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**The Roman Inquisition and the Crypto-Jews of Spanish Naples,
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ABSTRACT**The Roman Inquisition and the Crypto-Jews of Spanish Naples, 1569-1582****Peter Akawie Mazur**

Between 1569 and 1582, the inquisitorial court of the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples undertook a series of trials against a powerful and wealthy group of Spanish immigrants in Naples for judaizing, the practice of Jewish rituals. The immense scale of this campaign and the many complications that resulted render it an exception in comparison to the rest of the judicial activity of the Roman Inquisition during this period. In Naples, judges employed some of the most violent and arbitrary procedures during the very years in which the Roman Inquisition was being remodeled into a more precise judicial system and exchanging the heavy handed methods used to eradicate Protestantism from Italy for more subtle techniques of control.

The history of the Neapolitan campaign sheds new light on the history of the Roman Inquisition during the period of its greatest influence over Italian life. Though the tribunal took a place among the premier judicial institutions operating in sixteenth century Europe for its ability to dispense disinterested and objective justice, the chaotic Neapolitan campaign shows that not even a tribunal bearing all of the hallmarks of a modern judicial system-- a professionalized corps of officials, a standardized code of practice, a centralized structure of command, and attention to the rights of defendants-- could remain immune to the strong privatizing tendencies that undermined its ideals.

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Abbreviations

ACDF- Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Vatican City

ANTT- Arquivos Nacionais, Torre do Tombo, Lisbon

ARSI- Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome

ASDN- Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli, Naples *

ASV- Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City

MHSI- *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*

TCD- Trinity College, Dublin

* Not all of the documents in the *fondo Sant'Ufficio* of ASDN relating to the topic of this study are available for consultation by scholars. As a result, in several cases I have relied on partial transcriptions of the trial documents kindly provided to me by Prof. Giovanni Romeo of the Università di Napoli Federico II. In these cases I have placed an asterisk (*) after the document number in the citation.

Introduction

On October 26, 1569, Philip II of Spain sent a letter to his ambassador Juan de Zuñiga with instructions for a meeting with the reigning Pope, Pius V. The matter at hand was “the many things that have happened in his court that diminish the authority and pre-eminence of the Holy Office of these kingdoms.”¹ In particular, he was concerned with the Pope’s treatment of a series of trials of judaizers, heretics who practiced Jewish rituals, that had taken place in the city of Murcia in Southeastern Spain. The trials occurred in an atmosphere of panic and social unrest, and many of the condemned and their families had highlighted the numerous judicial irregularities of the trials and presented evidence of the corruption and partiality of the inquisitor, Salazar, and his officials. It was clear that this campaign had exposed deep inadequacies in the operation of the tribunals of the Holy Office in Spain. The victims of the Inquisition had appealed their case first to Madrid, and finally to Rome, where many of them began to arrive in 1565 seeking to appeal their case before the highest magistrate and arbiter of conscience in Christendom, the pope.²

In Rome, the accused judaizers of Murcia had found a sympathetic hearing. A memorial presented by Luisa Perez, who had been twice widowed by the Inquisition, was received with interest by several cardinals, and before long it became clear to the members of the Roman curia that in the Murcia campaign, the pure intentions of the law had been polluted by political interests, and the highest authorities of the Spanish Inquisition had been powerless to correct the mistakes of their subordinates. In 1565, Pius had requested an extraordinary inspection of the

¹ ASV, Misc.Arm.II.102, f. 287-296.

² Jaime Contreras, *Sotos contra Riquelmes. Inquisidores, regidores, criptojudios*. (Madrid: Anaya y Mario Muchnik, 1992).

tribunal of Murcia by a member of the Spanish *Consejo de la Suprema Inquisición*. Philip pointed out that the inquisitors in Spain, for their part, had always been sensitive to the pope's concerns; when he had requested the inspection, the Inquisitor-General had sent a member of the *Suprema*, the *licenciado* Francisco de Soto Salazar, to visit the tribunal and review all of its trials, after which he sent a summary to Rome. But not even this had been insufficient; Pius had further ordered *doctor* Gaspar de Quiroga to visit the tribunal in Murcia and await further instructions from Rome. There were even rumors that he was providing sanctuary to condemned judaizers. All of this seemed to Philip an excessive degree of interference in the operations of the tribunal by Rome, in violation of numerous pieces of legislation decreed by Pius' predecessors.³

The Pope replied to the king in a letter bearing the same date as the letter to Zuñiga. He conceded no ground: "The reasons that moved His Holiness to send someone to inspect this affair were the number of 65 men burnt, 18 of them in effigy, and a million in gold and perhaps more in confiscations and many other things besides," Pius continued. The victims who denounced the tribunal, he reminded the sovereign, "did not flee to Africa, but came to the Apostolic See, and they asked nothing other than to be returned to Spain under the control of a legate given by His Holiness, who would punish them if they had erred, and if they had not erred, would liberate the living and restore the reputations and possessions of those to whom he could not give back life." In the conclusion of his letter, the pope argued that the monarch's policies, if put into practice, would "in effect create an authority [for inquisitors], which has

³ ASV, Misc.Arm.II.102, f. 287-296.

never been seen and perhaps never conceived for any minister *a creatione mundi*...a thing which would be worthy of great consideration by all.”⁴

Pius V's letter is a remarkable statement of papal authority by one of its most dogged protectors, but it is also something more. The pope saw himself as the distributor of a severe, but ultimately fair and dispassionate justice. Having risen through the ranks of the clergy as an inquisitor, Pius was convinced that the battle against heresy in all its forms had to be based in the power of incorruptible judicial institutions capable of uncovering the many layers of deception that the heretics used to disguise themselves. Any lapse in the judicial standards of the Holy Office would only go to the benefit of its enemies. It was this goal that Pius pursued in his reorganization of the local tribunals of the Holy Office in Italy, his strengthening of its central administrative organ, the Congregation of the Holy Office, and his attempts to professionalize the office of inquisitor. He was a scrupulous and vigilant administrator, who according to one contemporary observer, “sees every trial and reads every document” relating to the inquisition.⁵ The policy undertaken by Pius V regarding the Murcia trials was fundamentally inspired by these principles. The pope's letter was at bottom a criticism of the methods of the Spanish Inquisition, and one that implicitly reprimanded the king from a much higher standard.

Ironically, in the very same days in which the pope wrote to Madrid, a series of trials similar in many respects to those in Murcia began to unfold in one of the tribunals of the Holy Office under the direct control of the papacy. In Naples, the vicar of the archiepiscopal court opened a massive investigation of judaizers on October 14, 1569. The investigation quickly expanded, and within months news reached Rome of judicial irregularities no less grave than

⁴ Pius V to Philip II, October 26, 1569, in *Correspondencia Diplomática entre España y la Santa Sede durante el Pontificado de S. Pio V*. ed. Luciano Serrano. (Madrid, 1914), 3:168-175.

⁵ quoted in Sergio Pagano, *Il Processo di Endimio Calandra e l'Inquisizione a Mantova nel 1567-1568*, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1991), 36.

those which had been denounced in Murcia: excessive use of torture, subornation of witnesses, confessions extracted under threat of capital punishment, and corruption of inquisitorial officials. The trials of the Neapolitan judaizers presented to Pius V, his collaborators in the congregation of the Holy Office, and their successors examples of the most violent and arbitrary procedures during the very years in which the Roman Inquisition was being remodeled into a more subtle and precise judicial system and exchanging the heavy handed methods used to eradicate Protestantism from Italy for more subtle techniques of control.

The local officials of the inquisition struggled with the logistics of a campaign on a scale beyond anything that had ever occurred in Naples. Hundreds of witnesses, false testimony, false denunciations, and retracted confessions complicated the work of the tribunal from the start. Combined with other problems, the campaign very nearly threw the tribunal into a full-fledged crisis. Tension stemmed from the tribunal's relationship with local secular authorities, who supported the inquisition's goals but feared the disorder that its activity could provoke, particularly in trials such as these, and from the suspects themselves, wealthy and powerful families who were capable of exerting influence both in the viceroy's palace and within the city's ecclesiastical institutions.

The whole affair obliged the Roman curia to an extended surveillance of the trials, and the Congregation of the Holy Office, the council that governed all of the inquisitorial tribunals in Italy, followed all of the most important stages of the trials from early on, making several decisive orders, and slowly bringing the proceeding, which lasted over a decade, into conformity with its standards of inquisitorial practice. In the early 1580s, the Congregation and the Neapolitan tribunal concluded the campaign with an investigation of crypto-judaism outside of the capital, in a remote corner of Calabria. But while the results of the papal-led campaign in

Southern Italy were more substantial than those of the one conducted immediately prior in Murcia, it was nonetheless an equivocal victory. The trials did not succeed in completely eradicating crypto-judaism from the *Regno*, and signs of it remained long into the future.

Reconstructing this chaotic undertaking in all of its complexity is essential for comprehending the history of the Roman Inquisition during the period of its greatest influence over Italian life. Though the tribunal is commonly recognized as among the premier judicial institutions operating in sixteenth century Europe for its ability to dispense disinterested and objective justice, this observation must be combined with the recognition that not even a tribunal bearing all of the hallmarks of a modern judicial system-- a professionalized corps of officials, a standardized code of practice, a centralized structure of command, and attention to the rights of defendants-- could remain immune to the strong privatizing tendencies that undermined its ideals. In Naples a series of factors converged to create a trial that fell short of the high standards set by Rome in almost every respect.

The Neapolitan campaign has been investigated by a number of historians, beginning with Luigi Amabile, who collected valuable materials from Italian state archives and the Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples for his monograph on the Inquisition in Naples. Amabile, however, was denied access to both the transcripts of the trials and the materials in the central archive of the Holy Office, which was not opened regularly to scholars until 1998. Romeo de Maio offered some further information in his studies of the Counter-reformation in Naples. More recently, Romano Canosa and Pierroberto Scaramella have reconstructed further aspects of the trials based on partial examinations of the trial records and correspondence. None of these studies, however, has offered a systematic reconstruction of the events based on an examination of all of the major collections of manuscripts in both Rome and Naples; moreover, numerous

fundamental aspects of the trials, such as the interventions of the Congregation of the Holy Office, and the maneuvers of the suspects behind the scenes, have not been brought to light.⁶

The following analysis is divided into four chapters. The first places the Neapolitan campaign in the context of the prosecutions for apostasy to Judaism by the three national tribunals of the inquisition, the Roman, Spanish, and Portuguese. The campaign in Naples did not occur in isolation, but was part of a general rise in prosecutions of judaizers in the 1570s linked to the contemporaneous re-organization of the three tribunals. It was an essentially “Iberian” campaign on Italian soil that arose through migration of Iberian conversos to Naples and the re-creation of Iberian social conditions in Southern Italy, from which Jews had been expelled by the Spanish monarchy in 1541. A large community of crypto-Jews developed in Naples because there was no opportunity for them to re-convert to Judaism, unlike in other Italian states. This, combined with the state’s robust support of the Holy Office in Naples, set the stage for a campaign of unprecedented proportions.

Chapter 2 narrates the first three years of the trials, in which a chaotic series of trials was brought under control after the Roman authorities of the Holy Office took drastic steps. The head of the local inquisition, Paolo Tasso, began to investigate a single family of New Christians, and quickly uncovered a much larger group of potential suspects. He and a small staff of officials carried out a series of proceedings that combined some of the worst excesses in the history of the Roman Inquisition: they made frequent recourse to torture, threatened suspects with capital

⁶ Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione in Napoli*, (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1892), 1:296-7, 306-319; Romeo De Maio, “Ideali e fortune di un controriformista minore: Girolamo Ferro” in *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Naples: Guida, 1973), 189-227; Romano Canosa, *Napoli e Bologna, la procedura inquisitoriale.*, vol. 5 of *Storia dell’Inquisizione in Italia* (Rome: Sapere 2000, 1990), 41-47; Pierroberto Scaramella, “La campagna contro i giudaizzanti nel Regno di Napoli (1569-1582): antecedenti e risvolti di un’azione inquisitoriale” in *Le Inquisizioni Cristiane e gli Ebrei* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2003), 357-373; Id., *Le lettere della Congregazione del Sant’Ufficio ai tribunali di fede di Napoli* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2002), lxxxviii-lxxxviii.

punishment if they did not confess, and suborned witnesses. At the same time, the maneuvers of influential members of some of the families under investigation saved some of their kin from full prosecution. As news of the situation gradually reached the Congregation of the Holy Office, it took decisive measures to restore the prestige of the tribunal by ensuring that correct procedure was followed. The first stage of the trials culminated in five executions in Rome, a lurid spectacle of ecclesiastical justice that concluded the most dramatic period of the trials.

Chapter 3 narrates the following decade, 1573-82, in which the *curia*, having overcome the crisis, continued to investigate the New Christians. Under continuous pressure from the Congregation of the Holy Office, the local authorities in Naples adopted a more piecemeal approach, prosecuting small groups at a time before moving on to others. Though stymied by disorganization and internal conflicts, the *curia* nevertheless demonstrated an ability to effectively continue the campaign, even re-opening seemingly dead investigations and pursuing suspects who had evaded prosecution in the past. This increasing efficiency and confidence also led to more ambitious endeavors, such as the prosecution of judaizers outside of the city of Naples, a frequently complicated undertaking which occasionally involved cooperation between the Neapolitan *curia*, Rome, the Spanish viceroy of Naples, and local civil and ecclesiastical authorities in the locality in question. By the 1580s, as prosecutions in Naples dwindled, the Roman Inquisition followed leads that led it to Catanzaro and Monteleone, two small cities in Calabria where communities of judaizers had existed undisturbed for many years. Though some inroads were made, the outcome of the Catanzaro campaign was inconclusive.

Chapter 4 examines the social background and religious practices of the *conversos* tried in Naples. When considering a campaign that was chaotic at worst and simply corrupt at best, in which inquisitors confronted witnesses who were influential and well-aware of the rules, it seems

unwise to place much faith in the confessions and testimony of the suspects. Nevertheless, the extremely rich testimony of the Neapolitan group faithfully reflects their position in many ways. In a large group full of tension and subject to heavy scrutiny from the outside and having little contact with Jews, a number of religious attitudes arose. There were some, like Girolamo Vignes, the founder of the Jesuit college in Naples and a powerful jurist, who sought to bring their families toward total assimilation with the Catholic majority, while others remained faithful to the traditions of their Jewish ancestors. Before the investigations began, they lived in an environment with few rules other than the maintenance of secrecy, in which experimentation and improvisation of Jewish rituals were the norm; some suspects also demonstrated an interest in other forms of religious dissent, including evangelical Christianity and astrology.

Neither unfettered hysteria nor social struggle provoked the Neapolitan trials. Instead, like many aspects of the Italian Counter-reformation, they were the result of an organized attempt to enforce rigid, legalistic conceptions of religious life through rational and modernized institutions. A rigorist turn at mid-century, developed by high ranking clergy within the Vatican, was channeled through new institutions and new versions of pre-existing institutions, all of which had the mission of enforcing Catholic doctrine and putting it into practice in everyday life. Among these, the inquisitorial courts had a central role; their mandate was clearly laid down in papal legislation, and they worked tirelessly against the many forces in society-- political, economic, and social-- which opposed them. Jews and New Christians represented a special aspect of this policy. Like New World *indios* or Africans, they were subjects for conversion. When the trauma of baptism was finished, and converts were left with a transformed identity, the Church once again stepped in to regulate.

Chapter 1: An Anomalous Campaign: Inquisition and Judaizers in the Mediterranean, 1550-1600

In October of 1569, the *vicario* of the archiepiscopal court of Naples and a group of assistants entered the home of Lavinia Petralbes and made a thorough search. They found several suspicious books: a vernacular *ufficiolo della Madonna*, a copy of the letters of Pietro Aretino, and most troubling, a mysterious book that eventually was identified by an expert witness as a liturgical book used by Spanish Jews. With these few but incriminating clues in hand, the *vicario* arrested Lavinia, her daughter Virginia, and her elderly aunt Mundina and began an investigation into the household. Over numerous depositions information emerged regarding Lavinia's family, its past history, and its current situation.

The testimony given by the servants who worked in Lavinia's home was particularly devastating. In lengthy depositions, they described a household full of secrets and barely concealed tensions. Every day, Lavinia would read from a book she kept locked in a case in her room, and she would quickly hide the book if found reading it. She would never invoke the name of Jesus or the Madonna, or any other saint, and there was no religious imagery, not even a crucifix, in her bedroom. Once a year, around Holy Week, she and Mundina would fast and eat *pane azzimo*, the matzoh. Yet despite her attempts to keep these activities secret, Lavinia's behavior was a sore point in the household. When Lavinia's husband, the *Capitan* Joan Ruiz de la Fonseca, had been alive, he would insult his wife during arguments, calling her a "Jewish whore" and threatening to have her burned at the stake. So, too, did the children, when they

were angry with their mother, call her a Jew, and the servants themselves were in agreement that Lavinia was a bad Christian.⁷

These depositions not only provided details of daily life in the Fonseca household, they also gave a steady flow of other names, mostly women, who were friends and family members of Lavinia and Mundina, and frequently members of the *Nazione Catalana*, the community of Catalan expatriates in Naples. Sometimes these women appear merely as witnesses to small household events that took on great significance during the trial, at other times they are accused of membership in the same “league of Jews and Lutherans” as Mundina and Lavinia.⁸ These names, when witnesses raised them, were carefully noted by the officials of the court, and little by little they too, began to appear in the archiepiscopal *curia* to testify before the *padre vicario*. By 1572, what had begun as the investigation of a single household had blossomed into a major event which involved not only the archiepiscopal court in Naples, but the Spanish viceroy and the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome, which had requested the extradition of several of the prisoners and carried on its own investigations in conjunction with the Neapolitan court. The first phase of the trials ended with the execution of five of the Neapolitan apostates in Rome, at Ponte S. Angelo, on the 8th of February of that year, but the investigation continued until 1582.

What emerged from the testimony was an underground world of religious ideas and practices that had developed in almost complete isolation from any outside stimulus, patiently and nervously cultivated in the seclusion of wealthy homes, observed only fleetingly by servants and neighbors. No family practiced quite the same way as another, and while certain women took on important roles in the conversion and education of others, the group represented a loose affiliation rather than a distinct organization. Books took on a paramount importance as

⁷ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 129, f. 1r-55v.

⁸ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 129, f. 14v-17r.

vehicles of religious messages and tools for instruction, though no traditional Jewish texts were ever found. Instead, the group relied on a series of manuscripts of biblical texts translated into Spanish and Portuguese. At the same time, they relied on a stripped down ritual calendar which they followed carefully, especially during Passover.

As the prosecuting authorities came to recognize, what they had uncovered in Naples was not a spontaneous local development, but part of a much larger phenomenon. In the wake of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the forced baptism of Portugal's Jews in 1497, Italy had become a place of refuge for *conversos*, the newly baptized and their children. They came for a variety of reasons, some of which had little to do with religion. But they brought with them a religious and social problem that loomed large in the 15th and 16th centuries: the problem of false conversion and apostasy to Judaism. A significant minority of the *conversos*, sometimes referred to as judaizers or *marranos*, continued to practice Judaism secretly, living outwardly as Catholics while continuing to follow the "law of Moses" in private among trusted friends and family members. Confronting this reality became an important task for both civil and ecclesiastical authorities throughout Italy, and different solutions were developed in the various states and urban centers of the peninsula.

The Neapolitan trials represent one of the most significant moments in the lengthy confrontation between the Roman Inquisition and the New Christians of the Italian peninsula. Here the Inquisition, with the measured support of the Spanish viceroy, pursued a large group of judaizers using methods and strategies that bear little similarity to the rest of its activity during these years, and represent an anomaly compared to the larger anti-Jewish and anti-*converso* campaigns that the Roman Inquisition pursued during these years. Nevertheless, the campaign occurred in the context of a general rise in anti-Jewish and anti-New Christian activity on the

part of the Catholic Church as a whole and specifically on the part of the tribunals of the Holy Office.

The Catholic Church, Jews, and New Christians: A Campaign for Conversion

The latter half of the sixteenth century saw dramatic change in the attitude of the Roman *curia* towards Jews in general and the Jewish population of Italy in particular. With the promulgation of Paul IV's 1555 bull *Cum Nimis Absurdum*, a new era in Papal-Jewish relations began that stood in stark contrast to the preceding centuries. No longer was the conversion of the Jews conceived of in terms of sacred history and millenarian expectations; instead, the papacy, beginning under Paul III, took a much more aggressive and activist approach to the problem of the presence of Jews in the midst of a Christian society. Jews were to be made aware of their subordination to Christians and forced to live in humiliating and servile conditions that would force them to recognize their errors and hasten their conversion. The task was no longer something to be left to providence: it became the duty of the Church to actively bring it about.⁹

Two developments inaugurated this new policy: the creation, on the recommendation of Ignatius of Loyola, of the Roman *Casa dei Catecumeni* by Paul III in 1543 and the publication of the bull *Cum Nimis Absurdum* by Paul IV in 1555, which mandated the enclosure of Jews in ghettos in the entire papal state, including Rome, and required Jews to wear distinguishing signs. The oppressive conditions of life in the ghetto which were intentionally imposed by Paul IV and his successors were designed in order to humiliate and drive their inhabitants into conversion to Christianity. The Jews, stated the bull, must "recognize themselves as servants, and Christians

⁹ Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy 1555-1593* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977).

as having been truly freed by Jesus Christ. (*recognoscant se servos, christianos vero liberos per Iesum Christum...effectos fuisse*)”¹⁰

The creation of the ghetto represented a profound rupture with the past. Relations between Jews and Christians in Rome had been regulated in the previous centuries, but they had been accepted. Now, the Jews were to be gathered into the largest of their settlements in the city, in the Rione Sant’ Angelo, and enclosed behind a wall. The ghetto was a form of discipline designed to guide the Jews toward conversion, while also preventing the kinds of exchange that were regarded as potentially dangerous for the Catholic majority. The Roman ghetto was bordered by a high wall with two gates that were constantly guarded. The movements of Jews in and out of the walls were strictly regulated, while most Christians were prevented from entering the ghetto entirely. This regime of surveillance was also accompanied by a constant barrage of religious propaganda. Jews were forced to listen to polemical sermons by friars and converts, and they were surrounded by imagery and rituals that symbolized their enslavement and exalted Roman Catholicism.¹¹

Though the *Casa dei Catecumeni* preceded the creation of the Roman ghetto by several years, the two were closely linked conceptually and practically: the ghetto made the lives of Jews miserable, and the *casa* presented one of the very few means of escape, an escape that could be obtained at the price of abandonment of Judaism and acceptance of baptism. The purpose of the *casa* was to facilitate the separation of Jews (and to a lesser extent, Muslims) from their families and co-religionists in order to guide them toward conversion to Catholicism and eventual baptism. Inside neophytes underwent an intense program of catechesis and religious education

¹⁰ Renata Segre, “La Controriforma: espulsioni, conversioni, isolamento” in *Gli Ebrei in Italia*, I ed. Corrado Vivanti, vol. 11 of *Storia d’Italia, Annali* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 709-778.

¹¹ Attilio Milano, *Il Ghetto di Roma. Illustrazioni storiche* (Rome: Staderini, 1964); Kenneth R. Stow, *Theater of Acculturation: The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2001).

with a clear and persistent message: that the old law of Judaism had been replaced by the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, the only true path to salvation. Indoctrination was combined with material assistance: the neophytes received room and board in the *casa* for the period prior to baptism, and were provided with a small stipend after they left. In one of the many bitter ironies surrounding the institution, much of the money that supported the *casa* came from the Jewish community itself, which was required to make an annual contribution.¹²

While Rome represented the location in which these institutions were developed and refined, the “laboratory” of the Counter-reformation in which policies and institutions were tested, they found favor elsewhere as well.¹³ They were considered successful initiatives that became trademarks of Catholic social policy in Italy. The norms laid out by the papacy were legally binding only within the papal state, where the pope had both spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, but they proved sufficiently successful to inspire imitation on the part of civil and ecclesiastical authorities throughout Italy. Bishops, especially after the council of Trent, took on a leading role. Synodal law from the second half of the sixteenth century is full of regulations designed to limit everyday contact between Jews and Christians as well as all unnecessary forms of mutual dependency. Jews were forbidden to hire Christian servants and to invite Christians to their religious services while Christians were not to enter synagogues or participate in Jewish festivities. With Jews, as in other aspects of their pastoral duties, bishops carried forth their own brand of religious intolerance, frequently independent of Rome. At the same time, new ghettos

¹² Milano, *Il Ghetto di Roma*, 55.

¹³ The phrase belongs to Marina Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati. Storie di ebrei, cristiani, e convertiti nella Roma dei papi* (Rome: Viella, 2005), 12.

were created, often with *Casa dei Catecumeni* flanking them. By the mid-seventeenth century the two existed side by side in Bologna, Ferrara, Padova, Venice, and Florence.¹⁴

While the policies toward Jews pursued by the Roman curia, the Italian episcopacy, and the Italian states were designed with the specific goal of converting Jews, they nevertheless bear a number of similarities with many of the initiatives of the post-Tridentine Church in Italy. They were based around a series of complementary institutions firmly in the hands of the clergy, with both coercive and persuasive aims designed to slowly shape a part or all of Italian society around a specific ideal. The “claustration of the Jews”, as the ghetto was sometimes described, had obvious affinities with the claustration of religious women, and the *Casa dei Catecumeni* was only one of the numerous new charitable institutions that were founded in the second half of the sixteenth-century: asylums for reformed prostitutes, ministries to prisoners, and assistance in hospitals were all among the “works of mercy” carried out by the Jesuits and other religious orders.¹⁵ The essential similarity between these initiatives is well-demonstrated by a public ceremony staged in Rome by several members the nascent Society of Jesus in 1541. After a sermon by Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón solemnly baptized a Roman Jew in the presence of Margaret of Austria, several cardinals, and the ambassadors of the Emperor and the King of Portugal. The new convert was then immediately married to an ex-courtesan with whom he had previously carried on a sinful affair, bringing the event to an edifying climax that symbolized the conversionary ideals of the Counter-reformation church.¹⁶

¹⁴ Pietro Tacchi Venturi, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1951), 2:147-161; John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1993), 188-192; Milano, *Il Ghetto di Roma*, 283-303; Natalie Rothman, “Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth Century Mediterranean,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, June 2006, 39-75; Stephanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community*, (Stanford: Stanford, 2006), 171-200.

¹⁵ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 165-199.

¹⁶ Tacchi Venturi, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù*, 150-151.

The Inquisition fulfilled several roles in this campaign for conversion. On the one hand, it provided a judicial surveillance over the Jewish populations of Northern and Central Italy that was primarily aimed at restricting their contact with Christians. While much of the prosecution of Jews rested outside the purview of the tribunal, which in theory governed only deviation from orthodoxy by Catholics, the Roman Inquisition took on an increasingly important role in the last decades of the sixteenth century. Gregory XIII's 1581 bull *Antiqua Iudaeorum Improbilas* gave inquisitors the authority to open proceedings against Jews for an array of infractions, ranging from divergence from orthodox Judaism to engaging in sexual relations with Christians.¹⁷ But even after the bull, the Inquisition shared responsibility for prosecuting Jews for religious infractions with several other ecclesiastical and lay courts. In Rome the court of the *Vicariato*, subject to the Cardinal-Vicar of the diocese of Rome, claimed jurisdiction over a number of religious offenses committed by Jews, and its competencies were never clearly divided from those of the Inquisition. In Venice, the state administered the ghetto and maintained its own court, that of the *ufficiali al cattaver*, to judge many of the offenses over which the Holy Office claimed jurisdiction. In Tuscany, a more flexible situation seems to have prevailed, but nonetheless one in which the state intervened at its pleasure.¹⁸

But the Inquisition also had another role, that of the delicate task of uncovering and prosecuting false conversions. The only offense related to Judaism over which the Inquisition maintained an uncontested monopoly was apostasy. The crime of converting or re-converting to

¹⁷ Adriano Prosperi, "L'Inquisizione romana e gli ebrei," in *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*, ed. Michele Luzzati (Bari: Laterza, 1994), 67-120; Nicolas Davidson, "The Inquisition and the Italian Jews," in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Haliczer (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 19-46; Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "L'Inquisizione romana e i giudaizzanti in Italia," in *L'Inquisizione. Atti del Simposio Internazionale, Città del Vaticano, 29-31 Ottobre 1998* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2003), 505-538.

¹⁸ Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, 26-34; Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1983); Adriano Prosperi, "Ebrei a Pisa. dalle carte dell'Inquisizione romana," in *Gli ebrei di Pisa. secoli IX-XX*, ed. Michele Luzzatti (Pisa: Pacini, 1998), 117-151.

Judaism fell squarely under the original mandate of the Roman Inquisition, and though statistically it occupied a relatively small fraction of the tribunal's activity, it was nevertheless regarded as extraordinarily grave. Cardinal Francesco Albizzi, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Office, asked rhetorically in his 1683 *summa* of inquisitorial case histories and jurisprudence "if so much legislation is made against heretics, what then should be said of apostates from the faith, who are so much more wicked than heretics?"¹⁹ By the time Albizzi was writing, the Roman Inquisition had accrued a rich dossier of case histories and guidelines from canon law about the questions of conversion from Judaism and apostasy. The cardinals were especially attentive to questions surrounding the legitimacy of baptisms, and to the nature and degree of coercion which could be used to bring about conversions to Christianity.

In point of fact the problem of apostasy regarded a distinct social group. False conversion could take a number of forms, and the Roman Inquisition confronted a limited number of apostates to Islam among Europeans returning from periods of captivity in the Maghreb, and an even smaller group of rarefied intellectuals who were born Christians but attracted to Judaism through contact with its sacred texts.²⁰ However, both qualitatively and quantitatively, Iberian New Christians were the apostates *par excellence* in the eyes of the Roman Inquisition. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain and the opening campaigns of the Spanish inquisition brought a large number of Jews and New Christians to Italy, where they hoped to find a more tolerant government and protection from the Spanish Inquisition. Some also sought a place in which they could safely and comfortably return to Judaism.

¹⁹ Francesco Albizzi, *De inconstantia in iure admittenda, vel non....* (Amsterdam 1683), 58.

²⁰ On converts to Islam, see: Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1983); Bartolomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les chrétiens d'Allah. L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 1989).

For the first half of the sixteenth century, preoccupied with other problems, the tendency of the papacy was to treat the New Christians with a degree of tolerance. The Roman curia was highly suspicious of the methods used in the conversions of Jews in Spain and Portugal and initially seemed well disposed toward New Christians. This is evident in the proceedings held under Alexander VI in 1498 in the immediate aftermath of the expulsions and forced baptisms in Iberia. A special commission set up by the Roman curia tried Pedro de Aranda, the bishop of Calahorra, for judaizing; de Aranda's property was confiscated and he died in prison in Castel Sant' Angelo. But the harsh treatment of the bishop was combined with a gesture of indulgence toward the larger marrano community in Rome; following the trial Alexander pardoned two-hundred and three Iberian judaizers living in Rome, welcoming them back into the church without temporal penalty in an *auto da fe* held at St. Peter's basilica.²¹ This ambiguous attitude continued into the following decades. Clement VII issued a partial condemnation of the forced baptism of the Portuguese Jews in the 1532 bull *Sempiterno Regi*, which extended a general pardon to the Portuguese New Christians. The bull drew on the learned opinions of Italian jurists such as Filippo Decio and Pietro Paolo Parisio, who were more inclined to consider the forced baptisms administered to Portuguese Jews illegitimate and void than their Iberian colleagues. Clement's successor Paul III invited a large group of Portuguese *cristãos novos* to Ancona in the hope that their abilities as merchants would help to develop trade in the main Adriatic port in the papal state. When the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues visited Ancona in 1554, he

²¹ Anna Foa, "Un vescovo marrano. Il Processo a Pedro de Aranda (Roma 1498)," *Quaderni Storici* 99 (1998), 533-551.

was shocked to find thousands of Portuguese New Christians who had returned to living as Jews in a foreign country.²²

This situation was drastically altered by Paul IV in 1556, one year after the creation of the Roman ghetto. Scandalized by the presence of Portuguese *marranos* in Ancona, he issued a decree stating that since many years and several generations had passed since the expulsion and forced conversions in Iberia, anyone arriving from Portugal or Spain would now be considered a Christian by birth. Therefore, anyone arriving from those countries that practiced Judaism or sought to live as a Jew was to be automatically suspected of apostasy and tried by the Holy Office. This was not only a reversal of fortune for the *converso* community in Ancona; it also provided an extremely rigid standard for evaluating the religious orthodoxy of *conversos* throughout Italy. This harsh provision was followed by equally harsh action. The pope sent two commissioners to Ancona to begin trials against the judaizers, an event which concluded with perhaps the most brutal punishment in the entire history of the Roman Inquisition: twenty-five *marranos* were burned in a single round of executions.²³

This campaign, which inaugurated the Roman Inquisition's activity against judaizers, was characteristic of the brutality of the Holy Office under Paul IV. One dramatic blow served to eliminate judaizing from the papal state for centuries to come and it stands as evidence of the ferocity with which the Congregation of the Holy Office regarded the crime. After 1556, Iberian New Christians sought out other ports in Italy, where they found a more consistent policy on the part of states and protection from the Inquisition. For these reasons, nothing quite as bloody and

²² Giuseppe Marcocci, "'...Per capillos adductos ad pillam.' Il dibattito cinquecentesco sulla validità del battesimo forzato degli ebrei in Portogallo (1496-1497)," in *Salvezza delle anime, disciplina dei corpi. Un seminario sulla storia del battesimo*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2006), 339-423; Segre, "La Controriforma", 721.

²³ There is little surviving documentation relating to this campaign, which has nonetheless received ample attention from scholars. Segre, "La Controriforma", 721-722; Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Ancora sui giudaizzanti portoghesi di Ancona (1556): condanna e riconciliazione," *Zakhor V* (2001-2002), 39-51.

dramatic as the Ancona trials occurred again. Nevertheless, Paul IV's decree remained the central piece of legislation regarding New Christians for the rest of the existence of the Roman Inquisition. Inquisitors would continue to use it as a legal basis for prosecution, and Cardinal Albizzi insisted on its fundamentally sound reasoning. The determination of the Congregation of the Holy Office to eliminate judaizing never diminished.

Yet, it would be a mistake to consider the Ancona campaign an archetype for inquisitorial repression of judaizers. After Paul IV's death, and especially during the pontificate of Pius V, the Inquisition itself took on a different character, transforming itself from a blunt instrument for the capture and destruction of heretics into a more subtle and effective tribunal that used both repression and persuasion to mold Italian society. The new strategy signaled the arrival of the Holy Office at a new level of confidence and maturity: no longer working to stem an emergency, the cardinals could give their attention to building a consensus in Italian society around the ideals of the Counter-reformation Church. In this new context, dramatic executions of large numbers of people that would terrify rather than persuade no longer conformed to the image of justice that the Holy Office sought to promote.

At the same time, the Congregation of the Holy Office managed to construct a peripheral network of tribunals, which allowed the Roman Inquisition for the first time to exercise constant and effective control over local inquisitors. At their height the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition were characterized by a scrupulous adherence to judicial norms regarding investigation, torture, and punishment that was unequalled by any other tribunal, lay or ecclesiastical, in the Europe of its day.²⁴

²⁴ Giovanni Romeo, *L'Inquisizione nell'Italia moderna* (Bari: Laterza, 2002), 29-35; John Tedeschi, "Preliminary Observations on Writing a History of the Roman Inquisition," in *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on*

But other factors were also at work. If the papacy had abandoned the policy of welcoming New Christians for purposes of economic development, other Italian states had not. The Republic of Venice, The Medici Grand-dukes of Tuscany, and the Este Dukes of Ferrara all invited Spanish and Portuguese New Christians into their territory and offered them varying degrees of protection from the Inquisition through a series of laws which effectively prevented the tribunal from pursuing judaizers.

The scrupulous procedures of the ‘new Inquisition’ and the legal barriers to the inquisition put in place by the Italian states made the tribunal “a meeting ground between the intolerant activism of the friars and the reasons of political realism.”²⁵ Every trial became a potential source of conflict in an uneasy balance between the Inquisition’s desire to enforce religious orthodoxy and the necessity of maintaining good relations with local secular authorities, on whom the inquisitors depended for a number of key responsibilities: arrests, extradition, death sentences, and in some cases, imprisonment. The decision to place a judaizer on trial always had to be weighed against the importance of the many other responsibilities of the tribunal and the necessity of state collaboration.

The Inquisition at Work: Trials and Investigations of New Christians in Italy

The three localities which required the most consistent attention from the Inquisition were the Republic of Venice, the Medici Grand-Duchy of Tuscany, and to a lesser extent, Ferrara under the Este. All three of these governments welcomed groups of New Christians into their

the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy, (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 3-21; Adriano Prosperi, “L’Inquisizione: verso una nuova immagine?,” *Critica storica* XXV (1988), 119-145.

²⁵ Prosperi, “L’Inquisizione romana e gli ebrei,” 80.

territory in the latter half of the 16th century as part of strategies of economic development: *conversos* were renowned as merchants with connections across the Mediterranean. All three states guaranteed them protection from inquisitorial prosecution, an indispensable premise to any settlement, and sanctioned this protection in a series of laws which directly contravened the norms laid out in Paul IV's 1556 decree regarding New Christians. This legal contradiction was never formally resolved despite the strenuous protests of the Roman curia. As a result, all of the prosecution of judaizers in these states was marked by conflict between the Inquisition and civil authorities over the basic question of the legality of prosecuting New Christians. In these situations, *ad hoc* solutions and unwritten rules were frequently applied, and the outcome of an investigation frequently depended on momentary shifts in the balance of power between the two.²⁶

The Este Dukes of Ferrara were the first Italian sovereigns to promote large-scale immigration of Portuguese New Christians into their territory. While Ferrara was not as important a commercial center as either Venice or, later, Livorno, and lacked a port, the city nevertheless managed to attract large numbers of Portuguese *conversos* who had taken refuge at Antwerp through generous commercial privileges and guarantees of protection from the Inquisition. In 1538, shortly after granting refuge to John Calvin in his territory, Ercole II invited the Portuguese of Antwerp to Ferrara. Despite the difficulties of crossing the Alps and the maneuvers of Imperial police who were determined to stop them from leaving Habsburg

²⁶ In a similar move, the Duke of Savoy Emanuele Filiberto approved a privilege in 1572 which promised Jews, including "spagnoli" and "portoghesi", that they would not be disturbed by "any inquisitor or ecclesiastical person" and that no investigation would be made into their past histories; the Savoy continued this policy into the seventeenth century, eventually creating a free trade zone in the port of Nice. The privilege provoked an immediate protest from the papacy, but there is to my knowledge no evidence of any inquisitorial prosecution of judaizers in the Piedmontese state during this period or later. Salvatore Foa, *La politica economica della casa Savoia verso gli Ebrei dal sec. XVI fino alla Rivoluzione Francese. Il porto franco di Villafranca (Nizza)* (Rome: Rassegna Mensile di Israel, 1962), 11-32; *Nunziature di Savoia*, ed. Fausto Fonzi (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1960), 1: 477-478, 483-484.

territory, large numbers of Portuguese New Christians arrived from Antwerp, and even more came in 1549 after Charles V expelled the *cristãos novos* from the Low Countries. The *nazione portoguesa* that developed in Ferrara became both an essential asset to the local economy and an international center of Sephardic culture, capable of producing monuments such as the Ferrara Bible, a Spanish translation of the Old and New Testaments published in 1553 and Samuel Usque's apologetic text *Consolaçam as Tribulaçôens de Israel*.²⁷

The protection that the Este offered to the *marrano* community of Ferrara seems to have faltered only occasionally. When a group of newly arrived Portuguese *cristãos novos* was blamed for bringing plague to the city in 1549, a large part of the community, as many as 500 individuals, was expelled. After the crisis had passed, Ercole II released a new safe-conduct that declared the baptism of the Portuguese Jews invalid and invited them to return to Judaism in Ferrara in much stronger terms than before. Significantly, the document was signed by the inquisitor, *fra* Girolamo Papini, and by *fra* Antonio Righini, the vicar of the Inquisition in Romagna. In the wake of Paul IV's decree and the Ancona trials, Ercole chose open defiance of papal directives by publicly renewing his safe-conduct to the *nazione portoguesa* and inviting any refugees from Ancona to come and settle in his territory. This defiance of papal directives continued largely unabated, apart from a 1570 decree by Alfonso I that all Jews must wear a distinguishing sign, a decree from which the entire Portuguese nation was eventually exempted.²⁸

Because of the total destruction of the local archive of the tribunal, very little can be said about the activity of the Inquisition in Ferrara. Nevertheless, it seems safe to say that whatever

²⁷ Aron di Leon Leoni, "La diplomazia estense e l'immigrazione dei cristiani nuovi portoghesi a Ferrara al tempo di Ercole II," *Nuova Rivista Storica*, LXXVIII (1994), 293-326; Id., "Gli Ebrei a Ferrara nel XVI secolo" in *Il Rinascimento. storie e personaggi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi, vol. 6 of *Storia di Ferrara* (Ferrara: Corbo, 2000), 278-311; Renata Segre, "La formazione di una comunità marrana: i portoghesi a Ferrara," in *Storia d'Italia, Annali 11: Gli Ebrei in Italia*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 781-834.

²⁸ Leoni, "Gli Ebrei a Ferrara," 300.

prosecution of *conversos* took place there did so under substantial restraints, especially prior to 1570, when the peripheral network of inquisitorial tribunals remained fragile and dependant on local civil authorities. The first inquisitor, Papini, was closely allied with the duke, and the few signs of his activity that remain suggest that he acted in full accordance with the duke's policy. In 1549 he held a meeting with representatives of the Portuguese New Christians in which he agreed to pretend that they had never been baptized and that they should therefore be allowed to live as Jews in Ferrara. Nevertheless, there is evidence of repressive activity as well: In 1553 the duke ordered the confiscation and burning of the Talmud on the instruction of the Congregation of the Holy Office.²⁹

In such a situation, the cardinals supervising of the Holy Office had to intervene directly and apply political pressure on the Duke. They finally struck directly at Ferrara's *marranos* in 1580. Cardinal Giacomo Savelli wrote to Alfonso II with instructions to arrest João Lopez, also known as Samuel Abudiente, an important member of the *nazione portoguesa* and a banker with a privileged rapport with the Este.³⁰ Cardinal Savelli's request put Alfonso II d' Este in a difficult situation. While it was impossible to ignore a request from a high ranking member of the Roman *curia*, the fact remained that Lopez had been living in Ferrara under a safe-conduct granted by Ercole II in 1566, and he had been guaranteed protection from the Inquisition. Furthermore, the arrest of such a well-known member of the Portuguese Jewish community threatened to create problems between the Duke and the *nazione*, a group of fundamental importance for the local economy who were constantly being courted by other cities in Italy and abroad. Faced with a difficult decision, the Duke bided his time, insisting that he was still

²⁹ Guido dall'Olio, "Il controllo di eresia", in *Storia di Ferrara*, 6:216; Leoni, "Gli Ebrei a Ferrara," 299.

³⁰ Aron di Leone Leoni, "Due personaggi della 'Nation Portughesa' di Ferrara: un martire e un'avventuriero," *Rassegna mensile d'Israel* LVII, 3 (1991), 411-415.

evaluating the situation. For over a year, negotiations between the Duke, his representative in Rome, and Cardinal Savelli continued without either side giving in. Savelli called into question the basis for the safe-conducts issued to the Portuguese, while the Duke insisted that the Holy Office present substantial evidence before he proceeded to arrest Lopez.³¹

A compromise was reached in January of 1581. After the Congregation had provided some details of the accusations against Lopez, the Duke succumbed to the pressure from Rome and had him interrogated under torture. Lopez admitted to having re-converted to Judaism in Ferrara and also named a sizable group of accomplices who were subsequently arrested. The news of the arrests was greeted with praise from Savelli, who asked that the duke immediately extradite the prisoners to Rome for trial; the Congregation, he explained, was carrying on a series of investigations of *conversos* in Tuscany, and the cardinals wanted to interrogate the suspects from Ferrara at the same time. He also made clear to Alfonso that the Holy Office made no claims to the property of the suspects, and that the duke was free to confiscate it for his own purposes. Despite this offer, which he considered dishonest, Alfonso opposed the extradition. He recognized that it would represent a further breach of the promises he had made to the *nazione*, and would also damage his prestige when the news reached other parts of Italy. Savelli countered that the Pope himself had requested the extradition and that it was not Alfonso's place to question it, though he did concede that only the principal members of the group needed to be extradited, while the rest could be kept in Ferrara. The stalemate finally ended in October of 1581, when the Duke reluctantly agreed to allow the extradition of four of the prisoners to Rome.

³¹ Leoni, "Due Personaggi," 416-420; Savelli, who also played an important role in the Neapolitan trials, proved to be a cleric of a harsh anti-Jewish bent not only as an inquisitor, but in his pastoral role as bishop of Benevento, where he issued decrees forbidding Jews to leave the ghetto for three days prior to Easter and to enter churches during celebration of the mass. see Cesare Colafemmina. "Gli Ebrei a Benevento" *Italia Judaica VI: Gli Ebrei nello Stato pontificio fino al Ghetto (1555)*. (Rome: Ministero di Beni Culturali e Ambientali, 1998), 225-226.

In the meantime Lopez's brother David and another suspect had successfully escaped from prison in Ferrara.³²

The substance of the accusations against Lopez and his accomplices can be partially reconstructed.³³ Besides Lopez, the other major figure in the trial was Yosef Çerralvo, a goldsmith born in Lisbon who arrived in Ferrara in 1545. In Italy, Çerralvo began to practice Judaism again and engaged in a program of active re-conversion and proselytism in Ferrara and Venice, even performing secret circumcisions. At the end of the Roman phase of the trials, which lasted 14 months, Çerralvo was found an impenitent heretic and sentenced to burn in Campo de' Fiori in 1583. He resisted every attempt at conversion, and died stoically, ensuring himself a place as a martyr among Jews and *marranos* throughout the Mediterranean. Another member of the group, Diego Lopez, also refused to repent before relenting when faced with capital punishment. The original suspect, João Lopez, and his brother Aires abjured and were spared heavy punishment. Afterwards João remained in Rome, where he became a financial adviser to Camilla Peretti, the sister of Sixtus V, eventually taking on important financial offices within the *curia* itself. After the pontiff's death he fell from favor and immigrated to Thessalonika, where he again reconverted to Judaism. In 1595, he was burned in effigy after Innocent IX learned that he had offered to develop financial institutions for the Sultan based on those of the papacy.³⁴

The episode ended any attempt to shelter *marranos* in Ferrara, bankrupting Este policy under intense pressure from the Congregation of the Holy Office. It also marked the beginning of the end of the *nazione portuguesa* in Ferrara. In 1598, the city devolved to the papal state and

³² Leoni, "Due Personaggi," 423-428.

³³ The Roman phase of the trial, which lasted 14 months, is completely obscure, though the *decreta* of the Congregation of the Holy Office in ACDF contain references to the trial.

