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Isaac Cardoso, *Las excelencias de los hebreos*
(Amsterdam, 1679)

David A. Wacks, University of Oregon (2019)

Las EXCELENCIAS DE LOS HEBREOS.

Por el Doctor
YSHAC CARDOSO.



Impreso en AMSTERDAM en casa de
DAVID DE CASTRO TARTAS.
El Año de 1679.



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Introduction

Las excelencias de los hebreos (Amsterdam 1679) is a treatise describing the positive characteristics (*excelencias*) of the Jewish people and a containing a refutation of common anti-Jewish calumnies (*calumnias*) written by Isaac Cardoso (b. Fernando Cardoso, Trancoso, Portugal 1603 - d. Verona, Italy 1683). Cardoso was born in Portugal to a *converso* crypto-Jewish family.¹ He was educated at the University of Salamanca (Spain), where he excelled in the sciences. He wrote a number of scientific treatises and served as chief physician at the court of Spanish king Philip IV (r. 1621-1665). Eventually he and his younger brother Abraham Miguel Cardoso (1630-1706) fled to Venice, where they were allowed to live openly as Jews. In Venice, Cardoso continued to work as a physician and scientist. There he published an ambitious liberal arts curriculum in Latin, a great compendium of science and philosophy in which he refutes the very popular Kabbalistic mysticism championed by the false messiah Shabbetai Tzvi.² However, Isaac Cardoso's younger brother Abraham Miguel was a follower of Tzvi and accomplished kabbalist in his own right, and this sibling rivalry may well have fueled Isaac's anti-Kabbalistic fervor.

Sephardic Jews, the Expulsions from Spain and Portugal, and the Sephardic Diaspora

There is an unbroken Jewish presence on the Iberian Peninsula going back to at least the Roman period and possibly before. Jewish culture famously flowered during the Andalusí period (711 CE - ca. 1200 CE),³ after which Jews served as a key colonial elite in the transition to Christian rule. Jewish fortunes on the Peninsula went, on the balance, gradually downhill from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, culminating in the infamous pogroms of 1391 that triggered a wave of mass conversions to Catholicism. This created a class of *conversos* or New Christians who were technically Christian, but whose spiritual beliefs and practices varied wildly and produced some very innovative hybrid forms of religious practice. The clandestine practice of Judaism was known as *judaizing* (Sp. *judaizar*) and was considered a Christian heresy by the Church.

The large numbers of conversos, who were often accused of judaizing, spurred the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition in 1478 and led to the eventual expulsion of Jews from the Spanish kingdoms in 1492, and Navarra in 1498, and the conversion of Portuguese Jews in 1497. Tens of thousands of Peninsular Jews chose conversion over exile. Some of these conversos, joining those who converted in the wake of 1391, now largely free of the social restrictions Jews experienced in Christian society, entered the Church, the royal administration, and other sectors of public life closed to them as Jews. They soon formed a powerful elite who attracted no little resentment and suspicion from their fellow Christians.

The annexation of Portugal by Spain in 1580 opened a floodgate of converso migration from Portugal and the Portuguese Empire to Spain and the Spanish Empire. Despite the fact that Portugal had established its

¹ Crypto-Jews were Jewish converts to Christianity (or their descendents) who continued to practice Judaism covertly, at the risk of being denounced to the Spanish or Portuguese Inquisition, institutions charged with policing heresy among the Christian community. The practice of Judaism (Judaizing) by a baptised Christian (and after 1492 in Spain and 1502 in Portugal all subjects were baptized Christians) was punishable by incarceration, confiscation of property, or even death. Crypto-Jews therefore ran tremendous risk in continuing to practice Judaism in this context.

² Shabbetai Tzvi (1626-1676) was an influential and charismatic Sephardic rabbi and kabbalist active throughout the Ottoman Empire who portrayed himself as a messiah. His activities attracted the attention of the Ottoman authorities, and in 1666 the Sultan's grand vizier gave him the choice of death by execution or conversion to Islam. He chose the latter.

³ Much of the Iberian Peninsula was under Muslim rule from the early 8th to the early 13th century CE, and the Arabic name for the Peninsula was al-Andalus. After Christian rulers took control of the last major cities Cordova (1236 CE) and Seville (1248 CE), only the Kingdom of Granada remained under Muslim rule until 1492 CE.

own Inquisition in 1536, the Spanish Inquisition did not prosecute crimes committed against the Church in Portugal, which meant that Portuguese conversos would not be persecuted for past Judaizing once they arrived in Spain. This incentive, together with Castile-Aragón's superior economy, encouraged many Portuguese conversos to cross the border into Castile-Aragón and from there to many of the Spanish Empire's territories such as the New World, where the Inquisition was less powerful than in Castile-Aragón proper. These migrants became bilingual in Portuguese and Castilian; many had been educated at Spanish universities and published works in Spanish. At this time many of Spain's literary lights, such as the author of *Celestina*, Fernando de Rojas (ca. 1480-1541), and the famous poet Luis de Góngora (1561-1627), were born to converso families.

After the Netherlands fell under Spanish control in 1566, Spanish and Portuguese conversos formed a vibrant trading community whose collective wealth supported a good deal of rabbinical study and publications. Even after the northern provinces of the Spanish Netherlands gained independence from Spain some twenty years later, Spain's continued presence in the southern provinces (today Belgium) provided a platform for the emigration of Spanish and Portuguese conversos to Amsterdam. Amsterdam's Sephardic community was connected to communities in the Ottoman Empire via trade associations, but the more significant routes were North Africa/Amsterdam. Venice was an important center linking Amsterdam and Iberia with the Ottoman Empire. The rapidly expanding Portuguese empire was home to many Portuguese conversos who had connections with the Amsterdam community as well. The wealth generated by these Sephardic merchants provided for numerous influential religious academies or *yeshivot* and a rich artistic and spiritual life for Amsterdam's Sephardic Jews.

The role of Spanish in this environment was significant, and the Sephardic press at Amsterdam produced a robust corpus of works in Spanish, and to a lesser extent in Portuguese, written by and for Sephardic Jews, many of whom were raised as Christians and educated in Spanish universities.

