

The Seventeenth-Century *Vida* of the Proselyte Abraham Pelengrino, alias Manoel Cardoso de Macedo

Analysis and Translation

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Abstract

The 1668-9 *Cópia da vida de bemaventurado*, claiming to be a copy of text written by Manoel Cardoso de Macedo who later adopted the name Abraham Pelengrino (d. 1652), is a unique testimony of an early modern conversion to Judaism, a phenomenon of which few descriptions have survived. The English translation of the Portuguese original presented in this article shows, among others, how such conversions were deeply personal experiences while at the same time served converts' apologetic needs and, possibly, the Jewish community's anti-Christian polemics. The essay that introduces the translation addresses questions of authorship, genre, and, focusing on discrepancies between facts described in the text and other sources, explores the *Vida* as a literary construct.

Keywords: Spiritual Autobiography, Inquisition, Amsterdam, Western Sephardic Diaspora, Conversion, race, Calvinism, early modern Christian-Jewish polemics

Abraham Pelengrino's *Vida* as a convert's autobiography and Jewish literary text¹

In the year 5529 (1768-69), an unknown 'scribe', possibly a member of Amsterdam's Portuguese Jewish community, completed what its title page claims to be a *cópia da vida de bemaventurado Abraham Pelengrino*, a copy of the life of the blessed Abraham Pelengrino, namely the autobiography of the Old Christian Manoel Cardoso de Macedo who had converted to Judaism early in the preceding century and lived in Amsterdam as the Jew Abraham Pelengrino until, as reported in the copy, his death on 20 heshvan 5413 (1652).² The document, in Portuguese, describes in the first person the life of Pelengrino, from his birth in San Miguel on the Azores in 1585 to the early years of his Amsterdam life in the 1610s, after which the text breaks off.

This document, translated into English in this article for the first time, is a unique account of an early modern conversion to Judaism. While most early modern proselytes left no trace other than names indicating they were converts, the *Vida* describes in detail the events, encounters, and inner thoughts that were to have brought an Old Christian to embrace Calvinism and end up as a Jew. It also shows the proselyte's personal discomfort of not having been born Jewish, which expresses itself in the apologetic argument of having been a 'wicked Jew' in a previous life before his present birth as a Gentile. Moreover, as this essay introducing the translation argues, the text is as much a literary work to which possibly also others contributed as it is an autobiographical description of an individual conversion. By focusing in particular on two incongruities between the text and other contemporary sources, the essay gives an example of an instance in which Pelengrino felt the need to misrepresent facts of his life and suggests that the polemical encounter with which the document ends might have been written by later authors using him and other converts as fictional polemical characters.

Questions about the *Vida's* authorship

What to make of this text of which there exists only one manuscript, a 'copy' penned down a century and a half after the events described are supposed to

1 The first part of this article is written by Alexander van der Haven.

2 Ets Haim Bibliotheek/Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam: EH 49 A 15. For details about and access to the text see etshaimmanuscripts.nl/items <http://etshaimmanuscripts.nl/items/eh-49-a-15/>. His name is often also written as 'Manuel'.

have happened? Is it, as the manuscript states, truly a copy of a lost, original autobiography of an early seventeenth-century proselyte? B.N. Teensma, who in 1976 published the *Vida* and its Dutch translation, took that claim for granted.³ There are, however, other possibilities. The first of these, namely that Abraham Pelengrino never really existed, can be easily dismissed. While in contemporary Sephardic Jewish prose fictional proselytes symbolized (and invited) *conversos* to return to their ancestral faith, Manoel Cardoso de Macedo alias Abraham Pelengrino was a real person who converted to Judaism, and details of his life recorded in sources external to the text fit, with some telling exceptions, those of the *Vida*.⁴ Cardoso-Pelengrino can be found in both the records of Amsterdam's Jewish community and those of the Lisbon Inquisition, the latter of which also describe some of same events the *Vida* recounts. Moreover, in Amsterdam's Portuguese Jewish cemetery in Ouderkerk lies a tombstone in which is chiseled 'de braahm pelengrino, ano 5413', showing that, besides the fact that his funeral budget did not allow for more than one attempt at spelling his name, Abraham Pelengrino had lived and died as a part of Amsterdam's Jewish community.⁵

Nevertheless, the fact that the Old Christian Manoel Cardoso de Macedo from the Azores ended his days as the Jew Abraham Pelengrino does not mean that the *Vida* is simply a chronicle of facts. It still leaves several questions unanswered. Was the autobiography an accurate description of his life, and if not, what do the inaccuracies tell us? Another question is that of authorship. Did Abraham Pelengrino author the entire *Vida* or did others write parts of or even the whole text, inspired by the life of this convert? A third, related, question is that of the history of the text: if it existed before 1768 or 1769, had it undergone alterations by one or more editors over time? Although none of these questions can be answered with certainty, this introduction to the English translation to the *Vida* will suggest some directions for doing so, and the translation offered here, in addition to the

3 Teensma, "De levensgeschiedenis van Abraham Perengrino, alias Manuel Cardoso de Macedo". For an early description of Pelengrino see also Kaplan, "Klitatam shel gerim ba-kehilah ha-portugesit be-amsterdam ba-mea ha-17 – parashat Lorenzo Eskudero [the absorption of proselytes in the Portuguese Community of Amsterdam in the 17th Century – the Case of Lorenzo Escudero]".

4 On proselytes in Iberian fiction, see Wilke, "Conversion ou retour? La métamorphose du nouveau Chrétien en Juif Portugais dans l'imaginaire sépharade du xviiè siècle".

5 Pelengrino's gravestone can be found in the Portuguese cemetery of Ouderkerk: Stadsarchief Amsterdam (further as SAA) 334 (Archief van de Portugees-Israëlitische Gemeente): 1328 (Beschrijving van de grafstenen van de begraafplaats te Ouderkerk aan de Amstel), p. 1188 (c. 1870). His tombstone can be viewed at: https://www.dutchjewry.org/portuguese_israelite_cemetery/p.shtml.

original manuscript and Teensma's transcription of it, can be of further help to pursue these questions.

A Proselyte's Story

The *Vida* describes, as the title suggests, the life of Manoel Cardoso de Macedo, and in particular his journey to Judaism, to becoming Abraham Pelengrino. The text is uneven in style – alternating between baroque formality to a conversational, almost spoken language. This can be explained either by the text having more than one author, to which we will return later, or the author's use of different genres: The two most obvious genres present in the text are autobiographical and polemical, of which the latter is embedded in the autobiographical narrative that makes up the majority of the text. This autobiographical genre, in turn, draws on a number of Christian genres, namely Iberian official forms of self-narratives that were composed for juridical or religious purposes, such as the *relación*, the confession, and *vidas de monjas* (nuns' lives), as well as the *discurso de la vida*, with which most inquisitorial interrogations open.⁶ The polemical dialogues in the text suggest also the influence of contemporary Protestant and *converso* (polemical) literature, while the style that is closer to spoken language is an indication that the biography, before it was written down, existed as an oral (auto)biography.⁷

In 1599, so the *Vida* tells, at the age of fourteen, Manoel is sent to Exeter for four years by his father to learn English. There, after reading books on various Christian denominations, he converts to Calvinism. This eventually reaches the ears of the Inquisition and, after a second stay in England, he is arrested during a visit home to the Azores. The *Vida* vividly describes the polemical encounter between the defiant Cardoso and his judges that, despite his family connections (his uncle worked for the Lisbon Inquisition), leads to five months of imprisonment. At the end of that period, in 1609, he is placed with another prisoner, Henriques Milão, who is suspected of Judaizing, and the crisis of faith caused by this encounter enables Manoel to cynically repudiate his Calvinist beliefs and hence ensure his release. After two months in a reform school, he moves in with Milão's family and begins exploring Judaism. His growing love for the Jewish nation, so he writes, leads him to

