

Women of the Colony: Intercultures, social experiences and religious miscegenation in the Portuguese America – XVI-XIX centuries

A.A.

*To be is not to be? What do I know of what I'll be
If I don't know, what I am?*
Fernando PESSOA

*And this reality of them can't be destroyed by any document, for they
breathe it, see it, feel it... and touch it! At most the document would serve
you, only you, satisfying a foolish curiosity. And even then would be
condemned to the wonderful torture of seeing, at the same time, the ghost
here, and here the reality, and not being able to distinguish one from the
other!*

Luigi PIRANDELLO, *So it is (If you think so)*.

Introduction

The Portuguese presence in the Americas, initiated with the arrival of the fleet commanded by Pedro Álvares Cabral to the Northeast of the current Brazilian territory, is one of the most important episodes of the process of maritime expansion experienced by the Iberian kingdoms during the XV and XVI centuries. An important moment, by the way, not only to Portugal and Spain, cradles of the process of the European maritime expansion at the dawn of the Modern Age. Its impacts were felt in the other countries of Europe and the Mediterranean region, expanding the commercial relations and contacts by the discoveries of new continents, keeping presence or control over territories that, in a few decades, changed, forever, the notion of known world. Ceuta, Madeira, Canary, Azores, Cape Bojador, Cape Branco, Cape Verde, Gulf of Guinea, Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, the Americas, Ormuz, in the Persian Gulf, Quiloa, in Oriental Africa, Calicut, Goa, Cochín, Diu, in India, Insulindia, Arguin, Surat, Ceylon, Malacca, Timor, Indonesia, Nagasaki, Macao. The map of the world gained new outlines, and encouraged the increasing of the circulation of goods, cultures, beliefs, ideas, in a not at all shy rehearsal by the standards of the time in the process of globalization.

In Brazil, that rapidly would occupy a prominent role for the interests of the Portuguese Empire, due to its strategic location in the South Atlantic and to the sugar production – the

“white gold”, an essential product at the time due to its use in the conservation of food -, the Portuguese presence would not be marked only by the action of men who let go their lives in the kingdom in seeking opportunities and wealth in the American tropic. Many were the women that crossed the Atlantic, not always by freewill, to start over their life in a Brazil in formation. Women of all kinds: religious, whores, witches, housewives, family mothers, orphans. In the colony marked by patriarchy, but, at the same time, by the frequent absence of the head of the family due to a delay in the voyages and the long distances to travel in the colony of continental proportions, just like the hardships and dangers to cross the Ocean Sea, they were responsible for the creation of their sons, for spreading the religious beliefs and local manners, for the sustenance of the house and the teaching of the first letters. Many of these women took up the role of social prominence, responsible for the family business, or ended up being accused of threatening the good Christian rule.

From the documentation produced by the colonial chroniclers and by the visits of the Holy Office of the Inquisition to Portuguese America, we intend, in this work, in addition to mapping the existing studies in Brazil regarding the theme, to draw a profile of the role performed by women in the colonial society, as well as perceiving the continuities of the cultural heritage experienced in Portugal and the adoption of new practices in the colonial everyday life.

The women and the Inquisition in colonial Brazil – what has already been said

In the last decades, encouraged by the new directions of historical science starting in the revolution of the *Annales* and the widening of the notion of documental source, as well as by the strengthening of the programs of post-graduation, many were the studies published in Brazil and abroad regarding the role of women in the formation of the Brazilian society. Although there's still a long way to travel to put women in their due place in historical studies, a series of researches and the recurrence to documental sources until then disregarded by historians helped to diminish the existing pit that makes History, yet, a field of studies focused on the predominant role of men in the events.

Analyzing the specific case of Brazil, we can say that the increase of academic interest in studies regarding the woman is connected, among other factors, to the new role occupied by women in society. In the last decades, women managed to raise their socio-economic importance, to achieve victories as the right to divorce, and amazingly increased their

participation in the job market, intensified their presence in universities and research, now working as companies leaders, athletes, and in the political life of the nation. They became, ultimately, the majority of the Brazilian population and, often, with great prominence. A good example of this new role of the woman is the recent election of Dilma Vana Rousseff to the maximum post of the national politics, the Presidency of the Republic, sworn in the first of January of 2011.

One can also notice the growing interest about the matters of gender in historiography, in the Academy and in Brazilian Arts. Although taking the risk of forgetting important works, we can list some examples. It is the case of the *Dicionário Mulheres do Brasil* (Schuma Schumacher and Erico Vital Brazil, 2000); *Ao Sul do Corpo* (Mary del Priore, 1993); *Rosa Egípcíaca* (Luiz Mott, 1993); *Honradas e Devotas* (Leila Mezan Algranti,); *História das Mulheres no Brasil* (Mary del Priore, 1997); *Branca Dias: o martírio*, by Arnaldo Niskier (2006). Deserving equal highlight are the magazines of gender studies, like the *Cadernos Pagu*, by UNICAMP (Campinas, Brazil) (<http://www.pagu.unicamp.br>), the *Caderno Espaço Feminino*, by NEGUEM – Núcleo de Estudos de Gênero, Violência e Mulheres (Nucleus of Gender Studies, Violence and Women (www.neguem.ufu.br), and the *Revista Gênero*, connected to the Universidade Federal Fluminense (Niteroi, Brazil).

