

CONVERSION, MOBILITY AND THE ROMAN INQUISITION IN ITALY AROUND 1600*

Early modern Europe was a world on the move, where travellers and merchants, soldiers and pilgrims, men and women met on the roads every day.¹ Many left their homes for journeys short or long, and they did so for a variety of reasons — travelling as part of their work or to look for work, or fleeing plague or religious repression. Some had more personal motives: they wished to improve their lot, or to escape the narrowness of village life or an unhappy marriage.

In their travels, men and women crossed cultural, religious or confessional borders.² With the advent of the Reformation, a

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¹ Paraphrased from Klaus J. Bade, *Europa in Bewegung: Migration vom späten 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 2000), 14. Historical research of the last fifteen years has shown that society was far more mobile than French historiography on migration has traditionally assumed. See Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, 1992); Laurence Fontaine, 'Gli studi sulla mobilità in Europa nell'età moderna: problemi e prospettive di ricerca', *Quaderni storici*, xxxi (1996). For French research, see Jacques Dupâquier, 'Macro-migrations en Europe (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles)', in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa, secc. XIII–XVIII* (Florence, 1994); Jean Pierre Poussou, 'De l'intérêt de l'étude historique des mouvements migratoires européens du milieu du Moyen-Âge à la fin du XIX^e siècle', *ibid.*

² On religious border-crossing, see Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith: Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities, 1400–1750* (Budapest 2001). For the northern confessional context, see Étienne François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg, 1648–1806* (Sigmaringen, 1991); Duane Corpis, 'The Geography of Religious Conversion: Crossing the Boundaries of Belief in Southern Germany, 1648–1800' (New York Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2001); Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington DC, 2005). For Protestant–Catholic border-crossing in Italy, see Irene Fosi, 'Viaggio in Italia e conversioni: analisi di un binomio', *Römische historische Mitteilungen*, xxx (1988); Irene Fosi, 'Roma e gli "Ultramontani": conversioni, viaggi, identità', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, lxxxi (2001); Peter Schmidt, 'L'Inquisizione e gli stranieri', in

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wholly new problem emerged within Catholic Europe, for now migrants traversed territories belonging to different confessions. Travellers in the Mediterranean region had long encountered the religious worlds of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. A journey from Tripoli in Lebanon to Venice meant leaving Muslim and entering Catholic territory. In Italy, migrants from the Ottoman Empire were confronted with a society unfamiliar with the status of the *dhimmi*, and if they were taken for renegades or New Christians they even risked persecution by the Roman Inquisition. How did travellers and migrants react when faced with other religious cultures? How did they integrate into a new society? How important were changes of religion in this process? If they converted, how did religious, social and economic considerations determine their religious choice? And how clear-cut was the newly adopted religious identity?

This article takes up these questions by way of a detailed case study focusing on the story of Mariana di Fiori, a Jewish woman from Poland who immigrated to Italy from Danzig via Tripoli. Mariana converted to Christianity under remarkable circumstances and was later denounced to the Sant'Ufficio or Holy Office in Rome by her husband in 1623 because he suspected her of apostasy.³ The trial initiated thereupon reveals a fascinating life

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L'Inquisizione e gli storici: un cantiere aperto. Tavola rotonda nell'ambito della Conferenza annuale della Ricerca (Rome, 2000); Peter Schmidt, 'Fernhandel und römische Inquisition: "interkulturelles Management" im konfessionellen Zeitalter', in Hubert Wolf (ed.), *Inquisition, Index, Zensur: Wissenskulturen der Neuzeit im Widerstreit* (Paderborn, 2001). For the Christian–Muslim context, see Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco: esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna* (Rome, 1983); Lucile and Bartolomé Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah: l'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVI^e–XVII^e siècles* (Paris, 1989); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, 2000). On Jewish religious border-crossing, see Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso. A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York and London, 1971); Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550–1670* (London and New York, 1983); Kaspar von Greyerz, 'Portuguese Conversos on the Upper Rhine and the Converso Community of Sixteenth-Century Europe', *Social Hist.*, xiv (1989); Jonathan I. Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World of Maritime Empires (1540–1740)* (Leiden, 2002).

³ The dossier of the case is kept in the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Vatican City (hereafter ACDF), stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624. The relevant decrees are in ACDF, stanza storica, Decreta 1624. The trial in Rome was preceded by interrogations at the Venetian Sant'Ufficio. Thanks to Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini's work, this part of the trial is available in a critical edition: see *Processi del*

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that provides rich material for a case study on the interconnections between conversion and mobility in early modern Europe. The story of Mariana shows that her encounter with a different religious world created a field of tensions in which she repeatedly had to choose between adapting to a new faith and preserving an old faith. Her conversion did not result in a clear, new religious identity, but in ambivalence and tension.

Historians have become increasingly interested in the topic of conversion in recent years. A growing number of studies investigate conversions in the confessional era,⁴ inter-religious conversions to and from Christianity, Judaism and Islam,⁵ conversion narratives,⁶ and the relationship between mobility and conversion.⁷ However, we still know very little about the social and

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S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti (hereafter *Processi*), ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, 14 vols. (Florence, 1980–99), ix, 1608–1632, 85–94 [= Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio, Processi, b. 79, fos. 1^r–12^v], and xiii, *Appendici*, 137–8. Ioly Zorattini discusses Mariana's case in the introduction to vol. ix (see 'Introduzione', 26–8). The case is also mentioned by Maddalena del Bianco Cotrozzi in "O Señor guardara miña alma": aspetti della religiosità femminile nei processi del S. Uffizio veneziano', in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini (ed.), *L'identità dissimulata: giudaizzanti iberici nell'Europa cristiana dell'età moderna* (Florence, 2000), 263. However, neither Ioly Zorattini nor Cotrozzi was aware of the Roman part of the trial. The discovery of these reconstructions makes possible a new reconstruction of the case. Some questions remain open, though, and I hope to present the findings of further research at a later stage.

⁴Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996); Keith Luria, 'The Politics of Protestant Conversion to Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century France', in Peter van der Veer (ed.), *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York and London, 1996).

⁵See Bennassar and Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*; Mercedes García-Arenal, *Conversions islamiques: identités religieuses en islam méditerranéen* (Paris, 2001); Christopher M. Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728–1941* (Oxford, 1995); Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven and London, 2003); Richard R. Popkin and Martin Mulsow (eds.), *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2004); Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion: Old Worlds and New* (Rochester, NY, 2003); Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (Rochester, NY, 2003).

⁶Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Expression* (Cambridge, 1983); D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005).

⁷Corpis, 'Geography of Religious Conversion'; see also Beat Hodler, 'Konversionen und der Handlungsspielraum der Untertanen in der Eidgenossenschaft im Zeitalter der reformierten Orthodoxie', in Heinrich R. Schmidt, André Hohenstein and Andreas Würzler (eds.), *Gemeinde, Reformation und Widerstand: Festschrift für Peter Blickle zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1998), esp. 290–1. For Italy, see Fosi,

cultural histories of converts, and the historiographic potential of the subject of conversions has yet to be assessed.

It is in the context of Jewish history that the religious identities of converts have been discussed most intensively. Here, scholars have debated whether the Iberian *conversos* essentially remained Jews who practised their faith in secret, or whether they became committed Christians. Cecil Roth and others have assumed a continuity of Jewish faith, handed down secretly from generation to generation,⁸ while other historians have radically questioned the existence of crypto-Judaism.⁹ Today's historiography has replaced these positions with a more differentiated picture.¹⁰ Whether a *converso* became a committed Christian, secretly adhered to Judaism or reconverted openly in exile was first and foremost a matter of individual choice.¹¹

Although the history of *conversos* is characterized by developments specific to the Iberian peninsula, it can shed a great deal of

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'Roma e gli "Ultramontani"', and, most recently, Ricarda Matheus, 'Mobilität und Konversion: Überlegungen aus römischer Perspektive', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, lxxxv (2005). More research has been carried out on confessional migration. See, for example, Heinz Schilling, 'Confessional Migration as a Distinct Type of Old European Long-Distance Migration', in Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa*; Alexander Schunka, 'Exulanten in Kursachsen im 17. Jahrhundert', *Herbergen der Christenheit: Jahrbuch für deutsche Kirchengeschichte*, xxvii (2003); Alexander Schunka, 'Exulanten, Konvertiten, Arme und Fremde: Zuwanderer aus der Habsburgermonarchie in Kursachsen im 17. Jahrhundert', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, xiv (2003). On the relationship between mobility and conversion in the context of Jewish history, see Gayle K. Brunelle, 'Migration and Religious Identity: The Portuguese of Seventeenth-Century Rouen', *Jl Early Mod. Hist.*, vii (2003); Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*; Pullan, *Jews of Europe*; Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora*.