6 Perelis, *Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic: Blood and Faith*, 10.

7 For possible Iberian polemical sources containing proselytes, see Wilke, "Conversion ou retour?" 55–6, and Wilke, *The Marrakesh Dialogues: A Gospel Critique and Jewish Apology from the Spanish Renaissance*, 154–5.

organize an English ship to help members of the Milão family escape Portugal. The operation is however thwarted, and he is arrested again. Following his second release, he lives for ten months with another *converso* family with whom he secretly practices Judaism. When an acquaintance is arrested, he fears betrayal and flees the country to Hamburg, where he formally converts to Judaism. Then, in Danzig, he enters the service of one of Milão's sons, Moses Abensur, which however results in a horrifying seven-week imprisonment after Pelengrino takes the fall for the death of Abensur's mulatto servant. Following his release, he returns to Hamburg, where another disaster befalls him, namely leprosy. After his cure he moves to Amsterdam, where yet another illness, this time malaria, confines him to a sickbed of fourteen months. The story ends with Pelengrino, who is trying to make a living as a low-level broker in Amsterdam, meeting 'Christopher' (Cr[ist]óvão), an English old acquaintance on a business trip in the Republic, with whom he enters into a debate about religion. The 1768–69 text breaks off mid-debate, but according to the anonymous author of the introduction, the outcome was that the Englishman 'converted to the truth' — that is, to Judaism.

It is unknown whether there ever existed a text that continued the story of Pelengrino's further life in Amsterdam.⁸ For these, however, we have other sources, namely the records of the Jewish community of Amsterdam, as well as some other sources. In 1615 and the following year, Pelengrino donated to the burial society and he was, provided there was no other 'Abraham Perigrino' (the records spell Pelengrino alternatively as Peregrino, Perigrino, and Pelegrino), one of the signatories of the Talmud Torah school.⁹ By 1617, as a confession of a returnee to Lisbon reveals, he was married to a former New Christian, also from the Azores.¹⁰ Four years later, in 1621, Pelengrino was appointed as beadle of the community Bet Israel, a function which he continued to hold at Kahal Kados de Talmud Torah, into which Amsterdam's three Portuguese communities united in 1639, until the year of his death in 1652.¹¹ In the records of both communities he is regularly mentioned,

8 Teensma writes that the presence of Castilian and Dutch linguistical influences in the spelling suggest that Pelengrino wrote the text long after his settlement in Amsterdam, but also admits that these might also be those of the copyist. Teensma, "Levensgeschiedenis," 2.

9 Burial society: Pieterse, *Livro de bet Haim do Kahal Kados de bet Yahacob: Original Text*, 25, 146. Talmud Torah school: SAA 334:1051 (Termos de Talmud Torah e de Ets Haim, 5376-5488), f. 3v. (Nisan 5376/1616)

10 Roth, "The Strange Case of Hector Mendes Bravo", 236.

11 Appointment at Bet Israel: SAA 334:10 (Livro dos termos deste Kahal Kados de Bet Israël, 5379-5399/1618-1639), f. 38r/ p. 79 (13 Nisan 5381). He is mentioned in the Kahal Kados de Talmud Torah records: SAA 334:172 (Manual, 5399-5406/1639-46) as shamas from the very beginning.

often with his wife, as the recipient not only of his shamas salary, but also of charity.¹² After 1630, Bet Israel's shamas might have been spotted in the city wearing the black linen cape, nice boots, and silken undervest that Meyr a Roya in his will had bequeathed to him.¹³

The *Vida* as a Literary Construct

The historical sources external to the *Vida* are not only useful to fill in the biographical details following those recounted in the *Vida*. They also offer insight in the *Vida* as a literary construct. This is particularly the case with discrepancies between the facts presented in the text and those that can be extracted from other records, and of these, two will be discussed here. The first concerns the *Vida's* misrepresentation of the duration of Manoel Cardoso's stay in England and his age at his first arrest and trial by the Inquisition.

According to the trial records, he was nineteen years old on 19 January 1609, which means he was born in 1589 or perhaps 1590, and not, as the *Vida* claims, 1585.¹⁴ While it is possible that Pelengrino had forgotten his date of birth or that in the document's history a mistake entered, the option that he deliberately changed his year of birth offers an interesting look at his attempt at self-representation. Because Amsterdam's Jewish religious leaders coaxed *conversos* to return to Judaism by emphasizing 'individualistic judgment and choice', it is not surprising that the Pelengrino of the *Vida* is a seeker guided by individual reason, gradually maturing towards his eventual, and unequivocal, embrace of Judaism.¹⁵ The *Vida's* timeline – being sent out in 1599, spending four long years of religious experimentation in Exeter, followed by another stay in England, and then, already in his twenties, facing the Inquisition – fits that ideal image of a young adult who does not make hasty and immature judgments.

The inquisitorial records, however, show that in the *Vida*, Pelengrino greatly exaggerated the length of his stay in England and, moreover, that

12 In SAA 334: 10 and 11-12 (Register houdende opgave van promessas en fintas en uitgaven, 1626–1639), and SAA 172 and 173 (Manual, 5407–13/1647–53).

13 SAA 334: 10, f. 72r/p. 147.

14 Arquivo Nacional, Torre do Tombo: TSO (Tribunal do Santo Ofício, 1538–1821): IL (Inquisição de Lisboa, 1538–1821): 028 (Processos, 1536–1821): 00319 (Processo de Manuel Cardoso, 1608–03–26/1609–08–17: PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/00319) (further as 'processo'), f. 38r (digital p. 75). Accessible through: <http://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=2300193>.

15 Bodian, "The Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam and the Status of Christians", 343–4.

he was much younger at his trial. His first sojourn in England lasted only a year, from 1604 to 1605, and his second stay took place in the course of the following year.¹⁶ It is also interesting, although not surprising, that to his interrogators, Cardoso attributed his conversion to the missionary efforts of his hosts rather than to his own religious inquiries.¹⁷ In the trial records he claimed that he had held these Calvinist beliefs only for the half year prior his arrest,¹⁸ and that he had acted out of the ignorance of his tender age with its concomitant ignorance of the faith.¹⁹ While the latter claims are as trustworthy as those in the *Vida*, the dates referred to in the records do show that the *Vida* deceptively makes Pelengrino's journey of faith last longer, as a result presenting it as based on a mature and gradual quest for the truth rather than on the rash decisions of an impressionable youth.

The second example concerns the identity of the Englishman Christopher who converted to Judaism as the outcome of the chance encounter with his old acquaintance Cardoso. The issue with this narration of events is that, of the not-so-many proselytes that could be found in Amsterdam in the second half of the 1610s, one is an English Christopher who has a story quite unlike that of the Christopher of the *Vida*. In the period the *Vida* stages the debate between Pelengrino and Christopher, namely in the late 1610s or early 1620s, two Englishmen are known to have arrived in Amsterdam and have 'Judaized' there. One of these was named Christopher Sands, and he belonged to the Judaizing Traskite sect. Together with one of the group's founders, Hamlet Jackson, Sands had come to the Republic not for reasons of business, as the *Vida* claimed, but for the express purpose of converting to Judaism.²⁰ In Amsterdam, according to a contemporary claiming to have witnesses to corroborate his report, Amsterdam's Jews told Sands and Jackson that they must either observe the Noahide laws upon which Gentiles' salvation was contingent, or else receive circumcision and observe the Jewish law. 'Whereupon Mr. Christopher Sands was content only to be a National Saint, or a Saint of the Gentiles, by observing the seven precepts: but Jackson would not be so content; he would be circumcised, and so make a Jewish proselyte.'²¹ Jackson probably became the 'Abraham Ger Yngrez',

