



TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

GREGORY B. KAPLAN

Arguments Against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam

*by Saul Levi Morteira,
Spinoza's Rabbi*

Amsterdam
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Press

AMSTERDAM STUDIES IN THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

Arguments against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam

Amsterdam Studies in the Dutch Golden Age

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by Saul Levi Morteira, Spinoza's Rabbi

*Ed., intro., trans., and notes by
Gregory B. Kaplan*

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For Nuria and Andrew, my two favorite people

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List of abbreviations

b.	born	Josh.	Joshua
BR	Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana	JTSA	Jewish Theological Seminary of America
c.	circa	Lam.	Lamentations
cf.	compare	Lev.	Leviticus
Cod.	Codex	LM	Livraria Montezinos
d.	died	Mal.	Malachi
Dan.	Daniel	Matt.	Matthew
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Mic.	Micah
Ed.	Edited by	MS./ms.	manuscript
ed./eds.	edition/editor/editors	Neh.	Nehemiah
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Num.	Numbers
EH	Ets Haim	Obad.	Obadiah
Exod.	Exodus	1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Ezek.	Ezekiel	Prov.	Proverbs
fl.	flourished	Ps.	Psalms
Fol./fol.	folio	r.	reigned
Fols./folis.	folios	Rev.	Revelation
Gen.	Genesis	2 Chron.	2 Chronicles
Hab.	Habakkuk	2 Sam.	2 Samuel
Hag.	Haggai	trans.	translated
Heb.	Hebrews	UBA	Universiteitsbibliotheek
H.H.	<i>Hakham</i> (Wise Man)		
Hos.	Hosea		Amsterdam
intro.	introduction	Vol./Vols.	volume/volumes
Isa.	Isaiah	Zech.	Zechariah
Jer.	Jeremiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah

Introduction

Ets Haim Library ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]: A ‘Monuments Men’ manuscript

The only textual witness to *Obstaculos y oposiciones contra la religion xptiana en Amsterdam* is a copy made in 1712 that comprises the first 85 numbered folios of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], which I have translated in the present volume from Spanish into English as *Arguments against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam*. MS. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] is stored at the Ets Haim Library of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam. For those who wish to consult the Spanish text of *Arguments*, a digital version of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] is available on the Ets Haim Bibliotheek (Ets Haim Library) website. The remaining 95 numbered folios in the manuscript include a copy of another work by the same author, *Preguntas que hizo un clérigo de Ruan de Francia alas quales respondio el exelente, y eminentissimo señor H.H. Saul Levy Mortera, doctor celebre y prophesor, de la divina theologia, y predicador de la nación judaica en la ynsigne, y opulenta ciudad de Amsterdam* (Questions posed by a French cleric that are answered by the excellent and very eminent Mr. *Hacham* [Wise Man] Saul Levy Mortera, celebrated doctor and teacher of divine theology and a preacher of the Jewish nation in the magnificent and opulent city of Amsterdam). The two works included in ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] were written by Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira (b. c. 1590-d. 1660), a native Venetian whose surname is sometimes spelled ‘Mortera’ as on the title page of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] (see Plate 1). Morteira wrote *Arguments* around 1650, toward the end of a four-decade-long career as chief rabbi in Amsterdam, during which time he presided over a congregation that included Baruch Spinoza (b. 1632-d. 1677), whose excommunication in 1656 was imposed by a rabbinic tribunal led by Morteira.

MS. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] measures 19.4 x 15.6 centimeters and is copied in a clear and skilled italic style, with seventeen lines per folio side (or page). It contains 181 folios (made of paper), with the first and last three folios being blank. The illustration on the title page of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] will be discussed in conjunction with further comments below concerning the copyist, Michael López. MS. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] is bound in an ornate leather cover whose marbled book board indicates that the process of binding occurred well after the copy by López was made. In light of Richard Wolfe’s assertion that ‘extant Dutch bookbindings indicate

that the real beginnings of marbling in the Netherlands occurred [...] just after the turn of the nineteenth century' (55), it is logical to consider the year 1800 as a *terminus a quo* for the binding of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]. If the binding is indeed from the nineteenth century, then this task may have been accomplished around the time it passed into the sizeable collection of David Montezinos (b. 1828-d. 1916), who served as librarian of the Ets Haim Library (which is also known as Livraria Montezinos) before donating his collection, including ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], to the library in 1889.

Montezinos was succeeded as librarian by Jacob da Silva Rosa (b. 1886-d. 1943). Silva Rosa's death at the Nazi extermination camp of Sobibor, on 4 June 1943, marked a tragic moment in the history of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]. This history has been recounted on two occasions, the first of which was by Lajb Fuks (b. 1908-d. 1990), who worked as a librarian in Amsterdam after the Second World War:

In May 1940 [...] the Germans invaded the Netherlands. In the summer of that year the library was closed and sealed up, together with all the other Jewish public libraries in the Netherlands. These libraries were destined to be incorporated in the library of the Institute for Research on the Jewish Question which Nazi-leader Alfred Rosenberg [b. 1893-d. 1946] planned to create in Frankfort-on-the-Main. An attempt to hide the most valuable items in the safe of a bank unfortunately failed. A German scholar who visited the library with some of Rosenberg's assistants found the receipt in one of the drawers. The contents of the safe were transported to Germany and were never retrieved. After this incident the library was packed in cases and after many tergiversations shipped to Germany in 1944, together with the other Dutch-Jewish libraries. The cases were stacked temporarily in a monastery in Offenbach, but the course of the war made unpacking impossible. After the war the cases were found by the American Occupational Forces in Germany and after identification shipped back to the Netherlands.

In April 1946 the Sephardic congregation regained its library, but the librarian Jacob da Silva Rosa and his family were not there to rejoice. They had been deported to a German concentration-camp in 1943. The library had not only lost the contents of the safe, which consisted [...] of all its Hebrew incunabula and many very rare books, but also its unique collection of etchings and engravings. The loss of manuscripts is more difficult to ascertain, because they had never been considered to be an important part of the library and were not separately catalogued by Silva Rosa. Most of the manuscripts were placed unlisted among the books on the shelves. (vii-ix)

A more complete version of the story, which complements Fuks' depiction, is provided by Frits Hoogewoud (b. 1941) who, like Fuks, served as a librarian at the Bibliotheeca Rosenthaliana, which is held by the University of Amsterdam:

In 1935 the first preparations had been started for a Hohe Schule of the National Socialist Workers Party. Including a library. Located for the time being at different places. One of these institutes was the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage [Institute for Research on the Jewish Question] established in Frankfurt am Main under the supervision of the Nazi-ideologist Alfred Rosenberg, to document the 'wickedness of the Jewish race'. In March 1941 it was officially opened, with three days of festivities. [...]

During the previous month, on 18 February 1941, the Portuguese-Israelite Community had taken precautionary measures. [...] So a number of objets d'art of exceptional value were chosen to be put in the Rijksmuseum (to be stored in an air raid shelter) and in the safe of the Kas-associatie, a bank in Amsterdam's Spuistraat.

They put five sealed cases with their most valuable items in the bank's safe. Two cases contained more than 200 volumes and two portfolios (with loose items) from the Ets Haim library. They included eight Hebrew incunabula, the 13th-century manuscript of Maimonides' *Yad Hahazakah*, about 60 manuscripts documenting the intellectual and spiritual life of the Portuguese Jewish community during the 17th and 18th century and more than 150 special prints. The selection (mainly from the former bookcases numbered 2 and 20) and the packing was most probably done by the librarian Jacob da Silva Rosa. [...]

This took place as the tension in Amsterdam rose, culminating in a general strike, later known as the February-strike. ('The Looting' 381-82)

It must be pointed out here that, according to Silva Rosa's handwritten catalog (which was also looted by the Nazis), the manuscript I have translated in the present volume, ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], was located on shelf 20, where it possessed the catalog number of 20 D 50. This older catalog number can still be seen, written in pencil, on the folio immediately before the title page of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]. The source for Hoogewoud's inventory of the contents of the safe, an appendix to Ets Haim's fire insurance policy dated 10 April 1941, confirms that ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], the only surviving textual witness to Morteira's *Arguments*, was considered to be among Ets Haim's 'most valuable items' and that, unlike Silva Rosa believed, at least some of the contents hidden in the safe were recovered by the library.

Hoogewoud also offers a fascinating explanation as to why the Nazis were interested in the contents of the safe, which involves the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Oliver Cromwell (b. 1599-d. 1658):

The *reason* for collecting just these four collections of Judaica and Hebraica was given as follows [in a German report from 1941]: ‘It is probable that previously unknown sources will be uncovered regarding the age of Cromwell, as well as for the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the personal union between England and the Netherlands. In particular, new conclusions may be found about Cromwell’s relationship with the Jews—perhaps even the Jewish influence on the development of the Secret Service.’ (*'The Looting'* 382)

It is intriguing to speculate that what the Nazis thought they might learn about the origins of the British Secret Service from reading works such as *Arguments* was tied to one of the topics I will discuss at length in the present study, namely, the centuries-old ability of Iberian *conversos* to act publicly as Christians but privately as Jews. Perhaps this ability to maintain public and private spiritual identities, at great risk of persecution by the Inquisition, was perceived by the Germans as the ideal foundation for the alter ego of a secret agent.

Due to allied bombing of Frankfurt, ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] never arrived at the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage established by the ‘Nazi-ideologist’ Rosenberg, who was executed in 1946 at Nuremberg for crimes against humanity. While it was being transferred to the Institut, ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] was one of many manuscripts rescued and returned to the Ets Haim Library by a multinational unit commissioned by U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt (b. 1882-d. 1945) in 1943 as the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section, a unit better known as the Monuments Men. The unit was comprised of some 350 men and women from fourteen countries and was largely populated by experts (museum curators, art historians, etc.) who were conscripted (some from civilian life and some from the military) in order to protect, retrieve, and return cultural artifacts stolen by the Nazis during World War II, a mission that lasted for some until the early 1950s.

The report describing the recovery of the Ets Haim collection alluded to above (*'After the war the cases were found by the American Occupational Forces in Germany and after identification shipped back to the Netherlands'*) was declassified in 1975 (NND 775057). This report, or ‘Receipt for Cultural Objects’, was composed in German city of Offenbach am Main on

11 April 1946 and documents a transfer of ten library collections involving two Monuments Men, a Dutch archivist, Major (later Colonel) Dirk P.M. Graswinckel (b. 1888-d. 1960), and an American archivist, Captain (later Colonel) Seymour J. Pomrenze (b. 1916-d. 2011). On Schedule A of the report, which contains an inventory of rescued items being held at the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD), the Ets Haim collection is listed in the following terms: '10 boxes JPIS: containing library and archival material from Ets Haim, Amsterdam. Contents in fair condition, boxes in fair condition, re-enforced by iron straps'.¹ Another document from 30 April 1946 (and declassified in 1975 as project number NND 750168) includes a 'Corrected Tentative List of Library Archival Collections at the OAD. 25 Apr[il] [19]46', and lists the Ets Haim collection (under the rubric Jewish Portuguese Israel Seminarium [JPIS]) among eighteen 'Institutional Library Collections' from the Netherlands yet to be returned. These collections, in addition to fourteen others, were returned prior to 31 August 1946, as revealed by a 'Monthly Report' from that day declassified in 1977 (under the project number NND 775057), which provides, beginning on page 13, a 'Complete list of Libraries and Book Collections restituted up to date'. On page 15, can be found the Ets Haim lot with an 'x' to indicate that it was a 'large collection'. The return of these collections to the Netherlands occurred during months when many other collections were returned to European libraries as listed on report NND 775057, and the text I have translated as *Arguments* is one of many that would have been lost to history were it not for the heroic efforts of the men and women who served in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section. Today, ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage Collection of Judaic texts that are again housed at Ets Haim Library in Amsterdam.

Morteira's youth in the Venetian Ghetto

For the parents of Baruch Spinoza, Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira was a young intellectual prodigy whose exegetical revelations permanently changed the spiritual landscape of Amsterdam's Jewish community. The enduring impact of Morteira is immortalized by a contemporary poet, Miguel de Barrios (b. c. 1635-d. 1701), who depicts the success of the Keter Torah (Crown of the Law) yeshiva established and run by Morteira:

[E]ver since the year of its joyous foundation, [Keter Torah] never ceased
burning in the academic bush, thanks to the doctrinal leaves written by

the most wise Saul Levi Morteira, leading his intellect to the counsel of Wisdom and his pen to the hand of Speculation, in the defense of religion and against atheism. *Thorns* are they that, in the *Fields* of impiety, aim to shine with the fire that consumes them, and the zeal of Morteira is a flame that burns in the bush of Religion, never to be extinguished. (Qtd. in Nadler, *Spinoza* 145–46)

As Steven Nadler explains (*Spinoza* 146), the terms ‘thorns’ (in the original *espinos*) and ‘fields’ (in the original *prados*) refer, respectively, to Spinoza and Juan de Prado (b. c. 1614), who was also excommunicated (in 1658) by Morteira, with the decision made in both cases reflecting Morteira’s ardent dedication to teaching and enforcing the practice of *halachic* (biblical/rabbinic/Talmudic) law. In appreciation of this dedication, Barrios situates Spinoza and Morteira on distinct intellectual levels. Whereas the radical philosophical thought of Spinoza symbolizes a dangerous ‘impiety’, Morteira’s ‘zeal’ for encouraging the practice of Judaism will forever endure ‘in the defense of religion and against atheism’.

Morteira was born in Venice, during the early 1590s, on an Italian peninsula policed by the Roman Inquisition but within an urban enclave where toleration of Jews was linked to efforts to bring economic prosperity through control of international trade.² Morteira’s rise less than three decades later to the position chief rabbi in Amsterdam, initiating a career that paralleled Venice’s emergence as a global economic power, began in a center of Jewish culture settled by Jews of various ethnic backgrounds. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that there were Jews living in Venice as early as the tenth century, the Venetian Jewish community traces its origins to the arrival of Ashkenazic (German) Jews during the 1300s. The community grew after the legalization of money lending in 1382, and most of the early immigrants continued to be Ashkenazic. Tolerant policies toward Jews, such as the granting of land for a Jewish cemetery in 1386, encouraged continued expansion of the community, though there were times when toleration would wane, and during the 1400s the amount of time Jews were permitted to reside in Venice was limited and Jews were forced to wear distinguishing badges on their garments. Notwithstanding periodic waves of anti-Judaism accompanied by restrictive legislation (and, at times, the burning of Jewish books on St. Mark’s Square), by the beginning of the sixteenth century about 500 Jews could be found throughout Venice.

While Jewish money lenders and pawnshop owners contributed to the Venetian economy, which in turn helped to finance military conflicts, an outbreak of anti-Judaism led in 1516 to the restriction by the Senate of the

city's Jews to a vacant copper foundry, which became the Venetian Ghetto (or Ghetto Nuovo):

The Jews must all live together in the Corte de Case, which is in the Ghetto near San Girolamo; and in order to prevent their roaming around at night: Let there be built two Gates on the side of the Old Ghetto where there is a little Bridge, and likewise on the other side of the Bridge, that is one for each of said two places, which Gates shall be opened in the morning at the sound of the Marrangona, and shall be closed at midnight by four Christian guards appointed and paid by the Jews at the rate deemed suitable by Our Cabinet. (Qtd. in Calimani 32-33)³

In the Senate's decree no distinction is made between Jewish communities, which reflected the fact that most Jews were Ashkenazic, a situation that would change in 1541 when the Ghetto was expanded to include the Ghetto Vecchio in order to accommodate Levantine Jews from the Ottoman Empire. The foundation of synagogues reflected the diversification of the Jewish population in the Venetian Ghetto. The first two to be established (in 1528 and 1531) were Ashkenazic synagogues, and during the following decades Levantine (1538) and Italian (1575) synagogues were founded, with a Sephardic (Spanish) synagogue being added in 1584. It is instructive to point out that, while the Venetian Jewish communities all adhered to the same fundamental tenets of Judaism, the two ethnic groups of import to the present study, Ashkenazic and Sephardic, have traditionally differed with respect to a number of *halachic* norms (such as dietary customs observed during the holiday of Passover).

Morteira traced his maternal lineage to German Jews, a detail discovered by Marc Saperstein in one of Morteira's sermons. In the exordium to a sermon delivered around 1623, Morteira supports his own interpretation of Deut. 33.26 by proclaiming that it 'is consistent with what my grandfather, the esteemed Rabbi Judah Katzenellenbogen, wrote on [Isa. 51.13]' (Qtd. in Saperstein 381). Although he was himself from Padua, Katzenellenbogen (b. 1521-d. 1597), was linked to 'the most important groups in the newly constituted ghetto [of 1516] [...] comprised [of] Jews who had lived in Italy and Venice for hundreds of years, as well as recent immigrants of German and, more generally, Ashkenazic origin' (Calimani 39). Ashkenazic Jews became known in the Venetian Ghetto as rabbinic authorities whose opinions were sought by other Jewish communities such as the one in Amsterdam.

Rabbi Judah Katzenellenbogen, the son of German-born Rabbi Meir ben Isaac Katzenellenbogen (b. c. 1482-d. 1565), served as the chief rabbi of the

Venetian Ghetto and became an ardent opponent of mysticism in a dispute that waged between Kabbalists and Talmudists during the 1570s concerning the study of *The Zohar*, a foundational mystic text from thirteenth-century Spain. The debate ended when several rabbis, including Katzenellenbogen, succeeded in censoring a work by the Kabbalist Azaria De Rossi, an 'episode [that] marked the culmination of Ashkenazic influence on the religious life of the ghetto' (Calimani 140). It was Morteira's undoubtedly thorough Ashkenazic formation acquired through his association with prominent rabbinic scholars, rather than his birthplace, that inspired metaphorical references to him as 'De Alemania natural' ('From Germany') and 'De Alemania nació' ('He was born in Germany') in two laudatory poems composed by Barrios during the late seventeenth century.⁴

In his two poems Barrios praises Morteira's vast knowledge, which, as evidenced by his sermons and writings, included an education in the Old and New Testaments, medieval Tosafot and commentaries, as well as Jewish mysticism.⁵ One school of thought advances the theory that Morteira received his education in Venice from Leon Modena (b. 1571-d. 1648), a renowned Ashkenazic theologian, polemicist, and preacher. The theory is based on an allusion made by Modena in a letter he composed to Morteira in 1618 in response to Morteira's participation in spiritual dispute that will be discussed in greater detail below. In his letter, Modena reacts to news of the dispute 'as [would] a father to his son':

I heard people complaining about you and your allies, alleging that you speak improperly against the words of the sages and against the Kabbalah. Although I write in your defense to Rabbi Isaac Uziel, in our private communication, as a father to his son, I must remind you that it is not right even for an elder and a prince, let alone for a young man who teaches Torah, to show a lack of respect for the glorious writings of our predecessors, and also to take a position in the conflict of the congregation there. (Qtd. in Saperstein 166-67, n. 74)

A similar reference to Morteira as Modena's 'son' occurs in a *responsum* by Modena composed around 1632.⁶ H.P. Salomon rightly underscores the fact that these references could have been Modena's way of referring to Morteira as his student, although Morteira's name is not officially documented as such (Morteira, *Tratado xl*).