⁸ Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (1932; New York and Philadelphia, 1959). For a more nuanced view, see Israel S. Révah, 'L'Hérésie marrane dans l'Europe catholique du 15^e au 18^e siècle', in Jacques Le Goff (ed.), *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle, 11^e-18^e siècles* (Paris, 1968), and Israel S. Révah, 'Les Marranes', *Revue des études juives*, cxviii (1959-60). Within this tradition, see also Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial: The Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (Jerusalem, 1981), esp. 23, 242.

⁹ Ben Zion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: From the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century, According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources* (1966; 3rd edn, Ithaca and London, 1999); António José Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and its New Christians, 1536-1765*, ed. and trans. H. P. Salomon and I. S. D. Sassoon (Leiden, 2001), first published as *Inquisição e Cristãos-Novos* (Lisbon, 1969). For a critique of Netanyahu, see, for example, David Abulafia, *1492: The Expulsion from Spain and Jewish Identity* (London, 1992).

¹⁰ See, for example, David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580-1700* (Philadelphia, 2004).

¹¹ Pullan, *Jews of Europe*, chs. 11-13.

light on early modern changes of religion in general. It demonstrates the mobility of converts and the wavering of their religious identity. Thus far, however, there have been few efforts to connect the historical research on conversion with that on *conversos*. While the former is just beginning to expand, the latter has been examining problems of conversion for quite some time. Bringing both into perspective, this article aims to identify and discuss shared aspects. The protagonist of this case study is a Jewish woman who has much in common with Iberian *conversos*, although her religious choices are in many respects comparable to other inter-religious and interconfessional conversions.

Many historians have described Iberian *conversos* as potential dwellers between religious worlds. They did not belong fully to either, yet could still exist in both.¹² This description, I shall argue, applies to Mariana's case, but it does not go far enough. It is true that she was familiar with both religious worlds and that she wavered between the two. Ultimately, however, these worlds remained incompatible. Rather than a hybrid faith, she experienced a juxtaposition of two different worlds from which she had to choose.

Mariana's religious choices were embedded in a complex individual biography. As early as 1983, Brian Pullan argued that the religious identities of *conversos* should be investigated as individual cases.¹³ He did not, however, exhaust the potential of biographical studies, for even more subtly nuanced interpretations are possible. Only a detailed reading of a life history can show how religious choices, individual experiences, mobility, marriage and work were interwoven with each other. Each of these aspects could be investigated individually by considering the Inquisition trials against *giudaizzanti*¹⁴ or bigamists.¹⁵ In this sense, Mariana's case is not exceptional. Her story differs from others, however, in the density of narrative elements that it brings together. Like a magnifying glass the case illuminates aspects of a past where the history of the Jewish diaspora, migration,

¹² *Ibid.*, 207–9; Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 2; David M. Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Albuquerque, 2003), 84, with numerous other references provided.

¹³ Pullan, *Jews of Europe*, 206.

¹⁴ *Processi*; Ioly Zorattini (ed.), *L'identità dissimulata*.

¹⁵ Kim Siebenhüner, *Bigamie und Inquisition in Italien, 1600–1750* (Paderborn, 2006), 121–7, 198–201.

marriage, faith and the Roman Inquisition intersect. Mariana's story shows what it meant to change religion in this specific historical environment. This article, then, offers insights into the complexity of conversions and the tensions they inspired in early modern Europe. The first section outlines the historical context of the Inquisition trial, and the second describes Mariana's story, as far as it is reflected in the court records. The third section sets out the problem of her husband's report. The fourth and fifth sections analyse Mariana's religious choices, and the last broadens the perspective, taking into consideration current research on conversions.

I

On 7 February 1623, Giovanni Domenico Morcante, 30 years of age and a hatter by trade, denounced his wife Mariana to the Sant'Ufficio in Rome for the offence of 'Judaizing'.¹⁶ Eighteen months passed before the Sant'Ufficio began to investigate these accusations more closely. During this time Mariana had been tracked down in Venice and brought to Rome, where she went on trial in September 1624.

The inquisitors' interest in the case was closely linked to the historical evolution of their institution.¹⁷ The Sant'Ufficio had been established to quell the Protestant movement on Italian soil. Thus, the Roman Inquisition differed from that on the Iberian peninsula, the main purpose of which was the control and persecution of Jews and *conversos*. In Italy, however, it was only in the course of the sixteenth century that the Inquisition began to persecute these groups. From a legal point of view, the Inquisition confined itself to heretics and heresy suspects and thus — at least theoretically — to the Christian population. A heretic was defined as a Christian who persistently adhered to a fallacy of faith. 'Unbelievers' such as Jews and Muslims were thus not subject to the jurisdiction of the Roman Inquisition.¹⁸

¹⁶ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 450^r.

¹⁷ For the history of the Roman Inquisition, see Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin, 1996); Giovanni Romeo, *L'inquisizione nell'Italia moderna* (Rome and Bari, 2002); John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, 1991).

¹⁸ Francesco Albizzi, *De inconstantia in iure admittenda vel non* (Amsterdam, 1683), cap. 11, nos. 4 and 24; see also Francesco Beretta, *Galilée devant le Tribunal de l'Inquisition: une relecture des sources* (Fribourg, 1998), 93–7.

Despite this definition, the Sant'Ufficio claimed responsibility for various concerns involving Jews or converted Jews.¹⁹ Jews who expressed doubts about dogmas shared by the Jewish and the Christian religions, as well as Jews who criticized Catholic beliefs, showed disrespect towards Christian images and crucifixes, blasphemed God, proselytized or — even worse — prevented other Jews from converting to Christianity, could be persecuted by the Roman Inquisition. Close contacts between Jews and Christians, such as visiting Christian prostitutes and employing Christian servants in Jewish households, were also suspect.²⁰ Converted Jews, on the other hand, could be prosecuted for practising Jewish rituals or returning to Judaism. In the documents of the Inquisition such sympathy with Judaism is referred to as 'apostasy' or 'Judaizing'.

This offence never reached the proportions in Italy that it did in Spain or Portugal. On the whole, trials against *giudaizzanti* remained rare.²¹ Yet the problem of Judaizing became more and more urgent in cities with large Jewish communities such as Venice, Livorno, Pisa, Ferrara and Rome, where many Iberian *conversos* had settled in the course of the sixteenth century.

Numerous Jews and *conversos* had come to Italy from the Iberian peninsula in the wake of the events of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²² The edicts of expulsion of 1492 and 1497 gave the Iberian Jews exile as an alternative to conversion, leading to a wave of emigration.²³ A second wave of

¹⁹ Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione romana e gli ebrei', in Michele Luzzati (ed.), *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia* (Rome and Bari, 1994); Nicholas Davidson, 'The Inquisition and the Italian Jews', in Stephen Haliczer (ed.), *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London and Sydney, 1987).

²⁰ *Prattica per procedere nelle cause del S. Offizio*, ed. Alfonso Mirto in 'Un inedito del Seicento sull'Inquisizione', *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, i (1986), 128–32.

²¹ See John Tedeschi and William Monter, 'Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', in Tedeschi, *Prosecution of Heresy*.

²² Jonathan I. Israel, 'The Marrani in Italy, the Greek Lands and the Ottoman Near East', in his *Diasporas within a Diaspora*; Renata Segre, 'Sephardic Settlements in Sixteenth-Century Italy: A Historical and Geographical Survey', in Alisa Meyuhas Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492* (London, 1992). For an overview of the history of Jews in Italy, see Corrado Vivanti (ed.), *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1996–7); Anna Foa, *The Jews of Europe after the Black Death*, trans. Andrea Grover (Berkeley, 2000); Roberto Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Los Angeles and London, 1994); Attilio Milano, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia* (Turin, 1963); Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy* (Philadelphia, 1946).

²³ R. D. Barnett (ed.), *The Jews in Spain and Portugal before and after the Expulsion of 1492* (London, 1971); Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the*

emigration followed the establishment of the Portuguese Inquisition in 1536 and its mass persecutions in subsequent decades. The Papal States and other Italian states received these immigrants willingly. When New Christians were found to be practising their former religion secretly or returning to Judaism, many Italian princes took steps to save these individuals from the clutches of the Inquisition. They also guaranteed far-reaching privileges to New Christians with respect to business, mobility and taxation. After all, these immigrants were often wealthy merchants and internationally connected people who could benefit the domestic market.²⁴ For example, Pope Paul III (1534–51) encouraged Sephardic, Levantine, Turkish and other merchants to trade in the port of Ancona, and prohibited the prosecution of New Christians for heresy without explicit papal order.²⁵ The duke of Tuscany Cosimo I granted similar privileges in 1549, as did Ercole II of Ferrara in 1550.²⁶

This leniency towards Iberian *conversos* during the 1540s and 1550s ended with the Counter-Reformational ambitions of the popes. The new concern for confessional purity was bound to reshape Jewish–Christian relationships as well. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the popes issued several bulls aimed at confining Jews within ghettos, on the one hand, and promoting their conversion to Christianity, on the other.²⁷ As early as 1543

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Jews from Spain (Madison, 1995); Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardic Experience, 1492 and After* (London, 1992); Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (eds.), *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After* (New York and London, 1994).