16 Processo, f. 22r (digital p. 43).

17 Ibid., f. 27r (digital p. 53).

18 Ibid., f. 39v (digital p. 78).

19 Ibid., ff. 13v, 14r, 35r (digital pp. 26, 27, 69).

20 See about the Traskite sect: Phillips, "An Early Stuart Judaizing Sect".

21 Pagitt, *Heresiography, or, a Description and History of the Hereticks and Sectaries Sprung up in these Latter Times*, 180. Capitalisation and italics of the original are removed.

who can be found in Amsterdam's Portuguese records from that period.²² Sands, on the other hand, returned to England, where he became known as 'a Jew, and denies both Christ and his Gospel' and, according to a report from 1633, persuaded several others to adopt Judaism.²³

Unless two English Christophers converted in the same year in Amsterdam (the fact that Sands 'only' became a Noahite is irrelevant, this is storytelling), this episode of the *Vida* is more evidence that the *Vida*, while correctly presenting many of the facts of Pelengrino's life, also contains fictional elements. While, as suggested above, the 'rewriting' of Pelengrino's age saved Cardoso from the suspicion of having left the Roman Catholic faith because he had merely been an immature and impressionable youth, what purpose would turning an English Traskite who had come to Amsterdam already with the intention to convert, into Pelengrino's accidental Puritan conversation partner? One possibility is that Pelengrino himself might have embellished this many years later, when his story's message had become more important than its accuracy. Even though the *Vida* describes how in the encounter the shame for his poverty, his limp, and perhaps his new faith made him try to avoid his old acquaintance, at the same time it gives Pelengrino a role in the defense of the Jewish faith that was far more glamorous than what he was ordered to do when the community's *ma'amad* in 1645 chided him and the other *shamosim* for neglecting their duties, namely to make sure that at the time of the *tefilot* no gentiles would enter the synagogue.²⁴

Another, more interesting, option is that Pelengrino did not author the polemic, but rather that members of Amsterdam's Jewish community created this bricolage of two Judaizers they fondly remembered, bringing them together in the popular format of a debate leading to conversion. This format was familiar from texts such as the late sixteenth-century *Marrakesh* dialogues of which a number of copies circulated among Amsterdam's Portuguese Jews at the time our copy of the *Vida* was written.²⁵ Thus, the stories of Abraham Pelengrino and Christopher Sands, brave Christians who embraced the true faith in Amsterdam, might have found each other in the retellings of Amsterdam's Jews.

22 Abraham Ger the Englishman: Pieterse, *Livro de bet Haim*, 108, 112, 126, 137.

23 Strafford, *The Earl of Strafforde's Letters and Dispatches*, 89.

24 SAA 334: 19 (Escamoth A, 5398–5440/1638–1680), p. 268/f. 183.

25 Wilke, *Marrakesh Dialogues*, 155–8, 163–5.

Translator's Introduction²⁶

Cardoso's narrative employs a variety of rhetorical and linguistic modes. At times a reader of the original will find an unadorned, conversational tone that is juxtaposed with a more formal register. My goal has been to render these different registers and his own idiosyncrasies into an accessible English that retains traces of the original style without allowing the original to obscure the target language and its reader: a non-specialist reader of English who wants to appreciate the psychological complexity and historical dimensions of this unique document. I am indebted to B.N. Teensma's transcription and study of the manuscript and am grateful that he brought this fascinating text to light so many years ago.²⁷

Translation

'The memory of the righteous is a blessing, and the name of the wicked will rot'

This is a copy of the life of the fortunate²⁸ one, Abraham Pelengrino, which tells of how I reached the highest Cause of all the Causes, and of the debate and controversy that I had, here, with an Englishman, whom I convinced and brought²⁹ to the Truth.

It was signed Abraham Pelengrino, who died the 20th of Hesvan in the year 5413 [1642] of the creation of the World. Anno 5529 [1769].

Preface

Seeing the very extraordinary means that the Blessed God used in order to bring me to His knowledge, being of a people so separated from Him and being of gentile blood and despised in His eyes, as Malachi said in Chapter 1, verse 2, 3: 'And I loved Jacob and Esau I hated'. I wanted to record

26 The second part of this article is written by Ronnie Perelis.

27 I want to thank my friends and colleagues Claude Dov Stuczynski and Daniel Strum for help with some of the obscure Portuguese phrases and Alexander van der Haven for his keen eye in catching infelicities.

28 Is this a translation of a Hebrew term? Is this of his own styling? Is this one of the many subtle ways that we can notice his debt to Calvinism?

29 Cardoso uses the term 'reduced' which connotes almost a violent conquest of his opponent, I chose the more benign 'brought' because it seems to make more sense in English.

the calamities and twists and turns³⁰ through which He brought me to His service so that I could continually give Him praise for the mercy He showed me, which does not cease being a mystery and secret considering the state I was living in, because anyone could ask what did He find in me more than in anyone else: it can't be because I am wiser than another? No. Is it because I am more fortunate?³¹ No. It cannot be because of the merit of my parents because I come from a lineage so opposed to His people, to such an extreme that, as my father made clear to me, there was not enough fire at his reach to destroy them all. So why me? Because of His compassion. I believe that my soul is actually from a wicked Jew, a profaner of the Divine Law; and the Blessed Lord, out of His pity, He dealt with my soul compassionately, placing it in this impure vessel far from His ways so that in this way it can turn from its wickedness, [and return again] as it once was when it was in a pure vessel. It is like what Job says chapter 33, verses 28-29: He redeemed his soul from passing into destruction and he will see his life in the light, and all of these does God do for the man, two or three times, in order to turn his soul from destruction towards illumination in the light of the living.

And thus He desired to keep me in the observance of His Law so that in this way I could reach the Divine Light and have patience throughout the trials that might come upon me. I won't say anymore because I don't know in what way my soul sinned, however, I hope that I will see that which we all desire to see.³²

Chapter 1

To begin telling the story of my journey,³³ I am, by blood, the son of a man named António Cardozo de Macedo, originally from Guimarães, and currently a resident living³⁴ in the city of Ponta Delgada on the Island of São Miguel, a gentleman and a merchant. All of the people of that island are

30 The term 'rodeos' alludes to both the circuitous path and the sense of journey and wandering so important to Cardoso's story. It might also point to the centrality of 'gilgul', the kabbalistic notion of the recycling of souls in Cardoso's self-understanding. Regarding the relevance of the doctrine of 'Gilgul' in seventeenth-century Amsterdam see Alexander Altman, "Eternality of Punishment: A Theological Controversy within the Amsterdam Rabbinate in the Thirties of the Seventeenth Century". *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 40 (1973): 1-40.

31 'venturozo' denotes both blessed and fortunate, something akin to grace.

32 This somewhat obscure expression possibly points to the belief and hope in the Messiah's arrival.

33 'ventura.'

34 'asistente.' I have decided to preserve the variant spellings of the author's own last name as they appear in the manuscript. He sometimes writes it as Cardozo and other times as Cardoso,

also merchants because of the great amount of trade between the island and England dealing in dyestuffs which they collect themselves. Being this as it was, my father decided to send me, as the oldest of eight brothers,³⁵ to England to learn the language and in that way better engage in the dyestuff business. It was decided in that year of [15]99 that I, being 14 years old, would go in the company of an Englishman named Master Gordon, who at that time did business on behalf of the Scots.