Excelencias y calunias de los hebreos

Excelencias is an apology or pro-Jewish treatise meant to educate its readers on Jewish history and practice, and to combat typical anti-Jewish ideas that were very widespread in Europe since the Middle Ages, and that persist to this day. Together with the *Historia degli riti ebraici (History of the Jewish Religion)* (Paris, 1637) of the Italian Jewish author Leone da Modena (1571-1648), it is one of few works of Jewish interest directed at non-Jewish readers. As the title suggests, *Excelencias y calunias* is comprised of two parts. The first details the positive characteristics and history of the Jewish people and the second is dedicated to refuting common calumnies or accusations made against them. In the work, Cardoso draws from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources, and displays the full measure of the classical education he received at the University of Salamanca.

In this excerpt, the tenth and last of the calumnies leveled at Jews that he addresses in the work, Cardoso refutes the blood libel often aimed at aimed at Jewish communities living in majority Christian societies from the Middle ages to the present day. This is the accusation that Jews murder Christian children and use their blood to make the unleavened bread that is eaten ritually on the holiday of *Pesach*, or Passover. This holiday coincides with Easter, and so historically preachers and other rabble rousers have taken advantage of the popular religious sentiment associated with the crucifixion of Jesus to focus blame on the Jews, and foment violence against the Jewish communities in the name of vengeance for the death of Jesus. As Cardoso explains in this text, these accusations are in contradiction to Jewish law, which forbids the consumption of blood of any sort, and condemns murder and human sacrifice in no uncertain terms. It is also worth pointing out that the accusation of drinking the blood and eating the flesh of a human sacrifice is structurally similar to the sacrament of communion, in which believing Catholics drink wine that according to the doctrine of transubstantiation has become the blood of Christ, and eat a wafer that according to the same doctrine has become his flesh. No such parallel is to be found, however, in Jewish ritual.

The local Jewish communities applauded Cardoso's effort to defend them, and a certain Rabbi Judah Briel of Verona (ca. 1643-1722), where Cardoso lived at the end of his life, wrote the following Hebrew sonnet in honor of *Las excelencias*:

A Poem in Praise of Isaac Cardoso

Trans. Liran Yadgar, UCLA (2018)

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| <p>יִצְחָק בְּסִפּוּר מַעֲלוֹת עַמּוּנו
עַל־חֹג שְׁמֵי מַדְע הָלֵא הִלְכָת
וּמְאֹר תְּלוּנֹת הוֹלְלִים הִחְשַׁכְתָּ
וּבְרוּב גְּאוּנָה תִּהְרֹס קְמִינוּ</p> | <p>1. Isaac, in recounting the excellencies of our people
you progressed along the path of celestial knowledge,
eclipsed the light of adversaries,
and with your eminence defeated our foes.</p> |
| <p>יֵשֶׁר מְסוּכָה אֶתְּ אֵלֵי כְרַמְנוּ
מְכָאִיב כְּקוֹץ עַל־שׁוֹנְאִים דְּרַכְתָּ
בְּדְבָרְךָ הַנּוֹפְלִים סַמְכָת
וַיִּפְלוּ הַדּוֹרְשִׁים מוּמִינוּ</p> | <p>2. Upright as a thorn hedge around our vineyard,
stepping, sorely, over enemies as in prickles,
in your words you uphold those who fall
and crush our rivals.</p> |
| <p>אֶרְאֶה לְקוֹל הַמְּנַת גְּאוּן מְלִיד
כִּי נִגְדָה מִתְּקוּמִים יְקוּמוּ
לְשִׁפּוֹךְ כְּמוֹ אֵשׁ וַעֲמָם עֲלִיד</p> | <p>3. I observe the brilliance of your words
as opponents proceed to attack you
and to pour out their wrath, like fire, upon you.</p> |
| <p>אֵד עֲזָה וּפְאָרְךָ יְרוּמוּ
כִּי כִסְנָה תִּהְיֶה מְנַת חֲבִלָּה
כִּי לִהְבֵּי אֵשׁ אֶצְלָה יְצוּמוּ.</p> | <p>4. Your might and splendor adorn your attire
because like the burning bush you are,
unconsumed by the flames of fire!⁴</p> |

Decima Calunia de los Hebreos: Que matan niños Christianos para valerse de su sangre en sus Ritos.

Este testimonio abominable de matar niños ò moços Christianos levantan à los Judios, y dizen que hazen la Pascua con su sangre, y amassan con el, pan azimo en su Pascua celebrada, otros dizen que para valerse de la sangre, y del coraçon para hazer sus hechizos, y encantos; y fue tan introduzida esta falsedad en las Naciones, que en muchas edades se ha continuado con grande esparzimiento de la sangre Judayca, y destruycion de sus haciendas, haziendo en ellos enormes crueldades por estas execrandas mentiras,

Tenth calumny, that they Kill Christians in order to use their blood in their rites

They bring this abominable testimony of killing children or Christian young people against the Jews, and say that they make the Passover sacrifice with their blood,⁵ and use it to make the dough for the unleavened bread⁶ in their Passover celebration, while others say that they do so in order to use their blood and heart to make witchcraft; this accusation is so entrenched among the non-Jews,⁷ that across the ages it has furthered the spilling of Jewish blood, destruction of their homes, committing against them great cruelty because of these

⁴ Source: Ignaz Blumenfeld (ed.), *Ozar Nehmad* (Vienna: J. Knöpfelmacher & Söhne, 1860), 3:168.

⁵ Pesach, or Passover, is a Jewish holiday that coincides with Easter and upon which Easter is modeled liturgically. The word pesach, from which the Spanish *Pascua* derives etymologically, means ‘sacrifice,’ referring to the lamb that the Biblical Hebrews were ordered to sacrifice in Exodus 12:1-28. Historically Jews have slaughtered and eaten lamb on the first evening of Passover to commemorate this sacrifice.

⁶ *Pan azimo* (*matza* in Hebrew) is an unleavened bread that Jews eat during Passover to commemorate the unleavened bread that the Biblical Hebrews ate in their hasty exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12:39). This ritual is commanded in the Bible itself (12:18).