²⁴ Benjamin Ravid, 'A Tale of Three Cities and their Raison d'État: Ancona, Venice, Livorno, and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century', in Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians, and Muslims*.

²⁵ Aron di Leone Leoni, 'Per una storia della nazione portoghese ad Ancona e a Pesaro', in Ioly Zorattini (ed.), *L'identità dissimulata*; Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, vii, *History* (Toronto, 1991), 448–50.

²⁶ On Tuscany, see Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, 'Cristiani Nuovi e Nuovi Ebrei in Toscana fra Cinque e Seicento: legittimazioni e percorsi individuali', in Ioly Zorattini (ed.), *L'identità dissimulata*; on Ferrara, see Renata Segre, 'La formazione di una comunità marrana: i portoghesi a Ferrara', in Vivanti (ed.), *Gli Ebrei in Italia*. Other states granted similar privileges, such as Milan in 1435, 1533 and 1580, Mantua in 1522 and Savoy in 1572: see Davidson, 'Inquisition and the Italian Jews', 31.

²⁷ Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555–1593* (New York, 1977), esp. ch. 1; Kenneth R. Stow, 'The Papacy and the Jews: Catholic Reformation and Beyond', *Jewish Hist.*, vi (1992); Renata Segre, 'La Controriforma: espulsioni, conversioni, isolamento', in Vivanti (ed.), *Gli ebrei in Italia*, i, as well as Jörg Deventer, 'Zwischen Ausweisung, Repression und Duldung: die Judenpolitik der "Reformpäpste"

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the Casa dei catecumeni was established in Rome, a house where future converts were instructed in the Catholic faith and prepared for baptism.²⁸ In the bull *Cum nimis absurdum* of 1555, the Jews of the Papal States were ordered to wear the Jewish badge and to live in the newly established Roman ghetto. In 1556, Paul IV (1555–9) declared New Christians who returned to Judaism in Italy to be apostates. And in 1569, the Jews were expelled from the Papal States, with the exception of Rome and Ancona.²⁹ Even though future popes did not enforce this policy consistently, it was characteristic of the new climate. In the long run, the Italian states could not ignore this policy.³⁰ More and more Jews and *conversos* could be taken to court.

II

Thus when Mariana was accused in 1624 of Judaizing, it was not an exceptional occurrence. Her story raises issues of conversion and religious identity similar to those of the *conversos* as well, yet Mariana was not an Iberian *conversa*, nor were the circumstances of her baptism comparable to the mass baptisms in Spain and Portugal.

Mariana left her home town of Danzig around 1600, when she was about 13 years old. She began a long journey that took her across eastern Europe and ended in Tripoli di Soria, the present-day city of Tripoli in Lebanon. We know little about the background to this enormous geographical leap. Who accompanied Mariana? Did her family have social or economic ties to Tripoli? No European ruler had protected the Jews like the Polish kings did. Although a free city such as Danzig did not share this tolerant

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im Kirchenstaat (ca. 1550–1605)', *Aschkenas: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden*, xiv (2004).

²⁸ Domenico Rociolo, 'Documenti sui catecumeni e neofiti a Roma nel Seicento e Settecento', *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, x (1998), esp. 393–4; Marina Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati: storie di ebrei, cristiani e convertiti nella Roma dei papi* (Roma, 2004), 22.

²⁹ Segre, 'La Controriforma', 714–33; Milano, *Storia degli ebrei*, 244–62; Prospero, 'L'Inquisizione romana', esp. 78; Roth, *History of the Jews of Italy*, 294–309.

³⁰ In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of the Italian states established ghettos. See Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, 71–2; Roth, *History of the Jews of Italy*, 309–53.

policy towards Jews, the situation worsened only in 1616, after Mariana had already left.³¹

Still, the Near East was not an unusual destination, since religious minorities were tolerated and protected by Islamic law. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the sultans had actively encouraged the immigration of Jews and their settlement in the Ottoman Empire.³² These territories were major destinations for persecuted *conversos* from Spain and Portugal. In the Near East, on the Greek peninsula and in the Balkans, Jewish communities grew through the immigration of *conversos*. As Jonathan Israel has shown, a unique network of merchants, bankers and brokers developed in these places, connecting the worlds of Islam, Christianity and the New World. Tripoli, too, had a large Jewish community and important connections with Cyprus and the Aegean.³³

Around 1603, when Mariana was about 16 years old, she married her Jewish husband, Aaron, in Tripoli. Three years later, in 1606, the couple decided to set off for Venice; why, we do not know. Venice was known for its generous acceptance of Jews from the Levant: from 1541 Levantine merchants were officially allowed to reside and trade there. The reasons for this position were primarily economic. Venice's economic pre-eminence in the Mediterranean had suffered ever since the discovery of a direct sea route to India, and cities such as Ancona and Florence were increasingly competing with the maritime republic. Venice had to rely on Levantine merchants who operated as brokers in the East in order to maintain the traditionally strong commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire.³⁴

³¹ Samuel Eicht, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Danzig* (Leer, 1972), 13–31.

³² Avigdor Levy, 'Introduction', in Avigdor Levy (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, 1994), esp. 1–31; Halil Inalcik, 'Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation', in Avigdor Levy (ed.), *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, 2002); Aryeh Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Late Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries: Administrative, Economic, Legal, and Social Relations as Reflected in the Responsa* (Leiden, 1984); C. E. Bosworth, 'The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam', in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols. (New York and London, 1982).

³³ Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora*, 41–65, esp. 49.

³⁴ Bernard D. Cooperman, 'Venetian Policy towards Levantine Jews and its Broader Italian Context', in Gaetano Cozzi (ed.), *Gli ebrei e Venezia, secoli XIV–XVIII: atti del Convegno internazionale organizzato dall'Istituto di storia della società e dello stato veneziano della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore*,

Mariana and Aaron, however, never arrived in Venice, because their ship was captured in the Mediterranean Sea during the voyage. Both were taken to Malta and sold into slavery, an event less extraordinary than it appears at first glance. Piracy was a realistic threat to all Mediterranean travellers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Taking captives as slaves was part of the ongoing conflict between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, and was practised on both sides. Merchant fleets and passenger ships were just as prized as warships because their cargo — goods and people — promised considerable profits from sale or ransom.³⁵

Considering that Mariana and Aaron were taken to Malta, their ship presumably fell into the hands of Maltese corsairs.³⁶ As the seat of the Order of the Knights of St John since 1530, the island was regarded as both a Christian outpost against Islam in the Mediterranean and a centre for transferring captives in the hands of Christian masters.³⁷ It was the mission of the knights to protect the Christian coasts against raids by the *corsari barbareschi* and other Ottoman attacks. For these ventures the knights also enlisted corsairs.³⁸ Captives taken by the Order's fleet or by corsairs

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5–10 giugno 1983 (Milan, 1987); Benjamin Arbel, 'Jews in International Trade: The Emergence of the Levantines and Ponentines', in Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (eds.), *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001).

³⁵ On the activities of Muslim and Christian pirates and corsairs in the Mediterranean, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (London, 1972–3), esp. ii, 865–91; Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary* (London, 1970); Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio* (Milan, 1993); Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke and New York, 2003).

³⁶ Unlike pirates, corsairs worked for a sovereign power which on the one hand authorized them by formal licence to attack hostile ships, and on the other obliged them to hand over a portion of the booty. For those who were plundered or captured, though, it made little difference whether the attackers were pirates or corsairs. See Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 9; Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, 6; Braudel, *Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, ii, 866–7.

³⁷ On the establishment of the Order in Malta, see Mario Monterisi, *Storia politica e militare del sovrano ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme detto di Malta*, ii, *L'ordine a Malta, Tripoli e in Italia* (Milan, 1940), 12–16.

