguese New Christians, is blocked;

period 4: 1640–1765, in which the struggles between Old Guard and New Guard in Portugal and Spain lead to greater swings of tolerance and persecution of New Christians before sputtering out of existence, and in which increased attention is given to liberals, Freemasons, and others regarded as politically incorrect (and often called Jews);

period 5: 1765–1834, in which the the Old Guard control, as hitherto known in Spain and Portugal, dissolves with the de jure abolition of the distinctions created by the *limpieza de sangre* myth, and there emerge new sociopolitcal spectra of Old and New Guard constellations.

From all of this it follows that the myth of *limpieza de sangre* notwithstanding, it was not blood but sociopolitical position which principally determined one's New Christian or Old Christian status. And it was Old Guard policy, through the leadership of its modern wing, which determined whether to make an issue of New Christian status or not. Therefore while many New Christians were caught up in the nets of the myth, often for generations, others, in New Guard no less than Old Guard activities, were long or forever unscathed.

Contrary to the oft-articulated belief, the Inquisition could not have invented crypto-Judaism or crypto-Jews. What it could and did do was to inflate a phenomenon whose existence had a basis in fact sufficient to impart credibility to the inflationary process. The massive conversions in Aragon, Castile, Navarre, and especially in Portugal could not have been followed quickly by the complete absorption of the conversos into orthodox Catholicism. Sociopsychologically, the conversos could not have failed to show a spectrum of deviation, including full retention of Jewish identity, even though such instances appear to have been increasingly scattered. At the same time, the myth of *limpieza de sangre* and its implementation by the Inquisition often turned the imputation of an inescapable Jewish identity into a self-fulfilling prophecy for many people whose commitment to Jewish identity had been slim or nonexistent and who had been striving for full assimilation into the general society. Similarly, for purposes of group trust and solidarity, the myth often turned these people, who

had increasingly few recollections of authentic Judaism, to the practice of a Judaism enriched by the Vulgate, the Edicts of Grace, and the Catholic religious environment. In this sense the Inquisition did, of course, create Jews by religion and in appreciable numbers.

Also noteworthy is the fact that, however unorthodox the Judaism of the New Christian judaizers might have been, the devotion in the name of Judaism with which it was practiced was often, if not regularly, exemplary. The records permit no doubt of the sincerity of Jewish identification on the part of many New Christians, the eagerness of many to learn as much as possible about Judaism, to teach others about it and, if need be, to die a martyr's death.

The divergence of the judaizers' faith from authentic Judaism is best dramatized by the disillusionment of Gabriel (Uriel) Da Costa (1585–1640) on his arrival in Amsterdam. There he had hoped to live openly as a Jew with a faith derived primarily from the Vulgate and the New Christian environment of Portugal. But there the faith he carried with him clashed with the authentic Judaism he found in the Amsterdam Jewish community, and this ultimately led to his excommunication, humiliation, and suicide.

The recognition of the operative role of *limpieza de sangre* and Inquisition reveals a critical dimension of crypto-Judaism. Because crypto-Judaism, sincere and fervent though it often was, was, especially in the course of time, essentially a sociopsychological response to a political agenda, its primary stimulus is attributable not to ancestral continuity but rather only to situational reality. All other elements being equal, Old Christians in the New Guard were therefore more likely be regarded as New Christians and to be judaizers than New Christians in the Old Guard.

Given this context, it becomes meaningless to speak of Iberian Christians who openly and formally embraced Judaism in the Diaspora as "returning" to Judaism. It also suggests the possibility that at least some of these people left Iberian lands without any crypto-Jewish attachment, became Jews for situational reasons in the Diaspora, and then claimed a history of secret Judaism in order to enhance their status within the Jewish community.

Related to the myth of *limpieza de sangre* is the Iberian and especially the Spanish concept of honor. Medieval in its origins and Old

Christian in its associations, this concept exalted the warrior, depreciated commerce in particular and New Guard activity in general, and reinforced a pride in racial purity. It even spawned what may be called an anti-work ethic. All of this intended to keep the New Guard as identified by the Old Guard separated from the rest of the populace, and therefore isolated, exposed, and subordinated.

The sociopolitical reconstruction best explains the potent opposition to the concept of *limpieza de sangre* and the institutions of the Inquisitions and its claim that in their absence all judaizing would cease. This is, of course, what happened with the end of the Inquisition in Spain, and, three quarters of a century earlier, the destruction ordered by the marquis of Pombal of all Portuguese registers of New Christian families. Left throughout the Iberian world were Christian individuals with traditions of ancestral crypto-Jewish practice and isolated pockets of Christians still called Jews but fully Catholic in their identity and practice.

With its racist doctrine, the Modern Old Guard created the first modern totalitarian states. A direct line of development links inquisitorial Spain and Portugal to the totalitarianisms of the modern world, with their demands for political correctness, their efforts at thought control, their unscrupulous treatment of opposition through rigged trials, their terrorization of multitudes by the persecution of selected individuals and the heaping of obloquy upon their families, their utilization of the myth of the Enemy, which, all too often, has been the Jew, and, above all, their creation of an external definition of the Jew which has led to a variety of understandings of self-identity on the part of those who have been so defined.

Within the, Iberian world, the known and putative New Christians of the New Guard contributed spectacularly to its development and modernization. Their names abound in the records of commerce, industry, diplomacy, the sciences, the humanities and the arts, and not least, the literature of both Portugal and Spain.

Within the diverse environments of their refuge, the Spanish and Portuguese exiles contoured their Iberian heritage into the modern and now classical structures of the Sephardic ethos.

There were actually three groups of exiles: one in 1492, one before, and one after. The first, after the events of 1391, comprised mostly Jews and apparently some conversos. Both groups could have remained in the Peninsula, the Jews as Jews and the conversos as Christians, but both, except possibly for some conversos, sought a Jewish life under happier skies. The emigrants of 1492 were mostly Jews, who could not have remained in the Peninsula except through conversion to Christianity. Added to these should be the smaller numbers of Jews who left Portugal in the wake of its expulsion order in 1496. The third emigration comprised Iberian New Christians, primarily Portuguese. It began after 1497, crescendoed after the Lisbon massacres of New Christians in 1506, and continued for decades.

In the first emigration the refugees in search of a Jewish life faced limited options. The Christian lands of Western Europe were closed to them, except for underdeveloped Portugal and several Italian states which offered limited immigration. A number of Muslim countries were also open: Morocco, where the refugees' lot was precarious; Egypt, where it was generally favorable; and Algeria, where it was most favorable.