I arrived on August 25th of that year [1599] in a town named Exeter, where I stayed two years learning the language, going to school and seeing its rhythms³⁶ and ceremonies. I encountered the Scriptures which was the first thing they put in my hand after learning the A, B, C's; later I came to see that the sect of my parents was not good. Seeing the variety of religions that existed, I resolved to not choose any of them until I had more information and see which one most pleased me. And so I went to London where I bought seven books of seven religions. So that you should know, these were: Calvinism, Anabaptism, Brownism, Unitarianism, Lutheranism, Puritanism, Arianism.³⁷ I read, and I began to see the differences that existed between them. I arrived at the conclusion that Calvinism was best because it was the one that most accorded with reason.

As I began following it, the locals were delighted that I was continuing in their Church and that I appeared so zealous for their religion. I was respected by them. They sought me out and enjoyed talking with me. It was in this manner that I gained access to the house of a man of importance³⁸ who lived in a country home about a half mile away, as the English gentry are accustomed to live.

In this man's house I was able to enter as if he was my father and I interacted with his sons and daughters like brothers, without any distinction between us. This gentleman was called Sir George Smith, he was a very accomplished man. When a certain Count in Ireland, named Sir Thomas Lee, died without heirs, his goods reverted to the Crown so that the Queen

which reflects the natural slippage between Spanish and Portuguese that would be common in his community.

35 In the inquisitorial trial it is noted that Manoel was an 'hijo natural' indicating that he was born out of wedlock but was raised as his father's son. It is logical that he leaves this potentially embarrassing fact out of his narrative.

36 The word 'ritmos' appears in the manuscript but there is a possibility that this is a mistake and that the correct word is 'ritos'- rituals.

37 In the original Cardoso refers to some of these books by the names of the founders of the sects- Calvin, Luther, etc. I chose to standardize the list. Unfortunately, we do not know which works of these authors the young Cardoso read.

38 'S[enho]r Grande.'

may distribute it as charity, as is the custom. My friend, this nobleman, went to court and arranged with the Queen that I would receive a portion of this fortune so that I stay firm in her religion. Because she was so dedicated to it, she set aside for me 100 pounds sterling per year. With this sum and with what I received from my father I lived like any other gentleman. My lifestyle was rather dissolute because I was able to have whatever I desired.

By the time four years passed my father called me back home. I went back to the Island where I was received [warmly] by my father and brothers. He again sent me [to England] with the merchandise from his dyestuff business. I went and returned three times without my father noticing anything untoward regarding my religion. When I came to London the last time in [1]606, the Queen had died and King James had ascended to the throne. James always maintained the peace with Spain and thus the Spanish ambassador was there, and he noticed that I was Portuguese and that I frequented the churches³⁹ and did not go to mass at his home like the other Portuguese and Spanish who were there [in England] and whom I always avoided. As he knew about me, he found me at court where I was with my friend the nobleman, and he took me aside and asked me why, being Portuguese, did I not come to mass? I responded saying: Your Excellency should keep track of his own subjects and not me. After seeing my behavior, the ambassador was compelled to write to the Inquisition in Lisbon about what was happening with me, and as I have a relative, António Diaz Cardozo, who works at that diabolical tribunal, they sent a warrant to the Bishop Don Jerónimo Texeira Cabral so that he should watch me without arresting me, and see what would happen and how I would comport myself at home.

Chapter 2

I came to the island, to the house of my father, and they threw the usual party in my honor, and on the first Saturday after the night of my arrival I was almost ready to lie down when my father called me over to a veranda overlooking the water and began to speak to me asking, 'Son, have you said anything against our Holy Faith? There is an official here to arrest you for the Inquisition. Now if he was here because you were a thief, a murderer or a bandit, I would free you and I would give you my own horse and money, and if I didn't have any more I would put you on my back and carry you, because this is what fathers do for their sons, and sons for their fathers; but in issues of faith I would go 7 leagues by foot to fetch the wood to burn you.'

39 'cerchas.'

I responded, 'May God pay back Your Grace's good will' and then I turned my back on him, and my mother⁴⁰ was there with him.

The issue was not resolved. Sunday morning, I went to meet up with two English merchants, friends of mine, and I told them what happened, and we went to where the ship captains were. We only found one ship bound for Plymouth, but it was only half-full. We negotiated with him [its captain] to pay for the surplus freight so that he would depart without delay. The following Monday morning, as I was about to depart and the boat was finishing its preparations, I went to have lunch with my two friends at one of their homes. In the middle of all this, one of the Clerical Guards knocked on the door, asked for me, and was told that I was inside. And speaking with me, because I could not get away, he said that the Lord Bishop wanted a word with me.

And I, without thinking about it, went with him. When I entered the room, the Bishop came in from another chamber and ordered everyone else to leave. Sitting in a chair next to me he asked me how long it has been since I arrived, and I told him. He said to me, 'Has Your Mercies committed or spoken something against the Faith? Because if you tell me, I can absolve you of it, because we know from where you come.'⁴¹ And to this I responded like a brazen youth: A Calvinist [I am], and a Calvinist I will die, unless you can convince me otherwise with reasons that accord with my understanding.

Seeing my temerity, the Bishop changed his disposition towards me⁴² and did not know how else to resolve the situation than to call the justice and the constable to have me taken away, while in the meantime he engaged me with words.

When they arrived, they took me to the public prison where they placed me in a cell alone. My father was gathered up in his home, very sad, and closed the doors and windows as he was embarrassed. He desired that no one from his house should send me bedding or food or anything else. In the end, my basic necessities came from the house of my grandparents.

Because he could not secure me, the Bishop had me sent at the end of 8 days to Terceira until there would be a ship going to Lisbon. After sailing to Terceira they placed me there in a dungeon, in the prison where I was

40 While his father is a major and recurring figure, this is the only mention Cardoso makes of his mother in the entire *Vida*. That his mother is there at this moment is interesting considering that according to Cardoso's trial record, she was not married to his father. Despite that, his status was that of a 'filho natural', and it seems that Manoel was treated as a full son in terms of his father's care. See Perelis, *Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic*, 85.

41 'pois sabemos de que gerasão hé.'

42 'se demudou de coor.'

for two months without talking to anyone, suffering greatly from the ill treatment of the place. At the end of this time, they put me onboard a caravel to Lisbon, and they placed me in shackles. I placed my eyes on them and considered all of the injustices that were being done to me and I said with great tears: Lord, it is not for being a thief or an evildoer [that I am in this prison], but rather to find the path to my salvation!

When I came to Lisbon they brought me to the Inquisition, and they stuck me in a sad cave. On the following day they brought me before the tribunal where all the tyrannical persecuting Inquisitors were seated. And they asked me, as was customary: who I was, what my name was, and why I was imprisoned. And I responded that, 'I am called Manoel Cardozo de Macedo; from what I understand, I am imprisoned for being a Calvinist.'

And later Manoel Álvarez, who presided there, asked me: And are you?' to which I responded: 'Yes I am.'

He said to me, 'What was it that moved you to become one; what reason could there be for you to have strayed from the true path, and what led you to embrace such an abominable and false sect?'

To which I responded, 'If Your Lordships would like to listen to me, I will explain how much more reason the title Roman Catholic and Holy applies to Calvinism [than to the Church].' And to this they responded: 'Speak, because God who is present at this table, suffers greatly.'

I told them, 'I separated myself from the religion of my parents after seeing the abominations of the papist religion.' Starting with the central issue I asked, 'for what reason is there a Pope who makes himself like God on Earth?'

Oh, and what should we say about images? We should throw away one of the 10 commandments of the Decalogue, and we would only have 9 of them, seeing that it is such an abomination in the eyes of the Lord as is established in Scripture.