There is reason to speculate, however, that Morteira may have been Modena's 'undocumented' student. Morteira may have come to know Modena through the latter's association with Morteira's grandfather, Rabbi

Judah Katzenellenbogen. The relationship between Modena and Katzenellenbogen began in the early 1590s, when Modena served in Venice as an apprentice rabbi during his ordination.⁷ This relationship may have been the conduit by which Morteira became Modena's undocumented student in Venice, where Modena worked periodically as a teacher of Torah from 1589 until 1612, as Modena reveals in his autobiography (*The Autobiography* 90). It is interesting to speculate that the only two students of the period named by Modena, Manasseh Levi and Zerah Halevi, may have pertained to Saul Levi Morteira's extended family. Based on the supposition that Morteira was born in the early 1590s, he could have begun to study with Modena in 1601 when, as Modena reports, he 'begun to board [...] a few students' (*The Autobiography* 101) in his home, although this situation was interrupted after Modena (on one of several occasions) gambled away his money and lost his students. Morteira may have returned to Modena's classroom in 1603-4, when Modena 'settled down with a few students' (102). From 1604-7 Modena taught in Ferrara, but Morteira may have resumed his studies with Modena upon Modena's return to Venice in 1607, when he 'set up an apartment and a school on the top floor of the house belonging to the family dal Osto, the Levites' (*The Autobiography* 104). Modena reports that his school attracted 'many pupils throughout the winter' (*The Autobiography* 105) of 1608.

After spending a year in Montagnana, Ferrara, and Florence, Modena returned to Venice in 1610, where he 'negotiated with the members of the Ashkenazic Torah Study Society [...] to teach their students and to preach' (*The Autobiography* 106). Modena reveals that, in 1611, 'full responsibility for the students' (*The Autobiography* 107) of the Torah Study Society was transferred to his son so that he could dedicate himself completely to preaching, which reveals another path through which Modena reached Morteira as posited by Saperstein: 'We don't have any of the ordinary Sabbath sermons that Modena preached week after week for many years, sermons that Morteira probably heard while growing up and may indeed have remembered' (6). Such an influence would have been reinforced through the direct contact between Morteira and Modena that undoubtedly occurred in light of the relationship between Modena and the Katzenellenbogen branch of Morteira's family.

One subject that Modena did not teach Morteira was Spanish, a language that Morteira learned along with Portuguese and Hebrew. Morteira's knowledge of these three languages is revealed in his sermons and polemical works. While he composed nearly all of his sermons in Hebrew, he delivered them in Portuguese (and composed a few of them in Portuguese), the ancestral

language of his congregants. Morteira wrote in Portuguese as well as in Spanish, the language in which he composed *Arguments* and other texts. Although Morteira was an Ashkenazic Jew, Spanish was learned by many Jews, Christians and Muslims out of necessity since it was a language of Mediterranean commerce during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Morteira may have heard regularly Spanish—more accurately, Ladino, medieval Spanish infused with Hebrew vocabulary—being spoken by residents of the Venetian Ghetto from the Iberian Peninsula. The use of Spanish in the Venetian Ghetto, which is attested by inscriptions on tombstones, reflects what Pullan has described as ‘a deep-seated loyalty to Spain, or a nostalgia for it, which survived expulsion or emigration’ (205). Spanish also enjoyed prestige as a language of high culture, and was a language being taken to new heights of expression during a Renaissance and Baroque Golden Age defined by writers such as Miguel de Cervantes (b. 1547-d. 1616), Lope de Vega (b. 1562-d. 1635), and Francisco de Quevedo (b. 1580-d. 1645). As a reflection of the international renown of Spanish literature, books in Spanish were printed in places such as Antwerp, Brussels, Milan, Paris, and Venice and became widely available.

The *converso* heritage of Morteira’s congregants in Amsterdam

The first Spanish synagogue in the Venetian Ghetto opened after the arrival of Iberian (Spanish/Portuguese) *conversos*, or New Christians, descendants of Jews who were forcibly baptized during a period lasting from the outbreak of violent pogroms in Spain in 1391 through the 1492, when Jews who refused to adopt Catholicism were expelled from Spain. Many Jews fled from Spain to Portugal, where they were forced to convert or be expelled in 1497. The precise number of Jews who underwent conversion is unknown, but scholarly estimates range from 225,000 to 700,000. The major factors leading to the conversions are clear, and include incendiary anti-Jewish sermons that stirred long-standing latent anti-Jewish sentiment and the repeated economic misfortunes that plagued Spain throughout this period, which left *conversos* vulnerable to violent mobs incited by fanatical preachers.⁸ Mass conversions initially took place after public sermons by the archdeacon of Écija, Ferrand Martínez (fl. fourteenth century), incited a wave of violence in Andalucía in 1391. Mass conversions again occurred from 1412-16 in the wake of the proselytizing of St. Vicente Ferrer (b. 1350-d. 1419), a Dominican friar who was canonized in the mid-fifteenth century, and two *conversos*, Joshua ben Joseph ibn Vives ha-Lorqui (fl. early fifteenth

century), who took the Christian name Jerónimo de Santa Fe, and Rabbi Solomon Halevi (b. 1351-d. 1435), the chief rabbi of Burgos who adopted the name Pablo de Santa María upon conversion in 1391 and became the bishop of Burgos.

The most distinguishing feature of *converso* history is that conversion did not produce harmony among neophytes and those whose ancestors had been Christians for centuries (Old Christians). Instead, during the fifteenth century a discriminatory socioreligious hierarchy developed between New Christians and an Old Christian population of some seven to nine million individuals, who acquired a sense of spiritual superiority because they were free of Jewish stock. The impossibility of assimilation was recognized early on by *conversos* such as the poet Antón de Montoro (b. c. 1404-d. c. 1477). In the mid-1470s, in response to a decade of anti-*converso* violence, Montoro made an appeal to a recently enthroned Queen Isabel I of Castile (r. 1474-1504):

I uttered the Creed and devoured
pots of thick bacon,
and undercooked slices of bacon,
I heard masses and prayed,
blessed myself and made the sign of the cross,
but I've never been able to rid myself
of this *converso* stigma.⁹

In spite of the fact that he utters Christian prayers and consumes bacon, a food prohibited by Jewish dietary laws, Montoro cannot extricate the indelible stigma of his Jewish lineage as he reminds the queen in subsequent lines: 'I have not been able to escape being called / old, dirty Jew'.¹⁰

The intra-Christian hierarchy described by Montoro was completely foreign to official Church doctrine, according to which converts were to be accepted as equal to nonconverted Christians. In addition, what occurred in Spain (and later in Portugal) was different than late-medieval anti-Jewish persecution in other parts of Europe that did not involve many conversions, such as the persecution that led to the expulsions of Jews from England (in 1290) and France (in 1306). During the Middle Ages, Spain was home to the largest and most prominent Jewish community, and the rapid introduction of a historically unprecedented number of converts agitated popular anti-Judaism and redirected this animus toward *conversos*. The ethnic concept of purity of blood ultimately gained a political dimension and became an integral component of the emerging national identities of

Spain and Portugal. In both places, the notion of unified nationhood became inexorably tied to religious purity, which excluded anyone descended from Jews (or Muslims).

The conditions under which the conversions of Iberian Jews took place laid the foundation for Old Christian assertions of religious superiority and purity. The fact that the conversions were coerced, and therefore spiritually insincere, is revealed by the fact that Jews referred to *conversos* as *anusim* (the forced ones), was also unprecedented. Illustrative of the violence and lack of religious instruction that accompanied forced conversions is a Hebrew narration of the mass conversion in Portugal in 1496-97 of some 40,000 Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, which was composed around 1510 by an eyewitness:

An expulsion was proclaimed in Portugal in [5]258 (1498), to take place at the end of a year. During this year King Manuel did not want any Jew to leave his kingdom, and children of thirteen years were taken away from their parents and baptized, amid tears, and against their will, and separated from their parents, whose fortunes were taken away from them and given to these same children. In spite of all this they did not allow the parents to leave the country, even without their money, unless they were baptized. When the time had passed, and the Jews did not want to change their faith of their own free will, they were taken by force in all the king's provinces, and were beaten with sticks and straps, and carried to the churches. There they sprinkled water on them, and gave them Christian names, men and women alike. (Marx 268; translation by Marx)

Of course, the conversion of the Jews had been sought throughout the Middle Ages, at times through coercive measures. Indeed, during previous historical moments in Spanish history, the conversion of the Jews was a central issue. At the Fourth Council of Toledo, in seventh-century Visigothic Spain, canons were issued to encourage the Jews to adopt Christianity voluntarily. During the thirteenth century, King Alfonso X of Castile (r. 1252-84) mandated the conversion of his Jewish subjects not by force but through 'good deeds, the words of Scripture, and gentle persuasion'.¹¹ Neither of these efforts met with much success, and it merits pointing out that the realization of a multitude of conversions in Spain and Portugal was ultimately a failure in a spiritual sense. The process of coercing large groups of Jews to convert without instruction in Christian practices or doctrines produced insincere neophytes who transmitted a Jewish identity to their offspring by performing the only rituals they knew well.

Crypto-Judaism

Conversos were perceived by Old Christians as inferior based on the perception that many performed Jewish rituals in private, a phenomenon known as crypto-Judaism. Although the number of *conversos* who were crypto-Jews is impossible to ascertain, crypto-Judaism was widespread and enduring as illustrated by the emergence in places such as Amsterdam of communities of ex-*conversos* wishing to return to Judaism. The unsurprising tendency for *conversos* to revert to Judaism is at the core of what scholars since Yitzhak Baer have called the '*converso* problem':

As is known, the Jewish historians of the [late-medieval] period did not write history in our modern sense, and they were not inclined to touch upon the *converso* problem, which was dangerous for a variety of reasons. The modern Jewish historian, however, has the duty of dealing with the problem in all its aspects. The story of the *conversos* is not one of racial 'remnants' which had lost their Jewish characteristics, but of a large population-group, the majority of whose members adhered, consciously and by conviction, to the living Jewish tradition. The old Christians who fought the *conversos* were impelled by religious fanaticism, for they considered the latter to be aliens whom circumstances labelled Christians, but who, in the main, [...] were attached to Jewry by personal and spiritual ties even if they did not believe in any positive religion. (278-79)

From the perspective of Old Christians, the 'problem' was that most if not all *conversos* were nominal Christians had converted in name only. The existence of crypto-Judaism caused suspicion to be cast on all *conversos*, a stigma that would plague descendants of *conversos*, even sincere Christian *conversos*, for centuries.

Popular suspicion of widespread crypto-Judaism gained a legal dimension in the form of purity-of-blood statutes enacted during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which obligated individuals to document Old Christian ancestry as a means of social ascension and acquiring honor as well as entrance into a variety of Spanish organizations, including municipal government, universities, and military and religious orders. While they were not always enforced and could at times be circumvented through bribery or falsification of documents, the promulgation of purity-of-blood statutes during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reflected the extent to which the mistrust of *conversos* permeated Spanish society. The first purity-of-blood statute was, in fact, the product of a popular uprising in 1449 in Toledo

and intended to prohibit *conversos* from occupying municipal posts on the grounds that they were crypto-Jews. Subsequent statutes issued by organizations involving the nobility reveal the national scope of the preoccupation with purity of blood, which, as I have explained elsewhere, enlisted any form of Jewish or Muslim heresy as a 'a threat to the integrity of the Catholic faith that defined the national identity of Spain' (Kaplan, 'The Inception' 34).

In Spain and Portugal, to an extent that differed from other parts of Europe, religious unity stood at the core of a social strata, that of the Old Christian, whose preservation was controlled by the Inquisition, which was instituted in 1480 in Spain, and in 1536 in Portugal, to seek out and eradicate crypto-Judaism and other heresies. Much scholarly work has been conducted on inquisitorial procedures, and there is general consensus that the Inquisition was an effective tool for maintaining a dichotomy between Old and New Christians in Spain and Portugal through the fear that it produced among the general population. This fear was not only based on the real possibility of undergoing torture, but on the process of accusation and conviction itself, which could occur based on conjecture regarding any number of practices followed out of personal habit rather than sincere religious beliefs and which deprived individuals of the basic right to innocence unless proven guilty.¹²

The intensity of what Stephen Gilman called an 'atmosphere of shared consternation and mutual suspicion' (44) fomented distrust and fear among friends, neighbors, and even among family members, including spouses who were driven to testify against each other in order to save themselves. Henry Charles Lea illustrates this 'agonizing struggle [...] between natural affection and self-preservation' (537) with the case of María López, who was brought before the Inquisition in Valladolid in 1646, around the time *Arguments* was composed by Morteira in Amsterdam:

For nearly four months she resolutely denied everything, but her endurance was at last exhausted and, on April 25th and 27th, she confessed as to herself and others and ratified it on May 7th. In her cell she brooded over this until June 25th, when the *alcaide* reported that she had attempted to strangle herself with a piece of her chemise. The inquisitor hastened to her cell and found the poor creature hiding under the bead. Interrogated as to her motives, she said that a woman who had falsely accused her husband and only daughter, as also her mother and an aunt, did not deserve to live, whereupon she revoked her whole confession, both as to herself and others. As a *revocante*, the pitiless rules of the Inquisition doomed her to the stake; her fears triumphed and, on July 28th, she confirmed her

confession of April, except as regards her husband. On November 29th she was condemned to reconciliation, confiscation and prison with the *sanbenito*, and she appeared in the *auto[-de-fe]* of June 23, 1647. (537-38)

The risk of being associated with expressions of insincere Christianity, including blasphemous comments made in any context, compelled crypto-Jews to develop a minimalized clandestine spirituality with no public form of expression. The interiorization of a Jewish religion replete with outward displays of devotion consisted of a handful of observances: 1. a belief in the Jewish concept of a unitary God; 2. messianic views that opposed Church doctrines; 3. a belief that personal salvation could be achieved through adherence to the law of Moses; 4. a conviction that adherence to Judaism would bring good fortune; 5. devotion among many to 'Jewish' saints (most notably Moses and Esther); and 6. a belief in the superiority of Judaism over Christianity.¹³ Because crypto-Jews were compelled to be Catholics in public, an inevitable fusion resulted in the adoption of Catholic beliefs, including a reverence for personal salvation whose spiritual importance is underscored by Gitlitz: '[T]his conflation of the Jewish idea of righteousness through obedience to the Law and the Christian idea of salvation through belief is the single most powerful example of syncretism in the crypto-Jewish religion' (*Secrecy* 111).

Morteira's knowledge of crypto-Judaism undeniably dated from his youth, when he would have first interacted with *conversos* who had emigrated to the Venetian Ghetto. Morteira's passion during his adult life for transforming crypto-Jewish *conversos* into *halachic* Jews may have evolved out of a general mistrust toward *conversos*, who were considered, as Brian Pullan asserts, to be 'dangerous because they had no firm faith [...] and were godless not as the result of any intellectual process or theological argument, but simply out of a desire to preserve their goods' (170-71). Even when *conversos* were beyond the reach of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, in Venice the risk of being known as an ex-Christian left them vulnerable to the Roman Inquisition, which was instituted in the 1540s in part as a means of stemming Venetian economic growth. The mistrust of *converso* spirituality often motivated refugees to erase their Christian identities by moving further east before permanently settling in Venice. For *conversos*, erasing the fact that they had been Christians could be achieved by spending time in the Levantine Jewish communities that existed in the Ottoman Empire. Being considered a Levantine Jew with no *converso* past greatly reduced the threat of persecution insofar as all Inquisitions possessed jurisdiction only over Christian Judaizers and not over Jews who had never converted.

In the mid-1570s, after Venice was defeated in the Ottoman-Venetian War of 1570-73, economic needs contributed to a relaxation of policies and the Venetian Senate invited Jewish merchants to live in Venice for two years, whether or not they had been *conversos*. During the following three decades, as Benjamin Ravid explains (17-19), an ex-Portuguese *converso*, Daniel Rodriga, continually lobbied the Senate to eliminate the distinction between Jews and *conversos* so as to stimulate commerce. This sustained effort bore fruit when charters were issued (in 1589 and 1598) that allowed the practice of Judaism by Jews of any provenance (as well as their families) and also guaranteed immunity from religious persecution. By the time Morteira was born, decades of the coexistence of various ethnicities fomented, as Miriam Bodian declares, 'mediation rather than segregation' (150). The spiritual amalgamation described by Bodian also worked to enhance the cultural profile of the Venetian Ghetto as a center for printing Hebrew texts and as a rabbinic center that served as an authoritative umbrella over nascent Jewish communities such as the one in Amsterdam.

Because of the small size of the Venetian Ghetto, Jews of different ethnicities lived in close proximity to each other, and contact between groups was inevitable. Morteira's Iberian surname, and the fact that he wrote in Portuguese and Spanish, suggests the Iberian provenance of his father. Morteira's paternal ancestors may have resided in the central Portuguese village of Murteira until sometime after the Inquisition was established in Portugal, whereupon they may have emigrated to Italy in order to escape persecution. At the same time, due to the fact that the rabbi's surname appears in its Spanish form 'Mortera' (as it does on the title page of ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]), his family may trace its roots to the northern Spanish village of Mortera, from which they may have been forced to leave when the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492.¹⁴ 'Murteira' may have been founded by refugees from 'Mortera' who were among the many Jews who fled to Portugal underwent forced conversion in Portugal, in 1497, and who remained in the country as crypto-Jewish *conversos* during the following 40 years before fleeing to escape the Portuguese Inquisition.