The emigrants of 1492 had more sanguine options. Some Italian states were more receptive, as was the now imperial Portugal; while in the Muslim world, where Algeria was less hospitable and Morocco somewhat more, a warm welcome awaited the Jews in the rapidly expanding Ottoman Empire.

The third group of emigrants enjoyed the broadest options because they were Christians when they left the Peninsula. They could go to the Muslim world, where they had to become Jews; or the Italian Peninsula, where in most places they could choose Judaism or continue in Christianity; or the Christian lands of Europe closed to Jews, like England, France, Germany, the Low Countries, where they had to live, at least ostensibly, as Christians; or the colonies and other territories of

Portugal or Spain, where they not only had to live, at least ostensibly, as Christians, but also continously in fear of inquisitorial molestation.

Sephardim from all three emigrations settled in the Muslim world, and from the second and third especially in the Ottoman Empire. According to a seventeenth-century Jewish source (Immanuel Aboab), Sultan Bayazid II (1481–1512) chided King Ferdinand for allowing such valuable subjects to slip out of his grasp.

In the Ottoman Empire the Sephardim came across four groups of Jews, each jealous of its own identity and generally unfriendly to the others. Two had been there as far back as memory could trail. They were the Greek-speaking Romaniotes, or Gregos, of the former Byzantine Empire and the Arabic-speaking Jews of the former Muslim caliphates, themselves divided into "Easterners" and "Westerners." The other two were more recent arrivals: the Karaites, who had appeared in the Byzantine Empire in the eleventh century; and non-Sephardic Europeans from the Italian Peninsula and Sicily, the Franco-German regions, Central Europe, and Provence, who had come largely in the fifteenth century because of unrest in their native lands.

In all Muslim areas the resident Jewish populations were threatened by the the newcomers' skills and culture. In Morocco and elsewhere, friction between the *megorashim*, as the refugees were called, and the natives, or *toshavim*, diminished, though hardly to the point of disappearance, with the assimilation of the Sephardim and their irrepressible rise to community dominance.

Exacerbating the friction, especially in the Ottoman Empire, was the animosity among the Sephardim themselves, particularly between the earlier Jews and the subsequent New Christians. Though advanced over the native groups, the Jews proved no match for the New Christians' practical knowledge and cosmopolitan sophistication. Besides, the immigrants of 1492, with few exceptions, arrived in poverty, while the New Christians often brought considerable wealth.

The relative underdevelopment of the Muslim lands facilitated the entree of the Sephardim into a broad spectrum of service, and, not infrequently, their rise to prominence.

In the Ottoman Empire their activities fall into four broad areas: commerce, from local shopkeeping to international trade and banking, in which they were aided by the Iberian trade routes and their

own worldwide mercantile contacts; manufacture of innumerable items, among them textiles, leather, wine, jewelry, and munitions; medicine, in which they produced scholars as well as practitioners, and even court physicians like Joseph Hamon, under Bayazid II and Selim I (1512–1520), his son Moses, under Selim I and Suleiman I (1520–1566), "the Magnificent," and Daniel de Fonseca under Ahmed III (ruled 1703–1730); and administration, ranging from the collection of tolls and supervision of finances to international diplomacy, in which court physicians, preeminently Daniel de Fonseca, were known to excel. Among the distinguished Sephardic diplomats at the Ottoman Court were Joseph Nasi (ca. 1524–1579), from a distinguished Portuguese banking family, who served under Suleiman I and Selim II (1566–1574), and, during Selim's reign, was named duke of Naxos and its neighboring islands; and Solomon ibn Yaish (1520–1603), who served under Murad III (1574–1595) and Muhammad III (1595–1603) and was named duke of Mytilene in 1585.

These activities produced considerable wealth and prominent families like the Catani, Kadoorie, and Sassoon, but the percentage of wealthy Jews was small. Most Jews hovered near the subsistence level, many comfortably above in prosperous times and at least as many precariously below during economic adversity.

The zenith of the Ottoman Empire and its Jewish community coincided with Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566). But by the last two decades of his reign the empire had spun into an irreversible decline. Beginning, at least symbolically, in 1571, with its naval defeat at Lepanto, the empire was wracked for two centuries by corruption, disorder, brigandage, revolts, secessions, impoverishment, ignorance, despair, disease, and, all too often, depopulation. The Jewish communities, never strangers to these calamities, suffered additionally from Muslim scapegoating and persecution in areas of Christian conquest. Significant amelioration did not come until the reforms of Abd al-Majid I (1839–1862) especially the Rose Law of 1839, reissued in 1856, which opened the way to legal equality for non-Muslims.

Until this time, the Ottoman Jewish community lived in functional sociocultural isolation and sociopolitical fragmentation. Like other subject communities, the Jewish community was officially regarded as a corporate entity: a *ta'ife*, or *cema'at*, or, in retrojection from broad-

er nineteenth-century usage, a *millet*. But its unity was a gossamer. The millet was in reality composed of politically autonomous religious congregations, of which there were some thirty in Salonika alone. These congregations were socially, intellectually, and culturally self-contained, since their link with the ambient society was, with some exceptions, like their access to Muslim courts, almost exclusively economic and professional. This is evidenced, inter alia, by the absence of conversions into the community and the rarity of conversions out.

The congregations were controlled by wealthy oligarchies. These served the sultans by ensuring the peace of their communities and the timely submission of their taxes. They adamantly opposed all efforts at democratization despite the advocacy of such measures by sages like Isaac Adarbi (1510?–1584?), and they zealously protected their parochial interests within the community umbrellas that had been created for mutual benefit. Each congregation possessed its own administrative structure, headed by a rabbi. The rabbi, not ordained because there had been no ordination among the Sephardim, was, among other occasional titles, called *hakham* (sage), *marbits Torah* (disseminator of Torah) or *dayyan* (judge).

Largely obstructed from significant exposure to the contemporary world, the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire were compelled to look inwardly to their own traditions for their ineluctably difficult adjustment to exile and immigration.

The adjustment to exile was emotionally traumatic for the Sephardim. They had been deeply attached to their Iberian horizons, and when they left, they held on to as much as they could. The land was behind them, but they carried its atmosphere with them pyschologically, culturally, and linguistically, and they were thereafter indelibly shaped by its influence. In their departure they searched vainly, as their literature attests, for earthly or heavenly explanations of their plight. They had been loyal subjects of their rulers. The Jews among them had been unswervingly faithful to their God, while those who had became Christian, whatever their religious proclivities, were under the shelter of canon law against generic suspicion or ancestral aberrance. Disoriented, the Sephardim were gripped by perplexity and guilt.