I said that what he [the Pope] does is not in accord with heaven, and that he is not the successor to Saint Peter who was the first Pope, for he [Peter] was never a Pope. Rather he was a saint and thus Christ was able to affirm in heaven what he did on earth, in accord with the promise that he [Peter] made when he said, 'I believe you are Christ, son of the Living God.' And then he [Jesus Christ] responded, 'Upon this rock I will establish my Church, which is the faith that all that you do on the earth will be confirmed in heaven. And so it was that he [Jesus Christ] only spoke with Peter, and not with others that would come after him, all of them mortal sinners. You could make more souls by God giving indulgences and forgiveness of sins, something which Peter did not do, nor could he ever do, because these are things only

meant for God. You could have someone who all his life murdered, robbed, and raped, and by [simply] saying: 'I absolve you!' he would find himself pardoned. It can be argued that if God does not want to absolve [the person of sin] it would be necessary to do it by force [and against His will], for as it says, what is done on earth, will be confirmed in the Heavens. And what you have here is that they are now greater than God, because regardless of whether He desires it or not, this person will be absolved of his sin. And if we continue discussing these matters let us turn to the priests. Which law or in what part of the Gospels did Christ command that they should not marry? This goes against the Divine command that states: 'Be fruitful and multiply.' Secondly, it goes against nature to make men and women into nuns and monks, for there is no doubt that human nature will burst forth and find a way to do much evil. And the last reason [against celibacy] is that if it is better to not marry than it is to marry, then shouldn't we all try to attain that higher status, but then if we all become monks and nuns, there would not be any offspring and it would be necessary for God would have to create a new world.

Then one of them said to me: 'What are you saying? How is it that we only have nine?' I responded: 'Well, because if the second one says: 'Do not make an image of anything that is on the earth or in the heavens.' This the Roman Church does not include, because they say that first: 'Thou shalt honor God' and the second one is 'Do not swear' and in this way they threw out the images and took the tenth and made it into two in order to reach ten, because the ninth one says: 'Thou shalt not desire your neighbor's wife,' and the tenth is [counted as] 'Thou shalt not covet a stranger's things.'

How is it that you make two out of one when the tenth commandment says: 'Thou shalt not desire your neighbor's wife and his house', meaning that this is only one commandment as established in the Holy Text? To this they responded by saying that this is done out of love for the ignorant. We of course know that the image is just wood and stone, and is no more than a semblance so that the people can remember God with greater devotion. It is as if you have a portrait of your father or mother or another person whom you love very much, wouldn't you appreciate looking at it?

To this I responded: 'First of all, who could see God so that they could capture His image? And even if they could capture His image, one does not need His image in order to know Him, for let us consider that portrait of my father that Your Lordship referred to. Let us say that he was a great prince, or as those of lower ranks like that of the Order of Christ or Santiago, and I as I go about my house I see the portrait of my father. Then as I reach the window I look out and see those men acting with that said greatness. From which

would I gain greater joy, their deeds or that portrait? Certainly, from their deeds. Since it is like this, I have no need of a portrait to remind me of God.

Look up to the skies, look to the earth, look at His creation, look at each one of my limbs, look at the passage of time. Any one of these things is sufficient to manifest His grandeur better than a portrait. This is all the more so because He commanded us not to make them nor to bow down to paintings. And in my father's house I saw how they revered and beseeched the images as if they were actually God.

It is easy to prove that all of this is in imitation of the pagans of the past. It accords with what I have seen and read, that when they wanted to preach the Gospel to the idolatrous Romans it was necessary that they not destroy their oracles. Doing so would make it so that they would not want to hear the word of God. Instead, they transformed them, almost like a trick, by taking the names of one for the other: the oracle of Apollo was turned into Saint Peter of such and such, Mercury would be renamed as Saint John of such and such, and the goddess Venus would be turned into Saint Mary of such and such. This approach brought them closer to their goal than striking down the idols. To prove this just look at what goes on in our Portugal today with the Festival of Lights,⁴³ which is celebrated in the same way as it was done in honor of the goddess Venus in ancient times, placing lights in the windows and other similar things.

When they did this in the past, I would say, they had an excuse because they were trying to bring them [pagans] to the knowledge of the Faith. Today, however, when we all have that knowledge, why wouldn't we do away with the idols and fulfill God's command? In this manner Paul complains in Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4, saying that he was unable to tear the people away from idolatry. And what greater proof of this is there than what the angel said to Saint John in the Apocalypse, chapter 22, verse 9: 'Don't humble yourself before me, because that is only reserved for God.'⁴⁴

They did not respond to me except by saying: 'The Devil speaks through you. Say all that you want against our Holy Catholic Faith so that it will be easier to condemn you as a heretical apostate.' And I responded to them, 'why should I say anything else if your Lordships have not challenged anything I said?' As a consequence, I became even more resolved in my religion, the

43 'Festa das Candelárias.'

44 My translation here and elsewhere is directly from Cardoso's Portuguese rendering of the Biblical text, 'Não te humilhes a mim, que isso só se deve a D[eu]s a todo isto.' It is unclear to me if this is his own translation from another version, most probably the English, or if he is using a Portuguese translation of the Gospels.

one that I chose to die in because it was true. To this they responded: ‘You are already predestined.’⁴⁵ What do you think of the sacrifice of the Mass, or do you abhor it like the other damn heretics?’ I responded: ‘It is true that this is the most abominable for those of my religion, even more than confession and all the rest, because in truth it is reason that takes us to that conclusion. Why would those created by God in this world need to make such a profane sacrifice, against their Creator, saying that God is in the host as he is in the Heavens? It seems like this idea was not very well thought through, because if God was in it then it would not ever be able to decompose, but seeing that the host is eventually eaten, it turns out that God is eaten. Certainly, anyone who considers this would be shocked. It goes without saying that a mortal man cannot take God into his hands. We see in the case of the Ark of the Lord when David wanted to transfer it from the house of Aminadab to his city, that Uzzah reached out and touched it so that it would not fall, and he was struck down right there. In this case, it was not God Himself, but rather one of His creations.’⁴⁶ What would he be doing taking it into his hands, rather as Paul says about the issue of the Sacrament that we take bread and wine as a reminder of his blood and body and this way is the true sacrament of our religion, that in taking bread and wine we say the same words as Christ: ‘Take this bread as a memorial of my body and this wine as a memorial of my blood that I will spill for you.’ This being as it is, I see that everything is done in the opposite way from how it was preached by the disciples of Christ.

To all these things they could not respond to me. Rather, all they did was simply record everything I said. Only Don Antonio Pereira said to me: ‘You want to know more than the doctors of the Church who were touched by the Divine spirit and who organized everything accordingly? You deserve to be burned alive for these blasphemies.’

And I responded to him that I well knew this to be true and that I ask that God enlighten all the blind ones and that He give recompense to the false prophets. As Christ said in Luke, 12.4: ‘They are the ones that say one thing with their mouth and another with their heart.’⁴⁷

45 Calvinist ideas seems to mark Cardoso's *Vida* even after his conversion to Judaism. See Perelis, ‘Turning and Turning Towards the Lord: Protestant Ideas and the Religious Journey of Manoel Cardoso de Macedo from Old Christian to Calvinist to Jew’, *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas* (2019): 99-116.

46 This passage seems to argue that Uzzah did not die because he touched God but rather because he inappropriately touched the Ark.

47 ‘que erão os que dezião huma couza com a boca, e outra no corasão.’

And with this they sent me back to prison, where I was for five months without them speaking to me again. Neither did they give me a bed nor a shirt to wear, so I slept on a small pile of straw filled with all sorts of filth, suffering cold and hunger – as God knows. At the end of my time there, I was unable to even take one step, and had developed weakness in one leg of which I will never have use of again, because the building I was in, as it was summer, had walls that dripped with water.

Being at wits' end and understanding that this treatment was meant to wear me down, I asked the warden for a meeting with the tribunal, to which he brought me. There, the cruel president [of the tribunal] said to me, 'What do you want?'

