A Social History of Religious Tolerance in the Iberia and its Atlantic Empires

In 1988, the distinguished British social historian Peter Burke suggested that a virtual "Copernican Revolution" in religious history was taking place. He noted historians of religion had moved away from a focus on institutional and ecclesiastical matters and a focus on the clergy and theology in a strict sense to a history of piety, or belief that examined the attitudes, values, practices, and sentiments of the laity; and not only of the majority, but of minorities and dissidents as well. Of course, a wide range of topics were being addressed in this movement, and among them was the history, meaning, and practice of freedom of conscience and religious toleration, a topic that in the study of Christianity already had a long and venerable genealogy. This topic had long been essentially a field of intellectual history, usually centered on the writings of a series of breakthrough thinkers, and, in political terms, traditionally associated with pragmatic considerations such as economic benefits or political accommodations like the Edict of Nantes (1598) made after the Protestant Reformation, or the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that brought an end to the period of the Thirty Years War and the wars of religion.

Although I was familiar with the writings of Natalie Davis, Carlo Ginzburg, Bob Scribner and others, since I had not been trained as a historian of religion, I was only vaguely aware of this general transformation that Burke had identified. As a student of Iberia and its empires, however, I was familiar with the extensive literature about Christian relations to Jews and Muslims in medieval Iberia, and about the role of the Inquisition in the hardening of religious identities and enforcement of Catholic exclusivity in Iberia during the Early Modern Catholic

Reformation. In the early 1980s, I experienced something of a transformative moment one night while reading Carlo Ginzburg's, *The Cheese and the Worms* in which its obscure protagonist, the Friulan miller Domenico Scandella, called Menocchio, explained his cosmology to inquisitors, and stated that while he was, of course, a Christian, that if he had been born a Turk, he would have found his salvation in their faith, because, as he insisted, "God loves us all." How remarkable, how "modern," I thought, and how unlike what I had been led to believe was the attitude of Early modern Christians about religion, religious identity, and salvation. Ginzburg's book became a classic, the model example of microhistory as a method. It made Menocchio, famous; he became an historian's household reference. But there had been criticism of the book too; that Menocchio's opinions, and dissident ideas were singular and idiosyncratic and could not be generalized, nor should they be understood as part of a more generalized "popular culture."

It was almost two decades later, while working in Spanish Inquisition documents in the National Archive in Madrid, I began to encounter many similar statements made by people who expressed ideas about other religions similar to Menocchio's. Some of them were clerics. lawyers, or doctors, and people with university training, but more often they were workers, tradesmen, bakers, and soldiers, or simply what might be called the common folk, some of whom were at least literate, and some who were not. Among them were *conversos* or moriscos, the converts from Judaism and Islam and their descendants, but there were also English, Flemish, French, and Italian travelers, some of whom had been influenced by Protestant thought, and there were surprisingly, many Spanish "Old Christians" of unquestionable Catholic origins who also shared these ideas. Their positions varied: some

were relativists who thought one religion was as good any other since God had made them all; others were universalists who thought all religions might be valid; still others were simply indifferent about religion in general. Also present were people who doubted all religions, and a few were so skeptical that today we would call them atheists.[1] But, I would emphasize that many thought themselves good Catholics, some of whom held that force in matters of free will was unjustified, others who believed that the motives of the Inquisition were corrupt, and many who simply disagreed with settled dogma on soteriology. They questioned the Church's exclusive claim to be the only path to salvation.

Why in the many works on toleration, the ones that always mentioned Spinoza, Locke, and Rousseau, was there usually no reference to these faceless nobodies, and why was I finding them in the supposedly intolerant world of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, regions long held to be the very epitome of intolerance, and examples of the negative national effects of religious bigotry and exclusions? My curiosity was piqued, and I spent much of the following decade writing a book on the subject that emphasized considerable evidence of popular resistance to the Catholic idea of no salvation outside the Church (*nulla salus extra ecclesiam*), often expressed by variants of the common expression or refrain: "each person can be saved in their own religion" (*cada uno se puede salvar en su* ley). [2]

Drawing on a few cases from that book and from materials that I and others have uncovered since its publication, this essay summarizes some of my findings and conclusions. It

[1] In the early modern Hispanic world "atheism " had a broader meaning and included not only those who denied the existence of God, but also blasphemers, epicureans, libertines, and Machiavellians who put *raison d'etat* before moral considerations, as well as those who we might classify as agnostics. See Gerónimo Graciano, *Diez lamentaciones del miserable estado de los ateistas del nuestro tiempo* [1607] (Madrid, 1974).
[2] Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved, Religious Tolerance and salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

was only as my book went to press (late 2007) that I discovered that other scholars such as Alexandra Walsham (2006) and Ben Kaplan (2010) were also writing social histories of religious toleration in other places, and although using quite different sources, sometimes reaching quite similar conclusions that amounted to a rewriting of the existing history of toleration in the Western Europe.[3]

Some evidence of this social history of toleration had already been done for other countries, cities, or regions in Europe and I had cited it in a concluding chapter entitled "Rustic Pelagians," a term that Anglican ministers had used to describe and criticize parishioners who did not seem to care much about the religious beliefs of their neighbors, so long as they caused no harm or trouble. That chapter suggested that the attitudes of religious tolerance within a regime of official intolerance that I had found in the Iberian empires could be found in many places in early modern Europe. While this growing wave of the social history of toleration seemed to be running against the well-developed current of the theological and philosophical history, long in the hands of the intellectual historians, all of us who were surfing on this new wave had to be indebted to our predecessors, some of whom had already realized that the history of religious toleration was neither lineal nor unidimensional, nor was it to be to be found only in learned texts.[4] The great French Jesuit scholar Joseph Lecler in his magnificent

[3] Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Tolerance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) provided a pan European approach while Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred. Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006) provides an excellent example of a deep study of one country which provides suggestive conclusions that might be generalized. For a perceptive general discussion of the historiographical changes in the study of toleration see Jeffrey Collins, "Redeeming the Enlightenment: New Histories of Religious Toleration." *Journal of Modern* History 81 (2009), 607-36, and the useful bibliographical guide provided by Jesse Spohnholz, "Toleration," Oxford Bibliographies (2014) http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com.

[4] See for example, P. Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) and the edited volumes of J. Ch. Laursen and C.J. Nederman on toleration such as *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: UPenn Press,1997). .

Toleration and the Reformation (1955) had written a traditional intellectual history, but he had been perceptive enough to realize that something was missing from his work. Lecler had pointed out that the great thinkers who had written on toleration were all part of a "social milleu," and that whole "milieu" was already aware of the same issues, As he put it, "history and sociology overlap in the study of tolerance." He was implying that Erasmus, Spinoza, Voltaire and the others had codified and synthesized, but they had never been alone. Lecler's observation leads to the final objective of this essay which is to raise questions about the relationship between the "popular" vs. the "learned" or theological origins of religious tolerance, and the dynamics or trajectory of their influence on each other. In doing so, I will incorporate some of the new research on toleration, especially in the Iberian world, that has appeared in the last decade, as well as respond to some of the criticisms of my "controversial" (a synonym for erroneous) approach to a social history of religious tolerance based on the use of questionable Inquisition documents. In doing so, I hope to suggest some directions that further research on the question of religious tolerance might take.