Insofar as is reconstructible, the reactions of the Sephardim to their calamity were manifold: they ran the gamut from uncompromising faith to inconsolable despair. In between were a plethora of speculations, popular even more than scholarly, on the purpose of God and the meaning of life. Not infrequently these speculations contained elements of questionable authenticity within the flexible parameters of Jewish thought.

A unifying thread in this fragmentation was the increased focus on the messianic advent. Many people could make sense of what was happening only in eschatological terms. They came to believe that their calamities, logically incomprehensible, could only presage what the Jewish tradition calls the pangs or footsteps of the Messiah. Some were certain that if they but exercised more patience, the messianic proximity would become ever clearer.

Reinforcing the messianic beliefs were the events unfolding before their very eyes. The Muslim soldiers of the Ottoman colossus had pushed dauntlessly into Christian Europe, approaching the gates of Vienna in 1529. Two years earlier the holy city of Rome, the very heart of Christianity, had been sacked and Pope Clement VII had been taken prisoner by the troops of none other than the Holy Roman emperor himself. Besides, with Luther's bolt, Christianity had begun to splinter. What else could these miracles signify save that the old order was, like night, being dispelled by the dawn of the new day?

This atmosphere illuminates the attraction of the mysterious David Reubeni in the 1520s. Many European Sephardim, both New Christians and Jews, considered him a messianic precursor, and in some cases, perhaps, the Messiah himself. It also explains the enthusiasm stirred by the messianic pretender Solomon Molkho (ca. 1500–1532), the former Portuguese New Christian known as Diogo Pires, who had been inspired by Reubeni.

Events like these galvanized apocalypticism, notably in Italy, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. From sages like Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508) to humble folk, predictions of the redemption for various years, especially 1503, 1512, 1540, and 1541, reverberated throughout the Mediterranean basin. These events also turned many ordinary people, apocalyptics as well as non-apocalyptics, to traditional Kabbalah, popular mysticism and superstitious practice.

Simultaneously, many sages, including the most renowned, combined their talmudic learning with blends of kabbalistic study, mystical speculation, apocalyptic expectation, and ascetic exercise, often with thaumaturgic dimensions. At least some were open to a divine voice, called a *maggid*, which instructed the listener to record its revelations. The origin of the maggidic appearances has been linked to Joseph Taitazak (1487/88?–before 1545), a renowned talmudist as well as kabbalist, whose inspiration could not have failed to play a role in the founding of Safed's kabbalistic circle by his students. Even better known is the maggid, personifying the Mishnah, who appeared to Taitazak's famous pupil Joseph Caro (1488–1575). It is of interest that Solomon Molkho studied Kabbalah under Taitazak for a while in Salonika, where the master spent his final years.

The adjustment to immigration was by no means easier. Though encompassed within the same millet, the individual communities of Ottoman Jewry governed themselves by a bewilderment of laws and customs. The Karaites diverged from the rabbinic Jews in tradition and even calendar. But the rest, although entirely rabbinic, were only in a generic sense more united. Sharp differences in tradition and practice separated not only the constellations of Greek-speaking, Arabic-speaking, European non-Sephardic, and Sephardic Jews, but also the individual congregations within each constellation. This situation was particularly apparent among the Sephardim, where fierce loyalties to the traditions and practices of Iberian regions and cities, without the curb of centralization, precipitated bitter internecine disputes.

As a result, the manifold concerns of adjustment among the Sephardim, as within the community at large, were addressed with an unbridled luxuriance of rabbinical responses, and these often in sharp conflict with one another. The concerns included the perennial and ubiquitous problems of personal, interpersonal, family, business, and community involvement. But they comprised as well the special conditions of Ottoman life, including the relations between Jews and Ottoman Muslims, and, even more, the differences between and within the Jewish communities. Additionally and most critically for all Sephardim, particularly those with a New Christian past, were the questions relating to their own or their family's Jewish roots, their

entitlement to community privileges, and, in some cases, even the validity of their contractual arrangements.

The responses of the Ottoman rabbis, the Sephardim most prominent among them, constitute the richest and most varied corpus of responsa literature in all of Jewish history. Their repertory would be even greater if many responsa, known through references in the extant literature, had not been lost. Responsa were scripted by almost every hakham. The most renowned, Rabbi Samuel di Medina (Rashdam; 1506–1589), also a disciple of Taitazak, left over a thousand responsa, some to questions from Christian Europe. His responsa on the New Christians reflect an openness to their plight and a desire to facilitate their full incorporation into the Jewish community. Still largely unanalyzed for historical purposes, the responsa of the Ottoman Jews provide an indispensable source for the appreciation of their daily activities and transcendent ideals.

The consolidation of the Sephardic phenomenon resulted from the confrontation between the Iberian and Ottoman contexts of life. In al-Andalus, even in the *taifas*, and certainly within Christian Iberia, the Sephardim had generated regional, if not pan-Iberian unities. And throughout their Iberian experience, whether as politically autonomous Jews or politically integrated Christians, they had regularly interacted with the majority community in social and intellectual openness.

Many Sephardic sages of the Ottoman Empire reflect this openness in their cosmopolitanism, acculturation, and intellectual syntheses. The polymath Rabbi Moses Almosnino (ca. 1515–ca. 1580), wrote on Al-Ghazali and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Gedaliah ben Tam Ibn Yahia (16th cent.), a physician and Maecenas of learning, translated the *Dialoghi d'amore* of Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravanel) from Italian into Spanish. Joseph Taitazak composed a commentary on Ecclesiastes (*Porat Yosef*) following Thomas Aquinas, whom he calls "the Sage." The breadth of cultural experience, including, besides philosophy, such varied disciplines as history, science, and rhetoric, sparkles delightfully in many of the religious compositions of the Sephardic elite.

Such sages, where immune to centrifugal politics, naturally inclined toward community solidarity. In scholarship they were characteristi-

cally collectors, organizers, and consolidators. This is engagingly evident even in their commentaries to biblical and rabbinic texts. Notable in the latter category is the commentary *Kesef Mishneh* by Joseph Caro (1488–1575) to Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah.* Emblematic of this process was the projection by Rabbi Solomon ben Jacob Almoli (before 1483–1542) of an entire encyclopedia of Jewish knowledge.

Outstanding personalities of this stamp, always, to be sure, with substantial support, stimulated efforts at reining in the fragmentation of Ottoman Jewish life. In the process they unleashed a creative tension, which persisted through much of the period of decline, between the existentially centrifugal and historically centripetal elements in Sephardic Jewry.