In light of the risks involved for a *converso* desiring to return to Judaism and the general mistrust of *converso* spirituality, it is possible that Morteira's father disguised his past from his son. Morteira's father may have been able to accomplish this after having resided for some time in the Ottoman Empire, and Morteira may have thus known him as a Levantine Jew. Morteira did not raise any objections to his classification as a 'non-Iberian' in a document from 1640 that authorizes his entrance into the *Santa Companhia de Dotar Orphas e Donzelas* (Holy Company of Orphan

and Young Daughters' Dowries), or *Dotar*.¹⁵ As this document explains, only Jews 'de nação portugueza ou hespanhola' (of Portuguese or Spanish nationality) were eligible for membership in the *Dotar*, which was instituted in 1615 in order to provide dowries to descendants of *conversos*. Entrance into the *Dotar* was granted to Morteira because he was 'casado com mulher portugeza nesta terra ha 24 anos' (married to a Portuguese woman in this land for 24 years) and because he was considered to be a 'pessoa tão benemerita' (such a laudable person). However, because Morteira is not thought of as a full member of the Iberian ex-*converso* community, the document decrees that only his direct descendants (rather than his extended family) would receive this prestigious benefit.

Rejudaization

Venice attracted many *converso* émigrés from Portugal during the seventeenth century, including Morteira's future patron, Dr. Elijah Montalto (b. 1567-d. 1616), a physician who fled his practice in Lisbon around 1600 in order to revert to Judaism in exile. The path by which Montalto became a practicing Jew exemplifies the dedication to educating himself in *halachic* norms and strictly adhering to them, or 'rejudaization', that Morteira would seek from *conversos* during his rabbinic career. Soon after leaving Portugal, Montalto spent some time in Leghorn, where he revealed his ardent desire to rejudaize fellow *conversos* in an episode occurring in 1599 that will be discussed in greater detail below. Montalto then passed through France, and while in Paris he was called upon to treat and cure a member of the retinue of the woman who would become queen of France in 1610, Marie de Médicis (b. 1575-d. 1642). Montalto's reputation as a physician soon spread and he was contracted in 1606 to teach at the University of Pisa, although, as Bernard Cooperman observes, 'if he was well set professionally, Montalto did not yet have the religious freedom that he craved. Hence, by early 1610 Montalto had decided to abandon his position and move to Venice where he would be allowed to practice Judaism openly' (473). During the next two years, Montalto worked as a physician in Venice and developed a lasting relationship with Morteira. Testimony of Montalto's ardent desire to persuade *conversos* to become sincere Jews is evident in four letters he composed in 1611-12 in the hope that two relatives, Dr. Pero Rodrigues and his wife, Izabel da Fonseca, achieve this goal.¹⁶

Montalto enhanced his international renown in Venice and in 1612 he was called to Paris as court physician to Queen Marie, although he first

needed to secure papal permission to practice Judaism in a nation experiencing a rise in anti-Jewish sentiment.¹⁷ While there is no direct testimony revealing why Montalto decided to enlist Morteira as a spiritual advisor when he departed for Paris, there is good reason to speculate that it was due to their shared passion for rabbinic study and rejudaization, as well as to the fact that Morteira could express his passion in Montalto's native language of Portuguese. During the following four years at the Parisian court, Montalto continued his career as a physician and medical researcher, and also produced a polemical work in Hebrew that Salomon attributes to Morteira (Morteira, *Tratado xli-xlii*). Such activity is somewhat remarkable considering that it occurred at a time when anti-Jewish sentiment would culminate in a decree, issued in 1615 by King Louis XIII (r. 1610-43), which expelled all Jews from France.

It was fortune, namely, the lack of a Jewish cemetery in France to bury Montalto upon his death in 1616, which brought Morteira to Amsterdam from Paris as part of the retinue of the deceased physician, who was buried at the cemetery that had been established in 1614 in nearby Ouderkerk by the Portuguese *conversos* who would eventually become Morteira's congregants. Although he could not have been more than in his mid-twenties at the time, Morteira had already established his reputation as a sage by the time he arrived in Amsterdam. This is clearly revealed in a French decree from 1617, in which Morteira, identified as a Jew who is 'cognoist pour en sçavoir' (known for his wisdom), and Montalto are implicated as Kabbalists during the trial of a confidante of the queen for sorcery.¹⁸ Testimony from the trial indicates that the accusations against Montalto and Morteira were leveled because they possessed books that were thought to deal with the Kabbalah. Although Harry Friedenwald points out that the most incriminating accusation involved non-Kabbalistic books and asserts that Montalto 'was not versed in the Cabala' (142), the testimony illustrates the harm that could come to individuals in France who, like Montalto and Morteira, possessed collections of Jewish books.

Morteira's fulfillment of the religious duty of providing a Jewish burial for his patron soon became a stepping stone to a life-long career. In 1619, though less than 30 years old, he was named rabbi of the fledgling congregation Beth Jacob, which was comprised of some 200 families. Beth Jacob had been founded in 1603 by Portuguese *converso* refugees who made their way to Emden, where they found an Ashkenazic rabbi, Moses Uri ha-Levi (b. 1544-d. c. 1622), who led them to Amsterdam to complete their rejudaization. Morteira arrived in Amsterdam amid mounting tensions within the Beth Jacob congregation that would motivate Modena's aforementioned letter to him in

1618 (in which he speaks to Morteira 'as a father to his son') and that would propel Morteira's own career as a spiritual leader. The situation centered on a dispute between Joseph Pardo (b. c. 1565-d. 1619), a rabbi from Salonika who had become a leading member of Beth Jacob, and Dr. David Farrar (b. 1573-d. 1624), a Portuguese *converso* physician whose preaching offended Pardo because of Farrar's 'rationalist approach to Judaism' (Saperstein 166). In his letter to Morteira, Modena reveals that Morteira had entered into the dispute ('I heard people complaining about you and your allies') and that Morteira was already asserting his rabbinic authority ('I must remind you that it is not right even for an elder and a prince, let alone for a young man who teaches Torah, to show a lack of respect for the glorious writings of our predecessors, and also to take a position in the conflict of the congregation there'). Morteira was sent to Venice as one of four emissaries to seek a resolution of the dispute from Modena.¹⁹ In the end, Morteira and the others who supported Farrar could not reach an agreement with the supporters of Pardo, who left Beth Jacob in 1618 to found a new synagogue, Ets Chaim.

Until his death in 1660, Morteira continued to work as a rabbi and teacher in Amsterdam, where he lived across the street from Rembrandt (b. 1606-d. 1669), who may have painted his portrait.²⁰ It was in Amsterdam that Morteira married in 1616 a Portuguese woman, Ester Soares, with whom he would have five children.²¹ From 1619 to 1639, Morteira was rabbi of Beth Jacob, where he also taught Gemara and Talmud, for which he received a salary of 300 florins a year.²² In 1639, Beth Jacob united with Ets Chaim and another synagogue that had been founded in 1612, Neve Shalom, to form Talmud Torah synagogue. The unified congregation named Morteira as head of its rabbinic college that same year, and for the following two decades Morteira taught Talmud to students in the seventh grade at the Keter Torah yeshiva and served over subordinate colleagues such as Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (b. 1605-d. 1693) and Menasseh ben Israel (b. 1604-d. 1657).

Morteira's role in rejudaisation

One of Morteira's responsibilities as chief rabbi was to deliver weekly sermons, a facet of his career that has been studied in depth by Saperstein in *Exile in Amsterdam*. Morteira regularly expressed in his sermons his zeal for the rejudaisation of his congregation. Saperstein observes that 'some of the most powerful passages of Morteira's preaching' (289) involved attempts to convince *conversos*, those in his congregation and their extended family members still in Iberia, of the importance of abandoning Christianity and

completely immersing themselves in Judaism. Morteira's views concerning rejudaaization could be extreme, as illustrated by his participation during the 1630s in a polemic concerning whether *conversos* who had not returned to Judaism would endure eternal damnation, which was Morteira's opinion.²³

Morteira shared his zeal with his patron, Dr. Montalto, whose own dedication to rejudaaization while living in Venice is evident in the above-mentioned four letters he wrote to Pero Rodrigues and Izabel da Fonseca. With respect to the manner by which Montalto grows more insistent in each letter, Bodian asserts, '[f]or those like Montalto who were deeply committed to [...] rejudaaization [...] such lack of cooperation could only be explained as weakness of character, opportunism, or obtuseness in religious matters' (139). Morteira was forced to combat this type of reluctance in Amsterdam, where his congregation included ex-*conversos* with a vision of a prosperous Iberia that was confirmed by the fact that many *conversos* chose to remain in Spain and Portugal and endure the threat of inquisitorial persecution rather than loose their possessions. Rejudaaization is a primary topic in the debate that occurs in *Arguments*, and Morteira's treatment of the topic in this work was undoubtedly shaped by his personal experiences.

Morteira's most important task as chief rabbi was to persuade *conversos* to be Jews. In this role Morteira participated in a campaign supported by the lay leaders of his congregation, or *parnasim*, and the lay council of elders who formed the *mahamad* that oversaw the whole community. For everyone involved, the rejudaaization of current congregants and *conversos* who continued to arrive throughout the 1600s could produce economic and spiritual benefits. In an economic context, the importance paid to rejudaaization reflected a desire for communal legitimacy and integration within the network of established European and Mediterranean Jewish communities, which would in turn afford greater access to markets abroad. General economic prosperity in the Netherlands indicates the early success of rejudaaization, when participation by Amsterdam's synagogues in the larger European Jewish community contributed to the fact that, by the early 1620s, as Jonathan Israel observes, 'London and Hamburg were unable to compete effectively with Amsterdam and Rotterdam making Holland the major entrepôt for peninsula and Italian commerce' (357).²⁴ That Amsterdam's ex-*conversos* ultimately forged an important Jewish spiritual center is well-known, and is demonstrated in the cases of rabbinic scholars who became authorities abroad, such as Morteira's student Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto (b. 1625-d. 1697), who left the city and became a renowned Kabbalist in Venice.

Morteira's role as a rejudaaizer is clearly depicted in an inquisitorial document from 1635, which offers the report of a deposition given before

the Inquisition in Madrid by a *converso* named Esteban de Ares de Fonseca.²⁵ Ares de Fonseca reveals his involvement with ex-*conversos* who attempt to persuade him to forsake Catholicism and embrace Judaism on several occasions. According to his deposition, Ares de Fonseca left Coimbra at around fifteen years old after having studied Latin with the Jesuits in Coimbra. A couple years later, while in Lisbon, he was taken prisoner by the Inquisition for an unidentified reason, and after three years he was reconciled and released, whereupon he spent the next five or six years as a wine carrier in Seville and other places in Spain. At this juncture, some nine or ten years before the deposition, Ares de Fonseca traveled to the French city of Bayonne, where ex-*conversos* attempted to convince him to follow Judaism. Ares de Fonseca resisted and his ex-*converso* acquaintances placed him on a boat to Amsterdam, where he was sent to Morteira in 1625 or 1626 for rejudiaization.²⁶ After six months, Morteira failed to persuade Ares de Fonseca and he was excommunicated by a rabbinic tribunal overseen by Morteira.²⁷ The extent to which such failures might have personally affected Morteira is open to speculation, although in this case the reason Ares de Fonseca had been sent to Morteira was probably of a personal nature, namely, because he was a member of a *converso* family Morteira knew well. Morteira's patron, Dr. Montalto, had been married to Jerónima da Fonseca, whose extended family in Amsterdam were probably the 'parientes' (relatives) named by Ares de Fonseca.

The Portuguese Nation

The major obstacles faced by Morteira were crypto-Jewish spirituality and a communal bond that galvanized his congregants, but that excluded Morteira. An ingrained idea that Morteira needed to combat during rejudiaization was the perception among ex-*conversos* that their Iberian heritage was an essential component of their spiritual identity, which distinguished them and their descendants from Morteira. Due to their common heritage, Morteira's congregants considered themselves to be members of the Portuguese Nation, which may be understood as a conception of socioreligious superiority that united Amsterdam's Iberian Jews as survivors of inquisitorial Spain and Portugal. This distinction is evident in the aforementioned document from 1640 granting Morteira admittance into the *Dotar* in spite of the fact that he was not from the 'nação portugueza ou hespanhola' (Portuguese or Spanish Nation). While Morteira would have undoubtedly seen his admission to the *Dotar* as a high honor, it is interesting to wonder how a spiritual leader and *halachic* authority would have reacted

to being treated as a second class Jew by a community that, in spite of facing discrimination, nevertheless considered their Iberian heritage as a trait that enlisted them as superior to other Jewish communities.

Iberian Jews had traditionally claimed aristocratic lineage on the basis of their claim to be descendants of the biblical Jewish community exiled in Obadiah 1.20 from Jerusalem to Sepharad, which became the Hebrew word for Spain (סָפָרָד). While this Iberian Jewish pride contributed to the Portuguese Nation's air of superiority, it is significant that this pride evolved directly out of the restrictive legislation and punitive measures endured by *conversos* during many generations. A remarkable feature of the way in which *conversos* could perceive their inferiority is exhibited by the fact that, once outside Iberia, many *conversos* considered themselves to be superior for the same reason that they were treated as inferior in Spain. As documented during the seventeenth century in texts by renowned individuals such as Menasseh ben Israel and the physician and philosopher Isaac Cardoso (b. c. 1603-d. 1683), a Portuguese *converso* who fled from Spain to Venice, members of the Portuguese Nation developed what Yosef Kaplan calls 'a social and cultural phenomenon typical of the victims of the laws of *limpieza de sangre* after they reached a safe haven: when they returned to the faith of their fathers, the former secret Jews borrowed the infamous concept from their persecutors, for it now helped them define their own spiritual identity' ('Political Concepts' 53). Bodian detects a similar tendency:

So internalized had Hispanic values become that even outside the Peninsula 'purity of blood' served a role among the emigres. The intellectual elite of the diaspora communities—either because they had come to hold and value ideas of ethnic purity or because they intuitively grasped their polemical value—enunciated notions of Jewish 'purity of blood' that were, however unconventional from a rabbinic point of view, a means of mobilizing Iberian preconceptions to bolster Jewish pride and the notion of Jewish chosenness. (88)

That many *conversos* adhered completely to neither Judaism nor Christianity lies, for Yirmiyahu Yovel, at the foundation of their sense of the superiority and exclusivity as a community that possessed 'the traits of a secret religious fraternity, neither Christian nor actually Jewish, and bound by a road to salvation that defied that of the established tradition around them' (153). Yovel is alluding to the communal pride that bonded the Portuguese Nation and to their crypto-Jewish spirituality. Morteira's congregants arrived in Amsterdam many decades removed from Jewish

educational traditions (such as learning Hebrew) and open expressions of faith (such as prayers and festival rituals). Their minimal Judaism was far removed from the rabbinic Judaism in which Morteira was trained. The differences between Iberian crypto-Judaism and rabbinic Judaism were qualitative and quantitative. While early modern Jewish communities outside of Iberia operated according to norms that regulated every aspect of daily life—such as the 613 biblical commandments, Talmudic laws, and the *Shulchan Aruch*, a sixteenth-century codification of Jewish law compiled by Joseph Caro (b. 1488-d. 1575) and adopted by both Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities—within Spain and Portugal crypto-Judaism consisted of a skeletal set of religious practices.

The conflict between crypto-Jewish and rabbinic traditions, and the importance lent to religious conformity, under pain of *cherem* (excommunication), produced a psychological anxiety among *converso* émigrés to Amsterdam during their period of rejudaisation, which lasted through the first half of the seventeenth century. According to Henry Méchoulan, ‘upon arriving in Amsterdam, however, the former crypto-Jews were soon disillusioned. They discovered that Judaism was more than a simple and stark biblicism; it was a difficult and demanding religion whose everyday rhythms were marked by specific acts and prayers. A rebellious wind began to blow already in the first years of the Amsterdam Jewish community, a rebellion which would present a constant challenge to the community’s orthodoxy’ (*The Importance of Hispanicity* 358). The establishment of orthodoxy involved the imposition of a complex code regulating numerous aspects of life including behaviors of which individuals may have barely been aware (such as the need to refrain from carrying objects on the Sabbath), and *Arguments* provides not only a unique glimpse into the conflicts experienced by individuals undergoing rejudaisation but also into the manners by which these conflicts might be resolved.

Plot summary of *Arguments against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam* (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206])

In *Arguments*, Morteira encourages his readers to adopt *halachic* Judaism through a fictional prose narrative (of some 40,000 words in length in the Spanish manuscript), which is informed by a lively dialogue, realistic depictions of contemporary social life, as well as major philosophical and theological issues. Writing during the middle of the seventeenth century, Morteira depicts an encounter between two *conversos* in 1616, which is

the same year Morteira had first arrived in Amsterdam. The narrative commences with a fortuitous meeting between two *conversos* at a *posada* (inn) in the western French city of Orléans. One *converso*, called *el peregrino*, or ‘the pilgrim’, is an aspiring Jesuit who was born in the Portuguese city of Montemor-o-Novo (in Spanish Montemayor el Nuevo), which is located some 30 kilometers to the northwest of the city of Évora. The pilgrim happens upon the inn during a four-month long return trip to Portugal from Rome where, as in his native land, his efforts at entering the Society of Jesus and becoming a priest have met with failure. The other *converso*, called *el amigo*, or ‘the friend’, was born in either Portugal or Spain before fleeing to Amsterdam, where he lives openly as a Jew. An unidentified business or personal matter has drawn the friend to the inn, where he is spending several days before returning to Amsterdam via boat on the Loire River from Orléans to the port city of Nantes.

The friend invites the pilgrim to sleep on an extra bed in his room at the inn and, as the two lay awake in their room, the pilgrim relates his experiences in inquisitorial Portugal and the story of his frustrated attempt to become a Jesuit priest. The friend then extends the invitation to the pilgrim to include the boat trip. As they travel along the Loire River, a trip from Orléans to Nantes that took eight days during Morteira’s time, an extended debate evolves in which the friend, who speaks the majority of the time, promotes the merits of Judaism over Christianity in order to encourage the pilgrim to embrace Judaism. The friend refers to numerous Jewish doctrines and quotes often from a Bible he intends to deliver to a friend in Bordeaux, with the nature of his discourse revealing Morteira’s rabbinic training. Morteira’s skills as a writer of fictional narrative are also evident in several fascinating vignettes included in *Arguments*, and his lifelong dedication to encouraging the practice of Judaism among his congregants is symbolized by the polemic between the pilgrim’s Christianized *converso* perspective and the Jewish theological and philosophical arguments employed by the friend to convince the pilgrim, a task that is accomplished as the narrative draws to a close.