Religion in Early Modern Iberia

The forced conversions of Jews and Muslims and the subsequent expulsions practicing Jews and Muslims, and eventually (1609) of the *Moriscos*, or converts from Islam, and then subsequent discrimination against the remaining descendants from converts from those faiths through the "purity of blood" (*limpieza de sangre*) restrictions, seem to make the Iberian kingdoms and their overseas empires the very models of intolerance. While other empires, the Roman, the Mughal, the Ottoman, and the Ching developed strategies of inclusion for other religions as a

basis of imperial expansion, the Iberian empires made Catholic religious unity the *sine qua* non of citizenship and the key to state power. In the Iberian monarchies-Castile, Aragon, and Portugal, the maintenance of political unity and Catholic orthodoxy of the community became the essential objectives of a state policy upheld by the Church, through its episcopal authority, its missions, and especially through the tribunals of the Inquisition. None were allowed to question orthodox Catholic belief openly, and when in the 1780s some "enlightened" critics did so publicly, the Inquisition responded sharply that "Intolerance is a fundamental law of the Spanish nation; it was not created by the common people and they should not be the ones to end it."[5]

Despite the overwhelming evidence of religious intolerance and the institutional and social marginalization of the converts from other faiths, from the fifteenth century forward there is also considerable evidence that a certain kind of religious relativism and could be found throughout the Iberian world, codified in a popular and often repeated refrain: "*Cada uno se puede salvar en su ley*" (Each person can be saved in his or her own law). This was a saying that never appears in the *refraneros, the* published collections of popular sayings, controlled as they were by the censors of state and Church, but with variations it often appeared in Inquisition edicts and in trial records. I t appears to be a saying that was constantly repeated or reformulated with slight variation by men and women from a variety of backgrounds; illiterate

[5] "La intolerancia es una ley fundamental de la nación española; no fue estabelecida por la gente del comun, y no deben ser ellos quienes la proscriban." See Ricardo García Cárcel and Doris Moreno Martínez, *Inquisición. Historia crítica* (Madrid, 2000), 314. See also,Ricardo García Cárcel, « The Other Forms of Tolerance in Early Modern Spain," Doris Moreno, ed. *The Complexities of Religious Life in the Hispanic World (16th to 18th centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 75-102.

laborers and peasants, soldiers, mariners, merchants, artisans, and occasionally some clergymen (especially Franciscans) as well.[6] It was heard from the mouths of *moriscos* and *conversos* anxious to defend their former faith, or to affirm the validity of the lives and souls of their ancestors, but also from Old Christians who dissented from the Church's dogmatic position that there was no *salvation outside the Church*, or who remained unconvinced, or were at least confused by the ancient and seemingly intractable Christian theological debate about the relative roles of divine grace, natural law, and good works in the process of salvation.

For these dissenters, religion and "law," or theology were conflated. Belief and ethics were one, and they held that those who lived according to natural law or held to God's precepts even in another religion would also be saved. This was a kind of permissive soteriology that had the effect of neither condemning nor demonizing the "other", and as such it threatened and undermined the considerable programs of state and Church to assure unity through orthodoxy."[7] Many of these dissenters believed, like Menocchio, that "God loves us all. " Some were religious relativists who thought there might be many truths, while others were pragmatists like the *morisco,* Gaspar Vayazan who told the Inquisitors of Murcia in 1567 that he believed in all three laws, that of Our lord Jesus Christ, that of Mahoma, and that of Señor Moisés, "for if one of them let him down, he could fall back on the others."[8] There were convinced Catholics who felt that discrimination and force in matters of conscience were

[6] F.C..Hayes, "The Collecting of Proverbs in Spain before 1650," *Hispania, 20:1 (1937), 85-94.*

[7] In 1641 a Spanish governor of Chile in negotiation with the Mapuche Indians told them that once they became Christians, they would share the same heart and faith with the Spaniards, but that until then, there could be no real union because between nations diversity of belief and prayer would always divide them. See, Guillaume Boccara, "Génesis y estructura de los complejos fronterizos euroopndígenas. Repensando los márgenes americanos a partirt (y más allá) de la obra de Nathan Wachtel, *Memoria Americana* 13 (2005), 21-52

[8] "tenia y creyia en tres leyes, la de Nuestro Señor Jesu Xpo, y la de Mahoma, y del Señor Moysen porque si la una le faltasse, no le faltasse la otra." AHN [Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid)], Inquisición Lib. 2022.

uncharitable and against Christ's teachings. Why, asked André Lopes, an Old Christian peddlar from Evora, Portugal in the 1620s, did the Inquisitors wish to make the *conversos* Christians by force if God did not want them to be Christians in the first place?[9] And, there were still others for whom no religion was valid. For them, there existed only birth and death. Such skepticism was not necessarily born of deep philosophical doubt or reflectiion. A *morisco* on his way to Gandía when asked which Law was best, Christianity of Islam, answered that, "he had no law [religion] in his heart because he was too poor to permit himself such a luxury." This is a response that should at least caution us about the supposed centrality of religious identity and belief in the lives of everyone in the early modern era.[10]

The idea that all could be saved was defined by ecclesiastical authority as a "proposition", a doubt about dogma that was potentially heretical, and as such, in need of correction.. These expressions of uncertainty took many forms, skepticism about the power of the saints or the symbol of the cross, doubts about the virginity of Mary, disbelief in Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, or the Devil, questioning that the state of marriage was less pleasing to God than the celibacy of the clergy, a rejection of the idea that sex between unmarried men and women was a mortal sin, and sometimes a criticism of the policies of the state and Church toward religious minorities or dissidents. After the great persecution of the converts from Judaism, in the late

[9] ANTT [Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon)], Inquisição de Évora, maço 64, n. 608. The case is discussed ore fully in Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved,* 112-114.

[10] Dolores Bramon, *Contra moros y judíos* (Barcelona, 1986), 194. See also, Aurelia Martín Casares, "Cristianos, Musulmanes y animistas en Granada: identidades religiosas y sincretismo cultural,"in *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos*, Berta Ares Queija y Alessandro Stella, eds. (Seville, 2000), 207-221. Alexandra Walsham, "Migrations of the Holy: religious Change in Medieval and Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44:2 (2014), 241-280 warns us not to project modern sensibilities and cosmologies on early modern opinions, and suggests rather like Lucien Febvre (*Le probleme de l'incroyance au xvie siècle. La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1947) before her that disbelief was virtually absent from early modern cosmologies. Nevertheless, statements like this one, give me cause to be skeptical about the impossibility of disbelief well before the eighteenth century.

fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the suppression of Erasmian thought and Protestantism, and the decision to enforce the reforms of the Council of Trent, the Spanish Inquisition tribunals had made the suppression of these propositions among Old Christians a major objective of its operations. In tribunals such as those of Toledo, Galicia, and Lima, trials for propositions constituted over a third of all prosecutions before 1700. But, the ideas were even more widely diffused than those figures imply since *conversos and moriscos* who expressed them were usually tried not for propositions, but as Jewish or Islamic apostates, while foreigners who held these ideas were usually prosecuted as "Lutherans," the common term for Protestants.[11] Thus they were not counted in the quantitative tabulations of prosecutions for propositions. Unfortunately for them, they were usually punished far more harshly as a result.[12]

The sources of ideas about the validity of all faiths were varied. At some point *moriscos* were thought particularly prone to this position as a Valencian report of 1560 argued. The Inquisition in its edicts of faith warned the faithful to especially beware of such ideas from converts from Islam.[13] There were, in fact, Islamic concepts such as *fitra,* or innate human religiosity, that was molded "accidentally" by the accident of birth. Our parents determined our religion. There were Koranic passages that could be interpreted in this way such as Koran 5.59: "To each of you God has prescribed a Law and a way. If God [had willed], He would have