There were seven principal avenues toward this consolidation. They were different from one another in substance, intensity, and duration. Six were initiated by Sephardim. The seventh debouched from historical forces beyond their control.

The first aimed for the political unification of Jewish life. It sought to accomplish this religiously and in conformity with the prescriptions of Maimonides, through the restoration of ordination and the Great Court, the Bet-Din Hagadol, later called the Sanhedrin, of proto-rabbinic and early rabbinic Judaism. The initiative for this move was taken in Safed by the Castilian Jacob Berab (ca. 1474–1541). In 1538, Berab convoked an assembly of twenty-five sages, who collectively ordained him, and in the process ignited an expectable controversy with the Jerusalem hakham, Levi ibn Habib. Before long Berab was expelled from Safed by the Ottoman Turks, but not until he had ordained four disciples, among them Joseph Caro. While these eventually ordained others, Berab's effort left no residue except perhaps a continued longing for Jewish political unity.

Reflective of the longing for political unity were the later efforts to retroject the title or function of chief rabbi (*hakham bashi*) upon the revered sages Moses Capsali (1420–1496 or 1497) and Elijah Mizrahi (ca. 1450–1526).

The second avenue involved the systematization of the Kabbalah, whose study was recommended as a propellant of the messianic coming. There was much activity in this regard in Morocco, and an important center in Salonica, but pride of place belongs to Safed. In

the century between the birth of Moses Cordovero (1522–1570), its first towering figure, and the death of Hayyim Vital (1542–1620), its culminating genius, Safed was the unrivaled navel of the Jewish mystical world. Symbolic of its centrality is the fact that the major commentaries to the *Zohar* in this period were all products of Safed, with the exception of the one written in Fez. Cordovero, and his disciples after him, strove to weave the inherited strands of Kabbalah into an organic and philosophically laced unity. The Ashkenazi Isaac Luria (known acronymically as the Ari, 1534–1572), raised by his Sephardic mother and her family after his father's premature death, was Cordovero's pupil for a while. His theoretical Kabbalah, with its focus on the cosmic signficance of all human actions for the *tikkun*, or redemptive completion of the world, carried a powerful messianic thrust. Since Luria preferred to communicate his system orally, it is known largely through four independent traditions, most notably that of Vital. Though philosophically inferior to Cordovero's, Luria's Kabbalah resonated greater intelligibility, implementability, and above all, messianic urgency to a broader constituency.

Within a generation after Vital's death the Lurianic Kabbalah had informed the doctrines of the Sephardi Shabbetai Zevi (1626–1676), whose messianism attracted Jews not only in Muslim Asia and Africa, but throughout Europe, some of them, as in Amsterdam, among the lay and religious leadership of the community. It also attracted Christian millenarians and men of practical affairs. Contributing to the impact of Shabbetai Zevi was the general disorientation in Jewish life consequent upon the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and in Europe, the destruction of Jewish communities during the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648 and the Russian-Swedish War of 1655.

The initial successes of Shabbetai Zevi and the support of eminent sages and power brokers in many parts of the Jewish world and in some of the Christian do not suggest a leader psychologically aberrant and followers all bovinely credulous. On the contrary, they point to two confluent realities: on the one hand, the sweeping intolerability of life in a messianically charged environment, and on the other, the inevitable political and economic vultures ready to capitalize on the instability of the Ottoman realm.

The failure of Shabbetai Zevi and the typical post-messianic trajectories of his movement further testify to the rootedness of the preconditions for its response.

The third avenue was the determination in all congregations, often in concert, to transmit the sacred tradition of Judaism through educational institutions on all levels, from elementary schools to advanced academies where scholarly symposia often paved the way for halakhic decisions. Academies (yeshibot) of this kind, often endowed by individuals like the grande-dame Doña Gracia Mendes Nasi, transmitted the traditions of Judaism through the methods of instruction brought over from the Iberian schools.

The fourth comprises the efforts to channel Jewish faith and practice through the structures of traditional thought and law. The distinguished name in the category of thought is Jacob ibn Habib (1445?–1515/1516), whose *Ein Yaakov* ("The Fountain of Jacob"), a compilation of Babylonian talmudic lore (aggadah) and a sampling from the Jerusalem Talmud, was intended as a guide to traditional faith and religious values. Ibn Habib was also a talmudist and commentator on the *Arba'ah Turim* ("Four Rows"), the innovatively organized masterpiece of Jewish legal compilation by the Iberian Jacob ben Asher (1270?–1340).

The decisive work in the category of law was left for Joseph Caro. He undertook to provide authoritative rulings on all points of Jewish law, and to construct them systematically upon a solid scholarly foundation, beginning with the Talmud and proceeding through the often labyrinthine trajectory of their subsequent applications. His work, the *Bet Yosef* ("House of Joseph"), the fruit of twenty laborious years, is framed as a commentary to the *Arba'ah Turim*. Caro's decision to do so proved to be of momentous significance in the history of Jewish law. It gave the organization of the *Turim*, which was becoming the cynosure of jurisprudence in the Ashkenazic no less than the Sephardic world, a de facto canonicity which made it the model for all subsequent Jewish legal compilations.

Caro's digest of his work, the *Shulhan Arukh* ("Prepared Table"), intended as a functional code buttressed by the scholarship of the *Bet Yosef*, achieved renown throughout the Sephardic world. With adjustments that were soon called the *Mappah* ("Tablecloth") after the

description by its author, Rabbi Moses Isserles (1525–1572), it became standard in the Ashkenazic world as well.

Reinforcing Caro's work was the massive *Kenesset ha-Gedolah* ("Great Assembly") by the hakham Hayyim Benveniste (1603–1673). Writing in the heat of the Sabbatian movement, which he opposed, Benveniste set out to strengthen the chain of halakhic tradition by elucidating the halakhic works, including responsa, since Joseph Caro and some earlier ones which he had not mentioned.

The fifth avenue was the tenacious preservation of fifteenth-century Castilian as the primary Sephardic language. Known by the Sephardim as Espanyol or Judezmo, and popularly if imprecisely as Ladino, its use as a primary language was concentrated in the Eastern Mediterranean, inasmuch as Western European Sephardim spoke current Spanish and Portuguese. Unaffected by the changes in later Castilian, Judezmo reveals certain peculiarities of syntax, grammar, and language attributable to Iberian regionalism, natural development, and the impact of Hebrew or the languages of the new Sephardic environments. The varieties of Judezmo have been subsumed into two groups: Western (Bosnia, Macedonia, Romania, Salonika, and Serbia) and Eastern (Constantinople, and Smyrna).