³⁸ Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, chs. 5–8; Michel Fontenay, 'Corsaires de la foi ou rentiers du sol? Les chevaliers de Malte dans le "corso" méditerranéen au XVII^e siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, xxxv (1988); Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 45–70. On Maltese 'piracy', see also Nicolas Vatin, *L'Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem, l'Empire ottoman et la Méditerranée orientale entre les deux sièges de Rhodes, 1480–1522* (Paris, 1994), 81–129.

were brought to Malta, where they were generally sold as oarsmen for Christian galleys or as slaves for private households.³⁹ From Michel Fontenay's studies on the Maltese slave market, we know that Jewish captives were a minority relative to Turkish and Moorish captives. Jewish women were especially rare on the slave market and could be sold for high prices, depending on their physical attractiveness and potential value for services in the household.⁴⁰

Mariana and Aaron were separated after their arrival in Malta, and as subsequent events reveal, the separation was permanent. Mariana was sold first to a Greek merchant, who then resold her to a Maltese nobleman named Fiamingo. Mariana had lived in his house only a few days when he took her to the church of Santa Maria di Valletta to be baptized. The certificate of baptism is dated 3 April 1607. The narrative of this conversion from Judaism to Christianity, told later in the Roman Sant'Ufficio, is as central as it is ambiguous. On the one hand, the baptism had all the elements of a forced conversion. Apparently, she hardly understood what was happening; in court, she recalled her amazement at the ritual. The priest dipped her head in the font, spread oil on her forehead, made a cross above her head and spoke Italian words she did not understand. Only her Turkish friend explained to her that she had been baptized. Faced with a Roman inquisitor, however, Mariana later emphasized that it had not occurred against her will. She pointed out that she had lived together with Christian servants in her father's house and was therefore familiar with the Christian faith: 'When I was baptized I agreed to it, and if I had not been willing to agree I would not have gone to the church, and I would have said to Girolamo that I did not want to be a Christian, and in this sense I was not forced, but it was God's will'.⁴¹

In Mariana's narrative, the experience of baptism aroused conflicting emotions. She was enslaved and did not resist the change of religion, and yet she burst into tears when told that she was now a Christian and that she could not continue to live with her

³⁹ Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, 169–70.

⁴⁰ Michel Fontenay, 'Il mercato maltese degli schiavi al tempo dei cavalieri di San Giovanni (1530–1798)', *Quaderni storici*, cvii (2001); see also Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, 168–78; Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 191–201.

⁴¹ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 490^r.

husband. In the years that followed, however, Mariana seems to have submitted willingly to Christian law.

She only stayed with the nobleman Fiamingo for a few months. After she became pregnant by him, he sold her to a nobleman in Sicily. According to Mariana, her master was the secretary of the marchese di Vigliena, viceroy of Sicily, who held office between 1606 and 1610.⁴² After serving him for about two years, she was granted her freedom. Equipped with a letter of recommendation, Mariana and her little son went to Naples and began a new life there. Apparently she had no material worries, for when she married her second husband in 1615 she brought with her a dowry of 400 ducats in gold, money and furniture.⁴³ This was a small fortune at the time and can only be explained by her work in the household of the Sicilian viceroy. She may have received it as 'seed capital' when she was freed.

In Naples, Mariana met Giovanni Domenico Morcante, her future second husband. According to Giovanni, she walked into his shop one day to buy a hat, and, because he liked her, he asked for her in marriage. Giovanni never questioned that Mariana was a Christian. He later testified in court that 'when the said Mariana stayed with me, she lived as a good Christian [*è vissuta da buona cristiana*] who confessed and partook of Holy Communion, . . . and she has always eaten pork without a single murmur of protest'.⁴⁴

Mariana and Giovanni spent the following years moving between Naples and Sorrento. Around 1620, Mariana expressed a wish to return to her homeland, Poland. It would soon become clear that her Jewish past played a major role in this plan. Giovanni explained that because his wife had convinced him that they would do well in Poland, he was not averse to the idea.⁴⁵ Together they travelled to Rome, seeking the advice of the Polish confessor of San Pietro. Because he did not advise them against it, Mariana and Giovanni embarked on their journey to Poland in September

⁴² The marchese di Vigliena and viceroy was Giovanni Fernandes Paceco. See Giovanni Evangelista di Blasi, *Storia cronologica de' Viceré, Luogotenenti e Presidenti del Regno di Sicilia*, 5 vols. (1790–1; Palermo, 1974–5), iii, 25–40.

⁴³ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 451^v. According to the evidence Mariana gave in Venice, her dowry even amounted to 500 ducats. *Processi*, ix, 86.

⁴⁴ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 451^r.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 450^{r-v}.

1622. When they arrived in Vienna, Mariana made a surprising confession, as Giovanni reported in court:

In Vienna the said Maria [Mariana] started telling me, 'Listen, Giovanni Domenico, I have said nothing during the last seven years, but I am Jewish and born into the Jewish faith, and I would like to go home, and if you would like to come with me you can live according to the Christian law and I will live according to the Jewish law'.⁴⁶

Giovanni was strictly opposed to Mariana's suggestion that they live as a mixed couple. He immediately turned to a Catholic adviser, went to the nuncio of Vienna and was sent to the Jesuits, who acted as mediators for the couple. The result of this intervention is not clear from the trial documents; it is certain, however, that Mariana and Giovanni parted ways without knowing the future status of their marriage. Giovanni returned to Italy, and even Mariana did not continue her journey to Poland. Despite her wish to reconvert to Judaism, she held on to her marriage to Giovanni and asked him to wait for her in Venice.

For more than a century Venice had been an attractive place not only for Levantines: it also served as a refuge for Jews from all over Europe. Although the Venetian Jews were enclosed in the city's famous ghetto, established in 1516, the city did grant them religious freedom as well as the right to practise Jewish rituals and establish synagogues within the boundaries of the ghetto.⁴⁷ When Mariana arrived in Venice, she and her son went to live in the ghetto, where they lived at their own expense and performed odd jobs.⁴⁸ According to testimony, the couple did keep in touch, and Giovanni wrote a series of letters to Mariana.⁴⁹ Mariana waited for her husband in vain, though: despite their agreement, Giovanni did not travel to Venice. He went instead to Rome, where he denounced his wife to the Sant'Ufficio.

III

It must have been more than anger about his wife's concealment and deception that made Giovanni take this step. Historians of crime have shown that frequently people resorted to legal action

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fo. 450^v.

⁴⁷ Roberta Curiel and Bernard Dov Cooperman, *The Ghetto of Venice* (London, 1990), 7–27; Riccardo Calimani, *Storia del ghetto di Venezia* (Milan, 1985).

⁴⁸ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 491^r; *Processi*, ix, 88, 89.

⁴⁹ *Processi*, ix, 87–8, 89.

only after extra-judicial solutions had failed.⁵⁰ Yet these findings do not readily apply to the Roman Inquisition. During the second half of the sixteenth century the tribunal had effectively managed to establish a system under which the reporting of heresy was obligatory. Edicts of faith, which called upon the population to denounce heretics and suspected heretics under threat of excommunication, were published at regular intervals.⁵¹ Those who failed to make such denunciations became suspect and risked prosecution by the Inquisition.⁵² Auricular confession, in particular, became a means of applying pressure. Confessors were not only to remind the faithful of their statutory obligation to report religious offences, but also to refrain from absolving their sins unless they presented themselves to the Sant'Ufficio. The believers' reporting practices, their lists of committed sins and the salvation of their souls thus became intertwined in a mechanism that greatly increased the pressure to appear in court.⁵³ This does not mean that Giovanni was merely fulfilling his obligation when he went to the Roman Sant'Ufficio, but such pressures to report suspected heretics may have encouraged him to do so.

It seems to me, however, that his rejection of a mixed marriage was even more important. Jewish-Christian marriages were strictly forbidden by canon law.⁵⁴ They contravened the principal aims of Christian marriage, undermined the religious education of the children and jeopardized marital harmony. A mixed marriage was regarded as invalid on the basis of the *impedimentum disparis cultus*.⁵⁵ Tomás Sánchez, author of an authoritative seventeenth-century marriage treatise, held that

⁵⁰ Peter Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität in Rom, 1560–1585* (Tübingen, 1995), 33–8; Ulinka Rublack, *Magd, Metz' oder Mörderin: Frauen vor frühneuzeitlichen Gerichten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 34–44.

⁵¹ An overview of the edicts of faith of the Roman Holy Office is provided in *Inquisizione e indice nei secoli XVI–XVIII: controversie teologiche dalle raccolte casanatensi*, ed. Angela A. Cavarra (Vigevano, 1998), 77–90.

⁵² Cesare Carena, *Tractatus de Officio Sanctissimae Inquisitionis* (1636; Cremona, 1655), pt 2, tit. 9, §§1 and 2 and §9, no. 41.

⁵³ For extensive research on the connection between the Inquisition and auricular confession, see Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*; Giovanni Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati e inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Naples, 1997); Elena Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio: penitenza, confessione e giustizia spirituale dal Medioevo al XVI secolo* (Bologna, 2000).

⁵⁴ Tomás Sánchez, *Disputationum de sancto matrimonii sacramento, tomii tres* (Antwerp, 1607), disput. 71 (De impedimento disparis cultus), no. 5. See also Jean Gaudemet, *Le Mariage en occident: les mœurs et le droit* (Paris, 1987), 203–4.

⁵⁵ Sánchez, *Disputationum de sancto matrimonii sacramento*, disput. 71, no. 1.

this impediment applied even when the 'infidel' partner had been improperly baptized.⁵⁶ If it emerged in the course of the trial that Mariana had been baptized by force, and that she had never stopped believing in Judaism, Giovanni could count on the annulment of his marriage.