[11] Belgian scholar Werner Thomas generously provided me 100 cases from his data base of people prosecuted by the Spanish Inquisition as Protestants in which the accused made statements about the validity of all faiths or in favor of religious tolerance. I did not include these cases in *All Can Be Saved.* See, Werner Thomas, *Los protestantes y la Inquisición en España en tiempos de Reforma y Contrareforma* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 478-83.
[12] Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos* (Baltimore, 2006), 105, cites the case of a Morisco, Francisco Zenequi, who in 1583 was tried by the Valencia Inquisition for holding to the belief that each can be saved in his own law.
[13] See the summary in Johanan Freidmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (Cambridge, 2003), 87-89.

made you a single people. But God's purpose is to test you in what he has given each of you, so strive for the pursuit of all virtues, and know that you will all return to God. . ." [14] *Moriscos* could take or mold such concepts to their resentments under the pressures of conversion. Luis Borico Gajo expressed the frustration of many when he complained that God had not done his job (*ofício)* well, making some Christians, some Moors, and some Jews, and if God had wanted them all to be of one faith, He should have made them so.[15] Some simply wanted to be left alone and enjoy freedom of conscience, to live, as the inquisitors recorded it, "each in his own sect". A *morisco* reminded the inquisitors in 1587 that in Ottoman lands Christians were allowed to worship as they wished, and that the result was more peace for all.[16] Conversos also held on to the idea that the Old Mosaic Law had been a good one, and had remained valid. While adopting Christian concepts of salvation foreign to Judaism, they continued to emphasize the validity of their former faith. Some adopted a relativist position that all the faiths were made by God and thus all were valid, and some came to have doubts about the validity of any religion, but such skepticism and questioning was not limited or peculiar to *conversos* as the rich historiography about the Sephardic diaspora in Amsterdam and northern Europe sometimes suggested. Whatever the rationale for universalist, relativist, or skeptical ideas among the religious minorities, these ideas were broadly shared by the Old Christian community as well. There was a medieval theological tradition in which the validity of natural

[14] *ACBS,* 65; Sara Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn-al-Rwândi, Abú Bakir al-Râzî and their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Leiden, 1999).
[15] AHN, Inquisición 2022, exp. 2. "que Dios no habia hecho bien su ofício en hacer que unos fuessen xtianos y otros moros y otros judíos sino que todos habian de ser unos. . ."
[16] AHN Inq. 988, 352v; AHN, Inq. Lib. 937, f.16, both cited in Marya T. Green-Mercado, "The Mahdi in Valencia: Messianism, Apocalypticism and Morisco Rebellions in Late Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Medieval Encounters* 19 (2003), 1-28 at p. 11.

law, “perfect ignorance” (never having the true faith revealed), and the possibility of salvation outside the Church had all been long debated. Although Aquinas’ position that the Church was the universal path that alone leads to the liberation of the soul had by the fourteenth century triumphed, it had to be reconciled with the concept of salvation available to all mankind, and so a series of apologetic arguments developed founded on the idea that while God could be recognized by natural theology and human reason, sin prevented salvation by this path. Earlier theologians like Origen (185-254 C.E.) who believed that eventually that a merciful God would save all, (the heresy of apocatastasis), or the English monk Pelagius (354-420 C.E..) who emphasized salvation by good works had lost the debate and had been declared heretics, but aspects of their positions had never been put to rest entirely.[17] We can observe the remnants of such thought in texts like the poet Dante’s *canto 19* of his *Paraiso that asked* what justice could there

be

for a blameless infidel on the banks of the Indus to suffer eternal damnation? What fault is it of his?[18] Two centuries later, Stefano Mendache di Alcamo told the Inquisitors of Sicily in 1575 that Muslims living well according to their own law would not go to Hell, but to Limbo. When asked where he got this idea, he said he had read it in the poet Dante. He had read and understood the poet’s questions. [19] The theologians had not made the issue of free will and

[17] D. Oligari, *Gratia et certâmen. The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-called Semipelagians* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003). See also, António Vitor Ribeiro, “Crise e consciência: ensaio sobre a descristianazação de Portugal no século xvii,”*Via Spiritus* 23 (2016), 117-145. Ribeiro underlines a growing skepticism and pyrrhonism by the close of the seventeenth century among the literate, but there is considerable evidence of such thought earlier as well.
[18] Robert S. Lopez, “Dante, Salvation, and the Layman,” *History and Imagination. Essays in honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper*, H. Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and B. Worden, eds. (London, 1981), 37-42.
[19] Francesco Renda, *La inquiszione in Sicilia* (Palermo: Sellerio,1997), 385.

grace disappear. It lingered on. Francisco Martínez, a Franciscan in Seville told his brethren in 1604 that, "any infidel negative or contrary to the faith, like the Moor or the Japanese, keeping natural law, can be saved, only needing to say to God, "Lord," if I knew a better way or Law, I would follow it."[20] Even the widely-read Dominican, Domingo de Baltanás had suggested that "works make the man," and he had gone so far as to suggest in his *Concordancias* (1555) that children who died before baptism, those who lived by natural law, or in the old Mosaic law could by their "intention and faith (*voto y fe)* be saved, so it was unthinkable that God would do less for those who had lived within the Church.[21]

But theological debate and questioning was not the only source of doubt. Iberia's peculiar multi-religious and cultural traditions of recognition and uneasy accommodation also made their contribution.[22] While relationships between the three religions were by the fifteenth century, usually hostile, on the personal level, interactions between individuals, families, and communities contributed to an uneasy sentiment of live and let live, and sometimes even to feelings of cultural relativity and admiration. Bartolomé Espín, a cloth merchant from Córdoba, in a discussion about the bad weather and shortages in Spain said that God sent good weather and abundance to the Moors and pagans because, "they lived in their law better than we do in ours," adding that, "they love and care for each other while we wish to beat each other, and if we loved one another and kept God's law, He would provide His mercy."[23] There were

[20] Nine of his brother Franciscans denounced him for his misunderstanding of the theology. See *ACBS,* 137.
[21] Domingo de Baltanás, *Concordancias de muchos passos dificiles de la divina historia* (Seville,1555). See also, Alvaro Huerga, *El proceso de la Inquisición de Sevilla contra Domingos de Baltanás* (Jaén. 1958).
[22] The literature on Iberian *convivencia* is extensive. For a perceptive recent overview see Hussein Fancy, "What was *Convivencia*? Spanish medievalism at mid-century, *History and Theory* (in press).
[23] Rafael Gracia Boix, ed., *Autos de fe y causas de la inquisición de Córdoba* (Cordoba: Diputación provincial, 1983), 377. See also David Nierenberg, *Communities of Violence* (Princeton, 1996).