The Portuguese Nation in *Arguments against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam*

The communal bond of the Portuguese Nation is evoked early on in *Arguments*. The friend recognizes this bond in the opening lines and asks the pilgrim if he is ‘portugués’ (fol. 1r, see Plate 2), which should be understood to mean Portuguese Jew and which seems to imply that the pilgrim thinks the

friend ‘looks’ like a Portuguese Jew. The pilgrim’s reply indicates that he too is aware, and both proceed to laud their communal superiority. The pilgrim declares: ‘Our national heritage is so strong [...] that I thought you were as soon as I saw you’ (fol. 1r), and the friend exclaims: ‘Our Portuguese Nation is the greatest in the world’ (fol. 1r). The debate involving the friend’s attempt to convince the pilgrim to embrace Judaism is preceded by the pilgrim’s biography—recounted as he and the friend lay awake in their room—which depicts a frequent manner by which *conversos* were victimized. The pilgrim presents his story as a ‘secret that I never thought I’d reveal’ (fol. 2v):

My parents owned a store and, one day, or better yet, one sad night, they came to our homes and seized my parents along with others of the Nation, thirty-two in all. I was left in the street at nine years old, when an Old Christian neighbor of ours felt pity toward me and took me in. After around three years there, I went to an *auto* to wait for my parents, but I didn’t have any luck because my mother died a few days after being sent to jail and my father was condemned to death. (Fol. 2v)

The pilgrim reveals that his parents were the victims of an *auto-da-fé* (the Portuguese term, which in Spanish is *auto-de-fe* and in English ‘act of faith’). An *auto-da-fé* was a ceremony of penance conducted by the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal at which sentences were pronounced on *conversos* convicted of heresy against the Catholic Faith. The first Spanish *auto-de-fe* was held in 1481 in the city of Seville, and in 1540 the first Portuguese *auto-da-fé* took place in Lisbon. The first American *auto-de-fe* occurred in Mexico City in 1528. Some 2,000 of these ceremonies took place on the Peninsula and in the Spanish and Portuguese American colonies through the middle of the nineteenth century. During an *auto-da-fé*, convicted *conversos* endured a public procession before facing punishment, and in the passage quoted above the pilgrim describes his futile search for his parents during one such procession. The most severe sentence, execution by burning at the stake, was carried out at a ceremony held after an *auto-da-fé* took place, which is the fate that befalls the pilgrim’s father.

The *auto-da-fé* depicted by the pilgrim was one of many that took place in Évora from 1542 until 1710, during which time hundreds of executions of Judaizers occurred on the ‘Praça Grande or Rossio (now called Praça do Geraldo)’, as António José Saraiva relates: ‘The Évora public *autos-da-fé* were held alternately in front of the Church of the Lóios (next to the monastery, now the *pousada*); on the patio of the Inquisitorial palace, in front of the Cathedral; in front of the Church of Santo Antão’ (110, n. 21). One particular *auto-da-fé* that

Morteira might have had in mind when he composed *Arguments* around 1650 was an especially lavish one that took place in Évora in 1646. This *auto-da-fé*, which was held after two weeks of feasting by the inquisitors, concluded with the symbolic 'execution' of many *conversos* who, like the pilgrim's mother in *Arguments*, perished while in prison awaiting their fate.

Although the pilgrim is not implicated by the Inquisition with his parents, the stigma of a *converso* lineage haunts him just as Montoro had described in his above-mentioned poem centuries earlier ('but I've never been able to rid myself / of this *converso* stigma'). The pilgrim reveals his ignorance of this stigma while narrating his unsuccessful attempt to become a Jesuit priest in Portugal:

I learned Latin, which endeared me to the Jesuits, with whom I spent my time studying the arts and theology with great zeal. The teachers would watch me and were kind to me because I showed ability. They urged me to continue, so much so that I became very hopeful of being admitted into their College, which I truly desired and, inspired by this idea, I kept on studying and learned science. Since I was at the right age to try for admission, I began to express my wish to those I trusted most. Although I felt I was more than prepared, I found my impression of their vision of me to be completely wrong, which is something I still can't understand. I quickly realized they were treating me very badly. Then, all of a sudden, they blocked the path I was on, clearly revealing that they detested me, and they rejected me at every turn. (Fol. 3r)

Although he possesses the appropriate skills, the pilgrim is denied entrance into 'their College', which alludes to the University of Évora, an institution that was controlled by the Jesuits from 1559 to 1759. The pilgrim is advised to travel to Rome, where he also fails to realize his goal, the reason for which continues to bewilder him:

I've told the sad story of my life to you, sir, in the quickest way possible so that you'll understand my troubles, which are many. I'm not telling you this story so you will feel pity toward me but to ask if you think I'm a fool since I've reached this wretched state for a reason that I don't comprehend. (Fol. 4r)

As a means of remedying the pilgrim's dejection, the friend explains to him the reason for his failure to gain admission to the Jesuit Order, namely, his inferior *converso* status. Since he was orphaned at a very young age, the pilgrim is barely aware of his affiliation to the Portuguese Nation, although

the fact that he has encountered *conversos* during his travels appears to have inspired some curiosity over his lineage, and he beseeches the friend to explain: 'how we survive so scattered and isolated in far off and difficult to reach lands where there are no people scattered like our nation, and I want to know why this occurs' (fol. 2r). The friend responds by telling him that:

the reason we find ourselves here is that in Spain and Portugal there is a fury that is so cruel, tyrannical, impious, and unjust that it makes our motherland into a stepmother for us, so that far off lands become our motherlands. This harsh, bloodthirsty, and corrupt fury is the Inquisition, which is the cause of all the wrongs you've seen and heard. It is forever robbing some and condemning others to death. It claims estates, lives, honors and one's human condition, and it forces people to find new places to live in freedom. (Fol. 2r)

The friend exposes the indelible inferiority cast upon *conversos* by Old Christians by enlisting this stigma as the reason for the rejection of the pilgrim by the Jesuits: '[S]ee now for yourself what's happened, how you were perceived by their hateful eyes. Wasn't it enough that you were raised by them, and that you learned, observed, and practiced their customs so that they'd admit you? But everything was not enough and soon they threw you out and rejected and scorned you' (fol. 46v).

The historical context described by the friend is the contemporary polemic regarding the admission of *conversos* to the Society of Jesus, a religious order established in 1534 that had a long tradition of admitting *conversos* as Jesuit priests. Efforts in Spain to exclude *conversos* from the order during the middle of the sixteenth century were led by the Archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez Silíceo (b. 1486-d. 1557), who began to acquire papal support in the 1550s for using purity of blood as a requirement for entrance. As *conversos* continued to become Jesuits, the opposition to their inclusion grew more vocal in Spain and Portugal, whose monarchs both lobbied Rome to name a non-*converso* Christian leader of the order following the death of the superior general, Francis Borgia (b. 1510-d. 1572). In his discussion of this campaign, Albert A. Sicroff (326-27) underscores the intensity of the anti-*converso* animus among Portuguese Jesuits, whose advocacy for the official proscription of *conversos* contributed to the enactment by the Society of Jesus in 1593 of a purity-of-blood statute. This ban, which as Sicroff observes (327) was not able to be circumnavigated, even by the superior general, is the obstacle faced by the pilgrim in *Arguments*, in which he comes to understand the tragic legacy of his *converso* heritage.

Crypto-Judaism and rejudaisation in *Arguments*

Although the pilgrim in *Arguments* does not reveal that he is a crypto-Jew, he is by lineage a member of the Portuguese Nation and his ignorance of *halachic* Judaism recalls the spirituality of Morteira's crypto-Jewish congregants. In this light, the friend's suggestion that the pilgrim turn to Judaism in order to achieve personal salvation reflects Morteira's awareness of the spiritual importance to *conversos* of a Christianized component of crypto-Judaism. The friend's suggestion first occurs in the narrative after the pilgrim condemns *conversos* for practicing Judaism once outside Iberia. The friend responds by focusing the debate on the crypto-Jewish reverence for personal salvation, which becomes a goal that can be reached through the decision to practice of Judaism: 'because man is free, and he should act freely, carefully, and attentively in important cases like salvation should be. He should speculate and be knowledgeable, especially when in free lands, on the chance that he might follow good and comply with it. And if he were to find something that better leads him there, he should embrace it' (fol. 5v). A little further on, the friend reveals that what 'better leads' the pilgrim to personal salvation is adherence to the holy (Mosaic) Law: '[T]he Holy Law was neither tarnished nor changed. Everyone who adheres to it will seek and find his Creator and will return to His grace, and only through this is it received and possessed. You see here the purity of truth and the Law in which each individual should save himself' (fol. 8v). At another juncture in the narrative, Jewish personal salvation is depicted as deriving from the 'correct path' (fol. 15r), as opposed to 'everything taught by the Roman Church' (fol. 15r) that lies at the foundation of the pilgrim's convictions.

Insofar as crypto-Judaism involved Jewish traditions that became Catholicized through the filter of their clandestine performance within an outwardly orthodox society strictly monitored by the Inquisition, the pilgrim's reverence for Catholic personal salvation should be understood to symbolize the reluctance among Morteira's congregants to supplant such ideas with Jewish ones that had been demonized for centuries. In an attempt to combat this reluctance, the friend returns to the topic of personal salvation, which he ties directly to the Old Testament through what may be a reference to Ezek. 18.20 ('The person who sins, he alone shall die. A child shall not share the burden of a parent's guilt') or Ezek. 18.17 ('[H]e shall not die for the iniquity of his father'): 'As I've said, that's part of God, and a son doesn't have in his organism more than the corporal part of his father. The Creator instills him with a soul whose salvation depends on its deeds as the

Law clearly shows to us: “the son will not die for his father, each one will die for his own sins” (fol. 27r). The friend reinforces his point by further relating Jewish doctrines to personal salvation: ‘Each person’, said the friend, ‘is judged by his deeds, which is true as I can show in Holy Scripture. With respect to punishments to the soul, which have nothing to do with Adam and pertain to God, those who follow and keep His divine will have their reward and salvation in Him’ (fol. 29r-29v).

Personal salvation is understood in *Arguments* as a goal achieved by being Jewish, a doctrine expressed by the friend that does not contradict *halachic* Judaism but that shifts the spiritual focus from actions performed on earth to the potential reward achieved after death: ‘[S]ee the light and open your eyes to understanding, recognize and know that only our Lord’s Law, which He gave to his people on Mount Sinai, is the one that offers salvation, and only the Lord gives it on earth and in the heavens’ (fol. 54v). Judaism is thus ultimately portrayed by the friend as the ‘true path of salvation’ (fol. 83r), and the pilgrim’s willingness to embrace Judaism as a religion that ‘bestows salvation’ (fol. 83v) speaks to what Morteira hoped he might be able to accomplish when he came into contact with Catholicized crypto-Jewish spirituality.

Converso protagonists in *Arguments*: Historical precedents

In the only previous discussion of *Arguments*, Yosef Kaplan posits that Morteira conceived the narrative through his ‘conversations with Elijah Montalto’ (*Rabbi Saul Levi* 100). While no historical encounter between two *conversos* may be identified as Morteira’s source, it seems likely that he took into account historical narratives while crafting his fictional one. Montalto’s own biography may have influenced the composition of *Arguments*, in particular his flight to Venice in order to practice Judaism and his efforts there to encourage the practice of Judaism among *conversos*. Moreover, there are references in *Arguments* that suggest that the encounter depicted by Morteira is similar in nature to those that occurred between *conversos* traveling through Europe and zealous rejudaizers like Montalto. Morteira would have known of one such encounter that occurred in Leghorn in 1599 between Montalto and a *converso* cousin named Paulo de Pina (d. 1635), an episode that finds several parallels in *Arguments*. Barrios refers to this encounter in an unedited work, *Triumpho del gobierno popular* (Triumph of the popular government), in which he relates that Pina, while traveling to Rome to join a monastic order, came into contact with Montalto bearing

a letter that asked the physician to turn Pina toward Judaism. Montalvo succeeded and Pina ultimately changed his name to Rehuel Jessurun and emigrated to Amsterdam in 1604, where he came to know Morteira while working as *gabay* (a synagogue official with managerial duties) during the first decades that Morteira served as rabbi of Beth Jacob. It would be logical to speculate that Morteira knew Jessurun's life story well, in particular because of their collaboration on the composition of a dramatic work, *Dialogo dos montes*, which will be discussed below.

Other cases that evoke the plot of *Arguments* involve the aforementioned Juan de Prado, a *converso* physician who fled from mounting inquisitorial pressure in Spain to Amsterdam, where his liberal views resulted in his excommunication. Yovel identifies two episodes in Prado's life that might have inspired Morteira's depiction of the pilgrim. The first occurred during Prado's flight from the Spanish Inquisition, which would later find him guilty of crypto-Judaism in absentia after his name was mentioned during inquisitorial torture by his friend, Isaac Orobio de Castro (b. c. 1617-d. 1687), a contemporary *converso* physician who returned to Judaism in Amsterdam in the 1660s. According to Yovel, in order to flee Spain, Prado 'seems to have seized the opportunity to accompany a Spanish cardinal traveling to Rome' (64). This recalls a declaration made in *Arguments* by the pilgrim, who tells the friend that he received assistance in Rome from a Spaniard 'who served in the retinue of a cardinal' (fol. 3v). The second episode described by Yovel reveals the intensity of inquisitorial scrutiny faced by Prado, who was also implicated by the testimony of a relative 'that in 1639 (a year after Prado had finished his studies) the two men had met in the [Spanish] city of Lopera, and for a long while Prado had tried to persuade his kinsman to abandon the Christian faith and secretly return to Judaism' (58). These episodes, like Ares de Fonseca's above-mentioned confession, depict encounters involving rejudiaization of which Morteira was undoubtedly aware. While *Arguments* is a fictional narrative, the actual experience of rejudiaization motivated Morteira to some extent to present his narrative as a plausible situation to his *converso* readership.

As the spiritual leader of an increasingly prosperous Amsterdam community, the persistence of Iberian crypto-Jewish tendencies and the need to replace them with rabbinic Judaism concerned Morteira greatly throughout his lifetime. *Arguments* concludes with the pilgrim declaring the superiority of Jewish doctrines and accepting an invitation to one day visit the friend in Amsterdam. The work may thus be understood as a 'best case scenario', in which both the pilgrim, the *converso* who is ignorant of Judaism, and the friend, the former crypto-Jew, embrace rabbinic Judaism.

The influence of *Lazarillo de Tormes* on Arguments

Morteira demonstrates on a number of occasions in *Arguments* that he was familiar with contemporary Spanish literature, which as mentioned above was undergoing its Golden Age and which was widely read outside of Spain. Morteira had ready access to Golden Age works because Venice was a center for printing, where over 900 editions of Spanish texts were produced during the 1500s by over 100 Venetian presses.²⁸ The existence of a large Spanish readership throughout Europe was due not only to the exile of *conversos* but also to the presence of other Spaniards—including theologians as well as administrators and their retinues—throughout the empire of King Charles I (or the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, r. 1516–56), which extended from Spain eastward to include the Low Countries, territories in Germany and the Italian kingdoms of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia.

Due to the fact that Venetian trade extended to many parts of Europe, Spanish books were imported to Venice, and it is through this conduit by which Morteira might have come to know the first Spanish picaresque novel, *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades* (which has been translated into English as *Lazarillo de Tormes*), an anonymous work that was widely available during Morteira's time. *Lazarillo* was published in Spanish in Antwerp in 1554 and 1595, after which it was reprinted ten times during the early 1600s, including another edition in Antwerp in 1602. *Lazarillo* contains the fictional autobiography, from boyhood to manhood, of Lázaro de Tormes, who recounts to a narratee (an individual referred to as 'Your Honour') his experiences while serving under the tutelage of seven masters. This episodic narrative structure would continue to characterize Spanish picaresque novels such as *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599) by Mateo Alemán (b. 1547-d. 1615) and *El buscón* (1604) by Francisco de Quevedo (b. 1580-d. 1645), works that were widely read in Europe and that influenced the development of picaresque literary traditions in France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain.

Lázaro's existence on the margin of society and his anticlericalism are themes that would be repeated in subsequent picaresque novels. In *Lazarillo*, after Lázaro's father dies and his mother is forced to abandon him, five of the seven masters he later serves are associated with the Catholic Church, and the harsh treatment Lázaro receives from these churchmen prevents him from achieving his objective of ascending in society by acquiring honor, which is his motive for seeking an audience with 'Your Honour'. One priest keeps Lázaro in the verge of starvation, others exploit him as a laborer and reveal to him the corrupt practices of concubinage and selling indulgences. Lázaro concludes his narration by revealing that his appeal to 'Your Honour'

is futile in light of his dishonorable profession and his dishonorable existence. Lázaro ultimately becomes a town crier in Toledo who accompanies prisoners to their punishments and whose wife appears to be having an affair with his supposed protector, the archpriest of St. Salvador, which is another example of the anticlericalism that probably motivated the author to remain anonymous. Indeed, in 1559 the Spanish Inquisition placed *Lazarillo* on its first Index of prohibited books, and when a censored edition was permitted in Spain in 1573 a number of the anticlerical passages were expurgated.

Through his contact with *conversos* or from his own reading of a work that was readily available in its uncensored version in northern Europe, Morteira may well have been familiar with *Lazarillo*. His knowledge of this popular work may have influenced *Arguments*, in which the pilgrim, who loses his parents at a young age like Lázaro, also reveals to a narratee (the friend) significant events in his life while associated with various masters since childhood. The marginal existence of the pilgrim, depicted in his service to several priests before ultimately failing to gain entrance into the Jesuit Order, finds a parallel in *Lazarillo*. Whereas Lázaro's service under priests leads him to a dishonorable existence, the pilgrim's time under the tutelage of Jesuit priests in Portugal ultimately leaves him on the margin of society as an unsuccessful aspirant to the priesthood, and both cases of social exclusion may be understood to be grounded in the treatment of *conversos* by Old Christians.