⁷ In the original text Cardoso uses the word *naciones* a literal translation of the Hebrew *goyyim* (‘nations’), used to refer to non-Hebrew or non-Jewish people. We should read it as ‘non-Jews’ or perhaps ‘gentiles.’

que les levantan sus enemigos, y con el odio entrañavel que le tienen solicitan con diligencia testigos, que afirman ser ellos los Autores desta maldad todos los años, con que miserablemente llevados al suplicio se cumple en ellos lo del Profeta Iesaya. *Apretado y affligido no abrirá su boca como cordero al degollio es llevado, y como oveja delante sus trasquiladores emmudeció, y no abrió su boca, entregó à muerte su alma, y con rebelladores fue contado.* (Isayas. Cap. 53)

Si un Niño, un Joven falta en las Ciudades, si le roban, los Judios le hurtaron, si hombres impios, y perversos le matan, los Judios fueron los omicidas, no ay maldad tan atroz, ni impiedad tan fiera, que no les imputen, ellos siempre llevan la pena de los delitos, que cometieron los depravados, de qualquier suerte aunque sea patente su inocencia ellos son los culpados, y los punidos, muy semejantes al cordero del Apologo de Esopo, que hallandolo el lobo su enemigo, y queriendo ensangrentar en el sus manos le injuriò de palabras, y le acusò que havia tres meses, que le havia comido la yerva de su campo, respondiò el cordero, que aun entonces no era nacido, que mal podia destroçarle su heredad, replicole el lobo que porque le enturbiava el agua del arroyo en que le estaba bebiendo, respondiòle el cordero, como te puedo yo enturbiar el agua, si tu bebes arriba de la corriente, y yo abaxo, y aunque vió el cruel lobo la verdad de sus razones, le dixo de qualquier modo yo te tengo de comer, y has de ser alimento de mis carnes, y luego le despedaçó, y tragó rabioso.

Semejante à otra fabula, que trae de la raposa, y del gallo en que no bastaron sus disculpas para librarse de su rapiña, y tirania: assi son los hijos de Ysrael en esta captividad, corderos con los lobos, y gallos con raposas de sus enemigos, que deseosos de tragarlos, y consumirlos ninguna razón les vale para librarlos de sus manos, sedientos de su sangre, y tiranos de sus vidas los despedaçan.

execrable lies with which they accuse their enemies, and with the deep hate that they have for them they find witnesses who affirm that they are the authors of this crime every year, so that they are miserably brought to be tortured, so fulfilling the words of the Prophet Isaiah: *He was oppressed, though he humbled himself / And opened not his mouth; As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, / And as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; / Yea, he opened not his mouth.* (Isaiah 53: 7)

If a child, or young person goes missing in a city, if they kidnap him, it was the Jews who took him. If evil, perverse men kill him, the Jews were the killers. There is no crime too atrocious, no cruelty too savage, for which they do not blame the Jews. They always carry the blame for the crimes committed by the depraved, no matter how obvious their innocence they are the guilty, the punished, very much like the lamb in Aesop's fable,⁸ meeting with his enemy the wolf who, wanting to bloody his hands with the lamb, insulted him with words and accused him of eating the grasses of his pasture three months ago. The lamb replied that three months ago he had not yet been born, and so it would have been impossible for him to destroy the wolf's property. The wolf said that the lamb had muddied the water the wolf had been drinking; the lamb responded: 'how could I have muddied your water, when you drink upstream from me?' Although the cruel wolf understood the lamb's arguments, he said to him 'in any event, I have to eat, and you must be the food for my flesh.' Then he tore him apart and ate him ferociously.

This is similar to another fable, about the fox and the rooster,⁹ in which his excuses did not spare him from being savaged and suffering tyranny: such are the Children of Israel in this captivity, lambs among wolves, and roosters among their enemies the foxes, who are so desirous of eating them and consuming them that no argument serves to free them from their hands; they

⁸ *The Wolf and the Lamb* is one of Aesop's fables, attributed to the African storyteller Aesop, who is said to have lived in Greece in the sixth century BCE. In the tale, the wolf accuses the lamb of a series of transgressions in order to justify killing and eating him. The lamb refutes all of the wolf's accusations, proving them impossible, but the wolf replies by saying that another lamb must have committed the crimes and proceeds to kill the lamb. The lesson is that the tyrant will justify his cruelty by any means, the truth notwithstanding.

⁹ Cardoso here seems to be referring to another tale of Aesop, "The Fox and the Crow," (and not a *gallo* or rooster as Cardoso writes) in which the fox distracts the crow by flattering him, after which the fox eats the crow, the lesson being that a predator is never to be trusted.

No basta para desvanecer tan enorme testimonio, y disuadir esta mal concebida opinion de la sangre, los breves de los Pontifices, los decretos de los Emperadores, y mandatos de los Principes, que dan por falsa, y por mala esta persuasion, no bastan todos estos motivos para desengaño de las malas intenciones, sino que con escritos, con libros, con sembrar essa fama vulgar estan en una firme creencia, levantandole, que son homicidas para matar à ellos, que derraman su sangre para derramar la suya, con que estas dos calunias, y testimonios de la sangre, y de las hostias, ò imagenes son dos blancos, y dos fitos, que exponen, y publican para tirar à nuestras vidas, con un furor barbaro, y nuestros adversarios ellos son los testigos, y los juezes contra nuestra innocencia como dize la Escritura. *No como nuestro Fuerte su fuerte, y nuestros enemigos juezes* (Deut. Cap. 32).

Nuestro Dios es el verdadero Señor, Criador de los cielos, y la tierra, ni hay otro Dios, como el, pero nuestros enemigos son los juezes, que sentencian no segun la justicia, sino segun la passion, no es la verdad la que investigan, sino el odio, que abraçan, y el rigor con que persiguen, no atienden al verso del mismo Cantico, que sangre de sus siervos vengará, y vengança tomará à sus angustiadores.

Nunca la gentilidad ignorante de nuestras ceremonias nos levantó estos testimonios, y los Christianos, que ò por mas sabios, ò por mas proximos, y que saben mejor de nuestros ritos, y leen también nuestros libros Sagrados devian reprobar estas falsedades, ellos mismos nos atribuyen acciones tan crueles, y tan contrarias de nuestra Ley Santisima. Es verdad que algunos varones sabios, y Principes prudentes abominan estas calunias, y tienen por malevolencia

thirst for their blood and tyrannize them as they rip them apart.

Papal briefs, imperial decrees, and the orders of princes are not enough to dispel this great testimony, and dissuade this misconceived opinion concerning the blood, this argument is made falsely and with ill intent. All of these motives are insufficient to give the lie to these ill intentions. Rather, with a firm conscience they sow this vulgar reputation, alleging that they are murderers in order to have them killed, that they spill blood in order to spill theirs, that these two calumnies, and testimonies regarding the blood, and the hosts or images¹⁰ are two targets, and two milestones that they promote and publicize in order to tear down our lives, with a barbaric furor, and the witnesses are our enemies, and the judges are against our innocence, as the Scripture says: *For their rock is not as our Rock, / Even our enemies themselves being judges* (Deuteronomy 32:31).