Castilians who objected to the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and to the war against Muslim Granada. "How do you expect it to rain" asked a drought-stricken farmer from Soria in 1480, "when the king is going to take away the Moors' homes when they have not done him any harm?" When told that war against them was necessary to spread the true faith, the farmer replied that no one really knew which of the three monotheistic religions was best.[24] In Portugal voices were raised against King Sebastião's 1578 campaign in North Africa: " Only God knew if this war was just or unjust because the Muslims are also his creatures," said Manuel Rodríguez, an Alentejan Old Christian. A New Christian woman, Lianor Martins, argued that the king had erred in his wars against the Muslims by not allowing each person to live in his or her own law.[25]

Sometimes these expressions of sympathy in the face of the Inquisition's of "pedagogy of fear" were bravely spoken and deeply felt. There were persons who were willing to speak out against what was perceived as policies they considered practically misguided and against both God's design and the principles of Christian charity. Fernando de Lucena, a public scribe from Mahón in the Balearic islands had told his friends during a discussion of some people tried by the Toledo Inquisition that "the good Moor should die as a Moor, the Jew as a Jew, and the Christian as a Christian," When someone lamented that those condemned for judaizing had stubbornly rejected the cross to the very end, and so were burnt alive, Lucena defended them, arguing that they had not abandoned their faith, and had died "like good soldiers, never taking

[24] John Edwards, Religious Faith and Doubt in Late Medieval Spain: Soria circa 1450-1500," *Past and Present* 120 (1988), 3-25.
[25] Maria Paula Marçal Lourenço "Para o estudo da atividade inquisitorial no Alto Alentejo: a visita da Inquisição de Lisboa ao bispado de Portalegre e 1578-79," *A Cidade* 3 (1989), 109-138.

a backward step." Here was undisguised admiration for the constancy of belief. For this, he was denounced by his friends. The idea that Jews dying for their faith were martyrs like the Christians who had died for theirs was expressed from time to time, not only by *conversos*, but by Old Christians as well. [26]

These propositions were carried by the Spanish and Portuguese to new lands as the empires expanded. A simple man like Tomé de Medina, a pastry chef in the mining city of Potosí in Upper Peru argued in 1582 that God had created the Muslim, Jew, and Lutheran in their own religions and undoubtedly expected that they would be saved in them. If he had been raised in one of those laws, Medina said, he (like Menocchio) would find salvation there, "for all of them are good."[27] In a well-studied and moving case, an Old Christian woman María de Zárate who was married to a New Christian merchant in Mexico City, had told the Inquisitors: "God the Father did not get angry at those who served God the Son, and God the Son did not get angry at those who served God the Father; and that in cases of doubt, the safest thing was to serve God the Father, without ever mentioning the Holy Spirit."[28]

Aside from *moriscos* and *conversos* certain other segments of the population also drew inquisitorial attention for relativist ideas about salvation. *Renegados*, former captives in North Africa or the Ottoman lands, always reconciled with the Church upon return to Christendom by

[26] The martyrdom of Issac de Castro Tartas, captured in Brazil and executed in Lisbon reverberated through the Sephardic communities is especially interesting since he was also an advocate of universal religious tolerance. See the work of Miriam Bodian, "From the Files of the Portuguese Inquisition: Isaac de Castro Tartas's Latin Ego-Document, 1645," *The Jewish Quarterly Review, 107:2 (2017), 231-246; Dying in the Law of Moses. Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in the Iberian World* (Bloomington,IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[27] *AHN, Inq. lib.1027 (Lima), fs. 237-39v.*

[28] Nathan Wachtel, "Marrano Religiosity in Hispanic America in the Seventeenth Century," The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450-1800, Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering, eds. (New York, 2001), 149-172.

stating that in their hearts they had never abandoned the true faith, but some had developed a certain cultural sensitivity and even admiration for the Islamic world and were later denounced for saying that the Muslims were religious or charitable, or that they too had their holy men, and that living well in their law, they too could find salvation. Similar statements were also made by foreigners—Flemings, Italians, Greeks, and especially the French who, of course, merited special concern as potential "Lutherans." Juan Viñas, a farmer from Toulouse in an argument with friends asked how it was possible that with all those Protestant dukes, counts, doctors, and ladies in France, that all were condemned? When told they all were damned, he gave the same response made by many: " What do you know about who will be saved and who is lost? Only God knows." [29] The presence of these ideas among foreigners undercuts to some extent the argument that such opinions were the peculiar heritage of Spain's *convivencia*, and they imply that popular attitudes of religious tolerance based on a common sense understanding of Christian doctrine, and perhaps some residual of the medieval doctrinal debates could be found across Europe.[30] Spain and Portugal at various moments were willing to make concessions on freedom of conscience when seeking diplomatic, political or commercial arrangements, but what makes Iberia exceptional is the fact that since there were no longer any resident religious minorities, and thus little apparent economic advantage to be gained from them, the expressions of popular religious tolerance can not be directly linked to

[29] AHN, Inquisición 2022, exp. 26.

[30] A number of reviews of *ACBS* wrongly stated that I believed the medieval experience of the contact of three religions had made Iberia peculiarly inclined to tolerant attitudes. While I believe that experience contributed to such attitudes, at various points in the book and especially in the concluding chapter, I emphasized that these attitudes were widely shared across Europe. For recent work centered on northern Europe see, Victoria Christman, "Ideology, Pragmatism, and Coexistence," in Marjorie Elizabeth Plumer and Victoria Christman, eds. *Topographies of Tolerance and Intolerance. Responses to Religious Pluralism in Reformation Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 7-27.

immediate material or political considerations.[31] When such *politique* objectives in regard to *conversos* seemed to be suggested by the Count-Duke of Olivares in the 1630s, they were met by stiff resistance from sectors of the nobility and the Inquisition that eventually contributed to his downfall.

In the face of these ideas the position of the Inquisition was firm. There was only one true faith; all others were false, and all other religions were merely sects. Salvation was only possible through baptism within the Church. This message was broadcast widely, but it encountered stubborn, persistent, practical, and permissive resistance, sometimes based on a reading or (mis)understanding of scripture that allowed for the salvation of all humankind. The Inquisitors responded subtly. The offending propositions were sometimes considered heretical—but not always. Punishments of uneducated Old Christian offenders tended to be lenient—fines, penance, instruction, and occasionally exile or whippings. Clergy and literate offenders as well as the converts and their descendants were more likely to be accused of heresy and treated more harshly. But despite the fact that prosecutions for propositions decreased after the mid-seventeenth century, the ideas lingered. In 1701 Inocencio de Aldama, a twenty-eight year old vagabond from Alava with a good education and broad experience as a soldier in the Mediterranean was denounced for saying that "all can be saved." He defended himself before his judges and although he was willing to accept their correction on most matters, on the matter of faith he told them that not even the "doctors of Salamanca," could persuade him from his belief that, " all can be saved in the law they profess. . . we all come

[31] Henry Kamen,T*he Spanish Inquisition* (New Haven, 1998) has argued that such attitudes were the natural result of *convivencia* and that under the Inquisition's pressure they disappeared among Old Christians and survived only among converts and other marginal groups. The charges against non-Spaniards and thee many eighteenth-century cases against these propositions argues against his position.

from the same trunk from which different shoots spring forth, and all of them bear fruit, and so too are all the laws and sects."[32] Exasperated by his reasoning, the inquisitors finally placed him in a mental hospital.[33]

Is it possible to characterize those who believed in salvation for all, or at least were willing to concede that only God knew who would be saved? The idea was found among both converts and Old Christians. It was not limited to Spaniards or Portuguese and a significant number of Flemings, Italians, Greeks, French, and others were also tried for this idea. Most of them were men, but some women also appear in the trials. Many of them had traveled; voyaged to the Indies, taken the king's pay in the famous Spanish infantry *tercios,* served in the Mediterranean, had been captives or renegades, or had circulated through Spain in the annual harvest cycle. Many had seen other lands and other ways, but if they had traveled, so too had many of the people that denounced them. Travel or cosmopolitanism itself did not explain doubts about dogma. Many who expressed doubts in fact, were not peasants or laborers but tradesmen and people from the middling sectors. While the occasional clerics or friars with a dissident soteriology seemed to be drawing on earlier theological debates, most of the laity appear to have reached their conclusions without reference to a specific theological position, although occasionally some did mention popular works of devotion like those of Fray Luis de Granada or Domingo de Baltanás. It seems that many could read and write, but did not have a

[32] ". . .que todos procedimos de la misma capa de que salian diferentes sarmientos que daban fruto y assi era todas las leyes y sectas y que todos se salvan en la que quisiessen profesar como la guardassen cumplidamente." AHN, Inquisición (Murcia) 2845.