Similarities between the historical alienation of *conversos* and the discourse of *Lazarillo* have been recognized by modern scholars since Américo Castro, who link the inception of the picaresque novel to the social impact of anti-*converso* persecution and discrimination. More recently, Gitlitz asserts that fear of the Inquisition motivated *conversos* to fabricate confessions containing elements that would inform *Lazarillo* and 'the development of the autobiographical genre in sixteenth-century Spain' ('Inquisition Confessions' 54) and José Faur understands Lázaro's lifelong desire for social ascension and honor to incarnate the impossibility of *converso* assimilation into Old Christian society.²⁹

For Lázaro, who goes from master to master in order to find a place in society, the favorable resolution of his case would bring him honor. Within the context of Lázaro's supplication to 'Your Honour,' his biography evokes the futility for *conversos* of attempting to assimilate. While serving his second master, a miserly priest who keeps Lázaro on the verge of starvation, Lázaro is offered some bread, supposedly nibbled on by mice, because it is clean enough for Lázaro to eat. The inference here is that Lázaro is as clean, or unclean, as the mice, with the religious connotation of Lázaro's

uncleanliness being further clarified in the third chapter of *Lazarillo*, in which Lázaro narrates his sojourn with a squire in Toledo. For the squire, honor is a superficial attribute as he expresses through his preoccupation with his physical appearance and his cleanliness, which should be understood to symbolize Old Christian spiritual cleanliness or purity of blood. Insofar as the squire is impoverished and famished because he refuses to work for fear of staining his honor, his concern over whether Lázaro's hands are clean enough to touch his cloak, and whether bread that Lázaro has acquired from begging has been made with clean hands (which would make it appropriate for the squire to consume) reveals an ironic preoccupation with aristocratic pretensions.³⁰ Whereas the squire avoids work, a sign of his pure blood but also the reason for his poverty, Lázaro tries to work his way up the ladder, although this sincere effort is unable to impede his social alienation at the end of the book.

A parallel may be established between Lázaro's alienation and the impetus for the exclusion of the pilgrim from the Jesuit Order in *Arguments*. Lázaro's lack of cleanliness, or religious purity, is the reason advanced by the squire for an inferiority to which Lázaro is oblivious just as the pilgrim's impure lineage is the impediment, unbeknownst to him, that prevents from becoming a Jesuit. Unlike the author of *Lazarillo*, who probably remained anonymous out of fear of the Inquisition, Morteira was able to depict *converso* inferiority and attack the Church in more explicit terms. While both Lázaro and the pilgrim appear at first to be unaware that children of *conversos* could be persecuted for crimes committed by their parents, what remains a mystery to Lázaro is explained by the friend to the pilgrim during the dialogue that begins at the inn. The friend's description of why the pilgrim is treated as inferior explicitly communicates a concept that the author of *Lazarillo* does not reveal, namely, that the Inquisition 'claims estates, lives, honors and one's human condition' (fol. 2r).

The influence of Spanish Golden Age theater on *Arguments*

As exemplified by internationally renowned figures such as Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina (b. 1579-d. 1648), and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (b. 1600-d. 1681), Golden Age theater was at its zenith in Spain during Morteira's lifetime. In Morteira's native land, performances of classical works at the residences of the Italian nobility and high-ranking church officials began to take place in the late 1400s, and a century later Morteira was born into a cultural milieu in which representations of Spanish plays, with religious

and secular themes, also had a long-standing tradition. Some of the most important early Spanish dramatists, including Juan del Encina (b. c. 1468-d. c. 1530) and Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (b. c. 1485-d. c. 1530), were staged in the Vatican, and over time other publics witnessed performances by traveling companies by the leading Golden Age figures.³¹ While there is no direct evidence to indicate that Morteira attended a performance, details included in *Arguments* suggest that he possessed at least an indirect familiarity with Spanish Golden Age theatrical discourse and the staging of performances.

Whether through experiences during his youth in Italy or through conversations with congregants arriving from the Iberian Peninsula, Morteira reveals his knowledge that attending religious and secular theatrical performances was a popular activity in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the early 1500s onward, liturgical dramas involving the Passion of Christ and the Resurrection were performed on Easter and Christmas in Spanish churches, and open-air representations of secular works in public spaces became a common occurrence in theaters known as *corrales* (courtyards). After originating during the late 1500s as stages placed in rented spaces between buildings in Madrid, where canvas shades could be extended in order to protect spectators from the sun, *corrales* opened in a number of other Spanish cities and became more elaborate structures with the addition of walls, doors and added seating for a constantly increasing public from all levels of society.³²

An episode described by the friend in *Arguments* suggests that Morteira was aware of a religious theatrical tradition that began to evolve during the early sixteenth century. The friend includes this episode as he attempts to influence the pilgrim's spiritual views, on this occasion by evoking the *Ecce Homo* theme:

According to you and your doctors, the man in question wasn't fair or just but a prisoner condemned to a vile and shameful death. This reminds me of when I was in Burgos and some friends took me to see a play, which are often put on there and in which they revealed some true things in an amusing way. While that man was in between the two thieves, one of them said to the other: 'Tell him to save you'. The other responded: 'How can he save me if he can't save himself?' The other one countered: 'Then rob him here on the gallows'; 'What can I rob from Him if He is naked?' That one spoke the truth because the other one was certainly not wearing much. Here you'll see that they themselves treat these things lightly and make a joke out of it, which it is. (Fols. 34v-35r)

Similarities may be found between the friend's narration and anonymous liturgical dramas performed in Burgos during the 1500s. The earliest textual witness to these performances was printed in Burgos in 1520.³³ This brief work opens with a dialogue initiated by the Virgin, who appears before four figures from the Old Testament—David, Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Virgin, anguished over the loss of her son, is unaware of the identity of these figures, who are 'sentados como a manera de juicio' (Gillet 954; seated in judgment),³⁴ and asks: 'decid me quienes soys vos?' (Gillet 954; tell me, who are you?). In the following lines the figures reveal their names and that they have appeared in order to pass judgment on Christ, which causes her to make a further inquiry in light of the fact that none of them is a Christian: 'que hazeys todos juntos?' (Gillet 955; why are you the ones who came?). David responds that they have appeared in order to cause the Resurrection ('porque viuan los defunctos' [Gillet 955; so that the dead will rise]) by 'sentenciar de muerte a cristo' (Gillet 955; condemning Christ to death). The Old Testament figures then pronounce their death sentence, whose gruesomeness is underscored by Solomon: 'Yo salomon tal sentencia / pronuncie mas cruel que larga / venid y con nuestra sciencia / a vil muerte y mas que amarga / condenemos su inocencia' (Gillet 956; The judgment by me, Solomon, / is more cruel than it is long. / Come and with our wisdom / it is to a vile very cruel death / that we will condemn his spirit).

After the sentenced is repeated, Christ arrives in order to 'despidese para yrse a morir' (Gillet 958; say goodbye and go to his death), which he does before reappearing in an *Ecce Homo* scene described in the stage directions: 'Enesta breue contemplacion del Ecce homo vn hombre honrrado trahe por vna sala a christo con vna soga ala garganta con su corona de espinas mas que harto de tormentos, y / nuestra señora vieño le tan desfigurado pregunta a sant Juan quien es aquel hombre. Y sant Juan le responde como es su hijo. Y nuestra señora haze alli cierta esclamacion alas gentes' (Gillet 958-59; In this brief contemplation of the *Ecce Homo*, a gentlemen leads Christ into the room with his crown of thorns and a rope around his neck, looking wretched from his anguish, and upon seeing him look so disfigured the Virgin asks Saint John who he is. Saint John responds that it is her son. And Our Lady makes a certain gesture to everyone). The emphasis on the disfigurement of a crucified Christ and the incredulity of the Virgin create an ironic tone in the piece from 1520 that Morteira may have imitated in *Arguments* in the friend's description of the play he saw in Burgos. The fact that the friend points specifically to the performance of a play in Burgos as an example of the 'a vile and shameful death' of Christ might recall the enduring memory of a one-time performance in 1520 that have caused a public stir because of its graphic nature and ironic treatment of the Virgin.³⁵

A staging of a liturgical drama in Burgos several decades later also involved explicit content. On this occasion, in 1552, several New Testament figures (the Virgin, Joseph of Arimathea, Saint John, the Three Marys, Nicodemus, Pilate, and a centurion and a page) portray the story of Christ's removal from the cross.³⁶ The atmosphere of this work is consistently somber, without the confused identities of the piece from 1520, and includes gruesome elements. For example, in one scene the dialogue among John, Joseph and Nicodemus acquires a morbid tone when, upon seeing the wound left by a particularly large and difficult to extract nail from Christ's foot, Nicodemus exclaims: 'Esta abertura tan fiera / causó ser cabe el huesso' (Wickersham Crawford 290; This opening has gone right through to the bone).³⁷ While the stage directions in this play are not as detailed as those in the piece from 1520, as N. D. Shergold observes:

[The] scene of the descent from the cross suggests that a figure was used to represent the crucified Christ, either a human being who played the part, or a life-size doll, perhaps an articulated one; indeed the fact that this play was printed in Burgos prompts the suggestion that it may have been written for performance in Burgos Cathedral, and the famous articulated *Cristo de Burgos* may have been used for this scene. (32-33)

While the play from 1552 portrays a scene that would be repeated in plays written and performed in many Spanish cities, Shergold suggests that the Spanish tradition of 'Easter plays requiring the use of an articulated figure of Christ' (545) originated in Burgos.

Of course, the setting and nature of the theatrical scene in *Arguments*, which is blatantly sacrilegious, could not have formed part of a liturgical drama, although it is possible that the friend's recollection of his experience alludes to a theatrical tradition of the late 1500s that caused resentment among the Spanish clergy. In his seminal study on Golden Age Spanish theater, Hugo Rennert identifies a popular tendency toward satirical representations of Catholic themes, of which the Church was aware but that was apparently beyond its control. The existence of this tendency is revealed in contemporary observations concerning the performances of actors and actresses. For example, the dramatist Lupercio Leonardo de Argensola complained about the blasphemous representation of a religious work by Lope de Vega near the end of the 1500s in Madrid³⁸:

in presenting a comedia of the life of Our Lady in this capital, the actor who played the part of St. Joseph was living in concubinage with the

woman who represented Our Lady, and this was so notorious that many were scandalized and laughed when they heard the words which the most pure Virgin replied to the angel's question: *Quomodo fiet istud*, etc. And in this same *comedia*, arriving at the mystery of the birth of Our Saviour, this same actor who played the part of Joseph reproved the woman in a low voice because she was looking, as he thought, at a man of whom he was jealous, calling her by a most vile name which is wont to be applied to evil women. (Rennert 261-62; translation by Rennert)

On another occasion, the Jesuit priest and historian Juan de Mariana (b. 1536-d. 1624) complains about performances of *entremeses* in churches that depict 'adulterous and foolish love affairs and other indecencies'.³⁹ Rennert also records a similar observation made anonymously in 1620: 'An actress appears upon the stage to represent a Magdalen or the Mother of God, and an actor to represent the Saviour, and the first thing you see is that the greater part of the audience recognizes this woman as a prostitute (*ramera*) and the man as a bully' (263).

The theatrical representation alluded to in *Arguments* by the friend, which involves Christ and the two thieves with whom He was crucified, could never have been published, although as the comments above illustrate, the satirical treatment of Catholic themes could occur during performances. In light of the detail provided by the friend in his summary of the representation in Burgos, which includes dialogue, stage directions and wardrobe details, it is interesting to speculate that Morteira alluding to an actual performance. The possibility is intriguing because the scandalous behavior in question is not documented aside from in comments such as those above, and the rendition provided by the friend in *Arguments* may well approximate the discourse employed in one such performance.

Morteira's familiarity with Spanish theater may have inspired him to write a play, which he did by coauthoring *Dialogo dos montes* several years after his arrival to Amsterdam. The play, written in Portuguese and translated into English by Philip Polack as *The Controversy of the Mountains*, is comprised of 908 verses composed by the aforementioned Rehuel Jessurun and seven prose sermons (each around a thousand words long) by Morteira, who might have also composed the twelve-verse poems that follow each sermon. As Polack has established, *The Controversy* shares much in common with a popular form of religious drama in Golden Age Spain known as the *auto*, a one-act religious morality play performed on Christian festivals, in particular on Corpus Christi (which is known as an *auto sacramental*). *Autos* were performed frequently in Spanish and Portuguese churches during

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Polack speculates that *The Controversy* was 'an attempt by Rehuel Jessurun to adapt for Jewish purposes the plays he may well have seen performed in Portuguese churches in his youth' (xxi). Indirect knowledge of *autos* acquired from Jessurun would have certainly been a manner by which Morteira stayed informed. *The Controversy* was performed in Beth Jacob in May of 1624 in commemoration of the Jewish festival of Shavuot. Although a direct reference is only available in the case of this performance, which was memorialized by Barrios in a sonnet that he dedicated to the event, subsequent performances of *The Controversy* may have taken place until 1632, when leaders of the three congregations prohibited theatrical representations in synagogues because they were considered to be a disturbance.⁴⁰

The Controversy begins with a prologue spoken by Earth, who appears 'to question what the cause may be / Of this new uproar, this new age's shift' (Jessurun 7). The allusion to change may be understood in the political context discussed below and as a manifestation of the growing messianic fervor among Amsterdam's Jewry, a theme announced early in the play: 'upon that day / The mountains will be leveled on your way, / upon that day they'll melt, sweetness distil, / Those whom you'll see today and every hill / Will break forth into song, with joyful voice / Bid Jacob's long-afflicted sons rejoice, / Proclaiming that the Lord brings consolation, / To all his people their desired salvation. / O may you see the Redeemer in your days, / For which this House of Jacob daily prays' (13-15). The seven mountains then engage in a dialogue concerning the final judgment pronounced by Jehosaphat, and the remainder of the play consists of seven prose sermons composed by Morteira, in which the mountains present their cases. Morteira grounds his sermons in the Midrash and, as he does in *Arguments*, intercalates biblical verses in support of the assertions of superiority by the seven mountains.

The Controversy is based in a Midrashic tradition concerning a dispute among mountains in ancient Israel for the privilege of being the place where God would reveal the Torah (which was ultimately Mount Sinai).⁴¹ This Midrashic tradition is linked to Jewish eschatology, and the resolution of the dispute among the mountains concerns the Apocalypse, which according to the Midrashic tradition includes the reunification of two mountains, Mount Moriah (where Isaac is brought by Abraham to be sacrificed in Gen. 22) and Mount Sinai: 'In the future world, Sinai will return to its original place, Mount Moriah' (Ginzberg 3: 84). Morteira's decision to present cases for particular mountains, Zion, Sinai, Hor Hahar, Nebo, Gerizim, Carmel and Zetim, including five not mentioned in the Midrashic tradition in

question (Zion, Hor Hahar, Nebo, Gerizim and Zetim), involved another decision to omit six others discussed in the Midrash (Carmel, Hermon, Lebanon, Moriah, Sinai and Tabor). The omission of Mount Moriah, which is mentioned in the Midrash in conjunction with an apocalyptic vision, may have been grounded in Morteira's desire to communicate the need to achieve a spiritual goal that had not been reached by *converso* émigrés to Amsterdam. According to Polack, *The Controversy*:

was above all a fervent affirmation of renewed faith—a product of its time and a tract for its time: a mixture of relief at having escaped from oppression, joy at being able to practice in freedom, and Messianic hope for the future. [...] The choice of Sinai and Zion may have been intended too as a reminder to those *marranos* who had not yet embraced Judaism as wholeheartedly as the author. It showed that Torah and Temple were more important than, among other things, the celebration of a death or triumph over the heathen. (Polack xxv)

Morteira's participation in the composition of *The Controversy*, and his efforts during the early 1620s to enlist a performative tradition as a component of rejudaisation by organizing a staging of the play in his synagogue, further demonstrate his commitment to advocating the practice of Judaism among his *converso* congregants.

***Arguments:* Biblical sources**

During the course of their dialogue in *Arguments*, the friend and pilgrim refer to the Bible, either directly or indirectly, on over 400 occasions. The vast majority of these references are to the Old Testament, although there also are a dozen allusions to the New Testament. Moreover, the fact that many of these quotations vary from their sources, at times to a significant degree, suggests that Morteira incorporated them from memory. It is thought that Morteira delivered his sermons by memory, and he would have thus been accustomed to rendering biblical verses without consulting the textual source.⁴² The application of this technique during the composition of *Arguments* might explain the numerous variations from the Old Testament, which stand out in light of the fact that, within the narrative, the biblical text is being consulted directly in a Bible the friend is taking to a 'friend in Bordeaux' (fol. 23r). The possibility that Morteira incorporated the biblical quotes into *Arguments* from memory is reinforced by the

appearance of some 20 quotations that derive from multiple Bibles, as will be discussed below. As Harm den Boer underscores, Morteira's technique for quoting the Old Testament may be said to reflect a common tendency among Amsterdam's rabbis toward inexact quotations in polemical works and sermons.⁴³

Analysis of the corpus of references to the Old Testament in *Arguments* reveals that the 247 references for which sources can be identified (with the other Old Testament references constituting indirect mentions as in the cases of allusions to the New Testament) derived from two (and perhaps three) Spanish translations of the Old Testament, all of which are actually grounded in the same textual tradition. While Morteira did not have access to a Portuguese Bible, which was not available in a reliable edition until the middle of the eighteenth century, his profound knowledge of extant Spanish Bibles suggests that he was familiar with the legacy of a tradition that had flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when commissioning Jewish translators to produce Spanish versions of the Hebrew Bible (including the Pentateuch and Apocrypha)—based on the Hebrew biblical text as Castro demonstrated—became a frequent practice as the survival of a good number of manuscripts attests.⁴⁴ These *biblias romanceadas* (translated Bibles) include the *Biblia de Alba*, produced in 1433 for the Grand Master of Calatrava, and five manuscripts housed at El Escorial library, whose textual parallels have been studied by Castro, Oliver H. Hauptmann, and Mark G. Littlefield. Hauptmann's notion of 'a family of translations, flowing out of a common rabbinical tradition' (50) as the source for *biblias romanceadas* is confirmed and amplified by Littlefield, who also posits that the *biblias romanceadas* tradition dates to the thirteenth century (xxiv).