I said, 'Sir, I have come here to know if Your Lordships have already decided to kill me in this building, because if it would be so I would have patience because I am good with God. And if you are keeping me here in order to burn me, please give me a better place to be so that I can live until I reach that state.'

He responded, 'You have more than you deserve. There is no better place. Why don't you call out to the Devil who speaks through you and see if he can help you? Or throw him out and perhaps you can appeal to the mercy of this tribunal. Take him away Warden, and if there is a worse place, give it to him and not a better place.'

Chapter 3

They took me back to the prison where I stayed until the next day. Then they brought me back to that tribunal teeming with vipers, and the president of the tribunal said to me: 'We have not considered your deeds but rather looked at whose son you are and at your lineage. Using the mercy which is our custom to offer to all, we wish to take you out of the place where you are now, give you clothes, and place you in the company of an upstanding gentleman of this city. He is elderly and thus you should obey him as it is proper, cleaning up for him and doing the necessary duties of a servant. Perhaps there the Holy Spirit will touch you so that you can convert (back) to the milk of the Church from which you nursed.'

I thanked them and they transferred me to the company of one Henrique Milão⁴⁸ who was imprisoned for being a Jew despite his denial of the ac-

48 Cardoso does not explain why he was moved into the cell of this accused Judaizer. There is no mention of it in his trial record. Perhaps this was just a temporary step before being released. In any case it has powerful reverberations in Cardoso's story.

cusation.⁴⁹ I was left there to clean myself up from the filth that I had on me [from my previous cell]. I was very happy with the company because it was good. I thought that my father would be shocked if he would see me [with this Jew].

Six days passed and then they called Henrique Dias to the tribunal, where they gave him a booklet listing his sins, showing him to be a Jew who observed the Sabbath and did not eat those foods prohibited by the Law and other particulars pertaining to it.

The unfortunate man looked spent. He declared that it was all false testimonies which were wrongly attributed to him because he had never been a Jew. He took the booklet and tossed it on the bed. I took it and while reading it I asked him: 'Are there actually people who keep this religion? Because everything that is documented in that book is in accord with Scripture, like that the Sabbath was not Sunday but rather the Seventh day when God rested.'

The good elderly gentleman responded, 'Son, I don't know anything about it; I know that I am imprisoned unfairly. Please let me be.'

Not wanting to torment him further I went pacing around the building, thinking about that paper. I found that being in that building my thoughts became more refined.⁵⁰ I recalled a proposition of Saint Jerome that I once read regarding the Sabbath. It said that Redemption was greater than Creation and that because the Sabbath was meant as a memorial to the Creation of the world the Lord had commanded us to observe it. However, because the world fell into perdition due to Adam's sin, and Christ came to redeem it and came back to life on Sunday, it is necessary to observe the Sabbath on that day for it was a sign of the Redemption. Thus, it was moved because it is greater to redeem than to create. Seeing in my imagination this and many other concepts that would occur to me, such as the nature of the trinity, I felt myself so oppressed by these thoughts, so much so that I, unable to sleep, arose at 2 past midnight. I sat at the foot of my bed and raised my eyes to heaven through a small opening [in the wall] and I said: 'Lord, help me, because I have lost my Salvation.' After that, I awoke without

49 He is called a 'Judeo negativo.' *Negativo* is an inquisitorial term used to describe accused heretics who consistently deny the charges against them. If the inquisitors have flimsy evidence and an accused heretic consistently denies the charges, they are supposed to let the individual go free. But if they have evidence against the individual, he is considered a recalcitrant heretic who refuses to receive the mercy of the Church and thus is punished with being burned at the stake.

50 The meaning of this passage is somewhat obscure. 'Delgado' has the sense of 'fine' and 'delicate'. For this reason I translate it as 'refined'. 'pensamentos mais delgados.'

any form of religion, rejecting all of the Scriptures, and did not believe in anything contained in them, taking it all as a fable. In the end I had turned into a libertine.

I passed through that day and then on the next day I decided to approach the tribunal to recant my beliefs⁵¹ and plead for mercy in order not to die. And that is what I did. When I arrived there, the President said to me, 'What do you want?' I said: 'Sir, the hour has arrived when God has done me the mercy of bringing me back to the religion of my fathers. Thus, I come to ask for mercy from this Holy Tribunal, which they afford to all sinners without holding on to the past. Surely the devil was speaking in me, because I don't remember anything that I said then. I was like a man who through drinking wine loses his sense and in that state he says and does a thousand idiocies, after which he sleeps off his drunkenness and returns to his senses and does not remember the things he had said and done. And that is how I feel. I no longer remember what I once said, all I want right now is to ask over and over again – for mercy.' You would not believe the sheer joy that was felt by those present and they said to me: 'This is what we expected from you, and not otherwise. For this tribunal is always here waiting with open arms for each one to turn to the Truth and recognize it to achieve Salvation for their souls. Go now and repent with all of your heart for how badly you have acted and spoken against the head of the Church.'

Chapter 4

I was summoned from prison and with a *sanbenito*⁵² I was led out to the Auto [da Fé] that was held on the 5th of April 1609. There they read my sentence. The next day they sent me, as is customary, to the General Reform School.⁵³ Never at peace, I would approach some people that seemed to me [to be Judaizers] and I would ask them: 'Why were you arrested?' And if they told me that it was for being a Jew, I would turn and ask them if indeed they were. If they said they were, I would try to find out what it was [to be Jewish]. As they would tell me about it, I would take what I thought made

51 'desdizer-me.'

52 A tunic with symbolic markings indicating the particular type of heresy the penitent heretic had confessed to. The individual seeking penitence would have to wear this garment over their shirt for the entire time of their penance, after which it was displayed in their local parish church for generations. It reminds me of imagery from Kafka's *Penal Colony*, where the crimes of the inmates are written on their skin.

53 This was a reform school for those had been sentenced to do penance at an Auto-da-Fé, and where they were supervised and instructed in the faith for a period of time. This was a rather unique institution within the network of Iberian Inquisitions.

the most sense. At the end of two months, I left the reform school and I went to stay with the sons of my companion Henrique Diaz Milão, who died at the same Auto [da Fé], may his bones be avenged, along with all the others.

I went with the goal of observing the Shabbat and to learn little by little about the Law of Moses, because it seemed to me to be the true one, the one of which I did not know anything before. I used to think that the Jews worshipped a *Toura*, a female bull, as they used to say in my father's house.

I was gathering as much information about it [Judaism] as I could, and with all of the secrecy in the world, and came to understand what it was to be a Jew, even as no one knew or understood anything about me.

It appeared to me that, over time, I began to feel affection for the people of the Nation,⁵⁴ I took on their troubles as my own, and that is how I came to arrange for the escape [from Portugal] of as many as would be possible, not realizing the great risk to me. I arranged the departure of some of the people in the house by connecting with an English ship, but, as we were set to depart one night, we were betrayed.⁵⁵

God desired that we would be in three sections: the first group that needed to escape were free. I was with two others and two children, because the others were still in their period of penitence [and thus would be punished severely for trying to escape].

As we were about to get on the ship, the pouncing lions were waiting with their claws and brought us to the prison. When the other companions found out what happened, they found their way to their houses. Even though the evening was beautiful and clear, it turned stormy and bitter for us all. The next day, they brought me before the Tribunal. I attempted to gain my freedom the best I could. Speaking not more than I needed to, I managed to free the others with whom I was arrested.

I did it in such a way that after 32 days they were released, but they left me inside, and because they were unable to condemn any of the others they decided to punish me. They could not understand the plot and were unable to get to the bottom of it and do ill to the others, because it was all in my mouth. They left me imprisoned until the next Auto-da-Fé, but because they couldn't get one word out of me they had to let me go.

During the time that I was imprisoned, they placed me in the company of a Jew from Salonica whom they had arrested for entering the kingdom

54 'Nasão.'