[33] I would note here that there are a number of famous and well-studied Inquisition cases in which, like that of Aldama, the accused was thought to be mad or mentally deficient, or feigning madness but in which all of them expressed some degree of religious toleration or openness to the possibility of the validity of other faiths. See for example, Sara Nalle, *Mad for God. Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete* (Richmond: University Press of Virginia, 2001), or the case of Mateo Salado in Lima (1578).

university education or theological training. They were literate and they used their skill to access learned culture to which they always brought their own reading and understanding. They may have represented a subculture—more traveled, more cosmopolitan, better read, and more independent-minded, but mixed among them were always individuals who did not fit the patterns of mobility or literacy, and yet had still come to believe that "each person can be saved in his or her own law." I would emphasize, however, that whatever they heard or read that they could think for themselves, like Andrés Fernandes, an Old Christian from Portuguese Alentejo who self-denounced himself, and told the inquisitors of Evora in 1583 that he had heard a sermon four years before in which the curate said that only with baptism was salvation possible. Nevertheless, he believed that given the greatness of God and the existence of so many Moors and Turks, and gentiles, that God, who had created them all, surely would not want them all in Hell. We do not know if he confessed his doubts motivated by desire for clarification, or in fear of being denounced, but it is clear that he had his well-reasoned doubts.[34]

Finally, it should be emphasized that prior to 1750 the people who had these doubts and reservations about aspects of dogma, and about the exclusive validity of the Church, were a minority and did not represent a party or a movement. They were individuals who simply shared a "proposition." As such their immediate threat to the established order of religious

[34] ANTT, Inquisição de Évora, livro 10, 250V.-52v. cited in Giuseppe Marcocci, I custodi dell'ortodossia. Inquisizione e Chiesa nel Portogallo del Cinquecento (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Litteratura, 204), 305-06.

intolerance was relatively small, but the inquisitors understood quite well that their desire for "freedom of conscience" might in the long-term have effects that could shake the existing social and political order.

America: Salvation and Liberty

In the case of Iberia and the overseas empires Spain and Portugal created we can see how these dissident ideas could survive or even flourish in a multiethnic and muilticultural environment. The Americas after 1492 presented various kinds of eschatological hopes as well as challenges to orthodoxy. Papal grants served both Castile and Portugal as the basis of sovereignty, and in both empires, the conversion of the pagan peoples became the acknowledged task of both crown and altar. Various Catholic authors saw in the availability of millions of new adherents to the Church through the conversion of the Indians as a compensation for what had been lost to the Church in Europe by the Reformation. Franciscan friar, Jerónimo de Mendieta, saw a divine plan in this situation and he specifically noted that this happened after, "the Catholic Monarchs had cleaned all of Spain that for so many years had been contaminated by these two sects (Jews and Muslims) who had dishonored and offended our Christian religion."[35] The creation of a universal Church bringing the inhabitants of the New World under the yoke of the true faith seemed a real possibility to the first generation of missionaries.

[35] Jeronimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica Indiana (1596)*, (Mexico City, 1971), 17-18, cited in Alberto Filippi, "laberintos del etnocentrismo jurídico-político. De la limpieza de sangre a la desestructuración étnica," *Para una Historia de América. II. Los nudos*, Marcello Carmagnani, Alicia Hernández Chavez, Ruggiero Romano, eds., (Mexico City, 1999), 318-43.

But the size of America, its pagan inhabitants, its conditions. and its distance from centers of authority also created threats to that hope. The policy of intolerance and religious unity was strictly applied to the New World. Restrictions on the immigration of *conversos* and *moriscos* began in 1510 and were repeated in 1518 and 1522, and a whole system of passports and registry was constructed to regulate and prohibit the passage of heretical individuals, categories of people, or ideas to America. But as early as 1506 there were complaints that *conversos* were consistently violating the restrictions . Converts from Judaism or Islam or foreigners who might be Protestants presented a threat to the orthodoxy of the empire, especially in an environment where the faith was still new among the indigenous peoples of America. Thus for political and economic reasons, but always with a religious motive as well, punishments of foreigners was usually stern.

But America also presented the challenges of "liberty," by which was meant a lack of restraint, sexual and moral license, freedom from the obligations of dependency and rank, freedom from tax obligations, and sometimes, by implication, freedom of conscience. As early as 1516, father Bartolomé Las Casas had called for the establishment of the Inquisition because of such threats, and in the eighteenth century Jesuits in the Rio de la Plata argued that not one, but two or three Inquisition tribunals were necessary in that region if, "Spain did not want in its dominions that each person live in the Law that they wanted."[36] The possibility of linking "*libre albedrio* (free will) with "freedom of conscience," that is religious freedom, was an inherent theological or philosophical problem, but in the context of the New World it might also have

[36] José Toribio Medina, *Historia de la tribunal del Santo Ofi3cio de la Inquisición de Lima*, 2 vols. (Santiago de Chile, 1887), I: 332-33n.

the effect of becoming linked to the freedom of the Indians from their tribute obligations or of African slaves from their servitude. The explorer Pedro Fernandez de Quirós alerted the Spanish crown in the 1590s that an English fleet had embarked for Chile where it hoped to join forces with the stubborn Araucanian Indians. From there, he warned of dire consequences because the English planned to declare "liberty of conscience, and freedom for all the Indians and Blacks of America."[37] Whether the warnings of Queirós were real or imagined, they reveal his perception of where the fissures in the society lay and the threat that freedom of conscience triggered for those in authority.

So a major challenge came not only from the traditional threats, the marginalized descendants of religious minorities or foreign interlopers, but also from a Spanish and Portuguese Christian laity seeking the "liberty" that the New World presented. Credulities and incredulities, local practices and "superstitions" had been transferred to America, and so too was heterodox soteriology. While there were many conquerors and colonists who exploited indigenous peoples and believed they had no souls to be saved, for others the traditional attitudes about the monotheistic faiths of the Mediterranean were now extended to other peoples and beliefs. Ysabel de Porras, a Spanish woman in Cuzco, told her friends that before the Spaniards came to Peru, the Indians had also gone to heaven. Lázaro Aranha, a Brazilian mestizo who had lived among Indians and participated in a millenarian movement in the 1560s believed that "there is a God of the Christians, a God of the Moors, and a God of the gentiles." He also doubted immortality and said that "only coal beneath the ground is immortal."[38] While

[37] Archivo General de Simancas [AGS], Estado 228. ". . .para juntarse con los indios araucanos y pregonar desde alli livertad de conciencia livertad a todos los indios y negros de América. . ."
[38] João Capistrano de Abreu, ed., *Primeira visitação do Santo Ofício ás partes do Brasil, Denunciações Bahia, 1591-92(Rio de Janeiro, 1925)*, 283-85.

such ideas are sometimes ascribed to *converso* rationalism or the influence of Averroes, Aranha seems to have arrived at them by a simple materialism.[39]