The emigration of *conversos* from Iberia and the formation of communities in exile during the sixteenth century, including the one in the Venetian Ghetto with which Morteira would have had much contact during his youth, created a need for a printed Spanish edition of the Bible. This lacuna was filled by the *Biblia de Ferrara* (Ferrara Bible), which was published in 1592 as *The Ladino Bible of Ferrara*. The Ferrara Bible was first published in 1553 and which became the standard biblical text for the following two centuries for ex-*conversos* and descendants of expelled Iberian Jews, who continued to speak and read Spanish in exile. The Ferrara text is essentially the same as that found in the El Escorial manuscripts, and it would not be inaccurate to term the Ferrara Bible a sixteenth-century *biblia romanceada*. The Ferrara Bible was the biblical text upon which Morteira most relied

throughout his career when composing works in Spanish, as well as when he wrote in Portuguese, a language into which he translated Spanish biblical quotes.⁴⁵ The Ferrara Bible was available in one edition until 1611, when it was reprinted in Amsterdam, with subsequent editions being published in Amsterdam, at times with modifications, on eight occasions prior to Morteira's death in 1660. Saperstein (80) believes that Morteira owned a copy of the 1611 reprint, which he might have acquired in Venice while initially forming a friendship with Montalto. At the same time, Morteira's thorough familiarity with the Ferrara Bible invites speculation as to whether he was exposed to it during his youth in Venice, which in turn might be another indication of his immersion at an early age in a (*converso?*) culture literate in Spanish.

Although it is not the only biblical source for *Arguments*, the Ferrara Bible is the most prominent one and, as the only '*converso* Bible' in question as will be explained further below, likely the Bible carried by the friend, who perhaps possesses a 1611 edition like the one Morteira may have owned. Of the 247 biblical quotes in *Arguments* that can be attributed to a particular Bible, around 80 derive from the Ferrara text. This provenance is evident in examples such as the following quotation from Isa. 8.18 ('the children the Lord has given me as signs and portents in Israel'):

Los niños que dio ami el Señor fueron por maravillas en Israel (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] [fol. 34r])

los niños que dio a mi Adonay, por señales y por marauillas en Ysrael
(Ferrara Bible)

los hijos que me dió Iehova por señales y prodigios en Israel. (Reina-Valera Bible)

In the rendition of Isa. 8.18 from ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], the expression of 'children' by using 'niños' rather than 'hijos' and the use of 'maravillas' rather than 'prodigios' to express 'portents' parallels the Ferrara text rather than the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (Reina-Valera Bible), which was also a source for *Arguments* as will be discussed below. At the same time, the omission in *Arguments* of the term 'señales' (signs) reveals that the quotation did not come directly from the Ferrara text itself, and that it was instead incorporated from memory.

Six of the quotations in *Arguments* that derive from the Ferrara Bible focus on a repeated deficiency of the Ferrara text that was, in fact, one of

several deficiencies pointed out by Abraham Usque (fl. sixteenth century), an *ex-converso* from Portugal who established a press in Ferrara and led the team of translators that produced the Ferrara Bible. Usque explains that the ‘rough’ (barbaro) Spanish is a result of the technique employed in the translation:

And although to some the language might seem rough and strange, and very different from the refined type used in our times, another type could not have been used, since in wanting to follow verb by verb and not render a word in two ways, which is very difficult, or mistakenly place one in front of or behind another, it was necessary to follow the language that the ancient Spanish Hebrews used; which, while somewhat strange, will reveal upon close inspection the character of the Hebrew vocabulary, and thus convey the gravity that antiquity typically possesses. For the well-known truth of the matter is that, inasmuch as all languages have their style and syntax, it cannot be denied that the Hebrew has its own, which is the one seen here in this translation, which was used instead of another one to keep its integrity.⁴⁶

The phrase ‘character of the Hebrew vocabulary’ is an indirect allusion to the fact that Hebrew is traditionally written without vowels (diacritical marks inserted above, below, or inside the consonants), and Usque’s declaration that the team of translators attempted ‘to follow verb by verb and not render a word in two ways, which is very difficult’ by reproducing ‘the language that the ancient Spanish Hebrews used’, or the *biblias romanceadas* tradition, assured that his ‘rough’ and ‘strange’ text would be open to interpretation.

One of the tendencies employed by ‘the ancient Spanish Hebrews’ in *biblias romanceadas* and perpetuated in the Ferrara Bible involves the manner of rendering a uniquely Hebrew verbal noun form called the ‘infinitive absolute’, which appears with frequency in the Hebrew biblical text immediately before verbs possessing the same three-letter root, as the infinitive absolutes ‘אכל’ and ‘מוה’ do in the phrases ‘אכל תמא’ and ‘מוה תמא’ in Gen. 2.16-17. In *Arguments*, as an apparent response to passages from Genesis (18.1-3, 28.11 and 28.18) mentioned earlier (fol. 20v) by the pilgrim, the friend introduces a reference to Gen. 2.16-17:

There we see the passage in Genesis that you pointed out. Look at what I’m showing you; you can read and check against the chapter being considered. First, we see the precept that our Lord gave to him, and based on that we’ll see the punishments given to him for not following it. Thus it

says: 'And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die". (Fol. 24v)

The infinitive absolutes in question, 'מוֹת תָּאכַל' and 'אָכְלָה תִּמְوت', form part of phrases that posed an obstacle to the Ferrara translators, which is underscored by Littlefield: 'In fact the only possible way to translate this construction in a language such as English or Spanish is to use a strengthening adverb' (xxix). In fact, this is the modern practice, as in the English translation of Gen. 2.16-17 from *The Jewish Study Bible* which treats the infinitive absolutes as verbal modifiers. In this case, modifiers, 'אָכְלָה' and 'מוֹת' convey the meanings, respectively, of 'free to' and 'shall' in order to place emphasis on the actions ('eat' and 'die') communicated by the verbs ('אָכְלָה' and 'מוֹת').

The Ferrara text is a source for the friend's rendition of Gen. 2.16-17 and the ensuing biblical quotations for a particular reason, namely, because it provides Morteira with a platform for expressing what may well have been his personal opinion of Usque's translation:

Dixo el Señor Dios al hombre de todo arbol del guerto comiendo comeras, pero del arbol de la cencía del bien ni del mal, no comeras, porque el dia que comieres moriendo moriras (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] [fol. 24v])

Y encomendo Adonay Dio sobre el hombre por dezir: de todo arbol del huerto comer comeras; Y de arbol del saber bien y mal no comeras del, que en dia de tu comer del morir moriras (Ferrara Bible)

In the preparation of the Ferrara text, the team of translators followed the previous convention employed in *biblias romanceadas* of rendering infinitive absolutes as variations of the same verb, with the result in the case of 'אָכְלָה' at the end of Gen. 2.16 being the problematic phrase 'comer comeras' (to eat, you will eat). While 'comer comeras' is employed in the Ferrara text as it had been in *Escorial Bible I.j.4* and *Escorial Bible I.ii.19*, in *Arguments* Morteira provides his own resolution with a phrase, 'comiendo comeras' (fol. 24v), in which the replacement of the infinitive verb form 'comer' with a gerund 'comiendo' communicates the meaning of 'eating, you will eat' and comes closer than the *biblia romanceada* text to communicating the notion of 'being free to eat from' almost all the trees in the Garden of Eden. Similarly, the friend's rendition of the final words of Gen. 2.17 as 'moriendo moriras' (fol. 24v) alters the Ferrara text with the substitution

of a gerund ‘moriendo’ (dying) for an infinitive verb ‘morir’ (to die). In this instance, the confusion involves Hebrew terms, ‘תוֹמָ’ and ‘תוֹמָת’, which share the same sequence of letters that form the root for the Hebrew verb that means ‘to die’ (תְּמוּתַ), and as such are incomprehensibly rendered in the Ferrara text as variations of the Spanish verb ‘to die’ (morir): ‘morir moriras’ (to die, you will die). It is interesting to note that the Ferrara translators themselves had modified a convention with the phrase ‘morir moriras’, which appears as ‘muerte morras’ (death, you will die) in *Escorial Bible I.j.4* and *Escorial Bible I.ii.19*. For Morteira, the solution is again a Castilian gerund, ‘moriendo’, to create a meaning of ‘dying, you will die’ (‘moriendo moriras’ [fol. 24v]).

Undoubtedly as a by-product of Morteira’s rabbinic training, as *Arguments* continues the friend exploits a Midrashic tradition for interpreting infinitive absolutes. A commentary on Gen. 2.17 found in *Midrash Rabbah* 16.6 explains that the verse signified ‘death for Adam, death for Eve, and death for his descendants’ (*The Midrash* 1.131), a punishment involving more than those who actually sinned that ‘is deduced from the doubling of the verb, that is, by interpreting the terms as they appear in the biblical text without vowels, ‘תוֹמָת תְּמוּתָ’, as manifestations of the same verb (תְּמוּתַ), which as usual is understood as an extension’ (*The Midrash* 1.131, n. 4). Through the discourse of the friend, Morteira engages in a Midrashic process of understanding the terms as repetitions of the same verb (albeit in a language different than that in which the terms were originally perceived as such), which is designed to reinforce the significance of the biblical punishment (and thus the significance of the sin). This reinforcement forms the core of the message the friend attempts to impart based on Gen. 2.16-17:

You have before you the words of the Sacred text, in which can be seen no punishment other than that of the body, and not of the soul, because they were all made of earth. And through that, since it was the part He had nurtured, the Lord began to inflict them on man and, accordingly, He said that his punishment would last until returning to the earth from which he was formed. This is the body, because we already know that the soul was instilled afterwards with that breath He blew into his nose. (Fol. 25r)

However, the pilgrim is not convinced, and begins to question the friend’s (Spanish) rendition of the infinitive absolutes:

‘Very well’, said the pilgrim, ‘but you don’t know that behind those words there are profound mysteries’.

'I believe that', said the friend, 'but the literalness can't be overlooked nor can the Ladino be changed'.

'Well', said the pilgrim, 'you don't understand the literal Ladino. It's clear in the duplication of the words of God, 'dying, you will die', that two deaths should be understood, corporal and spiritual. About that there can be no doubt because all Church doctors adhere to this'.

'After conceding to you', said the friend, 'that two deaths are to be understood, I'll clearly show you that neither refers to the soul but to corporality'.

'For me', said the pilgrim, 'it'd be a new thing that two mortal punishments were inflicted on the body'. (Fols. 25 r-v)

The pilgrim and the friend each provide interpretations of the meaning of the 'literal Ladino', that is, the Ferrara text. According to the pilgrim, both corporal and spiritual deaths are communicated by the phrase 'dying, you will die' (which is translated in *The Jewish Study Bible* as 'you shall die'), a concept with which the friend concurs only in part.

In the spirit of his attempt to distance the pilgrim from the conflation of corporality and spirituality that informs the Christian Trinity, the friend distinguishes the two notions in his response:

Adam was covered by grace, endowed with divine knowledge and full of light among the angels. In that bliss, in that kingly dwelling, like the angelic spirits he enjoyed the gaze of the Creator. In that state, there could be neither any ending nor death, so he used to eat from the tree of life. All of those distinctions made him immortal. Adam sinned and disobeyed his creator by eating the forbidden fruit and, afterwards, he was immediately deprived and stripped of all those gifts. He was unclothed and removed from that grace. With that he lost a glorious life, that sweet and blessed repose, which he'd been enjoying in the company of the saints. Proof of this is that he found himself naked afterwards, and he confessed in shame that he could no longer look with his eyes at the Supreme Divinity, and thus he hid himself. In the end he was banished and cast from the holy place of life. You see here how he lost that life, for it was the only life that his body and soul possessed. From this great loss came the second one, the corporal death to which He subjected his descendants. And because we possess the corporal part of him, we're called children of Adam. (Fols. 25v-26r)

The friend then pauses to ask for a Christian perspective on rendering infinitive absolutes:

'Before proceeding I'd like to ask you how your wise doctors understand the aforementioned verses, which contain the same duplication when God says, about the fruit of the garden: "eating, you will eat" (fol. 26r). The pilgrim's reply—"That', said the pilgrim, 'seems to say that it's not enough to eat one time, but that you keep nourishing and sustaining yourself through Him' (fol. 26r)—again provides an alternate perspective, which in turn leads to further discussion based on the ambiguity of infinitive absolutes as rendered according to the *biblias romanceadas* tradition.

The friend continues by suggesting that infinitive absolutes might be interpreted as verbal modifiers, as they are in *The Jewish Study Bible*: 'My good friend, here you see that your view is severely weakened and undermined. Furthermore, I say to you that it's not obligatory to understand that case of duplication in Scripture as two deaths. It's very normal to speak in that fashion as a means of affirmation, as if to say that one, without fail, will die' (fol. 26v). The friend then supports his position with a series of biblical quotations containing infinitive absolutes, from Genesis, 1 Kings, Deuteronomy, and Ezekiel (fols. 26v-27v), and even adds infinitive absolutes to Ezekiel 18.4-5 and 18.10 (fol. 27r).

The friend concludes by returning to the message imparted on fol. 25r ('You have before you...'):

You see clearly the clarity of the divine doctrine, in which the author of the divine truth teaches and advises us about the virtue of contrition by saying to us that the one who truly sins and repents will have his sins forgotten, and his soul will escape death. From this we see and understand that Adam's sin doesn't affect his descendants in a spiritual sense, which is why there's always a place for penitence. And neither you nor your doctors can deny to me that the virtuous work that man does for the love of and service to God is of more merit because it's done with the express intent of obeying his Creator. (Fols. 27v-28v)

In perpetuating the aforementioned Midrashic tradition of understanding the infinitive absolute to communicate an 'extension', or enhancement, of an action in question, Morteira provides the friend with a tool for combating the influence of Christian doctrine on the pilgrim while at the same time couching his narrative in terms that evoke a significant deficiency in the canonical Spanish biblical text used by *conversos*.

The Ferrara Bible was not Morteira's only source for the biblical quotations in *Arguments*. Around 35 of them, and 64 additional quotations that may or may not come from the Ferrara Bible, derive from a Christian Bible that employed the *biblia romanceada* textual tradition and expanded it by including Spanish translations of the New Testament and Apocrypha. The initial volume was published in 1569, in Basel, in order to avoid the Inquisition, by a team led by Casiodoro de Reina. Reina's edition is commonly known as the *Biblia del Oso* (Oso Bible) because of the bear (in Spanish *oso*) included on the title page. As Reina announces in his introductory remarks to the reader, his Spanish translation is based on the Latin Vulgate, although errors in the Vulgate are corrected by taking the Hebrew source into consideration. Reina also reveals that the Ferrara Bible was consulted more than any other Spanish rendition of the Old Testament, and the similarities between the two Bibles are readily evident. Modifications were made by Reina's team to terms and phrases deemed difficult to understand, and the fact that a number of these modifications involve the presentation of infinitive absolutes as single verbs so as to achieve more clarity. The employment of this technique in the Oso Bible indicates that the discussion in *Arguments* concerning the treatment of infinitive absolutes involves the Ferrara text, which would be another indication that the friend is carrying an edition of the Ferrara Bible.⁴⁷

Fewer than 3,000 copies of the Oso Bible were printed in 1569, and it quickly became difficult to acquire. While it was a Christian Bible, it would be logical to speculate that copies were available in important Jewish intellectual centers such as Venice, and Morteira may have gained his knowledge of the New Testament, demonstrated in *Arguments* and other works, by reading the Oso Bible as a component of his rabbinical education. Evidence that Morteira knew the Oso Bible surfaces on several occasions in *Arguments*. For example, a reference to a passage from Prov. 21.4 ('Haughty looks, a proud heart— / The tillage of the wicked is sinful') in a declaration made by the friend—'By the way, I'd truly like to avail ourselves now of the holy company of the Sacred Scripture, because it'll provide us with an example of the many disillusionments. Wise men call it 'teacher' King Solomon calls it 'light' (fol. 24v)—based on the rendition of 'The tillage of the wicked is sinful' in the Oso Bible:

pensamiento de malos, pecado (Ferrara Bible)

el brillo de los impíos, son pecado (Oso Bible)

In *Arguments*, the use of the term ‘light’ (in the Spanish text ‘luz’) parallels the term used in the Oso Bible (‘brillo’, which in Spanish can mean ‘brightness’, ‘shine’ or ‘glow’), while an equivalent term is lacking in the Ferrara text, in which ‘pensamiento’ (pondering) appears. Both ‘light’ and ‘pondering’, which in the phrase ‘pensamiento de malos’ (pondering of the wicked) recalls the metaphorical phrase ‘tillage of the wicked’, are possible Spanish translations of the Hebrew term, נַרְאָה. This term, which, as mentioned above, is traditionally written without vowels in editions of the Old Testament, has the same sequence of root consonants as the Hebrew terms for ‘light’ (נֶרֶת) and ‘tillage’ (נִירָה, in the literal sense of ‘tilling a field’), and may therefore be interpreted in either fashion by modern editors.

The possibility that Morteira knew the Oso Bible is further suggested by his awareness of another source used in *Arguments*, which is revealed on fol. 42v, within the friend’s depiction of the holiness of biblical Israel: ‘Consider now that the Lord gave them divine and spiritual bread as sustenance for their bodies. Those who say that they were a terrestrial and carnal people thus do possess knowledge and understanding. The blind ones don’t know that neither their clothing nor their shoes became worn during all the time in the dessert. Moreover, as Pineda says in his *Monarchía*, they didn’t get older and their hair didn’t grow’. Morteira’s source here is *Monarchia Ecclesiastica*, a multivolume history of the world (which is not available in a modern edition) by the cleric, preacher, and historian Juan de Pineda (b. c. 1500-d. 1566), who may have been royal ambassador in Rome during the 1520s. Although *Monarchía* was published in Salamanca (in 1588), it was reprinted on two occasions (in 1594 and in 1606) in Barcelona during Morteira’s youth in Venice, and it is logical to speculate that Morteira may have come to know at least parts of Pineda’s 30-volume work prior to arriving in Amsterdam. In light of the fact that the majority of the books published in Venice dealt with religious and theological themes, including ‘texts concerned with canon law, histories of monastic orders, collections of sermons, lives of saints and laymen’ (Pallotta 38), Morteira may have acquired knowledge of topics covered by Pineda indirectly, perhaps through interaction with individuals who had recently arrived from Spain or who were involved in the publication and trade of theological books. At the same time, another fact, namely, that on a good number of occasions in his last work, *Tratado da verdade da lei de moisés* (Treatise on the Truth of the Law of Moses), a polemical treatise containing over 400 folios completed in 1660, Morteira quotes passages from *Monarchía* (by referring to chapter and section numbers

from Pineda) and discusses them at length, is strongly indicative that he consulted Pineda's work throughout his lifetime.