In this language of daily discourse the Sephardim preserved their Iberian heritage of popular stories, proverbs, and especially *romansas* (known as *romances* in the Peninsula). The romansas are ballads whose music and words were on the lips of the Sephardim long after many had been forgotten in Iberia. These have been transmitted generally unaltered except for the removal in most cases of Christological allusions. The Sephardim also composed original works like Almosnino's ethical work, *Regimiento de la Vida* ("Direction of Life," 1564), which also touches on theology, education, astronomy, and even dreams.

The Sephardim also prepared translations of their religious classics from Bahya ibn Pakuda's *Duties of the Heart* to Joseph Caro's *Shulhan Arukh*, and above all, the Bible. The Psalms (1540) and the Pentateuch (1547) appeared in Constantinople and the Prophets in Salonika (1572), two centuries before Abraham Assa's translation of the entire Bible (Constantinople, 1739–1745). But the culmination of their achievement in Judezmo was the *Me'am Lo'ez* ("From a People of a

Strange Tongue"), a title taken from Psalm 114:1. An encyclopedic masterpiece conceived, named, and begun by Rabbi Jacob Culi (ca. 1685–1732) in 1730, and continued by others through the nineteenth century, the *Me'am Lo'ez* is a treasurehouse of traditional Jewish lore and law. Written as a commentary to the Holy Scriptures and the *Ethics of the Fathers*, and combining selected elements of the tradition with the explanations of the authors, it was intended as a source of Jewish learning during the time of the Ottoman decline. It became the most popular of all productions in Judezmo, and in many ways the most influential.

The sixth was the printing press. From its establishment in Constantinople by Sephardic immigrants in 1504, 224 years before the appearance of its Turkish counterpart, the Jewish press in the Ottoman Empire reinforced the unity and continuity of the Sephardic heritage. In Egypt, Safed, Syria, Salonika and Izmir, as well as Constantinople, despite interruptions and often tortuous histories, the Jewish presses, notable among them the Jabez press in sixteenth-century Salonica, combined for a cornucopia of publications. These included, besides books in Judezmo, translations of Iberian classics, the sacred classics of the Jewish tradition, and contemporary works of Hebrew law and lore. In the early decades of the sixteenth century, their publications ensured the preservation of many works scripted in the Iberian Peninsula and carried in manuscript into exile.

The seventh avenue was the trajectory of the decline itself, especially the disorientation in the Jewish community in the wake of Shabbetai Zevi. This debacle accelerated the acceptance of the *Shulhan Arukh* as the de facto authority of Jewish law. It converted the *Me'am Lo'ez* into a major vehicle of Jewish education. It compelled increased cooperation and centralization within the beleaguered Jewish community. And in the process it completed the establishment of the Sephardim as the dominant element of the Jewish community and Judezmo as its primary language. All of this, in turn, facilitated the sultan's imposition of centralization in the reforms of the nineteenth century.

With these events the consolidation of the Sephardic heritage was essentially completed. Although this heritage was strongly preserved in many circles, the nineteenth century witnessed its gradual reces-

sion from centrality in Sephardic life through increased acculturation and secularization. This is evident in the dominantly secularized Judezmo press, the advent of the French-oriented Alliance Israélite Universelle, the inclusion of the Turkish language and Ottoman culture in the curricula of Jewish schools, and the eagerness of many Jews for participation in the general community. Jews, among them Chief Rabbi Hayim Bejarano, were active in the Young Turkish Committee of Union and Progress that led the coup d'etat of 1908 and in the ensuing nationalism of the Turkish Republic. The Jews as a community also responded alacritously to the constitution of the Republic of Turkey in 1925, with its creation of a secular state and guarantee of equal rights for all its citizens. They renounced their community rights, reemphasized the centrality of the Turkish language, and adopted Turkish names.

A tragic end to this process came with the Nazis' decimation of the Sephardic Jews in the lands of what was once the Ottoman Empire that fell under their control. Some 50,000 Jews perished from Salonika alone.

More than three quarters of a century before the Holocaust, a stream of migrations of Sephardim from the Muslim world, predominantly from the Ottoman Empire to Central and Western Europe and the Americas, had modestly begun. The migrations reached their peak between 1908 and the Immigration Act of 1924 in the United States, which all but closed its borders to Jewish immigrants from many lands. By that time, however, the United States had received some 70,000 Sephardic immigrants and perhaps more, by far the largest number of any country. Of this number nearly 50 percent remained in the Greater New York area, while the others formed substantial communities in various cities, including Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Portland, and Rochester. In all of these the Sephardim and their descendants have contributed immeasurably to Jewish life and the life of the general American community.

Since World War II many Sephardim in Muslim lands have emigrated, frequently in a new exodus from persecution, to the State of Israel. There the Sephardim today constitute the majority of the population. With the aid of other nonestablishment groups that are

attracted to Sephardic culture, they bid fair to preserve and further develop the heritage of the Sephardic consolidation.

The Universalization of the Sephardic Phenomenon

The Western Sephardic Diaspora differed significantly from its Eastern counterpart. On the one hand, the activity of the Western Sephardim, Christians as well as Jews by our definition, was not concentrated in a single area: it circumscribed the entire planet, radiating its influence through much of Asia, the Americas, and Europe. On the other, although all the Western Sephardim had been Catholics, at least titularly, in the Iberian Peninsula, they were at no time in their Diaspora concentrated in one religious group. Many affirmed Judaism, some on their departure from the Peninsula, but even by the most inclusive reconstruction, they could not in their totality have constituted more than a small fraction of the Sephardic emigrants and their descendants. Other Sephardim became Protestant, and others still, when opportunities arose, drifted away from all religious identification. In their Diaspora many Sephardim shifted between one faith and another before making a faith commitment and even thereafter. But, by any count, the vast majority of the emigrating Sephardim remained Catholic, as have the vast majority of their descendants. To be sure, changes of faith among later generations of the Western Sephardim have not been infrequent. Occasionally the changes have been from Catholicism or Protestantism to Judaism, but more often they have involved the exchange of Judaism for the dominant Christianity of the environment. Conforming to this pattern, for example, were the conversions of large numbers of North African Jews to Catholicism after immigrating to Spain with freedom of religion during the nineteenth century.

Within the numbers of these Sephardim must be included the numerous descendants of their marriages, if not unblessed liaisons, with the natives of the various continents of their sojourn.