Our God is the true Lord, Creator of the heavens and the earth; nor is there any other God like him, but our enemies are the judges, who pass sentence not according to justice, but rather according to passion. It is not the truth they investigate, but rather hate that they embrace, and the in rigor with which they prosecute they ignore the verses of the very same Song.¹¹ The blood of their servants will be avenged; they will take vengeance upon their oppressors.

Those who bring such testimonies against us are not ignorant of our ceremonies. Indeed those Christians most familiar with our religion, either because they are learned or because they are our neighbors, and who read our Sacred books,¹² should reprove these falsehoods; but it is they themselves who attribute to us such cruel acts, and so contrary to our most Holy Law. It is true that some learned men and judicious princes abhor these calumnies, and regard these lies as evil, but the

¹⁰ *Hostia* (lit. 'host') refers to the consecrated host or communion wafer. The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation holds that once the host has been consecrated it becomes the actual body of Christ; therefore its abuse is the abuse of Christ himself. *Imágenes* (lit. 'images') refers to sculpted images of Jesus used in Church art and ritual.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 32 is traditionally referred to as the "Song of Moses."

¹² The Tanakh or Hebrew Bible (referred to as the Old Testament in Christian tradition), is considered part of the canonical Christian Bible, together with the New Testament, a collection of later books considered sacred in Christian tradition.

esta falsedad, mas ni la plebe cré à los sabios, ni el vulgo obedece à los Principes, quando el odio domina sobre la razon, y el furor cierra la puerta à la disculpa. Pero vamos refiriendo los sucesos, y despues descubriremos la falsedad.

En el año de 1183 cuenta el Vicencio en su Espejo Historial, que en Francia los Judios todos los años mataban à un Christiano en sacrificio la semana de la Pascua, y que hallados en este crimen fueron quemados por vezes, y que esto havian cometido contra un Ricardo, que despues fue tenido por santo, al qual crucificaron, y que el Rey Philipo luego que tomó la Corona del Reyno mandó prender los Judios en todos sus Estados estando en sus Sinagogas en Sabado, y los despojó del oro, plata, y joyas que tenian, los desterró de su Reyno, aplicó sus possessions al fisco Real, y sus Sinagogas convirtió en Iglesias, imputavanles tambien usuras demasiasdas con que agravavan los vezinos, y que los banqueros, y usuarios sus hijos se servian de los calizes, y vasos empeñados bebiendo en ellos, y haziendo la sopa en vino.

Este es el Rey que murió despues despeñando una montaña yendo siguiendo un ciervo en la caça, y cuenta el mismo Vicencio, que mandó quemar ochenta y quatro Judios en Paris acusados de que havian muerto à un Christiano. En Viena de Austria imperando Federico¹⁵ haviendose elado con los frios grandes de aquella tierra un gran charco de agua fueron como es costumbre, à holgarse y correr por el tres moços pequeños, y rompiéndose el yelo se hundieron, buscandolos por toda la Ciudad, y no pareciendo levantó el pueblo, que los Judios los

people do not believe the sages, nor does the rabble obey the princes, when hate dominates reason, and fury closes the door on pardon. However, we shall here narrate the events, and then uncover the lies.

In the year of 1183 Vincent, in his *Mirror of History*¹³ relates that in France every year the Jews would kill a Christian in their sacrifice the week of Passover, and those accused of this crime were often burned, and that they had done this to a certain Richard, who was later believed to be a saint, whom they crucified. Then when Philip¹⁴ became King, one Saturday when the Jews were in their synagogues he ordered them to be arrested, and they robbed them of their gold, silver and jewels that they had, expelled them from the kingdom, transferred their belongings to the royal treasury and converted their synagogues into churches. They also accused them of excessive usury by which they aggravated their neighbors, and that the [[Jewish] bankers used the chalices and vessels [of the churches], drank wine from them, and used them to make soup.

This is the king who later fell to his death from a mountaintop as he chased a deer on a hunt, and the same Vincent relates that he ordered 84 Jews, accused of having murdered a Christian, burned in Paris. In Vienna, Austria, during the reign of Frederick,¹⁶ once the great cold of that land had frozen a lake, three young boys went to play and run on it, as they normally did. While they were playing, the ice broke and they drowned. The people looked all over the city for them and they could not find them; they alleged, bringing witnesses, that the Jews had killed them to make a sacrifice of their blood.

¹³ Vincent of Beauvais (c.1190-c.1264) was a French Dominican friar and author of the *Speculum Maius* (Great Mirror), an encyclopedic treatise consisting of the *Speculum Naturale* (Mirror of Nature, on natural sciences), the *Speculum Doctrinale* (Mirror of Doctrine, on theology), and the *Speculum Historiale* (Mirror of History, on world history).

¹⁴ Philip IV of France (r. 1285-1314) expelled French Jews from his kingdom in 1306. In the following year he abolished the crusading order the Knights Templar, fearing they had become too powerful.

¹⁵ Durante el reinado de Federico II de Hohenstaufen, Emperador del Sacro Imperio (r. 1220-1250), un libelo de sangre fue perpetrado en la ciudad de Fuld en el año 1235. Las acusaciones dieron lugar a un levantamiento popular y una matanza de judíos. Para dar por terminado el caso, Federico convocó un concilio de conversos en el año 1243 para determinar si el sacrificio humano ritual realmente era permitido por la ley judía. La conclusión fue que no.

¹⁶ During the reign of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1220-1250) a blood libel was perpetrated in the city of Fuld in the year 1235. The accusations resulted in a popular uprising and killings of Jews. To settle the matter definitively, Frederick convened a council of Christian converts in the year 1243 to determine if human ritual sacrifice was, in fact, allowed according to Jewish law. They concluded it was not.

havian muerto para Pascuar con su sangre dando testigos, que havian visto entrar los tres moços en casa de los Hebreos, y añadian que una Christiana havia vendido una hostia à un Judio, y que la maltratava, amotinando el pueblo mandó el Emperador quemar trezientos Judios, y despues de executado el castigo se desyelo el charco, y parecieron sobre el agua los tres moços muertos, que se havian hundido, tan perniciosos son los juzyios precipitados, que anticipan la execucion al examen, y el condenar al inquirir.