³⁴ Leoni, "Due Personaggi," 430-435.

the capital of the Este state was transferred to Modena; many of the Jewish residents of Ferrara left for more hospitable surroundings.

Venice's ghetto, founded in 1516, was the oldest in Italy, and the Venetian state welcomed all foreign Jews who made a definitive decision to practice Judaism when they arrived. After a brief period in which the Republic adopted an anti-*converso* policy, the authorities gradually moved toward a willingness to ignore the past identity of those who arrived in the city, provided they did not cause scandal by continuing to vacillate between Christianity and Judaism. This policy, pursued *de facto* from early in the second half of the sixteenth century, was enshrined in 1589 in a piece of legislation called the *Ricondotta*, which guaranteed free practice of Judaism and protection from inquisitorial investigations to New Christians arriving from the Iberian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire.³⁵

This policy obviously conflicted with Paul IV's decree of 1556, but the position of the Senate prevailed because of the wide degree of control that the Republic exercised over the Holy Office in its territory. The Inquisitor of Venice operated with the collaboration of three representatives of a lay magistracy, the *tre savii sopra eresia*, along with the Patriarch of Venice and the papal *nunzio*; their approval was necessary for the inquisitor to open proceedings, making it difficult for the Roman Inquisition to proceed with a free hand against Jews and converts in the Most Serene Republic. The inquisitor also lacked any police force or powers of arrest, and was dependant upon the Senate in arresting suspects as well. Extradition to Rome also proved difficult.³⁶ As a result, the Congregation of the Holy Office and the Venetian inquisitor were prevented from pursuing judaizing apostates according to the full force of canon

³⁵ Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Ebrei e nuovi cristiani fra due inquisizioni: il Sant'Uffizio di Venezia e quello di Pisa," in Luzzati, *L'Inquisizione e gli Ebrei*, 233-241; Brian Pullan, "L'Inquisizione e gli Ebrei a Venezia," in Luzzati, *L'Inquisizione e gli Ebrei*, 251-264.

³⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 46-50.

law, and Jews and judaizers occupied only a very small fraction of the tribunal's activity in the sixteenth century-- 4.7 percent of the individual cases that came before the court, not all of them complete trials.³⁷ Furthermore, very few of these cases represented anything beyond the limited practice of a family group or a couple of people. There was nothing approaching an organized and aggressive form of religious dissent similar to the Protestant heresy that had taken place in the previous decades, and none of the individuals tried represented a realistic threat to the religious unity or social equilibrium of the Venetian Republic.

The conflicts and compromises between inquisitorial and civil authorities in the Venetian republic over the prosecution of judaizers are not always obvious from the trial records themselves. The relatively light penalties handed down in most of the trials, as well as the tendency to acquit rather than convict, suggest that the Roman Inquisition was not entirely free to pursue and investigate the crime of apostasy in Venice with its usual zeal.³⁸ Yet there is also plenty of direct evidence that the Congregation of the Holy Office and the *nunzio* came into conflict relatively frequently with the Venetian Senate and its representatives over the question of the *marranos*. In 1604, the Congregation of the Holy Office wrote to the *nunzio* to instruct him to contest the settlement of seventy *marrano* families and a group of Jews from Thessalonika in Venice.³⁹ In 1608, the Senate blocked an investigation of Moses and Joseph Masaod, who had come from Portugal via Turin and immediately gone to live in the ghetto as Jews. When the *nunzio* protested, he was met with the argument that *marranos* were fundamentally Jewish, and that even the Pope had allowed *marranos* to settle in Ancona, despite the recent history of the community there. Even more controversial was the case of the

³⁷ Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Jews, Crypto-Jews, and the Inquisition" in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, ed. Benjamin Ravid and Robert C. Davis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2001), 98-99.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 104-107.

³⁹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, II 1-g, "Repertorio di decreti del Sant'Ufficio ordinati per città," 22.

Portuguese Diaz brothers, who lived in Venice as Christians for a number of years before entering the ghetto and living as Jews. After arresting the brothers on the orders of the Holy Office in 1621, the Senate freed them on the condition that they leave Venetian territory. Rome considered the case especially grievous because the apostasy had taken place in Venice rather than abroad, and it retained a privileged place in the memory of the Cardinal-Inquisitors. Many years later, Albizzi recalled the incident in his *Risposta all'Historia della Sacra Inquisitione*, a polemical response to Paolo Sarpi, writing with a note of sarcasm that “although those Senators recognized that the case was very serious, and wanted the *marranos* to be castigated, they nevertheless were able to spare themselves punishment by fleeing.”⁴⁰

In these cases, the Holy Office took aim at the very individuals that the Venetian Senate had sought to protect from prosecution. Yet there were many more cases of a more mundane variety in which the interests of the Inquisition and those of the Venetian state coincided. These were trials of marginal figures who willfully provoked the Inquisition by making blasphemous statements or continuously switching identities. In these cases the crimes involved were too flagrant and too public to be ignored by the Senate, and prosecution by the Inquisition served both to safeguard religious purity and solidify the boundaries between the Christian and Jewish communities in Venice. A good example of this type is Francisco Oliver, a Portuguese subject who had been seen in Venice dressed both as a Jew and a Christian, and who had confessed to a priest but also received assistance from Jewish relatives in the ghetto. None of the witnesses who appeared during his trial in 1549 was sure whether he was a Jew or a Christian, and he was eventually condemned not as a judaizer, but as a Jew, for having sexual intercourse with a

⁴⁰ quoted in Zorattini, “Ebrei e nuovi cristiani fra due inquisizioni,” 240.

Christian woman. He received the heavy sentence of four years' galley service and banishment from the Republic.⁴¹

The difference was not always obvious between an apostate and a Jew who violated secular laws and committed sacrilege by impersonating a Christian. Since the behavior of the accused was usually well-attested to if not openly admitted, the most important criterion in deciding such cases was whether or not the defendant had ever been baptized. If baptism records were available in Italy, conviction became more likely. This aspect of the Venetian trials seems to have aided the Portuguese and Spanish 'New Christians', as any records of their baptisms were more difficult to obtain, especially in a period of scarce cooperation between the Spanish, Portuguese, and Roman Inquisitions. The overall result seems to have been a Venetian system in which strong judicial and administrative pressures forced their New Christian residents to make a definitive decision between membership in either its Jewish or Christian community, while at the same time guaranteeing a degree of protection from the Inquisition to those who wanted to re-convert to Judaism.

The Medici Grand-Dukes of Tuscany pursued a similar policy and invited large numbers of Jews and *conversos* into their territory, beginning with two privileges issued in 1549 and 1551. At the end of the century the need to rebuild the depressed city of Pisa and to integrate the new port of Livorno into the routes of maritime trade in the Mediterranean led the Medici to expand this invitation even further. As in Venice, a raft of civil legislation contradictory to the policies laid out by Rome inaugurated the creation of this safe haven. Two public charters issued by Ferdinand I in 1591 and 1593 known as the *Livornine* invited Jews to come to Tuscany and operate as merchants, guaranteeing in explicit terms protection from the Inquisition, "even if

⁴¹*Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini (Florence: Olschki, 1980-1999), 2:54-55, 79-91.

many of you have lived outside of our state as Christians or been known as such.” Without a ghetto or a *Casa dei Catecumeni*, Pisa and Livorno exuded a spirit of religious liberty that was unique in sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy.⁴² The *Livornine* attracted large numbers of Portuguese immigrants, many of whom had used the unification of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580 as an opportunity to leave Portugal.

The *Livornine* posed distinct limits to the activity of the inquisitorial tribunal in Pisa and its vicariates at Livorno and Piombino. But, distinct from the Venetian situation, the relationship between the local tribunals of the inquisition in Tuscany and the Medici state was much more harmonious, and open disputes were uncommon. There was no official representative of the state within the local tribunals of the Holy Office until the eighteenth century, and the *nunzio*, far from being the mouthpiece of the Roman *curia* as in Venice, was regarded as a potential vehicle for state interference. The reasons for this agreement are not obvious but they seem to lie in the substantial willingness on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities to conform to the wishes of the sovereign. Their own interests were largely local, and both the archbishop of Pisa and the inquisitor had numerous ties to the city and to the Medici. The inquisitor traditionally received the post of professor of theology at the University of Pisa.

The subservience of the local tribunals to the Medici translated into extremely few trials for apostasy and related crimes, especially in the first decades of the inquisition’s activity in Pisa. There were plenty of denunciations of suspicious behavior from outside, but the tribunal was slow to react, completing very few trials for apostasy and permitting irregularities which would have been difficult to allow elsewhere, or for other offences. As late as 1597, in a case involving two children who had been kidnapped by a group of Pisan Jews from their father, a recent

⁴² Prosperi, “Ebrei a Pisa,” 129-130; Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, “Gli ebrei, il principe, e L’Inquisizione,” in Luzzati, *l’Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*, 217-231.

convert to Christianity, the local Inquisition tolerated interference from the state in matters that normally belonged to its jurisdiction.⁴³

But while ecclesiastical authorities in Tuscany were usually content to follow guidelines of the *Livornine* in their treatment of Jews and *conversos*, the Congregation of the Holy Office took measures at a number of levels to put a stop to what the cardinal inquisitors regarded as an extremely dangerous situation taking shape in Livorno and Pisa. They feared potential instability from large-scale immigration of Portuguese New Christians into a specific environment on the Italian peninsula where they enjoyed a relatively high degree of religious freedom. The Roman Congregation of the Holy Office, at the apex of its powers, took an especially activist role in investigating *marranos* in Tuscany, employing a range of strategies and creating networks that would have been difficult to conceive a few years earlier.

Spies and informers, principally Portuguese Catholics, first made the cardinal- inquisitors aware of the inadequacy of inquisitorial activity in Tuscany. Under Cardinal Santoro, the Congregation of the Holy Office conducted a widespread investigation of the activities of *marranos* throughout Italy and particularly at Pisa, relying on such informants as the Portuguese Nuno da Costa, who made a series of denunciations, including of two relatives, in 1593 and 1594.⁴⁴ Another Portuguese informer, Giuseppe da Sousa, also denounced the scarce attention given to *marranos* by the Holy Office in Pisa to the congregation. In response, the cardinals took the unusual step of ordering the Inquisitor of Pisa to open a general investigation into the Portuguese living in Livorno and Pisa, which began in 1613. However, despite the numerous and authoritative witnesses who gave lengthy depositions describing the suspicious religious

⁴³ Proserpi, "Ebrei a Pisa," 133.

⁴⁴ Giuseppe Marcocci, "Itinerari marrani. I portoghesi a Livorno nei secoli dell'età moderna," *Proceedings of the International Congress on the 4th Centenary of the foundation of Livorno, October 22nd-24th, 2006*, forthcoming.

beliefs of many of the recent Portuguese immigrants, the trial ended inconclusively after a commission of theologians came to an agreement on two points. First, and most importantly, the Portuguese immigrants could not be judged on their interior convictions according to the principle that “*de occultis non est iudicandum*,” hidden things are not subject to judgment by the court. Second, the fact that many of them spoke Spanish and Portuguese was not in and of itself evidence that they had been born and baptized in those countries, given that many Jews learned these languages as children even if they were born elsewhere. It was an unprecedented step: the tribunal in Pisa had openly rejected the principles which Paul IV had laid out for the investigation of New Christians and carried out its investigation according to the wishes of Florence, rather than Rome.⁴⁵

Experiences such as this led the cardinal inquisitors to search for other means of confronting the presence of *marranos* in Tuscany. In 1595, the Jesuit Francisco Toledo wrote to Ferdinand I, imploring him to recognize the negative effects that tolerance, however well-intentioned, might have. And in November of 1599, Clement VIII threatened the archbishop of Pisa with nothing less than a trial of his own if he did not proceed more zealously against the *marranos* in Pisa.⁴⁶ But another strategy proved far more effective than either threats or persuasion: that of extraditing judaizers to Rome for trial.⁴⁷ The Congregation of the Holy Office began to use extradition almost as a routine, a tactic which allowed for a much more rigorous form of justice than what was handed down in Pisa. In 1640, Fernando di Giovanni Alvarez, an elderly judaizer born in Portugal, received one of the few death sentences handed

⁴⁵ Prosperi, “Ebrei a Pisa,” 136-143.

⁴⁶ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1597-1599, f. 845. (November 25, 1599)

⁴⁷ Marcocci, “Itinerari marrani.”

down by the Roman Inquisition in the seventeenth century after being extradited from Pisa to Rome.⁴⁸

These measures, combined with the accession of Grand-dukes such as Cosimo III, who were less friendly to Jews and *conversos*, did much to alter the balance of power in favor of the Holy Office. Yet, for the entire Early Modern period, the testimony from the trials in Tuscany reveals a climate of religious freedom and even open challenges to the authority of the Holy Tribunal that would have been hard to imagine anywhere else in Italy. Isaia Cohen da Salamanca was tried before the Holy Office in Florence in 1566 for judaizing, and during the course of his trial several witnesses stated that he had publicly declared that the tribunal had no right to try him because he was protected by a special privilege from the Grand-duke. “Do your worst,” he challenged his listeners, “because I live under a good prince.” Over a century later, the Pisan Jew Mose Saccuto was similarly uninhibited, telling a local priest in 1677 that “You Christians think one thing but it is really another. We (Jews) have the true law, and we have books that you don’t have, and that teach us what the truth is and what isn’t.” Saccuto followed this bold opening statement with the claim that Christ was nothing more than an ordinary man and a sinner, who the Jews had justly crucified for the sins he had committed.⁴⁹ Statements like these were born of a rather open atmosphere in which Jews felt uncommonly confident debating religious subjects with members of the Christian majority and had plenty of opportunity to interact with Christians due to the lack of a ghetto.

⁴⁸ Giuseppe Laras, “I marrani di Livorno e l’Inquisizione di Livorno” in *Livorno e il Mediterraneo nell’età Medicea. Atti del convegno 23-25 Settembre 1977* (Livorno: Bastogi, 1978), 99; Alvarez’s execution is described in a contemporary chronicle: *Racconto delle Cose piu considerabili che sono occorse nel governo di Roma*. ed. Maria Teresa Bonadonna Russo (Rome: Società Romana di Storia Patria, 2004), 88-89.

⁴⁹ Prosperi, “Ebrei a Pisa,” 132-33, 148-49.

In Ferrara, Venice, and Tuscany the Inquisition's activity against judaizers was held in check by the power of the state. At the same time, the policy of the states ensured that the number of secret judaizers was kept relatively low by allowing large numbers of New Christians to quietly return to the practice of Judaism and life in a Jewish community. This was in stark contrast to the Habsburg territories in Italy, where the state fully shared the revulsion of the Roman Inquisition at the crime of apostasy and was by no means interested in condoning it in the interest of economic policy. Charles V had expelled the Jewish population of the Kingdom of Naples in 1541, just as his grandfather had done for Sicily in 1492, and his son would do for the Duchy of Milan in 1597. The illegalization of Judaism created a 'Spanish' situation where the only solution for those who sought some contact with Judaism was to do it secretly. This obviously favored the formation of underground groups of the kind that were common in Spain and Portugal – and inquisitorial authorities uncovered one of them in Spanish Naples in the autumn of 1569.

Inquisitorial Prosecution of New Christians in Iberia ca. 1550-1600

If there is nothing in terms of quality or quantity to compare to the Neapolitan case in the history of the Roman Inquisition, the contemporary histories of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions contain numerous similar episodes. During the 1570s both the Spanish and Portuguese tribunals were heavily occupied with the problem of judaizing. In both kingdoms the courts of the Inquisition were under the direct control of the monarch, and consequently free of the kinds of interference created by the Italian states. While isolated trials of individuals were common, frequently the Iberian tribunals moved against entire communities, simultaneously

holding proceedings against tens and hundreds of people that culminated in spectacular *autos de fe*.

Conversos represented a social and religious problem in Spain and Portugal on a scale much larger than anything Italy ever experienced, and both the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions were founded for the express purpose of confronting the spread of judaizing among their New Christian populations. In these countries, the *converso* problem took on social characteristics that went beyond the simple fear of religious contamination; because of the sheer number of New Christians, the wealth and importance in public administration of a number of them, and their alliances with various factions in cities and in the royal courts, many of these trials acquired a political and social importance that outshined the drive for religious purity which constituted the formal justification for the tribunal's existence.⁵⁰

Also peculiar to the Iberian context was the concept of *limpieza de sangre*, a proto-racist theory which held that the heresy of the New Christians was acquired not simply through indoctrination, but as a genetic inheritance from one's parents. Heresy was thus linked to lineage, rendering every New Christian *ipso facto* suspect. While the concept of *limpieza* found heavy opposition from the papacy as well among some Iberian elites, it nevertheless enjoyed a wide consensus in Spanish and Portuguese society. Furthermore, a series of purity of blood statutes, beginning with the Toledan statutes of 1449, prevented New Christians from entering high offices in the church and government, joining religious orders, and taking membership in prestigious military orders.⁵¹ When employed as a judicial criterion, the concept of blood purity

⁵⁰Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la edad moderna* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1991); Francisco Marquez Villanueva, "Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* LXVIII, no. 2 (1957), 503-540.

⁵¹ Albert Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre. Controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII*. Spanish version revised by the author (Madrid: Taurus, 1985).

had the capacity to unleash the indiscriminate wrath of the tribunal against large numbers of individuals without much attention to whether or not they had actually practiced Judaism in any significant way. This was precisely the accusation that the future Jesuit Diego de Guzmán made in 1549 when he asked Pedro Ponce de Leon, a member of the *Consejo de la Suprema Inquisición*, to intervene in a series of trials in the Andalusian town of Ubeda. “It is really a terrible thing that these judges believe that one cannot be of this lineage [a *converso*] and not be without guilt, as God gives grace to those who have served him, and not according to the will of persons, as Saint Paul says in the *Acts*,” he wrote, in a lengthy critique which he hoped would spur the *Suprema* to reconsider its procedures.⁵²

In the 1560s, both the *Suprema* and the governing body of the Portuguese Inquisition, the *Conselho Geral da Inquisição*, took steps to formalize the suspicion of New Christians in the legal statutes that governed trial procedure. The *Istrucciones* redacted under the direction of the Inquisitor-General of Spain Fernando de Valdes in 1561 advised inquisitors that they should hear only trustworthy persons of Old Christian lineage as witnesses for the defense and never relatives or servants of the accused, except in cases where no other witnesses were available.⁵³ In 1573, probably following the lead of his Spanish colleague, the cardinal infante Dom Henrique, Inquisitor-General of Portugal, made an identical provision for the Portuguese tribunal. This was further supplemented with provisions that gave inquisitors greater discretion in evaluating the confessions of New Christians and allowed them to try New Christians for certain crimes without consulting the *Conselho Geral*.⁵⁴ The total effect of this legislation was to further weaken the

⁵² Stefania Pastore, “Tra conversos, gesuiti, e Inquisizione: Diego de Guzmán e i processi di Ubeda (1549-1552),” in *Inquisizione: Percorsi di ricerca*, ed. Giovanna Paolin (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 2001), 217.

⁵³ “Istrucciones de Don Fernando de Valdes” in *Introducción a la Inquisición española. Documentos basicos para el estudio del Santo Oficio*, ed. Miguel Jiménez Monteserín (Madrid: Editora, 1980), 216.

⁵⁴ ANTT, *Conselho Geral da Inquisição*, livro 323, doc. 4.

position of New Christians before the Holy Office, turning suspicion of them into one of the legal foundations of inquisitorial proceedings. There is no equivalent for these norms in the juridical material of the Roman Inquisition, which despite its suspicion of New Christians, as exemplified in Paul IV's 1556 decree, never differentiated them from Old Christians as legal subjects.

Finally, there are several relevant differences between the methods of operation of the Iberian and Roman inquisitions. While the tribunals of the Holy Office in Italy opened investigations solely on the basis of denunciations and chance discoveries, both the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions supplemented this method with the practice of an annual visit in which the inquisitor would travel to all of the localities in his district, searching for prohibited books, making inquiries, and if necessary, arresting suspects and opening investigations. The inquisitor would begin the visit by affixing an edict of faith to the doors of churches, listing a number of crimes under inquisitorial jurisdiction and instructing the faithful to denounce anyone they suspected might be guilty of committing them. The edict promised excommunication for anyone who failed to report something they knew and as a result, mass accusations frequently followed its publication.⁵⁵ The mobility of Spanish and Portuguese inquisitors allowed them a much greater control over the countryside than their Italian colleagues, and the arrival of an inquisitor in a small rural community often provided the occasion for the discovery of an entire group of judaizers. In the Portuguese community of Melo a large group of New Christians was prosecuted in three stages by the tribunal of Coimbra in 1601, 1652, and 1690. During all three of these "entries", the officials of the inquisition arrived following a denunciation and quickly

⁵⁵ Francisco Bethencourt, *L'Inquisition à l'époque moderne. Espagne, Portugal, Italie XVe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), 203-239; "Instrucciones para la visita inquisitorial al distrito" in *Introducción*, ed. Monteserín, 291-338; Charles Amiel, "Crypto-Judaïsme et Inquisition. La matière juive dans les édits de la foi des Inquisitions ibériques," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* CCX, no. 2 (1993), 145-168.

found themselves overwhelmed with even more accusations. The presence of the Holy Office in an isolated community full of internal conflicts provided an opportunity to settle old scores and dredge up memories of events that had occurred decades prior.⁵⁶

In Spain, campaigns against judaizers constituted one of the principal activities of the Inquisition from the beginning of its existence in 1478 until the 18th century. However, the cycles of the tribunal's activity were by no means uniform, and several phases of increased repression can be delineated. The earliest years of the tribunal were filled with campaigns in the urban centers of Spain that were marked by highly idiosyncratic and messianic hunts for judaizers among New Christian populations. The very first trials conducted by the Spanish tribunal began in 1481 against the judaizers of Seville, and similar campaigns took place in other cities in the same period. However, by the 1520s and 30s, the persecution of judaizers had diminished without ever ceasing entirely. The next major wave of persecution of judaizers began in the 1560s, when inquisitors pursued entire rural communities of judaizers in Castille who had managed to evade detection for decades. Investigations of judaizers took place in Murcia and Llerena in the 1560s, and in the Extremadura, the region on Spain's western border with Portugal, in the 1570s.⁵⁷

The new anti-judaizing campaigns were not the same as the ones that had inaugurated the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the fifteenth century. Not only did the inquisition focus more

⁵⁶ José Pedro Paiva, "As entradas da Inquisição, na vila de Melo, no século xvii: pânico, integração/segregação, crenças e desagregação social," *Revista de História das Ideias* 25, (2004), 169-208.

⁵⁷ Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen, "Forty-Four Thousand Cases of the Spanish Inquisition (1540-1700): Analysis of a Historical Data Bank" in *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods*, ed. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 1986), 124-125; on the early anti-judaizing campaigns of the Spanish Inquisition, see among others Ricardo García Cárcel and Doris Moreno Martínez, *Inquisición: Historia crítica* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2000), 31-41, 209-216; Juan Gil, *Los conversos y la Inquisición sevillana*, (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2000-2001); John Edwards, *Religion and Society in Spain, ca. 1492* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996); Tarcisio de Azcona, "La Inquisición española procesada por la Congregación General de 1508," in *La Inquisición Española. Nueva visión, nuevos horizontes*, ed. Joaquín Pérez Villanueva (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1980), 89-155.

on smaller rural communities than large urban centers, it was more organized and rational and less given to fanatical zeal for religious purity. This was the result of the reorganization of the tribunals of the Holy Office in Spain under Fernando de Valdes, who as inquisitor general from 1546-1566 had centralized the inquisition and rationalized its procedures. Valdes' *Instrucciones* of 1561 established definitive norms regarding trial procedure that would remain in force until the tribunal's suppression in 1820. He also instituted regular inspections of the local tribunals by officials of the *Suprema*, ensuring a greater degree of accountability.⁵⁸

The trials that took place in the Castilian town of Quintanar de la Orden are typical of these campaigns. In 1579, the inquisitor of Cuenca began an investigation of the de Mora, a family of New Christians living in Quintanar. They had been denounced by their own servants, who provided detailed information of the family's daily routines and devotional habits, including the absence of pork at the dinner table and the observance of the Jewish Sabbath. For reasons that are unclear, the inquiry stalled for nine years, until 1588, when the inquisitor, on the order of the *Suprema* and armed with new denunciations, imprisoned 12 members of the family in Cuenca and sequestered their property. The first set of trials ended with an *auto de fe* in 1590 in which two of the confessed judaizers were executed, but the campaign continued to widen on the basis of the confessions and other information collected during the trials. By the time the trials ended in 1600, one hundred New Christians had been tried, and five executed. The judaizers from Quintanar appeared in no less than six *autos de fe*, including one held in 1591 in Toledo in the presence of Philip II. Here as in many other instances, the inquisition ably organized a large

⁵⁸ On Valdes' reorganization of the Spanish Inquisition, see José Luis González Novalín. *El Inquisidor general Fernando de Valdés (1483-1568)* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1968-1971); Id., "Reforma de las leyes, competencia y actividades del Santo Oficio durante la presidencia del inquisidor general don Fernando de Valdes (1547-1566)," in *La Inquisición Española. Nueva visión, nuevos horizontes*, 193-218.

investigation of a remote locality, proceeding methodically from the interrogation of suspects to new arrests.⁵⁹

One of the most important inquisitorial campaigns of this period was the one, briefly mentioned above, against a group of presumed judaizers in Lorca and Murcia. The trials began, as frequently occurred, with a denunciation provoked by a private quarrel. The *licenciado* Quevedo publicly accused his enemy Magdalena Lopez, an elderly inhabitant of Lorca, for judaizing, and she was arrested by the inquisitor of Murcia, Salazar. Lopez's confessions under torture were enough to unleash the machinery of the inquisition against a much larger group. Another hundred individuals were tried, and around two hundred were imprisoned. After several years, Salazar's hunt spread to the much larger city of Murcia, the seat of the inquisitorial court and a city which was connected to Lorca through numerous economic and social networks. During the course of the trials in Lorca, the names of citizens of Murcia had been implicated as well, and this was enough to push the Inquisition to open investigations there as well.⁶⁰

However, behind this seemingly objective and legally scrupulous investigation, powerful social forces were conditioning the tribunal's movements. In Lorca, and especially in Murcia, powerful members of the city's social élite maneuvered the denunciations against their social and political rivals, a tactic which was especially effective when the rivals could be proven to be of *converso* lineage. In a judicial setting characterized by suspicion of testimony given by *conversos* and the frequent use of torture, it is not surprising that a few rumors or a well placed denunciation could result in the arrest and conviction of hundreds of individuals, or that accusers could condition the movement of the investigation to aim, somewhat crudely, on the general

⁵⁹ Charles Amiel, "Les cent voix de Quintanar. Le modèle castillan du marranisme (I)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 218, no. 2 (April-June 2001), 204-211.

⁶⁰ Contreras, *Sotos contra Riquelmes*, 87-110.

social group of which their enemies were a part. Nevertheless, the inquisitor was not simply a pawn in this game acting according to the rules of a slanted jurisprudence. He was connected through ties of amity and interest to the Riquelme family in Murcia, and together they successfully undermined the rival Soto family and their clients in a bloody campaign that lasted from 1560 to 1571. During this period, the Holy Office in Murcia tried three hundred and forty-five individuals, of which one hundred and thirty-five were burned at the stake in a series of *autos de fe*.⁶¹

Any group of judaizers this large was itself a cause for preoccupation for the central authorities of the Spanish Inquisition, but the Murcia trials demanded the attention of Philip II and the *Suprema* for another reason as well. The families that had been subject to trial and humiliation had powerful resources to counter the onslaught of the inquisition, and individuals such as Fernando de Valibrera, a member of a wealthy Murcian family that had been the target of Salazar, made articulate appeals to the king and the inquisitor general. Arguing in a letter to the king that the entire campaign had been built on false pretences and unscrupulously executed and that therefore the trials needed to be reviewed by a higher authority, Valibrera insisted that he was not criticizing the inquisition as an institution, but rather those responsible for it, “who are men, and as such, can be mistaken.”⁶² However, the most effective maneuver, which eventually forced Philip II and the inquisitors to come to terms, was the appearance of a large number of Murcian victims of the inquisition in Rome in 1565 and 1566, where they appealed their case to the Holy See. Through relatives and business contacts in the Eternal City, these few were able to find an audience with important cardinals, eventually obtaining the ear of Pius V. With the

⁶¹ Ibid., 187-258.

⁶² Ibid., 35-42.

Pope's intervention, the Philip II and the Suprema relented, agreeing to an amnesty and a revision of the trials.

To an even greater extent than their Spanish counterparts, Portuguese inquisitors were single-mindedly focused on confronting crypto-judaism among New Christians. From the first activities of the nascent tribunal of the Holy Office in the 1530s until the eighteenth century, trials for apostasy to Judaism regularly constituted over seventy percent of the total in all three of the domestic tribunals of the Portuguese inquisition: Lisbon, Coimbra, and Évora.⁶³ The consequences of this relentless campaign on Portuguese society are only beginning to be appreciated, yet it is not an exaggeration to say that "Portuguese identity was constructed and affirmed in opposition to the crypto-judaism of the New Christians."⁶⁴

As in both Spain and Italy, the 1560s were a decisive decade for the Portuguese tribunals in a number of respects. The convergence of a series of internal and external developments allowed the inquisition to acquire a new level of organization and authority in the same years that the Roman Inquisition was being remodeled under the guidance of Pius V. The redaction of a *Regimento* in 1552 gave the tribunal a modern organizational structure and a precise series of procedural norms, similar to those laid down in Valdes's *Istruccioness*.⁶⁵ This was supplemented by the presence of a vigilant administrative council, the *Conselho Geral da Inquisição*, which officially began to regulate the activities of the three mainland tribunals in 1569. In 1565-66, the tribunal of Coimbra, was reopened after being suppressed for over ten years. The decade also represented a turning point for the tribunal's political authority within the kingdom: in 1562,

⁶³ Robert Rowland, "l'Inquisizione portoghese e gli ebrei," in *l'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*, 47-66, in part. 51-55.

⁶⁴ Giuseppe Marcocci, *I custodi dell'ortodossia. Inquisizione e Chiesa nel Portogallo del Cinquecento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004), 136.

⁶⁵ The first *regimento* of the Portuguese Holy Office is printed in its entirety in Antonio Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil seculo XVI. Subsídios para a sua historia*. (Lisbon: Arquivo Historico Portugues, 1920), appendix, 31-57.

the cardinal infante Henrique became regent for the adolescent king Sebastião, a position which allowed him to remove many of the impediments that the monarchy had previously imposed on the inquisition and bring the two into closer alignment. The following year the cardinal revoked one of the final impediments to the activity of the inquisition, a moratorium on the confiscation of property of judaizers that had been imposed in 1547 and renewed for another ten years in 1558 by his predecessor as regent, Catalina.⁶⁶

These developments paved the way for a dramatic increase in prosecution of judaizing in the following decade, as prosecution of sexual and moral crimes such as blasphemy decreased.⁶⁷ Between 1571 and 1580, the tribunal of Évora witnessed a fifty percent increase in trials for judaizing from the previous decade.⁶⁸ A similar development took place in Coimbra, where 543 judaizers were convicted during the period 1567-1570, compared to 83 in the preceding period 1541-1545.⁶⁹ This activity included several large scale campaigns against groups of presumed judaizers, including the so-called Conspiracy of Beja in 1570-1572, where, for reasons that are not entirely clear, a group of New Christians falsely accused Old Christians of judaizing. The campaign was a sobering moment for the inquisitors because it revealed how easily a group of false confessions could undermine the judicial practice of their tribunal, and the incident left a profound mark on the memory of the Portuguese Holy Office. It also resulted in a series of new decrees by the central authorities which further weakened the juridical position of New Christians. The tribunal of Évora followed up the campaign in Beja with a massive action

⁶⁶ Marcocci, *I custodi dell'ortodossia*, 85-86, 110, 125-126.

⁶⁷ Elvira Azevedo Mea, "A Inquisição Portuguesa. Apontamentos Para o seu Estudo," in *L'identità dissimulata. Giudaizzanti iberici nell'Europa cristiana dell'età moderna*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini (Florence: Olschki, 2000), 330.

⁶⁸ Antonio Borges Coelho, *Inquisição de Évora. Dos Primórdios a 1668*. (Lisbon: Caminho, 1987), 1:195-196.

⁶⁹ Jose Veiga Torres, "Uma longa guerra social. Novas perspectivas para o estudo da Inquisição portuguesa. A Inquisição de Coimbra," *Revista da Historia das Ideias*; Mea, "A Inquisição portuguesa," 330.

against judaizers in Campo Maior, arresting over two hundred and eighty-eight people between 1582 and 1593 and executing seventeen.⁷⁰

Yet despite the massive concentration of resources and manpower on the prosecution of judaizing in Portugal in the second half of the sixteenth century, those in charge of this project were not satisfied with its results. In 1592, the cardinal-archduke Alberto, inquisitor general of Portugal, sent a circular in which he lamented that all of the efforts of the inquisition had not been enough to extirpate judaizing; not even the introduction of the inquisitorial visit had had much of an effect. It was, he complained, too great a problem for the Inquisition alone, and other methods of evangelization had to be sought out; he suggested the drafting of a catechism designed specifically for New Christians.⁷¹ The cardinal's plan never came to fruition, in part because of the resistance of the inquisitors themselves, who after nearly a half century of bitter confrontation with judaizers were unwilling to make any concessions.⁷²

The trials that took place in Naples in 1569-82, especially during the initial phase that lasted from October 1569 to February 1572, resemble the Iberian campaigns in a number of respects. It was a large, difficult campaign that involved a group of large and powerful families who were well-connected to local social and political elites, and thus necessitated a co-ordinated multi-year campaign that was highly atypical of the activity of the Roman Inquisition, which preferred to pursue individual suspects. Atypical as well were the methods that the inquisitors resorted to- unregulated use of torture, threats, and subornation of witnesses. The Roman

⁷⁰ Borges Coelho, *Inquisição de Évora*, 1:314-321.

⁷¹ Baião, *A Inquisição*, appendix, 15.

⁷² Mea, "A Inquisição portuguesa," 322; Marcocci, "'...per capillos adductos ad pillam,'" 403-404.

Inquisition pursued what could be described as a community of *conversos* within the city of Naples.

A number of factors had converged to create the necessary conditions for this campaign. The first was a government in Southern Italy that was closely aligned with papal policy towards Jews and New Christians. While the Aragonese monarchs in the fifteenth century had favored the development of Jewish communities in the kingdom, the advent of Spanish rule in Southern Italy in 1503 signaled an abrupt turning point. The Catholic Kings almost immediately began preparing an expulsion of the Jewish population of the *Regno*, a policy that was finally implemented in 1541 against the strenuous opposition of both local and foreign representatives of the Jews and of the native élites of Southern Italy. It is difficult to estimate the numbers of people involved in the expulsion, or speculate on the occurrence of forced baptisms, but the legislation and its aftermath probably added a number of domestic New Christians to the group that had already taken refuge in the kingdom from Spain and Portugal. A similar expulsion was carried out in the Duchy of Milan in 1597. The expulsion of the Jews was a key element of the imperial policy of the Spanish monarchy; along with the emplacement of tribunals of the Spanish inquisition in the colonies and subject territories, it was viewed as an essential step in fulfilling the monarchy's religious mission in the world.⁷³

Yet, while the Spanish were successful in the expulsion, the second phase of their project for religious uniformity- the installation of tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition- was a failure.

While such tribunals were successfully installed in two of the Italian territories subject to the

⁷³ Felipe Ruiz Martín, "La expulsión de los judíos del reino de Nápoles," *Hispania* 9 (1949): 28-76, 179-240; Viviana Bonazzoli, "Gli ebrei del Regno di Napoli all'epoca della loro espulsione," *Archivio storico italiano* CXXXVII (1979): 495-559, CXXXIX (1981): 179-238; Renata Segre, "Gli ebrei lombardi nell'età spagnola. Storia di un'espulsione." *Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* XXVIII (1973). An exception, the only officially tolerated Jewish community within the Spanish Empire, in Oran, Morocco, is the subject of Jean-Frederic Schaub. *Les Juifs du Roi d'Espagne. Oran 1509-1669* (Paris: Hachette, 1999).

Habsburgs, Sicily and Sardinia, this project failed in Naples and Milan. The tribunal of the faith, which was considered necessary for the imposition of Catholic orthodoxy, encountered the implacable resistance of the local population, which feared the tribunal and viewed it as an instrument of foreign control. This project provoked even greater opposition than the expulsion, and a series of protests that culminated in revolts in 1510 and in 1547 doomed it to failure. Prosecution of heresy became the responsibility of the archiepiscopal court of Naples and the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office.⁷⁴

The tribunal of the Roman Inquisition that began to function in Naples during the 1550s and 60s found a political situation that was fairly congenial to its goals. During this period, Naples was ruled by a Spanish viceroy who was directly supervised by the king and the *Consejo de Italia* in Madrid. Though there were few real limits on his personal authority, the viceroy nevertheless collaborated on many decisions with an advisory council of Spanish and Italian advisers called the *Consiglio Collaterale*. Underneath these two guiding offices, the Spanish administration preserved most of the institutions of the preceding Angevin and Aragonese monarchies- many of the most important offices were the same as those that had existed in the preceding centuries. This was typical of Spanish imperial policy in Italy, where the Habsburgs attempted as much as possible to preserve existing power structures. As Federico Chabod noted in his study of Spanish Milan, “the imperial will channeled itself, territory by territory, through the pre-existing juridical norms of each place.”⁷⁵ It was an administration at the service of the Spanish crown, and while the *Collaterale* offered a degree of local input in the government of

⁷⁴ Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione*, 1: 97-119, 196-215; Giovanni Romeo, “Una città, due inquisizioni: l’anomalia del Sant’Ufficio a Napoli nel tardo ‘500,” *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXIV (1988): 42-67; Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin : Einaudi, 1996), 65-75. On the case of Milan, see Massimo Carlo Giannini, “Fra autonomia politica e ortodossia religiosa: il tentativo di introdurre l’Inquisizione ‘al modo di Spagna’ nello Stato di Milano (1558-1566),” *Società e Storia* XCI (2001): 79-134.

⁷⁵ Federico Chabod, *Lo stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell’epoca di Carlo V* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), 146.

the kingdom, the viceroy was in effect a royal functionary who sought to implement the policies dictated by the Spanish crown, often against local interests. Many of the viceroys, including the Flemish Nicolas de Perrenot, Cardinal Granvelle, were trusted collaborators of Philip II who were put in the office after distinguished careers in the king's service.⁷⁶

The Spanish administration, operating at the apex of Spain's imperial expansion in the late 16th century, came into conflict with an equally confident and ambitious papacy on a number of occasions. The crown was concerned to maintain its jurisdiction against a series of papal initiatives that attempted to expand the reach of the ecclesiastical courts and by extension, the reach of the Roman pontiff. The most notorious of these was the series of bulls entitled *In Coena Domini*, which declared a wide range of sins as requiring absolution from the papal penitentiary, in effect making the pope the final arbiter of a wide range of civil and criminal cases. While these bulls had been published annually since the Middle Ages, under Pius V they began to encroach on legal terrain that had traditionally belonged to the state. The potential consequences of this legislation included an increasing papal influence over state finances, and several viceroys of Naples refused to grant the *regio exequatur*, or state permission, necessary for such legislation to come into effect. Throughout much of the modern era, relations between ecclesiastical and secular powers in the Regno were characterized by bitter disputes over jurisdictional privileges that often reduced local institutions to a state of complete dysfunctionality.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, this endemic and sometimes violent conflict did not prevent the viceroys from cooperating with the tribunal of the Roman inquisition in Naples. Though the Spanish

⁷⁶ Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *Felipe II y el gobierno de Italia* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1998).

⁷⁷ Massimo Carlo Giannini, "Tra politica, fiscalità e religione: Filippo II di Spagna e la pubblicazione della bolla 'In Coena Domini' (1567-1570)," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* XXIII (1997): 83-152.

would have preferred a tribunal dependant on the *Suprema*, the viceroys nevertheless gave almost unequivocal support to an institution that served a common interest. They provided assistance to the court in arrests and extraditions, carried out capital punishments ordered by the Holy Office, and collaborated with the inquisitors on investigations. Though the continuous jurisdictional conflict spilled over into questions of inquisitorial justice on many occasions, the viceroys for the most part aided the inquisition whenever necessary and allowed the Holy Office plenty of liberty to act. One of the most violent actions in the history of the Roman Inquisition, the massacre of the Waldensians of Guardia and San Sisto in Calabria, was carried out by the viceroy of Naples in coordination with the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office.⁷⁸

The trials of the Neapolitan judaizers were no exception. While the viceroy came into conflict with the inquisitors during several phases of the trials, he never questioned their legitimacy or the reality of the threat that these apostates represented. This was because the attitude of the Congregation of the Holy Office toward *conversos* and judaizers was largely in agreement with that of the Spanish monarchy and its representatives in Southern Italy. The *Regno* had none of the mercantile protections offered by the Venetian and Florentine governments, and Naples had no ghetto, since Judaism was officially illegal throughout the entire kingdom. This made the task theoretically simpler, without any of the protracted legal disputes regarding the legality of prosecution or the favoritism towards apostates exhibited by the Venetian Republic and the Medici. The few conflicts that occurred between the viceroy and the Holy Office during these trials involved purely pragmatic concerns, and the Holy Office operated with relative freedom.

⁷⁸ Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione*, 1: 212-347; Giovanni Romeo, "L'Inquisizione a Napoli e nel Regno di Napoli nell'eta' di Filippo II: un bilancio," in L. Lotti and R. Villari, eds. *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo*, Bari, 2003, 629-640; Pierroberto Scaramella, *L'Inquisizione romana e i valdesi di Calabria (1554-1703)* (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 1999).

The lack of barriers obstructing the Holy Office combined with the presence of a large community of judaizers in Naples created the proper conditions for the uniquely long and complicated campaign that took place there in the 1570s. There was little ambiguity in the Roman inquisition's attitude toward the crime of apostasy to Judaism, and when the tribunal in Naples began to function at full force in the 1560s and 1570s, it was only a matter of time before it focused its attention on this large group of New Christians living in the capital. Once the denunciation made by Lavinia Petralbes' servant provided the necessary catalyst, it was inevitable that the inquisition would proceed zealously and implacably against the group it had uncovered, following the logic of the law.

Chapter 2: An Uneasy Beginning: 1569-1572

I.

Inquisitorial structures in the city of Naples and the *Regno di Napoli*, the large territorial state belonging to the Spanish monarchy of which Naples was the capital, differed greatly from those of northern and central Italy. In the north the papacy depended on a series of Franciscan and Dominican inquisitors who answered directly to the Congregation of the Holy Office, but continuous and at times armed resistance in the city of Naples to any delegate inquisition, whether Spanish or Roman, prevented the installation of similar tribunals in the south.⁷⁹ Instead, the Congregation entrusted the prosecution of heresy in the city to the archbishop of Naples, who operated through the *vicario generale* of the archdiocese, the head of the archiepiscopal court also responsible for a wide range of ecclesiastical civil and criminal cases.

A branch of the Inquisition under the control of the local church, rather than that of a religious order with strong ties to the Roman curia, was bound to retain a degree of autonomy unknown elsewhere. In Naples, this autonomy was accentuated due to several factors specific to the history of the city. The personal authority of the archbishop, who controlled one of the most important dioceses in Italy, and as a cardinal could address the members of the congregation of the Holy Office as equals, was important, but the particular difficulty of governing Naples, Italy's most populous city and the capital of the largest territorial state in Italy, was perhaps even more significant. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, several initiatives by Roman and local clergy to reform the ecclesiastical structures of the city of Naples had faltered

⁷⁹ Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione*, 1:196-215.

because of both widespread resistance and inability to grapple with the massive logistical problems of surveillance over such a large metropolis.⁸⁰

For these reasons, the archbishop seems to have maintained a degree of independence from the control of the Congregation of the Holy Office that was unknown to most other inquisitorial courts. While inquisitors in Northern Italy corresponded with the cardinals with an almost nervous frequency, in Naples the archbishop seems to have requested the assistance of the central tribunal only on his own terms, and rather infrequently. Of the approximately 379 trials known to have been held in the Neapolitan *curia* between 1570 and 1580, only 55, or 14.5 percent, are mentioned in the extant letters that the Congregation of the Holy Office sent to Naples.⁸¹ Of these, an even smaller number were actually followed continuously by the Congregation. Most trials were briefly dispatched by the cardinals, not to be referred to again. Everything else was conducted entirely in Naples without outside consultation.

Outside of Naples, in the rest of the *Regno*, inquisitorial duties were entrusted to local bishops according to the traditional practice of the pre-Tridentine church, who rarely possessed either the desire or the means to engage in elaborate proceedings which were likely to pit them alone against the populations of their dioceses with little potential benefit and no substantial assistance from outside. In theory they were flanked by the *vicario* of Naples, who from 1553 also served as *commissario* of the Holy Office in the entire kingdom, but there is no evidence

⁸⁰ Romeo De Maio, *Le origini del Seminario di Napoli* (Naples: Fausto Fiorentino, 1958); Michele Mancino, *Licentia Confitendi. Selezione e controllo dei confessori a Napoli in età moderna* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2000), 23-65.

⁸¹ I calculated the total number of trials by a comparison of the trials left in the fondo Sant'Ufficio of the *Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli* with a contemporary index compiled by Francesco Joele (Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio*, vol. II, doc. 2, 6-12.) To this I added three trials, those of Francesco Cortellaro, Hieronimo Ferraro, and Horatio Spinola, which are mentioned in the correspondence but not present in either the Neapolitan archive or the Joele inventory. For the data on the trials I have relied on *Il fondo Sant'Ufficio dell'Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli, Inventario (1549-1647)*, ed. Giovanni Romeo, "Campania Sacra", 34, 2003, which supersedes the older inventory in *L'Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli. Guida*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso and Carla Russo, (Napoli: Guida, 1978).

that the *vicario*, who lacked the resources and perhaps also the desire to attempt such an ambitious task, ever took this responsibility seriously.⁸²

Thus, there existed not only a wide gulf between the form of inquisitorial tribunals in Southern and North-Central Italy, but also between Naples and the rest of the South. While the archiepiscopal *curia* seems to have been relatively inactive in anti-heretical campaigns until 1564, its caseload began to steadily increase under the energetic leadership of the future cardinal inquisitor Giulio Antonio Santoro. Santoro oversaw the elimination of the last remnants of groups inspired by the Protestant reformation, but also opened proceedings against individuals accused of many other types of crime, including apostasy to Islam, a common problem among Europeans returning from enslavement in North Africa. However, in the vast territory outside of the capital, local bishops pursued crimes pertinent to the inquisition much more sporadically or not at all, and frequently representatives of the Spanish viceroy acted in concert with the cardinal inquisitors to make up for their failings. The most notorious example of their collaboration was the 1561 massacre of the Waldensians of Guardia and San Sisto in Calabria, one of the bloodiest episodes in the history of inquisitorial repression in Italy, but it was not unique: The registers of the *Consiglio Collaterale*, the kingdom's highest executive body, are filled with orders to capture suspects in the provinces on behalf of the Holy Office and bring them to Naples for trial.⁸³

This state of affairs, characterized by a wide degree of autonomy from Rome accompanied by a heavy dependence on the state, never satisfied the Congregation of the Holy Office. Even attempts by Roman authorities to increase their authority, such as the installation, in 1585, of a second inquisitorial tribunal in Naples under the leadership of a *Ministro del*

⁸² The series of letters from the bishops of the *Regno* to the Congregation of the Holy Office, (ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a) provides plenty of evidence of the lack of means and in some cases lack of will of Southern bishops to mount trials for heresy and apostasy.