55 'malsinado.' This loaded term for betrayal has roots in the Hebrew word מלשין that is used in the daily prayers to refer to those who betray their fellow Jews by informing on them to the authorities.

without a 'sign.'⁵⁶ His name was Joseph Bar Jahacob. At times I would argue with him [about Judaism] but only in order to get something out of him, and slyly, so that no one was able to notice. I left his company as a 'Rabbi of the Jews' of those parts.⁵⁷ I left there and went to stay at the home of one Manoel Rodrigues Pinheiro, a native of Celorico and a widower with three young daughters,⁵⁸ all good Jews and God fearing. I stayed in his house with the appropriate honor, for ten months. I came to learn more and shared my beliefs with many of the Nation, and to some of them I taught hymns to the Lord because, as I said earlier, I came out like a good teacher from the company of the good Jew whom God had sent for my benefit [to my prison cell].

Chapter 5

At the end of those ten months, they arrested Jorge Fróis Rachão, with whom I had discussed Judaism intimately. Fearing that I would be implicated because I was a known suspect, and that harm could come my way, I made arrangements with the help of my friends and I embarked for Hamburg. [Fearing arrest] I abandoned my plan to try to enter my house and take out a few things with which to enter into Judaism.⁵⁹ However, God acted better [than my plans], finding a way to take me out and not putting me at risk of never getting away from these idolaters.

I arrived at Hamburg and was very well received by the sons of Henrique Diaz Milão, who were already there because they had come there while I was in prison. I got myself circumcised on the fourth day of my arrival by the hand of David Pardo, the son of Hakham Joseph Pardo, and thus I was circumcised which was a sign⁶⁰ of what I came here to become. Then I immersed myself as the law commands and I gave myself the name Abraham Pelengrino (Pilgrim).

56 Open Jews who came on official business to Spain or Portugal were allowed into the realm as long as they received official permission and wore a 'sign/señal' in public to mark them as Jews. See Yosef Yerushalmi, "Professing Jews in Post-expulsion Spain and Portugal", *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume*, edited by Saul Lieberman (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1974): 1023–58.

57 The original has Cardoso referring to himself as 'mestre dos Judeos'; the title 'rabbi' captures the idea of religious teacher and is easily translated from the original Hebrew as 'master.' This is yet another fascinating example of the role of Jews who had experience with life in open Jewish communities of the Sephardic Diaspora providing normative Jewish knowledge to aspiring crypto-Jews living under the Inquisition.

58 'donzelas.'

59 This passage is somewhat cryptic but probably refers to items of value that will give him financial support once he leaves behind Christianity. As the author of the introduction makes clear, Cardoso had good reason to be worried about his financial well-being in his new community.

60 'pronóstico.'

This name was most appropriate for me, because the Lord took me out of the land of my birth as he did with Abraham our father (Genesis chapter 12, verse 1).

Thirteen days later, these gentlemen sought to find me a way to make a living. They sent me to Danzig to be in the company of Mosseh Abensur, one of the sons of the aforementioned Henrique Diaz Milão. Upon arrival he [Abensur] treated me like a friend. Three months later, one of our mulattoes⁶¹ died in the house, and I took it upon myself to deal with this. In the wake of his death – may God save us – the people rose up, claiming that we had killed him in order to drink his blood as a sacrifice for the upcoming holiday⁶² because it was five days before Kippur. Mosseh Abensur told me that we should go and leave everything behind. I told him that he should go while I would stay behind, because there was so much merchandise and it was necessary to make an inventory and see if we could escape [with it]. He went to Schottland,⁶³ which is in another jurisdiction, and I stayed behind in a miserable state, and then they brought me to prison. And first they made an inventory of the merchandise except that much of it was stolen by some German Jews⁶⁴ who were there. Some of it was found and some was whisked away. Those that were found, may God repay them!

In the prison they stuck me between five murderous thieves. May God discount all my sins when he enacts His justice on me, for I would take a month before the Inquisition than one day in that prison. Every day I was concerned that I would suffer, and already I lost my fear of death because I was sick and tired of life and exhausted by my trials. What really got to me was thinking that if my father would be able to see me, he would say that I was being punished for rejecting the path that he had taught me. This exhausted me and it drove me to plead with God to liberate me, which He did as a compassionate Father at the end of 49 days. I was freed from prison, giving thanks and declaring Psalm 107, ‘Praise be the Lord, for He is good, for always is his mercy, for he freed me from the hand of my oppressors.’

Because I was [there], the goods were assessed, although with great loss, and were delivered to their owners. I went to Hamburg. Upon my arrival I

61 The wealth of the Abensir family was intimately connected with the flow of Atlantic trade. One of their businesses was a sugar refinery and it is only logical that they had Africans in their employ- whether free or enslaved. the unfortunate death of this ‘mulattoe’ and the vicious mob attack on this tiny Jewish enclave highlights perfectly Jonathan Israel’s famous dictum that ‘Jews were both the agents and victims of empire’.

62 ‘pascuas.’

63 The original has Scotland but it seems to refer to Schottland, a suburb of Danzig founded by Scots as a trading colony mentioned in Book III of Glückel of Hameln’s autobiography: Beth-Zion Abrahams (transl. and ed.), *The Life of Glückel of Hameln: A Memoir* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2012), 68.

64 ‘tudescos.’

was covered in leprosy. It was monstrous to behold; I could not even feed myself with my own hands. I passed many days in the house of Dr. Samuel da Silva. While the doctors doubted if I would live, he cured me with the love that God shows his creatures continually, and I pleaded with the Lord that he unburden me⁶⁵ from such torment. I praised Him for all of the tests He has tried me with to prove whether I am firm in His Law or not. And recognizing this, I said Psalm 137, verse 6: 'May my tongue stick to my mouth if I forget thee Jerusalem.' And after some days, Praise be to God,⁶⁶ I became healthy.

I was sad, alone and without support, and I brought myself to this city of Amsterdam, where I am now. When I arrived there, I was stricken with malaria. This tormented me severely for fourteen months, during which I suffered, as the good reader could imagine, as someone alone, a foreigner without any other assistance than that of Heaven. God willed that I would have health, and I entered the bourse⁶⁷ as a broker, to see if I could gain 2 Flemish *Stuivers* with which to eat and give praise to the God of Israel for the kindnesses He has done on my behalf, bringing me to His Knowledge through such extraordinary means as these. I have a continual obligation to praise Him for having brought me out from among my brothers and given me a place among His people so that I may attain that which He says through the Prophet Isaiah Chapter 56:6-7: And children of the strangers, those who join unto A[donay], in order to serve Him and in order to love the name of A[donay], in order to be His servants, keeping the Sabbath from profaning it, holding fast to my covenant, lo I will bring them to my holy mountain, and I will rejoice with them in my house of prayer...For my house will be called a house of prayer; so says A[donay] God, to all of the nations, the oppressed of Israel will be gathered, I will still gather unto Him his oppressed ones.

And may it be in our days. Amen.

Chapter 6

Going to the Bourse I had an encounter well outside of what I expected to find there, I met an Englishman, a native of Topsham. Seeing him, I vaguely recognized him, and I diverted my path from his. He also vaguely recognized me, and he approached me, eyeing me [intently] as if putting his face into mine. I saw that he was following me from one part to another, and every time I walked, my leg, which is weak from the sufferings I have

65 'despenasse.'

66 'foy D[eu]s servido.'

67 Cardoso uses the term 'prassa', or plaza or marketplace.

received,⁶⁸ would grow weaker. He was confused and did not recognize me because of the way I was walking and gesturing, yet he was still sure [that it was me] from the appearance of my face. Approaching me he said to me in English: ‘Do you recognize me?’ and I responded to him in Flemish: ‘I don’t understand.’