While a thorough analysis of Morteira's knowledge of *Monarchía* is beyond the scope of the present book—indeed, Pineda is an important figure who is in grave need of further study, and there is evidence in *Tratado* that Morteira criticized some of Pineda's ideas—it merits underscoring that Morteira's interest in Pineda was more likely because he was a Protestant rather than because he was a Spaniard. During the 1540s, Pineda occupied the post of rector at the Colegio de la Doctrina de los Niños in Seville, where he was influenced by Erasmians and Lutherans before the persecution of Sevillian heterodoxy by the Inquisition forced him to flee to Paris and then, like Reina and Valera, to Geneva. Pineda became a Calvinist minister and produced a number of religious works, including a Spanish translation of the New Testament and biblical commentaries that reveal 'his profound knowledge of Scripture' (Kinder, 'Juan Pérez' 291). In addition to looking to Pineda as a biblical authority, Morteira may have also read his works because of Pineda's anti-Spanish posture. Pineda composed one letter that 'attempts to show both religiously and politically that the papacy does not deserve the support of the King of Spain' (Kinder, 'Juan Pérez' 289) and another polemical text in which he attacks the cruelty of the Inquisition. Moreover, A. Gordon Kinder sheds light on Pineda's efforts to introduce his works 'into Spain as a means of spreading the Protestant message' ('Two Previously' 113), which may have also inspired Morteira to privilege Pineda as a Christian source. Pineda worked in Geneva among a group of Protestant sympathizers that included Casiodoro de Reina, which makes it logical to speculate that Morteira was familiar with the Oso Bible.

Whether or not he knew the Oso Bible before coming to Amsterdam, Morteira did develop a preference for the Spanish translation that replaced it, the Reina-Valera Bible, which was published in Amsterdam, in 1602, by Cipriano de Valera. Valera, like Reina, was a member of the Order of Observantine Jeronomites who was forced to flee from Seville to Geneva during the 1550s because of inquisitorial scrutiny cast on their Calvinist leanings. For Fisher, Morteira's praise of the Reina-Valera Bible in his *Tratado* reveals his sympathy toward Calvinists and his appreciation for an edition that was appealing on a religious level: 'Translating the Bible in a way that segregated apocryphal works and references to them from the Old Testament text, and filtering out residual influences of the Septuagint and Vulgate, Cipriano de Valera's Bible was closer to the Jewish version of Scripture than any other Christian Bible written in Spanish' (Fisher 128).

Morteira's affinity for the Reina-Valera Bible is evident in over 30 quotations in *Arguments*, such as the following verse from Isa. 43.21 ('The people I formed for Myself / That they might declare my praise'):

Este pueblo, que crie para mi, mi alabança cantaran (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] [fol. 41r])

El pueblo que formee para mi, mi loor recontaran (Ferrara Bible)

Este pueblo crié para mi, mis alabanças contara (Reina-Valera Bible)

As evident in the use of the verbs 'crie' ('I formed') and 'cantaran' ('That they might declare'), Morteira's rendition of Isa. 43.21 derived from the Reina-Valera Bible rather than the Ferrara Bible, in which 'formee' and 'recontaran', respectively, are the verbs used to express the same actions. The influence of the Reina-Valera Bible is also evident in *Arguments* in some 20 quotations that fuse passages from that Bible with passages from the Ferrara Bible, as in the following abridged quotation from Ps. 94.20-21 ("Shall the seat of injustice be Your partner [...] / They band together to do away with the righteous; they condemn the innocent to death"):

ajuntanse en asiento de maldades, [...] forman exercito contra la vida del justo, la sangre ynoçente condenan (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] [fol. 51r])

Si sera ayuntada a ti silla de quebrantos, [...] / Afonsadeanse contra alma de justo, y sangre ynoçente condenan (Ferrara Bible)

Iuntarseha contigo el throno de iniquidades, [...] / Ponense en exercito contra la vida del justo: condenan la sangre inocente (Reina-Valera Bible)

In this quotation, the phrase 'sangre ynoçente condenan' ('they condemn the innocent to death') parallels the Ferrara text while the phrase 'exercito contra la vida del justo' ('band together to do away with the righteous') parallels the Reina-Valera text.

As I have pointed out above, the abridged nature and imprecise wording of the biblical quotations in *Arguments* reveals their inclusion from memory, which in turn speaks to the scope of Morteira's knowledge of two, and possibly three, Spanish Bibles. Morteira not only knew how to quote from

these Bibles, he was also aware of the linguistic difficulties faced by *converso* readers of the Ferrara Bible, and there is a strong possibility that he began to study the *biblia romanceada* text at an early age. The ability to quote from and interpret the Ferrara Bible by Morteira upon his arrival in Amsterdam would have certainly contributed to his rapid ascension to the position of chief rabbi. Moreover, Morteira's familiarity with the Bibles used by Spanish Protestants may have also enhanced his appeal as a leader of a community situated in one of the centers of Protestant thought.

Arguments: Eschatology, rejudiaization and Baruch Spinoza

Fisher's theory regarding Morteira's reverence for Valera and other Jeronymites who converted to Calvinism in Geneva is further suggested by Morteira's knowledge of the work of Juan de Pineda. Both Fisher and Saperstein see this reverence as being based in Morteira's conviction that the spread of the Protestant Reformation moved Christianity toward Judaism with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, and thus closer toward an Apocalypse whose imminence was widely discussed by Jewish and Christian intellectuals during the seventeenth century. Of course, messianism had always been apart of the medieval European political landscape. In Iberia, during the seven-century-long Reconquest of Islamic Spain, as in Europe of the Crusades from the late tenth through the late thirteenth centuries, each Christian king became a potential messianic figure. Messianic movements also evolved in Islamic lands. In the *Iggeret Teman* (which has been translated into English as *Epistle to Yemen*), composed by the Cordovan Moses Maimonides (b. 1138-d. 1204) around 1172 in order to discredit a messianic figure of obscure origins in twelfth-century Yemen, Maimonides also mentions three other cases of messiahs in Islamic-controlled territories in Spain and modern-day Iran, as well as another one in France. During Morteira's time, apocalyptic messianism attracted an organized segment of the population among Christians as evidenced by the support of the Anabaptist John of Leiden (b. 1509-d. 1536) and his followers for the Münster Rebellion of 1534-35, during which John proclaimed himself king of a new Zion. Another Anabaptist reformer who was active in the Netherlands, David Joris (b. 1501-d. 1556), proclaimed himself the messiah as a descendant of King David and inspired a Davidjorist following that persisted until the end of the sixteenth century.

Morteira participates in this trend in the second half of *Arguments* by linking the rejudiaization of the pilgrim to the advent of the Apocalypse, a

topic he introduces when the friend points out that the Jews lack a polity as well as a spiritual center:

They don't have a republic, or a land, or a government like other peoples, after having once been fortunate enough to enjoy continuous prosperity in their land. They used to revel in the true good, protection by the divine Lord of the Law, and a government that was well respected and valued because it was widely considered to be a treasure, the son of God Himself. (Fol. 45v)

Because we see today that He doesn't have a house, or any place at all in the land of His repose, it's a clear fact to us that God wanders here and there with His people. (Fol. 47r)⁴⁸

The 'house' to which the friend refers, an allusion to the Second Temple of the biblical Jews, is depicted in further detail as *Arguments* reaches its climax:

First, you should know the holy house in which the Lord placed his name, including the one established by King Solomon, the one we're talking about—which was established after arriving from Babylonia—and the third that has yet to be founded, are all the same thing in the same place. While keeping this principle in mind, consider that during the founding of the second house there were present some elderly men who, remembering that the first had been much more sumptuous, felt that the second one was lacking; the people then grew lax in their practices and in keeping it up. (Fol. 63r)

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD is linked to rejudiaization in *Arguments* insofar as it is the result of an abandonment of Judaism, and further on the narrative the friend underscores that a new spiritual center can be built after the arrival of the Messiah: 'I'll show you the consequences of his arrival and how he'll reign on the earth over Israel as its steward and shepherd, under the protection of the Almighty' (fol. 69r). According to the friend, both he and the pilgrim are active participants in the development of eschatological events:

The Messiah promised by God to His people will come when Israel is scattered and spread throughout the world. [...] According to this ineffable truth, we know that the time hasn't come, since in the days of our forefathers, and in our own, new worlds have been discovered about which nothing was understood or known before, and thus our people has never been scattered as it is today. Item; the Messiah promised in the Law will

be the completion and fulfillment of all the prophesies that are written in the sacred books, which obviously shows that they weren't fulfilled back then. [...] Today we see very clearly, with our own eyes, that this prophesy hasn't been fulfilled by anyone but us since we're the ones who've arrived at the ends of the earth. We're there at a bad time because so many of us are worshiping their gods made of sticks and stones. (Fols. 69r-7or)

In declaring that 'so many of us are worshiping their gods made of sticks and stones', the friend alludes to the fact that *conversos* in Amsterdam and in Iberia remained practicing Christians.

This situation could change through genuine adherence to a doctrine the friend emphasizes in the narrative from the time he first reveals his copy of the Bible to the pilgrim, namely, education in *halachic* law, which is at the root of the 'great sin' committed by the Church fathers upon concealing what Scripture reveals about the Apocalypse (in this case Jer. 23.3-4, in which Jeremiah foretells God's ingathering of all Jews):

It was necessary, in order to comply with the divine word, that the Messiah reveal himself to the ten tribes, who formed the majority of the people, and that other one didn't do it. I ask: what fault did they have? Although they'd lost the right to what God had promised to them, they weren't in any way at the end of their rope. Truly, your doctors are so blind that they don't see something as clear as this. I don't consider this to be any excuse for playing down or covering up that type of great sin; things like this blind [fol. 71r] the people, leading them away from reading the sacred books and defending them with a wall of fire.

After establishing that the Messiah will come from the Davidic line, which he grounds in Jer. 23.5-8 (fols. 71r-71v), the friend depicts the restoration of his kingdom:

So you must know that our Lord, after He created the world, then created at once all the souls that would occupy it. The blessed soul of the Messiah was later predestined to save Israel and rule over it, and this is what your prophesy says, that one will come who, 'From ancient times', God raised in order to give him the scepter in Israel. In that place the Lord of the world revealed through David from whom and from where he'll come. I understand it; he's a son, the one who, being the youngest in his father's house, cast aside by his brothers, was chosen by Him in order to restore the kingdom [...] the Messiah will be from the tribe of Judah and the

house of David, that he'll be king and lord over Israel and all the people will join with him, and thus the kingdom of the Lord of the world will be magnified until the ends of the earth. (Fols. 76r-76v)

In the spirit of a sermon delivered by Morteira in which he claimed the Davidic Messiah would actually be King David, the friend's resolve to convince the friend of the imminence of the Davidic Messiah is contextualized by directly linking King David to the Inquisition and the ceremony which sentences were pronounced, the *auto-da-fé*⁴⁹:

To all must come a day when vengeance is taken upon them for the evils they inflict on the people of God. Hear how King David prophesizes it clearly, asking the Lord for this revenge, as he depicts these evils when clearly speaking of the rigorous judges who are ministers of the Inquisition: 'Rise up, judge of the earth, give the arrogant their deserts! / How long shall the wicked, O Lord, how long shall the wicked exult, / shall they utter insolent speech, / shall all evildoers vaunt themselves? / They crush your people, O Lord, / they afflict Your very own; / they kill the widow and the stranger; / they murder the fatherless'⁵⁰; 'Shall the seat of injustice be Your partner [...] / They band together to do away with the righteous; they condemn the innocent to death'⁵¹: Psalm 94.

Listen further, as the same king alludes to the *auto* that we endure, which they call 'de fe'⁵²; Psalm 14 says: 'Are they so witless, all those evildoers, / who devour my people as they devour food[?]'⁵³; 'You may set at naught the counsel of the lowly, but the Lord is his refuge'.⁵⁴ Behold the clarity of this truth, how they force our people to endure public shame before the large crowds that amass. They preach in public, on a raised stage, so that all can see and hear everything. They do that to them while they wait for what our Lord has promised, and they believe in His Holy Law and praise the divine word. (Fols. 50v-51v)

This series of references to the Psalms anchors the contemporary context of the friend's eschatological vision, which culminates in the destruction of inquisitorial Spain toward the end of *Arguments* in the friend's interpretation of Isa. 59.19-20:

'Let's take a look at that passage', said the friend, 'and we'll grasp the thread of the truth. Do you see here the verse and chapter? It says: 'For He shall come like a hemmed-in stream / Which the wind of the Lord drives on; / He shall come as redeemer to Zion, / To those in Jacob who turn back from

sin—declares the Lord'.⁵⁵ These two verses go together and are bound to the truth. I can affirm to you that I've never heard any discussion about them. They're very clear and it seems to me that the Lord of the world wants to give us a true sign in them about when He'll send the Messiah, which is the following: when you see a tormentor running toward you like a river, know that the time for Me to send the redeemer to Zion has arrived. However, the people of Israel have had so many oppressors throughout the ages, and have felt the pain of so many deaths in so many parts of the world so that there's hardly a piece of earth that hasn't been bathed in their blood. The Lord of the world speaks in this passage of only one oppressor, and compares it to a river, which is the truth. [...] Therefore, the prophesy teaches us clearly by declaring that this oppressor, who, like a flowing river continually oppresses and massacres the people of God, is the Roman Empire, whose leader and champion is Spain, which has for so many years, with the drive and the rage of a tempestuous river, moved with the current of its putrid waters, plunging the people of God into mourning, and always casting it into a sea of oppression. (Fols. 79r-79v)

Spain, presented here as the new Rome, can be defeated if the friend's objective is met, 'which is that the Lord of the world shapes us and teaches that the kingdom of the Messiah will be in the Holy Land with the twelve tribes of Israel all living subservient to their Creator, which is why they were created' (fol. 82r).

According to Morteira's eschatological vision in *Arguments*, the reju-daiization of *conversos* brings about a restored Jewish polity in the Holy Land. Insofar as the narrative is directed toward the pilgrim, he too shares in the responsibility of contributing to the advent of the Apocalypse through sincere reju-daiization, which is a responsibility that he accepts as *Arguments* draws to a close:

I truly understand and know well the Holy Scripture, for only the Law of our Lord is the true one. It contains and bestows salvation through knowing the truth: that the people from whom God made me follows and goes along the right path. May God be given thanks. I promise you, and I take the Lord as a witness, that I carry Him rooted in my heart, and that He has cleansed me of all the lies that I've followed until now. It was reserved for you to do such a great thing for me, because you're good and deserve more from the Lord of the world. May he give you a reward and may He give me the will to never forget the debt that I owe to you for so much kindness. (Fols. 83v-84r)

Morteira's eschatological vision in *Arguments* should be considered against the backdrop of the messianic fervor of the mid-seventeenth century that reached its zenith in the figure of Sabbatai Zevi (b. 1626-d. 1676), whose presence was first noticed in Amsterdam in 1665. Zevi began to reveal himself as the Messiah in the late 1640s in his native city of Smyrna and then continued making the announcement in major Jewish communities during the 1650s, where he attained thousands of followers who sold their possessions and prepared for the Apocalypse—in particular, among *conversos*—before ultimately converting to Islam (under pain of death) in Constantinople in 1666.⁵⁶ The messianic pretensions of Sabbatai Zevi constituted the most provocative call for the establishment of a Jewish homeland and, although Morteira died five years before Zevi arrived in Amsterdam, he may have come to know these pretensions via his well-informed former student in Venice, Mordecai Zacuto.

Morteira's depiction of a revival of a biblical polity was thus far from the only contemporary expression of Jewish eschatology and, of course, the goal of restoring Zion had a long-standing tie to intensified anti-Judaism and the emergence of messianic figures.⁵⁷ At the same time, Morteira wrote at a unique historical moment. During the 1650s, the intensification of Jewish eschatology responded to two catastrophic events, with the initial one being the decimation of Iberian Jewry and subsequent persecution of *conversos* by the Inquisition. The second episode to spark an intensification in messianic fervor was the Khmelnytsky Pogroms, a wave of violence in 1648-49 during an uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky (b. c. 1595-d. 1657) for Ukrainian liberation from Poland, which resulted in the slaughter of tens of thousands of Jews.

Morteira's messianism was less fanatical than that of Zevi and developed in conjunction with his lifelong participation in non-Jewish intellectual circles. The roots of the aforementioned Anabaptism among millenarist Dutch Protestants are found in exegesis from late Antiquity, when eschatology acquired a chronology among early Christian theologians such as Tertullian (b. c. 155-d. c. 240), who foretold the advent of a thousand-year messianic kingdom after the Second Coming of Christ.⁵⁸ Chiliasm, as this premillenarist eschatology is known, evolved for a thousand years parallel to a Jewish Midrashic tradition that also foretold a thousand-year messianic reign proclaimed in the Hebrew Bible. Gershom Scholem underscores that interaction between Chiliasts and Jews upon declaring that '[o]nly a small minority of the Jewish people lived at the time in Protestant countries where chiliasm can be said to have been a significant factor in public affairs. In fact, only the Jews of northern Germany and Holland could possibly have felt

such an influence' (101). As Scholem explains, interaction between Chiliasts and Jews, which occurred primarily in Holland, worked to complement Jewish thought: 'Chiliast sectarians were among the first to defend in public the rights of the Jews and to proclaim the restoration of the kingdom of Israel an essential part of millenarian fulfillment. Some, such as Johann Amos Comenius, the revered leader of a group of Bohemian Brethren living in Holland, and Peter Serrarius succeeded in establishing contact with local Jewish scholars' (101). It would be logical to include Morteira among these 'local Jewish scholars', and it is certain from correspondence that Serrarius (b.1600-d. 1669), who lived in Amsterdam, was also on close personal terms with Spinoza, then a member of Morteira's congregation, during the middle of the seventeenth century.⁵⁹

A letter sent to Spinoza from London in December, 1665, a month after the first news of Sabbatai Zevi had arrived in Amsterdam, by his long-time friend, the German theologian Henry Oldenburg (b. c. 1619-d. 1677), demonstrates that Spinoza was aware of contemporary messianic fervor:

But I turn to politics. Here there is a wide-spread rumour that the Israelites, who have been dispersed for more than two thousand years, are to return to their homeland. Few hereabouts believe it, but many wish it. Do let your friend know what you hear about this matter, and what you think. For my part, I cannot put any faith in this news as long as it is not reported by trustworthy men from the city of Constantinople, which is most of all concerned in this matter. I am anxious to know what the Jews of Amsterdam have heard about it, and how they are affected by so momentous an announcement, which, if true, is likely to bring about a world crisis. (Spinoza, *Complete Works* 853)

Although Spinoza's response to this letter has been lost, he was undoubtedly cognizant of Zevi's presence, which the Jewish community proclaimed openly as documented by Rabbi Jacob ben Aaron Sasportas (b. 1610-d. 1698) in a letter translated into English by Scholem: 'And there was a great commotion in the city of Amsterdam, so that it was a very great trembling. They rejoiced exceedingly, with timbrels and with dances, in all the streets. The scrolls of the Law were taken out of the Ark [for ceremonial processional] with their beautiful ornaments, without considering the possible danger from jealousy and hatred of the gentiles. On the contrary, they publicly proclaimed [the news] and informed the gentiles of all the reports' (521).