El Simon de Trento en Ytalia, y el Niño de la Guardia en España son dos funestas tragedias inventadas contra los Judios. El Bergomense en su suplemento de las Coronicas, y el Surio cuentan, que los Judios de Trento el año de 1475 hurtaron un niño de dos años para celebrar la Pascua con su sangre mezclada con el pan azimo, y el Viernes de la passion le llevaron à la Sinagoga, le pusieron en cruz, le taparon la boca, le hirieron, y mataron, y con su sangre celebraron su Pascua con grande alegria, el cuerpo echaron en el rio, que despues fue hallado, los Judios puestos a tormento, todos ellos, ò muertos, ò desterrados, y confiscados sus bienes, lo mismo dize el Bergomense, que succedió en la Mota en los confines del Friuli dalli à cinco años matando un niño del mismo modo, y que presos tres Judios fueron llevadas à Venecia, y con atroz Suplicios quemados.

Jacob de Valencia en su Tratado contra los Judios refiere que por los años de 1174 quando lo de Ricardo en Paris succedió lo mismo en Saragoça de España, sacrificando un niño y despues le echaron en un poço para que no pareciesse, y que por milagro subia el agua sangrienta hasta el bocal del poço. Otro semejante pone el Sepulveda por los años de 1468 y que el Obispo Don Juan Arias los hizo prender, y justiciar. Del Ricardo son Autores Emilio, Roberto

They testified that they had seen the three boys going into a Jewish home and added that a Christian woman had sold a host to a Jew, who abused it. The people rioted, and the Emperor ordered three hundred Jews burned. After this punishment had been carried out, the lake thawed, and the three boys who had drowned appeared in the water. The rush to judgment was so pernicious in this case that the execution came before the trial, and the condemnation before the inquiry.

Simon of Trent in Italy and the Boy of La Guardia in Spain are two dark tragedies invented against the Jews. The Bergomense,¹⁷ in his supplement to the *Chronicles*, and the Surio both relate that the Jews of Trent in the year 1475 abducted a two-year old child to celebrate the Passover by mixing his blood into the unleavened bread, and on Good Friday they brought him to the synagogue, put him on a cross, gagged him, wounded him, and killed him, joyously celebrating the Passover with his blood. Then they threw his body in the river; later it was found. The Jews were tortured and all of them were either killed or expelled, and their belongings confiscated. The Bergomense says that five years later, the same thing happened in Mota, in the region of Friuli. According to him, Jews killed a child in the same way, and three Jews were imprisoned in Venice, where they were brutally burned.

Jacob of Valencia, in his *Treatise against the Jews*,¹⁸ tells that around the year 1174, when the case of Richard happened in Paris, the same thing happened in Zaragoza, Spain. Jews sacrificed a child and later threw him into a well so that his body would not be seen, and by a miracle the bloody water rose to the opening of the well. Sepulveda¹⁹ relates another similar case around the year 1468 that Bishop Don Juan Arias arrested the

¹⁷ “El Bergomense” is Giacomo Filippo Foresti da Bergamo (1434–1520), an Augustinian friar and author of *Supplementum chronicarum* (Supplement to the Universal Chronicle, Venice, 1483). “El Surio” is Laurentius Surius (Lorenz Sauer, 1523–1578), a German Carthusian monk and historian, author of *Commentarius brevis rerum in orbe gestarum ab a. 1500 ad a. 1564* (Brief Commentary on World History from 1500–1564, Cologne, 1566).

¹⁸ Jaime Pérez (1408–1490) was Bishop of Valencia and author of *Tratado contra los Judios* (Treatise Against the Jews, 1484).

¹⁹ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (ca. 1490–1573) was a Spanish priest who argued against Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and for Holy War against the indigenous peoples of the Americas. He was author of a number of books of history.

Gaguinio, y Vicencio, el qual dize que lo tenian de costumbre degollar en el día de la cena, ò semana santa à un niño, como por sacrificio, y prosigue el Valencia que todos los años curcifican algun Christiano, y no lo pudiendo haver curcifican en su lugar un animal por sacrificio.

El otro decantado successo, y memorable historia tragica es el niño de la Guardia lugar nueve leguas de Toledo, la qual escribió Fray Rodrigo de Yepes, y después del, Sebastián de Nieva Commissario de la Inquisicion. Dizen que el año 1491 unos Judios del Quintanar, la Guardia, y Tembleque del Reyno de Toledo se acordaron para hazer un hechizo de una hostia, y un coraçon de un niño de tres, ò quatro años con que pudiessen matar à los Inquisidores, y Christianos, hurtaronlo, llevaronlo à una cueva junto à la Guardia donde le açotaron, lo maltrataron con empellones, y bofetadas, que le dieron 6000 açotes, y que à Xro. le dieron 5490 segun revevlaciones de hombres pios, y lo refiere Ludolpho el Cartuxano en la Vita Cristi segunda parte Cap. 58 y al fin le crucificaron, y mataron, y le sacaron el coraçon, y esto todo en Pascua del cordero de los Judios.

Despues le llevaron à enterrar un quarto de legua dela cueva en una viña. Compran una hostia del sacristan de la Guardia, y juntamente con el coraçon del niño hazen su hechizo para morir rabiando los Inquisidores, y Christianos, y haziendo la consulta determinaron de mandar à la Sinagoga celebre de Samora à Benito de las Mesuras Cardador, con el coraçon, y la hostia la qual llevaba metida entre las

accused Jews and put them on trial. Emilio,²⁰ Robert Gaguinio,²¹ and Vincent all write about Richard, and Vincent says that the Jews customarily would behead a child on the first day of Passover, during Holy Week as a sacrifice, and Jacob of Valencia adds that every year they would sacrifice a Christian, and when they could not find one they would instead crucify an animal.

The other unfortunate event, and memorable tragic story is the Boy of La Guardia, a place nine leagues from Toledo, related by Fray Rodrigo de Yepes²² and later, Sebastián de Nieva,²³ Commissioner of the Inquisition. They say that in the year 1491 some Jews of Quintanar, La Guardia, and Tembleque in the Kingdom of Toledo agreed to enchant a host and the heart of a three- or four-year old child in order to kill the Inquisitors and the Christians. They abducted the child and brought him to a cave near La Guardia where they whipped him, brutally abused him and beat him, whipped him 6,000 times (according to pious men Christ was whipped 5,490 times, and this we find in the *Vita Christi* of Ludolf the Carthusian,²⁴ in the second part of ch. 58), and in the end they crucified him, killed him, cut out his heart, all on the day of the Jews' Passover of the Lamb.