But even if his opposition to a mixed marriage had nothing to do with an awareness of the possible invalidity of his marriage and thus with legal considerations, Giovanni could have had other legitimate fears. From a post-Tridentine Catholic perspective, in which Jewish-Christian marriages were taboo, marriage to a Jewish woman must have seemed incompatible with honourable life in society. In addition, differences of faith could threaten the marital hierarchy and, in particular, diminish the husband's authority in the household.⁵⁷ If patriarchal power and faith were opposed to each other, Mariana might obey not her husband, but rather the prescriptions of her religion. Whether Giovanni foresaw these problems relating to his salvation, his social reputation and his role as a husband, and whether he sought an annulment or wished to force Mariana to return to him are questions that must remain open.

His report did not have immediate consequences for Mariana; the authorities did not approach her for about another year. Then, in April 1624, she was summoned before the Sant'Ufficio of Venice. The tribunal had either been alerted to her presence by Roman officials or received other information. For Mariana, the trial thus began in Venice.

IV

A successive reading of the Venetian and Roman documents reveals that Mariana gave two wholly different accounts of her religious identity. In Rome she tried to convince the inquisitors of the integrity of her Christian faith. In Venice, on the other hand, she argued that she had never abandoned her Jewish faith. She affirmed the marriage to her Jewish husband, Aaron, her enslavement in consequence of an 'infortunio maritimo' and her subsequent stay in Sicily and Naples. She did not, however, mention

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 3.

⁵⁷ Dagmar Freist has analysed these problems for confessionally mixed marriages: see Dagmar Freist, 'One Body, Two Confessions: Mixed Marriages in Germany', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *Gender in Early Modern German History* (Cambridge, 2002).

her baptism in Malta. She accounted for her Christian life by pointing to the constraints of her situation. She lived in a Christian society and feared prosecution. Since 1541, when the Jews were expelled from the kingdom, Naples had been practically a city without Jews. Unlike other large Italian cities, it never established a ghetto.⁵⁸

I have never pretended to be Jewish in order to save my life . . . I went to church because I couldn't afford not to do so . . . but I have never confessed. I went to Mass because I liked listening to the sermons, but I never kneeled down before any priest, neither in order to confess nor in order to receive the Holy Communion . . . Asked whether her husband had asked her if she confessed and received the Communion, she replied: Yes, Sir, and I told him that I did . . . Asked whether she ate meat and forbidden food at times when Christians were not allowed to eat it, she answered: I ate what Christians ate on Fridays and Saturdays, but during Lent I made the physicians give me permission because I was suffering from my liver. Asked what she felt about our Christian faith, she answered: I was forced to stay with Christians and if I had had the intention of becoming a Christian I would have become a Christian the first day, and I was enslaved. Asked about her marriage, she responded: My second husband liked me and I liked him.⁵⁹

Mariana characterized her Christian life as dissimulation for the sake of her security and of her affection for Giovanni. According to her testimony she had practised certain customs of Christian life, and resisted others. She went to Mass and adopted Christian eating habits, but avoided confession, observing Lent and making the sign of the cross. In other words, she described herself as a crypto-Jew who — while observing Christian pious practices as much as necessary in order to remain inconspicuous — always secretly maintained her Jewish faith. In this narrative, it was important for her to refuse some central Catholic rituals. Mariana repeatedly alleged that she had neither confessed nor taken Holy

⁵⁸ On the expulsion of the Jews from the Kingdom of Naples, see David Abulafia, 'Il Mezzogiorno peninsulare dai bizantini all'espulsione (1541)', in Vivanti (ed.), *Gli ebrei in Italia*, i, esp. 35–44; Viviana Bonazzoli, 'Gli ebrei del Regno di Napoli all'epoca della loro espulsione, I parte: il periodo aragonese (1456–1499)', *Archivio storico italiano*, cxxxvii (1979), and 'II parte: il periodo spagnolo (1501–1541)', *Archivio storico italiano*, cxxxix (1981). On the disappearance of Judaizers in Naples, see Giovanni Romeo, 'La suggestione dell'ebraismo tra i napoletani del tardo Cinquecento', in Luzzati (ed.), *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*. On the campaigns against *giudaizzanti* during the second half of the sixteenth century, see Pierroberto Scaramella, 'La campagna contro i giudaizzanti nel Regno di Napoli (1569–1582): antecedenti e risvolti di un'azione inquisitoriale', in his *Inquisizioni, eresie, etnie, dissenso religioso e giustizia ecclesiastica in Italia (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Bari, 2005).

⁵⁹ *Processi*, ix, 86–7.

Communion. This claim directly contradicted the testimony of the witness Angelo Balbi, who stated that Mariana had mentioned her confessions to him.⁶⁰ The inquisitors asked about this several times for good reason, for if Mariana had observed Catholic rituals the accusation of Judaizing would have been valid in their eyes.

After the first interrogation Mariana was taken into custody. Three weeks later she requested permission to write to her husband Giovanni in order to ask him to come to Venice. After a further two weeks she changed her mind. This time, she requested permission to travel to Rome herself in order to speak to her husband. She promised in return to be baptized after her arrival in Rome — a baptism that had already taken place many years before, as we know. The trial thus took a surprising turn. Although Mariana at first denied the circumstantial evidence of her Christian faith, she now consented to convert to Christianity. When the inquisitors wanted to send her to the Casa dei catecumeni she protested vehemently ‘that she knew perfectly well how to live as a Christian and the duties of a Christian and also various prayers’.⁶¹

Mariana’s wish to return to her husband, combined with her willingness to convert, convinced the inquisitors. In June or July of 1624 she was transferred from Venice to Rome via Ancona.⁶² In Rome she was taken into custody by the Roman Sant’Ufficio. As in Venice, the Roman trial centred essentially on the accusation of Judaizing. Mariana’s second marriage was discussed only as a secondary issue. As was to be expected, Mariana told a different story in Rome. Her wish to return to Giovanni was inseparable from a Christian life. When Mariana asked for a hearing in Rome, she must have been aware of this. Travelling to Rome meant presenting herself as a committed Christian and, indeed, living a Christian life in future.

Here she provided a more detailed account of her life, including her time in Danzig, Tripoli and Malta. The description of her baptism figured prominently in this narrative. She referred to her conversion as divine providence in order to emphasize the integrity of her faith. She mentioned details such as the cohabitation of

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶² ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 471^r.

Christians and Jews in her father's household in Danzig. Asserting that she had been instructed in the Catholic faith, she cited the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments.⁶³ Giovanni's statement and the evidence of the Viennese Jesuits, which documented her wish to reconvert to Judaism, went against Mariana's version of events.⁶⁴ Yet Giovanni also testified to Mariana's having lived in accordance with the Christian faith and rituals. She herself protested that she had always respected Christian law. 'After being baptized, I did not adhere in the least to Hebrew law, and I believed the Christian faith to be completely true and good, and if I had not had this will, I could have gone to the Levant while I was in Venice'.⁶⁵

Unlike Giovanni, Mariana presented her 'confession' in Vienna as part of a marital dispute in which she had spoken in anger. The inquisitor reproached her with having lived in the Venetian ghetto. Mariana justified her behaviour, however, as necessitated by external circumstances in a difficult situation:

When I arrived in Venice I went to the ghetto of the Jews in order to live honourably and to be accepted as a daughter of the Jews and of the Jewish race. During the day, I stayed among Christians. In the evening, I returned to the ghetto, observing as much as possible the Christian law, although I was forced to eat cheese and eggs during Lent. But I never ate meat on Fridays or Saturdays, and I did not go to Mass and I did not confess. I always intended to return to Rome and join my husband, but I was afraid of the Inquisition because I had lived in the ghetto of the Jews in Venice.⁶⁶

This evidence was insufficient to clear Mariana of the suspicion of heresy. According to the logic of inquisitorial law, a suspicion of heresy — which in Mariana's case had arisen from her expressed wish to return to Judaism and her sojourn in the Venetian ghetto — could be removed only by interrogation under torture.⁶⁷ On 3 December 1624, a scant three months after the beginning of

⁶³ *Ibid.*, fo. 491^v. The exact wording of the prayers was not recorded. While the Ten Commandments were a fundamental component of both the Jewish and the Christian religions, the Ave Maria and the Apostles' Creed were clearly Catholic prayers.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fo. 454^r.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 491^r.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fos. 490^v–491^r.

⁶⁷ On the routine application of torture, see Peter Schmidt, 'Tortur als Routine', in Peter Burschel, Götz Distelrath and Sven Lembke (eds.), *Das Quälen des Körpers: eine historische Anthropologie der Folter* (Cologne, 2000). See also John Tedeschi, 'The Organization and Procedures of the Roman Inquisition: A Sketch', in his *Prosecution of Heresy*, 141–6; Siebenhüner, *Bigamie und Inquisition in Italien*, 61.

the trial, she was interrogated under torture for a quarter of an hour. Again she asserted her Catholic faith and denied secret Judaizing.