⁸³ Romeo, "L'Inquisizione a Napoli e nel Regno di Napoli," 629-640.

Sant'Ufficio who was directly subordinate to Rome and authorized to open proceedings throughout the *Regno*, do not seem to have substantially altered the profile sketched above. The *Regno di Napoli* continued to remain a thorn in the side of the Congregation of the Holy Office well into the seventeenth century. In 1603, the *ministro* gave Cardinal Camillo Borghese, the future Paul V, a vivid description of the city's problems and the inadequacies of the two tribunals to combat them:

“The necessity here is enormous, because all sorts of wicked and devious people- heretics, apostates, sorcerers and necromancers- arrive here, both from foreign countries and every province of Italy and the islands, and because this city is large and curious, they're always up to something, and the prelate never hears a thing about it. Even if there is a denunciation, most of the time it is never received, and even if it is received there's no investigation, and all of this comes from not paying the *ministri* who are necessary for this work. Many denunciations of very grave things end up in the cabinet of oblivion.”⁸⁴

Both secular and ecclesiastical authorities were aware of the presence of judaizers in Naples and in the *Regno* prior to the campaign of the 1570s and had taken judicial action against them on several occasions. In 1534, a group of citizens in Manfredonia denounced their rivals in the communal council to the viceroy of Naples, Pedro de Toledo, accusing them of a range of stereotypical *marrano* practices including abuse of the sacraments and butchering meat according to Jewish custom.⁸⁵ The denunciation seems to have resulted in the formation of a special investigatory commission during Charles V's visit to Naples in 1535-36, one of a series

⁸⁴ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 1-a, f. 1.

⁸⁵ Giuseppe Coniglio, “Ebrei e Cristiani a Manfredonia nel 1534,” *Archivio Storico Pugliese* XXI (1968), 63-69.

of measures against Jews and New Christians undertaken by the sovereign in preparation for the expulsion in 1541. In 1548, the viceroy received a denunciation of six judaizers in the capital, several of whom were members of the much larger group tried in the 1570s by the Inquisition. Camilla Beltrana, Lavinia Petralbes' mother, and her sister Mundina Beltrana were both mentioned in the denunciation, as was Giannotto Leone, the patriarch of the Leone clan.⁸⁶

When the Neapolitan curia began to function, it too began to prosecute judaizers on a limited scale. In 1567, the vicar tried two Sicilians, Giovan Domenico Russo and Domenico della Senia. Della Senia, nearly ninety years old at the time of the trial, abjured, but was called before the tribunal a second time in 1571 in the midst of the larger campaign that followed. On this occasion, he was judged a relapsed heretic and sentenced to death. However, he does not appear to have been connected to the larger group of New Christians to whom his fate was eventually linked, and it does not appear that he provided names for the curia to pursue. In the two years between his trial and the denunciation of Lavinia Petralbes that opened the wider investigation, the Neapolitan curia seems to have remained inactive against the larger community of judaizers and perhaps unaware of its existence.⁸⁷

II.

The campaign against the judaizers began rather innocuously. A denunciation by Geronima Cioffa, a former maid in the household of the deceased captain Joan Ruiz Fonseca, served to pique the interest of the vicar, Paolo Tasso. On October 14, 1569, Cioffa accused Fonseca's widow Lavinia Petralbes of an array of traditional practices associated with

⁸⁶ Ruiz Martin, "La expulsión de los judíos," 213-217, 229-230.

⁸⁷ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 171* The Theatine historian Joseph Silos asserts that the campaign began in 1567 and that the judaizers were uncovered by Theatine confessors. This appears to be supported by the date of the trial of Domenico della Senia and Giovan Domenico Russo, but there is no other evidence that suggests anything similar.

marranism: She would fast during unusual times of the year, and during Lent she would secretly consume *pane azzimo*, matzoh, and then attempt to erase the evidence by cleaning up her crumbs. But there was also something more unusual: Lavinia would frequently read in private from a book covered in black leather that she kept locked in a safe when she wasn't reading it. In time other testimony revealed that Cioffa's denunciation was motivated by vendetta: Lavinia owed her four ducats, and she took revenge by denouncing her former employer to the Holy Office. But by then there was no turning back; an investigation of unprecedented proportions had begun.⁸⁸

Tasso ordered a raid of the Fonseca home several days after the denunciation. Arriving in person, he searched both the apartment of Lavinia and her family and the one belonging to Lavinia's elderly aunt Mundina Beltrana. When he left, the *vicario* had found what he was looking for: a book with a black cover, resembling a breviary. The book was identified several months later by the Franciscan Giovanni da Pisa, a convert from Judaism, as "a copy of the cycle of prayers used by the Spanish Jews in all of their holidays" that had been translated directly from Hebrew into Spanish.⁸⁹ It had belonged to Camilla Beltrana, Lavinia's mother. Immediately after Tasso had finished his search, Lavinia and her daughter Virginia began to destroy the evidence that he hadn't found. They burned three other books in the fireplace of their home, including one that had been in Mundina's possession.

The testimony of other servants who had worked in the home of Lavinia Petralbes confirmed the picture given by Geronima Cioffa. They described Lavinia's crypto-judaism as centered around the ritual observance of the Jewish sabbath, observance of a fast in the month of September, and consumption of *pane azzimo* during Holy Week. These practices were kept

⁸⁸ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 1r-4r. ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 171*, f. 113v

⁸⁹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 182.

confined to the privacy of the home, and Lavinia took advantage of the fact that she owned both a large house in the city and an estate at Fuorigrotta, in the countryside outside Naples, where she could practice her crypto-judaism in relative privacy. According to the servants, Mundina followed a similar regimen, while Virginia was less convinced, and only sometimes followed her mother's example.⁹⁰

After the vicar had heard the testimony of the servants and considered more carefully the material he had recovered during the search, he summoned the four women of the Fonseca household- Lavinia Petralbes, Mundina Beltrana, Virginia Fonseca, and Lavinia's cousin Porzia Bruno- before his court on the 22nd of October. All four were incarcerated in the convent of *La Consolazione* after giving depositions in which they insisted that they had done nothing wrong, and that they led entirely Christian lives.⁹¹ When asked to state her opinion on "the law and ceremonies of the Jews", Mundina replied dryly that "I think that they are cursed by God", and when asked if she knew anything about these ceremonies, she said no, reasoning that "Whoever knows of these things must be doing them."⁹²

This testimony bore little resemblance to the image of the household that the servants had given, but the defendants' stories quickly began to change. Early in the morning of October 27th, Porzia Bruno, after a discussion with the abbess of *la Consolazione*, declared to the nuns that she had opened her eyes, and was ready to confess to having been a Jew. She exhorted Lavinia to

⁹⁰ Ibid., f. 9r-37r

⁹¹ *La Consolazione* was a convent of Franciscan nuns. Ottavio Beltrano. *Breve Descrizione del Regno di Napoli, Diviso in dodeci Provincie* (Naples, 1640), 9. The date of the incarceration is October 22, since on that day Mundina arrives at the consolatione with Virginia and Lavinia, (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 18r)

⁹² ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 18r-20r

follow her decision, telling her that “Once we were Jews, and now we are Christians.” One of the nuns who witnessed her conversion was left in tears.⁹³

Porzia’s conversion, though it occurred outside the courtroom, forced the other suspects to immediately change their position, as it breached the wall of silence that the vicar had initially encountered. On the same day, Mundina Beltrana admitted to a complex series of doubts, founded in a reading of scripture, around the question of the old law, but she continued to insist that she was a Christian. She also admitted to having made a vow to not eat meat when her nephew was hurt, but refused to admit to practicing Judaism, or to name any accomplices. Virgilia Fonseca also admitted to observing the Jewish Sabbath along with her mother, though she denied eating pane azzimo or fasting. She described her mother, Mundina, and Porzia Bruno as being members of a ‘league’ of Jews in Naples along with several other women.

Porzia’s confession came on October 30. She admitted that Lavinia’s deceased mother Camilla Beltrana had taught her and Lavinia to observe the Sabbath “a modo deli hebrei” and to eat matzoh during the months of Lent. On November 2, she appeared again before the court, describing her religious beliefs in greater detail, and for the first time named other judaizers, all of them women: Lucretia and Virginia de Leone, Violante and Beatrice Astorca, Isabella Raguante, Dianora Catalana, and Isabella Cartigliana. The predominance of female suspects, according to a classic model of Iberian judaizing, began to appear, a pattern that would emerge even more clearly as the trial progressed.

Immediately after this deposition, Porzia was tortured. Using the technique of the *corda* or *strappado*, in which a suspect was tied to a rope and suspended by their arms from the ceiling of the torture chamber, Orazio Galluccio and Cesare Cangiano questioned Porzia for a third time,

⁹³ Ibid., f. 39r-39v.

insisting that she reveal the truth regarding her practice of Judaism and her accomplices.

Despite the intense pain, Porzia resisted, and Cangiano was forced to resort to a secondary tactic. He brought Lavinia Petralbes into the room where she was being tortured, and Lavinia began to implore Porzia to confess her errors. This tactic proved efficacious: after hearing Lavinia, Porzia confessed to having been a “*giudea*”, who had only observed Christianity out of ceremony. She had lied while in confession, and did not believe that the body of Christ was present in the host.

The full story of the series of confessions and tortures in *la Consolazione* did not emerge until later. In two depositions given in January and February 1571, before Tasso’s successor Pietro Dusina, Porzia claimed that her initial confession was not the result of a spontaneous conversion, but that instead the abbess had threatened her that she would be taken to Piazza Mercato and burned if she didn’t say exactly what the vicar wanted her to say, but that she would be freed immediately if she did. The intimidation had continued in the torture chamber, where Lavinia had told her the same thing. Overwhelmed by the pain and fear, she asked Cangiano what to say. He told her to answer that she was a “*giudea*,” which she did. The only true testimony she had given, she claimed, was in her first deposition.⁹⁴

Lavinia provided other details about the nature of the threats that Tasso had made. After Porzia’s interrogation, she too was questioned in the ‘*stanza della corda*’, though she was not placed under torture. Tasso, Galluccio, and Cangiano asked her questions in Latin, which she didn’t understand, and did not translate them for her. “To everything they asked me I responded ‘yes’, and I may have said the biggest lie in the world, because everything I said, I said for fear of being tortured.” Tasso told her that he had a special dispensation from the pope which allowed

⁹⁴ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 1r-2v, 239r-241r.

him to absolve her, but that if she didn't say the right things, she would be burned. She also alleged that he had paid the witnesses who testified against her.⁹⁵

The most dramatic confrontation between Lavinia and the vicar occurred one evening when Tasso had come to visit her late at night in the convent and asked her what she planned to say during her next deposition. When she responded that she had nothing to add, he told Lavinia that the following morning he would have her dragged through the streets of Naples and then burned and that the four quarters of her corpse would be hung from the walls of the monastery. Lavinia responded that there was no need to wait for tomorrow, he should go ahead and do it that very night. Tasso made a sign of the cross and exclaimed "Jesus, Jesus, you're possessed!," to which Lavinia responded "You're the possessed one if you want to make me say I did things that I never did."⁹⁶

The nuns of *la Consolazione* were also participants in this campaign of fear and coercion. Several of the nuns were present during the various meetings between Tasso and the Fonseca women, and they mounted a campaign of persuasion, coming to Lavinia's cell from early morning to eight in the evening to persuade her to confess. The abbess Antonia repeated the vicar's promise that she would be let free or burned depending on her testimony, while Sister Geronima Sorrentina informed her of her daughter's arrest and suggested that she should confess for her sake.⁹⁷

The tortures administered by Tasso provide, perhaps, a clue to his motivations. Both the original transcripts of the trials and the later testimony of Porzia Bruno and Lavinia Petralbes reveal that he was in search of something beyond a simple admission of participation in Jewish

⁹⁵ Ibid., f. 267r-275v; interrogating a witness under threat of torture, frequently in the torture chamber itself, was a formal procedure known as a *territo*, a frightening of the suspect.

⁹⁶ Ibid., f. 303r-305v.

⁹⁷ Ibid., f. 267r-275v.

rituals. He was convinced that he had uncovered something far more diabolical that required more than the ordinary tools of criminal investigation to be revealed. Porzia Bruno, after all, was tortured not because she refused to confess, but because she had confessed. Her mere admission of a syncretic Judaism in which she practiced Jewish rites alongside a full and sincere participation in the Christian sacraments was unconvincing, and Tasso used an elaborate combination of threats, entreaties and torture to extract a confession that he believed accurately described the reality of the situation.

III.

The confessions at *la Consolazione* had provided the court with the names of several other individuals, mostly women, and Tasso immediately began to investigate these new suspects. Thus began a new phase of the investigation, one in which the court proceeded extremely rapidly, summoning large numbers of witnesses over a very short period of time. From an investigation of one family, the trial escalated rapidly to involve members of several large families: the Pellegrini, Leone, Raguante, Cartigliana, Corviglies, and Astorga.

The relationships between these families were ambiguous. They all belonged to the *natione catalana*, subjects and former subjects of the crown of Aragon, and most could trace the migration of their families to the *Regno di Napoli* to their parents' generation. Many of the families lived in different parts of the same house, and they were frequently related to one another by marriage. They lived in constant contact. However, despite the intimacy of this community, it also contained significant divisions. Almost all of the suspected judaizers described members of the other families as their enemies. These hatreds usually had their origins in still smoldering conflicts from the distant past: Geronima Pellegrina recounted how her son

Scipione had once fought with one of the sons of the Fonseca in Palermo over a debt, while Lucretia Leone remembered that Ugo Fonseca had offended one of her daughters during a dance.⁹⁸ As a result, many of the witnesses had no compunction about accusing fellow members of the *natione catalana* of judaizing. This very quickly gave the court a long list of suspects to investigate.

A second factor of great importance to the court was the presence of servants in almost every household concerned. Much as in the case of the Fonseca, the servants provided detailed testimony about the practices of their employers. In this respect as well, the Neapolitan trials mirrored numerous Iberian inquisitorial campaigns, where servants, who had a privileged view of the daily lives of their employers, often served as key witnesses.⁹⁹ Often, the testimony of the servants was hostile, but in some cases it was simply naive: the servants recounted in detail the daily practices of their employers, unaware that they were incriminating them as judaizers.

These two factors very quickly led the court into an investigation of much greater dimensions than the one that focused solely on the Fonseca. Every deposition was thick with material regarding not only the religious practices of the suspect in question, but with names of friends, enemies, and relatives who were also judaizers. The quantity of information that emerged was enormous, and Tasso decided to delegate many of the interrogations to his assistants Orazio Galluccio and Cesare Cangiano. The three men worked extremely fast, interrogating over fifty witnesses in November alone.

They also continued to make frequent recourse to torture and the threat of torture. After Porzia Bruno, five other women, including a servant, underwent sessions of torture *ad eruendam*

⁹⁸ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 65v-70v.

⁹⁹ See for example, the trials collected in *Records of the trials of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real*, ed. Haim Beinart (Jerusalem: Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-1985).

veritatem apostasie et sciendam complices. The most brutal was that of the seventy-five year old Mundina Beltrana. After being hung from the *corda* for several intervals, she implored her torturers to let her down. She confessed that she had never believed in the truth of Christianity, but instead followed the creed of *Iddio grande*, the Yahweh of the Old Testament. She did not believe in the sacraments, and held that the Eucharist contained nothing more than flour.

Another elderly suspect, Sibilial Falcona, was tied up, but after loudly protesting that she was too old to be tortured and that her arm was already wounded and wouldn't bear the stress, she was let go, the judges preferring to wait until a doctor could visit her to examine her under torture.¹⁰⁰

This series of tortures closely followed the pattern established in the interrogation of Porzia Bruno. With the sole exception of Angela Leone, the suspected judaizers were subjected to torture only after having admitted to participation in Jewish rites as a complement to the regular practice of Christianity. The tortures were thus aimed at revealing what the court regarded as false confessions, invented to diminish the witness's guilt. It was not always a successful tactic: Geronima Pellegrina remained consistent in her version through a session of torture, as did the servant Fatema del Monasterio, who was brought to the *corda* because she refused to reveal information about her mistress Aldonsa Pellegrina. Angela Leone also resisted over an hour of torture without altering her testimony.

The tortures reveal a great deal about the perspective of the inquisitor. Tasso seems to have regarded the confessions of these women as fundamentally insincere: Not content with their declarations that they had participated in Jewish rituals out of respect for both the old and the new laws, and despite the fact that these admissions were on occasion based in deep reflection on these themes, Tasso insisted that these women reveal themselves for what he believed them to

¹⁰⁰ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 131r-134v.

be: participants in a Jewish counter-cult, a sort of plot against Christianity replete with abuse of the sacraments and hatred of Christ. Perhaps it was for this reason that the questioning frequently centered on the *azzimo*: to the eyes of the judges it no doubt appeared as a perverse substitute for the Eucharist, and the ultimate proof of the nefarious intentions of the judaizers.

This wide-ranging investigation quickly provoked a defensive reaction from the members of the *natione catalana*. On November 7th, less than a week after the first witnesses from outside the Fonseca household had been called, Margarita Vital came forward and denounced herself to the Inquisition in a special procedure called the *spontanea comparitio*. According to this procedure, if an individual guilty of heresy or apostasy denounced himself or herself to the Holy Office, he or she would be reconciled to the Church without any temporal punishment and spared the shame of a public abjuration.¹⁰¹ The advantages of this scheme were obvious to anyone who felt threatened by the possibility of a trial, and eighteen judaizers came forth to denounce themselves between the 7th and 15th of November.

The organizer of these special proceedings was probably Vital's son Girolamo Vignes, a figure of tremendous influence in the most elevated political and religious circles of late sixteenth-century Naples. A jurist by profession, Vignes had become attracted to the spirituality of the newly founded Society of Jesus during his university studies in Padua in the 1540s, and upon his return to Naples single-handedly negotiated the foundation of the Jesuit college in the city. He persuaded the viceroy, Pedro de Toledo, of the benefits that the new order would bring, and used his contacts among Neapolitan aristocracy to gather funds and support. He subsequently remained among the most trusted collaborators of the Jesuits in Naples; in 1562 the rector of the college wrote that "the obligation which the Company owes to this man and his

¹⁰¹ Romeo, *L'Inquisizione nell'Italia moderna*, 45-47.

efforts cannot be repaid in money.”¹⁰² Alfonso Salmerón called him “*tutto nostro*” and claimed that the Jesuits could trust him more than any other person in Naples.¹⁰³ While the Jesuit college remained his primary interest, Vignes also took part in a number of other projects closely tied to the religious ideals of the Counter-reformation. In 1550 he joined the confraternity of the *Bianchi della Giustizia*, a sodality that provided assistance to criminals sentenced to capital punishment. For much of the Early Modern period, membership in the *Bianchi* was reserved to the urban élite, and conferred tremendous prestige upon those who obtained it.¹⁰⁴

As a layman with close ties to the leading religious figures of the city, Vignes proved a valuable mediator between the viceroy and the city’s religious institutions. During the 1570s, Vignes occupied the post of *avvocato fiscale*, or prosecutor, of the tribunal of the nuncio of Naples, an important position which would have placed him at the center of a range of affairs involving the viceroy and the Roman *curia*, including legal disputes over royal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In 1576, he was sent to present a protest to the viceroy over the imprisonment of a group of persons accused of necromancy by the state criminal magistracy of the *Vicaria*; the archbishop, as well as the Congregation of the Holy Office, held the crime to fall purely under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.¹⁰⁵ He possessed a rare knowledge of the inner workings of the ecclesiastical tribunals, including the Holy Office, and had privileged access to their activities.

Vignes was therefore likely aware of the revelations that had come out during the trial against Lavinia Petralbes and her family, and he also knew that members of his own family had

¹⁰² Romeo De Maio, *Alfonso Carafa, cardinale di Napoli (1540-1565)* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1961), 156n.

¹⁰³ MHSI, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis* (Madrid: Lopez del Horno, 1907), doc. 473, 2: 600.

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Romeo, *Aspettando il boia. Condannati a morte, confortatori e inquisitori nella Napoli della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1993), 105-161.

¹⁰⁵ Romeo, *Aspettando il boia*, 320-321.

similar histories. Furthermore, the close relationships between the various families of *conversos* living in Naples meant that it was only a matter of time before Tasso uncovered clues or heard testimony that lead to his family. The proceedings that followed were an effective way to remove his family from suspicion and dishonor.

Margarita Vital received a privileged treatment that spared her the embarrassment of an appearance in the episcopal court. She testified in the church of San Paolo Maggiore, the seat of the Theatine order in Naples, in the presence of Paolo Tasso, the Theatine Domenico di Napoli, and the Jesuits Giovan Cola Petrella and Gaspar Fernandes, rector of the Jesuit college. Vital admitted to relatively little. She had observed the Sabbath and September fast on two occasions over twenty-five years prior at the instigation of one of her sisters, but then had quit, never again practicing Jewish rituals. Furthermore, she had already confessed these errors to a priest and received absolution. The rest of Vital's testimony consisted of accusations of other women for judaizing, including members of the Raguante and Pellegrino families, and Vital's own sister Dianora, who was eventually executed in Rome. A week later, Vital gave a second deposition in the home of Girolamo Vignes, adding some details and receiving absolution from a Theatine father.

Girolamo Vignes' brother Gaspar also gave a secret confession, admitting to having consumed *pane azzimo* twenty-five years prior in the home of Gioanotto Leone. During the same period, Isabella Raguante had sequestered him in a room and read a book to him, which he believed was the Bible. He didn't remember what she said, but he was nonetheless scandalized by the experience. He also accused a Sibilla Leone of dressing corpses in the Jewish manner. Gaspar had never revealed these things before, he said, because he was not sure that they were

prohibited, but now that he had heard about the recent imprisonments, he thought it wise to inform the *curia*.¹⁰⁶

The presence of authoritative members of the religious orders in the commissions that guided these hearings is unusual, and may have been the result of Vignes' involvement. But the Jesuits and Theatines were frequently active in anti-heretical campaigns in the city, and had collaborated with the inquisitorial authorities before. The Jesuits had established themselves in Naples partly through their work to unravel evangelical groups, work which at times included active collaborations with the Inquisition. As one of the order's own chronicles recounted, in 1553, during a period of emergency when evangelical groups had gained a significant foothold, Alfonso Salmerón had preached in the church of the Annunziata, and "the fruits which he claimed among the souls were remarkable, reducing to Catholic faith a great multitude of those who as heretics had been seduced and pursuing those heretics in such a way that the synagogues of Satan disappeared and their schools and libraries as well."¹⁰⁷ One of the listeners was the vicar general, Scipione Rebiba, who operated the tribunal of the Holy Office in the absence of the archbishop and who would soon become himself a cardinal and one of the leading members of the Congregation of the Holy Office. Rebiba, "who did not trust the other religious, wanted all ten of our brothers of the College, even though they were not yet priests and not learned in the sciences, to go preach in the female convents of the city. So much was the credit and devotion which he had for the Society, and so much did he fear that the others might sow tares."¹⁰⁸ The Jesuits were again present in 1563, when several fathers undertook a mission in Calabria to tend to the survivors of the brutal repression of the Waldensian communities by the Inquisition and

¹⁰⁶ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 137*, f. 1r.

¹⁰⁷ ARSI, *Neap.* 72, "Historia Provincie Neapolitanae, 1551-1613," cc.nn.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

the viceroy that had just concluded.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, these collaborations were viewed with ambivalence by some members of the Society of Jesus, who viewed the heavy-handed judicial methods of the Holy Office as contradictory to the image of the Society as an order fundamentally concerned with acts of Christian charity.

In the wake of Vital's testimony, eighteen other judaizers, predominantly women, appeared to confess their apostasy in various settings. Several were accorded similar arrangements to Vital- hearings in San Paolo Maggiore, the Jesuit College, and private residences, before respected members of the religious orders such as the Theatine Girolamo Ferro and the Jesuit Giovan Battista Bonocore. Both of these men were among the small group of trusted collaborators of the archbishop Mario Carafa, though they do not appear to have regularly participated in inquisitorial proceedings. Both were also well-known to Vignes, especially Bonocore, who like him was a member of the *Bianchi*.¹¹⁰ These arrangements served to safeguard the honor and reputation of the suspects but also kept the confessions under the control of the archbishop and provided information about other suspects to the Holy Office.

Angela Conca was among those who seized this opportunity to avoid the more serious consequences of an ordinary trial. She had already deposed before Tasso on November 4th, the day after her husband, Giuseppe Catalano, had been imprisoned. She insisted that she was entirely orthodox, that she and her husband ate pork and that they never observed the Sabbath, and expressed surprise that her husband had been incarcerated. Five days later she returned to the *curia* to depose again before Tasso, but on this occasion she came on her own initiative, and with a completely different story- she admitted to having judaized and received absolution.

¹⁰⁹ Mario Scaduto, "Tra Inquisitori e Riformati. Le missioni dei Gesuiti tra Valdesi della Calabria e delle Puglie. Con un carteggio inedito del Card. Alessandrino (S. Pio V). (1561-1566)," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 15 (1946): 1-76.

¹¹⁰ De Maio, *Le origini del seminario*, 84-85.

Conca had felt the pressure of an impending investigation against her, and sought the quickest and least difficult route of escape possible, and it is probable that others, such as the women of the Raguante family, Diana, Violante, and Laudomia, who were close to Lavinia Petralbes, denounced themselves for the same reasons.¹¹¹

The members of the Corviglies family, by contrast, had not been named by any of the suspects, and they only became involved after Elionora Corviglies heard news of the arrests of several women for Jewish rites and denounced herself. She called fra Pietro da Cilento, the guardian of the *Ospidaletto*, and revealed to him that she too had been taught to observe the sabbath by an elderly aunt, Isabella Lopes, who had also taught her and her sisters to eat *pane azzimo* and swear to “*Iddio Grande*” instead of Jesus. She asked the priest to inform the archbishop, and she and her two sisters, Laura and Victoria, appeared on November 10 before the doctor of theology Giovan Francesco Lombardo and a canon, Andrea Sarno, to whom they repeated their earlier stories. The court’s investigation of her family continued, eventually focusing on her brother Cesare, who was tortured before finally being found suspect of apostasy and allowed to abjure secretly on December 5th.¹¹²

In several cases, the *spontaneae comparitiones* provoked violent reactions from the families under suspicion. Margarita Vital complained that she had been followed and threatened by two men armed with swords when she came to confess at San Paolo Maggiore. She suspected that they had been sent by the Capelli or the Leoni, two families that both came under suspicion during the course of the trials.¹¹³ Beatrice Fernandes recounted that her relative Alonso Pellegrino had told her that he wanted to “fire a gunshot” at any member of his household who

¹¹¹ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio* 129, f. 107-109r; ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 137*, f. 9r-9v.

¹¹² ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio* 139, f. 1r-51r.

¹¹³ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio* 155, f. 293-297.

revealed damaging information to the archiepiscopal court and that many of the Pellegrini had stopped speaking to her and her sister Livia after the two of them had gone to confess.¹¹⁴ There was an evident division between those, like Vignes and his family, who saw an advantage to cooperating with the Holy Office, and those, like Pellegrino, who had hoped to present a united front against the investigation.

The trials came to a brief culmination on the feast of *Ognissanti* in December of 1569, when a ceremony was held in the cathedral in which twelve individuals, an entire household, abjured as judaizers. On the same occasion, twelve of the viceroy's Turkish slaves were baptized, all before an enormous crowd.¹¹⁵ But for all of the impressive ceremony, the occasion marked less a victory for the inquisition than a brief truce. There were still plenty of new leads to be followed, plenty of witnesses who had not yet been interrogated, and above all, plenty of suspects languishing in the prisons of the episcopal palace and the convent of *la Consolazione* who had not yet been sentenced or absolved. By the end of 1569, it was clear that the Neapolitan tribunal had a major case on its hands, one that would require persistent attention for the foreseeable future.

IV.

The massive investigation that was taking place in Naples had gone forward up to this point under the exclusive control of the archbishop of Naples and his *vicario generale*.¹¹⁶ The Congregation of the Holy Office began observing the activity of the *curia* no later than February

¹¹⁴ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 111.

¹¹⁵ De Maio, "Girolamo Ferro," 212-213.

¹¹⁶ It is unlikely that the Roman curia was completely unaware of the trials, as news of them had been spread around Italy by an *avviso* of uncertain date, but which probably comes from the end of 1569. The text of the *avviso* is in Amabile, *Il Santo Officio dell'Inquisizione*, 308.

16, 1570, when the trials of three of the Neapolitans, Lavinia Petralbes, Gaspar Vignes, and Margarita Vital, were read aloud during a meeting of the Congregation in the presence of Pius V. The following day the records of another twenty-four of the Neapolitans were read in a meeting without the pope.¹¹⁷ These are the first signs of an exchange of information and instructions between Naples and Rome over the trials of the judaizers, a conversation which unfortunately is only partially preserved in existing documentation.

On April 1, 1570, Cardinal Scipione Rebiba wrote on behalf of the congregation to Mario Carafa and asked him to turn the suspects Cesare Corviglies, Girolamo Pellegrino, Francesco Cartiglia, and Giuseppe Catalano over to the viceroy, who would then send them to Rome by sea. It is not clear what motivated the decision to extradite the four men, but the decision signals a growing interest and involvement of the Roman Congregation in a series of trials of clear importance. Within a few months, all of these men, except for Francesco Cartiglia, who remained in Naples for unknown reasons, had been transferred from Naples to Rome, where the central tribunal of the Holy Office had begun its own investigation.¹¹⁸

The first official judgment by the cardinals on what had occurred in Naples came in a meeting of the congregation on July 12, 1570, when it was decreed that the trials of Cesare Corviglies and others had constituted a “notorious injustice” on the part of the Neapolitan tribunal, and that the entire proceeding was to be reviewed and the trials re-done.¹¹⁹ The decision was presented by Pietro Belo, the *avvocato fiscale* of the Roman Holy Office, who referred in his argument to a *motu proprio* issued by Pius V in 1566. This piece of legislation stated that sentences released by the tribunals of the Holy Office in favor of heretics that were

¹¹⁷ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1567-1571, f. 138v-139r.

¹¹⁸ *Le lettere*, doc. 56, 24.

¹¹⁹ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1567-1571, f. 150v-151r.

contrary to the “*stylum*” or jurisdictional prerogatives of the Holy Office were to be considered null and void. Furthermore, it re-affirmed the authority of the cardinal inquisitors to review these cases.¹²⁰ The provision was therefore intended to prevent heretics from escaping from justice because of poorly conducted trials, and had the additional goal of strengthening the supremacy of the Congregation of the Holy Office over the local tribunals of the Inquisition and all other judicial authorities in the matter of heresy. The case at hand was obviously different: no one had received excessively lenient treatment at the hands of Tasso. On the contrary, it was the genuine displeasure of the Congregation at the excesses and irregularities of the trial that provoked the decision, which clearly placed the bizarre scenes that had unfolded at *la Consolazione* outside of the acceptable conduct of an inquisitorial court.

This clamorous decision cancelled in a single blow the enormous amount of work that the Neapolitan tribunal had undertaken from October 1569, and also seems to have sealed the fate of Paolo Tasso, who left the post of *vicario generale* of the archdiocese of Naples sometime in the second half of 1570. Despite the circumstances of his departure, the Archbishop Mario Carafa retained his esteem for Tasso, recommending him to Gregory XIII in 1573 as a prelate who had “served as *vicario* to my great satisfaction, and that of the entire city.” In 1574 he recommended him for the vacant episcopal see of Sant’Agata dei Goti, in a letter in which he remembered the discovery of “those sects of Jews” as among Tasso’s principal achievements.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Laerzio Cherubino, *Bullarium sive nova collectio plurimarum constitutionum apostolicorum diversorum romanorum pont. A Pio quarto usque ad Innocentium Nonum* (Rome, 1617), 2: 200-201.

¹²¹ De Maio, *Le Origini del seminario di Napoli*, doc. 9, 203. By 1597, Tasso was serving as archbishop of Lanciano, a diocese in Abruzzo: Gigliola Fragnito, *Proibito capire. La Chiesa e il volgare nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 265.

V.

Tasso's replacement at the head of the Neapolitan *curia* was Pietro Dusina, a prelate from Brescia and a trusted collaborator of Pius V. In many ways, Dusina's career reflects the model of the new type of inquisitor that the Congregation of the Holy Office began to install in the Italian courts during the 1560s and 1570s. Nominated by the pope, he was a loyal servant of Congregation of the Holy Office who by the end of his career had served both as judge in a local tribunal and as a consultor in Rome. He was, in short, exactly the kind of person necessary to correct the errors of his predecessor and bring the Neapolitan tribunal up to the high standards set by Rome.¹²²

In January of 1571, Dusina immediately began work on the delicate task of revising the trials that Tasso had mishandled and left incomplete a year before. It was a complicated task: Dusina had to do his best to separate the true from the false by both analyzing the flawed earlier testimony, and by examining the witnesses for further information without allowing them to take advantage of the court's previous mistakes. The first person to testify in 1571 was Porzia Bruno, who gave a vivid description of the numerous threats and irregularities that had taken place before and during her examinations under torture over a year before. But she was not the only one with heavy complaints against Tasso. Sibilia Falcona, eighty-five years old, lamented that she was physically ruined after an interrogation under torture, and that she couldn't talk anymore. Angela Conca protested that even the notary had colluded in the falsification of her earlier testimony: there were things written in the copy of her earlier examination that she had never said.¹²³ Nevertheless, the revision of the past was not total, even among those who were

¹²² On Dusina, see Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, 309 and Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti, e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 92-93.

¹²³ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 12r-14r, 62r-62v.

involved in the most violent and obscure phases of the previous trial. Virginia Fonseca told the court that she had nothing to add to her earlier deposition, despite having been present in the convent of *la Consolazione* when her mother and aunt had been terrorized by Paolo Tasso.

The sensitivity with which Dusina examined every aspect of the previous trial can be seen in his interrogation of Julia Campegnna, an acquaintance of Angela Leone who had testified in her defense in 1569, saying that she had spent time in Angela's house and seen nothing out of the ordinary; she had also seen her eat pork.¹²⁴ When Campegnna appeared before Dusina on February 14th, he noticed some inconsistencies between her testimony and the deposition she had given over a year before. He ordered that her previous testimony be read back to her, and asked her to explain the differences. After a brief attempt to dissimulate, Campegnna admitted that she had lied; she had never seen Angela eat pork in her home, but only after her imprisonment. She also confessed that she had only seen Angela confess two or three times, despite having said that she had seen her do so frequently. She explained that she had given misleading testimony out of ignorance, and that she hadn't been instructed by anyone or paid to do so. Dusina had Campegnna re-examined Angela under torture, but her story remained the same. She insisted that she had not lied on Angela's instructions.¹²⁵ Subsequently both Julia Campegnna and her relative Giovan Antonio Melioto, a member of the corps of guards of the city of Naples who also testified in defense of Angela Leone, underwent trials for false testimony. In March 1571 Campegnna was sentenced to sit in front of the Cathedral for nine hours wearing a mitre with her hands tied behind her back, and Melioto received an even harsher sentence: public flagellation in all of the *sedili*, or quarters, of the city, followed by five years' galley service.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 143, f. 94r-97v.

¹²⁵ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 229r-230r, 235r-237v.

¹²⁶ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 162*

One of the suspects, perhaps emboldened by the many mistakes the court had made in the previous trial, made an attempt to resist the investigation. Lucretia Vaglies, the daughter of a Spanish immigrant to Naples who was not closely connected to the other families accused of judaizing, told the priests who came to her home on behalf of the *curia* that she was a good Christian and had no intention of coming to testify and bringing shame upon her children unless she was ordered to do so by the viceroy himself. She would sooner kill herself, she vowed, or throw herself at the feet of his Excellency the Viceroy, than appear in court. Despite this strident resistance, Vaglies eventually relented and appeared in court on February 12, 1571, where she denied having participated in any Jewish rituals. In 1572, both Lucretia and her mother Francina were found guilty of apostasy and sentenced to *carcere perpetuo*, or life imprisonment.¹²⁷

By the summer of 1571 the trials were moving to a close. On July 1st a large public abjuration ceremony was held in the cathedral, in the presence of a huge crowd and several dignitaries, including Marcantonio Colonna, who was in Naples as part of the preparations for the Holy League's campaign against the Turks. Twelve women renounced their former apostasy and were re-received into the church, while another four refused to abjure. Unfortunately the names of the participants in this ceremony are unknown, but the four women are to be identified with Geronima Pellegrina, Elionora Pellegrina, Isabella Raguante, and Dianora Vidal, who were subsequently sent to Rome.¹²⁸

The number of unrepentant judaizers was potentially much higher. The Jesuit historian Francesco Schinosi relates that during the preparations for this ceremony, the Spanish Jesuit

¹²⁷ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 201r-201v, 220r-222v; ASDN SU 212* (libro di sentenze, in notes for giudaizzanti 2) Sentences of *carcere perpetuo* were rarely definitive, and most of those who received them were able to successfully appeal for reductions after several years: Tedeschi, "Preliminary Observations," 3-21.

¹²⁸ Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, 1:310.

Antonio Soldevilla undertook a mission among the judaizers in prison, attempting to convert those who “maintained their obstinacy, so that not with the force of reason, nor with the violence of torture, nor even with the image of vituperous death before their eyes, could they be induced with a humble confession to experience the mercy of the church instead of its severity.”

Soldevilla managed to bring several of the women to penitence, so that they confessed “both publicly before the judges and sacramentally at the feet of the same father.”¹²⁹ With Soldevilla’s visits to the prison, the Jesuits in Naples once again provided crucial assistance to the operation of the Holy Office. It was a kind of cooperation that, while rarely emphasized among the order’s contributions, was not uncommon in the Iberian Peninsula. In Spain, members of the order worked hand-in-hand with the Holy Office during the antiheretical campaigns in Seville during the 1550s, on several occasions disguising inquisitorial investigations under the cover of their traditional works of mercy. In Portugal, where Jesuits were members of the *Conselho Geral da Inquisição*, the order’s links with the Holy Office were even stronger.¹³⁰

On July 22nd another public abjuration of ten judaizers took place in the cathedral. The following day Dusina wrote to the cardinal inquisitors, describing the enormous effort which the trials had required. He had never done anything similar before, nor had he ever seen anyone else do it, and he begged their pardon for any mistakes he may have made.¹³¹ The letter testifies to the importance that these trials took on for Dusina: much depended on his success or failure in this enterprise.

The abjurations created complications of their own. They represented the first occasion on which a series of controversial trials was officially revealed to a city that retained a long-

¹²⁹ Francesco Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia di Gesu, appartenente al Regno di Napoli* (Napoli 1706), 1: 249.

¹³⁰ Stefania Pastore, “Esercizi di Carità, Esercizi di Inquisizione,” *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXVII (2001) no. 2, 231-258; Marcocci, *I custodi dell’ortodossia*, 287-311.

¹³¹ Amabile, *Il Santo Officio dell’Inquisizione*, doc. 10, 2:74.

standing hostility to inquisitorial courts, especially when they were guided by foreign authorities. In July of 1571 the viceroy Cardinal Granvelle wrote a letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office describing a situation of crisis and requesting that the trials be transferred to Rome. The huge number of people involved, which he estimated at around five hundred between the *inquisiti* and their families, and the new prisons that the archbishop was hastily building to house them, had fed public fears of the inquisition, and especially of Roman interference in the *Regno*. Granvelle had asked the archbishop to halt the construction of the prisons and suspend the trials, but there was still a significant risk of a revolt.¹³² This request was probably one of the factors in the decision to bring the four unrepentant judaizers to Rome later that year.¹³³ More abjurations followed, probably of persons of lesser importance, through the beginning of 1572, and an internal document from the Neapolitan curia states that most of the abjuration ceremonies were held privately.¹³⁴

After the summer of 1571, the most dramatic developments took place in Rome rather than in Naples. The cardinal inquisitors continued, periodically, to read copies of the trials arriving from Naples, and the Roman tribunal continued the trials of the three judaizers that had been extradited at the beginning of 1570, Girolamo Pellegrino, Cesare Corviglies, and Joseph Catalano. Cesare Corviglies was released by decree of the cardinal inquisitors on October 5, 1571 but the trials of Joseph Catalano and Girolamo Pellegrino continued into the following year.¹³⁵

¹³² Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, doc. 10, 2:74-75.

¹³³ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, c. 32v-33v.

¹³⁴ Two abjurations were held on January 21, 1572, three on January 25, 1572, and three more on January 27, 1572: Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, doc. 1, 2:1-2.

¹³⁵ There are scattered references to the Roman trials of Catalano and Pellegrino in the *Decreta Sancti Officii*.

Then, on February 7, 1572, Pius V decreed that Isabella Raguante, Elionora Pellegrina, and Geronima Pellegrina, all unrepentant judaizers, should be consigned to the governor of Rome for execution. The sentence was carried out the following day at Ponte Sant'Angelo, where the women were joined on the scaffold by Dianora Vidal, Isabella Raguante's mother, and Domenico della Senia, the Sicilian judaizer who had abjured in Naples in 1567 and had been found a relapsed heretic in 1571. The convicts were accompanied to the place of execution by members of the Roman confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato, a lay brotherhood of Florentine expatriates responsible for spiritual assistance to the condemned, persuading them to resignation to their fate and repentance of their sins, both essential elements to the Christian ideal of the good death. The five judaizers all demonstrated sufficient contrition that they were granted the mercy of being hung before their bodies were burned, rather than burned alive.¹³⁶

The executions at Ponte Sant'Angelo brought the first phase of an inquisitorial campaign that had been the almost exclusive focus of the Neapolitan inquisition's time and resources for the previous two years to a dramatic close. The ruthless sentence handed down by Pius V was consistent with the gravity of the crimes and the lack of repentance demonstrated by the women. It was also the Pope's last decision on these matters. On May 1, Ghislieri died, and after a brief conclave Ugo Boncompagni was elected Gregory XIII on May 12.

The first major decision that the congregation faced under the new pope regarded the sentencing of Girolamo Pellegrino, who had been living in the Roman prisons of the Holy Office since early 1570. On July 3, in a meeting of Congregation of the Holy Office in the presence of the pope, the consultants almost unanimously voted that Pellegrino was a false convert and a

¹³⁶ The sentence is in ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, f. 51. The most detailed accounts of the execution are provided by the records of the confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato, reproduced in Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, 1: 315-316, n. 1.

relapsed judaizer who deserved capital punishment. The sentence was dictated in a subsequent meeting on the 16th, and Pellegrino was hanged to death and his corpse burned the following day at Ponte Sant' Angelo.¹³⁷

The ruthless treatment of the unrepentant was combined with clemency towards those who had been found guilty of apostasy but had recognized their error. Livia Fernandes, who had denounced herself to Tasso in 1569 and given another lengthy confession to Dusina in 1571, was spared by a special pardon from the pope in June 1572. Instead of being considered an impenitent or relapsed heretic, as the evidence indicated, she would be sentenced only as a first time offender. She was given relatively light punishments: the requirement to wear the *habitello* that denoted her as a penitent heretic, and a series of penances assigned by the court. A similar arrangement was made for Angela Fernandes, who had also denounced herself to Tasso at the beginning of the trials. Diana Raguante, who had confessed to apostasy as well as to having lied in confession, was also given a special pardon from the pope in December 1572, and was sentenced perform a series of penances and to incarceration in her home.¹³⁸

Pietro Dusina, who as *vicario generale* of the archiepiscopal *curia* had overseen many of the most dramatic and important opening stages of the trials, left Naples in 1573. The occasion was a bitter conflict between the viceroy and the archbishop over the arrest of a thief who had stolen some sacred objects from the church of San Lorenzo. Caught in the act, the thief was brought to the archbishop's prisons to await trial. Granvelle protested that since the thief was a layman, the case fell under the purview of the *Vicaria*, the state criminal court, and he sent the *avvocato fiscale* of the *Vicaria* and a group of armed guards to extract the suspect by force from the prisons of the archbishop. Dusina responded by excommunicating the *fiscale*, the guards,

¹³⁷ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, f. 67r-67v.

¹³⁸ ASDN SU 212* "Secundum volumen sententiarum in causa hebraismi"

and the viceroy, for which he was expelled from the city and Kingdom of Naples by Granvelle.¹³⁹ It was a typical, if unusually dramatic, example of the kind of jurisdictional conflict that had become common in the kingdom of Naples, one of the main battlegrounds between the expanding state jurisdiction of the Spanish monarchy and a papacy determined to preserve its authority. Dusina left for Rome and the Congregation of the Holy Office, and the work that he had begun was left to his successors.

¹³⁹ Fausto Nicolini, *Aspetti della vita Italo-Spagnuola nel cinque e seicento* (Napoli: Guida, 1934), 89-90.

Chapter 3: New Problems: 1573-1582

I.

In the years following the spectacular executions in Rome, the prosecution of judaizers in the Neapolitan curia relented significantly. The furor of the initial phase subsided, and the tribunal focused on slowly bringing to a conclusion the campaign that had begun some three years earlier. Yet, even if the urgency of the first years had passed, new problems presented themselves. The targets, initially easier to delineate, became more complex. On the one hand there remained individuals among the group of suspects and their circle who still needed to be investigated. Others, no sooner than they had abjured Judaism, began to practice it again. Several judaizers found themselves on trial a second time, recidivist apostates who narrowly escaped the death penalty. There were also judaizers who were unrelated to the New Christian community in Naples, wandering soldiers, intellectuals, and doctors who had found a home in Southern Italy. Finally, there was the complex problem of the settlements of judaizers in the provinces of the *Regno*, where the Inquisition had jurisdiction but no organization. In these remote locations, where the inquisitors relied on local ecclesiastical and secular authorities to do their work for them, even opening an investigation or making an arrest was a major accomplishment.

The constant point of reference for the officials of the *curia* who sought to find their way through this morass was the documentation left behind by Pietro Dusina. The volumes of testimony that he had compiled and carefully indexed provided a rudimentary guide to what had come before as well as a mass of clues and accusations that provided material for the *curia* to investigate in the future. Many of the trials begun by his successors began not with

denunciations, but with simple references to earlier pieces of testimony from the period 1570-1571 that implicated the suspect in question. In 1581 the vicar Quattromani wrote to Cardinal Savelli, his correspondent in the Congregation of the Holy Office, with such a case:

“I found in the trials held under Mons. Dusina and in the summaries that Vittoria del Castro is suspect of Judaism based on the testimony of three witnesses, in addition to being the daughter of Lucretia Leone, who abjured. She was already examined during that period, and since she kept denying everything, she was given a deadline to give her own defense. But since then neither she nor the *avvocato fiscale* has done anything, and since it seems to me a case of importance, I’ve attempted to move forward.”¹⁴⁰

Quattromani’s letter demonstrates that even in the 1580s, at the very end of the campaign, the curia was still proceeding largely along the lines laid out by Dusina’s investigation a decade prior. The same year the Archbishop, Annibale di Capua, wrote to inquire whether it was necessary to call witnesses a second time who had already testified to Dusina in 1571, or whether their old depositions were still valid, remarking that “this problem arises in almost all of the trials for Judaism.”¹⁴¹ Pietro Dusina himself continued to work in Rome during this period as a consultor of the Congregation of the Holy Office, frequently supervising the trials of the judaizers from afar, and he was also an important resource for the Neapolitan curia in these matters. In 1577, he provided a second copy of his summary of the trials for Judaism to the current *vicario*, Gaspare Silingardo, after the copy in Naples had gone missing.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, carte non inventariate.