These ideas might even be extended to Africans as well. While there had been clerical advocates of the humanity of Africans and the need to bring them to the faith by gentle instruction and good treatment, more radical positions were also possible. Mateo Salado, (Matheus Saladé) a French resident in Lima who lived by pillaging Inca burial grounds was a man with heretical Protestant tendencies and little constraint on voicing them. An admirer of Erasmus and Luther, critical of the ecclesiastical establishment and its greed, dubious about the existence of Purgatory, he also claimed that all slaveowners were damned, and the Pope that permitted the slave trade that took the Africans from their lands must have been drunk at the time. Some thought him mad, others saw him as impenitent. He was burned at the stake in 1573, but his opinions were not entirely unshared, even though it is difficult to document their existence. Andrés de las Cuevas, a carpenter from Jaén, for example, was another man of heretical thoughts and a blasphemous mouth who in the 1620s resided in Cartegena de Indias, a center of the slave trade. He was at war with all authority and believed that the lands of heretics were ruled better than those of Spain. He did not believe that the conversion of Africans and the saving of their souls justified slavery. He attacked slavery and the slave trade frontally, and believed that Africans could find salvation in their own way. "They should be allowed to live in their law and in their own lands where they were raised. The king does this for his own self-interest and for no other good intention."[40] Such statements reveal an unease

[39] See Francisco Marquez Villanueva, " 'Nacer y morir como bestias' (criptojudaímo y criptoaverroísmo)," in Anita Novinsky and Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, eds., *Inquisição. Ensaios sobre mentalidade, heresias e arte* (São Paulo:EDUSP, 1992), 11-34.
[40] I provide more detail on Cuevas in *ACBS*, 164-67.

with the social conditions and hierarchies of the colonies and also a willingness to question the authority of the Church.

From Tolerance to *tolerantisim*

In the eighteenth century the popular ideas of religious tolerance continued to be expressed, but they were now increasingly joined by a rising chorus of more systematized arguments coming from elsewhere in Europe. Publications like Locke's *Letter on Toleration (1689)* and Voltaire's *Letters on England (1726*) began to advocate freedom of conscience as a positive aspect of civil society. They and the later *philosophes* like Diderot and d'Alembert were far less interested in religion as truth, and they tended to see it as a practical support for civil society and as an ethical compass. Their ideas also penetrated Iberia. In Spain, there was a noticeable shift in Inquisition prosecutions in which those accused of these relativist or universalist propositions tended now be persons of education (*ilustrados)* and some social projection; lawyers, merchants, clerics, military officers, tradesmen, and city officials. A man like the Peruvian Pablo de Olavide, an enlightened judge and administrator who rose in the Spanish bureaucracy was a case in point. A collector of books, advocate and admirer of the ideas of the *philosophes*, he was tried in 1766 for a variety of subversive ideas including doubts about the exclusive validity of the Church, a belief that Socrates had also found salvation, and that anyone who fulfilled his or her obligation to the state and lived morally within their religion would be saved." His trial and sentence for irreligion, libertinism, formal heresy was a warning to all of the "frenchified" (*afrancesados*) those who had fallen under the influence of dangerous French ideas. Although we do not have a careful accounting for the whole

eighteenth century, prosecutions for propositions rose again and from 1780 to 1820 made up 46% of all the cases tried by the Spanish tribunals. Most of these were traditional ideas that had been around for centuries, like those expressed by Manuel Pereda who told the Sevillian inquisitors that, "since the majority of people are infidels and the followers of sects, and the Catholics are so few, if the former are condemned for their religion, then God is a tyrant who must enjoy condemning them."[41] By this time, however, the Inquisition was linking theological questions with political ones, censoring publications, limiting the circulation of books, and seeking to stem the tide of its old enemies who were now adorned with new names; "encyclopedists", "libertines", "freethinkers", "freemasons", "indifferentists", and "tolerationists." State and Church viewed all of them as purveyors of the "poisonous doctrines of liberty, independence, and toleration,"

"Tolerationism" *(tolerantismo*) or indifferentism became the pejorative term that symbolized the new age after the French Revolution. , and defined religious tolerance as a direct attack on revealed religion. For all the defenders of monarchy and the *ancien regime,* religious tolerance, freedom of conscience, and disbelief came to represent the worst aspects of secularism, often associated with the current enemies of the true faith- the frenchified, the libertines, the freemasons, the Jews, and the atheists. but if the Inquisitors and those who supported the Old Regime had looked carefully at the records of those tribunals of the faith they could have seen that there had been a long tradition of such ideas in Early Modern Iberia and its colonies among all sorts of people. Although for those who hoped to transform the societies of Spain and Portugal and for whom "intolerance" and "Inquisition" had became the symbols of a world

[41] Alejandre y Torquemada, *Palabra de hereje*, 76-77

they hoped to change, the Napoleonic invasions and forced French reforms generated winds of nationalism that cooled their ardor for freedom of conscience. While many of the reformers became advocates of economic, political, and social changes, they refused or were slow to liberalize the restrictions on religious toleration. [42] That change would come to Spain, Portugal, and their former colonies only in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

Criticism and Paths to the Future

This story that I have suggested for the Iberian world of a long but somewhat ignored history of a questioning of the exclusive validity of Catholicism as the only path to salvation and even of religion itself that emphasizes popular culture and perceptions, has not convinced everyone, and has been met with a series of methodological, epistemological, and interpretative objections. First, there is the methodological question of the validity of Inquisition records themselves. Given the inquisitors' objectives and their inherent prejudices can these records be a trustworthy source?[43] The disparity of power between the inquisitors and accused or witnesses, and the institutional tendency to force evidence or testimony into predetermined categories, surely calls for caution and skepticism in the use of these sources. Statements by the accused in the trials can not be considered "holographic autobiography," as Lu Ann Homza reminded me, and Inquisition records like many sources about popular culture do suffer from the "Bahktinian problem" of filtering ideas through the prism and language of learned

[42] Scott Eastman, "The Ruin of the State is Freedom of Conscience: Religion, (In)tolerance, and Independence in the Spanish Monarchy," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* 44:1 (2019) https//digitalcommons.asphs.ne

[43] This was a

observers, or those in authority.[44] Still, Inquisition sources were meant only for internal use, and inquisitors and their theological advisors really wished to know the origins and sources of heterodox and heretical ideas, so I believe that read with care and attention to context, they retain their value as a key to the thinking of the accused, the accusers, and the inquisitors.[45] Then too, there has also been a growing parallel literature that emphasizes tolerant attitudes and practices based on non-inquisitorial sources. The principal example of this is found in the work of the late Trevor Dadson whose books on the integration of *moriscos* in a community in Castile and their acceptance by their neighbors even when they returned after their expulsion in 1609 has reopened many questions about the policies of religious exclusions and the extent to which these were universally accepted and enforced.[46]

A second critique has been a dismissal of many of the statements of doubt, skepticism, indifference, or universalism as not indicating any tendency toward religious tolerance, but rather reflecting the opinions of mostly unlettered people, ignorant of the theological implications of their sentiments and interpretations.[47] Therefore, there was no sentiment of tolerance, but only naiveté or theological unsophistication that was being expressed, or that these people only spoke out of materialistic concerns and personal self-interest. In other