V

Historians of crime have written much about the possibilities and limitations of trusting and interpreting court records.⁶⁸ Historians of the Spanish Inquisition, in particular, have debated whether trials against New Christians reflect the ideology of the inquisitors or the reality of crypto-Jewish practices.⁶⁹ Today, however, many historians agree that the reproaches against Judaizers were not mere inventions of the inquisitors and that the sources may be regarded as relatively trustworthy.⁷⁰ The writers of the interrogation records were obliged to be accurate in every detail, and notaries had to confirm the authenticity of the records. Many cases of the Roman Sant'Ufficio and the Spanish Inquisition have come down to us only as summaries, but in Mariana's case we have the interrogation records themselves and can assume that they give an accurate account of the testimonies and the course of the trial.

How trustworthy, however, is Mariana's narrative itself? Is her story too fantastic to be true? Not at all. Her biography is plausible in the context of the Jewish diaspora of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For many Jews, life in the diaspora was characterized by long-distance mobility and multiple changes of location. It was not unusual for individuals or families to move from Madrid to Bordeaux, from Amsterdam to Venice or from Venice to Saloniki.⁷¹ Samuel Pallache (c.1550–1616), for

⁶⁸ For a summary, see Gerd Schwerhoff, *Aktenkundig und gerichtsnotorisch: Einführung in die historische Kriminalitätsforschung* (Tübingen, 1999), 61–8.

⁶⁹ In the 1960s, António José Saraiva argued that the accusation of Judaizing was used as a pretext to proceed against the *conversos*, who were fast becoming a considerable economic force. The central arguments of the ensuing controversy are documented in Saraiva, *Marrano Factory*, appendices 1–2. Independently of this debate, Benzion Netanyahu has argued that crypto-Judaism was essentially a creation of inquisitorial persecution: see Netanyahu, *Marranos of Spain*.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'The Archives of the Holy Office of Toledo as a Source for Historical Anthropology', in Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi with Charles Amiel (eds.), *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods* (DeKalb, 1986), 168–9; John Edwards, 'Was the Spanish Inquisition Truthful?', *Jewish Quart. Rev.*, lxxxvii (1997), 365; Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit*, 76–9.

⁷¹ Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora*; Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*; Greyerz, 'Portuguese Conversos on the Upper Rhine'; Pullan, *Jews of Europe*, 211–28.

example, commuted as a political agent and entrepreneur between Fez, Madrid and Amsterdam.⁷² In this context Mariana's moves between Danzig, Tripoli, Naples and Venice were not exceptional. Given the activities of pirates and corsairs in the Mediterranean, her captivity and enslavement were also not improbable. Moreover, her stay and conversion in Malta have been verified through the certificate of baptism that was submitted as a copy to the Roman inquisitors.

It is far more difficult to answer the questions concerning Mariana's faith. She painted two different portraits of her faith before two different courts. In Venice she presented herself as a forced convert who had merely pretended to live as a Christian, while in Rome she convinced the inquisitors of her Christian faith. She produced a coherent story in both trials, including details and arguments in her favour. In an environment of fear, threat and disinformation, the accused always pursued strategies that promised rescue. Obviously, Mariana would have tried anything to avert a sentence for Judaizing. On the other hand, she was not a prisoner of her situation. Her deliberate silence on the subject of her baptism and her request to travel to Rome demonstrate that she was not helpless. She emerges from the interrogation records as a resolute and intelligent woman, despite her inability to write. Given her defence strategy and varying depictions of her chosen religion, an enquiry into her 'true' faith does not seem very promising.

More than true religious convictions, her story reveals the strategies and ambivalences associated with a change of religion. The seemingly perfect adoption of the new faith, its doctrine and the requisite pious practices enabled her to integrate successfully into Christian society. This outcome is supported not only by Mariana's release from enslavement but also by her second marriage, since categories such as trustworthiness and orthodoxy always played a role in the arrangement of a marriage.⁷³ Before the wedding, two witnesses testified that Mariana was unmarried, a circumstance that also points to her ability to establish a network of new relationships after she arrived in Naples.

⁷² Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore and London, 2003).

⁷³ Angiolina Arru, 'Il prezzo della cittadinanza: strategie di integrazione nella Roma pontificia', *Quaderni storici*, xci (1996), 166.

Neither the persons who made these testimonies nor her husband seem to have had any inkling of her Jewish past.

Her conversion and her Christian life were first and foremost a matter of survival, freedom and social integration. As she said in Venice, she lived as a Christian for the sake of security and for love of her husband. Her change of religion was connected to certain perspectives. Her Catholic life in Naples allowed her not merely a certain social and material security, but also a marriage in which Mariana and her husband 'liked each other'.⁷⁴

Although in Venice she alleged that she had been dissimulating, she must have developed a Christian identity. After her baptism in 1607 she lived according to Christian customs for fifteen years. In her testimonies she affirmed her familiarity with the Christian faith and its rituals. She knew the central teachings of Catholicism because she had received instruction after her baptism, attended Mass, listened to sermons and prayed. At least in part, she had adopted and engaged in Catholic pious practices.

Perhaps she found ways of remaining loyal to the Jewish religion within her everyday Christian life. More than her testimony, her departure for Poland points to the continuity of her Jewish faith. Mariana expressed her wish to return to her home country after having lived a secure life in Naples for about a decade. What caused her to give up this stable existence in Naples? The confession in Vienna shows that her desire to return openly to Judaism was an important motive. Although not mentioned in the trials, her son may have played an important role too. Many Sephardic rabbis held the view that the children of a converted Jewish woman were still Jews.⁷⁵ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Jewish identity was a matter not just of faith but also of lineage. Mariana thus had to enlighten her son about his Jewish identity by birth. When the couple set off for Poland, he was about 14 years old. According to Jewish law, this was the age at which a boy entered the world of adults.⁷⁶ Many *converso* families informed their sons about their Jewish origins and the Jewish religion at this age.⁷⁷ Perhaps Mariana intended to do exactly this

⁷⁴ *Processi*, ix, 87.

⁷⁵ David Nirenberg, 'Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain', *Past and Present*, no. 174 (Feb. 2002), 20–1.

⁷⁶ Milano, *Storia degli ebrei*, 556.

⁷⁷ Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit*, 218–23. In *converso* families, it often was the woman's role to pass on the religion. See Renée Levine Melammed, 'Sephardi Women in

when she pressed for a return to Poland. All we know for certain is that mother and son stayed together in the Venetian ghetto. As Mariana was on her own when she was transferred to Rome, we can assume that her son remained in Venice.

If the departure for Poland marked one turning point, Mariana's change of attitude in Venice marked another. As mentioned above, she decided to profess her faith in the Catholic Church and to return to her husband Giovanni. However, she had nursed this idea even before being taken into custody. Angelo Balbi gave the following testimony concerning his conversations with Mariana: 'She told me that she had the intention of becoming a Christian because she liked him [Giovanni]', and 'I have talked several times to this woman, who told me that she wants to go to Rome and find her Christian husband, to whom she is drawn by feelings of affection'.⁷⁸ The relationship with Giovanni, then, was a major reason for living as a 'buona cristiana'.⁷⁹

Although Mariana lived as a Jew in the ghetto, she kept in touch with Christians and even with converts.⁸⁰ It was no accident that she confided in Angelo Balbi: according to his own testimony, 'She dared to speak to me because I told her that I was Jewish, too, and have become a Christian'.⁸¹ Balbi shared Mariana's experience of two religious worlds. Her plan to return to Catholicism even before she was caught by the Inquisition shows that she could not put aside her Christian identity by entering the ghetto — just as she could not put aside her Jewish identity after baptism.

Mariana lived between two religious worlds. She was converted by force, lived as a Christian, reconverted to Judaism and then returned to Catholicism. She was familiar with both faiths. Her religious identity was anything but clear. Rather than changing her faith once and for all, she remained poised between the two religions. Neither did her conversion in Malta imply a clear break

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the Medieval and Early Modern Periods', in Judith R. Baskin (ed.), *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective* (Detroit, 1991), esp. 126–7; Foa, *Jews of Europe after the Black Death*, 70–1.

⁷⁸ *Processi*, ix, 89–90.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 92: 'se mio marito mi vorà, mi contento di farmi battizzare et viver da buona cristiana'.