The Sephardim emigrated for three reasons, in varying degrees of intensity: religious zeal, economic opportunity, and fear of persecution. Since autobiographical rationalizations for depature tend to be self-serving, the reasons have to be estimated on the basis of broader con-

textual coordinates. By any reconstruction, the aggregate number of New Guard individuals who emigrated constituted only a small percentage of their total number in Iberia. The vast majority, neither zealous nor lured nor frightened sufficiently, remained in the Peninsula.

In choosing their spheres of refuge, the Sephardim had to weigh risk and reward in three areas: economic opportunity, social acceptance, and physical security. The best mix of these elements was to be found in the far-flung colonies of Portugal and Spain. Although these territories were in one form or another subject to the Inquisition, their distance from the Iberian power struggles, their linkage to the crown and therefore the Modern Old Guard, and, not least, their critical dependance upon the emigrants' activity, seemed to carry the promise of inquisitorial restraint. At the same time, the colonies beckoned with visions of untapped riches and replications of the familiar society of the Iberian Peninsula.

Not surprisingly, by the middle of the sixteenth century, perhaps as many as 50,000 Iberians had emigrated to the colonies. The number classifiable as New Guard was considerably smaller and probably no more than a third of the total. The emigrants included some nobles connectible to the Old Guard and peasants, similarly definable, who became soldiers in the colonies. Once in the colonies, these often turned to New Guard pursuits. Outside of the Spanish and Portuguese orbits, where only the New Guard was needed, and where different politics controlled their immigration, the total Spanish and Portuguese immigration was considerably lower.

In Italy and the Low Countries they were also subject to Inquisitions. But here, as elsewhere in the non-Iberian world, the Sephardim faced additional problems. Being outsiders in these countries, they were for this reason socially and politically marginal. They were especially vulnerable as Iberians whenever their hosts found themselves in strained relations or open warfare with Portugal or Spain.

All Western Sephardim were linked to one another not by religion but by their New Guard status, with its characteristic range of skills, including their broad general culture and linguistic versatility, and its conditioning toward risk orientation, marginality, and alienation. The implications of their New Guard status render otiose the attempt to connect all Western Sephardim to Jewish descent, assuming that such

connection were possible in the face of the widespread blurring of bloodlines in the Peninsula and outside through official and unofficial certification.

In no case can the reception of the Sephardim in any polity be fruitfully attributed to altruism or whimsy on the part of any ruler. In every case the motivation is explainable on the basis of the polity's political and economic needs. All of the admitting establishments were composed of Modern Old Guards or New Guards. All were in stiff competition with one another in their progress toward rationalization and modernization against internal as well as external obstacles. The New Guard qualities of the Western Sephardim were therefore understandably useful and eagerly sought by these establishments.

Each of these polities differed in the circumstances of its history. Only a detailed analysis of the particulars of each history will convincingly support an appreciation of the similarity of their contours, and therefore, for all the differences involved, the fundamental similarity of the role of the Western Sephardim throughout the lands of their Diaspora.

After 1492, all five regions of eventual Sephardic settlement were bustling with modernization. Portugal and Spain were speeding toward their imperial zeniths. Spurred by Vasco da Gama and Afonso de Albuquerque, Portugal would soon secure a trade route to India, 10,000 miles from Lisbon, with critical bases at Ormuz (1509), Malacca (1511), and Goa (1510), which was chosen as the nub of the Portuguese Orient. Spain, led by Castilians, was opening the Western Hemisphere and scanning the Pacific Ocean as far as the Philippines. The quiltwork of Italian city-states, the duchies of Ferrara, Savoy, and Modena, the republics of Florence, Genoa, and Venice, the marquisates of Saluzzo and Montferrat, the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, and the Papal States, though incapable of rivaling the Iberian powers and often in conflict with one another, nevertheless promoted every potential augmentation of their wealth and peninsular power. France and England were embarked on different routes toward the goal of modernization. New Guards in both militantly pursued power, often through vehicles of religious dissent. England underwent more rapid transformation with the establishment of a national church, the creation of a largely New Guard government under

Cromwell, and a Modern Old Guard polity after the Glorious Revolution. In the meantime France's Modern Old Guard, led by such stalwarts as Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, was bolstering its "Old Regime" against revolts from left and right, even to the point of revoking the Edict of Nantes (1685), which less than a century before (1598) had given its Huguenot Protestants freedom of worship and civil rights. The Low Countries, in Hapsburg hands since 1477, were soon to pass to Emperor Charles V, who was also Charles I of Spain (ruled 1516–1556), and to be exploited as a mercantilist bastion by Charles's son and successor in Spain, Philip II (1556–1598). Seething with resentment against Spain, the Catholics and Protestants of the Low Countries would agree in 1576 to join against the Spanish "blackbeards." This alliance foundered, but the predominantly Protestant Northern Provinces, with powerful New Guard leadership, were to secede in 1581 to form the Dutch republic.

Throughout their Western as in their Eastern Diaspora, the Sephardim, with differences of detail specific to each locale, continued the complex economic, political, and social roles they had played in the Peninsula. They served New Guards and Modern Old Guards. These invited the Sephardim and, within the parameters of their own security, protected them against their natural enemies of the anti-establishment and their competitors from within the local New Guards. As elsewhere, the enemies of the Sephardim resorted to the equation of all the Sephardim with Jews and summoned against them the medieval anti-Jewish canards of the kind that had received de-facto canonization by Alfonso de Spina. In all cases the effectiveness of the opposition to the Sephardim was inversely proportional to the stability of the polity as a whole. In instances of heightened instability, the establishments often felt compelled to pass legislation and take action against the Sephardim, although the legislation passed was often not thoroughly implemented and the action taken was just as often milder than anticipated.

This matrix makes it possible to structure the often bewildering vicissitudes of the Sephardic experience in the various polities. Thus, for example, in Italy it can account for the rejection of Iberian Jews in 1492 by cities like Genoa and their admission by others like Rome, where, incidentally, Jewish merchants were among the opposition;

the expulsion of New Christians from Milan in 1540 and Venice in 1497 and 1550, on the one hand, and, on the other, their guarantee of freedom from persecution by Ferrara (February 12, 1550) and the famous Leghorn charter, known as *La Livornina* (July 10, 1593), which specifically extended a welcome to Jews, even if they had lived elsewhere as Christians. In France, it accounts, on the one hand, for the favorable response of Iberian New Christians to the charter of Louis XI (1474), which extended privileges to foreigners, except the English, and even more to the authorization of freedom of residence to New Christians by Henry II (1550); and, on the other, the many attacks against New Christians by merchants in Bordeaux, Bayonne, and the French Caribbean, and charges of host desecration at St. Jean de Luz (1622) or of collusion with the Spanish enemy, as at La Ligne (1596) and St. Esprit (1630).