[44] Lu Ann Homza, "Attitudes, Alterity, and Law, Critical Forum on *All Can Be Saved. Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series 66:2 (2009), 409-411.
[45] The question of the validity of Inquisition resources and their epistemological challenges has been specifically addressed by Ricardo García Cárcel, ¿Son creíbles las fuentes inquisitoriales? *Grafías del imaginario. Representaciones culturales en Espan1a y América (siglos xvi-xviii), Carlos Alberto González Sánches and Enriqueta Vila Vilar, eds.* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), 96-110;
[46] Trevor J. Dodson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain. Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2014). An earlier, much longer version with accompanying documentation was published as *Los moriscos de Villarubia de los Ojos (siglos xv-xviii). Historia de una minoría asimilada, expulsada y reintegrada* (Madrid:Vervuert, 2007).
[47] Giuseppe Marcocchi and José Pedro Paiva, *História da Inquisição portuguesa (1536-1821)* (Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2013),

words, dissidence and heterodoxy on the question of the Church's claim that it provided the only path to salvation was not a result of belief or principle, but orthodoxy was implicitly only due to religious conviction. An extension of this argument is that the Inquisition was simply a mirror that reflected a society's attitudes, a "child of its time," and that its political, financial, and theological interests had little role in stimulating or directing society in the matter of religious exclusivity, and its role as a protector of the faith. We have, however, an enormous and growing historiography that has documented the Inquisition's use of sermon's, autos de fe, publications, and political influence in the Iberian royal courts and in Rome itself to protect and extend its influence and prerogatives. Rather than simply a "mirror," the Inquisition formulated, provoked, and articulated opinions and often mobilized support for its interests. There is much evidence that not only religious minorities, or heterodox thinkers criticized its actions and procedures, but so too did many people, both lay and clerical, who considered themselves to be faithful and true members of the Roman Catholic Church.[48]

From a seemingly contrary position a number of historians of religion believed that rather than concentrate primarily on the beliefs of a relatively uninformed laity, I should have devoted more attention to the theological debates taking place within the Church itself on matters "natural law", soteriology, or the comparative issue of grace vs. works, all so important to the process of early modern confessionalization. [49] How these debates might have been reflected in "popular" attitudes and opinions remains an open question. These critics are correct that

[48] I mention here only two quite different books of a growing literature. Stefania Pastore, *Il vangelo e la spada. La inquisizione di castiglia e I suoi critici (1460-1598)* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2003); Yllan de Mattos. *A inquisição contestada. Críticos e críticas ao Ofício português (1605-1681)* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2014).
[49] For example, see the learned reviews of *All Can Be Saved* by Giuseppe Marcocci [*e-Journal of Portuguese History* 8:1 (2010)] and Evergton Sales Sousa, (*Varia história* 25, n. 42 (2009); https://doi.org/10.1590/SO104-87752009000200014

such research is necessary, but I would argue that to have done so would have made my study far more conventional, and return it once again to the realm of intellectual history, and perhaps to imply the hypothesis that learned discourse was the driving force in creating these opinions.

This was the problem that Carlo Ginzburg had called the issue of "circularity," the interaction and reciprocity of ideas between the dominant and subordinate classes and their cultures.[50] Did ideas always flow downwards? Was the general population always an uncritical receptor? A case that I learned about after publishing my book was illuminating. Francisco Ruiz [or Razin], a French weaver living in Guatemala was tried for heresy (1640-1642). He was called before the Inquisitors in Mexico because he had told people that religion was all about taking people's money, and he had jokingly said that "the greatest of the prophets and most esteemed and respected among the six or seven hundred of them had been Mohammed, because he was the richest." Ruiz, like Menocchio, went on to claim that, each person thinks that he or she is correct in the religion that they follow, suggesting that no one could be sure, but he also noted that, " the scholars or intellectuals mislead the simple folk." (*cada vno piensa acierta en la ley q sigue y q la gente de letras engaña a la simple*)." [51] This was a kind of underlying desire for freedom of conscience (to think for himself) and a distrust of theologians and intellectuals that had made me doubtful about the call to return this topic to

[50] Carlo Ginzberg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, 3d ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xii.

[51] "*cada uno piensa acierta en la ley que sigue y que la gente de letras engaña a la simple*" Francisco Ruiz trial, Huntington Library, Mexican Inquisition Papers, HM 35120, HM 3512

its traditional home in intellectual history, or to search for its roots in classical philosophies or theological debates which were mostly absent in the recorded testimonies that survived. [52]

We modern scholars were not alone in our concern with the problem of circularity. The inquisitors themselves also had been curious to know how those accused of heterodox or heretical opinions had acquired their ideas about salvation. What impressed me was how few of those accused of these deviant ideas about soteriology mentioned some text or sermon that had influenced their opinion, even though literacy and book ownership was not uncommon.[53] There were a couple of mentions of Dante, or Luis de Granada, but these were far outweighed by references to "natural law," or to the idea of God's magnanimity, or the need for Christian charity and the biblical admonition to love one's neighbor. So the issue of whether the influence on this issue came from above or below remains in question.

Religion and heterodoxy in the Iberian world had a long and distinguished historiography. I had been aware of theological and humanistic arguments for freedom of conscience and opposition to the use of force in matters of belief of individuals such as those of the Aragonese physician and humanist Miguel Servet (1509?-1553), and of the broad impact of Erasmus in Spain that the Inquisition had targeted and sought to suppress in the sixteenth century.[54] This was vein of learned tolerant attitudes the study of which has greatly expanded

[52] Wootten. " Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988), 699-700. Wootten like Lecler (1955) recognized that there was a difficult to recapture popular oral tradition that was "lost almost beyond recall." In Wootten's study of unbelief, he pointed out that we do not know if learned texts defending aspects of Christianity were written to refute some published or manuscript text, or if they were responding to "the things that unbelievers were saying." Trial investigations despite their epistemological challenges provide one of the few avenues to recover those traditions.

[53] Nicholas Griffiths, "Popular Religious Scepticism and Idiosyncrasy in Post-Tridentine Cuenca," *Faith and Fanaticism. Religious Fervour in Early Modern Spain*, Lesley K. Twomey, ed., (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 95-128

[54] Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmo y España*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City:Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966)

in the last decade as historians have explored various aspects of heterodox thinking, although still principally concentrating on political, theological, or philosophical writings.[55]

Rather than viewing the idea that salvation in an alternative religion might be possible as a form of religious tolerance, another approach has been a rediscovery of doubt as a central issue in early modern thought. Skepticism had long been recognized as an important aspect of medieval and Early Modern thought, and the debate over its importance produced by Lucien Febvre's old classic about the ontological impossibility of disbelief has been reexamined in a more negative fashion as a result.[56] Although Richard Popkin's classic *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (1960) had not included Spain and Portugal, there were scholars in those countries who had laid a groundwork of interest in the theme.[57] Recent studies of the Luso-Hispanic world have reopened the question and deepened our understanding of the theological and epistemological issues at stake.[58] An important aspect of this movement has

[55] See, for example the essays in Ricardo García Cárcel and Eliseo Serrano, eds., *Historia de la tolerancia en España* (Madrid: Editores Cátedra, 2021) and especially the earlier essays by Ricardo García Cárcel, and Doris Moreno, "La Inquisición y el debate sobre la tolerancia en Europa en el siglo xviii," *Bulletin Hispanique* 104:1 (2002), 195-213; Ricardo García Cárcel, "Las otras formas de la tolerancia en la España moderna,"*Poder,sociedad, religio4n y tolerancia en el mundo hispánico, de Fernando el Católico al siglo xviii*, Eliseo Serrano Martín and Jesús Gascón Pérez, eds. (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2016), 25-46; Ricardo García Cárcel, " The Other Forms of Tolerance in Early Modern Spain," in Doris Moreno, ed., *The Complexity of Religious Life in the Hispanic World (16th to 18th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 75-102.

[56] David Wootton, " Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988), 695-730

[57] For example, the early critical work of Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo , *Historia de los heterodoxos* españoles, 3 vols. first published in Madrid,1880-1882 and now best consulted in the facsimile edition (Madrid: CSIC, 1992) and that of the anthropologist Julio Caro Baroja, *Las formas complejas de la vida religiosa,* (Madrid: Akal, 1978) now accessible in a corrected edition of 2 vols. (Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg and Circulo de Lectores, 1995).