¹⁴¹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 796.

¹⁴² ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 463.

If the guidance of Dusina provided a degree of continuity and organization to the tribunal's work, there were other, more general factors that severely hampered it. In 1578 Stefano Quaranta, the *avvocato fiscale*, or prosecuting attorney, of the *curia*, sent a harsh letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office that denounced the Neapolitan tribunal of the Holy Office as wracked by incompetence, inefficiency, and widespread disorganization. Important procedures, such as arrests, were often handled without regard for protocol and entrusted to low ranking officials. The papers of the inquisition were left in the open, among them "the summary of the trials for Judaism made by Signor Dusina when he was *vicario*, which contains the accusations against each person, page by page, was sitting where it could be taken and read by anyone." The volumes containing the records of the trials were similarly left about, so that "even the servants read them, and they knew the secrets of the trials of religion before they were finished."¹⁴³ This was accompanied by the incompetent handling of some of the trials, which in many cases were conducted by mere *scrivani* who were untrained in examining witnesses. The confusion was such that many important proceedings had been left "asleep." The following year, upon becoming archbishop of Naples, Annibale di Capua wrote to the cardinal inquisitors to inform them that he had begun to review the trials for Judaism, but that he and his staff hadn't been able to do anything but reorganize the transcripts, which were all out of order.¹⁴⁴

This disorganization was compounded by heavy conflict in the *curia*. The various tasks of the court were divided among several vicars, many of whom were in constant conflict with one another and with the archbishop. Mario Carafa's vicar Alessandro Ravalio registered a bitter complaint with the cardinal inquisitors in the summer of 1575, lamenting that despite the presence of four or five vicars in the Neapolitan curia, he was burdened with all of the work and

¹⁴³ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 631-634.

¹⁴⁴ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 671.

forced to pay for all of his own expenses. He was alienated from the Archbishop, and afflicted by fever. “Tell me what I have to do to remain here with my honor intact,” he wrote, giving full voice to his feelings of impotence and frustration.¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, despite these problems, which significantly complicated the operation of the tribunal, the Holy Office in Naples, acting in conjunction with the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office and the viceroy of Naples, was able to continue the campaign, demonstrating an ability to follow a number of proceedings simultaneously and continue investigations over many years. Throughout this period, the *curia* tended to focus on small pieces of the whole, prosecuting individual suspects or several members of the same family at a single time before moving on to another group; this method not only made a seemingly inhuman task manageable, it allowed the court to intersperse the ongoing campaign against the judaizers with the numerous other investigations for other crimes that it was pursuing simultaneously.

Among the remaining suspects connected to the original group of judaizers, finishing the investigation was frequently a drawn-out process. The judicial odyssey of Francisco Cartiglia demonstrates the sometimes lengthy intervals between the various stages in prosecution. Cartiglia had admitted in confession to having fasted in September and eaten, at the persuasion of his wife Violante Raguante and her mother, a piece of *pane azzimo*. He confessed these sins to three different priests, and the last one of these, the Jesuit Bonocore, suggested that he write a *memoriale* describing these facts and send it to the archiepiscopal *curia*. Cartiglia did so and was called before Dusina in 1571, who placed him in chains after hearing his testimony. He had then been released because of poor health, and only came under scrutiny again in 1577, when he was arrested and re-interrogated. Cartiglia gave a detailed confession of his religious beliefs that

¹⁴⁵ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 159r-v.

shocked the the vicar Gaspare Silingardo, who wrote to Cardinal Savelli that "...he vomited incredible stuff, I will say only that in denying the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, he denied all of the Christian truths", and was sentenced to *carcere perpetuo*.¹⁴⁶ In 1578, he requested and received permission from the Congregation of the Holy Office to leave his home once a week and remove his *habitello* in order to work.¹⁴⁷ Cartiglia was by no means an inconspicuous figure, or one who was unconnected to the rest of the group of judaizers. His mother, Maria Cartigliana, had been a focus of the first investigations, and he was connected by marriage to the Raguante and Vignes families. Nevertheless, it took a long period of time for the court to locate and try him after his release.

Cartiglia's daughter Maria had also been interrogated before, once in 1571 and again in 1572, after Margarita Vital had implicated her in the practice of Jewish rituals and Beatrice Leone had given her name under torture. Maria had denied all involvement during this period, but many other witnesses placed her among the group of judaizers. Even her own mother, Violante Raguante, testified that when she had fasted in September in the company of her mother, she often brought Maria with her and feared that she might have learned the practice on these occasions. Ultimately, however, her first trial was quietly suppressed. Her husband, the *cavaliere* Giovan Vincenzo de Lagni, of the *seggio* of Capuana, had privately asked Orazio Galluccio, a relative of his, to persuade the archbishop, then Mario Carafa, to drop her case. Galluccio referred the request to Carafa, who agreed, saying that he would not request further testimony from Maria. From there it seems, her case was forgotten.

In October of 1580, Maria was called to testify before the *curia*, and this time it was her husband who was responsible for the denunciation. De Lagni had earlier been imprisoned by the

¹⁴⁶ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 208r-212v; ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 436*; ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 510.

¹⁴⁷ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1577-78, c. 126-128r.

Vicaria for a range of crimes relating to his small-scale lending enterprises. During his absence Cartiglia had committed adultery with several other men, and he now sought to avenge himself by bringing Maria's judaizing back to the attention of the archiepiscopal *curia*. De Lagni provided some of the most damning and direct testimony, revealing that his wife had observed the Sabbath on Saturdays by not working and preventing her maids from working, and that she consistently refused to eat pork, protesting that it made her feel ill. Cartiglia was imprisoned at *la Consolazione*, and she began a vigorous and expensive defense of her cause. She engaged several lawyers on her behalf who drafted numerous briefs requesting the testimony of witnesses in far-flung corners of Puglia and others that detailed the numerous potential witnesses who were enemies of Maria and therefore unreliable. These maneuvers prolonged the trial significantly, and in the summer of 1582, as her imprisonment continued into its twentieth month, Maria received permission to leave *la Consolazione* in order to improve her health, provided she did not leave the city of Naples.

But in addition to these suspects, usually marginal participants in the rituals and dissemination of crypto-judaism, the court also had to confront the problem of recidivism. Sibilial Falcona, an elderly and eccentric Frenchwoman, had been found vehemently suspect of apostasy to Judaism and sentenced to a ten-year prison term in 1571. Then, testimony from several trials in the mid-1570s, including that of Francisco Cartiglia, revealed that Sibilial had continued to practice crypto-Jewish rituals after her first trial. Julia Vitale and Margarita Parregna testified in 1578 that they had witnessed her dress the corpse of Rafaele Raguante in a white sheet, "*more judaico*", which was exactly the practice for which she had been convicted on the first occasion. Now over ninety years old, she was brought back to court and interrogated, and her previous trial and sentence were removed from the archive for consultation. Sibilial

initially denied all the accusations, maintaining that she had lived as a Catholic since the end of her first trial: “*Figlio mio bello*, if I had committed these Jewish errors, I would have said so, because I know that whoever denies in this court is condemned, and whoever confesses is saved.” Nevertheless, in light of the testimony against her, the *vicario* did not find her position credible, and she was imprisoned in *la Consolazione* while the court continued to investigate.¹⁴⁸

In October 1579, the Archbishop Annibale di Capua reported to Rome that Sibilialia had begun to confess and give the names of her accomplices, “several old Portuguese women who died several years ago.” Nevertheless, because he believed Sibilialia to be none other than the “*principal istruttrice di tutte le donne giudaizzanti*”, he thought that she was still concealing the names of many of her accomplices who were still living. Though she had been interrogated under torture in her first trial, di Capua thought that she was too old to be tortured now, and he would instead have to persuade her through other means to confess completely.¹⁴⁹ Cardinal Savelli advised the Archbishop to proceed carefully. Not only should Sibilialia not be tortured because of her age, it was possible that she was no longer completely mentally sound, and that it would be necessary to carefully guide her toward “real penitence.”¹⁵⁰ Sibilialia’s depositions were filled with expressions of exasperation at the vicario’s questions and protestations that she could not remember. Whether these were genuine expressions of mental anguish or a clever defensive strategy is not obvious.

On October 8, 1580 Sibilialia unexpectedly died, leaving her confession unfinished and her trial unresolved. A post mortem sentence was given by the Archbishop on June 21, declaring a *damnatio memoriae*, a posthumous destruction of her name and memory that among other things

¹⁴⁸ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 436, f. 15v-18v, 27r.

¹⁴⁹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH-2a, f. 710.

¹⁵⁰ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 436, f. 59r; the letter is also published in *Le lettere*, doc. 132, 55-56.

made her unfit for burial in a Christian cemetery. When the *vicario* made arrangements to have her body exhumed, Sibilia's children protested to Rome, arguing that the court was at least required to admit their arguments in her defense before doing so. The Congregation conceded this point and ordered a final audience with the family before the exhumation of the corpse.¹⁵¹

Sibilia was perhaps a particularly tenacious and committed judaizer, and her trial demonstrates how even the spectacular forms of exemplary justice used in the first part of the trials, such as the humiliating public abjurations, the use of capital punishment, and the frequent use of torture, were not enough to completely dissuade the most hardened judaizers from returning to their old habits.

Laura and Vittoria Cruglies were also objects of the court's scrutiny during these years for impenitence, although their case is slightly different. Both women had voluntarily admitted to having engaged in Jewish rites, including consumption of *pane azzimo* and observation of the Sabbath, and had been allowed to abjure these errors secretly during the series of *spontaneae comparitiones* in late 1569. They claimed to have been deceived by an elderly aunt, Isabella Lopes, who told them that these rituals were orthodox Christian devotions, and they had therefore been at worst naïve participants in crypto-judaism, not convinced apostates.

However, later testimony revealed that there was more to the story: According to later witnesses, both of the Corviglies women had made statements professing a belief in Judaism which contradicted their earlier claims to having made an innocent error. Beatrice Leone accused them of giving her alms in return for saying Jewish prayers in their names, and Angela Fernandes recounted that the sisters both had stated that they did not believe in Christ or the Church, but only in a single God. After collecting these clues, the *vicario* Quattromani ordered

¹⁵¹ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 204r-204v.

the arrest and imprisonment of Vittoria in *la Consolazione* in 1580; Laura had died in the interim and the curia did not pursue her case further. Vittoria Cruiglies denied the charges against her and presented six witnesses who testified to her exceptional devotion to the Catholic Church, but to no avail. Cardinal Savelli wrote that she was to be considered an “*impenitente diminuta*” for having failed to admit the extent of her apostasy, and ordered that she abjure a second time with a harsher punishment. In his sentence, Di Capua insisted that the gravity of Vittoria’s crime merited “great castigation and harsh penalty”, but that in view of her repentance “with sincere faith and heart, not false” he decided to show clemency. She was ordered to wear the *habitello* for the rest of her life, but spared capital punishment and a prison term.¹⁵²

In addition to the byzantine lines of investigation that the curia pursued against the main group of judaizers, the Neapolitan curia also proceeded against others suspect of the same crime that were not connected to the main group of Iberian New Christians in Naples. Though not specifically linked to the earlier trials, these trials can nevertheless be attributed to a climate in which the *curia* was especially sensitive to the charge of Judaism, and potential accusers were also aware of the curia’s interest in the crime.

One of the most curious of these cases was that of Giulio Cesare Gambardella, a Neapolitan musician who was denounced to the Holy Office in 1579 for a series of bizarre religious opinions. Though he had been born into a Catholic family and had not had any contact with Jewish religion or culture, Gambardella had nevertheless arrived at the conclusion that Christ was not the Messiah and that the sacrament of the Eucharist was nonexistent. He therefore declared himself a Jew, awaiting the coming of the true Messiah. His trial, which was carried out in close consultation with Rome, centered around the question of whether

¹⁵² ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 477, f.18; the letter is also edited in *Le lettere*, doc. 133, 57.

Gambardella constituted a genuine, willing apostate from Christianity or if his declarations were simply the ravings of a madman. “Some doubts have arisen among these illustrious lords [the cardinal inquisitors] whether he might be empty-headed or breast-fed for too long,” wrote Cardinal Savelli. The question was especially significant considering that Gambardella flamboyantly gave his opinions in court and made no demonstration of repentance, the kind of behavior which frequently merited capital punishment. In the end, he was declared a formal heretic and abjured in the Cathedral. He was condemned to *carcere perpetuo*, a punishment which he appealed in 1583.¹⁵³ Gambardella was an autodidact of eclectic interests who drew much of his inspiration and support from the reading of a wide range of texts, including Dante. Nevertheless, he was not completely alone in his attraction to Judaism- several other cases of Christians attracted to Jewish spirituality and theology came before the Neapolitan curia during the 1580s and 1590s. These individuals were characterized by highly idiosyncratic and radical views on religion which bore only a superficial resemblance to those of the Iberian *conversos* living in the city. Their confessions revealed them to be entirely unfamiliar with *marrano* apologetic literature and their actual contact with Jews and *conversos* seems to have been very limited.¹⁵⁴

By contrast, the background of Dionisio Lopes *alias* Mesquita, a soldier tried by the Neapolitan *curia* for apostasy to Judaism in 1579, is much more difficult to delineate. Born in Lisbon, where he claimed that his father was a member of the Supreme Council of the King, he had come to the *Regno* as a member of a company of soldiers in the service of the Spanish monarchy. Denounced by two colleagues who had heard him irreverently express doubts about

¹⁵³ Giovanni Romeo, “La suggestione dell’Ebraismo tra i Napoletani del tardo Cinquecento” in *L’Inquisizione e gli Ebrei*, 179-194; ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH2-a, f. 1074.

¹⁵⁴ Amabile, *Il Santo Officio dell’Inquisizione*, doc. 8, 2 : 28-50.

the divinity of Christ, Lopes was brought from his garrison in Cava to Naples, where he was tried by the vicar Mascardi. The witnesses against Lopes were all members of his military garrison who expressed shock and disbelief at the irreverent way in which he had criticized the Catholic faith. They described several conversations in which Lopes had subjected the stories of the New Testament to a minute rational critique. He expressed doubts about Christ's resurrection and about the marriage of Mary and Joseph, arguing that the story in the Bible contradicted the historical record. He even went so far as to insult the masculinity of Joseph, who he declared a "*mangiadieri*" for not having "ridden" Mary.¹⁵⁵ The accusations against Lopes contained nothing that indicated a specifically Jewish origin, and not even his fellow soldiers, Castilians who would have been sensitive to the presence of a potential judaizer in their midst, attributed Lopes' statements to an affinity with Judaism or to New Christian ancestry. Part of the court's work was to uncover the cultural background of Lopes' insinuations. When the case was referred to the Congregation of the Holy Office, almost all of the consultors agreed that Lopes should be tortured for further information, but only two, Pietro Dusina and Pietro Sanctus Humanus, suggested that he was probably a judaizer, a theory that drew strength not only from the content of the statements, but from Lopes' nationality. Dusina further suggested that the court should investigate Lopes' ancestry to determine whether or not he was *ex genere judeorum*, a New Christian, and that he should be tortured *gravius* if so and *levius* if not.¹⁵⁶ Dusina's opinion not only demonstrated his keen sensibility to the potential crypto-Jewish origins of heretical statements, no doubt developed during his years in Naples, it also placed him very close to the juridical positions of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, which considered

¹⁵⁵ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 417*

¹⁵⁶ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1578-1579, f. 217.

those of Jewish ancestry automatically suspect. Unfortunately the outcome of Lopes' trial is unknown.

II.

The episodes described above provide numerous examples of the continuing involvement of the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office in the campaign against Judaism in Naples. The control of the cardinal inquisitors, especially intense during the final stages of the first phase of the campaign, remained so during the following years. The archbishop of Naples and the officials of the curia kept the Roman authorities constantly informed of the proceedings, and consulted them on a series of questions regarding the torture of witnesses, extradition of suspects, and the sentencing of condemned judaizers. On occasion even more subtle problems such as the interpretation of evidence and strategies of interrogation were discussed. The sustained interest of the congregation in these trials is a sign of not only the maturation of the relationship between the cardinal inquisitors and this peripheral tribunal of the Holy Office in Italy, but also of the extraordinary importance attributed to this particular campaign by Roman authorities. Of the many religious problems of interest to the cardinals throughout Italy during these years, the trials of the Neapolitan judaizers took a significant place.

The extraditions that had been essential to the first phase of the trials continued into the second. The Congregation of the Holy Office continued to request the extradition of suspects from the Neapolitan *curia* to Rome, where the investigation could be conducted under the expert guidance of the congregation, and the trials could be held in relative isolation from the political and social pressures that were present in Naples. Three members of the Blanes family, Ferrante, Lucrezia, and her sister Dianora, along with Violante Paglias, were brought to Rome for trial and

sentenced to *carcere perpetuo* in May of 1573.¹⁵⁷ Another pair of sisters, Caterina and Mancina Malvicina, were brought to Rome in June of 1578 for trial. They were kept imprisoned in a private home and a monastery before being absolved and released in March of 1579.¹⁵⁸ These extraditions were part of a substantially cooperative relationship between the Congregation of the Holy Office, the Neapolitan curia, and the viceroy of Naples, one in which all parties agreed on the gravity of the crimes in question and the legitimacy of the court prosecuting them. None of the difficult conflict regarding judaizers characteristic of the tribunals in Venice and Pisa ever occurred during the Neapolitan trials. A frigate belonging to the Holy Office regularly brought suspects by sea from Naples to Civitavecchia, one of the principle ports of the Papal State, from which they were then conducted by land to Rome.

Far more controversial were the sentencing phases. While the Roman Inquisition never staged theatrical spectacles like the *autos de fe* of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, the sentencing and abjuration nevertheless represented one of the most dramatic and certainly the most public moment of any trial. It marked the end of a secret proceeding that had lasted months and sometimes years, and the rumors that had surrounded a particular case for months or years were finally substituted with concrete condemnations and dire penance. For the church it was a moment of triumph and resolution, for the condemned it was almost inevitably a fall into disgrace from which it was difficult to recover. These already highly charged moments took on even greater significance in the Neapolitan context, where the first abjuration ceremonies had been witnessed by enormous crowds and created unrest in the city. The viceroy's anxiety combined with the judaizers' considerable political and financial resources created ample space

¹⁵⁷ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, f. 100-101, f. 105r.

¹⁵⁸ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1577-1578, f. 105r, f. 107r; ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1578-1579, f. 219v-220r.

for negotiation, and on two occasions, two different archbishops of Naples attempted to alter penalties in favor of lighter sentences at the request of the families of the accused judaizers and the viceroy of Naples. This kind of mediation was in stark contrast to the kind of justice that the Congregation of the Holy Office sought to promote, and episodes such as these are extremely rare in the history of the Italian tribunals.¹⁵⁹

The first of these involves negotiations over the sentencing of Lavinia Petralbes and Porzia Bruno, two of the first suspects and among those most heavily implicated in the practice and dissemination of crypto-judaism in Naples. Since their last depositions before Dusina, in 1571, both women had languished in prison awaiting further developments in their trials. Lavinia was at some point moved from *la Consolazione* to the archbishop's prisons, where another prisoner, the astrologer Vincenzo Vitale, made her acquaintance in August of 1573. He found that she had successfully corrupted the prison guards, who allowed her to receive visitors, including her son Ugo, and send letters to people outside of prison.¹⁶⁰

In May of the same year Mario Carafa had written to the Congregation of the Holy Office to tell the cardinals that he had condemned Lavinia and Porzia to immuration, solitary confinement in an enclosed and poorly lit space, but that the viceroy had intervened, arguing that such a cruel example of the archbishop's justice would "create a great scandal among the *popolo*." Instead, Granvelle had suggested that he should write to the Congregation of the Holy Office and ask what other penalty might be given as an alternative. Replacing immuration with a normal incarceration was impossible, Carafa argued, because he lacked prisons that were

¹⁵⁹ For a comparison between the Iberian *auto da fe* and the Roman ceremony, see Francisco Bethencourt, *L'Inquisition a l'epoque moderne. Espagne, Portugal, Italie. XVe – XIXe siècle* (Paris : Fayard, 1995), 241-312.

¹⁶⁰ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 226*, f. 116r-126r.

adequate for women.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, he was convinced that the solution at which he had arrived, pending the approval of the Congregation of the Holy Office, was sure to satisfy all. He could envision letting the two women off with a lighter sentence, namely house arrest, if Lavinia and Porzia gave a large “*elemosina*” or pious donation to the convent of *la Consolazione*, where they had been incarcerated during the trials. He expressed concern for Lavinia and Porzia’s daughters, who otherwise would be left alone in the world and exposed to great danger. Besides, the nuns needed some money to finish the construction of a small church they were building, and he had been able to procure them funds this way in the past. A little over a month later, on the third of June, Carafa wrote to the cardinals again, requesting a response to his previous letter and briefly recapitulating the arguments in favor of his plan.¹⁶²

There is no trace of the response of congregation to this extraordinarily venal request. However, a letter sent to the cardinal inquisitors the following year by Carafa’s *vicario* Vicedomini provides some information about its reception. Vicedomini began by defending himself against some accusations contained in a previous letter from Cardinal Rebiba, saying that he had never lessened any penalty in a trial in exchange for money, and that he had no idea how such a thing could possibly happen without his knowledge. That said, he continued,

“It is true that in the first weeks I began working here, a lengthy incarceration given to Lavinia Fonseca, a judaizer, was commuted to fifty ducats, a part of which was given to the nuns of *la Sapienzia* and another part to the nuns of *la Consolazione*, all of which, as I understood it then, was on the order of the Holy Office.”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 41.

¹⁶² ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 44.

¹⁶³ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 116.

This exchange raises a number of questions. It is unclear, for example, whether the Congregation of the Holy Office approved the archbishop's plan, despite the fact that the *vicario's* letter confirms that it was eventually carried out. Also unclear is the role of the families of Porzia and Lavinia in this scheme. It is difficult to imagine that the archbishop conceived of the plan without consulting them or their relatives, and certain aspects of his letters, such as his concern for the safety of the daughters and his detailed knowledge of the families suggest that they were involved, though to what degree is difficult to say.

A similar situation arose several years later during the sentencing of two other women. In a letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office written in July 1579, a new archbishop, Annibale di Capua, asked for clarification on the penalties to be assigned to Laura and Beatrice Raguante. Both had been found suspect of heresy and therefore had to go through the formal ceremony of abjuration, but di Capua wanted to know whether they should be forced to go through a humiliating public abjuration or a secret ceremony that would spare the honor of the women and their family. He preferred a secret abjuration, pointing out that many of Laura's sons were important lawyers who had received high offices in the viceroyalty on more than one occasion, including that of the *Regio Auditore di Provincia*. Additionally, Beatrice was a little more than a "*giovane donzella*" who would soon be searching for a husband, and it seemed unnecessary to cause her great dishonor.¹⁶⁴

After the Congregation discussed the case in a meeting on July 22, they sent word of their decision to Naples two days later.¹⁶⁵ The letter was unequivocal: Laura should be tortured for further information about her accomplices and then abjure, in public, on a festival day, a circumstance no doubt intended to maximize the public shame of the occasion. No decision was

¹⁶⁴ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 671, f. 690.

¹⁶⁵ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1578-1579, f. 269r.

given in Beatrice's case, but the cardinals requested an extensive summary of her confessions. Several months later, on September 11, Cardinal Savelli wrote to di Capua again, informing him that Laura Raguante's son had come to Rome to request a secret abjuration for his mother, but that the congregation had decided not to change the original sentence, and that di Capua should go ahead and execute it. Then, on October 10, Savelli communicated the congregation's decision concerning Beatrice Raguante: She too, as a judaizer, should be given a public abjuration, but if the archbishop had any reasonable objection to this, he should let the cardinals know.¹⁶⁶

The three letters that Savelli sent to Naples left little doubt about the congregation's intentions, but di Capua nevertheless accepted Savelli's invitation to present his objections, on which he elaborated at greater length in a letter dated October 23, 1579:

"I can only modestly say to you that [Beatrice] is a young lady of 17 years of age, and ready for marriage, and that her father and her uncle serve his majesty in very high and honorable offices. Her brothers are also highly qualified jurists, some of whom have served as *auditori regi di provincia*. And beyond these things, it is worth noting that in the past young women have been allowed to abjure privately in this city. So, it would seem to them that we should extend this pardon to them, or at very least, for the sake of the family's honor, important for both the mother and the daughter, they should abjure in a side chapel with the doors open and the members of the *curia* present."¹⁶⁷

Cardinal Savelli responded several days later, on the 31st of October. He reprimanded di Capua for informing Laura Raguante's family about the punishment that the congregation had

¹⁶⁶ *Le lettere*, doc. 110, 113, 117, 46-50.

¹⁶⁷ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 700.

designated for her, and for agreeing to postpone the abjuration in order to see if Rome might finally allow a secret ceremony instead of a public one, writing that “it is never a good idea to make public the orders that come to you, and one should never postpone anything on behalf of one of the parties in the trial.” Instead he instructed di Capua to immediately execute Laura’s sentence and write back once he had.¹⁶⁸

Savelli wrote again in December of 1579 to inquire why he had still received no word of the abjuration from di Capua, and instructed him to write back. When he did, the archbishop no longer had any objections to offer, and simply stated that he had waited to execute the sentence in order to gather a larger group of penitents who would all perform the ceremony together. But considering how long this had taken, he now declared that he would go ahead and hold the ceremony for Laura Raguante. Beatrice’s ceremony would wait until some of the final procedures in her trial were finished, however.¹⁶⁹

In this instance, better documented than the first, it is clear that the cardinal inquisitors had little tolerance for the archbishop’s willingness to mediate on behalf of the families of the judaizers, and they were ultimately successful in enforcing their will, at least in the case of Laura Raguante. Most remarkable, however, is the archbishop’s behavior in the first place- his warning to the family of Laura and Beatrice Raguante of the penalties that were in store for them, and his persistent advocacy of their cause, though couched in the traditional terms of obedience, against the instructions of the Congregation of the Holy Office. All of this closely recalls the rhetoric of di Capua’s predecessor Carafa just five years earlier.

How to explain the willingness of the officials of an inquisitorial court to work on behalf of individuals they had tried and convicted for apostasy? It seems difficult to place the entire

¹⁶⁸ *Le lettere*, doc. 118, 50.

¹⁶⁹ *Le lettere*, doc. 121, 51; ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 132.

burden of proof on a single explanation, such as the greed of the two bishops. There is some evidence for this in Mario Carafa's insistence on the replacement of a prison penalty, which would cost his church money, with a large fine that would go to benefit it. However, there is no evidence that money exchanged hands under in the sentencing directed by Annibale di Capua. We can also dismiss as rhetorical the constant expressions of concern for the women and their families, especially in light of the brutality that had been employed during their trials. Both Lavinia and Porzia had suffered multiple sessions of torture, at a time when the tribunals of the inquisition were making such practices less and less a part of their everyday operation.

Instead, the decisive factors in these episodes seem to lie elsewhere. Perhaps the most significant seems to be the relationship between the viceroy of Naples and the local tribunal of the inquisition. This collaboration, in which the viceroy was certainly the more powerful partner, placed a limit on the autonomy of the inquisition in Naples. The inquisitors could not afford to damage the interests of the state in the course of their work, and when necessary, they had to allow the state a say in important decisions. Not even the Congregation of the Holy Office questioned this. Hence the decision, shared by both the archbishop of Naples and the cardinals, to alter the sentences of Lavinia Fonseca and Porzia Bronda at the viceroy's request. The beneficiaries of the viceroy's decision were obviously the families of Lavinia and Porzia, even if the viceroy himself doesn't seem to have intended this.

The situation in 1579 was slightly different. Here, the Raguante family was able to obtain a number of concessions from the archbishop, including advance notice of their sentences in clear violation of the secrecy of the tribunal, largely because of the status of the family. The archbishop twice points out the membership of the family in the bureaucratic elite of the city, and it is difficult to escape the impression that it was the family's power and influence within the

state that led him to negotiate with the cardinals of the Holy Office on their behalf. Here too, the archbishop had to avoid offending the interests of the state, and that also meant maintaining good relationships with those who served it.

For all the severity that the Congregation of the Holy Office insisted on in the sentences in Naples, the cardinals measured this with a degree of clemency. Throughout the 1570s, many of the judaizers and their relatives successfully petitioned Rome for reductions in their sentences and habilitations that would remove some of the social stigma and legal barriers that the trials had brought about. Lavinia Petralbes was granted the right to leave her house arrest in April of 1576 to visit churches for the Jubilee. Aldonsa Pellegrina was granted the right to remove her *habitello* and move freely around the city of Naples, as was Francisco Cartiglia several years later. Dianora Blanes was granted the right to remove her *habitello*, though she was to remain under house arrest. One of the most interesting of these habilitations concerns Giovan Luigi Pellegrino, son of the impenitent apostate Girolamo Pellegrino who was executed in 1572. In December of 1577 Giovan Luigi was granted the right to assume the rank of doctor and read in the university. The certification of the cardinal inquisitors was evidently a necessary step for the son to enter such an elevated rank, despite the fact that he had himself never been suspect of heresy.¹⁷⁰

In addition to the negotiations over penalties, the Congregation of the Holy Office came into conflict with the state authorities in the kingdom of Naples on one occasion. The question concerned the murder of one of the condemned judaizers, Lucrezia Blanes, by her husband, Bartolomeo Lectieri. The events can only be partially reconstructed based on a few pieces of documentation.

¹⁷⁰ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1576-1577, f. 14v-15r; *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, f. 127v; *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1577-1578, f. 126v-128r; *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1577-1578, f. 27r-27v.

After being investigated in Naples, Blanes had been extradited and tried in Rome, where she abjured in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva with her co-defendant Violante Paglias in May of 1573.¹⁷¹ Unable to stand the dishonor brought upon his house by his wife's conviction, Lectieri had threatened to kill her, and for this reason he was charged a 500 ducat bond against her death by the Holy Office. Nevertheless, in 1575 Lectieri made good on his threat and murdered Blanes; Violante Paglias informed the Congregation immediately.¹⁷² Both the nunzio Ravalio and Mario Carafa promised the cardinal inquisitors that they would investigate the murder thoroughly, but no action appears to have been taken immediately.¹⁷³ Two years later, the Archbishop of Naples Paolo Burali d'Arezzo wrote to the cardinal inquisitors, informing them that he was unable to obtain any of the documentation regarding the murder that had been collected by the *Vicaria*, the criminal court in Naples.¹⁷⁴

The question remained unresolved until 1580, when the Congregation of the Holy Office was finally able to read Lectieri's trial and expressed interest in further examining Lectieri in Rome. At issue were the 500 ducats due to the Holy Office. The agent of the viceroy in Rome, Ferdinand de Torres, intervened as *fideiussor* for Lectieri. He argued that this was a necessary step for him to introduce new information in the case, but in practice this meant that any legal action by the Holy Office had to be taken against de Torres in person rather than Lectieri, an explicit offense to the viceroy that was bound to provoke a diplomatic crisis. The reaction of the consultants of the Congregation to this move came after a debate which was recorded by the notary. While Anselmo Canuto, the *procurator fiscalis* of the Roman Holy Office, was prepared to respond in kind to Torres' challenge and proceed directly against him unless he delivered

¹⁷¹ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1571-1574, f. 100v-101r, 105r.

¹⁷² ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH-2a, f. 198.

¹⁷³ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH-2a, f. 158, 167.

¹⁷⁴ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH-2a, f. 498.

Bartolomeo Lectieri to the cardinal inquisitors, the other consultants urged some sort of compromise that would prevent a direct legal battle. In the end the cardinals voted to hear the new information presented by Torres, provided it was not simply an alibi for the murder itself, which in their view was already an established fact, and set a deadline of one month. Eventually, at the request of the viceroy and on the personal order of Pope Gregory XIII, Ferdinando de Torres was released from his obligations to the court, which continued to pursue Lectieri.¹⁷⁵ The resolution of this case is unknown, but it demonstrates eloquently how tenuous the cooperation between the viceroy and the Congregation of the Holy Office was at times.

III.

While Naples remained the focus of activity for both the Neapolitan curia and the Congregation of the Holy Office throughout the decade, it became increasingly evident that judaizing in the *Regno di Napoli*, while centered in the capital, was not limited to it. From testimony and denunciations in both Rome and Naples, it became increasingly clear that there were isolated families, as well as entire groups of judaizers, living all over Southern Italy. Many of these individuals were connected to the Neapolitan families in one way or another. Some were Neapolitans who occupied important posts in the royal service and had been sent to far flung corners of the realm. But others were more or less independent from the Neapolitan groups, representatives of local traditions of crypto-judaism that were only brought to light once the campaign in the capital had begun.

Trying judaizers in the periphery of the Regno, especially in far-flung provinces such as Puglia and Calabria, presented a new set of challenges to the Holy Office. The only functioning

¹⁷⁵ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580, c. 23r, 67r-68r, 71r, 75r-75v, 86r.

tribunal of the Roman Inquisition in Southern Italy was that of the Neapolitan *curia*, and in the rest of the kingdom more informal solutions had to be employed. While during the 1550s and 60s the Neapolitan curia had relied on the viceroy, who would order his officials to capture suspects and bring them to Naples for trial or further extradition to Rome, in the 1570s this practice was gradually abandoned. It was a kind of reliance on secular authority which the Roman Inquisition sought to avoid, and instead the tasks of the inquisition were entrusted, whenever possible, to the local episcopal tribunals. This was an imperfect solution at best; bishops and their vicars were rarely equipped with the training and resources necessary to carry out trials for heresy, and the local episcopal courts were frequently already struggling under the load of local disputes that they had to adjudicate.

On top of these problems, the judaizers in the periphery presented many of the same characteristics which had made them such an uncommonly sophisticated adversary for the inquisition in Naples. They were frequently wealthy, frequently well-connected to feudal, civic, and even ecclesiastical powers in the places where they lived, and they also could present a united front to those who confronted them. All of these things made a difficult job even more so, as the vicar Guidoboni lamented in a 1579 letter to Cardinal Savelli regarding a Neapolitan suspect who had fled into the countryside:

“Among those who need to be tried I’ve found that a principal named Violante Leone *alias* Astorga has fled, and it seems worthwhile to advise your eminence that she has two sons who are in the service of Marc’ Antonio Colonna, under whose shadow she could very easily retreat.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 724.

Violante was tried *in absentia* and found suspect *leviter* of apostasy to Judaism. She eventually appeared before the Roman tribunal of the Holy Office, where in 1582 she abjured and was assigned several salutary penances, probably a sign that she had cooperated with the tribunal.¹⁷⁷ Another of the Neapolitan suspects, Isabella Raguante, also fled rather than appear before the court in 1578. She retreated into the territory of Benevento, where her husband was serving as castellan of a fortress. Benevento was a small enclave of the papacy in the northern territory of the *Regno*, and for this reason it was impossible to pursue her there. Instead, the vicar recommended that the cardinal inquisitors themselves see to the matter, as they could more easily pursue her by themselves in their own state.¹⁷⁸

In addition to fleeing suspects, there were many other reasons why the Neapolitan curia frequently needed to look toward the provinces. There were important witnesses who were living in small towns or moved frequently, and there were also important suspects who had been living in provincial cities with their families. Even a single trial, such as that of Livia and Prudentia Capella in 1580, could necessitate questioning of witnesses in several different places. Di Capua wrote to the cardinal inquisitors that the trial had been delayed because although he had already received the testimony of Angela Conca, who was in Rossano, he immediately realized from reading it that he would also need to hear from Laudomia Conca, who was living in Brindisi. He had written to the Archbishop of Brindisi to request her interrogation, but he had still received no news, and said that he would send a copy of the unfinished trial to Rome regardless.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ The decree to try Violante in absentia is in ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1578-1579, f. 214v. Her sentence is in TCD, ms. 1227, f. 158-160.

¹⁷⁸ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 607 (letter from Giuseppe Mascardi to Cardinal Savelli, October 20, 1578); This is not the same Isabella Raguante tried in 1571, who was executed in Rome the following year.

¹⁷⁹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 828.

The trial of Angese Parregna, a member of a Neapolitan family living in Taranto, where her husband Pietro Perrone was serving as *Regio Portolano*, demonstrated the dangers of leaving these cases in the hands of inexperienced judges. Agnese had attracted the interest of the Neapolitan curia after her mother and sister had admitted to having carried on a “*vita giudaica*” and had accused her of doing the same. The case was referred in May 1580 to the Archbishop of Taranto, who promised that he and his vicar would immediately begin investigating the matter.¹⁸⁰ A year later, it had become clear that her sister and mother had been suborned by Agnese’s husband and two Carmelite friars. They had abruptly changed their testimony in favor of Agnese, and with the two principal witnesses lost, the trial threatened to come undone. The cardinal inquisitors immediately reacted by extraditing Agnese to Rome, where she would be tried, and ordered the Archbishop of Naples to investigate the subornation. Agnese was found suspect *de levi* of apostasy, given salutary penances, and abjured in Rome in June 1582.¹⁸¹

While the great majority of cases in which the inquisition pursued judaizers outside of Naples were of single individuals, there is one example of a campaign against a large community of New Christians in the provinces of the Regno. In Catanzaro, a provincial center in southern Calabria, the local episcopal court pursued a group of judaizers in cooperation with the Neapolitan curia and the Congregation of the Holy Office. This group, while not as large as the one in Naples, shared many of its characteristics.

In November of 1573, as the first wave of trials in Naples came to an end, Felipe de Aguilar, the *capitano* of Catanzaro, sent a letter to Cardinal Rebiba. He wrote to inform the cardinal inquisitors about “a large number of baptized Jews whose ancestors came from another

¹⁸⁰ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 795, 814, 821, 822.

¹⁸¹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 872, 880, 917; ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 309v-310r; TCD, ms. 1227, f. 102-105.

land.” “They are all very wealthy,” Aguilar continued, “and they work as merchants, but most importantly, they secretly (*occultamente*) follow the Jewish law with a million superstitions.” The letter continued with a description of an array of traditional marrano practices, many of them the same ones that had been discussed during the Neapolitan trials: observance of the Jewish Sabbath, burial outside of consecrated ground, and abstinence from certain foods. But this was not all: The *cristiani novelli* maintained relations with Jews in Salonika, where they would travel on occasion to find servants who would protect their secret. Yet, despite the fact that the presence of these apostates was “public and notorious”, no one had denounced this scandal because the marranos had corrupted most of the authorities in the city, including the bishop and his vicar.¹⁸²

Aguilar specifically named several individuals in his denunciation as worthy of investigation. The first was Benedetto da Sulmona, a merchant from Catanzaro with connections throughout the Mediterranean who was living in Naples. He and his brothers, in addition to possessing fabulous sums of money, were active judaizers. Another notorious judaizer was the New Christian merchant Gaspar de Condria, who had once attempted to burn a cross. Finally, he mentioned Antonino Vento, a descendant of Jews whose testimony would “shed light on everything.”¹⁸³

Aguilar, as *capitano*, the highest local representative of royal authority, was a figure who commanded respect and influence, and his denunciations were taken seriously by the authorities in Rome. Shortly after receiving Aguilar’s letter, Rebiba wrote to Antonio Sauli, the papal nuncio in Naples, instructing him to write to the *capitano* for further information and to begin an

¹⁸² ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 45.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

investigation of Benedetto da Sulmona, who was resident in Naples.¹⁸⁴ There is no evidence left of this investigation, if it did take place, but in September of 1577 Aguilar testified before Stefano Quaranta, the *fiscale* of the Neapolitan *curia*, and restated much of the contents of his original denunciation.

It would be another two years before one of the New Christians from Catanzaro was formally tried for judaizing. Antonino Vento was denounced to the Neapolitan *curia* in February of 1579 by a group of three Calabrian law students who had been living with him in Naples. They described his peculiar religious opinions and habits, which were not strictly of Jewish origin. He would read from an unorthodox version of the Bible which described sexual relations between Mary and Joseph among other things, and he did not follow the fasts and vigils prescribed by the church. Most scandalous were his declarations that the Messiah was still to come, that the trinity could not exist, and that the church had ‘usurped’ two books of Esdras, effectively altering the original sense of the Bible. They also accused Vento of practicing necromancy.

When Vento’s servant Bruno Timpano appeared in court, he argued that the denunciations of the students were motivated by vendetta. He pointed out that Giovanni Cesare Curiale had been denounced to the *gabella delle puttane* for trafficking in prostitution, and that Vento had himself upbraided Curiale for practicing alchemy and counterfeiting money. The accusations against his boss, Timpano argued, were nothing more than a *contracava*, false testimony designed to injure the reputation of an enemy. Such tactics were commonplace in late sixteenth century Naples, where ordinary individuals made frequent recourse to the courts in the hope of ruining their enemies. Nevertheless, Timpano’s testimony was ambivalent: He admitted

¹⁸⁴ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, f. 13.

that Vento did not eat lard and that he had seen him talking to several Jews imprisoned in Castelnuovo. When interrogated, Vento denied all of the accusations.¹⁸⁵

The presiding vicar, Guidoboni, was genuinely concerned by the possibility that the accusations against Vento were false, and he asked the Congregation of the Holy Office to send any information they could. The cardinals replied that they had found nothing in their records about Vento, but included a recent letter from the bishop of Catanzaro which explained that Vento belonged to an “*antica razza di guidei*” resident in the city: “While externally (*estrinsecamente*), they live as Christians, I nevertheless doubt that they don’t internally (*intrinsecamente*) judaize.”¹⁸⁶

In the meantime, Vento continued to claim innocence, naming a series of enemies in Catanzaro who were working against him, including Aguilar. The few seemingly impartial witnesses available gave inconclusive testimony, leaving the vicar in the same situation as before.¹⁸⁷ Guidoboni again expressed his doubts in a letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office. On the one hand, the crimes denounced by the three men were grave, and in their examinations they insisted that they had made their denunciations purely out of “zeal.” At the same time, Guidoboni was equally sensitive to the necessity of keeping the Holy Office from becoming a mere instrument in private squabbles. He asked the cardinal inquisitors if they could provide any assistance regarding Vento, and said that he would attempt to hear another deposition from Aguilar, who was still alive.¹⁸⁸

The complications involved in trying Vento convinced the cardinals that the best solution to the problems posed by the case was to have Vento himself sent to Rome, where he could be

¹⁸⁵ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 356*

¹⁸⁶ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, c. 399.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, HH 2-a, c. 726.

interrogated directly. On September 18, Cardinal Savelli wrote to Annibale di Capua, the archbishop of Naples, instructing him to send Vento to Rome “on the usual frigate of the Inquisition” along with a copy of his trial.¹⁸⁹ Thus began the second phase of the trial of Antonino Vento, which took place entirely in Rome. This trial is entirely lost, though some of the decrees regarding Vento and his sentence have survived. On December 15, 1580 Vento’s case was discussed during a meeting of the Congregation of the Holy Office during which several of those present gave voice to their continuing doubts about the reliability of the testimony against him. Several options were discussed. He could be condemned to abjure *de levi* solely on the basis of the prohibited books in his possession, or he could be tortured for further information about his alleged practice of necromancy. In the end the latter course was chosen.¹⁹⁰ Because of his poor health, he was let out of the prisons of the Roman Inquisition and placed under house arrest in July of 1581, where he remained until his sentencing in February 1582.¹⁹¹ His sentence, undersigned by Cardinals Savelli, Madruzzo, Gambara and Santoro, stated that he had been found vehemently suspect of both apostasy, for judaizing, and heresy, for necromancy. He abjured on March 18 before the Dominican Tommaso Zobbia, *commissario generale del Sant’Uffizio*.¹⁹²

While Vento was being tried in Naples and Rome, a second investigation was opened in Catanzaro itself. The questions about Vento’s relatives and background had rekindled the interest of the Holy Office in the suspicious activities that Felipe Aguilar had denounced several years prior. This interest was further stimulated by an anonymous denunciation that reaffirmed

¹⁸⁹ ASDN, *Sant’Uffizio*, 356*; *Le lettere*, doc. 115, 49. The relevant decree of the Congregation of the Holy Office, given on September 15, 1579, is in ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1578-1579, c. 293r.

¹⁹⁰ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 209v-210v.

¹⁹¹ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 348v.

¹⁹² TCD, ms. 1227, f. 18-20.

the presence of a community of judaizers in Catanzaro and the nearby city of Monteleone.

These families had migrated from Sicily over seventy years prior, the letter recounted, evidently following the expulsion of the Jews from the Kingdom of Sicily in 1492. The letter continued:

“Of these, many are *cristianissimi* and persons of repute, yet there are many who despite having received the most holy sacrament of baptism judaize and hold a secret sect, and read the bible, especially Deuteronomy. To be brief, they do not believe in Christ nor in anything of the Church, and this wickedness continues to spread, so that one brother might be Christian and the other Jew and in other cases the father and mother Jews and the children Christian...”

In the view of the anonymous correspondent, the fault for this situation lay with the “scarce zeal of the prelates,” in particular the former bishop of Catanzaro, Ascanio Gerdino, who had known all about the sect but done nothing. Anytime a priest attempted to denounce the sect, the judaizers would use their wealth to corrupt the authorities. The correspondent suggested that his account could be corroborated by trustworthy witnesses: In addition to several laymen, he suggested the Jesuits Giuseppe Blondo and Francesco Mercado, and the Capuchin Fra Grigolio Speraindeo, himself a New Christian, but nevertheless devout. Among local bishops, only the bishop of Squillace was considered trustworthy, as all of the others might have been corrupted by this “most powerful” sect. As for Antonino Vento, who he had heard was under investigation in Naples, he was undoubtedly a useful witness; Vento had many sisters, who were the heads of the “synagogue.”¹⁹³

The atmosphere of civic factionalism and corruption in Catanzaro described by both Aguilar and the anonymous letter writer are attested to by other sources. Giuseppe Blondo, the

¹⁹³ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 398

same Jesuit mentioned in the anonymous letter, had written in 1574 to the general of the Society of Jesus, describing a city on the brink of civil disorder. “This city remains in great unrest,” Blondo wrote,

“with the *capitano* excommunicated, and it is something worthy of compassion because the captain is in a fight with the city, with the bishop, and with the judge, and the city is still in conflict with the bishop and the *capitano*, and the bishop with the city, the judge, and the *capitano*, and many of the citizens are in rancor among themselves, and yet despite all of this we are making some progress, and we try with all our abilities to navigate among these shoals. I hope to God that He will bring quiet to the town someday.”¹⁹⁴

These conflicts placed both the bishop and the New Christians in a complicated web of factions and local interests, one in which accusations of heresy were often connected to disputes of a more mundane variety. While it seems unlikely that the bishop was in open alliance with the judaizers, the tension in the small city certainly contributed to his difficulties. Combined with the bishop’s trepidation and inexperience in holding inquisitorial trials, it was the cause of an extremely slow and inefficient campaign that almost immediately required outside intervention.