⁸⁰ Angelo Balbi *quondam* Salomonis de Castrofranco converted to Catholicism in 1611. *Processi*, ix, 89.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

with Judaism, nor was the will to reconvert that she expressed in Vienna definitive. Mariana's attitude wavered between Jewish convictions, Christian habits and dissimulation, between an open adherence to Judaism and adherence to the Catholic Church. In this she resembled many *conversos*, whose religious identities oscillated along a continuum, with committed New Christians at one end and zealous New Jews at the other. Between these poles a wide range of attitudes was possible, from inner wavering or syncretistic practices and beliefs to indifference and scepticism.⁸² Each positioning on this spectrum related to an individual situation and the interplay of spiritual, social, economic and emotional needs, possibilities and constraints. At the religious turning points in her biography — the baptism in Malta, the departure for Poland and the return to Rome — Mariana, too, must have weighed and compared these factors. She was neither a sceptic nor an opportunist. Her life in Sicily and Naples was associated with certain perspectives, as was her confession in Rome. Opportunism was not one of them, however. Mariana was a complex woman who tried to harmonize her religious attitudes with the circumstances in which she found herself.⁸³ Although living as a Christian was essential in her situation as a slave, she later risked religious persecution and her marriage in order to return to Judaism and, perhaps, to initiate her son into the Jewish religion. After the events in Vienna and her capture in Venice, her circumstances changed once again. Mariana now knew that her husband rejected the idea of a mixed marriage, and that her son, who had reached the age of about 16, could earn a living on his own if necessary.⁸⁴ She also knew that even in the ghetto, where she could practise Judaism freely, her Christian identity did not simply fade away. In this particular situation Mariana made yet another decision — this time in favour of her marriage and of the Christian faith.

This outcome suggests that for Mariana, the Christian and Jewish worlds remained ultimately incompatible. Some converts

⁸² In this regard, see also Révah, 'Les Marranes', 53, 58; Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 34–5; Pullan, *Jews of Europe*, 242; Greyerz, 'Portuguese Conversos on the Upper Rhine', 77; Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit*, 85–90.

⁸³ A similar interpretation has been suggested by David Graizbord for the case of Antonio Rodríguez de Amézquita: see Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 160, 167.

⁸⁴ Mariana's son worked as a water-bearer in the ghetto. *Processi*, ix, 89.

managed to combine the best of both religious worlds.⁸⁵ But Mariana's story reveals how torn she actually was. Her hope that she and her husband could live as a mixed couple may be read as an attempt to unify the Christian and the Jewish worlds and to avoid losing either Giovanni or her son. Each of the two worlds seemed to be incarnated in a person. Whereas her husband Giovanni stood for the Christian world, her son represented the continuity of the Jewish world. Living in Poland or in the Venetian ghetto meant losing Giovanni. Life in Rome, on the other hand, meant refraining from any open profession of Judaism as well as relinquishing a close relationship with her son if he stayed in the Venetian ghetto. Ultimately, Mariana's choice was not just between two religions, but also between two people, and between her role as a wife and that as a mother.

Her religious decisions were strongly influenced by her personal relationships and her identity as a woman. At the beginning of her Christian life she was separated from her husband and became pregnant by a stranger who had become her master. In the years that followed, her motherhood and second marriage introduced a dilemma specific to female Jewish converts. By marrying Giovanni, Mariana had integrated into Christian society and could live as an honourable woman. On the other hand, independent of her own religious choices, she had given birth to a son who tied her to the Jewish world. Faith, marriage and motherhood were simultaneously interwoven and opposed to each other. They created a field of tensions in which she repeatedly had to give up something in order to gain something else.

VI

In sociological scholarship, conversions are normally defined as fundamental, religiously motivated turning points in a biography.⁸⁶ Although there are many different issues at the centre of

⁸⁵ Nicholas Griffiths, 'The Best of Both Faiths: The Boundaries of Religious Allegiance and Opportunism in Early Eighteenth-Century Cuenca', *Bull. Hispanic Studies*, lxxvii (2000).

⁸⁶ Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Volkhard Krech and Hubert Knoblauch, 'Religiöse Bekehrung in soziologischer Perspektive: Themen, Schwerpunkte und Fragestellungen der gegenwärtigen religionssoziologischen Konversionsforschung', in Hubert Knoblauch, Volkhard Krech and Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (eds.), *Religiöse Konversion: systematische und fallorientierte Konversionsforschung* (Konstanz, 1998). On the concept of conversion, see also Eckhart Friedrich, Klaus Hartmann and Detlef Pollack,

sociological research on conversion, such as its process, its reasons or its communicative aspects, there is a common understanding of conversion as a radical change, a transition from one system of beliefs to another.⁸⁷

This view is firmly rooted in the historical concept of conversion. First, the concept carries on the tradition of the first Christian conversion narratives by the Apostle Paul and the church father Augustine. Whereas Paul described his experience of conversion as a singular moment of enlightenment, Augustine represented it as a process of progressive theological discovery.⁸⁸ Both of them, however, fashioned the event as a fundamental turning point in their religious identities and created a model that would influence the description of conversion for centuries to come.⁸⁹ Second, it was in the interest of the early modern authorities to label conversion as a permanent change. In Rome, for example, neophytes were not allowed to contact their former co-religionists. Their integration into Christian society was systematically promoted through marriage, financial support and other incentives.⁹⁰ The actual conversion was carefully choreographed and staged for the public in a ritualized baptism. Moreover, many authorities attempted to verify converts' intentions. Seeking to avoid opportunistic changes of religion, they made converts prove the sincerity of their beliefs through an examination.⁹¹ Finally, for many individuals conversion was indeed a definitive

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'Kircheneintritt und Konversion: Kircheneintritte in einer ostdeutschen Großstadt — betrachtet aus der Perspektive der Konversionsforschung', *ibid.*, esp. 93–100.

⁸⁷ Wohlrab-Sahr, Krech and Knoblauch, 'Religiöse Bekehrung in soziologischer Perspektive', 8, 16. Ultimately, even models that conceptualize conversion as a process presume a clear change of religion. See Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, 'Converting: Stages of Religious Change', in Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant (eds.), *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies* (London and New York, 1999). Massimo Leone describes the process of conversion in a similar way, but from an anthropological and semiotic point of view. A phase of the destabilization and crisis of the 'I' is followed by a phase of restabilization in which a new religious identity is constructed. See Massimo Leone, *Religious Conversion and Identity: The Semiotic Analysis of Texts* (London and New York, 2004).

⁸⁸ Paula Fredriksen, 'Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions and the Retrospective Self', *Jl Theol. Studies*, xxxvii (1986).

⁸⁹ Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 90–2; see also D. Bruce Hindmarsh, "'My Chains Fell Off, My Heart Was Free": Early Methodist Conversion Narrative in England', *Church Hist.*, lxxviii (1999).

⁹⁰ Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, esp. 265–89 and 299–325.

⁹¹ Corpis, 'Geography of Religious Conversion', 324.

choice. The fact that some converts became missionaries and religious zealots shows how radical conversion could be.⁹²

Yet this understanding of conversion fails to describe adequately the reality of many other converts. This reality was characterized not by a clear change of religion but by the development of a coexisting religious world, by partial assimilation, syncretistic practices and multiple conversions. Recently, Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton stated that 'complete religious conversion — prescribed by change or pure transmission — was and is impossible to achieve'.⁹³ One might add that these findings apply to the research on Iberian *conversos* as well as to studies of conversion in missionary history and the confessional history of Europe.

The break between the old and the new faith was frequently not as clean as Catholic missionaries might have wished. Although the Indians of New France accepted Christian beliefs in the seventeenth century, their native religion remained intact, as Allan Greer has shown.⁹⁴ In this case, two religious worlds coexisted. In colonial Peru, on the other hand, the Christian religion fused with pagan traditions. For example, by taking the dead bodies of their ancestors into Catholic churches in order to 'baptize' them, the indigenous population of the Andes attempted to integrate the objects of former veneration into their new Christian faith.⁹⁵ At the same time, Reformation Europe saw the emergence of confessional territories and interconfessional conversions. Sometimes, ordinary people converted only after much vacillation. Nicholas Griffiths's case study of Francesco Antonio, who was put on trial for heresy by the Inquisition of Cuenca, illustrates that the protagonist could alternate perfectly between Catholicism

⁹² For example, some German Protestants who converted to Catholicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took on missionary functions. See Jürgen Stillig, 'Konversion, Karriere und Elitekultur. Profile kirchlicher Konvertitenfürsorge: Ludolf Klencke und Barthold Nihus', in Friedrich Niewöhner and Fidel Rädle (eds.), *Konversionen im Mittelalter und in der Frühneuzeit* (Hildesheim, 1999). In addition, a few prominent Jewish converts wrote sharp polemics against their former religion. See Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 52–6; Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, 36–9.

⁹³ Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, 'Introduction', in Mills and Grafton (eds.), *Conversion*, p. x.

⁹⁴ Allan Greer, 'Conversion and Identity: Iroquois Christianity in Seventeenth-Century New France', in Mills and Grafton (eds.), *Conversion*.