Then they brought him to be buried a quarter of a league from the cave in a vineyard. They bought a host from the Sacristan of La Guardia, and together with the boy's heart performed their witchcraft in order to kill the Inquisitors and Christians by driving them insane. They got together and decided to send Benito the Carder of Las Mesuras²⁵ to the Great Synagogue of Zamora with the host and the heart between the pages

²⁰ Paulus Aemilius Veronensis (Paolo Emilio da Verona) (c.1455-1529) was an Italian historian and author of *De Rebus gestis Francorum* (History of France, printed in 1543).

²¹ Robert Gaguin (1434-1501) was a French Trinitarian friar and Master of that order, author of *Rerum gallicarum annales*, (History of France, printed in 1577).

²² Fray Rodrigo de Yepes was a monk and historian of the Monastery of San Jerónimo el Real in Madrid and author of a number of moral and historical treatises written in the last third of the sixteenth century, including a history of the 'martyrdom' of El Niño de la Guardia, *Historia de la muerte y glorioso martirio del santo inocente que llaman de La Guardia* (History of the Death and glorious martyrdom of the saintly innocent named de la Guardia, 1583).

²³ Sebastián de Nieva was an Inquisition official in Toledo and author of *El Niño Inocente, hijo de Toledo y Martir de la Guardia* (The Innocent Child, son of Toledo and Martryr of La Guardia, Toledo, 1628).

²⁴ Ludolf von Sachsen (d. 1377) was a Dominican friar and author of one of the first lives of Jesus, the *Vita Christi*.

²⁵ A *carder* (Sp. *cardador*) is a specialized laborer who prepares raw wool to be spun into thread. In many cases occupation names were used to distinguish people with same first name who lived in the same community: Benito Cardador ('Benito the Carder'); Benito Zapatero ('Benito the Cobbler').

hojas de las oras, ò oficio en que rezava, y puesto en oracion un dia en la Iglesia, acercandose à el acaso un hombre vió, que de las hojas del libro salia un gran resplandor, y claridad, como arreboles, y colores del cielo, dió aviso à los Inquisidores, y visitandole sus ministros confessó luego la maraña, y el trato que tenían pensado yendo con aquellas reliquias de Samora, que como gran sabio era muy diestro en los hechizos y le prendieron en Avila, prendieron tambien los culplices de la Villa de la Guardia, que al principio estuvieron negativos, despues confessaron con los tormentos, y fueron justiciados, y quemados en Avila estava entonces la Inquisicion, antes que se pasasse à Toledo.

El coraçon del niño no lo hallaron, la ostia sí, que después llevaron en processión al monasterio de Tomás, que está en la misma Ciudad, el cuerpo nunca pareció, aunque le fueron buscar à la cueva donde le enteraron. En la sentencia, que se pronunció contra el Benito de las Mesuras confessó haverse baptizado, y torner despues a ser Judio, guardando los Sabados, y Fiestas Judaycas, y observando sus ayunos, y que creya que por haverle hecho Christiano, y haver una vez comulgado, junto con las maldiciones de su padre la havia sucedido aquella miseria, y prision en que estava, dizia que la hostia no es mas que un poco de harina, y agua batida, añadidas las palabras del Clerigo, que rezava las oraciones en Hebrayco, y que solo le pesava de dexar sus hijos en la feé Christiana.

Era tambien en esta compañía un Fernando de Ribera de Tembleque contador del Prior de San Juan Christiano viejo, que entonces no prendieron, sino treinta años despues de cometido el delito, el año de 1521 que confessó haverse hecho Judio, y seguido la Ley de Moseh, y le quemaron, acusaronle que en la sentencia del niño inocente muerto el havia hecho el oficio de Pilato, y juez, quando los otros lo hazian de Sayones, mas escriven estos autores que negó la acusacion impjuesta aunque confessò ser Judio.

of the Book of Hours (of the Christian prayer service),²⁶ and one day while he was at prayer in the church, as nightfall drew near, a man saw a bright light coming from the pages of the book, like the clouds lit up by a sunset. He warned the Inquisitors, and when the officers of the Inquisition visited him he later confessed to the plot, and that they had planned to escape with the relics [the boy's heart and the host], and that as a very learned man he was skilled in the magical arts. They arrested him in Avila and also arrested the perpetrators of the Boy of La Guardia, who at first denied everything, but after being tortured confessed and were put to trial and burned in Avila, where the Inquisition was then based, before it moved to Toledo.

They did not find the heart of the boy, but did find the host, that they later brought in a procession to the Monastery of Thomas,²⁷ which is in the same city. They never found the body, although they went to look for it in the cave where they had buried him. In the sentence passed upon Benito of Las Mesuras he confessed to having been baptized, and later having returned to Judaism, keeping the Sabbath and observing the Jewish holidays, and fasting. He believed that all this had happened to him because he had become Christian and taken communion, and because his father had cursed him. In prison, he said that the host is nothing more than a bit of flour mixed with water and blessed by a priest, that he said his prayers in Hebrew, and his only regret was that his children would remain Christians.

In this company there was also a certain Fernando de Ribera from Tembleque, accountant of the Priory of San Juan, an Old Christian, whom they did not arrest at that time, but rather thirty years after the crime was committed, in 1521. He then confessed that he had converted to Judaism and followed the law of Moses. They burned him, having accused him of playing Pilate and judge in the case of the dead innocent boy, while

²⁶ The *libro de horas* or book of hours is a book containing the Latin prayers meant to be recited at the canonical hours of prayer services in the Roman Catholic Church. Books of Hours produced for churches were often illuminated with colorful illustrations and ornamentation.

²⁷ The Real Monasterio de Santo Tomás was founded in 1480 in Ávila, Spain, by Hernán Núñez de Arnalte, treasurer of the Catholic Monarchs Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, for the use of the Inquisitor General Tomás de Torquemada (1420-1498), who was responsible for fierce persecution of conversos.

Bien se ve claramente de los que escriben estos Autores lo improbable de la narracion, y la ficcion de la historia, pues que en Pascua ni podian prender ni matar, ni hazer sacrificio de hombre, cosa abominable, ni pareció el cuerpo muerto enterrado, ni se vió el coraçon sacado, ni los Judios uzan de hechizos para matar hombres tan poco juyzio tenia el Cardador Benito de Mesuras, que llevaba la hostia en el oficio, ò libro en que rezava exponsiendose à tan gran peligro en cosa que tan poco le importava, como le dieron 6000 açotes si la Ley no manda passar de quarenta, que Ley de Moseh manda matar hombres para sacrificio, ni aun los animales fuera de tierra Santa, quando aquella Ley toda es piadad, y misericordia.