The bishop sent word to Rome in September of 1579 that he had begun to interrogate witnesses and to request “security”, or bail, from those who were under investigation. He had been especially discreet in informing the accused judaizers, going personally to their houses to collect the security, in order to protect their reputation. He also sent the cardinals a list of names of thirty-one “judaizers who have given the security”, which provides some essential information about the individuals on trial. As in Naples, female suspects predominated heavily over male

¹⁹⁴ ARSI, *Ital.* 144, f. 169-170.

ones: all but six of the suspects were women. They also belonged to a handful of families- Scavello, Gulli, Marchese, d'Arena, and Vento- that were closely intermarried, another similarity with the Neapolitan case.

From the beginning, the Congregation of the Holy Office began to hear witnesses and suspects in Rome. Some of the suspects came to Rome on their own initiative, in the hope of receiving fairer treatment.¹⁹⁵ But the cardinal inquisitors also extradited suspects directly. In July of 1579, they ordered the transfer of three *fautores*, or accomplices, of Rinaldo Scavello from Monteleone to Rome, and three of the principal suspects, Prospero Marchese, Michelino Scavello and Antonino Grillo, were brought to the Roman prisons of the Holy Office sometime before 1580.¹⁹⁶

Despite the energetic start to the trials, the bishop and his vicario quickly ran into problems. Neither one had ever held a trial for heresy, and both were unsure of how to proceed. Stefano Quaranta, the former *fiscale* of the Neapolitan *curia* and now the *vicario* of the nearby diocese of Santa Severina, inspected the transcripts of the interrogations on the request of the bishop and found them well-done, according to “the true style of the Holy Office.”¹⁹⁷ Yet by April of 1580, the bishop was desperate for outside assistance. He was bedridden, and unable to listen to the testimony of the judaizers, as the cardinal inquisitors had ordered. He requested immediate assistance from the Congregation, which had previously promised to send him an assistant who was experienced in trying these sorts of cases. The trials of the judaizers were an

¹⁹⁵ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 396.

¹⁹⁶ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1579, f. 267r; ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 192v.

¹⁹⁷ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 405.

“intricate and difficult affair”, and the bishop complained that he was isolated, able to trust no one in Calabria.¹⁹⁸

By November of 1580 Quaranta had arrived in Catanzaro, and had begun to examine not only the suspects, but the butchers and shopkeepers which they frequented, to learn whether the suspects had ever bought food prohibited by Jewish dietary restrictions. He promised to keep the cardinals informed of the developments in the case on a weekly basis, and in one of his letters declared that there was little left to do, implying that the whole affair would be over with in the near future.¹⁹⁹ One of the few difficulties remaining was obtaining the testimony of witnesses from Monteleone, which was nearby but part of a separate diocese.²⁰⁰

Nevertheless, in February 1581, the Congregation of the Holy Office determined that further consultation was necessary, and that neither the bishop or Quaranta were completely up to the task. They sent none other than Pietro Dusina to advise the bishops of Catanzaro and Mileto in the proper handling of the trials.²⁰¹ It was a choice no doubt inspired both by Dusina’s close knowledge of the wishes of the cardinal inquisitors, his juridical expertise, and his professional experience in the Neapolitan curia a decade prior. After all, who better to preside over the trials of these judaizers than the man who had presided over the first major trials of judaizers in the Kingdom of Naples?

It is not clear how the trials in Catanzaro ended. Three sentences from the trials have survived which indicate successful conclusions to at least a few of the proceedings. Laomedonte Barbaro appeared voluntarily in a *spontanea comparitio* before the bishop of Mileto in 1582 and was assigned a series of salutary penances for her participation in the *setta*. During the same

¹⁹⁸ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 403, 407.

¹⁹⁹ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 401, 402.

²⁰⁰ ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, LL 3-a, f. 406

²⁰¹ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1580-1581, f. 272r

year, the Roman congregation assigned salutary penances to two judaizers from Catanzaro, Baldassare Bonifazio and Ottavio Ruffo.²⁰² Yet there are other pieces of evidence that suggest that the Catanzaro trials were not a success by the standards of the cardinal inquisitors, and that even the use of extraordinary measures- the extradition of suspects to Rome and the use of expert inquisitors in Catanzaro working alongside the bishop- were inadequate to make up for the lack of trained personnel and resources in the episcopal court in Catanzaro. The Congregation of the Holy Office continued to receive notice of the presence of judaizers of Catanzaro well into the seventeenth century. References to *Judaizantes catacenses* appear in the decrees of the congregation regularly from the 1620s onward, and in 1637, a group of Jewish books in Portuguese were found in Catanzaro. In 1643, the cardinal inquisitors supervised another series of trials that involved a group of suspects from some of the same families that had been investigated some sixty years prior- Barbaro, Bonfacio, and Vitale.²⁰³ Some sixty years after the first trials, a particularly tenacious religious minority in a remote location continued to stymie the efforts of one of the most sophisticated and powerful tribunals of its day.

As the year 1582 came to a close, the staff of the Inquisition in Naples could finally look forward to a year in which judaizers would not absorb a sizeable fraction of the tribunal's time and energy. Over twelve years after the denunciation and arrest of Lavinia Petralbes, the campaign had finally ground to a close. In the hundreds of pages of documentation produced during the trial lay a detailed description of the social world and religious practices of the New Christians of Spanish Naples, and it is to this evidence that the next chapter is devoted.

²⁰² TCD, ms. 1226, f. 73-79, ms. 1227, f. 4-10

²⁰³ ACDF, *Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1643, c. 88v, 128r, 151r.

Chapter 4: The Neapolitan Model of Crypto-Judaism: Social Characteristics and Religious

Life

I.

On February 16, 1571, Livia Fernandes submitted a written deposition to Pietro Dusina. The document, redacted by her husband, was the most extensive confession she ever gave of a lifelong practice of crypto-judaism:

“Desirous of leaving the road of shadows and error, and having made manifest my mistakes to the vicar of your lordship and to father Giovan Battista Bonocore, and having received from him absolution and penitence, and having been called again before your lordship, I came immediately as an obedient daughter and testified.”²⁰⁴

After briefly restating the chain of events that had brought her and her sister to confess their apostasy, she began to recount her biography:

“And so that your lordship will know the origin of my error, I tell you that although I was born to Catholic parents, one born in Seville and the other in Cordoba, I was nevertheless in the tender years of my childhood (at about ten years of age) given by my mother to be raised by my aunt Bianca del Castiglio, who as rumor had it was raised among Catalans. By Bianca I was persuaded to fast every year toward the end of September, and since this fast was instituted by God and then observed by our Lord Christ, who came not to destroy, but rather to fulfill the old law, and observed also by his most holy mother, it was a thing of great importance. And the

²⁰⁴ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 255r-260v.

observance served not only for the remission of sins, but to assure oneself of prosperity in the future, especially for finding oneself a good marriage.”

Her aunt’s instructions on prayer were similarly detailed:

“She wished also that we should pray as she did, standing and facing the open window, and looking toward the sky. And even if there was in her room I believe a figure of the Madonna, in front of which I would sometimes kneel and say a prayer, which she hadn’t prohibited. Nevertheless, she would frequently keep that figure with its face turned against the wall, even if she said she did this out of great reverence, as I believe I said in my other examination. What her intention was in doing this I have no idea, as I never investigated it. Nor (as I said), did she ever prohibit the adoration of images, of which there were many from the apartment of my mother. She also told me, and I followed her during the time when I was in her care, about five years, that it was enough to say *Gloria patri*, without adding *et filio et spiritu sanctu*. I have little ability to know what her intentions were in this case as well, because I never asked, and as I said before, my young age, and the trust I had for that old lady took reassured me and took away my impulse to investigate further. It is true that after she died and I saw the rest of the Christians observe in the opposite manner, I began to add after the *Gloria patri*, still *et filio et spiritu sanctu*. And from that I could conjecture that her intentions were of the worst kind, because her silencing the name of the son and the holy spirit makes one suspicious that she did not believe perfectly.”

Maturity marked a gradual abandonment of the idiosyncratic teachings of her aunt, a process perhaps reinforced by her marriage into a traditional, probably Old Christian, family.

“After I had been married to a Spanish gentleman named Francisco [Guerrera] and had gone with him to the castle of Mola in the province of Terra di Bari, of which my husband was governor, I lived there for five years. In that time I quit the September fast, not because I thought it a bad thing, but because I had no one to tell me which day it was, and it never came on the same day of the month. During that time that I lived in Mola, several Jews ended up there whose ship had been taken by a [group] of Christians who treated them very badly...These Jews were given over with their property to my husband as castellan, from which arose a dispute between him and the Marchese di --- Maggiore, who was at that time Governor of the said province. But when they had – their differences, my aforesaid husband received from the aforesaid Marchese two pieces of fabric and a case of books, which having ended up in my hands, I found therein two large books with red covers, which was Genesis, and a small one covered in black which contained the psalms of David and many other prayers. I didn’t think much of it, and I left them around my house so that everyone saw them, and it stayed like this until my husband burned [the larger one], because it appeared to him to have been prohibited by the Council of Trent. And this book was very dear to me, even though it was written in the Portuguese language, which I don’t understand well. The other smaller one, with prayers and psalms, was even dearer to me, and I always watched it carefully and showed it to very few people. I remember well having given copies of several of the prayers to Geronima Pellegrina, who asked me for them, as I believe I said during one of my examinations. I kept this book right up until these rumors of women being imprisoned began, when, doubting that there might be something bad inside, I gave it to Alonso Pellegrino, who threw it in a box.”

When she left the isolation of Mola for Naples, her practice of crypto-judaism increased, as she was able to interact with others who assisted her. She closed her confession with a plea for mercy:

“Let your lordship have regard for the reputation of seven poor children, and even more for that of my husband, who finds himself in some repute with his Majesty the Catholic King, whom he has served, and still serves as Captain of Infantry in the undertaking of Granada where he is continuously exposed to danger in service of the Christian faith and his king.”

Livia’s confession, together with that of her sister Beatrice, is one of the richest pieces of evidence regarding the content of Neapolitan crypto-judaism. It contains a good sample of the common themes in the religious life of the Neapolitan community of New Christians- the slow initiation into crypto-Jewish rituals by a female relative, rituals that were often overlaid with Christian meanings, skepticism towards the cult of saints and the adoration of images, and an interest in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. It is also an engaging narrative that emphasizes the role of chance occurrences, such as the discovery of a cache of Jewish books, and important personalities in her biography. Her religious life was intimately connected to her experiences as a member of a family of Spanish immigrants to the Kingdom of Naples.

Yet, despite the extremely rich images that Fernandes’ testimony evokes, it also poses a number of interpretive problems. There is plenty that seems potentially contrived in order to lessen her responsibility, from the juxtaposition of the pure faith of the Castilians with the crypto-judaism of the Catalans to her professions of complete innocence and ignorance about the nature of the religious practices taught by her aunt. Furthermore, the confession itself belongs to a kind of literary genre. Spanish inquisitors routinely instructed suspects to give a *discurso de su vida*, a short retelling of one’s life history that included any salient information for the trial. By the late sixteenth century the Iberian tribunals had amassed thousands of such autobiographical

tales; some were confessional and others defiantly exculpatory, but all shared certain tropes and generic styles. They were particularly interested to hear such stories in trials of judaizers, whose crimes frequently involved relatives and ancestors.²⁰⁵ One might have to search more carefully in the records of the Roman Inquisition for stories like that of Livia Fernandes, but her retelling had plenty of elements in common with those of other individuals who appeared before the Iberian tribunals.

Though confessions are among the most dramatic and potentially valuable portions of any trial, they are by their very nature suspect as historical sources. Courtroom confessions are always given under circumstances of coercion; the threat of punishment or torture lurks in the background, and even in confessing a crime an individual may be as likely to say what they believe their audience wants to hear rather than what they actually believe to be true. The credibility of testimony is a serious problem for the historian of inquisitorial trials, and one that has provoked a series of debates with implications that extend beyond the scope of the history of the Inquisition.

Historians of the Roman Inquisition have been particularly influenced by the method proposed by Carlo Ginzburg. Comparing the inquisitor to an anthropologist, Ginzburg suggests that inquisitorial testimony is most useful during those moments when the inquisitor's professional role most closely mirrors that of the historian. In such moments, the response of the witness frequently reveals something unknown to the inquisitor and that does not easily conform to the judicial and religious categories which he is using. In these moments, the inquisitor's questioning temporarily abandons the suggestive or leading tone of an interrogation, and a more

²⁰⁵ David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 112; Richard Kagan and Abigail Dyer, *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004), 4-7.

equal exchange is possible. These portions of a trial are most useful for historical anthropology, the most untainted by the complex power relations present in the courtroom. Ginzburg's method is the basis of his influential studies of witchcraft and popular culture in Friuli.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, while this strategy reliably identifies moments in which the inquisitor's questioning was less likely to reproduce stereotypes, it provides no guarantee that the witness would reciprocate.

Several influential historians of the Iberian inquisitions have confronted the problem in relation to the mass prosecution of judaizers by the Portuguese and Spanish tribunals. Benzion Netanyahu and Antonio Jose Saraiva have portrayed the Iberian tribunals as judicial institutions wholly perverted by the political goals of the sovereigns who controlled them. They used anti-Jewish prejudice as a means of accomplishing political goals, and the trials that they held were entirely corrupted proceedings. Therefore, they conclude, records of these trials cannot stand up to the scrutiny of modern historical criticism, and they can be used only as records of the stereotypes of the inquisition and the means of its domination of Iberian society. Saraiva describes the Portuguese Inquisition as a "marrano factory", which manufactured victims in order to enforce the hegemony of the landed aristocratic elite against the claims of a nascent mercantile bourgeoisie in Portugal.²⁰⁷ These visions of inquisitorial procedure emphasize the worst excesses of the Inquisition: interrogations under torture, extortion, secret proceedings, and falsified trials. While magnified by the rhetoric of so-called Black Legend propaganda, these were nevertheless real features of the inquisitorial courts in Iberia and were especially common

²⁰⁶ Carlo Ginzburg, "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist" in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1989), 156-165.

²⁰⁷ Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995); António José Saraiva. *The Marrano Factory: the Portuguese Inquisition and its New Christians, 1536-1765*. trans. H.P. Salomon and I.S.D. Sassoon (Leiden: Brill, 2001); H.P. Salomon has recently offered a defense of Saraiva's position in "Reaberto o debate entre I.S. Révah e A.J. Saraiva sobre o criptojudáismo peninsular?," *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas* 5 (2005), 89-114.

during the earliest period of their activity in Spain. The most notorious episode from this period is the trial of the inquisitor of Cordoba, Diego Lucero, who provoked a revolt by the communes of Andalusia after he attempted to create a personal power base by threatening all of his rivals with prosecution and by imprisoning huge numbers of people. This massive and idiosyncratic campaign threatened to throw the entire kingdom into crisis and only ended when a commission established by Cardinal Cisneros removed Lucero from office and re-examined the procedures of Holy Office.²⁰⁸ In such a situation, it is worth wondering whether any testimony can be regarded as credible.

A third perspective is offered by the work of Natalie Zemon Davis, who urges historians to look at such sources not as testimony of actual factual occurrences, but rather as examples of persuasive discourse from the period. In this view, confessions can provide models of persuasive speech and narrative that are by themselves interesting objects of historical analysis. If someone accused of judaizing came before an inquisitor had an opportunity to defend his or herself, what were the necessary points to include in one's self-defense? What position would one take regarding their accusers? Regarding the judge? What constituted a plausible explanation?²⁰⁹

The dilemma posed by the nature of the sources is impossible to resolve definitively. Yet while a position of extreme skepticism seem like the most potentially responsible approach to these problems, there are potential costs in this attitude. For one thing, while the context of a courtroom presented plenty of opportunities and incentives to subtly alter one's story or confuse or willfully deceive one's judges, there were also powerful incentives against lying. Judicial

²⁰⁸ Lucero's career and its aftermath are recounted in "La Inquisición española procesada por la Congregación General de 1508," in *La Inquisición Española. Nueva visión, nuevos horizontes*, 89-155.

²⁰⁹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). Davis' study is based not on trial records themselves, but rather on written requests for pardon made by convicted criminals to the King of France.

institutions, then as now, were not completely deprived of means for verifying the testimony of witnesses, and there were heavy penalties to be paid for perjury. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that despite these important considerations and methods, not even the most skilled and knowledgeable witness went before the inquisition in a complete rhetorical vacuum. There were serious consequences for false testimony, and the court was not always deprived of means for uncovering it. At the same time, it is incorrect to cast an equally skeptical glance over the entire activity of inquisitorial courts. There were significant differences between the three national tribunals of the Holy Office, in their procedures, and in their personnel, and each of the tribunals' practices varied over time. And despite the impressive degree of centralization and bureaucratization attained by inquisitorial courts in the modern age, each local tribunal preserved a particular perspective and set of traditions. It is therefore important to evaluate not only each individual tribunal independently, but also each trial.²¹⁰

These interpretive problems are especially present in the trials of the Neapolitan judaizers, which, as chapters two and three demonstrate, were filled with judicial irregularities and corrupt practices. Even after the Congregation of the Holy Office invalidated a part of the testimony and ordered a revision of the trials on July 12, 1570, the proceedings continued to be complicated both by the disorganization of the tribunal and the maneuvers of the witnesses. The later testimony is less marked by the atmosphere of terror and arbitrary justice created by the first vicar, Paolo Tasso, but still took place in a relatively chaotic circumstances. In what follows, the decision has been made to privilege testimony from the later periods of the trials, which took place under more rigorous judicial standards. At the same time, as far as possible, I

²¹⁰ Andrea Del Col, "I criteri dello storico nell'uso delle fonti inquisitoriali," in Andrea del Col and Giovanna Paolin, eds. *L'Inquisizione romana: metodologia delle fonti e storia istituzionale* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2001), 51-72.

have attempted to take account of each individual's previous and subsequent testimony and personal experiences in evaluating their testimony.

The portrait of the Neapolitan New Christian community and its religious life that emerges is by no means "untainted." Numerous strategies to minimize guilt and unload one's own culpability on the shoulders of others are in evidence throughout. Nevertheless, in the midst of a complex campaign full of accusations and counter-accusations, a degree of internal consistency is perceptible across the various depositions. There was a community of New Christians in Naples, many of whom practiced crypto-Jewish rituals. Though by no means every fact can be verified, or every witness's reliability affirmed, the complexity, size, and length of the Neapolitan campaign is in this sense a virtue. Many of the events described were discussed in a number of different contexts by a wide range of people over a long period of time. It is a kind of consistency that would have been difficult to fake, even for a remarkably compact and resourceful group that proved capable of manipulating the court on numerous occasions.

II.

The suspects in the trials belonged to what witnesses referred to as the *natione catalana*, the community of Catalanian immigrants living in Naples and their children. Though most of the men and women on trial were second or third-generation immigrants, many of them could tell stories of their parents' and grandparents' immigration to Naples. Most of the families had come from Valencia and Barcelona, though some had arrived from other locations in France and Spain. The reasons given for the move usually had to do with employment; they came either as merchants or to occupy posts in the royal bureaucracy in Naples. Very few of the suspects admitted that their ancestors were of *converso* lineage, but several hinted that their parents' and

grandparents' departure from Spain was motivated not only by opportunity: the Pellegrino, for example, had fled from the Inquisition in Barcelona and Valencia. In reality, the fact that many of the families fled to Naples at the end of the fifteenth century, when the inquisitorial tribunals in Spain were beginning their most ferocious attacks on New Christians, suggests that this was the primary reason behind the families' departures, even if it was largely hidden from the judges. Despite the fact that in several cases inquisitors referred to the women as Portuguese, there seems to be no evidence that they were, other than the presence of several books in Portuguese among their possessions. Sometimes the arrival at Naples came after a long period of migration: Isabella Raguante was born in Genoa to the merchant Francesco Catalano and his wife, who had emigrated from France. The family passed to Florence, where Isabella was educated, and then to Venice, where she married Michele Raguante, and finally to Naples.²¹¹

In Naples, the families that belonged to the *natione* quickly came to occupy positions of wealth and honor. Many of them owned the houses they in which they lived, and several possessed other properties in addition to their urban residences. Many of the male members of the *natione* had attained offices of importance and authority in the civil administration of the Regno, earning the appellation '*Magnificus*' for them and other members of their families. Joan Fonseca was a captain of the guard, where he served with members of the Leone family. The husbands of several of the women served in captaincies in the towns and cities of the Regno, where they were the chief representatives of the central government and served as justices of first instance in matters civil and criminal. Still others worked in the treasury of the *Regno* as tax officials and accountants. And others, such as Giovan Antonio Villagut and Girolamo Vignes, were important jurists and legal scholars.

²¹¹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 5r-9v.

These families also seem to have been rather successful in finding well placed friends and protectors. Angela Leone and her daughters were on friendly terms with a number of Spanish officials in the city. Two captains of the guard of the city of Naples, Juan Ortega de Salines and Alonso de Quiroga, testified in Angela's defense. While Quiroga said he had heard of Lavinia Petralbes's judaizing, he had no doubt that the Leone family was Catholic. The *licenciado* Cristobal de Berrocal, sacristan of the royal chapel, almoner of his Excellency the Viceroy, and treasurer of the church of San Nicola in Bari, one of the Regno's most important churches, also described a long and warm relationship with Angela and her daughter Virginia, who he described as honorable women and good Christians. He also had kind words about Beatrice Astorga, whose husband, the captain Garcia de Valdes was a friend from Berrocal's university days in Salamanca. The noblewoman Maria Colle recounted to the court not only Virginia Leone's impeccable religious attitudes, but also her friendships with members of several of the most important noble families in Italy, including Felice Orsini, the wife of Marcantonio Colonna, Cecilia de' Medici, niece of Pius IV, and Anna Borromeo, the sister of Carlo Borromeo.²¹²

The relationships among the families within the *natione*- the Cartiglia, Vignes, Villagut, Raguante, Fonseca, Beltrana, Pellegrino, Corviglies, Alugia, Astorga, and Leone- were complex. The families had intermarried over several generations, making it difficult to draw clear distinctions between one kin group and another. Their interests were also closely allied because of their professions and their religious and ethnic identities, and it seems that they represented a relatively closed and independent community. In this respect the Neapolitan group followed a classic pattern. Many of the *converso* groups around the Iberian world developed into large,

²¹² ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 143, f. 17r-31r, 74v-76r, 99v-102v.

multi-family nuclei. It was an arrangement that was both necessary for the self-defense of a group that was exposed and vulnerable to a number of attacks from the Old Christian majority and in many cases also afforded the necessary solidarity for attaining ambitious dreams of social advancement. From the fifteenth century onward, inquisitors in Spain and Portugal had become accustomed to encountering large groups of *conversos* among the mercantile and administrative elites in Iberian communities and with time, they uncovered them in the overseas colonies as well.²¹³

But despite the outward solidarity of the Neapolitan clan, there were plenty of divisions within. Petty incidents, such as unpaid debts, insults, and romantic entanglements were remembered for years and were the source of hatreds that only worsened when the trials began. The members of the *natione* accused one another of judaizing in the service of long-standing vendettas and defended themselves by complaining that their accusers were motivated by personal animosity. Yet, while vendetta often provided the pretext for these divisions, there were also more concrete reasons for the strife in the Neapolitan community. There existed in almost all of the families, and certainly within the community as a whole, an extreme tension between aspirations to conform to a Catholic society and advance by playing by its rules, and the attraction to the unforgotten religious traditions of the distant past.

This tension is most evident in the history of the Vignes family, where the contradictions produced by the conflict between allegiance to the past and hopes for a future as full-fledged members of Catholic society appear in their most dramatic form. The leading member of the family was Girolamo Vignes, a jurist of substantial authority within the ecclesiastical institutions of the city. He returned from the University of Padua in 1547 and orchestrated the foundation of

²¹³ Jaime Contreras, "Estructuras familiares y linajes en el mundo judeoconverso," in Raphael Carrasco, ed. *Solidarités et sociabilités en Espagne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1991).

the Jesuit college in Naples, a task that demonstrated his considerable administrative and financial skills; with the assistance of Ettore Pignatelli, the Duke of Monteleone, Vignes succeeded in securing the approval of the viceroy and the financial assistance of a large part of the Neapolitan aristocracy for the new venture, which began in 1551. Despite his intense advocacy of the Jesuits, however, Vignes did not become a priest or formally enter the society. This decision was made by Ignatius himself, who preferred that Vignes remain a layman and see to the care of his elderly parents. Though the choice was a difficult one for Vignes, he accepted the orders given to him and continued to act in an informal capacity on behalf of the Society, corresponding frequently with Ignatius and subsequent generals of the order on matters relating to the financial problems of the college.²¹⁴

Yet, Vignes' fervor for the Society concealed, perhaps intentionally, both his family's Jewish ancestry and their continuing practice of crypto-Judaism. His elderly mother Margarita Vital recounted to Paolo Tasso how she had followed certain crypto-Jewish rituals, such as the September fast, and the Passover, over 25 years prior. She recalled how Samuel Abravanel, a member of the powerful Portuguese Jewish family that had lived in the city prior to the expulsion, had provided her with *pane azzimo* during Holy Week. She also mentioned that an aunt of her husband's family fled Valencia out of fear of the Inquisition.²¹⁵ Yet, while Margarita portrayed her own crypto-judaism as a thing of the distant past, several members of her immediate family were still involved. Both her sister Dianora Vital and her sister's daughter Isabella Raguante were among those executed in Rome in 1572 as impenitent judaizers.

²¹⁴ MHSI, Juan de Polanco, *Chronicon*, no. 276, 528; MHSI, *Epistolae Mixtae*, doc. 840, 274-275: letter from Vignes to Oviedo, former rector of the Neapolitan college, "Desidero intender' piu claramente come sian compatibile queste due cose, servire con grado de dottore li parenti nel seculo, et star resignato *ad nutum superioris*."

²¹⁵ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 137*, f. 2r.

Under the guiding hand of Girolamo Vignes, the family seems to have been on the road to abandoning these aspects of their religious life by the time the trials began in 1569. Two of Vignes' younger brothers, Michele and Fabrizio, entered the Society of Jesus in 1552 and left Naples to serve in several of the colleges in Northern Italy, including those of Gubbio, Florence, and Genoa. Ignatius periodically informed Girolamo Vignes of their progress; while both were highly regarded for their intellect, they were limited by frail constitutions and spiritual torment. In 1554, Ignatius wrote to the rector of the college in Ferrara, Giovanni Pelletario, that Fabrizio had to be cured from unnamed "temptations of worldliness" by which he was afflicted. "To me it seems that it would be good to totally prohibit him from conversing with that person who gives him occasion for temptation, and also to exhort him to never look at him directly, and to moderate the quantity of food he eats."²¹⁶ The other members of Girolamo Vignes' immediate family had also been initiated into the spirituality of the Society of Jesus. The entire family, including Girolamo's mother Margarita Vital, his brother Gaspar Vignes, and his sister Diana Vignes, frequented Jesuit confessors in Naples. Gaspar was known to confess and take communion frequently, every eight days, and he had lived in the college for a period during which he completed the Spiritual Exercises.²¹⁷

But the family's old demons continued to haunt them. Gaspar and his wife Geronima Corviglies were accused of judaizing, and the curia opened a proceeding against both of them in 1571. Several hostile witnesses made vague accusations, such as the Spaniard Diego Gil, husband of Lucretia Vaglies. Speaking in a broken Italian mostly composed of Spanish phrases

²¹⁶ MHSL, *Monumenta Ignatiana*, doc. 4108, 243-245.

²¹⁷ ASDN *Sant'Ufficio* 173*, f. 4r-v; The practice of frequent communion was one of the centerpieces of Jesuit spirituality, and had also been introduced to Naples by both the Society of Jesus and another important proponent of Counter-reformation spirituality, Bonsignore Cacciaguerra. On Cacciaguerra, see Romeo De Maio, *Bonsignore Cacciaguerra: un mistico senese nella Napoli del Cinquecento* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1965).

and idioms, Gil launched into an ugly tirade against Gaspar and Geronima, who he accused of belonging to “that race of Jews.” Expressing his full belief in the concept of *limpieza*, otherwise absent from the Neapolitan trials, Gil argued that “I hold all those who are descended from Jews to be Jews, even though they might have become Christians and might be persons of repute.”²¹⁸ However, most of those who offered more specific information portrayed Gaspar in a different light. Isabella Raguante described him as a good Christian who was probably unaware of his wife’s judaizing. The Jesuit Pietro Blanca portrayed him as an essentially simple and guileless individual who earned a living through odd jobs provided to him by his brother. When Gaspar testified, he admitted to nothing more than having unwittingly eaten an azzimo and witnessed some Jewish ceremonies.²¹⁹

While his family was consumed with the discontents of their own distant conversion, Girolamo Vignes was occupied in the conversion of others. In 1555, he wrote Ignatius to inform him of a “*negotio di grandissimo momento*.” The Marchese of Vico, Colantonio Caracciolo, had contacted the Jesuits to inform them that his son, Galeazzo Caracciolo, was returning to the family’s feudal territory near Naples, and that he had given signs of wanting to be reconciled with the Catholic Church. Several years earlier, under the influence of Juan de Valdes and Pietro Martire Vermigli, Galeazzo had fled to Geneva, renounced Catholicism, and embraced the Reformed Church. Given his high status within the Neapolitan aristocracy and his membership in the Imperial court of Charles V, Caracciolo’s abandonment of the Roman church was regarded as a profound embarrassment to the Pope, the Emperor, and the city of Naples, and a corresponding victory for Calvin and his followers. Vignes, acting as an intermediary between the family and the Society, wrote to Loyola to suggest that an authoritative member of the

²¹⁸ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 223r-223v.

²¹⁹ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 137*, f. 1r.

society be sent to fulfill the Marchese's request, which was to be taken seriously not only for the status of the individual in question, but also because the Marchese and his family were among the benefactors of the college. As a replacement for Salmerón, who was participating in the Diet of Augsburg, Vignes suggested Diego Laínez. Though the family was related to the reigning pope Paul IV Carafa, they had turned to the society, perhaps chastened by their illustrious relative's religious zeal and lack of mercy toward heretics: "Though these gentlemen have ample means with his Holiness because of the close kinship that exists between them, nonetheless, I am constrained to ask you, as a lowly and obedient servant, and I assure you in all truth that it would be a most singular grace for this entire city, and an occasion of great affection and devotion towards the Society, beyond the particular benefit for this college..." Vignes closed the letter with a note advising Loyola that Viatrice Carafa, a sister of Paul IV, would also write to him regarding the matter.²²⁰ The proposal was welcomed in Rome, and a meeting was arranged between Caracciolo and his father on the Tremiti islands in the Adriatic, but like previous attempts at reconciliation, it came to nothing.

Vignes' ability to delicately maneuver between Neapolitan élites and the city's ecclesiastical institutions, ably demonstrated by his activities surrounding the foundation of the college and the negotiations over the return of Caracciolo, were again put to use when Vignes was present at the bedside of the dying *reggente* of the *Consiglio Collaterale*, Francesco Antonio Villano. The story, recounted in a letter from Alfonso Salmerón to Antonio Sauli, the papal nuncio in Naples, describes the patient labor of persuasion undertaken by the two men. After Villano had been informed by his doctors that he would shortly die, Salmerón and Vignes came

²²⁰ MHSI, *Epistolae Mixtae*, doc. 1000, 756-758; the response is at MHSI, *Monumenta Ignatiana Epistolae*, 412, 9:467; on Caracciolo's biography and conversion to Calvinism, see Benedetto Croce, *Vite di avventure, di fede, e di passione* (Bari: Laterza, 1953), 187-291, and *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, s.v. "Caracciolo, Galeazzo."

to his bedside, where Salmerón wrote that “we found him sitting up in bed, with great pain in his heart and suffering, sighing heavily, and with live tears running from his eyes. He took me by the hand, and openly confessed that he was feeling pains of conscience, for having made great resistance to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in particular that of the Pope, and that he had done all of this out of pure ambition and in order to remain in the good graces of the king and the viceroy.” Villano told Salmerón and Vignes that he was dying fully repentant of his errors, and that he wanted to leave the office of *reggente* rather than place his soul at risk. He asked Salmerón to communicate his decision to the viceroy and pleaded with him to employ him as the porter in his house, a suitably humble position for a penitent. Three days later, Villano died. Salmerón did not elaborate on Vignes’ role in this extraordinary deathbed conversion, but his presence was nonetheless significant. As *avvocato fiscale* of the tribunal of the *nunziatura*, he was one of the main representatives of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Regno and he would have been very familiar with Villano and the moral and political questions with which he struggled.²²¹

The presence of a New Christian in a central role in the Society of Jesus was by no means an anomaly. Ignatius of Loyola, in his emphasis on the evangelical calling and missionary activities of the society, created a broad and tolerant mandate for it, one that was capable of absorbing elements of the foreign and the heterodox, including New Christians. Ignatius was reported to have stated that he wished he had been born a Jew so that he could be related to Christ by blood as well as by spirit, an extraordinary statement during a period when anti-Jewish prejudice and pessimism about the possibility of sincere conversion from Judaism were at their height in Spain. His attitude was in stark contrast to that of the majority of the other religious orders in Spain, most of which had adopted blood purity statutes. The Jesuits quickly attracted a

²²¹ MHSI, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis*, doc. 378, 338-341.

number of talented New Christians to their ranks. Not only were several of the most important of the first Jesuits, including Ignatius's secretary Juan Alfonso de Polanco and the second general of the order, Diego Lainez, of New Christian ancestry, numerous talented members of the society were either themselves converts or descendants of Jews. This openness lasted until the General Congregation of 1593, when a ban on the entrance of New Christians was implemented in the midst of crisis within the order.²²²

What is extraordinary about the case of the Vignes family is the fact that Girolamo Vignes' activity within the Society took place at the same time as his family continued to practice forms of crypto-judaism and remained in close contact with a large group of judaizing *conversos*. Caught between the poles of assimilation and apostasy, the family eventually fell under suspicion, though the considerable authority of Vignes also provided a means of escape for those closest to him. Margarita Vital, Gaspar Vignes, and Geronima Cruiglies escaped all punishment through their depositions, and they seem to have been treated with sufficient discretion that the family emerged relatively unscathed from the proceedings. The reputation of Girolamo Vignes was secure enough that he maintained his authority long past the initial moment of emergency in 1569, and when he died in 1584, he was still held in esteem by the Jesuits.²²³

While the Vignes family presents an extraordinary example of the tensions and contradictions within the *natione catalana*, many of the other families seem to present similar characteristics. While the women practiced Jewish rituals, the male members of the family, perhaps more preoccupied with the social position and reputation of the family, were less likely

²²² O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 188-192; John Patrick Donnelly, "Antonio Possevino and Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 55 (1986), 3-31.

²²³ MHSI, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis*, doc. 530a, 2: 729.

to participate. In this respect as well, the Neapolitan group followed patterns well-documented in Spain and Portugal, where women often demonstrated a greater propensity toward judaizing than men.²²⁴

III.

Unlike *conversos* living in Venice, Ferrara, and Livorno, the members of the *natione catalana* in Naples had almost no real contact with Jews or Jewish communities. Some of the older members of the community could remember a time when Jews lived in Naples, and told stories of their interactions with them. Margarita Vital testified that she had eaten pane azzimo given to her by Isabella Galzerana, who had in turn received it from Samuel Abravanel, a member of the famous Portuguese Jewish clan that had immigrated to Southern Italy. He had hidden the bread in a box underneath a section of silk cloth.²²⁵ Sibilía Falcona recalled meeting a ‘*gran ricca judea*’ in the presence of Charles V during the Emperor’s visit to Naples in 1535-36. Charles’ visit occurred during the midst of protracted negotiations over the expulsion of the Jews from the *Regno*, and the sovereign devoted a great deal of attention to the problems posed by Jews and *conversos* during his stay. The visit also provided an occasion for religious polemics: one of the members of Charles’ entourage, the Franciscan Antonio de Guevara, visited the Neapolitan synagogue several times and debated the rabbis on aspects of the Old Testament.²²⁶ According to Sibilía, the rich Jewess had come to request the renewal of a privilege, in all likelihood the charter allowing Jews to live in the kingdom. She told the Emperor that if it had not been for the money that her father had given to Charles’ father, that the

²²⁴ Renee Levine Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel?: The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²²⁵ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 293r-297r.

²²⁶ Ruiz Martin, “La expulsión de los judíos,” 213-217.

kingdom of Naples would have been lost. When the Emperor told her that she should become a Christian, she replied that he should consider carefully, because she was of a greater lineage than the Emperor: while he descended from the Maccabees, she was a descendant of King David. To which the Emperor responded that the Macabees were “men of war,” and that David went wrong. The conversation between the two continued, and they discussed *pane azzimo* as well. In the meantime, Sibilia played the cymbals and danced, and the Emperor gave her three hundred ducats as a dowry for her daughter.²²⁷

Sibilia described further contact with Jews in the days following the expulsion in 1541. In her fourth deposition, given in February of 1571 before Paolo Tasso, she claimed that “not only have I not been a heretic, I have made two Jews into Christians, Giovan Giacomo Damasotta and his sister.” The family of the Jews in question had remained in Naples after the expulsion because they were involved in an unresolved dispute, and Sibilia came to know them through business with their father Aron de Masotto and his wife Allegra. She became familiar with their son Jacob and broached the possibility of his conversion: “One day I was with him at the *Annunziata*, and I exhorted him to become a Christian, saying ‘What do you want to do? You [Jews] are without a leader, without a kingdom, you are chased out, hated, and despised, and we others have such beautiful marvels and we’re well off.’” He responded that he would think on the matter and they would meet again in a few days. The brother and sister were subsequently baptized and Sibilia became their godmother. Dusina, no doubt anxious to verify the story, pressed for further information, but Sibilia could not remember the name of the church where the baptism occurred and claimed that the siblings were no longer in Naples. Jacob, baptized as

²²⁷ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 13r-14r.

Giovan Giacomo, had been murdered by a man named Joan Durante, while his sister had moved to Loreto.²²⁸

After the expulsion, opportunities for contact with Jews undoubtedly decreased even further, but the judicial record still preserves evidence of Jews in the *Regno* and contact between Jews and crypto-Jews. In 1578, the *curia* intercepted a cargo of *pane azzimo* sent by boat from Rome to Naples. It had been intended for a group of Jews from Thessalonika incarcerated in Castel Nuovo, where they had been sent after a shipwreck on the coast of Puglia. They had received *pane azzimo* from Rome several times before: it was form of charity provided by the Roman Jewish community, and had slipped by without notice in the past. The case also involved two individuals loosely connected to the New Christian community: Massimiliano de Pisis and his mother were converted Jews born in the Roman ghetto who had come to Naples after baptism. De Pisis was a sixteen-year old law student who was negotiating for the imprisoned Jews, and had attempted to collect the case of pane azzimo for them at the port. His mother, Costanza de Donato, was also questioned; after the death of her first husband, Moise, Costanza had married Alessandro Savanales, a member of the Pellegrino clan. The episode, while peripheral to the trials as a whole, nevertheless demonstrates continuing contact between Jews and New Christians in Naples.²²⁹

IV.

Within the contours of a closed and tight-knit community of New Christians living in Naples with little contact with Jews, a form of crypto-judaism developed that followed many of

²²⁸ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 217r-218v; Sibilia had previously told the court the same story in ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 133v-134r.

²²⁹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 386*

the patterns identifiable in Iberia. The rituals most commonly practiced by the Neapolitan judaizers included observance of the Jewish Sabbath as a day of rest, abstinence from pork according to Jewish law, the observance of a fast, sometimes called the *digiuno grande*, in the month of September in honor of Yom Kippur, and the consumption of matzoh, or *pane azzimo*, during the Passover season. When they died, many of Naples' crypto-Jews requested that they be buried according to Jewish custom, in a white sheet. Other observances, such as prayer in the direction of Jerusalem, were only practiced by a few individuals.

Some witnesses also accused the judaizers of sacrilegious acts against Christian symbols and sacred objects, but this seems to have been a rather marginal aspect of Neapolitan crypto-judaism, if it was present at all. Geronima Cioffa, the servant of Lavinia Petralbes whose denunciation catalyzed the trials, claimed to have heard from another maid that Lavinia's mother Camilla Beltrana had once intentionally vomited up the Eucharist. Similarly, Giovan Girolamo de Angelis testified that he had heard through his maid that Laudomia Raguante had emerged from mass, exclaimed "Cursed be the hour that I went to take communion, and cursed be whoever does it" and spit out the host on the ground. This grave sacrilege interested Dusina enough that he called the maid for an interrogation, but she could only claim to have heard the story second hand, and had not witnessed it personally.²³⁰ Gaspar Vignes claimed to have witnessed Violante Cartigliana spit on a crucifix, an act which like the abuse of the host would seem to reveal an open hostility to Christianity and its sacred objects. However, these testimonies were based almost entirely on hearsay and never confirmed by other witnesses.

The judaizers were often described during the trial as members of a league or sect of Crypto-jews, suggesting that they possessed a degree of organization and common purpose. This

²³⁰ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 56r-56v; ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 147r-150v.

was also implied in the vicar Silingardo's allegation that Sibilina Falcona was the leader and instructor of all of the judaizing women. In fact, the group seems to have been fairly diffuse, and in many cases, the suspects were not entirely aware of the religious habits of their neighbors and relatives, even when both were actively involved in crypto-Jewish observances. Instead, the Neapolitan judaizers seem to have been an atomized group, one in which small groups of family members practiced according to the instructions of older relatives and trusted friends.

In a few cases, oral tradition was supplemented with recourse to sacred texts. Paolo Tasso's initial raid on the Fonseca household uncovered several books, all in manuscript. The collection included not only the text identified by fra Giovanni da Pisa as "a copy of the cycle of prayers used by the Spanish Jews in all of their holidays", but also a *Salmista Breviato di San Geronimo*. Mundina Beltrana admitted to having received a vernacular bible in manuscript; her analysis of several passages from the Old and New Testament formed the basis for two shocking depositions in 1569 and 1571. Livia Fernandes' sister Beatrice also recounted to her reading list to her judges; it included a book by Jean Gerson which can probably be identified as *The Imitation of Christ* and "le opere di Luigi de Granato," the works of the Franciscan Luis de Granada.²³¹ The Spanish friar's *Simbolo de la Fe*, replete with stories and parables taken from the Old Testament, was popular among judaizers throughout the Iberian world.²³² Beatrice also described attempting to read her sister Livia's copy of Genesis in Portuguese, though she abandoned the attempt because of her difficulty with the language.²³³

²³¹ *The Imitation of Christ*, now usually attributed to the fifteenth-century monk Thomas à Kempis, was widely believed in sixteenth-century Italy to be the work of Jean Gerson (1363-1429), the famed theologian and chancellor of the University of Paris. John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley: California UP, 1993), 93.

²³² David Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 429-431.

²³³ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 177.

Perhaps as a result of the diffuse and unorganized character of Neapolitan crypto-judaism, many of the descriptions of ritual practice from the trial records give a sense of highly individual forms of crypto-Judaism, in which the meanings attached to practices were not well-defined. Their religiosity was given to spontaneous and highly personal expressions.

The Passover matzoh, or *pane azzimo*, was present in several pieces of testimony and was a focus of interest for the judges. Numerous witnesses reported having seen or consumed *pane azzimo*, but frequently ascribed to it an innocuous or benign significance. Isabella Raguante, a confessed crypto-Jew, recalled having consumed the bread only twice, over fifteen years prior, during Holy Week. She believed she was doing something good by eating the bread, she argued, because it was of “little substance,” and therefore appropriate form of abstinence during Holy Week.²³⁴ Laura Sagania, the wife of Galzerano Alugia, freely admitted to having made and distributed the bread to several women of the *natione catalana*, pointing out that both Christians and Jews habitually consumed the bread in Puglia, where she had grown up. She insisted that it was not a sin to consume the bread unless one did it with the intention of performing a Jewish ceremony.²³⁵ For both women, the *pane azzimo* and its religious use were not purely Jewish in nature, and could be used by devout Catholics as well.

Violante Raguante and her husband Francisco Cartiglia gave a description of their experimentation with *pane azzimo* in a series of depositions before Pietro Dusina. Violante, interrogated on February 4, 1571, remembered being with her mother, her aunt Violante Cartiglia, and her husband during the season of Lent when her aunt had fed her a piece of what she described as “pizza.” Immediately noticing a bitter flavor, she suspected it was *pane azzimo* and spit it out, accusing her mother of attempting to poison her. She described the bread as

²³⁴ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 5r-9v.

²³⁵ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 24r-27r.

containing “either poison, something bitter, or some devil.” The word devil piqued Dusina’s interest, and he asked Violante what sort of devil might be in the bread. She replied that she didn’t know, and the interrogation turned to other topics.²³⁶

Five days later, on February 9, Francisco Cartiglia was questioned for the first time. He described his wife as an active proselytizer, along with her aunt, who convinced him to fast during the month of September and to eat the *pane azzimo* during holy week.

“I seem to remember that the bread was white, and about the size of one half of the palm of one’s hand, and I know that it seemed insipid to me, or even bitter, and it seemed to me to be an extraordinary bread, without yeast, and definitely *pane azzimo*. And Maria gave it to me while Violante was there, but I’m not sure if my wife was there, though I know she had some, and Violante said to me when she gave me the bread “Eat this, for it will be the salvation of your soul and you will have prosperity.”

He ate the bread with the intention of being well, and not in bad faith. Nevertheless, the experience left him full of doubts, and he soon began to regret having taken it at all. During the following years, he revealed both his fasting and his consumption of the azzimo to a series of confessors who had all absolved him for his ‘superstition.’ He told his wife that she should not continue to eat the *pane azzimo*. Finally, he confessed his sins to the Jesuit Bonocore, who suggested that he write a *memoriale*, or brief, to the curia regarding what he knew.²³⁷

The testimonies of Cartiglia and his wife suggest both the spirit of religious experimentation, mingled with intense fear of sin, with which the couple approached the bread,

²³⁶ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 169r-172v.

²³⁷ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 155, f. 208r-212v.

and a meaning distant from its Jewish origins. Rather than a remembrance of the Exodus, the bread represented for the couple a point of access to the unknown world of the supernatural, where they sought the assistance of hidden forces. It was precisely the difficulty of determining whether the bread he had eaten was the work of the devil or of God that left Cartiglia in torment, searching through multiple confessions to find a remedy for his error.