⁹⁵ Peter Gose, 'Converting the Ancestors: Indirect Rule, Settlement Consolidation, and the Struggle over Burial in Colonial Peru, 1532–1614', in Mills and Grafton (eds.), *Conversion*.

and Protestantism. When he tried to combine elements of both, confessional differences faded.⁹⁶ For some individuals, a change of religion lasted all of their life and reflected the experience of both political and personal change.⁹⁷ A conversion, then, was rarely motivated by religious concerns alone. Normally, it was conditioned by social contexts, familial tensions and economic and political ambitions as much as by confessional convictions.⁹⁸

Whether they changed their religion or their confession, many of these converts were extremely mobile. Their conversions were often connected with one or even several changes of location.⁹⁹ Lutherans or Calvinists who wished to convert in Rome often completed an odyssey through Europe before arriving there. Because of trade, military service or other cause for travel, converts came to Rome from Amsterdam via Corsica, to Livorno from Alsace via Flanders, to Florence from Paris via Berlin, and so on.¹⁰⁰ Being on the move meant crossing religious and cultural borders and coming into contact with different religions or confessions. The reports of converts from Protestantism in Rome make it clear that they had experienced Catholic rituals, had come to know Catholic people and had entered into religious dialogue

⁹⁶ Griffiths, 'Best of Both Faiths'. For similar cases of confessional mixture in the Netherlands, see Christine Kooi, 'Converts and Apostates: The Competition for Souls in Early Modern Holland', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, xcii (2001). In the context of confessional plurality and freedom of religion, some converts played down confessional differences: see Judith Pollmann, 'A Different Road to God: The Protestant Experience of Conversion in the Sixteenth Century', in van der Veer (ed.), *Conversion to Modernities*, esp. 56–7. Converting from the Anglican to the Roman Church could be a tiny step, as Michael Questier shows for Reformation England: see Michael Questier, 'Crypto-Catholicism, Anti-Calvinism and Conversion at the Jacobean Court: The Enigma of Benjamin Carier', *Jl Eccles. Hist.*, xlvii (1996). On the phenomenon of multiple conversions, see Martin Mulsow, 'Mehrfachkonversionen, politische Religion und Opportunismus im 17. Jahrhundert: ein Plädoyer für eine Indifferentismusforschung', in Kaspar von Greyerz et al. (eds.), *Interkonfessionalität — Transkonfessionalität — binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese* (Gütersloh, 2003).

⁹⁷ See, for example, the case of Arnoldus Buchelius, in Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641)* (Manchester and New York, 1998).

⁹⁸ Frauke Volkland, 'Konfession, Konversion und soziales Drama: ein Plädoyer für die Ablösung des Paradigmas der "konfessionellen Identität"', in Greyerz et al. (eds.), *Interkonfessionalität — Transkonfessionalität — binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität*.

⁹⁹ Corpis, 'Geography of Religious Conversion', esp. ch. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Jane Wickersham, 'Results of the Reformation: Ritual, Doctrine and Religious Conversion', *Seventeenth Century*, xviii (2003), 271, 273, 279; see also Matheus, 'Mobilität und Konversion'.

with them before deciding to convert.¹⁰¹ Moments of contact and exchange could thus become the crucial impetus for a gradual change of convictions or, indeed, a change of confession. This applies to Iberian *conversos* as well. The case of Antonio Rodríguez de Amézquita, analysed by David Graizbord, illustrates nicely how trading New Christians met crypto-Jews on their travels and converted as a result of these contacts.¹⁰² Although mobility was not a precondition for conversion, these phenomena were often linked. Mobility went along with cultural contact, which in turn made conversion more likely.

The experience of migration was an essential factor in Mariana's conversions too. It was only her travels from Tripoli to Venice and her experience of enslavement that catapulted her into Christian society. Not until she was on her way to Poland, where she would have the opportunity to practise Judaism, did she freely confess her Jewish origins to Giovanni. Changing places meant entering environments characterized by varying degrees of tolerance, and this played an important role in Mariana's religious choices.

Mobility, marriage, motherhood and religious decisions were interwoven in her biography. The baptism in Malta was more than a mere religious act. It was accompanied by emigration, the loss of a husband, the experience of social and personal degradation through enslavement and a pregnancy by her first master. Her profession of Judaism in Vienna and of Catholicism in Rome were also profoundly associated with her relationship to her second husband and her son. The complex nature of her conversion belies the notion of conversion as radical change.

A story like Mariana's shows that religious identities were multi-layered and often ambiguous. Religious choice was embedded in individual biography, where different experiences, desires and roles competed. Faith, marriage and social environment could create strong points of tension. Conversion stories, then, provide insights into individual biographies and religious ambiguities at a time when church and secular authorities were striving for religious clarity and demarcation. Religious boundaries were

¹⁰¹ Wickersham, 'Results of the Reformation', 269–71, 275–7; Matheus, 'Mobilität und Konversion'.

¹⁰² Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 87–8, 143–67. Rodríguez later reconverted to Catholicism — a choice that was partly motivated by economic misfortunes and his experience of Catholic piety in Zaragoza.

marked and anxiously guarded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Rome — to return there one last time — the battle against heresy began in the 1540s and 1550s. At the same time, the authorities initiated policies of converting and ghettoizing Jews. The Tridentine decrees lent Catholicism a clear-cut confessional profile and instituted a programme of a more Catholic, more moral and more disciplined society. This reflex of defence and differentiation was accompanied by active promotion. The Casa dei catecumeni as well as the Congregatio de propaganda fide, the Congregatio de iis qui sponte veniunt ad fidem and the Ospizio dei convertendi functioned as institutions that systematically promoted conversion from Islam, Judaism, Protestantism or Calvinism to Catholicism.¹⁰³ In this policy of fishing for souls, it was left to the inquisitors to secure the boundaries of the faith and return dissenters to the bosom of the Church.

Mariana minimized the accusation of dissidence by presenting herself to the Roman Sant'Ufficio as a committed Christian. This attitude must have been the reason for the inquisitors' leniency. Despite some valid evidence of her apostasy, the trial ended harmlessly. Although questions concerning Mariana's son and his religion seemed self-evident, the inquisitors enquired no further about him. The records do not tell us whether he was baptized or circumcised, or whether he lived among Christians or Jews, in the Venetian ghetto or somewhere else. This is remarkable, because normally the children of converts were heavily contested.¹⁰⁴ Instead, the inquisitors examined in detail the matter of whether Mariana could continue to live with her husband Giovanni. In a case of the conversion of one partner from the Jewish to the Christian faith, canon law stipulated that the 'infidel' partner should be summoned and asked whether he or she wished to follow his or her spouse.¹⁰⁵ This was virtually

¹⁰³ On the Casa dei catecumeni, see Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, as well as Rocciolo, 'Documenti sui catecumeni e neofiti a Roma nel Seicento e Settecento'; on the Congregatio de iis qui sponte veniunt ad fidem, established in the early seventeenth century, see Fosi, 'Roma e gli "Ultramontani"'; on the Ospizio, founded in 1673, see Sergio Pagano, 'L'Ospizio dei Convertendi di Roma fra carisma missionario e regolamentazione ecclesiastica (1671–1700)', *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, x (1998), esp. 313–44, as well as Matheus, 'Mobilität und Konversion'.

¹⁰⁴ Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, ch. 3.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1691, fasc. Livorno 1705, fasc. Venezia 1721, fasc. Venezia 1678. The basis for legitimizing the second marriage and the praxis of invocation were the *Privilegium Paulinum* and a papal decree of 1585 by Gregory XIII. See Gaudemet, *Le Mariage en occident*, 311; Arturo Carlo

impossible in the case of Aaron, from whom Mariana had heard not a word since their separation in Malta eighteen years previously. On 5 September 1624, Pope Urban VIII (1623–44) therefore decided that Mariana was exempted from the invocation, and could live with Giovanni.¹⁰⁶ This sentence was perfectly in keeping with the Inquisition's policy in favour of sacramental marriage.¹⁰⁷ As far as the offence of Judaizing was concerned, however, the final sentence did not mention any sanctions. We may assume that Mariana was released without being punished or forced to abjure. What was crucial, no doubt, was Mariana's remorseful behaviour, her affirmation of faith and unreserved confession. That was, after all, what truly counted in the inquisitors' battle for souls.

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Jemolo, *Il matrimonio nel diritto canonico: dal Concilio di Trento al Codice del 1917* (1941; Bologna, 1993), 67.

¹⁰⁶ ACDF, stanza storica, M 5-m, fasc. Roma 1624, fo. 505^r. See also ACDF, stanza storica, Decreta 1624, fos. 190^v–191^r.

¹⁰⁷ On the Inquisition's marriage policy, see Siebenhüner, *Bigamie und Inquisition in Italien*, chs. 7–8.