An intriguing parallel between Spinoza's posture and that of Zevi comes to the fore in light of an indirect comment made by Zevi well after his

apostasy to explain his most important concept, that is, the mystical doctrine of the Godhead. Zevi's clarification of this concept was recorded by an acquaintance: 'Know that the Cause of all Causes exercises neither influence nor providence in the lower worlds. He brought into being the Supreme Crown to be God' (qtd. in Scholem 912). Scholem explains that Zevi's most threatening doctrine 'is based on the "heretical" assumption that the "Cause of All Causes" has no religious significance. As the beginning of the chain of causes, it is a matter of logic or ontology, but not of religious contemplation or worship' (913). The primacy given by Zevi to logic over spirituality is one with which Spinoza would have concurred, and both the mystic and the philosopher advocate this primacy through the abrogation of rabbinic law.⁶⁰ In the case of Zevi, this attitude was typical. Messianic figures inevitably came to challenge and oppose rabbinic authority, especially on a doctrinal level insofar as they bypassed the signs held by rabbinic exegetical tradition to foretell the Apocalypse.

While Spinoza also equates logic (or reason) with the highest level of knowledge, he also indirectly finds a role for spirituality.⁶¹ In his *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza displays tepid support toward the notion that the ability of the Jewish people to endure, symbolized by the ritual of circumcision, will contribute to the future restoration of a Jewish homeland:

I think that the sign of circumcision has such great importance as almost to persuade me that this thing alone will preserve their nation for ever, and in fact, were it not that the principles of their religion weaken their courage, I would believe unreservedly that at some time, given an opportunity, since all things are changeable, they might reestablish their state, and God will choose them again. (55)

Spinoza's view that Jews were capable of restoring their homeland was shared by followers of Zevi, including Zevi's prophet, Nathan of Gaza (b. 1643-d. 1680), and renowned intellectuals such as the Italian scholar Jonas Salvador (fl. seventeenth century).⁶² These manifestations of Zionist thought articulate visions of a restored Jewish homeland after the ingathering of Jews in the Holy Land, which had long been a characteristic component of the missions of false messiahs. At the same time, aside from the ingathering itself, depictions of messianic doctrines or texts composed by messianic figures throughout history provide little information on how these individuals planned for the political reestablishment of a Jewish state. A facet of Spinoza's attitude toward a Jewish homeland in his *Theological-Political Treatise* that he shares Morteira's eschatological vision in *Arguments*

involves a formula for this political reestablishment, namely, that it might be achieved through the practice of Judaism, whether by performing the act of circumcision or by embracing *halachic* Judaism.

As chief rabbi, Morteira oversaw the process of rejudaization in meetings with *conversos*, by composing anti-Christian polemical works, and through his weekly sermons from the pulpit, which, as Saperstein rightly points out, Spinoza heard 'beyond any reasonable doubt' (16). That Morteira exerted some influence on Spinoza in this role is generally accepted by scholars. Morteira's influence on Spinoza, whether through weekly sermons or during what Margaret Gullan-Whur calls 'leisure-time' (42) learning sessions involving biblical study, occurred in spite of the fact that Morteira could be hostile toward philosophy. In one sermon, Morteira enlists philosophers as one of 'three kinds of heretics who diverge from God's Torah. [...] The first are the philosophers, who follow the path of logical deduction, deriving from it what they apprehend and nothing else' (qtd. in Saperstein 211). In another sermon, Morteira repeats this attack: 'Now there are three categories of those who rise against the divine Torah at various times. The first are those who deny the divinity of the Torah. [...] The first are the philosophers' (qtd. in Saperstein 213). Morteira appears to be directing his criticism toward contemporary rational philosophy since, as Saperstein observes, 'he cites Jewish philosophers (Maimonides, Gersonides, Albo, Abraham Shalom) approvingly in his sermons' (212). The philosophers revered by Morteira all worked during the Middle Ages (Maimonides, Gersonides (Levi ben Gershon [, [b. 1288-d. 1344], Joseph Albo [b. c. 1380-d. c. 1444] and Abraham Shalom [d. c. 1492]), which further suggests that he was at odds with aspects of contemporary philosophical thought.

Although he may have been opposed to some of its ideas, Morteira reveals in *Arguments* that his knowledge of contemporary philosophy was current. For example, in order to support his assertion of God's 'universal power He has over all creatures' (fol. 19r), the friend declares: 'He took it from them in His own way, thus relegating them to the second causes' (fol. 19r). The friend returns to this line of reasoning further on in the narrative:

But since Adam didn't keep the commandment and he overstepped his limit, he lost his earthly share in this world, which had been given to him conditionally. He lost it because of his sin and thus he was later banished from the holy place, condemned to wander in exile for having lost what pertained to the Lord. He was divested of his possession of it and cut off by our Lord from His divinity, without which he and his descendants remained under the second causes of the heavens. (Fol. 57r)

These statements reveal Morteira's engagement in philosophical and theological discussions centering on cause and effect involving a cause (an action, occurrence, volition, etc.) that is ultimately brought about through a first cause, God, notions that Spinoza would develop in a different direction in his *Ethics*.

For Morteira, there is no doubt that God is the universal first cause, a view that Spinoza, albeit by identifying God with Nature, appears to express in an Appendix to Part 1 of his *Ethics*:

I have now explained the nature and properties of God: that he necessarily exists, that he is one alone, that he is and acts solely from the necessity of his own nature, that he is the free cause of all things and how so, that all things are in God and are so dependent on him that they can neither be nor be conceived without him, and lastly, that all things have been predetermined by God, not from his free will or absolute pleasure, but from the absolute nature of God, his infinite power. (*Complete Works* 238)

As he continues in this Appendix, Spinoza undermines this position by disempowering this 'infinite power' and, by extension, the concept of worshiping God (or religion):

Now all the prejudices which I intend to mention here turn on this one point, the widespread belief among men that all things in Nature are like themselves in acting with an end in view. Indeed, they hold it as certain that God himself directs everything to a fixed end; for they say that God has made everything for man's sake and has made man so that he should worship God. So this is the first point I shall consider, seeking the reason why most people are victims of this prejudice and why all are so naturally disposed to accept it. Secondly, I shall demonstrate its falsity; and lastly I shall show how it has been the source of misconceptions about good and bad, right and wrong, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and ugliness, and the like. (*Complete Works* 239)

Spinoza's disdainful attitude toward worship of God, which invalidates Morteira's concept of God as a universal first cause that is appreciated through worship (and lost, as in Adam's case, through sin), may have been influenced by contact with Morteira, and it is interesting to speculate that, in developing this attitude, Spinoza was reacting to Morteira's disdain for philosophers, which is the type of intellectual impact Saperstein sees on Spinoza in concepts that are 'transformed and secularized' (16) in his writings.

Perhaps as a manifestation of this tendency, Spinoza's view of *converso* spirituality contradicts the spiritual history described by Morteira in *Arguments*. Spinoza ties the dilapidated state of Iberian Jewry to their abandonment of Judaism:

But experience has shown that it is the resentment of the gentiles to a large extent that preserves them. When the king of Spain at one time compelled the Jews to accept the religion of his kingdom or go into exile, a large number of Jews converted to the Catholic faith. All those who accepted it were granted the privileges of native Spaniards and were considered worthy of all positions of dignity. Hence they immediately integrated with the Spanish, so that in a short time there were no remnants of them left and no memory of them. But quite the opposite happened to those whom the king of Portugal compelled to convert to the religion of his kingdom. For though they submitted to this faith, they continued to live apart from all men, doubtless because he declared them unworthy of all higher positions. (*Theological-Political Treatise* 55)

Spinoza's failure to recognize the significance and popularity of crypto-Judaism is noteworthy because it was crypto-Judaism that maintained his forebears as Jews and that, ironically, was the reason the Portuguese Nation felt superior because of their Iberian heritage to all other Jews.

However, with respect to the actual process of restoring a Jewish homeland, rather than dismiss the possibility as a relic of a religion that he finds outdated, Spinoza finds common ground with the evolving contemporary ideas of his rabbi. Spinoza sees little sense in practicing a religion that became invalid upon the destruction of the Second Temple: '[N]ow that their state is dissolved, there is no doubt that the Jews are no more bound by the Law of Moses than they were before the commencement of their community and state' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 71). At the same time, the fact that he implicitly links the practice of Judaism to Jewish statehood as noted above ('circumcision [...] will preserve their nation for ever, and [...] they might reestablish their state') echoes the tone of the discourse in *Arguments*. Even though he may not have supported its spiritual foundation, Spinoza, like Morteira, envisioned the possibility of a restored Zion. While not an official student in the Keter Torah yeshiva founded by Morteira, where the climate was 'fervently Messianistic [and] supportive of Menasseh [ben Israel's] claim [in *The Hope of Israel*] that the redemption of Israel through a marrano Messiah was fast approaching' (Gullan-Whur 41), Spinoza undoubtedly knew that his community leaders

were actively working to trigger an apocalyptic event in the hope creating a Jewish state, and that this matter was not only complicated by the appearance of messianic figures but by the popularization of Lurianic Kabbalah, according to which there existed ‘the possibility of bringing about the end and redemption with one stroke, that is, by one powerful and concentrated act of meditation’ (Scholem 75).

Morteira composed *Arguments* at a pivotal moment in Jewish history, when a recovery from the obliteration of Iberian Jewry and the Khmelnytsky Pogroms was uncertain and beginning to be linked to the need for a homeland. Menasseh ben Israel took the extreme step in 1655 of traveling to meet Cromwell, who had defeated his royalist foes and risen to the post of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England less than two years earlier. Menasseh’s aim was to convince Cromwell to participate in the apocalyptic process of reestablishing a Jewish state through a physical act, namely, the unification of the Jews in England. Morteira, unlike his colleague but just like his congregant, Spinoza, focuses the issue of restoring Zion on a spiritual act, namely, the practice of Judaism. The limited appreciation expressed by Spinoza for observing rituals that he considers to be obsolete is centered on a connection between a restored state and those rituals. In *Arguments*, Morteira expresses this connection in clear terms by communicating the notion of the restoration of Zion brought about by the rejudaization of *conversos*, an early Zionism whose roots were firmly planted within the Amsterdam community that he spiritually fathered at the dawn of modernity.

Biographical notes on Miguel López and notes on his messianic images

The individual who copied the two polemical works that comprise ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], who is called either Miguel (or Michael) López or Michael López Pinto, copied at least ten manuscripts containing works by Morteira over the course of several decades.⁶³ As he reveals in a manuscript that he copied in Dutch in 1735 or 1736, López was born in 1662 or 1663, and it would be logical to speculate that he died soon after copying an anonymous Spanish text (*Question de la unidad de Dios* [The matter of the unity of God]), in 1739, in which he declares on the title page that he is 77 years old.⁶⁴ López copied four different works by Morteira during his career as a scribe, including *Obstaculos, Preguntas que hizo un clérigo de Ruan de Francia a las quales respondio [...] Saul Levy Mortera, Argumentos contra los*

Evangelios, Actos y Epistolas, and *Providencia de Dios con Ysrael* (the Spanish translation of *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés*, which López copied on four different occasions).

The fact that López copied these works between 1703 and 1734 indicates Morteira's popularity well after his death as well as the continued existence of a Jewish public in Amsterdam that read in Spanish. Moreover, the illustrations on several manuscripts, including the one that contains *Arguments*, testify to a lingering messianism in post-Sabbatean Amsterdam. These illustrations were presumably made by López himself insofar as similarly drawn images appear on three manuscripts copied by López within a span of thirteen years: *Providencia* (1706) Cod. UBA/BR 21 [Fuks 280]; *Obstaculos* (1712) Ms.. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]; *Providencia* (1719) Cod. EH/LM 48B16 [Fuks 208].

The title pages on all three of these manuscripts are adorned with classical columns, which is a reflection of contemporary neoclassical tastes. Although the columns possess different types of capitals (UBA/BR 21 [Fuks 280] includes Roman Doric capitals and the other two manuscripts display Roman Corinthian capitals), all three pairs of columns possess the same base consisting of four horizontal sections stacked on top of each other. In addition, all three title pages portray a scene in which a woman is shown standing on top of a figure that appears to be male, and which may be a representation of the Devil. At the same time, in each drawing the woman appears in a slightly different position with respect to the other figure. In the earliest manuscript, UBA/BR 21 [Fuks 280], from 1706, the woman appears bare breasted holding a lamp in her right hand as she triumphantly stands on top of a male figure—one foot on his shoulder and the other on his leg—whose demonic nature is suggested by his raised triangular ears and the fact that a serpent lies coiled behind him. In the manuscript containing *Arguments* (EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]), which was produced in 1712, the woman, lamp in hand, wears a body-length tunic as she stands on top of the stomach and the leg of a devil like figure who exhales a smoky substance (his last breath?). In the third manuscript, EH/LM 48B16 [Fuks 208], produced in 1719 (and unlike the other two polychromatic), the female figure (clothed in a more elegant tunic) appears in the center of the title page (rather than near the top as in the other two cases), again holding a lamp and again standing on top of a male demonic figure (as suggested again by his raised ears), who on this occasion rests on his stomach.

The notion of triumph is what relates this repeated scene to another scene that is depicted on the title pages of two of the manuscripts in

question. The depiction of this second scene by López indicates that he wished to underscore one of the major themes in both *Arguments* and *Tratado*, namely, a vision of an impending Apocalypse leading to the arrival of the Messiah from the Davidic line. López includes the scene in three illustrations at the bottom of the title page of UBA/BR 21 [Fuks 280], his copy from 1706 of *Providencia de Dios con Israel*. The scene commences at the far left, with a depiction of an earthly king sitting on his throne, speaking to his queen as he points his scepter toward her. In the middle illustration, an individual who appears to be same (bearded) earthly king is anointed by the high priest of the ancient Israelites (whose identity is revealed by his priestly breastplate). In the third image, to the far right, the Davidic Messiah, presumably the same individual just anointed as revealed by the spotted collar of his tunic (as in the first illustration while speaking with his queen), is mounted on a horse being led by an individual who must be the prophet Elijah, who ushers in the messianic age according to Jewish eschatology. As can be seen in Plate 1, in ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], the arrival of the Messiah, mounted on his horse and being led by Elijah, is centrally presented at the bottom of the title page in one illustration.

Translator's notes on ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206]

In copying ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206], Miguel López used little punctuation other than commas to separate clauses within sentences. López also employed commas at the end of many sentences rather than a period. In translating the manuscript into English, I have modernized the punctuation. In my translation I have also attempted to reproduce the manuscript by respecting, to the extent possible, divisions between paragraphs.

The language employed by Morteira in ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206] is a mixture of contemporary Castilian Spanish and Ladino. With respect to the former, the dialogue between the friend and the pilgrim—that is, everything except for the biblical quotations—exhibits linguistic features of seventeenth-century Castilian. For example, the typical confusion of two sibilants orthographically represented as *c* and *z* (due to a similar articulation) appears in several terms including various conjugated forms of the verb *hacer* (conveying the meaning of ‘to cause’, as in ‘to cause a renewal’), whose modern form, *hacer*, was not standardized until the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ Examples in *Arguments* include: ‘haze’ (fol. 9r), ‘hazen’ (fol. 13v),

etc. These forms stand in contrast to those used in the Ferrara Bible, which are archaic forms of the medieval Ladino variant of Castilian. For example, the appearance of ‘haze’ on fol. 9r occurs in Morteira’s rendition of Ps. 19.8 (‘perfect, renewing life’), in which his verb of choice modernizes the biblical quotation:

perfecta, y haze tornar el alma (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206])

perfeta, fazién tornar alma (Ferrara Bible)

The verb ending *-ién* employed in ‘fazién’ is an imperfect tense form that dates to the late Middle Ages, and its appearance in the Ferrara text is a typically anachronistic feature of Ladino that was eliminated from Castilian in favor of *-ían* by the end of the fifteenth century.⁶⁶

That this brief reference to Ps. 19.8 represents Morteira’s modification of the Ferrara text to what was presumably the Castilian he had learned during his youth is revealed further on in *Arguments* when Ps. 19.8 is quoted at greater length on fol. 55r (‘King David says it—“The teaching of the Lord is perfect, renewing life”’):

Ley del Señor perfecta hazien tornar alma (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206])

Ley de *Adonay* perfeta, fazién tornar alma (*Ferrara*)

The archaic verbal ending *-ién* of Ferrara text is preserved in this rendition by Morteira, which suggests that he recalled his source more precisely when using a longer quotation. However, the initial *h-* that Morteira employed in ‘hazien’ once again speaks to the difference between contemporary Castilian Spanish and archaic forms ‘frozen’ in Ladino, a difference that is revealed on many occasions in *Arguments*, including on fol. 13v, in Morteira’s rendition of Isa. 44.14-15 (‘He also makes a god of it and worships it’):

del resto hazen vn Dios (ms. EH/LM 48D38 [Fuks 206])

fazerloha doladizo (*Ferrara* Bible)

Whereas the Ferrara text again preserves the form ‘fazer’, whose initial *f-* was spelled as *h-* by the early 1500s to indicate that it was not being articulated as in the case of the modern Castilian *h-*, which in turn reveals that Morteira learned sixteenth-century Castilian as a youth rather than

Ladino.⁶⁷ Social prestige may explain why Morteira may have been less familiar with Ladino than Castilian Spanish. The mixture of dialects in *Arguments* may be explained by a daily reality described by Gullan-Whur (37), namely, that contemporary Castilian was spoken in *converso* homes in Amsterdam rather than Ladino, which was considered of the 'lower class and [of] regional usage' as Lloyd asserts (362). The narrative of *Arguments* indicates that Morteira experienced this reality and enlists him, whether or not he had any *converso* ancestors, on equal terms with his *converso* congregants with respect to comprehending the difficulties discussed above faced by readers of the Ferrara Bible.