Another typical crypto-Jewish practice which was frequently described in the Neapolitan testimony was burial. In keeping with the halakhic prescriptions for Jewish burial, Crypto-jews followed a regimen of ritual cleanliness and dressing of the corpse that closely mirrored that of actual Jews, placing the body in a clean white sheet. This practice was common enough among Crypto-jews that it received detailed treatment in the various versions of the Edict of Faith that were read to Spanish and Portuguese faithful. Several deceased members of the New Christian families in Naples had been buried *more judaico*, in the Jewish style. The protagonist of these rites was a poor Frenchwoman, Sibilial Falcona of Montpellier, a bizarre figure who parried with the judges of the Neapolitan curia for over three years with outlandish denials of her involvement in any Jewish activity; she was eventually convicted twice, the second time posthumously. Numerous witnesses described her as both a habitual distributor of *pane azzimo* and the person who would dress the dead for burial in the Jewish manner. Several witnesses, including the French protestant Gottofredo Maymone, remembered in particular the funerary rites that she conducted for Rafael Raguante, the paterfamilias of the Raguante clan. Sibilial dressed the body in a clean white sheet, and placed a new white shirt on the torso.²³⁸ When questioned about her role in these burial ceremonies, Sibilial Falcona did not hide the fact that she had participated in the cleaning and dressing of corpses, and said that she had earned plenty of money in preparing

²³⁸ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 436, f. 1r-20r.

the funerals of five or six individuals, both Italians and Spaniards. But she denied that this ritual was at all Jewish in nature. On the contrary, she always made a sign of the cross over the bodies, and said a series of Christian prayers over them, which she repeated for the court.

Though it is difficult to accept Sibilía's benign view of the rituals she engaged in, there is evidence that suggests that the burial preparations were viewed somewhat benignly in important sectors of Neapolitan society. In 1571, as part of the testimony in defense of the accused judaizer Angela Leone, the sacristan of the royal chapel and royal almoner, the *licenciado* Cristobal de Berrocal and the royal medic, Alfonso de Laras, wrote a *memoriale*, or brief for the court. In it the two men stated that the dressing of the dead in a white sheet was the "use and custom in all of the Kingdom of Spain," and that even the recently deceased viceroy of Naples, don Perafan de Ribera, the Duke of Alcalá, and numerous gentlemen in his entourage who had died in the royal infirmary had been dressed in this manner.²³⁹ These were extraordinary claims to be made by two members of the viceroy's household, given that the practice of burial in a white sheet was clearly defined as a crypto-Jewish custom in both the Spanish and Portuguese edicts of faith, and would never have been seen as innocuous or insignificant in Spain itself. Unfortunately, no evidence has survived of the reaction inside the *curia* to this provocative piece of testimony; its existence does suggest a more fluid definition of what was heterodox in Naples than in Iberia.

The Vignes family had an ambiguous view toward these rituals. Margarita Vital recalled that Sibilía had come to visit her when she was sick, and had said that in the event of Margarita's death, she would come and clean the body and ensure that it was properly dressed and buried;

²³⁹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 143, f. 135r.

believing that Sibiliala wanted to give her a Jewish burial, she refused.²⁴⁰ On another occasion, when Girolamo Vignes' aunt Isabella Fortiale was dying, he forbade the family to call Sibiliala Falcone to dress the body. She was replaced by another woman, Dianora, who performed a similar preparation. In the hours before her death, Isabella had her family members bring to her the sheet in which she would be wrapped. She removed the sheet, and taking a needle and thread in her hand, she admonished those present that they must bury her all in white. She then removed a small red patch from the cloth, and told Diana Vignes and her two sisters Laodomia and Luisa to say several Jewish prayers.²⁴¹

V.

In the testimony given by confessed crypto-Jews in Naples, a number of different religious attitudes can be discerned. There was unquestionably a minority of unrepentant judaizers who had sought to return to Judaism and who viewed the Church as a bearer of falsehoods. Elionora Vitale, in a confession given shortly before she was sent to Rome, admitted that she did not believe in Christ or the Virgin. When asked whether she had believed in a host of other elements of Catholic dogma, including Purgatory, the Papal supremacy, and the sacraments, she responded incredulously: "How could I have believed in the church and the sacraments if I didn't believe in Christ, the principal thing?" She said that all of her participation in the sacraments, in particular confession and communion, had been merely for show, and devoid of any belief. Even though Vitale demonstrated contrition and repented her error, the

²⁴⁰ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 296v.

²⁴¹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 300r-v.

gravity of her confessions alone seems to have been sufficient to earn her the death penalty which she received in Rome the following year.²⁴²

But those who portrayed themselves as Elionora did were relatively few. In the surviving testimony, it is far more common to encounter descriptions of lives on the margins of religious difference, sliding back and forth between attraction to Jewish rituals and the exigencies of participation in Catholic society. These suspects described their religious practices as inspired by profound doubts about the nature of the relationship between Christian and Jewish teaching, or simply by confusion about the true significance of the practices they engaged in. They described a world of religious ideas full of ambiguity, mystery, and uncertainty in which the confines between the old law of the Jews and the new dispensation of Christ, so vigorously insisted on by both the Catholic Church and the rabbis, were open and subject to debate.

Most described their initiation into Jewish rituals as a subtle transformation, rather than a dramatic conversion. Rather, many of the women recounted how an older female relative had instructed them in a particular devotion, usually the observance of the Sabbath or the September fast, usually cloaking it in the language of Christian piety. The September fast, an adaptation of the Jewish celebration of Yom Kippur, was sometimes described as a fast in honor of St. Catherine, or in honor of the Virgin Mary.

The confessions of Livia Fernandes and her sister Beatrice both describe how their elderly aunt Bianca del Castiglio slowly indoctrinated the two girls into crypto-Jewish practices without revealing that they had any relationship to Judaism. For the Coviglies sisters, it was their aunt Isabella Lopes who performed a similar role. These rituals were seamlessly integrated with the

²⁴² ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 171*, f. 100r-100v.

more common devotions which they had already been taught and which were practiced by all Catholics.

Even those who described their initiation into crypto-judaism differently also insisted on the ambiguity of the rituals that they had been taught. Angela Conca, a member of the Pellegrino clan, underwent an unusual conversion experience far from Naples, in remote countryside of Calabria, where she and her sister Laudomia Conca were in the service of the Princess of Bisignano in the early 1560s. An itinerant Franciscan named Fra Paolo arrived in the princess's household one August, and captivated all with his charisma and devotion. He spoke of the law of the Jews, and told his audience that the September fast was a good and holy thing. Angela was attracted to the friar's teaching, and asked him to teach her some devotion that would placate her husband's jealousy, which was a particular source of torment for her. The friar instructed Angela to pray to Christ and to say the rosary, but also to fast during the month of September. When she returned to Naples, Angela continued to observe the September fast along with her mother, Geronima Pellegrina, and also began to observe other Jewish rituals, including the Sabbath.²⁴³

The rural south was also the scene of the initiation into crypto-Judaism of Angela's uncle Girolamo Pellegrino. Some twenty-seven years before his first deposition before the *curia* in 1569, Pellegrino had been on a mission in Puglia together with Galzerano Alugia. Both were serving as agents of the treasury, and were going to pay the Spanish infantry garrisoned in Puglia. As the party approached Cerignola, Pellegrino suggested to his companion that they stop for a drink. Alugia replied that he would not eat that day, because he and the entire Spanish and Catalan nation fasted on that particular day in September. He persuaded Pellegrino to follow his

²⁴³ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 58r-61r; ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 137*, f. 9r-9v.

example by telling him that God would remit his sins and grant him well being and honor.

Pellegrino discussed these matters further with Alugia's son Giovan Luigi, with Portia Bruno's father Benedetto Brondo, and with a Portuguese named Pietro Neudes who lived in Barletta. He followed these practices as well, without thinking that he was doing anything contrary to the teaching of the church.²⁴⁴ Like Livia Fernandes, these individuals described situations of ambiguity and uncertainty, in which rituals that were later revealed to be Jewish in origin were given a Christian significance.

However, not everyone admitted to being in ignorance of the true significance of the rituals they practiced. Several of the witnesses employed a much bolder defensive strategy, one that frankly acknowledged the potential conflicts between Christianity and Judaism. Porzia Bruno, in the confession that she gave under extreme duress in late 1569 and later retracted, said "I observed one law and the other, the Jewish and the Christian, and I held both laws to be good."²⁴⁵ Porzia in effect was admitting that she had practiced Jewish rituals, and recognized them as such, but that she had done so not out of a desire to become Jewish. Rather, she recognized no conflict between the two religious truths, and found it to her benefit to practice both. Angela Conca, in testimony given to Pietro Dusina in 1571, gave a similar justification for her practices, saying that she had followed both laws in the belief that both could assure her salvation.²⁴⁶

The most articulate exponent of this position was Mundina Beltrana, the elderly member of the Fonseca clan who was among the first suspects to be interrogated by Paolo Tasso in 1569. Over the course of several depositions, she gave the court two extensive and largely consistent

²⁴⁴ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 137*, f. 17r-18v.

²⁴⁵ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 46r-50r.

²⁴⁶ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 171*, f. 119r.

interpretations of the Bible, which she had read in Italian. In these depositions several elements are present which bespeak Mundina's distinctly *marrano* approach to scripture. The questions that concerned her, the books of the Bible she read, and even some of the reasoning she used is similar to that of other judaizers. But despite these close parallels, what Mundina did not give her listeners the tired polemics of what Spanish inquisitors called "pertinacious dogmatizers," literate judaizers who wanted to use scripture to prove the truth of Judaism and the falsity of Christianity. Instead, she provided an interpretation of the Bible in which Judaism had not been completely superseded by Christianity.

After denying any wrongdoing in her first deposition, Mundina unburdened herself when called before the court a second time on October 27, 1569:

"I'll tell the truth-I observed the Sabbath, not in contempt of Christ, but believing that I was doing good because God commanded it by the old law, and I did it out of devotion and not to sin, and I have confessed it...I freely confess that I have made an error because I realize it, and the *Padre vicario* has opened my mind and my eyes and made me understand the truth. And my mind had been confused and I didn't know what to do.

I intuited from the new scripture-when one reads in Matthew or Luke '*non veni solvendum legem, sed adimplendum*'²⁴⁷ that one should take something from the old law, and I observed the Sabbath. And also, remembering that Solomon, having made the temple, said that all those who pray toward this holy house, that he exalts them- and since I knew that the temple stands to the East- and for that reason turned my eyes to the East. And if I have made an error I repent of it.

²⁴⁷ "I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it." Matthew 4:13

And I remember, reading the book of Esdras, where one reads, ... '*non imposuit penitentia abramo, Isaac, et Jacobo, et illis non peccaverunt.*' Regarding this, I thought to myself and discussed once with my niece Isabella, that if God did not give penance to the patriarchs, how is it true that Christ lifted them from Limbo, and that they had many years of penitence before the coming of the glory of God. And on this I vacillated for a long time and I told it to the confessor. I remember also that in Malachi the prophet or in another one: 'I will send, or his servants will come, and I will send Elijah another time.' And I said and conjectured that the day of judgment was yet to come."²⁴⁸

In a deposition made over a year later, on February 29, 1571, Mundina again took the opportunity to ruminate on the fate of the Patriarchs under the new law. She first reiterated her respect for the legitimacy of the tribunal that was judging her, explaining that:

"I want to tell the truth, because these are not trials like those of the *Vicaria*, where whoever denies is spared and whoever confesses is condemned. Here I am standing before God and I know that his justice isn't like that, because he sees the heart of every person and he pardons whoever repents and confesses, and whoever denies is damned."²⁴⁹

When asked about the observation of Jewish rites, she remained consistent in both the texts she cited and her analysis of them, saying:

"But if I said before, '*non imposuit penitentia Abraham, Isaac, et Jacobo, et illib qui sibi non peccaverunt*' [sic], I meant that it might be that these ancient fathers had been in Limbo until the

²⁴⁸ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 129, f. 37r-38v.

²⁴⁹ ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio*, 155, f. 283.

advent, and it might be that they were not, and that they have been in the glory of God, [I said it because] it seems to me too great a penance to have to stay many years deprived of the glory of God, and in the dark...”²⁵⁰

When asked about the observation of the Sabbath, she returned to the New Testament:

“I said that I observed and did the Sabbath because Christ in St. Matthew says ‘*non veni solvendum legem sed adimplendum*’, words which he said, I believe, though I’m not certain, when the Jews reprehended Christ who was doing I-don’t-know-what on the day of the Sabbath. It didn’t seem to me to be doing anything against the law of Christ, observing the Sabbath.”²⁵¹

Mundina’s understanding of the Biblical message depended mainly on two passages. The first was a celebrated quotation from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew which Livia Fernandes had also cited in her confession: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”²⁵² Mundina saw this not as an abrogation of Mosaic law, but rather an affirmation of its continuing validity after the coming of Christ. She concluded that it therefore justified and indeed encouraged the practice of anything commanded in the Old Testament, such as prayer in the direction of Jerusalem. In her view, contrary to the teaching of the Church, Christianity comprehended both the old law of the Jews, and the new dispensation of Christ.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Matthew 7:15-16

She then turned to a related question, the fate of the Hebrew patriarchs after the coming of Christ. Catholic theology taught that these figures were initially unable to ascend to Heaven because they lacked the gift of Christ's salvation. They remained in the *Limbus Patrum*, sharing the fate of unbaptized infants, until Jesus released them after his death on the cross. Though they had been righteous, they had sinned, and lacking Christ's intercession, they could not be saved under normal circumstances. This doctrine highlighted the utter impossibility of human salvation without Christ. Such a "penance" was in Mundina's view both contrary to the words of scripture and inconsistent with her understanding of justice. She cited a passage (which she misattributed to one of the books of Esdras) from an apocryphal text known as the *Prayer of Menasseh* which stated that God had not imposed penance on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and she concluded that therefore they could not have been placed in Limbo. They were entirely righteous, and therefore worthy of heaven. She considered it unfair that the patriarchs should remain in Limbo for such a long time, arguing in her second deposition that "it seems to me too great a penance to have to stay many years deprived of the glory of God, and in the dark."²⁵³

These arguments confronted two related problems- what was necessary for human salvation, and where the differences between Judaism and Christianity lie. Mundina's solution is most simply expressed in her understanding of Christ's statement in Matthew. This demonstrated to her that the old law was not entirely incompatible with the new, as the Church taught, and that observance of the Old Law could also contribute to one's salvation. The meaning of her ruminations on the fate of the patriarchs is less obvious. She did not state that this interpretation had led her to change her religious practice, as Jesus' statement had. The unstated message seems to be that salvation was possible under the old law alone, at least before

²⁵³ *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis* (Paris: Mequignon, 1843), 947. The *Oratio Manassae Regis Juda* was included in the edition of the Vulgate approved by the Council of Trent.

the coming of Christ. The effect of these arguments is to render far more ambiguous the line between Jewish and Christian belief and practice.

Mundina's description of her reading of the Bible bears some similarity with that of the Mexican Luis de Carvajal, one of the most well-known judaizing martyrs of the late sixteenth century. Carvajal's autobiography includes several passages where he discusses his understanding of the Bible. In the first, Carvajal describes how he and his brother Baltasar, also a judaizer, attempted to convince their brother Gaspar, a sincere Catholic and a Dominican, that the Bible lent support to their views. After Gaspar insisted that Jesus had abrogated the law, Baltasar replied with the following argument:

“Even in the Gospel it is told that your Crucified One said, “Do not think that I came here to annul the laws of the prophets or their holy and truthful prophecies!” He said that it was easier for the sky or the earth to be missing than a jot or tittle of this holy law.”²⁵⁴

Baltasar cited the same passage of the Bible as Mundina, though she did not cast it in the same polemical terms that he did. Her intent was slightly different, in that she wanted her practices to be considered those of an orthodox Catholic, whereas Luis and Baltasar Carvajal denied the divinity of Christ and his message entirely.

Only one part of Mundina's interpretation of the Bible tends in the direction of overt sympathy with Judaism and a rejection of Catholic doctrine. At the end of her October 27, 1569 deposition, she made brief reference to a passage in Malachi which presages the return of the

²⁵⁴ *The Enlightened. The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo*. ed. Seymour B. Leibman. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1967), 64.

prophet Elijah, saying that it taught her that the Messiah was still yet to come.²⁵⁵ This rather forthright statement of a distinctly Jewish form of messianism lacks the ambiguity of the rest of her depositions; it also presents strong evidence that her religious beliefs took inspiration from the prophetic expectations of Iberian New Christians. Particularly at the end of the fifteenth century, New Christians in Spain and Portugal fell under the sway of charismatic prophets, such as David Reubeni, who preached the coming of the Messiah of the Old Testament, often prophesying the return of Elijah in a similar manner to Mundina.²⁵⁶ Unfortunately, neither of the judges who questioned Mundina seems to have recognized the implications of this aspect of her deposition and did not question her further regarding it.

The extraordinary creativity and experimentation of the Neapolitan *marranos*, as well as their interest in reading the Bible, raise the question of their relationship with religious dissenters of other kinds. There is very little evidence regarding contact between Jews and the evangelical groups of Southern Italy, which had largely been dispersed by the Inquisition in previous years. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of contact between judaizers and heretics in Southern Italy, as well as a reciprocal interest of the judaizers for heterodox Christian doctrine.²⁵⁷

One of the most vivid descriptions comes from the 1571 trial, by the Roman tribunal of the Holy Office, of the doctor Teofilo Panarello. Panarello, an evangelical from Monopoli in Puglia, was a man of erudite interests who recounted how he had discussed religious topics with Giovanni Antonio di Gello, a merchant living in Monopoli who was rumored to be a *marrano*. Their conversations had ranged over a number of recondite topics, including the significance of the first chapter of Genesis for alchemy, and the interpretation of the *kabbalah* by Giovanni Pico

²⁵⁵ Malachi 4:5

²⁵⁶ On millenarian expectation and prophecy among New Christians, see Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel*, *passim* and Elias Lipiner, *O Sapateiro de Trancoso e o Alfaiate de Setubal* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1993).

²⁵⁷ Scaramella, "La campagna contro i giudaizzanti," 370-372.

della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin. He described himself to di Gello as a “Lutheran of the school of Geneva,” a Calvinist, and di Gello, for his part, boasted that his ancestors had only recently converted to Christianity, that he ate meat on Fridays in violation of the commands of the church, and that he did not confess and take communion during Holy Week. The Congregation of the Holy Office sent a copy of Panarello’s testimony to Naples with instructions to investigate di Gello, but it appears that the local authorities did not follow through.²⁵⁸ Even the rough outline of these conversations contained in the deposition gives a sense of the multiple points of common interest between religious dissenters of an evangelical background and crypto-Jews.

Vincenzo Vitale, who was tried by the curia in 1574 for necromancy, gave several depositions which illuminate the conversations that he held with Lavinia Petralbes while the two of them were incarcerated in adjacent cells. A friendship quickly arose, and Lavinia, who had previously managed to corrupt the guards, arranged for Vitale to send and receive letters and books from outside the prison. Lavinia’s son Ugo managed to procure a series of ‘extravagant’ books for Vitale, including a text by Philip Melanchthon, and Lavinia herself expressed an interest in necromancy; when Vitale was about to leave the prison, she asked him to find a familiar spirit for her so that she might know the future. In return she promised him a piece of land from among her properties where he could build a house for himself. In her conversations with Vitale, Lavinia demonstrated herself to be curious about a range of potential approaches to the supernatural- her interests were not limited to crypto-Judaism.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 125*; several letters from Teofilo Panarello to his sister, incarcerated in the prisons of the Venetian Inquisition, are transcribed in Xenia von Tippelskirch, “Lettrici e lettori sospetti davanti al tribunale dell’Inquisizione nella Venezia post-tridentina” *Memoires de l’École Française de Rome-Italie et le Mediterranée* 115 (2003), p. 315-344.

²⁵⁹ ASDN, *Sant’Ufficio*, 226*, 117r-127r.

Conclusion: The Portuguese Question

In 1580, as the Neapolitan *curia*'s prosecution of the local New Christian community moved to a conclusion, an event occurred that would further alter the religious landscape of the Mediterranean and force the Roman Inquisition to change its strategies to confront the problem of apostasy once again. Philip II became king of Portugal, ending a dynastic crisis that had begun with the death of Sebastião at the battle of Alcacer-Kebir in Tunisia three years prior. After his successor, the cardinal-king Henrique died without an heir, both Philip and Antonio, the Prior of Crato, mounted conflicting claims to the throne, and a brief war resulted in Philip's accession to the throne of Portugal. The Habsburgs controlled the country for another sixty years, until the House of Bragança claimed the throne in 1640.²⁶⁰

One of the unintended consequences of this political transformation was a new freedom for Portugal's New Christian population. Prevented from emigrating by royal edict during previous decades, they now streamed across the border into Spain, mixing with the local population of New Christians and provoking a new offensive by the Spanish Inquisition.²⁶¹ The difference between native and foreign New Christians, perhaps never a completely legitimate distinction, became even more difficult to make, as the mobility of this minority increased dramatically. Italian cities, particularly Livorno and Venice, became important destinations for

²⁶⁰ For an overview of the dynastic crisis and its resolution, see Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain* (New Haven: Yale, 1997) 168-177, 242-245.

²⁶¹ Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 20-22. Graizbord estimates that "hundreds and probably thousands of Lusitanian conversos crossed the Portuguese border into Castile, Aragon, and Navarre during the period of Spanish control."

these refugees, particularly those who sought the even greater refuge of Ottoman lands, where Jewish communities operated with a great degree of autonomy.²⁶²

This new situation resulted in an increase of exchange of information between the three national tribunals. While there is some evidence for collaboration in the 1560s and 70s, it does not seem to have become a regular practice until later. During the Venetian trial of the *marrano* Righetto in 1570, the Lisbon tribunal provided crucial information to their Venetian colleagues, but this does not seem to have been a common practice.²⁶³ In 1580, the Inquisition of Lisbon had collected information regarding Yosef Çerralvo, the Ferrarese *mohel* mentioned in chapter 1, but it remains unclear whether this information was sent to Rome, and, if so, whether it played a role in the beginning of the investigation.²⁶⁴ In the wake of the unification of the monarchies, this began to change, and cooperation between the three tribunals became more common. By 1586, Cardinal Savelli wrote to the inquisitor of Venice during the course of the trial of Felipe Nis that “we shall have even greater clarity on the matter from the Portuguese that are in Rome and from the Inquisition of Portugal.”²⁶⁵ At the end of the century, Fernão Goes Loureiro, abbot of São Martinho de Soalhães, wrote a brief in Rome listing the names of Portuguese New Christians bound for Italy and the amounts of money they possessed.²⁶⁶ Exchanges of information of this sort regarded almost exclusively crypto-Jews, who alone among the targets of inquisitorial courts possessed the financial wherewithal and personal contacts to travel great distances to avoid the tribunal.

²⁶² Anthony Molho, “Ebrei e Marrani fra Italia e Levante Ottomano” in *Storia d’Italia, Annali 11: Gli Ebrei in Italia*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 1009-1043.

²⁶³ Brian Pullan, “‘A Ship with Two Rudders’: ‘Righetto Marrano’ and the Inquisition in Venice,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 20 no. 1 (1977), 25-58; *Processi*, vol. 3, contains a complete transcript of the trial of Righetto. See in particular 73-89, 97-124; Marcocci, *I Custodi dell’ortodossia*, 106-110.

²⁶⁴ Baião, *A Inquisição*, 207; Leoni, “Due Personaggi”, 411-412.

²⁶⁵ Zorattini, *Processi*, 7: 123-124.

²⁶⁶ João Lucio de Azevedo, *História dos Cristãos Novos Portugueses* (Lisbon: Classica Editora, 1975), 364.

The beginning of the seventeenth century saw an even greater involvement of Roman authorities in the affairs of the Portuguese New Christians. In 1605, after years of political negotiation and strenuous opposition from the *Consejo de Portugal*, Paul V conceded a third general pardon to the New Christians, in exchange for 1.7 million cruzados to the Spanish crown. Underlying the debate was the still unresolved question of the supremacy of the Congregation of the Holy Office over the other national tribunals of the Inquisition. While the King of Spain continued to be reluctant to concede any authority to the papacy in these matters, the Congregation of the Holy Office took an increased interest in this period, agreeing to hear a wide range of appeals, including that of Gastão de Abrunhosa, a minor noble who appealed to Rome with a critique of the methods of the Portuguese inquisition after his family had been ruined.²⁶⁷

Naples was not a principal destination of the Portuguese refugees, but it nevertheless felt the effects of Portugal's newly open borders and absorption into Spain's orbit. The city remained a fundamental link in the Spanish Imperial system and a major port involved in Mediterranean trade, and Portuguese New Christians arrived there much as they did in other Italian cities, though there was little sign of the religious liberty characteristic of the city during the first half of the sixteenth century. The poet Miguel de Silveira arrived in the city after serving as court mathematician in Madrid in the early years of the seventeenth century. Born in the Portuguese town of Celorico da Beira he migrated eastward after studies in law at both the University of Coimbra and the University of Salamanca. He had been interrogated by the Inquisition during the course of a large trial of judaizers in his hometown that involved a number of his family members and friends, but was not himself charged. Shortly after this trial, he

²⁶⁷ Bruno Feitler, "L'Inquisizione universale e le inquisizioni nazionali: tracce per uno studio dei rapporti tra il Santo Uffizio Romano e i tribunali Iberici" in *Le Inquisizioni Cristiane e gli Ebrei*, 115-121; Giuseppe Marcocci, "Questioni di stile: La protesta romana di Gastão de Abrunhosa," *Studi Storici* 2007, 779-815.

migrated to Naples in the service of the new viceroy Ramiro de Guzmán, the Duke of Medina de las Torres, where he wrote three poetic works before his death in 1639: *El Macabeo* (The Macabee, 1638), *El Sol Vencido* (The Vanquished Sun, 1639) and *Partenope Ovante* (Naples Exultant). *El Macabeo*, an epic retelling of the Maccabean revolt, treated specifically Jewish themes, a fact which has given rise to speculation that Silveira maintained sympathies for the religion of his ancestors.²⁶⁸

After 1582, the *curia* opened scattered proceedings against individuals or small groups accused of judaizing in 1596, 1598, 1611, 1612, 1616, 1624, 1627, and 1629. The last of these suspects was the cleric don Simone de Olivera, who arrived in Naples after having already received a sentence from the Portuguese Inquisition.²⁶⁹ This activity culminated in an important series of trials against the Portuguese *cristão novo* Duarte Vaaz and several of his relatives in the 1650s. The investigation was carried out under the auspices of the *Ministro del Sant'Ufficio*, an inquisitor in all but name who was installed by Rome to make up for the shortcomings of the episcopal tribunal. An anonymous letter sent to the Congregation of the Holy Office describes the prosecution of the Vaaz family as the result of over forty years of unsuccessful inquiry and suggests that Crypto-judaism remained a considerable problem in the entire *Regno di Napoli*, even in the 1650s:

“Since the year 1616 it has been understood that in Naples judaism was taking root and spreading not only among the lowest plebeians, but even in noble houses, but it was not possible to collect enough evidence to undertake the use of proper antidotes to such a pernicious venom, even

²⁶⁸ Benedetto F. Di Bitonto, “Miguel de Silveira: un’autore barocco alla corte vicereale di Napoli” unpublished *tesi di laurea*, Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, 2004. I thank James Nelson Novoa for bringing this text to my attention.

²⁶⁹ Romeo, *Il fondo Sant’Ufficio*, passim.

though the popes and the Congregation of the Holy Office knew of these things. In the infected families it easily took possession of the offspring of both sexes at a tender age, and ... snaked through the cities and provinces, resistant to every remedy that human prudence or laws might prescribe for such evils.”²⁷⁰

The letter continued, mentioning twenty judaizers whose testimony had revealed that the problem spread throughout the Regno, from Naples to the provinces, and was particularly present in the cities of Salerno and Bitonto. The correspondent revealed that the trial against Duarte Vaaz and his brother Emanuele Vaaz, the Duke of San Donato, was a special case; the pope had intended to make an example so “that with the public castigation of Duarte Vaaz and his brother, he might terrify the others that wanted to embrace Judaism.”²⁷¹

There were good reasons why Alexander VII might have set his sights on the Vaaz de Andrada family. After emigrating from Portugal, they had acquired large landholdings and noble status in the Kingdom of Naples during the first half of the seventeenth century under the guidance of Duarte’s great uncle, Michele. The curia had already opened an investigation of the family in 1616, but it ended inconclusively and seems to have had little effect on their wealth or reputation. In the meantime, their acquisition of feudal titles and prestigious offices had continued unabated; at the time of his trial, Duarte Vaaz held the title of Count of Mola and was serving as a judge in the *Vicaria*.²⁷² The family symbolized the social and political ascent of Portuguese New Christians, and though it had managed to keep suspicion about religious

²⁷⁰ ACDF, HH1-a, cc.nn. “Circa violentiam factam Ministro Sancti Offici,” dated April 15, 1661

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Some information on the property of the Vaaz family can be found in Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Il bisogno di eternità. I comportamenti aristocratici a Napoli in età moderna* (Naples:Guida, 1988), 76-78.

practices and ethnic background at bay for over fifty years, the Vaaz were perhaps too visible for their own good, provoking an attack by the Holy Office which otherwise might not have come.

The confiscation of Vaaz's property immediately after his imprisonment added a decisive element of controversy to a proceeding already heavy with political implications, and provoked an agitation against the Holy Office in 1661, which resulted in a series of negotiations between the *seggi*, or representative councils, of the city of Naples, the viceroy, and the officials of the inquisition. In 1662, after more than a year's worth of agitation by the *seggi*, the viceroy repealed the confiscation of Vaaz's property on instruction from Madrid, thus putting an end to a minor crisis for the delegate tribunal of the inquisition in Naples. Vaaz's trial was moved to Rome, where he publicly abjured while wearing the *habitello*. He remained in prison until his death in 1671.²⁷³

A full appreciation of the place of the Vaaz trial in its various historical contexts must await a study of the substantial documentation conserved in the *Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede*, which includes both a manuscript of the trial and correspondence between Rome and Naples. Some material may also remain in the *fondo Sant'Ufficio* of the *Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli*, which is currently being reorganized and inventoried. Though considerably smaller in scale, the Vaaz affair bears a number of similarities to the campaign that preceded it by almost a century. In both cases, a group of wealthy and sophisticated suspects, capable of mobilizing political forces in their favor, faced off against the Holy Office, destabilizing local balances of power and necessitating the intervention of the Congregation of the Holy Office.

²⁷³ Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, 2: 41-51.

The seventeenth century came to a close with one of the most brutal examples of anti-converso violence by Neapolitan ecclesiastical authorities. In 1687, a Spaniard receiving last rites in the hospital of San Giacomo admitted to the priests attending him that he was born into the law of Israel and wanted to die in it as well. Shocked by the revelation and fearing for the sick man's soul, the priests placed his hand on an open flame in an attempt to terrify him into conversion. The *converso* resisted, and "with great constancy suffered martyrdom and died half-burned in his perverse law."²⁷⁴ Even at this relatively late date, when the inquisitorial system in Italy had entered its decline, there was still a lively fear of apostasy in Naples.

Yet, despite the continuation of inquisitorial activity against isolated incidents of crypto-Judaism and even the dramatic clashes provoked by the Vaaz trial, the Holy Office in Naples never faced anything approaching the scale of the campaign against the *natione catalana* ever again. The exodus of New Christians from Portugal touched Naples only peripherally; they were far more attracted to the burgeoning *porto franco* of Livorno, which became a city in 1606 and continued to attract Jews and New Christians throughout the following century and to Venice, their perennial place of refuge.

²⁷⁴ Nicola Ferorelli, *Gli Ebrei nell'Italia Meridionale. Dall'età romana al secolo XVIII* (Torino, 1915), 243.

Appendix: Documents from the trials of the Neapolitan judaizers

The source material for this study comes from primarily three different types of documentation. The first and most important are the series of trial records containing verbal testimony and official decrees, including sentences, conserved in the fondo *Sant'Ufficio* of the *Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli*. These documents contain not only very vivid testimony regarding the social background and religious practices of the accused judaizers, but are also essential for establishing an accurate chronology of an extremely lengthy and complex campaign. This task was made even more complicated by both the heavy damage that the manuscripts have sustained over the centuries, but also by the disorganized state of the manuscript record. In the bound fascicles containing the trial records, many depositions appear out of order, and the order of the documents does not directly follow the chronological sequence of the depositions. This circumstance is probably due not only to the unusual length and complexity of the campaign itself, but also to the disorganization of the Neapolitan *curia*.

Two series of documentation from the central archive of the Roman Inquisition provide an essential complement to these records. The first is the series of decrees of the Congregation of the Holy Office, a precise and nearly complete record of every major decision taken by the cardinal inquisitors from the 1550s until the eighteenth century. These decrees record the decisions of the congregation on the trials, often preserving the opinions of the clerics and jurists who served the cardinal inquisitors. Alongside the *decreta*, the written correspondence from the archbishop of Naples and his assistants to Cardinal Scipione Rebiba, and after his death, Cardinal Giacomo Savelli, provides evidence of an extremely active exchange of information between Naples and Rome.

In the following pages, several of the most important documents, chosen either for the richness of their descriptive power or for their importance to understanding the trials, have been transcribed. The appendix is divided into two sections, the first containing material from the trial records, the second containing exemplary pieces of correspondence. I have opted not to include any of the *Decreta Sancti Officii*; despite their importance to my research, they are extremely brief and laconic pieces of documentation the contents of which can be adequately appreciated from the text of the dissertation alone.

In addition to the letters from the central archive transcribed here, several letters relating to the trials taken from various pieces of archival material in ASDN are available in Pierroberto Scaramella, ed. *Le lettere della Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio ai tribunali di fede di Napoli* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2002).

In preparing these documents, I have followed modern punctuation and undone abbreviated words and phrases. Hypothetical words and phrases have been placed in brackets, while ellipses mark lacunae in the text. I have modernized the accents and punctuation.

I. Testimony

1. Mundina Beltrana's second deposition (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 129, f. 37r-38v)

Die xxvii eiusdem mensis octobris 1569 Neapoli in monasterio Sancte Marie Consolationis et coram reverendo domino generale locumtenente

Constitutata Mundina Beltrana principalis quo ad se et testis quo ad alios et prima instantia ... pluribus charitativis monitionibus eidem ut dicat veritatem ... sue conscientie et quod manifestet complices, dixit ad interrogationem factam: io dico la verita io ho osservato lo sabbato, non in dispregio de cristo, ma credendomi de far bene perche Dio lo comanda perch Dio lo comandava alla lege vecchia, et per devotione lo ho fatto, et non per peccare. Et io me ne son confessata, et dicto che lo faceva per devotione, ma non dico che lo osservava perche faceva il rito de giudeo, ma confesso mo liberamente che ho fatto errore perche me lo conosco, et lo signor vicario me ha aperto la mente, et li occhi et factome conoscere la verita, et mi è stata offuscata la mente che non sapeva che fare. Et de più io ho havuto un sentimento dela scrittura nova quando se legge a Matteo o a Luca, *non veni solvendum legem, sed adimplendum*, et per questa ragione et authorità io ho pigliato qualche cosa dela lege vecchia, et osservato li sabbati, et ricordandomi che salomone havendo facto lo tempio verso oriente disse ... tutti quelli li quali farano oratione verso questa casa santa che tutti li esaudischi, sapendo io che la casa santa sta verso lo oriente, et per questa ragione voltava li occhi verso detta parte del oriente, et se ho fatto errore me ne emendo. Et mi ricordo di più che legendo lo libro de Esdra, dove si legge ... *non imposuit penitentiam Abramo, Isaac, et Jacob, et illis q. sibi non peccaverunt* per il che io argomentava fra me stessa, et una volta con Isabella mia nepote morta, se Idio non dia penitentia alli predetti come è vero che Cristo li levò dal limbo, et ebbero penitentia tanti anni primi de la gloria de Dio. Et de questo ho vaccillato tanto tempo et lo ho dicto allo confessore, et mi ricordo de più che se in Malechia profeta o in altro se legge, Io mandarò, seu se levarano i servi miei, et ve li mandaro Helias un altra volta. Et io diceva et congeturava che avesse da venire lo giorno del Judicio, il quale Helia non si trova de chi è figlio, nè manco morse, et de più Io ho osservato che la sera della festa passata sia del giorno venturo, et trapanava fusa, et facea altri exercicij de casa.

Interrogata ut dicat veritatem sub pena confessi criminis et delicti, chi altri sonno stati di questo rito, et legge che manifesta la verita per servitio de Dio, dixit: io per me non mi ricordo nessuna, et sopra questo ci farrò pensieri per qualche dì, et se mi ricordo alcuno lo dico, per levarme la scomonica da sopra. Et ad opportunam domini interrogationem, dixit: io mai ho magnato li azzimi la settimana santa, ne li conosco, si bene ho fatto pastizzi de pesce compressi di settimana santa et la pasca.

Interrogata come passa il fatto de libro che teneva in la soa sacca quella sera che fu cercata la casa de Lavinia Petralbes, dixit: La verita è questa che non voglio negarla, che io havea nascosto il detto libro nela mia sacca, quando quelli canonici vennero a far la cerca nela mia camera per [portarlo] a Vostra Signoria, perché bene vi conosceva, et essendo circa una hora de nocte Lavinia et Virginia matre et figlia con pregarme et exortarme, et forzarme, si come già fecero che io loro desse il detto libro, cossi io lo consignai alla detta lavinia, et se lo pigliò, et non so che ne habbia fatto, et de più a quella hora in quella forza, io li dissi: Non me lo brusciar, tenetelo, che

non voglio che si perde, et essa Lavinia mi disse che non avesse pagura, et poi da Vostra Signoria ho inteso per detto dele citelle che fu bruciato.

Interrogata sub eisdem penis quod dicat che cosa era in detto libro, et se era scritto a mano, volgar o latino, o in hebreo, spagnolo, o italiano, dixit: Era il salmista breviato de San Geronimo et piu salmi di Davit et ce era latino, et signor Pirro Antonio Lectierj me lo scrisse. Et ostenso sibi libro reperso in domo lavinie, [et quo] dicta lavinia tenebat, et si consimile fuisset in eodem suo libro, et per eam viso, dixit: Non ce era oratione nessuna consimile a questo libro, et avante che messer Pirro Antonio Lectierj ho havuto dicto libro, et rare volte lo leggeva, et lo fici legar da messer Pirro Antonio Lectierj medesimo et non da altro. Et lo hebbe dicto Pirro Antonio dicto libro da Gasparre de Lectierj suo nepote carnale, et me disse che piu non hebbe de detti libri et che ne dispensò a più persone. Et ad opportunam interrogationem dixit: io non ho havuto detto libro per sospetto, et per questo desiderava che fosse stato visto da Vostra Signoria et che non fosse perso, acciò fosse visto se era bono o tristo. Et dicente domino, se è la verita, se quando essa constituta lo legeva, et veneano forastieri che lei lo nascondeva in quello miglior modo che poteva, dixit: io non me ne ricordo, e potria esser questo. Et ... sibi diceret de modo orandi, an recte, vel sedens, seu prona genuflecta, lingens terram orasset quotiens, et a quanto tempore citra dixit: Io ho orato alla assettata per esser inferma, et una o due volte ho orato cola bocca in terra sola la avemaria. Et dicente domino si carnes porcinas nunquam comederit, dixit. Io ho magnato sopresate, presutto, ma lardo non ne posso magnar perche mi fa danno.

Interrogata ... sub pena ignis, et relapsi quod dicat veritatem, dixit: io decesette anni sonno che non ho havuto pratica stretta con Portia Bruno, benche fosse mia alleva et nepote, et non saccio se è bona o trista, ne tampoco ho inteso dire se si delectava di queste cose judaiche.

Interrogata sub eisdem penis et censuris ut dicat veritatem, si have inteso che virginia figlia de lavinia have osservato il sabato à modo deli hebrej, et da quanto tempo dixit: io non lo saccio, ne mai lo ho inteso, perche da augusto in qua solo conosco la Virginia Fonseca.

Et ... sibi diceret per che causa, poichè essa Virginia non sequita lo stile della matre, venne quella sera del vernadi a pigliar il suo libro dala sacca, dixit: potria esser, et non potria esser, io non so perche ce venne, forse ce venne per timore della matre.

Subdens ex se dixit: Ben vi prego, che questo sia secreto con tutti, perche ho dicto la verita, la quale non dissi l'altro hieri, ma perche son cristiana et voglio morire da cristiana, et vorria più presto un palmo de vergogna, che un tarpiso de danno all'anima.

Et propter hore tarditatem dominus locumtenens dimisit examen, animo ipsam totiens quotiens fuit opportunus prorogandi...

io Mundina Beltrana

2. Giovanni da Pisa, regarding the books found in Lavinia Petralbes' house (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 129, f. 182r)

Die xxi mensis januarij 1570 Neapoli

Magnificus Joannes de Pisis Pisanus ... Neapoli comorans ad Montecalvario etatis annorum triginta sex incirca ut dixit introductus in camera Reverendi Pietro Dusina generalis locumtenentis per quem delato sibi juramento de veritate dicenda super recognitione [infrascripti] libri

Et primo ostenso eidem testi quodam libro coperto pelle rubea manuscripto incipiente: Verba mea auribus percipe et finiente exaltabo te Domine, et per ipsum bene viso et reviso atque lecto prout et asseruit diebus elapsis coram reverendissimo domino archiepiscopo neapolitano dictum librum [alias] vidisse et perlegisse dixit: Questo libro io come pratico perche prima son stato ebreo so ch'è la copia del ufficio delle orationi che usano gli ebrei spagnoli in tutte le loro feste et giornalmente ancora, quale libro si dimostra apertamente essere stato translato de verbo ad verbum da uno officio seu libro ebraico. In questo libro che si vede a me monstrato scripto a mano, in lingua spagniola, et gia ci appaeno, et si vedono alcune orationi seu salmi in latino et volgare.

Et sic dominus mandavit eidem testi declarari si inter fideles cristianos liber huiusmodi potest detineri, an sit prohibitus, qui respondens dixit:

Io credo che per essere volgare sia prohibito fra fideli cristiani atteso se dimostra che quello o quella apresso del quale si è ritrovato se n'habbia servito.

Io Joannes de Pisis ut supra ho detto et recognoscuto il detto libro como di sopra si contiene mano propria me suscrissi

P. Tassus

3. Revising false testimony: Portia Bruno's first deposition before Pietro Dusina (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 1r-2v)

Die nono mensis Januarij 1571 Neapoli in monasterio monialium Sancte Marie Consolationis coram Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Archiepiscopo neapolitano ... Magnifici et Reverendi Domini Petri Dusini utroque juris doctoris ... assistentibusque Illustrissimo Domino Fernando Carrafa et Domino Andrea de Sarno canonico neapolitano

Constituta coram prefato illustrissimo domino Portia Brunno alias Beltranna etatis annorum triginta sex annorum in circa ut dixit. medio suo iuramento [juravit] tactis scripturis de veritate dicenda super infrascriptos ... per eundem dominum Petrum

Interrogata an aliquid sibi occurrat addere in depositionibus suis alias factis

Respondit: io non ho da giunger altro se non che quello che ho ditto, l'ho ditto piu per pagura, che fosse verità perché la abbadessa sore Antonia che allora mi diceva ogni hora perche io dormiva in soa camera: Figlia mia si tu non dici quello che vole lo vicario, te porterano a bruscian al mercato, et io diceva: Perché, che ho fatto, et le sudette monache [foro] tutte presenti quando haveva giurato sopra del calice, che come io diceva tutto quello che essa voleva, che subito me ne haveria mandato via, et se no che me haveria brusciata viva, et sore Antonia abbatesa ... che lo vicario volea pigliare quattro carcerate et voleva portare tutte le monache et voleva portarle al mercato a veder lo bruscian che volea far de noi. Et io per questo dissi quello che ho detto che sempre ho fatto officio di bona cristiana et confessato et comunicato come ogni bona cristiana, et quando me portorno al arcivescovado che mi dettero la corda mi dicevano di', et io diceva: Non so che dir, et quando fui llà di sopra mi scesero senza che io dicessi scenditimi che io non parlava, et mi buttorno acqua in faccia quando io tornai a saglire battero la corda, et lo vicario mi tirò per le ... dela gonella ancora et dissero di', io dissi: Non so che dir ... signora Lavinia da dentro de una camera, et disse Portia di', et io dissi: Non so che dir et essa mi disse: Dicitu tutto quello che voleno loro, perché mi hanno detto che hanno portato le legne al mercato per brusciarse domano matino, et che questo lo havea inteso essa signora Lavinia dal signor Cesar Cangiano si come essa signora Lavinia mi disse, et io dissi: Che voliti che dica, io non so che dir, dicitu voi per me, che Io non so che dire, disse lo Cangiano: Dicitu voi, et io dissi che voglio dir, mi disse, di' che sei una giodea, et io dissi: giodea sia, scinditimi per amore de Dio non più, et io dico che allora non dissi niente altro se non che intrai in una camera, et lo di seguente mi dissero quello che hai ditto alla corda é la verità, io dissi de si per pagura de haver pegio.

Interrogata [quod] contra illa particulariter [pretenderetur]

Respondit: Quelli che mi domandorno foro lo signor Cesar Cangiano, et lo signor Oracio Galluccio, et non mi domandorno altro solo che se io era una giodea, et io dissi scenditimi per lo amore de dio, che so giodea, et la corte pretendeva che io havessi portata non so che azzimi alla signora Lavinia Petralbes de Fonseca.

Interrogata quid sint azzimi, et quomodo conficiantur

Respondit: io non so che cosa siano, ne mai tal cosa ho visto, con tutto che dissi de sì, et lo dissi per timore dela corda.

Et Interim interrogata si quid aliud ... pretenderit ipsum preter de portatione azzimorum domine lavinie et monita benigne quod dicat veritatem super hoc, q.m veritas apparet.

Respondit: niente altro pretendeva, nè fui altrimenti examinata per altro che di questo.

Et interrogata quod reddat [rationem] vite sue à pueritia, ex quibus parentibus orta sit, ubi nata, ubi educata, quas conversationes habuerit et cuius ... sit.

Respondit: Mio patre fu Gianotto Beltrano di Napoli et era gentilhommo spagnolo e di razza spagnolo, et vivea d'intrata, et stava in Napoli et era in Napoli nato, et mia matre si chiamò

Polita Beltrana, et erano nati cristiani. Io nacqui in Napoli dali presenti et fui baptizzata come tutti li cristiani et fui cresimata che mi ricordo era da nove anni, et son stata allevata a Santo Nastase. Poi morse mio patre ... che me havessero pigliata dalla notriccia, et andai in poter de Mundina Beltrana de tre anni incirca, et in casa de Mundina stetti insino che mi accasai, et in casa soa mi maritai, et llà si fecero le nozze, alli decesette de ottobre passato fecero quindici anni che mi accasai con Benedetto Bondo che è mercante in banchi de età di anni sessantacinque, et con esso son stata continuamente come bon marito, et moglie.

Interrogata an litteras didicerit, vel aliqua alia arte soleat mulieres ediscere et a quibus, et cum quibus solita sit conversarij.

Respondit: io non ho imparato a leger perché non ne ho havuto intelletto, con tutto che mi ci fosse posta più volte, et ad interrogationem dixit: Mundina è stata quella che me volea insegnare cio è ... non ho possuto imparare altro che lo paternoster

Et interrogata quare Mundina domui sue ... [et si sepe domo exiret] ...cum aliis esset, et cum quibus, et in domo prefate mundine ...