Es donosa la digression que hazen en asemejar aquel territorio de la Guardia al de Ierusalaim, y sus contornes para simbolizar con ella en los sacrificios no advirtiendo que fuera della no se podia sacrificar y solo eran alli encomendados los sacrificios de carneros, bueyes, y cabras, no de hombres racionales.

[...] En esta calunia se encierran tres pecados homicidio, comer sangre, y magia ò hechizo, y encanto, pecados tan abominables en la ley, y que Dios los prohíbe severamente. Es el homicidio un pecado detestable, que con el adulterio, y idolatria, son los tres por quien tienen los Judios obligación de dexarse matar por no cometerlos aunque los obliguen por fuerça à ello, porque son los destruydores del mundo, de la paz, y de la religion.

El primer precepto de la segunda tableta de la Ley es no matar, y no solo en la Ley de Moseh execrable, sino tambien en la natural dictada a Noah, y à sus hijos. *Vertien sangre del hombre en el hombre su sangre sera*

the others played the Sayones.²⁸ However, these authors write that he denied the accusation although he did confess to being a Jew.

We can see clearly from what these authors have written that their narratives are improbable and their stories fictional. On Passover Jews cannot have abducted, murdered, nor sacrificed humans. The body never appeared, neither did anyone see the heart taken from it. Neither do Jews use witchcraft to kill people. Are we to believe that the carder²⁹ Benito of Las Mesuras had so little sense so as to carry around a consecrated host, or the book of hours, exposing himself to such great risk for something about which he cared so little; that they gave him 6,000 lashings, if the law commands us to give no more than 40; that the law of Moses commands us to kill people for sacrifice, when we are not even allowed to kill animals for sacrifice outside of the Holy Land, the entirety of that Law is piety and lovingkindness.

Their digression in comparing the land of La Guardia to Yerushalayaim³⁰ and the contortions they go through in order to symbolize the sacrifices made there without mentioning that outside of Yerushalayim it was forbidden to make sacrifices, and in any event the only ones made were those of calves, oxen, and goats, not rational humans, is really quite charming.

[...] The calumny combines three sins: murder, the consumption of blood, and magic, or witchcraft, and enchantment, all such abominable sins in our law, that God has severely prohibited them. Murder is such a detestable sin, together with adultery and idolatry, that they are the three sins for which Jews are obliged to let themselves be killed before they might commit them, even though they be forced to commit them by someone else. They are the scourges of the world, of peace, and of religion.

The first precept of the second tablet of the Law is Thou Shalt Not Kill, and not only is it execrable according to the Law of Moses, but also in the Natural Law given to Noah and to his children: *Whoever sheds the*

²⁸ According to this account, the accused Fernando de Ribera maintained that he played Pilate to the others' sayones, the Spanish name for the executioners in the Passion plays that reenacted the trial and execution of Jesus during which the Roman Governor of Judea Pontius Pilate (d. ca. 38 CE), who in the Gospels argues to spare Jesus from crucifixion.

²⁹ A carder is a specialized laborer who prepares raw wool to be spun into thread.

³⁰ *Yerushalayim* is the Hebrew form of Jerusalem.

vertido, que con figura del Dio hizo al hombre. Genes. Cap. 21. Y aun antes al mismo Adam se le havia dado esse preceto en su mismo entendimiento, aunque la Escritura no haze prohibicion sino del arbol de saber el mal, y el bien, que à no ser preceto Divino, y tan ajustado à la razon por ser semejança de Dios el hombre, no seria pecado en Cain la muerte del hermano Hebel, de suerte que en la ley natural, en la Divina y en todas las humanas fue siempre gravissimo pecado alguno del homicidio, sino que constando con pruebas evidentes pague el agressor la pena del talion vida por vida.

Siendo el natural de los Judios piadosos, como lo enseña la Escritura, lo muestra la experiencia, y lo hemos probado en estos discursos, como havian de tirar la vida crueles donde Dios la puso piadoso, que ley se lo manda que preceto los obliga, que fin les mueve à tan henorme pecado, que influencia les incita contraria de su natural sobre todas las naciones clemente, y compassiva. Es tanta la piedad de Ysrael que para matar à una gallina, à un pollo, à una avezilla para su alimento no basta qualquier Judio tiene necesidad de que haga este officio el pratico, y particular maestro dedicado para esta funcion, que sepa los juyzios de degollar, del cuchullo agudo, de las bendiciones, que sin estos requisitos ni es licito el degollar, ni el comer la carne. Los mismos Sabios tienen por grave pecado matar por gusto las aves y los animales, y el andar à caça de fieras, ò asestar à los paxaros, por ser todas obras de inhumanidad contra los vivientes, que el Señor crió en el mundo, solo la necesidad, y el intento los haze licitos, no la recreacion, ni el gusto, que embuelve la crueldad en el divertimiento, y la impiedad en el regalo.

Con los perros manda el Señor usar de piedad, y que se les de la carne terefá que no puede comer el Judio ò que la vendan al gentil donde se deve notar, que pone en primer lugar al bruto, que al hombre, como mas necesitado del sustento, y que no sabe buscarlo sino en la piedad del patron, y por enseñar tambien al

blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image Did God make man (Genesis 9:6). What's more, this precept was given before to Adam himself as part of his understanding, even though the Scripture makes no prohibition other than that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that it is not even a divine commandment, but rather one perfectly in line with reason by way of humans' resemblance to God. Was not Cain's murder of his brother Abel a sin, according to natural, Divine, and all human laws? It has always been considered the most serious sin, which we can conclude from the fact that it is punished by the law of talion,³¹ a life for a life.

The Jews are by nature merciful, as Scripture and experience both demonstrate, and we have proven it in these arguments. How could they live lives of cruelty when God has made them merciful, as religion dictates and as precept demands? What would move them to such heinous sin, what would influence them to so act against their nature, when they exceed all other nations in clemency and compassion? The mercy of Israel is such that in order to slaughter even a hen, a chicken, or a bird for their food, not just any Jew is qualified to do so; rather he must be a specially trained professional who is learned in the laws of slaughter, of the sharp blade, of the blessings. Without these qualifications it is not permitted to slaughter nor to eat the meat. The Rabbis themselves regard it as a serious offense to kill birds and animals for sport, to hunt wild beasts, and to shoot birds; all of these are inhumane actions against living things created by the Lord. Only necessity and proper intention make them permissible, but neither recreation nor sport, that involves cruelty in diversion, and impiety in pleasure.