Also in literature, some works that picture women who lived in the colonial period are gaining strength. Such is the case of *O santo inquérito*, by Dias Gomes, a theatrical play that deals with one of the most emblematic personalities of the colonial imaginary, Branca Dias, denounced as Judaizer to the Lisbon Inquisition, and of *Desmundo* (1996), by the writer Ana Miranda, which recoups the drama and hard life of the orphans sent to Portugal to constitute families in colonial Brazil, also adapted to the cinema. One of the curiosities of this work is the care of the author in exploring the archaic Portuguese language, building her dialogues with the language of the time.

Although they don't have the woman as central object of their researches, some works were fundamental to help understand the everyday life and the experience in colonial Brazil together with the impact of the inquisitorial presence in Portuguese America. It is the case of the book by Anita Novinsky, *Cristãos novos na Bahia* (1972) – reference work for studies about the theme of the converted Jews -, as well as the works by Laura de Mello e Souza - *O Diabo e a Terra de Santa Cruz* (1986) and the first volume of the *História da Vida Privada no Brasil* (1997) -, dedicated to Colonial Brazil, and *Trópico dos Pecados*, by Ronaldo Vainfas (1986). Laudable are, still, the efforts that led to the publishing of inquisitorial

sources about Brazil, like the Denunciations and Confessions of Pernambuco, published in 1985 by the Fundação Joaquim Nabuco and the Confession of Bahia, published in 1997 by Ronaldo Vainfas.

But the process of expansion experienced by Portugal during the XV and XVI centuries also needs to be analyzed beyond the economic interests. At the end of the XV century, Iberia faced problems concerning matters of faith.

The problem of the New Christians and the occult Judaism in the Portuguese world

The end of the XV century would be eternalized in Portuguese history as the final instant of the free living together between Jews and Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, made official through the signature of the forced conversion to Catholicism decrees to the followers of the faith of Israel in 1497, transformed, thereafter, in New Christians, direct heirs of the prejudices and persecutions once destined to Jews. They were required to embrace the Christian doctrine to be accepted in a society which had renounced to their traditions, a certain portion of the old supporters of the Hebrew religion would find ways of cheating the Law and continue in secrecy to commune the faith of the heart, being for this called Crypto Jews – a fact that would not pass unnoticed to the attentive and suspicious eyes of the Church. The never-ceasing and unmeasured search for Catholic purity and righteousness would cause the need of control over the threats to the dominant religion, identifying in Crypto Judaism the main obstacle to Christian homogeneity, as well as the first justification for the introduction of the Court of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Lusitanian territory, in the year of 1536. The permanent climate of inquisitorial vigilance would end up by generating deep transformations in the social relations, intensifying the hostilities between the groups of old Christians and the newly converted.

With its bases quite weakened due to the persecutions and prohibitions that were imposed, the Jewish rituals would suffer alterations of all kinds in the attempt to, when adapted to the new and hostile reality, dribble illegality and not disappear completely, allowing the coming generations to know and commune the traditions, faith and manners of their ancestors. In the new picture that was being configured, the role destined to the female figure in the Jewish religion would also be redesigned. If, in a normal situation, to the men were destined the prominent positions in the everyday practice of the Hebrew ideals, the prohibitive and unfavorable situation created in the Portuguese world would lead women to

subvert this picture, occupying a primordial role in the spreading of the adapted, dissimulated and petite Judaism that became possible, turning them into the ones responsible for the resistance and organization of its new bases during the centuries in which the beliefs of the sons of Israel only echoed furtively. No wonder that the structuring of the Inquisition in Portugal and the consequent increase of the persecutions to the new converts from the decade of 1540 meant the increase of migrations of New Christians to the Lusitanian-American colony.

The tropic in formation was being converted in an opportunity of fast enrichment, shaping the dreams of greed of its producers and spicing the directions of the economy. According to Ambrósio Fernandes Brandão, who was writing his *Diálogos das Grandezas do Brasil* in the beginning of the XVII century known for being, as a Sugar Baron, connected to the said business, the sugar economy was the greater generating source of wealth in the colony, followed by merchandise, exploitation of *pau-brasil*, cotton and wood, the plantations of provisions and livestock (BRANDÃO, 1997). Before him, many New Christians, “ennobled” by money, transformed from traders without coats into land owners and respectable sugar barons. To be part of the top of this structure, a selected and small group known as “sugarocracy”, was the peak sought by all who participated in some degree in the working of the colonial economy. There is no doubt, however, that the prestige strengthening of the “descendents of the nation” would displease, with time, the Old Christians sugar barons, who felt their power threatened – not only in what concerns the sugar production, but also regarding the trade of the product, in large scale, in the hands of the newly converted merchants.