Respondit: io non usceva mai da casa, et mia cia predetta mi tenea in casa come soa nepote, et non usceva mai se non quando andavamo a messa et a confessare, et comunicare, et la mundina è donna cossi solitaria et anco per esser zoppa, non visitava nessuna, ne tampoco era visitata.

Interrogata quod dicat quibus confitebatur sua peccata, postquam dixerit solita fuisse singulis annis confiteri.

Respondit: Quando io era citella à santo Joanne maggiore era un prete che mi confessava, et poiche son stata maritata mi son confessata à un frate di Santa Maria dela Nova chiamato frate Gabriele, et mi solea confessare due volte lo anno, la Pasca, et lo Natale, et da quattro anni in qua mi sonno confessata ad prete ... in Santo Jacobo delli Spagnoli

Interrogata an sciat orationem dominicalem, orationem seu salutationem angelicam, et credo, et alia.

Respondit: Signor sì, et recitavit bene orationem dominicalem, et salutationem angelicam, ... credo, et salve regina non bene recitavit, et dixit nescit aliquem salmum

Interrogata ubi sit eius...

Respondit: è alla cella nostra, dove lavora, et sta per la medesima causa perche stamo tutte.

Interrogata quod exprimat causam per quam manet ibi.

Respondit. perché el vicario ce hà portato.

Interrogata an cognoscat aliquas personas suspectas de heresi, vel de observatione alicuius ritus contra fidem catholicam, vel saltem nominare intellexerit.

Respondit. Io non conosco, né inteso nominare persona nessuna, se non quelle che [lo stesso] vicario ha nominate qua, quale sonno, la signora Lavinia, et la signora Mundina

Quibus habitis, fuit dimissum examen animo [continuandi] ... iniuncto ei silentio et quod se subscribat, vel si scribere nescit, faciat signum crucis

† signum crucis p.e portie scribere nescientis ut dixit

4. Francisco Cartiglia (ASDN, Sant'Ufficio 155, f. 208r-212v)

Die nono februarij 1571 Neapoli in archiepiscopali palatio in aula studii Reverendi Domini Petri Dusine U.J.D. Illustrissimi Domini Archiepiscopi Neapolitani in spiritualibus locumtenentis et coram reverendo Petro Dusina... Reverendo Domino Andrea Sarno canonico neapolitano.

Constitutus et vocatus Magnificus Franciscus Cartiglia etatis annorum quatragerinta incirca ut dixit et videtur ... dice habito vicino Monte Calvario, comparuit coram prefato domino Petro ...

Interrogatus an sciat causam sue vocationis, vel saltim illam presumit.

Respondit: io vengo all'ubidienza.

Interrogatus an putat causam pro qua fuit vocatus.

Respondit: io credo siano per questi romori che corrono.

Interrogatus quod sunt isti rumores.

Respondit: per questi segni che si vedono per napoli di queste genti che son chiamate qui.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: molti credo siano chiamati per principali, et molti per testimonij.

Interrogatus ex qua causa isti vocantur, et quod dicat qui uti testes, et qui uti principales vocentur.

Respondit: io non so la causa dell'altri che si imputa a quelli ... si bene dela causa che si imputa a me.

Interrogatus quod dicat quid sibi imputet.

Respondit: di quello che mi domandara vostra signoria, io responderò.

Interrogatus si scit de quo imputatur, vel presumit.

Respondit: io non penso di essere imputato che di un mio scritto che fici l'anno passato del quale hebbi l'absolutione.

Interrogatus quod dicat quid in dicto scripto continetur.

Respondit: io non mi posso ricordar bene di quello che se contene, ma se me monstrarete quel scritto, me ne ricardò.

Interrogatus quod [saltem] recenseat ...

Respondit: Havea circa vinti dui in vinti tre anni, che ritrovandome con la magnifica Violante Cartiglia seu Vitale in casa de socera, et con la detta mia socera nel mese de settembre, mi diedero ... ovvero per dire meglio mi dissero che io dovesse degiunare, essendo questa cosa la quale che giovava all'anima mia, però lo giorno che fusse non me ne ricordo... Et non bene me ricordo se fusse avante, o poi, mi diedero un boccone di pane, el quale dovesse mangiare, et veramente quello havendo me lo posi in bocca per mangiarlo, me vado ricordando che intanto detto pane ... parendome cosa insipida et non di bon gusto, però questo non fu, pensandome far cosa quale io non dovesse, nè contra la fede, et non mi ricordo de altro che di questo.

Interrogatus qua intentione scriptum suum huiusmodi porrexerit.

Respondit: lo diedi per maggior mio disgravio, perche sentendo questi romori di persone che si pigliavano, andai dal patre Boncore, et li dissi questo, et mi disse che facesse questo mio scritto, subiungens: non so niente di questa vita ne superstitione.

Et monitus quod dicat veritatem super interrogatoriis.

Respondit: del tempo che mangiai quel pane io me confessai ad un padre di san luise, el quale in lo discorso dela confessione, mi dimandò se havea degiunato le quattro tempora, et le vigilie comandate dala santa chiesa, li dissi che havea degiunato, quelli giorni che havea possuto degiunare, et che de più havea degiunato nel mese di settembre, onde volendo intendere che digiuno era questo di settembre, io li raccontai tutto sudeto al che me respose che io giudicando questo essere in salvatione dell'anima mia, et esser cosa bona, che questo non era cossì, ma che erano superstitioni quale io non le dovessi fare più, et cossì mi diede la mia assolutione talmente che io raccordandome di questo in detto tempo ne fui dal predetto reverendo padre bonocore per veder quello che li occorreva, et cossì li parse che Io per maggior mio disgravio l'havebbe notificato al reverendissimo patre vicario con un mio scritto.

Interrogatus ... se confessus est hos errores seu superstitiones, ut in foro conscientie tantum absolveret, vel timore pene ... , et qua intentione hoc dixit.

Respondit: io non pensava haver fatto mal nessuno.

Et interrogatus si putabat bene fecisse...

Respondit: io lo fici pensando haver piu tosto meritato, havendo fatto quel di più che l'ecclesia non havea comandato.

Et ei dicto...

Respondit: havendo al confessore prima ditto che questa cosa non era ben fatto, io per mio disgravio volsi confessarmelo di novo.

Interrogatus quod dicat qua die mensis septembris jeunavit quoque ritu.

Respondit: io mangiai quel di che degiunai la sera al tardo, ma non mi ricordo il di preciso del degiuno.

Interrogatus an ceteri cristiani ita soliti essent ieiunare, et qua die intellexerit ab aliis huiusmodi jeunium solitum esse fieri.

Respondit: io non lo so perche non ne dimandai nessuno di queste cose, se no che lo dissi al mio confessore al tempo della mia confessione.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: io credo che non lo facessero altre persone, eccetto che quelle persone che lo hanno ditto che lo facesse, et si ci trovò mia moglie presente, subiungens, mai ho inteso de che dj di settembre si facesse.

Interrogatus quibus verbis usa est illa violantes persuadendo sibi dictum jeunium et qua intentione ipsa fecerit.

Respondit: La Violante detta, in compagnia de Maria mi disse che facesse quel degiuno che saria stato salvatione dell'anima mia, et io haveria havuto bene.

Interrogatus si ei dixerit a quo huiusmodi jeunium fuisse institutum, et qui servare soliti essent huiusmodi jeunium, quia significaret.

Respondit: Non mi disse altrimenti da chi fosse instituto, et che era salvatione dell'anima mia, et che altri lo facevano, et me prometteva anco vita longa.

Interrogatus qui alii [servent] dictum jeunium, et quos alios nominasset servare dictum jeunium.

Respondit: Non mi diceva, et nominava le persone per expresso.

Interrogatus quid ipse responderit, et qua intentione consenserit huiusmodi jeunio.

Respondit: Quando lei mi propose questo, io resposi di gratia, et cossi lo fici con questa intentione d'havere bene.

Interrogatus an sciebat dictum jeiunium fuisse institutum ab ecclesia vel ab alio, et a quo.

Respondit: io voglio dire la verità, non sapeva che fosse istituito da la chiesa, et non pensai di far altro che di quello che detta dona mi disse

Interrogatus an publice jeiunaverit, et si alicui dixerit se jeiunasse.

Respondit: io non so si degiunasse pubblicamente, ne lo dissi a nessuna persona.

Interrogatus cuius qualitatis esset ille panis qui comedit, a quo confectus fuit, nec non ei traditus et quibus presentibus.

Respondit: Mi par di ricordar che quel pane era bianco, et era come fosse mezza palma de mano, et so che mi parse insipito, non che mi paresse amaro, et mi parve che fosse pane straordinario, senza crescita et pane azzimo. Et me lo diedi la Violante presente Maria, ma non so se allora se ci trovasse presente mia moglie, la quale so che lei ancora ne hebbi, et quando la Violante me diede quello pane mi disse mangia questo che sara salvatione dell'anima tua, et haverai prosperita. Et allora che me lo diede credo che non erano in tavola, si ben non me lo ricordo.

Interrogatus de quo tempore et qua parte anni dictum panem azzimum habuerit et comederit et qua intentione [fuisset] ei datum et qua intentione ipse ...

Respondit: non mi ricordo bene il tempo ne di che parte dell'anno ne posso saper de che intentione me lo diede, et io lo pigliai et mangiai con intentione de haver bene, et di salvare l'anima mia, et non per infedeltà alcuna.

Interrogatus quomodo sciat quod eius uxor comederit de huiusmodi pane et quociens.

Respondit: io so che di quello medesimo tempo che ne fu dato a me, ne fu dato anco [in] avante o dappoi dale medesime donne a mia moglie et se io dico la verità contra di me devo dire la verita contra de altri, postea dixit: Non scriveti contra di me, ma dite che se dico la verità per me la dico anco per altri.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Parve a me veramente che lei se lo mangiasse, è ben vero che lei mi disse, che li parse ancora insipido.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Non ne mangiai altre volte, se non allora, dal che mi dispiace, et duole.

... habuerit de huiusmodi comestione azzimorum cum eius uxore ...

Respondit: Allora che io lo mangiai, et che me ne confessai, et che lo confessore me ne riprese, io lo dissi a mia moglie che lo confessore me havea ditto che quello degiuno de settembre, et quel pane, era cosa mala che se ne guardasse, et lei mi rispose che non l'avesse fatto altrimenti.

Interrogatus quare confessus est [propter] ei confessori has cerimonias, et an confessor [illum] absolverit ...

Respondit: Mi confessai per mio confessore ordinario et li dissi di quello degiuno de settembre, che non solo havea fatto li degiuni de la ecclesia ma questo de più, pensando meritare de più, et del pane semelmente che dicevano che quello fosse astinentia et lo confessore me absolve, perche havea fatto ignoratamente senza infedeltà.

Interrogatus quis ei dixerit ut comederet panem azzimum fiet abstinentia.

Respondit: Me lo disse quella vecchia che mangiando detto pane facea abstinentia, et non posso indicar altro che per lo tristo gusto.

Interrogatus si per una vice putabat ... abstinentia vel cogitaret sepe comedere.

Respondit: Io non pensai de far abstinentia con mangiar una volta sola, et se il confessore non me ne avesse ripreso, ne haveria mangiato li altri anni ancora, non pensando far peccato alcuno de infedeltà.

Et ei dicto quod animadvertat ad contrarietatem ... dixerit se revelasse confessori comestionem azzimi tamquam fecisse abstinentia, et postea dicat contrarium.

Respondit: Io pensavo esser abstinentia a mangiarlo più volte, et havendo io questa intentione di mangiarne più volte ho ditto de esserme confessata come de abstinentia fatta, quando lo confessore non me ne avesse proibito.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Non mi ricordo veramente del nome del confessore.

Interrogatus si sermonem habuit cum eius uxore de depositionibus alias factis.

Respondit: Lei ha detto a me de haver fatto depositione et io li ho detti anco haverla fatta io, ma in particular non havemo ragionato molto.

Interrogatus an sciebat casum absolutionis huiusmodi fuisse reservatum sedi apostolice.

Respondit: Signor no, ne sapevo manco che questo fusse peccato, anzi [io] credeva che fosse cosa bona.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Mi disse solamente, che era peccato, et che nol facesse più né che fusse peccato di religione, né mai ho ... saputo che questo fusse peccato di religione.

Interrogatus cuius etatis esset tempore quo promissa fecit, et an unq. cum aliqua persona ...

Respondit: Potea haver da quattordici in quindici anni, et non mi ricordo con chi ne possa haver parlato.

Interrogatus ut dicat si habeat aliquos inimicos, et quos.

Respondit: Ho per inimici tutta la casa Leone, la Sibilìa, casa Pellegrina, casa Cappelli, Conca, Savenales, Alexandro et la moglie Severina, et casa Catalana, perche son tutti una ceppa, et con questa gente io non mi confaceva, la inimicicia che ho con li Leoni per una lite che hebbi con loro, de Alexandro ... per denari che dovea haver da lui, con li Pellegrini perche son parenti de li Leoni, con la Sibilìa perche è parente semelmente, et cia de Jacobo Leone per quanto dicono, et li Pellegrini son parenti restretti de la moglie del detto Jacobo et cossi li Cappelli, et lo Savenales, et mi remetto de più à quelli che havessero con me mala voluntà.

Interrogatus cur appellavit istas gentes.

Respondit: Perché son tutti parenti et gente catalana, che cossì publicamente et comonemente si dicono esser catalani.

Interrogatus quod reddat [rationem] vite sue a pueritia.

Respondit: Mio patre si domandò Gaspare Cartiglia, et mio avo Francisco Cartiglia, ... quali intendo siano de Catalogna si ben mio patre credo nascesse in Francia, la matre mia fu Dianora de Antonia [andria] che intesi era di Francia ... de la quale credo venessero da Catalogna, la causa perche li parenti partessero da Catalogna et Francia per venire in Napoli non la so, ma debbe esser per loro negotij ordinarij et io nacqui in Francia, in Avignone, et portato in Venetia, et da Venetia in Napoli che potea haver cinque anni et credo sia stato baptizzato, et crismato et fui allevato da mia matre fino a cinque annj et stetti in Venetia finchè mio patre morì, et venni in Napoli et ho atteso a mercantie de ogli, grano, et altre cose, et imparato de leger et scrivere, et non ho letto libri Catalani et non mi ricordo lo mastro da chi imparasse, et fù in Napoli alla scola che stava vicino la Sellaria, che lo mastro era un tal di Motula se non mi ricordo male. Et quando fui di età negociai mercantie, poi pigliai moglie havera da vintj dui in vinti tre anni incirca che allora stava alla Sellaria alle case che hogi sonno di messer Sigismondo de Pietro dove alloggiavi con mio socero.

Interrogatus qui essent soliti in eius domo cum eo habitari, et conversari.

Respondit: Ce habitava in la medesima casa Rafaele Raguante mio socero, et Maria Cartiglia mia socera, et Violante Vitale stava all'appartamento di sopra, et nessuno altro ce stava, et ci conversava come parenti stretti li signori Geronimo et Pietro Beltrano, ce praticava ancora Giovan Paulo, et filio Cesar Ramo, et si visitavano le donne.

Interrogatus quod nominet eius consanguineos, et affines.

Respondit: Li mei parenti sonno che ho di sopra nominati et del casato mio non credo haver altri parenti, mia socera mi era parente la matre del signor Geronimo et Pietro Beltrani, chiamata la signora Francisca Cartiglia, la signora Isabella Cartigliana, la signora Dianora Catalana, Violante Vitale, la signora Sabella Reguante, la signora Laudomia Raguante, la Severina Catalana, Beatrice, et Livia Fernandes, Diana, et Livia Reguante mi sonno parenti.

Interrogatus si habeat aliquos suspectos de hebraismo vel aliis pro suspectis intellexerit.

Respondit: De che si sonno suscitati questi romori, io son stato de opinione, che molte de queste persone, siano sospette de queste superstitioni che correno.

Interrogatus quod declaret que superstitiones sunt iste.

Respondit: Io non so, ne le posso dechiarare.

Et ...

Respondit: Io hebbi per sospette molte persone che io scrissi, in quello mio scritto, tra l'altre Lavinia Petralbes, la Portia Bruno, la Severna Catalana, alcune de queste Pellegrine.

Interrogatus quod dicat unde sit orta causa suspicionis.

Respondit: Dala presa mi è nata, et perche a me me è venuta questa fantasia che queste habbiano qualche imperfessione, si bene non so altro perche non ho trattato con loro.

Interrogatus quod dicat an Violantes et Maria supradicte sibi fuerunt suspecte per Judaizantes vel saltem aliquando dubitaret.

Respondit: Havendome dato quel pane azzimo, hagio havuto sospetto che in loro non ci fosse quella bontà che si conviene, pero che non ci fosse cosa contra la fede.

Interrogatus a quanto tempore ... habuerit hac suspectu.

Respondit: da che io me confessai la prima volta, che lo confessore mi disse, che non possea esser cosa bona.

Interrogatus quas famulas habuit a decem annis citra et de presenti habet.

Respondit: Io ho havuto una schiava si chiama Antonia quale è in casa mia, che c'è stata da vinti anni, et ho tenuto donna di compagne salariate che sono andate et venute che non mi ricordo loro nomi, tenni una schiavona se chiamava chiara, che sene andò in li anni passati che pono esser da dece anni, et hogi non tengo altre serve che la detta antonia schiava negra.

Quibusque habitis stante tarditate hore dominus promotor dimisit prosecutionem examinis animo continuando et iniuncto ei silentio, et quod se subscribat.

Et antequam se subscriberet, dixit : Legitimi il mio examine

Et ei lecto de verbo ad verbum, dixit: al [interrogatorio] fattomi che dice una contrarietà che io ho risposto come appare per la mia risposta mi occorre dicere, che saria abstinencia quando io l'havesse mangiato piu volte.

Francisco Cartiglia o deposto il soprascritto.

Et sic dominus mandavit ipsum poni in vinculis caute, prout positus fuit.

5. Diego Gil (ASDN, Sant'Ufficio 155, f. 223r-v)

Die xiii februarij 1571 Neapolis in archiepiscopali palatio in aula cubiculari Reverendi Domini Petri Dusine U.J.D. Illustrissimi Domini Archiepiscopi Neapolitani generalis locumtenentis in spiritualibus, et coram prefato Reverendo Domino Petro.

Constitutus Magnus Didacus Gil Hispanus, etatis annorum sexaginta incirca ut dixit et [videt] ... aspectu sue persone habita vicino monte calvario et vicino le case del [Ecc.te] [p] Santa Croce principalis quo ad se et testis quo ad alios medio juramento tactis per eum scripturis. Interrogatus et examinatus super e.d. R.d. Petrum.

Interrogatus quomodo dicat, q. cu. dicer. pre. Lucretia Vaglies eius uxore.

Respondit: Io dico che non credo che mia moglie habia errato, et sarà stata accusata da qualche inimico, et io tengo che mi sia inimico Francisco Cartiglia, perché tali come lui, non ne tengo conto, perché mi paresse hombre de mala vita.

Interrogatus in quo genere male vite habet eiusdem franciscum.

Respondit: Io non ho mai trattato cosa nessuna con lui, et lui ha cercato trattare con meco, et io non ho voluto, subiungens: Io ho per inimico Gasparre Vignes per essere di quella casta giudea.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Casta giudea io tengo di quella razza giudea, et intendo che lui è disceso da giudei, subiungens: Ho per inimica Geronima Cruiglies moglie di Gaspar Vignes, perche sape mas che las serpientes, et chiere saver ogni cosas, et tengo per inimicos totos quantos los giudios sian al mondo, et totos mi chieren males, pera che los deshonoron per giudios, et mi charen males totos, et tan biene los reguantes.

Interrogatus quos reputat esse judeos.

Respondit: Io tengo per giudei tutti quelli che discendono da giudei, ancor che siano fatti cristiani, quantonca alcuno ne sia homo da bene, et di razza di giudei, sonno li Pellegrini perche sonno discesi da giudei, et cossì è anco disceso Francisco Cartiglia, et quando io era pagatore de soldati spagnoli sempre questi Pellegrini erano disonorati come giudei, et po essere da quarant'anni.

Et ad interrogationem qui alii de praemissis sint informati, respondit: Non mi ricordo, ma potria pensare qualche soldato che lo sapesse.

Et ad interrogationem dixit: Quelli che hanno accusato la casa de Diego Gil, potevano saper quello io faccio in casa mia, che veder che io vivo come cristiano et per tal mi reputo, et tengo fino ala morte, et havendono ditto el contrario doveriano esser castigati.

Interrogatus qui fuerunt eius ascendentes.

Respondit: Mio patre si chiamava Joan Gil dela terra de Selorzen gionta ala redo de biscaglia, mia matre si chiamava giusta de san petro del regno de leone di spagna, et chi fossero stati li patri de mio patre, et de mia matre non lo so, et mei patre et matre nacquero et morsero in Spagna, et io venni in Napoli giovane per soldato.

Interrogatus quod dicat quos habeat consanguineos et affines.

Respondit: Ho per moglie Lucretia Vaglies, per socera tengo Francina Vaglies, et in spagna tengo frati, et sore, et in Napoli ho due figli mascoli, et una femina, lo magiore si chiama Pietro, lo secondo Diego, la figliola Leonora, Rafaele Vignes mi è cognato, et Costanza de Marco è soa moglie et non tengo altri parenti.

Subiungens ex se dixit: Io ho anco per inimico, che è lo magior traditor del mondo Alexandro And.ra.

Quibus habitis d.s dimisit pro nunc prosecutionem examinis aio. et iniuncta ei silentio et q. se subscribat, et fuit mandatus dimitteri.

Qui constitutus non valuit se subscribere impeditus ab infirmitate podagre.

6. Livia Fernandes' written confession (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 255r-260v)

Die veneris que computatur XVI februarij 1571 Neapoli ... ecclesiam Sancti Pauli Maioris ... infrascripta depositio seu confessio consistens in paginis seu cartis numero sex scriptis, incipiens Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor havendo io livia fernandes, et finiente: Ma dimitte fuochi ... proprie manus dicte Livie dictante, Io livia fernandes ho fatto scrivere la presente, et l'ho sottoscripta de mia mano accetto quanto in essa se contiene; presentata et exhibita fuit per dictam Angelam Fernandes coram Reverendo domino Hieronimo Ferro preposito ecclesie sancti pauli maioris, et petente in actis conservari ...

Havend'io Livia Fernandes al tempo quando per la corte archiepiscopale di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima fu proceduta contra alcune donne della nation catalana per haver servato alcuni riti et cerimonie giudaiche venuta in cognitione di mio errore, nel quale molti anni ero stata [incorsa] per haverne anch'io osservato alcuni, Et desiderando col lasciare la strada delle tenebre, e dell'errori nella quale dalle false persuasioni di che acciò fare sotto colore di maggior bene era stata tirata per ridursi alla vera via del nostro Signor Jesu Christo, così a quelli remedi, che dalla comune Madre, cioè l'Ecclesia Cattolica [s'offeriscono] con haver in mano del molto Reverendo Vicario di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e del Padre Giovan Battista Buoncuore manifestato le mie sciocchezze, e da quello ottenuto l'assolutione e penitenza doppo già pochi giorni sono, essendo di novo chiamata [avanti] di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima subito come figliuola d'obediencia venni, et in sua presenza fu esaminata. Et [tanto] la prima quanto la seconda volta sempre fu di mia intentione ... tutti li secreti del mio cuore. Non dimeno perche nel principio non fui con esatta diligenza esaminata, et ero anco piena di pagura, ... per esser pentita di cose per fare quell'effetto la sera di notte senza saputo di mio marito, oltre che non eran passati piu che quattro o cinque giorni ch'era [partorita]. Et ultimamente ridotta alla presenza di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima per cose tanto importanti fui tutta ripiena di confusione, e spavento, non mi mancando il medesimo timore che il fatto non si facesse palese, del che ... ne può nascere l'ultimo mio ... Ho riconosciuto dopo dove spero quel spatio di tempo a revoltar la terra del mio cuore, che la mia altra essamina è stata imperfetta. Per il che desiderando (come ho detto) di purgare le piu segrete parti del cuore di così venerata doctrina, vengo à buttarmi ai piedi di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima con supplicarla con lacrime di sangue per quel sangue [di] quel pretioso [santo] del quale lei tiene il luogo ... abbracciar questa povera anima, e come vero pastore, revocandola da mani dei lupi reddurla nel gregge dal Signore commessoli. Et acciò di novo da confusione e spavento non sia impedita quanto ho nel cuore. Vengo a far questo [atto] con la presente sottoscritta di mia mano.

Et accio Vostra Signoria Illustrissima saprà l'origine del mio errore, le dico che si ben'io sono nata da padre e madre christiani e catholici, essendo uno nato in Cordua, et l'altra in Siviglia, fui nondimeno nelli teneri anni della mia fanciullezza (essendo da circa dieci anni) da mia madre data ad allevare ad una mia zia chiamata Biancha del Castiglio, quale per quel'intendeva dire era apparentata et allevata tra cathalani. Et si ben stava nelle medesime case di mio padre, e madre, viveva non di meno del tutto appartata dal loro, massimo circa il suo vitto, standosene nella sua camera nella qual'io il piu delle volte dimorava etiam di notte. In quel tempo da questa Biancha di nome, si ben assai nera d'effetti, mi fu persuaso di dover diggiunare un giorno ogn'anno circa la fine di settimana con darmi ad intendere ch'essendo questo diggiuno instituto da Dio, et anchora osservato da Christo signor nostro, qual non era venuto per destruere, ma piu presto per adempire la legge vecchia, et osservato anco dalla sua Madre santissima era cosa di grande importanza. Et chi l'osservava oltre la salute doveva sperarne dell'anima per la remissione di peccati. Era anco certa di havere in q.a della prosperità, massime di dover essere ben collocata in matrimonio. Al che non fui presto resistente a dar fede ... qualità di quella vecchia quale dimostrava doverglisi haver ogni credito, si anche per le larghe promesse mi faceva Credo bene che alcune volte essendo figliuola nascosta da lei avesse per il giorno mangiato senza havere osservato quella strettezza di deggiuno, che Lei ordinava. Avvenga che ... in quel giorno non si mangiasse cosa ... fino alla sera et allora si ben fosse stato di dominica mangiare cibi

quadregesimali. In quel giorno non permetteva, che facesse essercitio alcuno de fatiche corporali benche di questo volentieri la serviva essendo natura di figliuoli il fuggire quanto può il lavorare. Ordinava ancho che in quel giorno s'attendesse all'oratione con dire degli psalmi di David si ben proibiva che non si dicessero che non si dicessero psalmi di laude ne cantici con dire che per essere quel giorno deputato per mortificatione della carne non conveniva a dire tali psalmi. Voleva anche, e così vedevo osservar da lei, un'oratione in piedi con stare con la finestra aperta, e guardare verso il cielo. E si ben nella sua camera v'era una figura credo della madonna avanti la qual'io alcuna volta solevo ingenuchiarmi, e dire qualche oratione. Non essendomi stato da Lei che io face proibito. Non di meno quella figura lei il piu delle volte teneva con la faccia rivolta al muro, si ben dicesse farlo per maggior riverenza, come credo haver detto nell'altra mia essamina. Quale in ciò fosse la sua intentione non posso saperlo per non haverlo investigato, ne tam poco (come ho detto) mai da lei mi fu proibita l'adoration dell'immagine, delle quali dall'appartamento di mia madre ve n'era assai piu d'una. Nel dire de psalmi mi diceva e così osservai il piu delle volte sin'a quel tempo che fui sotto il suo governo per spatio di quattro in cinque anni, che bastava dire Gloria patri, senza aggiongervi ... et filio, et spiritu sanctu. Questo anco con che intentione il dicesse tam poco posso saperlo per non havermi mai dimandato raggione, e come ho detto l'età fanciullesca e il credito haveva à quella vechia, mi quietavano l'anima di non investigar l'altro. E ben vero che doppò lei morse vedendo così osservare al resto de Christiani nol'ho lasciato d'aggiungere doppo il Gloria patri ancora, et filio, et spiritu sanctu. E da quello ho possuto congetturare mi pare l'intention sua fosse pessima, poi che col tacere il nome del figlio, et del spirito santo, da suspectione, che lei non perfettamente ci credesse. Al che tanto piu hora (che mercé della gratia del nostro signore) mi vedo fuori di tante tenebre. Ma [circa] inchinando quanto che mi riduco à mente, che lei era solita à dire, che bisognava amare, adorare, e revirir Iddio, qual'era omnipotente, haveria creato il cielo, la terra, e il mondo tutto, e che la sua omnipotenza era tale, che posseva mandare il figliuolo, et il Spirito Santo. E perche non scendeva poi al particolare si veramente il figliuolo era incarnato, e nato di Maria Vergine Santissima per operation del Spirito Santo sicome la Santa Chiesa Catholica tiene, et io non dubito. Però come ho detto ho suspetta l'intention della detta Biancha ma essendo Io figliuola non havendo cercato d'investigare questi secreti, non mi resta scrupolo di haver in questo principalissimo articolo commesso volontariamente errore alcuno, si ben così in generale per la reverenza, e credito haveva à quella maledetta vechia, mi pareva che a tener il contrario havria possuto errare. Quello m'ha dato, e da intorno a questo articolo secreta pace di coscienza. Si è, ch'essendo battezzata, e cresmata, et havuto sempre intention di vivere, e morire christiana, quantunque sciocchamente avesse dato credito alla Bianca e per sua persuasione errato nell'osservanza di questo o d'altri riti giudaici come dirò appresso, ma per occasione de suoi persuasioni, ne per osservanza di qualsevoglia superstitione o cerimonia ho lasciato d'haver quella certezza di fede, almeno generale, che come christiana sono obligata. Et in segno di ciò mai ho lasciata la confessione e communion piu di una volta l'anno etiam dio al tempo stava sotto 'l suo governo, con avere spessissime volte massime nelle feste ascoltato le messe, e nell'entrar in chiesa, tanto nel pigliar dell'acqua benedetta, quanto infinite altre occasioni etiam fuori di chiesa spessissime volte segnatomi al fronte, el petto, e la bocca col segno della santissima croce, et infinite volte per ogni occorrenza invocato il nome e il aiuto ... Questo modo di diggiunare et orare lo osservai per quel spatio di tempo di anni quattro in circa, che visse la sovrannominata Biancha. Doppo essend'io collocata in matrimonio con un gentihuomo spagnolo chiamato Francisco Guerrera, et con lui andato al Castello di Mola della provincia di Terra di

Bari, del quale detto mio marito teneva governo. Dove dimorai seco per spatio d'anni cinque incirca. Lasciai in quel tempo il deggiuno di settembre, non già perche lo riputasse cosa mala, ma per non haver havuto chi m'havesse notificato il giorno, che doveva farsi, essendo che non veniva mai in una giornata del mese. A quel tempo, ch'io dimorai in Mola capitorno nel detto Castello alcuni giudei, quali eran stati presi d'una pista di Christiani e da loro molto maltrattato... furono colle loro robbe rinvenuti dal detto mio marito, sotto pretesto che toccasse a lui come castellano. Dal che nacque controversie e dispiacere tra lui e l'illustre signor Marchese di ... Maggiore quale allhora si ritrovava governatore di quella provincia. Ma al fine la differenza fra loro sendo sopita, il detto mio marito hebbe dal detto marchese due pezze di panno...il quale panno essendo capitato in mano mia Io ritrovai dentro duo libri [uno] grande coperto di rosso, il quale era il Genesis, et un piccolo coperto di nero, nel quale eran dentro psalmi di David, e molte altre orationi. Del primo non lo retenni molto santo, anzi lo lasicai dentro casa, che ogn'uno el vedeva e così stette sin'a tanto che mio marito lo bruggiò parendogli che fosse proibito per il Concilio Tridentino. Et questo testo manco m'era charo quanto ch'era scritto in lingua portoghese, ch'io non bene l'intendeva. L'altro piccolo per quell'orationi e psalmi m'era piu charo, et lo tenni sempre ben guardato con mostrarlo a pochi. Ben mi ricordo haver dato copia d'alcune di quell'orationi a Gerolama Pelegrina per havermi domandato, come credo haver detto ad una mia essamina. Questo libro lo retenni sin'a tanto ne nacque quel romore delle donne pigliate preggioni per occasione del quale dubitando che quello v'era dentro non fosse cosa mala lo diedi ad Alonso Pelegrino, che lo butasse in una [chiaricca]. Dall'istessa Biancha per quel tempo che foi seco al tempo della settimana santa in circa mi teneva dato al quanto di pan azzimo, e questo la sera à tardi con darmi anco a mangiare delle lattuche amare, e darne ad intendere, che questa osservanza e cerimonia era parimente ... all'anima e per casto segno della Pasqua. Questi azzimi nol'ho fatto nel'ho voluto fare ad altri. Credo bene che la Biancha facesse lei havendo nella sua camera sempre della farina e'l fuoco et spesse volte si stava colla ... Nel sabbato soleva dire ch'era bene a non lavorare, non posso però giudicare quale fosse la sua intentione si ben dava ad intendermi che dovesse riverirle in honore della Madonna di Pedigrotta, e benche persuadere a figliuole, che s'astengan da lavorare è assai facil cosa, tanto piu quanto se gli persuade sotto spetie di divotione; Nondimeno non restava il sabato di far molti serviggij minimi che corrono per casa, et particolarmente doppo, che sono uscita dalle sue mani, havendo fatto in tal giorno il pane, et molti altri serviggij, facilitava anco il dargli credito vedere, che universalmente in Bitonto (dove all'ora habitava) la maggior parte delle donne il Sabato per honore della Madonna s'astengan da molti serviggij non stavan all'intutto in otio.

Nel mangiare Biancha era fastidiosissima, poiche di molte cose s'asteneva e tampoco in questo posso far giudizio quale fosse stata la sua intentione poiche mai mi scoperse l'animo suo. È ben vero che essendo anch'io assai schiva nel mangiare, ne soffrendomi il stomaco di mangiar cose grasse tampoco selvagine, col haverne anco usata collei, mi sono astenuta di molte cose senza però haver havuto mai intentione di giudaizare. Del che posso fare fede (sicome dissi nell'altra mia essamina), pur che il presutto non sia stato molto grasso non ho lasciato, ne lascio di mangiarlo. E si ben nell'ammazzar de polli avesse usato ad dire, o far dire alcune parole in laude di Dio, come à creator del tutto imparatomi dalla detta Biancha, et ancho havuto piacere s'ammazzassero talmente che non uscisse tutto il sangue, acciò che fossero più bianchi. Non fu però mai di mia intentione tampoco in questo di giudaizare, ne ho havuto intentione di far cosa contro la vera legge di Christo. Non lasciarò ancho di dire d'haver deggiunato il lunedì, e

benche dalla Biancha mi fosse stato imparato di farlo in honore di Santa Catherina, et all' hora non havesse havuto altra intentione, nondimeno [vo] suspicando, che sotto questo colore vi fosse coverta qualche altra osservanza non costumata da Christiani catholici tanto più, quanto, che a suggestione e persuasione non solamente della Biancha, ma della soprannominata Gerolama Pelegrina a certi tempi osservava alcuni altri deggiuni, e solennizzava alcuni giorni di festa, delli quali non sappia darvi raggione, né distinguere li tempi per non haverne cognitione sua, quando haveva da fargli, e spettava, che ne fosse stata avvisata o dalla detta Biancha o dalla sovradetta nominata Gerolama. Aggiungo di più haver imparato dalla sovradetta, et osservato un' altra superstitione, che al tempo dovea farse il ... , ovvero solennizzare alcuna festa. Bisognava quanto era possibile procurare l' esteriori monditie del corpo, e particolarmente il giorno avanti del digiuno lavarsi la testa. E questi deggiuni, e feste si ben cercava di farli occulti, e non palesi. Non dimeno il lunedì, non curava di nascondarlo poiche ci era il calore di farsi in riverenza di Santa Caterina.

Doppo partita dal Castello di Mola, avvenuta in Napoli il deggiuno di Settembre, et altri quali per non haver havuto da chi intendere nel tempo...

Retornai a ripigliarlo, e l' ho osservata sin' al tempo che nacque questo romore delle donne Priggione...

Doppo in processo di tempo cominciai ad haver pratica, benche non molto stretta colle donne della Nation Cathalana colle quali alle volte si raggonava così del deggiuno grandi di Settembre, ... et anco delli azzimi e dell' osservanza dell' altre feste con esser avvisata del tempo del deggiuno da alcune di esse. Et quel mi ricordo della già detta Girolama Pellegrina e da Beatrice mia sorella.

Per trattare o raggonare de simili cose e superstitioni non mi ricordo esserci ragunati insieme, ne a certo loco, ne a certo tempo, ma solamente secondo l' occasioni di visitare l' una l' altra nasceva raggonamento, qual' haveva principio hora d' una, hora d' un' altra. In questo tempo che sono stata in Napoli, non posso ridurmi a memoria d' haver mangiato dell' azzimi se non una volta sola essendo [imparto] nella settimana santa, che me le diede una mia zia chiamata Catherina Fernandes, overo Pelegrina Che havesse lasciato di mangiarne negli altri anni, non è stato per schivarse, ne reputarsi cosa mala, ma per non esserci stata occasione che mi fossero stati offerti. Imperoche se mi fossero stati dati non haveria lasciato di mangiarli.

Non pensava però di fare cosa contraria alla vera legge di Christo, anzi per quello m' era stato imparato dalla detta Biancha, e dall' altri teneva di fermo di meritare apresso d' Iddio assai piu di quelle che ciò non facevano. Poiche pareva s' attendessi ad atti di devotione, et coll' osservanza delli deggiuni se colorava la maceratione della carne. Et in questa opinione mi pare che eran tutte quelle colle qual' io (com' ho detto) ne trattava reputandosi meglio serva di Christo quella, che più fedelmente l' osservava, e quella ch' era istruita in sempre dare raggione, et haver cognitione de li tempi, nelli quali queste cerimonie dovessero osservarsi. Colorando sempre quello si faceva con dire, ch' era bene, poiche l' haveva osservato anchora Christo, el quale non era venuto per distruggere, ma più presto per adempire la legge.....

Et si ben per salute dell' anima, e sodisfar in qualche minima parte l' offesa fatta al mio redentore, poco sarrà qualsivoglia penitenza pur pubblica che fusse. Nondimeno [metto] alli suoi pretiosissimi piedi, con supplicarla con amarissime lagrime, che lasciando da parte il [merito]

particolare della mia persona. Voglia haver riguardo a la reputation di sette poveri figliuoli, et assai più à quella del mio marito, quale ritrovandosi in qualche reputatione apresso la Maestà del Rè Catholico al qual'ha servito, e serve per Capitano di Fanteria all'impresa di Granata dove sta continuamente ad esponersi a pericolo della vita per servitio della fe Christiana, e del suo Re....

7. Beatrice Fernandes' written confession (ASDN, *Sant'Ufficio* 155, f. 174r-178r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor

Die quarto februarij 1571 Neapoli et in domo Magnifici Cesaris Reguante ... doctoris In qua fuit examinata Violantes Raguante in forma in lecto jacens, presens infrascripta depositio incipiens Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor Io Beatrice Fernandes etc. et finit ma non già per malitia, cum ... proprie manus dicte beatricis ... Io Beatrice Fernandes ho fatto scrivere la presente per mano del signor Cesare Raguante mio marito et affirmo quanto in essa se contiene. Presentata, exhibita, et producta fuit per dictam beatricem in manibusque Reverendi Domini Petri Dusine locumtenentis illustrissimi domini archiepiscopi neapolitani. ... cum instantia in actis conservatis.

Io Beatrice Fernandes serva di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima con lacrime et vera contritione di cuore li fo intendere qualmente l'anno passato per occasione del rumore nacque in napoli che molte donne dela natione catalana erano state carcerate sotto pretesto che havessero osservato alcuni riti et cerimonie giudaiche tocca dal rimorso della conscientia sentendomi anchor io avilupata in tal errore per haver dato piu che dovea fede a chi m'havea persuaso ch'losservanza d'alcune di quelle cerimonie era molto giovevole alla salute dell'anima et remissione di peccati mi mossi a rivelare il mio errore al molto reverendo signor vicario de Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et al reverendo padre Buoncuore come può vedersi per la mia abiuratione allhora fatta, nella quale si no fu detto quanto era necessario ne tampoco quella fatta diligente et exacta discussione della mia conscientia como in caso di tanta importanza si ricercava certificato a vostra signoria illustrissima con ogni verità che non fu lasciato per malizia ma per non ricordarmi allhora altre particolarità oltra di quelle che furno dette o per non esser stata cossì minutamente dimandata di quanto bisognava. Ultimamente essendo pochi jorni sono stata chiamata avanti di vostra signoria illustrissima et con ogni diligentia examinata delle mie sciocchezze credo di fermo di non haver sotisfatto a quanto dovea. Et questo como già di sopra ho detto non per malitia ne per volunta di ritener cosa veruna che con si salutifera confessione non vomitasse, ma solo per confusione nasciutami dal vedermi per così abominevol causa avanti il tribunal de vostra signoria illustrissima ridotta, et ancho dal'ordinaria mia smemoragine causatami dalle mie continue infirmità per il che desiderando quanto sia possibile proveder alla salute di questa povera anima merce della bontà del mio cuore conoscendo doverla haver tanto chara per esser ricomperata col sangue del mio christo nostro signore ritorno a buttarmi ai piedi di vostra signoria illustrissima como quello che in questo particular tiene il luoco del mio dolce jesu con desiderio de aprire tutti li secreti del mio cuore et mostrarli la bruttezza et [monditia] delle piaghe della misera anima mia accio como vero medico possa applicarvj quel salutifero medicamento che li pareva conveniente certificandola che per niuno rispetto humano lasciaro de dir quanto mi viene in memoria promptissima ancho de risponder a quanto vostra signoria illustrissima si

degnara dimandarmj pensando ch io sia manchata de dire, apparecchiata poi a sottomettermi del tutto alla pietosissima sua correctione con abbracczare allegramente tutta quella salutifera penitenza che si degnara impormi tanto più prontamente quanto dal mio signore pietosissimo sarò illuminata che non è penitenza ne confusione ne vituperio cossi grave ch io non meriti per le mie sciocchezze, non restaro pero di supplicarla per le viscere dela pieta del mio signore Jesu Christo posto da parte ogni mio rispetto si degni mirar alla riputatione et honore del mio marito et al bisogno deli figli poveri maxime de una che sta per collocarsi. Et questo dico affine che siben la penitenza hara de impormi del mio errore sia quanto si vuol greve et dura non sono per rifiutarla, desidero nondimeno che sia secreta poiche ogni volta che fussi publica sarebbe per uscirne tanta ruina che maggiore non sapria immaginarla et potria l'inimico del humana generatione avalersene per instrumento dela ruina di più d'una anima con poco guadagno della mia, il che so certa che non è intentione et fine di vostra signoria illustrissima. Dico dunque che circumscrivendo le due prime confessioni come fatte con poco prudentia et manco diligente examine della propria conscientia et con offuscatione di mente per li respecti già detti di sopra ch'io mi conosco haver offeso il mio pietosissimo signore principalmente per havere come ho detto piu che dovea dato credito acchi mi tirava alla via della perditione della quale la prima fu una mia cia, chiamata Bianca dalla quale essendo in puglia a bitonto dove seco dimoraj per dui anni incirca imparaj dovere osservare il digiuno di settembre cerimonia veramente judaica et dela legge vecchia et questo era il decimo jorno dopo la luna di settembre in quel jorno mangiava di magro una volta sola, et questo la sera a tardi ne intal jorno faceva exercitio manuale dispensando quel jorno in alcune orationi nelle quali non me rimorde la conscientia de haver offeso in altro sino che dicendo di molti psalmi lasciava quelli psalmi quali chiamano cantici o laudi per essere quel jorno piu presto deputato a mortificatione della carne che non a cantici di allegrezza, et siben non me ricordo mai per occasione di queste superstitioni di haver lasciato a tempi debiti la mia confessione et comunione havea nondimeno dato credito a quello che dalla detta mia cia me era stato imparato, che essendo questo digiuno di tanta importanza fra li altri effetti che si faceva, si era che in quel giorno Idio mandava l'angelo a remunerar li digiunati con scancellare dal libro tutti li peccati che si erano fatti in questa vita. Questo digiuno cominciaj ad osservare al modo ho detto di sopra et per ammaestramento della detta mia cia insino al tempo ch'io era da circa xii anni et l'ho cossi continuato insino al settembre delanno 69 che poco dopo successe questo rumore delle donne preggione senza pero aggiungervi altra superstitione di quelle ho detto quanto dopo haver ben examinata la mia conscientia posso ricordarmj: Aggiungo di più che alle volte accascando quel jorno etiam dio in domenica non lasciava però di far il solito digiuno forzandomi di coprirlo et nascondarlo tanto de mio marito como dal resto della famiglia con diverse excusatione. Il che m'era facilissimo per tener Io il governo dela casa, quanto tocca poi all'osservanza dela festa di sabato dico a vostra signoria illustrissima con ogni verità che di questo non ho rimorso altro di conscientia non havendo havuto maj animo ne intentione di osservar in quel jorno niuno rito ne cerimonia judaica et siben (como credo haver detto nella mia dipositione) in tal jorno maxime [deponeva] Io lasciava di far opere servili et dalla matina insino a nona tampoco me occupava a filar o fare altri exercitij da qual potesse cavar guadagno. Non restava però di far ogni altra cosa fussi bisogno per servitio de la casa et governo de miei figlioli et maxime che il più delle volte solea como ancho soglio far il pane et questa osservanza di devotione lo faceva solo per devotione dela madre de Idio tanto più quanto che il medesimo vedeva observar, et si observa dalle donne di Bitonto dove io sono allevata sin da fanciulla: di questa osservanza del sabbato non posso riddurmi a mente che da quella mia cia

biancha mi fussi stato detto casa, [aia] forse perchè il spatio di tempo che fu seco fu breve et io era di éta assai tenera overo perché essendo io figliola con bona ... occasione volentieri in quel jorno schivava di lavorar [o per] attender a vanita de figliole io, per confermarmj colla questione dele altre donne di quella città questo ben torno a replicar che mai fu mia intentione di far cosa diversa ne contraria al costume de christiani: ne tampoco da niuna della natione catalana circa questa osservanza dal sabbato m'e stato detto cosa alcuna, eccetto una sola volta che in tal jorno venne [qui] in napoli in casa mia dianora catalana qual ritrovandomj che io stava facendo il pane monstro di cio grandissimo sdegno et me riprese con direme che faceva male essendo il sabato a far il pane ma con tutto czio poco curando del suo sdegno sempre ho continuato a far il midesmo ne maj, imbrattato l'intentione con osservanza de rito o cerimonia Judaicha circa questo particolare:

Nel mangiar tampoco ho rimorso alcuno de haver osservato ne rito ne cerimonia Judaicha poiche sempre ho costumato et costume di mangiar indifferentemente qualsivoglia cosa ch' dio ha creato per uso et vitto del' homo tanto di carne como di pesce cossi di mare como de fiumj cossi di animali terrestri como volatili senza che nel amazzar de animali cosi terrestri como volatili habia osservato cerimonia o superstitione altra. Quanto tocca poi al fare o mangiare de pani azimi al tempo dela pascha secondo il [computo] fano li hebrei dico a vostra signoria illustrissima con ogni verità chiamando in cio Idio in testimonio che mai in mia vita ho fatto tal pane ne sapria dire quando viene la pascha secondo il [computo] di hebrei ne tampoco quello significano quelli azimi. È ben vero che per quello ho possuto dopoi molti pensieri riddurmi a mente mi par ricordar che per quel tempo che io stetti in Bitonto dopoi che vene in casa la supranominata biancha mia cia che non fu piu che per spatio di uno anno et mezzo incirca nel qual vi capitò una pascha della detta Biancha mi furno dati di quelli pani azimi quali credo che la stessa Biancha l'haveva tutti nella sua camera nella quale teneva della farina [et] il fuoco benche Io non cel'havessi visti fare per stare quasi sempre cola porta serrata et di quelli mangiai senza molto investigar quello significassero si ben per la fede teneva a quella vecchia li mangiava per cosa bona che potesse apportar salute ancho alla anima. Partita poi de Bitonto per il tempo fui col mio predetto marito mai n'ho mangiato et questo perche non mi è venuta occasione di haverne. Perche se me fossero stati offerti con la credenza che tenea di non far male ma più presto bene n'haria ancora mangiato. Per il tempo poi che so stata casata con questo marito che hora tengo per quanto posso ricordarmj non credo haverne mangiato piu che due volte una che sono circa 4 anni che stando [in parto] mia sorella Livia nella settimana santa me ne diede una severina catalana qual stava in uno appartamento della mia casa che lei senza --- et tanto dalla detta Catherina como dalla Severina mi veniva detto questo esser cosa assaj bona et per un certo segno della Pascha.