In England, it explains the quiet admission of Iberian refugees, initially in very small numbers, under Henry VII (1485–1509), Henry VIII (1509–1547), and Elizabeth I (1558–1603), as well as Cromwell's interest in the the Jews' formal readmission. It explains as well the persistent opposition to the Sephardim from many quarters (including Spain, when it could pressure Henry VII), leading to the dissolution of their early communities and the obstruction of their formal readmission. It also accounts for the sensational charges against prominent Sephardim, most notably that Rodrigo López, physician to Queen Elizabeth I, had conspired to murder his royal patient.

In the Dutch Republic it explains not only the fundamental openness of the country's borders to the Portuguese, but numerous special considerations, as, for example, the grant to Jews, on July 12, 1657, of the status of subjects of the states of Holland, Zeeland, and West Friesland. It explains as well the currents of opposition by the Remonstrants and other, but far from all, elements in the Dutch church, leading to efforts at disabling legislation. In this connection, it can account, in New Netherlands, for the efforts by the governor, Peter Stuyvesant, on September 22, 1654, to dissolve the inchoate Jewish community there and prohibit future Jewish immigration, and at the same time, the obstruction of these efforts by the Dutch West India Company, for reasons that transcended the significant number of Jews who were "main participants" in that company.

In the Iberian colonies, it will explain, on the one hand, the rise to prominence of many New Christians and, on the other, the persistent efforts to obstruct the emigration of New Christians to these territories and the crescendos of inquisitorial activity evident, for example, in the so-called Great Conspiracy in Peru, culminating in 1639, and its counterpart in New Spain a decade thereafter.

In all of these areas, despite occasionally successful restrictions, the Sephardim engaged in the full gamut of New Guard activities.

Contrary to the myth reiterated by their enemies, the Sephardim of the Western Diaspora, for the most part, were neither rich nor famous. The majority were ordinary folk, eking out a subsistence as artisans, craftsmen, or petty merchants. Poverty was not always a stranger to them, and was often painfully visible, as among the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam after the French subjugation of the Netherlands in 1794. Although these Sephardim did not make history by the drama of their individual lives, they provided the indispensable support for their communities' achievers.

The achievers constituted only a small minority of the total Western Sephardic population. But their aggregate contribution can only be characterized as extraordinary.

The tonal activity of this minority was international commerce. The varied skills of the Sephardim in this area, and their connections in the Eastern and Western Diasporas, with fellow Sephardim, Catholics and Jews, and most often family members similarly engaged, could not have failed to promote their favorable reception and spectacular successes. From the Far East they brought herbs, including pepper, and tea, silk, diamonds, and pearls. From the West Indies they carried cocoa and cotton, wood and sugar, tobacco, silver, and gold.

Western Sephardim were involved in a host of related economic activities: shipbuilding and privateering; the mining of gold and silver; the development of plantations for cocoa, tobacco, and sugar; the stimulation of industries to move raw materials toward finished products; and the advancement of banking techniques and insurance.

But no less impressive was the breadth of Western Sephardic activity and achievement in the broadly defined areas of political administration, the hard sciences, the humanities, and the arts. The names

and achievements of distinguished Sephardim in these areas, many within the Iberian empires, would fill many pages. In administration the Western Sephardic Diaspora has produced prime ministers, ambassadors, judges of the highest national courts, high-ranking military officers, including generals and admirals, and innumerable government officials in other high-level positions. In the sciences Western Sephardim have been prominent in medicine, some even serving as royal physicians in Iberia, England, Sweden, and Russia; in medical research, some becoming renowned authors in a variety of fields; and in disciplines like physics, chemistry, minerology, and even conchology, and critical related fields, like mathematics. In the humanities, Sephardim have achieved renown in areas like history, anthropology, sociology, economics, philosophy, and biblical criticism. In the arts, their names are to be found among the leading figures of music, painting, and literature in almost every country of their sojourn. Indeed, in many of these disciplines Sephardim have been in the forefront of developments in numbers far beyond their percentage of their country's population.

In many cases it is impossible to determine whether the Jewish identity of Western Sephardim was accepted prior to their emigration or subsequently. The difficulty derives from their tendency to retroject the origins of Jewish identity as far back as possible. Connected to this tendency was the adoption by many Sephardic Jews of traditional Hebrew names like Cohen or Levi. But whatever their origins, the self-identification of the Sephardim as Jews, clandestine or open, was always an amalgam of commitment and circumstance.

We have examined these circumstances in the Iberian empires. Throughout the Iberian world, a formal Jewish identity was denied to all its inhabitants throughout the inquisitorial period, even though, for reasons that can best be fathomed politically on the basis of the Old Guard–New Guard struggle, nonresident Jews in areas like commerce and diplomacy were tolerated, as was commercial contact between resident Iberian New Christians and their Jewish relatives abroad. Outside of Iberia's orbits the circumstances varied more greatly and therefore produced different results.

In Italy, many places permitted Jews and even New Christians to live openly as Jews without molestation. There were New Christians

who became Jews, but many clearly did not. The widespread religious ambivalence of New Christians in early-sixteenth-century Italy motivated Samuel Usque to write his Portuguese classic, *Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel* (1552), in whose prologue he attests: "I have seen members of our [Portuguese] nation, recently pursued and routed from the realms of Portugal, vacillating in their faith."

In France New Christians all lived as Catholics until the beginning of the eighteenth century, although culturally in distinctively Portuguese communities. Not uninfluenced by this isolation, some, notably in Bordeaux, seem to have slackened their Catholic practice for several decades prior to their official recognition as Jews. Ironically, the imposition of conformity among Frenchmen through the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1698) may have facilitated the emergence of the New Christians as Jews. These actions disrupted the largely New Guard Huguenot communities and created a vacuum for Sephardim, who because of their social distinctiveness were less threatening to France's Old Guard and Modern Old Guard. It is of interest that the imposition of conformity strengthened the opponents of the Sephardim in France's distant possessions, like Martinique, where a non-Sephardic, non-Huguenot New Guard was eager to seize the opportunities the Sephardim had helped create. The continued social marginality of the French Sephardim is dramatically evidenced by the questions posed by Napoleon to the Assembly of Notables (1806) and the Great Sanhedrin (1807).

In the Low Countries Judaism appeared slowly among the Sephardim in the Dutch republic. An appreciable settlement of Portuguese merchants began in the early 1590s, but open Judaism did not appear until 1603. The account of the Yom Kippur service in 1596, interrupted by the Dutch authorities, is a legendized retrojection of what appears to have been an illegal Christmas mass.