Taking into account more my tone of speaking [than the actual words] he said: ‘I know you well Manoel. What is with your foot? Realizing that I was in a free country and that it mattered little if I was recognized, I said to him: ‘The state of poverty that I find myself in, made me want to avoid you. But this is how it is. How are you and what brings you here, Christopher?’ ‘I came to Middleburgh, in Zeeland along with my brother to deal with our businesses. Having heard of the grandeur and commercial activity in this place [Amsterdam], I wanted to come and see it for myself. And for certain, now that I met you, I truly value my arrival here. Back in England, your friends and those who knew of you among the people have been very concerned, because we did not hear anything from you. We knew that you were imprisoned [by the Inquisition], but we did not hear any other news about you. I am overjoyed to see you, but rather confused why you are here in this state of poverty. How is it that you did not come to where you have so many friends who want to see you, and among whom you would be as you always were [presumably meaning that his friends would have taken care of him as they once did].

Abraham: ‘I feel the same way [seeing you]. I very much appreciate seeing you because we are almost like countrymen. But it very much weighs on me not to be able to attend to you as is fitting. As to your question why I did not go back to England where I have so many friends: It is because I am now in a different state and way of life than the one I was once in, so I am unable to go and spend time there, because it [his new state] is considered abominable among your nation.’

Christopher: ‘And what way of life is it? Do you profess something other than our religion, of which you were so religious?’

Abraham: ‘I profess to be a Jew, and in this way I live in hardship, but am glad because God has acted with Mercy with me to bring me to this state, which is the one of true Salvation. There is no other way than to observe the law of Moses, given by God on Mount Sinai as presented in the Sacred Scriptures, and thus I am circumcised and I am called Abraham.’

68 In the *Vida* Cardoso describes the severe beatings he received while in prison in Danzig in the aftermath of an attack on his Jewish patrons, the Díaz Milão family.

Christopher: 'I am astonished hearing this from you. Is what you say even possible? I swear by God that he brought me here to cast out this deception and blindness that some Jew has tricked you with, using false reasoning to lead you away from the true knowledge and to perdition.'

Abraham: 'Nobody has tricked me because it was my own research⁶⁹ that led me away from falling into the error I had accepted, and I got myself out of that darkness, for I know the Scriptures as they are and to which all confess. The Messiah could not have already come and neither can the Law given by Him ever be changed because of some internal fault. Because the creation that the master must fix is [in its essence] imperfect, so if the law must be modified then God is mutable.⁷⁰ But Our Lord does not change. Rather, He remains the same being as when He said to Moses in Exodus 3, verse 14: I will be what I will be. And as the Law is firm, all the more so when there is nothing else than what Moses says in Deuteronomy: 'Who would give of their hearts in order to fear Me, and to guard my commandments all of their days, for it will be good for them and their children.' In Deuteronomy 5, verse 29, in the same book it says: 'And it is not with you alone that the heavens are making this oath, with those that are here today and with those that are not here today does Adonay⁷¹ Our God make this oath.' And this is what it means when it says that it [the Law] will be with all of them eternally. With regards to all of these [statements] the pact and covenant are unlimited. One sees this regarding all the festivals, sacrifices and the anointing of Aaron, as it says in Exodus 29, verse 28: 'And it will be for Aaron and his children as a perpetual covenant' and regarding Shabbat it says: 'And the Children of Israel will observe the Sabbath, to make for the generations an everlasting covenant between Me and the Children of Israel as a sign forever'.⁷²

And in Leviticus 7, verse 36 it says: 'And Adonay enjoined upon them on the day of his anointing, it is for the Children of Israel as an eternal declaration for all generations. And in the same book, chapter 16, verses 29 & 34, it says: 'And for you it will be a declaration forever in the seventh month, on the

69 'discurso.'

70 This passage in particular is somewhat hard to follow. His reference to the 'master' and his imperfect creation points towards an analogy with God but its full meaning is unclear.

71 Cardoso maintains the Hebrew term for 'Lord,' Adonai much the same way many of the Judeo-Spanish translations of the Bible popular with Sephardic exiles did. In general, he seems to follow these Jewish translations. I strive in my translation of the verses to follow Cardoso's lead by maintaining some of the same idiosyncrasies. I did consult the Hebrew original to have a better sense of the translation's meaning.

72 The emphasis here is on the fact that God in the Bible consistently enjoins the Israelites to keep these commandments in perpetuity. They are not meant for one stage of history but for all time, thus denying the Christian/Pauline rejection of the law over the spirit.

tenth of the Month you shall afflict your soul, you shall do no work, the native and the foreigner among you.' And then this is repeated in the last verse: 'And this will be for you as an eternal declaration, in order to forgive the Children of Israel for all of their sins one time a year.' These [examples] that I have presented should suffice, there are many others that if you would like you could easily find in the Law, where it continually states, 'forever'. I recommend you do this, for if this is such, how can it be that the Author of this Law, being eternal, would give a Law that is not eternal, because otherwise it would only serve as confusion and blindness. While you say that we are set for perdition and not for salvation because we were given another Law, we actually should hold on to the first [Law], because it is most fitting⁷³ that He would have given us the true one and not go through so many changes as you say, which would make it seem as if it was not given at Mount Sinai.

There could not be another [law], rather it would be eternal and for always without an end. And you? As it was not given to you, you do not know how to recognize its secrets. You go along playing the fool, fulfilling what Moses said in Deuteronomy 28, 37: 'You will be like a desolate one and like an example for all of the nations towards which Adonay will drive you.'⁷⁴

Christopher: I well understand your blindness and ignorance regarding that which you say that the Law is eternal, because the word 'always' is repeated throughout Scripture. And I would say to you based on what I have read from our teachers that in the Hebrew language there is no word that means 'for all time'. That it means 'without limit' can be seen in the case of the Hebrew slave where it says: '... and he brings him to the door or the door post,' Exodus 21, verse 6, 'and his master will pierce his ear with a hammer and he will serve him forever.'⁷⁵ With the limitation that the servant can no longer be captured again until his death, and so this word does not mean forever in Hebrew, and in all the other instances of the word 'forever' it has a limit.

And if you would argue that it is forever to the extent that the thing when it is finished continues to be forever in its strength, well you will get to the point where he will have no one to serve, I would say that this is poor reasoning. For a better proof look at Leviticus, where it says, 'Like a tenant

73 'justo.'

74 It is interesting that Cardoso does not use the previous verse which invokes the image of the exiles serving foreign gods made of 'wood and stone,' which could easily refer to Christianity. However, this would not be relevant to Christopher who was a devout Protestant and who would not have revered idols. These verses, however, highlight the idea that Jews' presence in exile was proof of divine disfavour and proof of the supersessionism of Christianity over the dead law of Moses.

75 'sempre.'

and a sojourner you shall be with Me, until the Jubilee year he will serve with you' and then in the next verse it states: 'He and his sons with him will go out from under you and return to his patrimony and to the portion of his parents he will return,' Leviticus 25, verses 40 & 41. Here we are commanded to leave during the Jubilee year, but it previously talked about serving the master forever, and thus there can be no doubt that in this case 'forever' has a limit. And just like this one are all the other instances in the Law, which further proves that one is required to observe the law and the festivals within limits, as Hoseah 2, verse 10, 'And I will take away all of your delight and your Passover and your New Moons and your Sabbath, and all of it.'⁷⁶

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⁷⁶ This is not an innocuous verse. It is a reference to God's punishment of the Israelites for their breaking of the covenant. By invoking God's wrath at the Jews and specifically his threat to seemingly abrogate the Sabbath and festivals, Christopher is making a strong argument for the rejection of Carnal Israel and the physical manifestations of the old Law.

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