Questo è Monsignor Mio Illustrissimo quel tanto che dopo molto havere investigato li secreti del mio cuore con la debilissima mia memoria ho possuto ridurmj a mente di haver colpatò circa queste osservantie et riti judaichi. Et questo maj ho fatto ne pensato di fare in dispregio della vera fede christiana quale ho sempre tenuto et tengo et per la quale sono apparecchiata mille volte morire: ma solamente l'ho fatto penzandomi di fare bene et credendo ancho che da cio fare non solo contraheva colpa veruna di peccato ma acquistava non poco merito appresso Idio. Si ben non tacero de dire che tutto cio ho fatto con tal arte che non havia [per bene] che altri che non fusse de la natione il sapesse. Et questo perche vedendo che li altri che non erano de la

nacione ne nissuno huomo dela natione lo faceva dubitava di non darli scandolo si ben pensava che per far lo questo più deli altri christianj tanto piu meritassi appresso di dio et che a far luno et l'altro non vi fussi prohibitione ma merito: non havendo per occasione di questa superstitione o cerimonie lasciato mai di far tutto quello fanno li altri christianj cossi di digiunj a tempi comandati de la santa chiesa como di confessioni et comunionj piu volte lo anno vedere messe piglar jubilei et altre opere de christiani et principalmente con havermi segnato il fronte et il pecto tanto in chiesa al tempo che pigliava delacqua benedecta como in casa per infinite occasioni contra lucifero segno della santa croce havendo sempre tenuto como hora tengo in più luochi della mia casa con ogni debita reverenza l'immagini tanto di christo nostro signore como dela madre santissima et de altri santi non havendo mai lasciato di dire benche freddamente et indevotamente como peccatrice la corona et offitio dela madona si ben per non intender il latino ho havuto piacere dirlo in lingua spagnola con haver ancho letto diversi libri spirituali como et gioan gersone le opere di fra luisi di granata et molti altri de libri poi nelle quali si contenesse qualche rito o osservanza de hebrej mai ne ho tenuto ne visti eccetto che una volta in puglia ... ne veddi uno grande coperto di rosso quale era de mia sorella livia et vedendolo l'apersi et trovai che era il genesis lo cominciai a leger ma como ch'era in lengua portughese che non bene lo intendeva lo lasciai stare ne più l'ho visto. Nel dire l'offitio di psalmj etiam al tempo che faceva il digiuno di settembre se non ho detto nel fine ... patri filio etc. como usano tutti veri christianj havendo anchora col cuor creduto si como credo nella santissima trinità padre figlio et spiritu santo et che per lo advenimento del vero messia christo nostro signore siano consumate tutte le figure del vecchio testamento et la perfectione consiste nel evangelio et si ben como ho detto osservava altre di quelle cerimonie della vecchia legge lo faceva per haver sciocamente dato credito a chi non dovea et tanto piu m'assicurava a farlo quanto che pensava di non offender ne Idio ne far pregiuditio alla legge evangelica ma piu presto como tante volte ho detto pensando de meritarne appresso iddio. Si Vostra Signoria Illustrissima desidera saper chi sono quelle persone cole quali lo altre volte ho ragionato delle cose ditte di sopra dico del digiuno et dico per total discarico della mia conscientia che quelle che di cio hanno meco ragionato sono la sopranominata Biancha, Severina Catelana, Dianora Catelana, Angela Concha sua nora, Geronima Pellegrina et sua sorella Caterina Pellegrina, Vittoria Pellegrina, Dianora Corviglia, Livia, Diana, et Violante Raguantes mie cugnate, Livia Fernandes mia sorella et Laura Corviglia. Potria ancho esser che ne havesse tractato con altre ma certifico a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima con ogni certezza di verità che non posso ricordarmene di più ma ricordandomj non restarò de dirli como ancho farò ogni volta che mi ricordi de alcuna altra particolarità che havesse osservato in simile superstitione quale per tenere poca memoria potria haver lasciato de dire ma non già per malitia.

Io Beatrice Fernandes o fato scrivere la perescritta per mano di signor Cesere Regante mio marito e afermo quanto in esa si contene.

8. Don Cristoforo de Berrocal and Alfonso Laras defend the practice of burial in a white sheet (ASDN, Sant'Ufficio 143, f. 135r)

Die 21 Junij 1571 Neapoli et data pro ... familiaribus ... Angele Leone.

Noi licentiato Berrocal sacristano magior dela cappella regia di questo regno, abbate ..., adjutant di camera delo signor Illustrissimo Duca de Alcalá et Alfonso Laras infermiere del quondam Illustrissimo Duca facimo plena et indubitata fede a chi la presente in qualsevoglia modo serrà presentata, qualmente, e uso et costumanza per tutto lo Regno di Spagna che se sepelliscono in tela bianca alcuna volta nova et alcuna volta vecchia secundo la possibilita della persona che morrera et signanter Io soprascritto Alfonso Laras infermiere ut supra fo similmente ampla fede come esso con sue proprie mani ave vestito cola detta tela bianca nova lo quondam Illustrissimo Duca d'Alcalá in presentia di piu persuni et in presentia del sopradetto Pietro Merino et non solo lo dicto Illustrissimo Duca ma piu et piu gentilomini dello Illustrissimo Duca ave esso similmente vestito con la medesima tela bianca che sono morti nella medesima infermaria del detto quondam Illustrissimo Duca. Et essendo cossi la verità havimo fatto la presente --- de nostre proprie mani et segnata del segno ---. datum Neapoli die septimo mensis junij 14 --- 1571

El doctor ...

El licenciado Berrocal
Pedro Merino

Yo ...

El sobredicho Alonso Laras

In fide ego notarius Marcus Antonius de Maso de neapoli ... propria mano scripsi de voluntate et in presentia deli sopra. Subscritt. In mia presentia et meo solito signo signavi ... M.A.D.

II. Letters

1. Mario Carafa to Cardinal Scipione Rebiba, 22 May 1573 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 41)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignor padron mio osservandissimo

Ho ricevuta la lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima delli xvi dell'istante mese, con la quale mi manda due memoriali, l'uno di Lavinia Petralbes et Portia Bronda, e l'altra del monasterio della Consolatione, presentati a cotesto Sant'Officio. Onde, havendoli molto ben considerati, dico a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che queste donne furono condannate che si murassero: il che io volendo mandare in essequitione, Monsignor Illustrissimo di Granvela mi fece intendere che di questa muratione ne nasceva gran scandolo al popolo, ma che si soprasedesse fin tanto che se ne avesse dato avviso a cotesta Illustrissima Congregatione, sì come egli fece. Et io ricevei ordine delle Signorie Vostre Illustrissime, costoro non si morassero altramente, ma qui stessero carcerate, dove son state e stanno per spatio di quattro anni da che fu cominciata lor causa. Quando fui io ultimamente costì, feci intendere di più alle Signorie Vostre Illustrissime che queste carcere non erano conveniente per tenere dette donne lungamente et che si provvedesse dove havrebbero a stare, et le nominai quel luogo delli incurabili di che restano servite; ma ritrovandose detto luoco molto pieno, non ci è stato garbo di posservele accomodare. Onde, poi che le Signorie vostre Illustrissime mi commandano ch'io [rescriva] quel che mi pare che si possa fare, io giudicherei che fosse ben fatto che costoro s'abilitassero con iddonea pleggiaria alle lor case, perciò che è verissimo che la detta Lavinia ha tre figli mascoli carcerati in Vicaria et una figliola zita rimasta sola in casa, la quale veramente potria portare pericolo di capitare

male, et nel medesimo stato sta un'altra figlia della detta Portia. Però se le Signorie Vostre Illustrissime restano servite conceder loro questa gratia, ne nascerebbe che con le elemosine che queste donarebbero se ne faria beneficio al detto monasterio della Consolazione, le quali veramente hanno dato molto fastidio le loro figlie insieme con le altre di questa setta, mentre sono state in detto luoco, il quale ha grandemente bisogno di essere aiutato per finire quella chiesiola che si trova incominciata, alla quale io ho fatto dare da queste donne che sono spedite et da altre pene di questa corte molti quatrini, sì come vederanno per notamento qui inchiuso. Laonde questo è quanto m'occorre in risposta della lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et per dichiarazione delli memoriali che m'ha mandate; tutta vostra rimettendomi al prudentissimo parere delle Signorie Vostre Illustrissime non dirò altro, se non che à Vostra Signoria Illustrissima bacio reverentemente la mano et da Nostro Signor Dio prego ogni felicità Di Napoli a xviii di Maggio Mdlxxiii

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima,

servitore obligatissimo

Mario Arcivescovo di Napoli

2. Mario Carafa to Cardinal Scipione Rebiba, 5 June 1573 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 12)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignor padron mio osservandissimo

Per la lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima delli 29 del passato mi comanda ch'io debba far ordine al padre don Ignatio che non si parti da qui infino à nuovo avviso da lei, il che ho subito fatto intender al padre Abbate di Monte Oliveto, che così faccia; et del giovane dell'Amantia si eseguerà conforme all'ordine da Vostra Signoria Illustrissima venutomi. In quant'al memoriale della Angela di Leone mandatomi da lei, l'ho molto ben considerato, et è vero quant'ha esposto: ma perche costei è stata inquisita et condannata, sì come furon la Lavinia Fonseca et Portia Bronda, delle quali per l'altro ordinario pienamente donai ragguaglio a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di quel che era passato, et mi pareva convenire per servizio di Dio e della giustitia, il medesimo dico della detta Angela, aggiungendo che queste carcere non sono conveniente per tenere donne. Et habbilitarle in casa loro con idonea pleggiaria ne nasceria che delle elemosini che si poriano cavare da queste se ne sovveria li monasterij de Santa Maria della Consolazione et di Santa Maria delli Angeli, alli quali esse con loro figlie hanno dato molto fastidio, et in vero hanno bisogno di soccorso per la gran necessità che tieneno, pur rimettendomi sempre al prudentissimo giuditio delle Signorie Vostre Illustrissime. A lei bacio riverentemente le mani et da Nostro Signor Dio le prego ogni felicità. Di Napoli a quinto di Giugno Mdlxxiii.

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima
Servitore obligatissimo,

Mario Arcivescovo di Napoli

3. Mario Carafa to Cardinal Rebiba, 3 July 1573 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 44)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignor padron mio osservandissimo

Li giorni passati scrissi a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima dandoli conto di quel che mi pareva che per servitio di Dio et della giusticia si facesse di queste donne, che si tieneno qui carcerate, venendomi così con mandato da lei in nome di cotesto Sant'Ufficio: et per che non ho havuto fin qua risposta di quel che si debba essequire, et vedendo che queste non son carceri convenienti per donne, et che potrebbeno servire per altri di più importanza, et che dell'elemosina che da queste s'havrebbe se ne potria giovare a qualche monasterio, supplico per tanto Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che si degni di far risolvere che debba fare et avisarmi, acciò conforme al suo ordine possa farlo essequire. Né questa essendo per altro, a V.S. Illma bascio la mano et da Nostro Signore Dio le prego ogni essaltatione. Di Napoli a iiii di luglio 1573

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima,

servitore obligatissimo

Mario Arcivescovo di Napoli

4. Felipe de Aguilar to Scipione Rebiba, 16 Novembre 1573 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 45)

Reverendissimo Monsignor

Retrovandomi come mi ritrovo in questo offitio dela città di Catanzaro per capitano, vedendo quanto importa al servitio di Nostro Signore Iddio et sapendo che Vostra Signoria Reverendissima se ritrova in Napoli con ampla potestà di Sua Santità, in questa li dono aviso come in questa città di Catanzaro si ritrova molto numero di Judei battizzati et li antiqui lor sono venuti d'altra parte. Li quali sonno gente molto facoltosa et fanno arte de mercanti et lo più che occultamente fanno la lege iudaica con mille superstitioni, con non far niente il dì del sabato, non mangiar carne de li animali del quarto [divieto], sepellendo [si] fuera della chiesa, fandone una gran fossa sotto terra di sette palmi et più, né magnono carne di porco, apparentandono tra loro e molte altre cose, le quali observano li veri et perfidi Judei, andandone in questa città in Salonichi dove se ritrovano li Judei in Levante. Et tutto ciò è puplico et notorio per tutta questa città et che pigliandonosi li servitori loro li quali hanno servito alli predetti et le donne hanno tenuto in loro case spaventandole/per mandato [regio] si potria haver in tutto ciò la verità et esaminando gentilhomini antiqui di questa città et altri personi potriano dire il vero et tanto più del vescovo di questa città dicono per certo che have havuto cinquecento docati acciò non pigliasse informatione contra di loro. In questo ne [rimetto] al vero, però cossì si ragiona per vero. Et del vescovo ogni cosa si può credere perché ... e homo tiranno et puoco timoroso d'Iddio, come per tutta la diocesi sua et in questa citta se venisse [confermando]. A pigliar informatione contra di

loro si trovariano molte cose....remettendomi al vero. Et io so molte informationi contra di esso et suo vicario di importantia non per processare né al vescovo né al vicario, ma per chiarezza della verità et per molte cose indebite et insolite che han fatto in preiuditio della Jurisdiction regia onde [i sudditi] di sua Maesta come ... et voler il spirituale et temporale et per consentire in molte cose enorme et degne di castigo.

De più, quanto alli Judei, dicono che il dì del veneri frustano il crucifisso benedetto decendoli molte injurie et similmente alla madonna benedetta. In questo me remetto al vero, però uno homo di bene di questa città nomine Franco Ferraro m'ha detto che lo sa per cosa certa. Vostra Signoria Reverendissima potrà considerare quanto orrende siano queste cose grave et degne di castigo et di tali Judei si può credere ogni cosa et queste sonno cose ch spettano a Vostra Signoria Reverendissima per honor di Nostro Signore Iddio a provvedere in questo con tutto calore et diligentia et come meglio li serà in servitio. Et parendo a Vostra Signoria Reverendissima darne notitia all' Illustrissimo signor Cardinale Granvela o a Sua Santità accio si provveda, perche oltra farà il servitio di Iddio serà grande aumento, perché so mercanti ricchi che tengono robba di malo acquisto et de usura. Et ritrovandomi io qui in Catanzaro proventia di Calabria capitano potria far diligentia con le persone che io conosco per haver più luce del tutto.

De più in quella città di Napoli si ritrova un mercante di questa città nomine Benedetto di Solmona che habita alla rugha Catalana et pratica in bancos et è Judio et Judeisce?? et tiene li fratelli a Salonichi in Levante terra del turco dove habitano li Judei et tiene corrispondenza con loro et andando in sua casa et pigliandosi le scritture ad esso et sua famiglia potriano haver luce di queste cose et cqui in Catanzaro sonno testimonij di questo.

De più in questa città di Catanzaro costà per informatione come Gasparro di Condria cristiano novello mercante facultoso ha detto che voleva abrusciar una croce di santo Giorgio che portava un figlio suo nomine Cesare di Condria. De più il predetto Cesare, figlio del predetto Gasparro di Condria ... con dir che era figlio di gentilomo et di gentildonna ...per denari per una ...del cardinal Sabello have havuto la croce di san Giorgio la quale è rossa improntata d'oro la qual porta allo saio et nella cappa con [privilegio] di Sua Santità, con farsi conte palatino con sudetto homo che tiene di proponer sottomettere a sua santità per ottener simili cose essendo come e cristiano novello et figlio di patre et matre cristiani novelli il patre mercante et la matre panettiera et e homo il patre facultoso di piu di venti milia ducati et per puplico notorio si dice che vivono alla Judaica.

In questo donera luce francesco ferraro il vecchio il quale trovò la mitria del piccolo et il magnifico cesare framatella medico Iurato di questa città et il fratello martino gagliato il quale e stato in levante con altri et [è] di catanzaro li quali hanno visto in salonichi li fratelli di Benedetto di Solmona li quali hanno lasciato in catanzaro piu di dece milia docati di faculta che la possede Bendetto de Solmona, lo frate et figlio il quale sta in cotrone et tiene corrispondenza a salonichi colle mercantie che manda alli altri fratelli che sono [alli] Judei in questo Antonino vento che si ritrova in catanzaro che ha la matre judea donera luce in tutto quello de salonicchi che sa li testimonij et la facolta che lasciarono, de tutte queste cose m'ha parso darne notitia a Vostra Signoria Reverendissima accio che per lo servitio di Iddio provveda al meglio che li parera per non restar occulte queste abominazioni de heresie et Nostro Signore Iddio la molto

reverendissima persona di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima guardi et in felice stato l'accresca come ella desidera. da catanzaro a giorni 16 di Novembre 1573

Monsignor Reverendissimo

Besa sus manos reverendisimas su servidor

El Capitano de catanzaro
Phelippe de Aguilar

Testimoni in catanzaro
Il magnifico Andrea Bulotta
francesco ferraro de la mina
lo magnifico Cesare Framarella
Antonino Vento figlio dela judea
Il medico dottor Gasparro Strineri
Rendina ... del ... marchese et altri dela terra et li servitori presenti et ...

5. Pietro Antonio Vicedomini to Cardinal Scipione Rebiba, August 6, 1574 (HH 2-a, f. 116r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor mio colendissimo

Per quello che ho trattato e veduto io dopo la mia venuta in Napoli, non posso se non dire che sia molto lontana dal vero la relatione fatta a cotesto Santo Offitio di questo tribunale, perché qua non s'è composta in tempo mio alcuna causa di persona heretica o che havesse punto dependentia dalla heresia, né so imaginarmi qual modo si potesse tenere per comporre cause tali senza saputa mia, anzi che di tutte le occorrenze qualche pocco sostantiali in questa materia, è stata data informatione a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et per mezzo di lei a gli Illustrissimi Reverendissimi Signori colleghi suoi e Signori miei. Fu vero che nelle prime settimane della mia venuta qua fu commutata nella pena di cinquanta ducati la pena d'uno lungo carcere, al quale era stata condannata di prima ch'io venissi qua una Lavinia Fonseca giudaizante, de quali denari intesi per certo che una parte fu consegnata per elemosina al monasterio delle monache della Sapientia et un'altra parte al monasterio delle monache della Consolatione, et questo, sicome intesi allora, con ordine del Santo Offitio. Certa cosa è che quando si trattassero qua tali compositioni, se non le potessi impedire, almeno ne darei conto subito al Santo Offitio. Se ancho fussi imputato io, particolarmente supplico quella e gli altri Signori Illustrissimi che vogliano commandar che si truovi il vero et con humilissima riverenza le bascio le mani. Di Napoli nel vi di agosto del lxxiiii

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Humilissimo devoto

6. Mario Carafa to Cardinal Rebiba, July 6, 1576 (ACDF, Stanza Storica HH 2-a, f. 332r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor mio osservantissimo

Da che io mi trovo in questo luogo, ho tenuto sempre per principale fra i desiderij miei che le cause della religione andassero con quella curiosità e rigore di giustitia che ricercano simili materie et io devo; né ho mancato mai di dar conto a Roma di quanto mi è parso bisognevole. E se da alcune settimane in qua io ho servato più lungo silentio del solito, può Vostra Signoria Illustrissima credere che non vi sia corso più di quello di che le ho dato raguaglio, meritevole di avviso: e che non si sia perduto tempo in iscoprire molte cose occolte, come potrà vedere per li notamenti che le si mandano: nel che veramente ha valuto molto la destrezza e diligenza di questo vicario, il quale voglio credere che ogni giorno più sia per sodisfare a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, come fa in tutto il resto, che spetta all'ufficio suo.

Nella causa de'Giudaizanti si è servato il medesimo silentio per la istessa cagione: ultimamente con nuove diligenze, si è ritratto dalla depositione d'una donna tanto, che potemo dire di havere qualche cosa a proposito, sebene nell'adietro le fatiche sono state indarno. Hora, le si manda sumario di quanto ancora [sa] e farassi il medesimo nell'avvenire di tutte le altre cose che succederà, conforme a' comandamenti suoi. Ho dato ricapito alle lettere mandatemi da Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, a cui bacio le mani, e priego ogni desiderata felicità. Di Napoli a dì vi di luglio MDLxxvi Di vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima.

servitore obligatissimo

Mario Arcivescovo di Napoli

7. Gaspare Silingardo to Cardinal Rebiba, January 19, 1577 (ACDF, Stanza Storica HH 2-a, f. 463)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo mio signor et padrone colendissimo

Mentre ch'io era in Roma il signor Pietro Dusina mi disse ch'io troverei qui in Napoli un'informatione delli inditiati per conto dell'hebraismo fatta da sua signoria, cavata da molti processi fabricati qua sopra questo delitto, et mi disse di più che quando non la trovassi qui havessi ricorso da lui, che ne teneva copia costì. Io, gionto che fui, non manchai di cercar detta copia per incaminare queste cause per honor del signor Iddio, et non la trovando altrimenti scrissi al detto signor Pietro, che si contentasse mandarmi detta copia, et mai qui non n'ho havuta risposta alcuna. Et dubitandomi che per questi sospetti della peste possano le lettere mie facilmente essere andate in sinistro, ho deliberato ricorrere per questo fatto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, essendo sicuro che per l'autorità del nome suo queste mie giongeranno sicuramente. Le supplico dunque che voglia ordinare al detto signor Pietro che sia servito mandarmi detta informatione per potere più presto per servizio del Signor Iddio dar principio a queste cause; si degnerà perdonarmi s'io sono stato troppo ardito in scrivere queste quattro righe,

che la benignità di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et la natura del negotio mi ha fatto pigliare questa sicurtà, et se non fosse per parerle odioso le raccomandarei anchora le cause di alcuni carcerati qui, che pendono a cotesto tribunale. Et con questo fine humilmente baciandole le mani, le prego dal Signor quello che più desidera.
In Napoli il di 19 di gennaio 1577.

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Humilissimo et devotissimo servitore
Gasparro Sillingardi vicario in Napoli

8. Gaspare Silingardo to Cardinal Savelli, August 8, 1578 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 602r-v, 642r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo mio signor et padrone colendissimo

Questa matina Monsignor Nuntio m'ha parlato d'un processo che ella scrive ch'habbia consegnato al Signor Annibale Moles instando, che detto Signor Annibale riconsegnasse detto processo in man sua, io ho detto a lui quello, che dirò anchora a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che è quando piacque alla bona memoria del Cardinale che si procedesse contra le Malvicine, ch'ora sono in Roma, et essendo esse già state citate da me, comparve il detto signor Annibale, et mi disse, che si maravigliava, ch'in questa causa si procedesse, poiche l'haveva per sopita per sino al tempo della bona memoria di Mario Caraffa, et m'essibì la copia autentica che havevano havuto dell'esamine di Giovanna, Catherina, et Manzia Malvicine, insieme con la contestazione della lite, et assignatione del termine alle difese, sino dell'anno, si mal non mi ricordo, 1572, io le presi e le mandai al Cardinale al quale piacque conforme a quello che fu terminato in congregatione, che non ostante questa asserita liberatione, che pretendeva il Moles, si procedeva al ulteriora contra le dette Malvicine, come si feci, che furono citati di nuovo per la quale citatione essi s'inviarono a Roma, inviate che furono, il detto Moles ricreò che se li restituessero le sue scritture, cioè le dette tre depositioni, la contestatione della lite, et la assignatione del termine alle difese, et havendo il Cardinale in man del quale restano dette scritture, quelle perse o smarrite, m'ordinò che di esse ne facesse trar copia autentica dell'originale, et gliele mandassi, et cosi fu fatto, et le le mandai per man del notaro, et ne volsi anchora ricevuto dal detto Moles, per poterlo mostrare al Cardinale come feci, et se Vostra Signoria Illustrissima troverà mai, che il detto Moles ne altri habbia havuta scrittura alcuna da me, se non le dette tre depositioni, la contestazione della lite, et l'assignatione del termine alle difese, le quale scritture le furono consignate, et date sino dell'anno 1572, come appare agl'atti, che sono venuti corti, et che poi per ordine del Cardinale le furono restituite, questa santa congregatione mi mandi in preceptio, che me lo merito, che si bene nel resto io sono imprudentissimo sappia per ch'io conosco quanto sia necessaria la fedeltà, et secretezze nelle cose di religione ch'in questo non voglio mai che l'ignoranza m'escusi, et l'assicuro che questa cosa m'ha di maniera trafitto, che vengo a supplicare Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che si contenti, ch'alla prima rinfrescata io possa venire a Roma per darle conto di questa, et qualche altra cosa, che spero conoscerà la prontezza dell'animo mio in ponere la vita per simili cause, et non in essere traditore in dispreggio di Dio,

carico dell'anima mia, et perdita d'ogni sorte di reputatione, et supplico Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che mi perdoni, se nel scrivere havessi passato il termine, perche la grande afflittione, ch'io sento di questo fatto, me ne deve render escusabile appresso di lei, et spererò nella bontà di Iddio, che fara conoscere la verità, ne la malitia del notaro o per disegno suo, o d'altri la potrà odombrare ne d'altro mi rincresce se non di non essere costi presente per potere dire quello che sarebbe longo a scrivere, et ch'io dirò a suo luogo et tempo, et spererò che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi conoscerà per huomo da bene, in simil conto, se bene nel resto mi conosco imperfettissimo, et con questo fine basciandole humilmente le mani le prego dal S.or Iddio ogni contento.

In Napoli il dì 8 di Agosto 1578

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Humilissimo et devotissimo servitore
Gasparro Sillingardi

9. Stefano Quaranta to Cardinal Savelli, July 2, 1578 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 631-634)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor mio patrone osservandissimo

Per l'obbligo del mio officio m'ha parso d'avisare a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima d'alcune cose che se sono fatte, et fanno in questa corte dalli presenti signori vicarij quanto a quello ch'appartene alle cause di religione, et tra l'altre sono queste. Vostra Signoria Illustrissima saperà che ritrovandose carcerato in questa corte un prete ch'officiava nell'Hospitale degl'Incurabili nominato Don Angelo Desiderio di Macerata, come haveva detto, et tenuto in presentia di molta gente, che Christo in croce a tempo della sua passione non sparse vero sangue, et come haveva confessato in detto hospitale senza essere stato approbato alla confessione, del ch'essendo convitto per molti testimoni degni di fede, s'avisò Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et da quella si mandò copia autentica d'una sententia, come era stato condannato per diece anni in galera per vitio nefando, dalla quale sententia apparea non essere altrimenti elasso il tempo di tale condennatione, questo don Angelo fo habilitato dalle carcere per il signor vicario Sillingardi, senza ch'io come fisco fosse stato inteso, ne fattone decreto, quale non ritornò altramente, del che resentendome, detto signor vicario à mia instantia ordinò alli ... della corte che si trovasse per li quali essendosi usata diligentia non s'è possuto ritrovar in modo alcuno.

Le scritture di cause di religione, benche si tengano in uno stipo, nondimeno alcune di quelle se lasciano fora, et poi non si conservano, et vanno dispersi per sopra le banche delle camere del detto vicario, dove praticano scrivani della corte, et altre gente, quando se da audientia, et particolarmente questi di a' dietro vi stava el sumario delle persone inquisite de iudaismo, riassunto dal signor Dusina a' tempo era vicario, dove se contene quanto ve sia contro ciascuna persona foglio, per foglio, che facilmente se posseva pigliare et legere da tutti, et al presente li volumi de dette cause stanno in una camera poco custoditi, del che nd'è stato avertito spesse volte da me, le lettere, quali scriveva l'Illustrissimo cardinale di Pisa bona memoria, et che

scriveva Vostra Signoria Illustrissima al Cardinale nostro bona memoria, quale poi li dava al vicario, per eseguire quel tanto, ordinava, stavano palese, ch'appersi li servitori le legevano, et sapevano li secreti di cause di Religione avanti che s'esequessero et in particolare Giovanni Placentino servitore del detto vicario.

Nell'istesse cause di Religione si procede come se fossero meno che cause pecunarie, perche questi Signori Vicarij alle volte permettono, et danno licentia, che li testimonij del processo informativo s'esaminano da ogni minuto scrivano da per loro senz'assistente, et non in loco secreto, ma alla sala dove praticano molte gente, per li quali oltra che non s'osserva il stile del vero esaminare nel interrogare, per esserò ignoranti, se da ancora occasione a molte testimonianze false, perche se li testimonij sapessero ch'hanno da essere esaminati avante il vicario et persone d'authorità, se resolveriano de dire la verità.

Se procede de piu a citatione, o captura alle volte per semplice relatione del mastro d'atti, o scrivano, firmandono le citationi, et mandati di captura come se fossero mandati cum clausula iustitie, per il che nde sono sequiti inconvenienti assaissimi, non ritrovandosi poi niente contra il denuntiatio, et s'infamano le persone, senza il danno che pateno in starno retenti et altre spese del ch'essi signori vicarij, nde sono tenuti a restitutione, cossi come a loro ho detto piu volte, et in congregatione perche benche io sia fisco, nondimeno voglio piu per la verita, et il debito procedere che per milli fisci, tra l'altre cose nde referirò una, l'altro giorno fu denunciato a questa corte Giovanni Campanile medico in questa città, ch'havesse mangiato carne questa quatragesima prossima passata, et nel'informatione non n'era stato altro, che il detto del denunciante, quale diceva haverlo inteso dal servitore del detto giovanni et esaminato il servitore, depone essere vero, ma in detto tempo il medico suo patrone stava infermo nel letto, et ch'esso li pigliava li sciroppi dal spetiale, per questo solo detto fo citato il Medico dal signor vicario Mascardi, et accettò haverne magnato nel tempo di detta infirmita et retento per questo per molti di, et vedendo poi l'informatione insieme con me, non volse che si procedesse piu oltra, non essendo altro nell'informatione donde per honore di questa corte, attalche non appare ch'have proceduto senz'inditij, et che quel medico non havesse havuto ricorso à questo santo officio pro indebita molestatione, non ha voluto che seli conceda sopra alcuna havendola piu volte dimandata, et l'have habilitata per tutto, senza farne parola in congregatione di Religione il simile s'è fatto in molte altre persone, contro le quali s'è processo da esso signor Mascardi per semplice denuntia solo, a carceratione, senza esserò prima impegnate informationi. saria bene per oviare a questo procedere cossi facile, tanto piu che questo Regno abonda di testimonij falsi, ch' Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ordinasse per l'advenire non s'havesse in modo alcuno recevoir alcuno testimonio in dette cause senza intervento del signor vicario et d'assistente, et per scrivani approbati, buoni cristiani, secreti, et noti ad essi signori vicarij, et che non se proceda ad citatione, ne ad captura senza farsene prima parola in congregatione, cossi come per dispositione de legge si deve attalche in congregatione se discutano l'inditij si sono sufficienti, et al piu delle volte è piu expediente che se proceda contro alcuna persona, prima che se proceda contro un'altra, per la connexità delle cause, et perche se spera piu da uno che da un'altro, il che è necessario farsi poiche da questo procedere cossi facile, se vede ogni giorno in questa corte, che come ad alcuno è mossa lite, o fattoli alcuno dispiacere, per contracava il contrario ricorre a questa corte a denuntiarlo di cose di Religione con portarse il denunciante li testimonij appresso, et se sono scoperte falsità assai, et poi non se castica nesciuno,

cossi come s'è visto in le cause de Giovan Baptista Stantione, Francesco Antonio Pollio, d'un orefice che non me ricordo il nome ma è di casa Moscato, et altri.

In questa corte vi sono nove mastri d'atti, quali oltra che sono ignorantissimi per non saperno apena scrivere, non solo non osservano la pandetta, ma fanno molt'extorsioni, contro li quali ho preso informatione, et fattoci procedere a loro carceratione, et a restitutione dalla bona memoria del Cardinale nostro, et tra l'altri presi informatione contro di Francesco Jovele actuario delle cause di Religione, perche havea inteso gran cose d'esso, et tanto piu ho havuto sospettione contro de lui, et suoi scrivani perche bona parte de tutti l'inquisiti che sono stati, et sono a tempo mio, nelli loro costituiti, et defensionis non hanno errato di nominare et excipere contro quelli che se sono esaminati et già havea incominciato a scoprire cose assai contro di lui, et questa causa per ordine del cardinale, la faceva attitare da uno scrivano secreto che non era di questa corte, et presa che fo l'informatione il cardinale la comesse al detto signor Mascardi all'ora suo luocotenente che dovesse procedere all'esequitione, et venendo detta informatione nelle sue mani questi dì a dietro, volse in ogni modo che quest'informatione la sequitasse ad attitare il detto Francesco Jovele, al scrivano del quale pur inquisito consignò l'informatione, et vede quanto era contro di loro, siche l'informatione contro di detto francesco non s'ha possuto inpignare, et tutto questo contro mio volere, et ordine del Cardinale, del quale succedendo la cascata, et infirmita, non ho possuto dirgelo, perno dargli travaglio, con quest'occasione desiderando che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ordinasse che si mandi copia di quel tanto ch'è solito pagarse per l'atti in quello santo officio, attalche cossi s'osservasse cqua

V'era carcerieri di queste carcere Fabritio de Florio, del quale intendeva molte cose, et particolarmente come dava comodita ch'alli carcerati secreti per cause di Religione seli parlasse da chi loro desideravano, et teneva protectione de carcerati, et faceva banchetti, donde il detto Fabritio una sera al tardo hebbe ardire di volermi corrompere portandomi una mano di ducati da parte di Angelica Granucci carcerata, attalche me portasse bene in suo favore nella causa sua (che credo che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima se ricordi ch'è complice in la causa de Giovan Baptista della Porta) il che non possendo sopportare andai dal Cardinale, et li raccontai questo, et lo fece carcerare, et accettò il tutto nel suo examine, et già io teneva intentione di farlo andare in galera, ma perche il cardinale era compassionevole, del che quella santa anima era soverchio, se contentò che fosse privato dell'officio di carcerieri et che per l'advenire non potesse exercitare il detto, et altro officio in questa corte. Al presente sede vacante contro il detto decreto questi signori vicarij l'hanno adnesso ad officio di [nuntio] et esecutore

Quanto all'escomuniche, et monitorij ad instantia di parte, non s'è osservato requisito nesciuno del sacro concilio di Trento, perche fin'qua se sono concesse senza alcuna consideratione, cioè pro relevi, pro causa criminali, et infamatoria, pro batendis testibus coram iudice laico, et pro quacumque causa, in tanto da che è stato l'Arcivescovato di Napoli, non credo che se ne siano concesse tante quante da alcuni mesi in qua

Restariano infinitissime cose à dire circa la poco secretanza delle cause di religione, et della negligentia grande in non procedere in le cause importantissime che dormeno, et circa la confusione di questa corte in ogni cosa, et principalmente d'esserno dui vicarij con la medesima potesta, l'uno concedendo quello che non ha concesso l'altro, per stare in elezione delli mastri

d'atti, scrivani, et negotianti da chi delli dui voleno fare provvedere, ma sarrebbe piu presto volume, che lettera, assai me basta a me d'havere accennato Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di queste poche cose, tanto piu che per l'obbligo del mio officio, non sono tenuto, ne devo portare rispetto a nesciuno in simili cose, cossi come ho fatto sempre appresso l'Illustrissimo Cardinale mio bona memoria et al presente fo appresso d'Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, et non facendolo gravaria l'anima mia, si che per questa lettera io me sgravo, relassando ogni cosa a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, si ben la supplico di farne gratia scrivendo al signor vicario o altro, di questo non farmene autore, per evitare alcuno inconveniente che potesse nascere, sapendose da essi signori vicarij ch'io habbia scritto questa lettera.

Io ho servito il cardinale a quest'officio dalla sua venuta in Napoli in qua, et quanto m'amava, et come me sia portato fatigando in questa corte dall matina alla sera, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima sene porra informare, al presente ... m'ha confermato. Quest'officio io non l'ho procurato ma il cardinale da se fece elettione di me, facendomene parlare dove volse il signor suo vicario Sillingardi, et per conpiacere à si tanto prelato et santo homo, l'accettai lasciando tutte le mie clientele ch'havea in questa citta, cossi al presente non interpongo parte con l'Illustrissimo successore che sara, pure per l'advenire m'offero servire, et con questo li fo humilmente reverentia, pregando il signor per la salute di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima. Da Napoli el di della visitatione della Beata Vergene del 1578

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Humilissimo Servitore

Stefano Quaranta Advocato fiscale dell'Arcevescovato di Napoli

10. Annibale di Capua to Cardinal Savelli, July 10, 1579 (ACDF, Stanza Storica HH 2-a, f. 690r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor mio padrone colendissimo

Nel ricever l'ultima lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di 4 del presente ordinai subito che si usasse diligentia per trovar Beatrice Portella spagnola, et carcerarla conforme alla sua commissione. Fin qui ella non si è trovata : ma havendosi a continuare nella medesima diligentia avvisarò Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di quel che succede. S'attenderà all'espeditione della causa di mastro Theofilo d'Amico da Trapani ch'ella s'è degnata di commettermi; et à lei darò raguaglio di quel, che si risolverà in essa. Mando a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima il sommario della causa di Laura et di Beatrice Raguanti per haver da lei, et da quei Signori Illustrissimi Colleghi la risoluzione di doi dubbij; l'uno s'elle habbiano da tormentarsi pro ulteriori veritate; et l'altro se le Signorie Vostre Illustrissime comandano, che loro habbiano da abiurare pubblicamente o pure nell'Arcivescovato sedente curia per haver Laura molti figliuoli, et alcuni dottori di qualità c'hanno servito, et forse servono di presente per Auditore Reggio di provincia, et per esser Beatrice giovane donzella da marito. Com'io riceverò l'ordine da Vostra Signoria

Illustrissima l'esseguirò subito riverentemente con quella ispeditione delle sudette cause; et mi raccomando nella sua protectione et gratia. Di Napoli a 10 di luglio 1579

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Devotissimo et obligatissimo servitore

Annibale Arcivescovo di Napoli

11. Annibale di Capua to Cardinal Savelli, October 23, 1579 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica* HH 2-a, f. 700r-v, 759r)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor mio padrone colendissimo

Fu habilitato Mastro Theofilo d'Amico nel suo Monastero con idonea sicurtà in conformità dell'ordine che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima si degnò di di mandarmi con la sua di 10 d'Ottobre. Et per la repetitione de testimonij della Corte, io n'ho scritto all'ordinario di quella terra in Calavria: dove essi si trovano

Quanto a Beatrice figliuola di Laura Raguanti, essendo Vostra Signoria Illustrissima restata servita d'ordinarmi nella sudetta lettera, che se bene come giudaizante doveva abiurare pubblicamente, non di meno, ch'io l'havessi dato conto, se vi fusse stato qualche rispetto per far altra determinatione io per obedire a V.S. Illma le dirò humilmente ch'ella in età d'undeci o dodici anni fu ridotta dalla Madre, et che hora è giovane di 17 vergine, et da marito, et ha il padre, et il zio, che servono a Sua Maestà in officii molto honorati; et di più ha fratelli qualificati, alcuni de quali essendo Dottori hanno servito à Sua Maestà per Auditori Regij di Provincia; et oltre questi rispetti mi par anco conveniente di notificar a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che per quanto intendo da questi consultori della Congregatione è stato usato in questa città, che simili figliuole vergini et in età nubile habbiano ricevuta gratia dell'abiuratione segreta. Onde parrebbe loro, che à lei si potesse far la sudetta gratia, ò almeno, che per honor della famiglia, che milita ugualmente nella madre, et nella figlia si facessero abiurare ambidue nella cappella ianuis apertis et curia sedente. Ma dell'una, et dell'altra se starà aspettando d'intender la volontà di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima per eseguirla subito con humilissima riverenza.

Circa quel Vincenzo di Giovan Leonardo, del qual Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi commanda con quest'ultima sua di 17 che si procuri d'haverne notitia io ho ordinato subito, che fusse esaminato un Giovan Leonardo di Benevento, che si trova prigione nelle mie carceri; et essendo stato interrogato del sopradetto Vincenzo di Giovan Leonardo non ha saputo darne conto alcuno. Però se ben di lui non s'habbia particolar contrasigno; non dimeno per altra via si farà diligentissima inquisitione per saperlo; et se ne darà conto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima.

Mario spada per l'informatione, ch'io ne ho havuto dal Reverendo Padre Rettore del Gesù fu à questi giorni passati in Napoli di ritorno di Spagna: ma che hora al creder suo si trova a Pizzo terra di Calavria. Io conforme all'ordine di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mandarò l'informatione

contra di lui all'ordinario di quel luogo; et le bascio humilissimamente le mani. Di Napoli à 23 d'Ottobre 1579

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Devotissimo et obligatissimo servitore

Annibale Arcivescovo di Napoli

12. Annibale di Capua to Cardinal Savelli, December 28, 1579 (ACDF, *Stanza Storica HH 2-a, f. 728r-729r*)

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor mio padrone colendissimo

Ferrante Guidi, del qual Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi commanda con l'ultima sua di 18 di Dicembre, ch'io le dia informatione è carcerato in questo tribunale ad instantia di Monsignor Reverendissimo di Policastro, che implorò il braccio di questa Corte per procuratorem nel mandato del quale si esprimeva, che procurasse di far ritenere pro causis concernentibus fidem. Et perche questo Ferrante mostra d'haver suspecto il predetto Monsignor Reverendissimo m'ha fatto molte volte instantia ch'io volessi conoscer la sua causa, et spedirla per giustitia. Ma perche se gliè fatto intendere, ch'io non haveva altra auttorità che di tenerlo per Monsignor Reverendissimo di Policastro esso sara mosso a far dar memoriale a quella Santa Congregatione.

Nella causa di Livia, et Prudentia Cappelle, delle quali Vostra Signoria Illustrissima s'è degnata di mandarmi memoriale incluso non si è mancato con molti essamini, et con molte essortationi di persuaderle a confessar la verità ma persistend'esse nella negativa, si sono date loro le defensionì et hora si attende alla repetitione de testimoni, non si mancherà di tirar la causa a fine con ogni diligenza possibile.

Circa Laura Raguanti, et Beatrice sua figliuola Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi ordinò con una di 10 d'ottobre, ch'io havessi fatta abiurare pubblicamente laura et che di Beatrice sua figliuola, che come giudaizante doveva pur abiurar pubblicamente io l'havessi dato conto, se vi fusse stato qualche rispetto per temperar la deliberatione. Risposi per mie lettere de 13 d'ottobre ch'io haverei esseguito riverentemente l'ordine con far abiurar la madre et quanto alla figliuola io avvisai Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di quei rispetti, che concorrevano nel caso di lei, et nella sua persona. Poi volend'io mandar in essecutione l'ordine dell'abiuratione, parve a questi consultori della Congregatione che dovendosi far quest'atto publico sarebbe stato bene di aspettar la resolutione di due, o tre altre giudaizanti per far l'abiuratione insieme, et cosi io diedi conto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di questa dilatione per lettere mie di 7 di Novembre passato. Et dopo quella lettera mandai à Vostra Signoria Illustrissima il sommario d'Angela Leone, et Virgilia sua figlia; acciò si degnasse di commandarmi quel ch'io doveva essequire circa le predette la resolutione delle quali io aspettava per espedirle in compagnia di Laura Raguanti, in caso, che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima avesse ordinato la lor publica abiuratione. Ma poiche delli predetti sommarij io non ho ancor ricevuta risposta per la gravità delle occupationi che

Vostra Signoria Illustrissima sostiene, io ho risoluto di mandar piu allongo l'abiuratione della predetta Laura, et cosi in un giorno di queste feste abiurará senza fallo. Et quanto à Beatrice sua figliuola io starò aspettando risposta di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di quel ch'io l'avvisai con la mia di 13 d'ottobre, non potend'io eseguire altro nella persona di lei per l'ordine che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi diede con una sua di 10 d'ottobre, ch'io dessi conto delli rispetti, che militavano a favor suo, et che poi essa mi haverebbe ordinato quel, ch'io doveva eseguire.

Circa Mastro Theofilo d'Amico Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi comanda con quest'ultima ch'io aspetti la repetitione de testimoni, et che poi spedisca la causa di giustizia. Ma perche io l'avvisai per una mia di 13 ottobre che la repetitione de testimoni io l'haveva rimessa in partibus a Monsignor Vescovo di Squillaci, et dopo quella lettera Vostra Signoria Illustrissima mi ... con una sua di 20 di Novembre, che quando l'espeditone della causa si sarebbe spedita in quella santa congregatione io, dubitando che la repetitione che si aspetta di Squillaci non fusse tardata, mi risolsi di mandar il processo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima accompagnato con una mia di 27 di Novembre. Hora in quest'ultimo ordine di 18 di dicembre, c'ho ricevuto da lei non si facendo intentione della ricevuta del processo, né potend'io esser sicuro che questa commissione di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima sia in risposta della mia di 27 di Novembre, o di quella prima di 13 d'ottobre, riceverei somma gratia ch'ella si degni di scrivermi, et havendo ricevuto il processo, ella mi comanda ch'io aspetti la repetitione di testimonj et che poi spedisca la causa per giustizia, desiderando questa dechiaratione per non far errore circa il modo di obedire a gli ordini di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, li quali eseguirò sempre con humilissima riverenza.

Quanto a Francesco Antonio di Massarijs, che fu inviato à queste carceri, lo mandai a quel Santo Officio in compagnia di Porfirio Roscio per la fragata del Santo Officio, che condusse anchora Antonino Vento. Et non havend'altro da rispondere alla lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima le bascio humilissimamente le mani, et mi raccomando nella sua protezione et gratia. Di Napoli a 28 di dicembre 1579. Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

Devotissimo et obligatissimo servitore

Annibale Arcivescovo di Napoli