[58] Although there were important earlier studies of doubt and disbelief in Iberia, the last two decades have seen a wave of new work Mercedes García-Arenal, "De la duda a la incredulidad en la España moderna: algunas propuestas," *Identidades y fronteras culturales en el mundo ibérico de la Edad Moderna, José Luís Betrán Hernández, Doris Moreno, eds.* ( ), 51-64; António Vitor Ribeiro, "Crise e consciência: Ensaio sobre a descristianização de Portugal no século xvii," *Via Sacra* 23 (2016), 117-145; Stefania Pastore, "Doubt in Fifteenth-Century Iberia," *After Conversion. Iberia and the Aftermath of Modernity*, Mercedes García-Arenal, ed., (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 283-303.Mercedes García-Arenal, "What Faith to Believe? Vacillation, Comparativism, and Doubt,"*From Doubt to Unbelief. Forms of Scepticism in the Iberian World, Mercedes García-Arenal and Stefania*

been to find the contemporaneous humanist exemplars of classical skepticism—so we now have a growing number of studies of the classical intellectual origins of such thinking in Averroscism, epicurianism, pyrrohnism, as well as in atheism, or in Paulist forms of interior Christianity as the origins or expressions of doubt about dogma that lay beneath the attitudes I found expressed. [59] These studies have enriched the field. Surely, skepticism or doubt did not necessarily lead to religious tolerance. We need only to reflect on Voltaire's essay on the Jews to recognize that. Still, I would argue that while doubt about aspects of dogma, or about religion was not in itself tolerance, it was an attitude that made such tolerance a logical next step whether for philosophical or pragmatic reasons.

Why that step was not taken in Iberia at the beginning of the nineteenth century despite the political and philosophical changes taking place in Europe in the preceding decades and their influence on Spain and Portugal and their colonies has become a recent focus of study and revision that seeks to explain the conflicting tendencies of liberalism and religious intolerance.[60]

Pastore, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Legenda, 2019), 53-74. Barbara Fuchs and Mercedes García-Arenal, *The Quest for Certainty in Early Modern Europe. From Inquisition to Inquiry, 1500-1700* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2020).

[59] For example, Harold Stone, "Why Europeans Stopped Reading Averroes: The Case of Pierre Bayle," *Alif. Journal of Comparative Poetics* 16 (1996), 77-95; Stefania Pastore, "Pyrrhonism and Unbelief. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and the Spanish Tradition," *From Doubt to Unbelief. Forms of Scepticism in the Iberian World, Mercedes García-Arenal and Stefania Pastore, eds.* (Cambridge, UK: Legenda, 2019), 90-106; Karine Durin, "El epicureísmo y las heterodoxias españolas : propuestas para un estado de la cuestión », *Las razones del censor : Controlideológico y censura de libros en la primera Edad Moderna,* Cesc Esteve (ed.), Bellaterra, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona,2013), 177-191; Stefania Pastore, "Doubt in Fifteenth-Century Iberia," *After Conversion. Iberia and the Aftermath of Modernity*, Mercedes García-Arenal, ed., (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 283-303. On Pauline Christianity and the heresy of the *alumbrados s*ee Stefania Pastore, *Un'eresia Spagnola. Spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e inquisizione (1449-1559)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2004); Claude B. Stuczynski, " Converso Paulinism and Residual Jewishness: Conversion from Judaism to Christianity as a Theologico-Political Problem," *Bastards and Believers. Jewish Converts and Conversion from the Bible to the Present,* Theodor Dunkelgrün and Pawef Maciejko, eds. (Philadelphia:University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 112-33.

[60] For an excellent overview see Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain. The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic* World (Cambridge,MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 189-231. On the question of religious tolerance in this period, See for example, Juan Pablo Domínguez,

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Reflecting back on my decade of research and writing about the social history of religious toleration in the Iberian world, and what I have learned subsequently from a new wave of interest is this topic, I would emphasize a number of conclusions that I have reached. First of

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"Reformiso cristiano y tolerancia en España a finales del siglo xviii," *Hispania Sacra* 45 extra ii (2013), 113-73; Juan Pablo Dominguez, "Intolerancia religiosa en las Cortes de Cádiz," *Hispania* 77, n. 255 (2017), 155-183; Javier Fernández Sebastián, "Tolerance and Freedom of Expression in the Hispanic World between Enlightenment and Liberalism," *Past and Present*, 211 (2011), 159-166. On Portugal and Brazil, see, Igor Tadeu Camilo Rocha, "Não se fazem mais excomunhões que prestem nos dias de hoje: libertinos, Reformismo Ilustrado e a defesa da tolerância religiosa no mundo luso-brasileiro (1750-1803)," *Almanack* 14 (2016).

all, although religious identity was constantly emphasized in the Early Modern era, it was not everything , nor did it have the same importance to everyone. Not only were there believers and non-believers, there were also degrees of belief, doubt, and skepticism. This point is important because the truly indifferent were unlikely to risk themselves by revealing themselves, and probably escaped the Inquisition's notice. Only those who were really serious in their objections, or who were careless enough to say so in public. got denounced. That suggests that the known cases are the tip of a much larger iceberg of dissidence and non-conformity.

Moreover, I think there is considerable evidence that religious and other identities were much less stable than we have been urged to believe. We have many cases, of individuals who shifted from one religion to another, and then back again, or who shifted within religions from Franciscan to Dominican. Identities were not fixed in this age of pretenders, fakes, and dissimulators--Martin Guerre, the false kings-- Sebastians and Dimitris, Christian captives and renegades in Barbary, and the many former New Christians who had become New Jews that returned from Hamburg, Livorno, or Amsterdam to live or die in Spain or Portugal, 'the lands of Idolatry." [61] This instability of identity, religious or not, was not a singular problem of the conversos as some have suggested, and I would add that skepticism and religious doubt was not just a Christian problem as the debate between the conversos Isaac Orobio de Castro and

[61] Aside from cases I presented in *ACBS,* some books that have influenced my thinking of shifting identities are Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge,MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Yves-Marie Bercé, *Le roi cache: sauveurs et imposteurs. Mythes politiques populaires dans l'Europe modern* (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Jacqueline Hermann, *No reino do desejado. A construção do sebastianismo em Portugal séculos xvi e xvii* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998); Lucette Valensi, *Fables de la memoire. La glorieuse bataille des trois rois* (Paris:Seuil, 1992); Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar, *Los cristianos de Alá. La fascinante aventura de los renegados* (Madrid : Nerea, 1989) ; David L. Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute. Converso identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Juan del Prado revealed. As university students together in Spain when both were still ostensibly Catholics, they had expressed their adherence to the idea that "each could be saved in their own law." Later in life, Castro became an ardent practitioner and advocate of rabbinic Judaism and an intellectual opponent of Prado, a skeptical pariah, exiled from Amsterdam's Jewish community. [62] Then too there was the problem of dissimulation—the need for Nicodeminism, the hiding true religious conviction as practiced by conversos and moriscos in Spain, protestants in Italy, or Catholics in England.[63] Getting to true belief or its absence remains a difficult epistemological challenge for historians.

[62] Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro,* trans. Raphael Loewe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Carsten Wilke, ed., *Isaac Orobio. The Jewish Argument with Dogma and Doubt* (Berlin: De Grruyter, 2018).
[63] Mriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig, *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

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