Even with dogs, the Lord commands compassion in their treatment, that we give them the unkosher meat³² that Jews cannot eat, rather than sell it to non-Jews. One should note that this commandment puts the animal and not the human first, for the animal has more need of sustenance, not being able to seek it without the aid of

³¹ The "law of talion" (Lat. *lex talionis*) is the doctrine of an eye for an eye, or that the punishment should be proportional to the crime committed. It was first codified in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1750 BCE), and then further refined in the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 21:22-25; Deuteronomy 19:16-21; Leviticus 24:19-21).

³² In the original text, the Hebrew word *terefá* refers to food that is non-kosher, or not in compliance with the Biblical laws of kashrut as specified in Exodus 22:30.

dueño el retiro de la avaricia, y que no anteponga un poco de interes que puede recibir del gentil à la piedad, que deve tener con los animales domésticos, siendo, infalible verdad, que no tiene piedad con los hombres, quien no la tiene con los brutos.

El comer la sangre los Judios es un pecado grande, y que dize Dios sea el alma tajada del que lo comiere, como havian de mesclar sangre en el massó, ò pan azimo de la Pascua, si estan vedada su comida, la pureza de la Fiesta, y la simplicidad de aquel pan sin sal, y sin levadura requiere gran perfeccion en hazerle, y no contaminarle, fuera de que el comer la sangre causa un horror à la vista un asco al estomago, y un daño à la salud, quiso Dios afuera el secreto que encierra el preceto en lo literal de no comerlo, desviarnos de la crueldad, y que no acostumbrassemos à derramar sangre, no solo la humana, que es abominacion, sino tambien la del animal vertiendola por gusto, y no por necesidad: quieren las gentes comer nuestra sangre, y nos achacan que comemos la suya, y por ellos dize el Psalmo. *Comientes mi pueblo, como si comiessen pan.* Psal. 14. Y dos vezes lo repite en dos Psalmos diferentes, como que las gentes uzan estas violencias repetidas de comer la sustancia de los Judios frequentemente como si comiessen pan.

Dizen lo tercero nuestros contrarios, que los Judios se valen desta sangre para sus hechizos, y encantos, cosa tan prohibida, y nefanda en nuestra Ley que dize. *A la hechizera no des vida.* y pone mas hechizera, que hechizero, por ser dadas mas à este pecado por su liviandad, y codicia las mugeres, que los hombres; y en otra parte dize *No ay aguero en Iabacob, ni adivinacion en Israel.* Nume. Cap. 23. Estos sacrificios humanos, y diabolicas supersticiones uzaron entre los Christianos los Gnostos ciertos herejes, de quien cuenta Porfirio, que el Viernes de la passion à la tarde se juntavan en un lugar destinado con donzellas, y mugeres sus conocidas,

his master, and in addition teaches the owner to restrain his greed, and not to put the bit of profit one may receive from the non-Jew ahead of compassion, which one must show with domestic animals; for It is an infallible truth that he who cannot treat animals with compassion cannot do so with humans.

It is a great sin for Jews to eat blood, and God says that the soul of one who does so is stained. How then, would they mix blood in with the matzá, or unleavened bread of the Passover, if it is forbidden for them to eat it? The purity of that Holiday, and the simplicity of that bread without salt and without leavening requires that it be made with great attention to detail, so that it not be contaminated. Blood causes horror to the eye, disgust to the stomach, and great harm to one's health. We cannot presume to know God's intention in forbidding us from literally eating it, but apart from this, he intended to guide us away from cruelty, that we not become accustomed to shedding blood, not only that of humans, which is an abomination, but also that of animals, spilling it for sport, and not for necessity. The gentiles³³ want to eat *our* blood, and blame us for eating theirs. Because of them the Psalm says: *[they] eat up My people as they eat bread* (Psalm 14).³⁴ This is repeated twice in two different Psalms, like the gentiles who repeatedly use this violence to destroy the Jews as frequently as they eat bread.

The third thing our enemies say is that the Jews use this blood in their enchantments and spells, something so forbidden and nefarious in our Law that it is written: *Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live* (Exodus 22:18). What's more, it says sorceress, not sorcerer, for women are more given to this sin because of their foolishness and greed than men. Elsewhere it says: *there is no enchantment with Jacob, Neither is there any divination with Israel* (Numbers 23:21). The Christians used these accusations of human sacrifice and diabolic superstitions against the

³³ Like the use of Naciones above, in the original text the word gentes (lit. 'peoples') is a literal translation of the Hebrew *goyim* (lit. 'nations'), meant to refer to nations other than the Biblical Israelites and later the Jews of the Diaspora.

³⁴ The full text of the verse is "Shall not all the workers of iniquity know it, who eat up My people as they eat bread, and call not upon HaShem?" (Psalm 14: 4)

y que hechas sus devociones mataban las luzes, y se juntavan con ellas indiferentemente hijas, madres, y hermanas según caía la suerte, y las criaturas que nacían deste incestuoso, y nefando ajuntamiento las cogían de los pechos de sus madres, y mataban abriendoles las venas, recogían la sangre en vasos, y quemaban los cuerpos, cuyas cenizas mezcladas con la sangre bebían, y les servían de manjares, entendiendo, que con esto se disponían para un furor profético y un ánimo elevado para cometer grandes empresas.

Gnostics,³⁵ certain heretics about whom Porfirius³⁶ writes, that on Holy Friday of the Passion in the afternoon, they gathered in a certain place with maidens, women friends of theirs;

once they said their prayers they blew out the lights. Then daughters, mothers and sisters all coupled together randomly and without a care, and the babies born of these cursed and incestuous unions they plucked from the breasts of their mothers and killed them, opening their veins, collecting the blood in vessels, and burning the bodies, and drank their ashes mixed with blood, serving them as food with the understanding that in this they would enter into a prophetic rage and an elevated spirit which would enable them to do great things.

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³⁵ Gnosticism refers to a number of religious sects that flourished in the Mediterranean in the second century CE. The gnostics were influenced by early Christianity and by the ideas of the Greek philosopher Plato (fifth-fourth century BCE). Later Christian writers, upon whom Cardoso is likely drawing, accused the Gnostics of a wide range of barbaric practices, including human sacrifice.

³⁶ Porphyry of Tyre (c. 234 – c. 305 CE) was a Greek philosopher who lived in the Roman Empire. His book *Isagoge* (in Arabic or Latin translation) became a standard logic textbook in the middle ages.