The public emergence of Judaism was at least partially conditioned by the Dutch hostility toward Spain, to which Portugal was united until 1540, and an equivalent animus to Catholicism.

In England any Iberian Jews who may have arrived in 1492 and 1496 either disappeared or were absorbed as Christians into the English population. The Iberian Christians who followed found increased

opportunity for becoming Jewish with Henry VIII's break with Rome, the Commonwealth (1649–1660), and the Glorious Revolution (1688).

When the Western Sephardim left Catholicism for Judaism, they were as a group religiously more zealous than knowledgeable. They were ignorant of the traditions, language, and customs of authentic Judaism. The first center of their integration into Judaism was Italy, where authentic Jewish communities, Iberian included, had long existed, and where the so-called "Marrano Press" at Ferrara, during four years (1552–1555), published translations into Spanish of the liturgy and the Bible (the renowned Ferrara Bible [1553]), Usque's *Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*, in Portuguese, and two other works, one in Portuguese and the other in Spanish, whose connection to the New Christians appears clear but whose exact purpose remains enigmatic.

The liturgy and Bible profoundly influenced the second center, Amsterdam. Under Spanish-speaking teachers from Italy and the Muslim world, the Amsterdam Sephardim confirmed their link to the Iberian heritage of learning, custom, and liturgy (the *Minhag Sepharad*), and have preserved this heritage with nuances derived from the context of the Western world.

Within a few decades, Amsterdam became the spiritual cynosure of Western Sephardic Judaism. Its community was rich with traditional Jewish study, and its Talmud Torah, founded in 1615, was renowned for the range of its teaching and its rabbinic and belletristic alumni. Amsterdam was astir with an intellectual ferment that amalgamated the Iberian heritage, the Jewish faith, and the contemporary context. It made significant contributions to Jewish scholarship and many fields of general learning, and, not least, the literature of the Spanish Golden Age. And, with its Jewish printers, beginning with Manasseh ben Israel (1627), the Amsterdam community supplied books throughout the Sephardic world. Simultaneously testifying to the sophistication of this community, the novelty of Judaism for many erstwhile Sephardic Catholics, and the wavering marginality of others are the numerous apologetical and polemical works composed in Amsterdam and its offspring communities by distinguished thinkers, among them Immanuel Aboab (ca. 1555–1628), Saul Levi Morteira (ca. 1596–1660), Isaac (Fernando) Cardozo (1604–1681), Isaac

(Baltasar) Orobio de Castro (1620–1687), and David Nieto (1654–1728).

Directly, or indirectly through its offspring, Amsterdam became the mother city for the Sephardic congregations in England, Germany, France, and the New World.

Amsterdam Sephardim provided the religious foundation for the first openly Jewish community in the Western Hemisphere. This community arose in the city of Recife and its suburb of Mauricia within the independent Dutch enclave carved into Portuguese Brazil in 1630. During the twenty-four years of the existence of this enclave, many Portuguese New Christians, or perhaps, more correctly, New Guards, openly adopted Judaism. They were soon joined by Sephardim from various places in Africa and Europe, especially Holland.

On recapturing the enclave in 1654, the Portuguese gave its Jews and Protestants three months to leave. Some former Portuguese Christians, despite the dangers of the Inquisition, appear to have remained in possessions under Iberian control, including Peru and the Río de la Plata region. Large numbers of Jews returned to the places of their origin, especially Holland. Others sailed northward, developing Sephardic communities in the Caribbean, in the Guianas, English Barbados, Dutch Curaçao, and elsewhere. A group of twenty-three, arriving in New Amsterdam early in September 1654, where two Jews had preceded them, founded the first American Jewish community, and the first American synagogue, which they appropriately named Shearith Israel, the "Remnant of Israel."

The Brazilian Jewish community generated a rich panoply of Jewish institutions on the Amsterdam model, including an educational system that offered advanced talmudic study. It was enriched by the arrival in 1641 of Hakham Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (1605–1693), the first rabbi in the Western Hemisphere, and with him Hakham Moses Raphael de Aguilar (d. 1679). Other American Sephardic communities continued to be guided by the Amsterdam model, and some, like Barbados, Jamaica, and Curaçao, achieved an appreciable level of Jewish life in the century after their arrival. The Jamaican community produced two distinguished authors: Daniel Israel López Laguna, a Portuguese, who while in Jamaica wrote his famous *Espejo fiel de vidas* "Faithful Mirror of Lives," (London, 1720), with reflections of his

inquisitorial incarceration, and Rabbi Joshua Hezekiah de Cordova, author of *Reason and Faith* (Jamaica, 1788), which was to become the first English book on Judaism reprinted in North America (Philadelphia, 1791).

In the North American colonies Shearith Israel became the model for other American colonial Sephardic congregations, in Newport, Philadelphia, Savannah, and Charleston. Long after the year 1720, by which time the Sephardim in the colonies had become a minority of the Jewish population, it continued to set the tone for all of American Jewish religious life, modeling a dedicated involvement in the general life of the American community with a passionate devotion to the Iberian traditions of Judaism. Its concern for internal Jewish unity was never better expressed than by its distinguished hakham, Henry Pereira Mendes (1852–1937, rabbi 1877–1923), who came to Shearith Israel on the recommendation of his brother, Rabbi Frederick de Sola Mendes (1850–1927), at the time rabbi of the neighboring Congregation Shaarey Tefila in New York.

From their first settlement the Sephardim in North America, as elsewhere, became increasingly integrated economically, socially, and politically into the community. In the colonies and the nations of the United States of America and Canada, they have contributed significantly not only to material life but to every phase of scientific, scholarly, and artistic endeavor. In these countries dedicated to New Guard progress, they have been the quintessential New Guard. In the twentieth century, the Eastern Sephardic immigrants to America have joined in these achievements.

But throughout the New World, as in the Old, the Sephardim have suffered the erosions that inevitably accompany acculturation. Deep knowledge of Judaism, even where available in abundance, has not characterized large numbers of Sephardic Jews in the Western Hemisphere, any more than it has the Ashkenazic. Apathy, marginality, and defection, often through marriage, have numerically eroded many communities. The strength, dedication, organization, and inspiration within the surviving remnants remain, as in the past, the strongest guarantee for Sephardic survival.

Note

The foregoing is a précis of a multi-volume work in progress. Spatial limitations in this volume and the complexity of the subject matter have made necessary the omission of numerous facets of the Sephardic experience. They have also required the postponement of notes and other scholarly apparatus until the publication of the larger work.