Among the New Christians that arrived here, it’s presumable the existence of a considerable portion of Crypto Jews. Notwithstanding, the occurrence or not of Crypto Judaism inside the Lusitanian-Brazilian borders can only be investigated if one takes in consideration the temporal and spatial specificities which surround it. In the course of time, the prohibitions to the law of Israel and the education of the once Jews and their decedents according to the Christian manners diminished the initial resistance, allowing a growing adaptation to the new reality. In other words, the closer we get to the characters that freely communed Judaism in Lusitanian lands and from the instant that the forced conversion of the Jews into New Christians occurred, were increased the possibilities or verisimilitudes that there were in fact Judaizing new converts, be it for the remembrance of the religion experienced in the period before the conversion and the discontentment with the retrenchment of their culture, be it by the testimonies and resistances of acquaintances and relatives who

still made themselves strong. The very presence of the visitations of the Holy Office would not cover all the captaincies of the colony, what makes very fluid the possible considerations regarding the occurrence and particularities of Crypto Jewish practices in other areas, making difficult the comparisons about this kind of manifestation.

Brazil was made a privileged space for Judaism occult resistance, motivated by the relative harmony and complicity in the living together among the Christians separated by blood, only possible due to the still pale ecclesiastical structure and absence of an established and active inquisitorial court, bringing up larger and more immediate daily problems than the matters of the faith, as the little effective presence of the State, the lack of food, lack of materials and tools for the everyday working tasks, the danger of an attack by wild animals, the risk of tropical diseases, or the threats of pirates and the untamed gentile, among others, making them first-time allies against common and greater enemies than the suspicions of religious heresy in the primordial search for survival in an inhospitable environment.

A proof of the good living together between Christians separated by blood, is the neo-convert presence in almost all spaces of the economy, imbricating in the most diverse social levels, many of them achieving posts and positions of importance: ombudsmen of the Ecclesiastic Court, masters in Latin and arithmetic, sugar barons, religious, literate professionals, doctors, lawyers, aldermen, judges, registrars, bailiffs and stockmen, what reflects the high grade of miscibility in the colony if compared to other areas of migration of New Christians fleeing Portugal, like the European North, the geographically discontinuous occupations in the East and the Levante (NOVINSKY, 1972, p. 58). The large number of marriages between Old and New Christians, nonetheless ratifies the greater social acceptance of these links and the dilution of the frictions in the living together between the groups in the Brazilian region. The visitations of the Holy Office, as we'll see, would end up by modifying this picture.

In traditional Judaism, literate, paved with reading and discussion of the sacred books, women occupied positions inferior to the ones occupied by men, like secondary places in the Cult and limited public roles, receiving only a minimum education, to the point of being believed that it was better to burn the sacred words of the Torah than transmit and teach them to women. In one of the daily prayers of traditional Judaism, the men get to the point of thanking for not having been born a woman. They were responsible especially for the preparation of the home for the domestic ceremonies, like fasting and the preparation of the *shabat*, for example. The prohibition of the old faith in the Portuguese World and the new importance given to education at home, however, would lead to a transformation of these

roles, changing Judaism into a kind of “home religion”, with a new emphasis on the oral divulging of the teachings due to the difficulties and dangers of possessing the Hebrew texts. Functions that were exclusive of men would become the responsibility of women – a sign of the occurrence, in the breast of the Mosaic religion, of a certain relaxation of the rigorisms in order to guarantee its survival in a hostile environment.

For obvious reasons, the residences would occupy a strategic importance. With the impediment of the existence of a Jewish school, Lina Gorenstein explains, “the domestic culture continued, in part, with those “indoor” practices and celebrations (SILVA, 1995, p. 121), although they suffered a certain deflation and modifications according to the distance of the permitted Judaism period. It was, without a doubt, in the relative privacy of the homes, while cooking, arranging and cleaning the house, weaving or embroidering, the families together, that the Jewish teachings were passed from parents to sons, generation after generation, maintaining the resistance, veiled and possible against dominant Catholicism which prohibited them to experience the religion of their ancestors.

Trying to dissimulate the preference for Judaism, the Crypto Jews saw themselves obliged to abandon certain important ceremonies of their profession of faith in favor of less known or delatorian of their real religious surrender: so the circumcisions were replaced by prayers and home vigils; the public observation of certain dates and festivities like the New Year or Pentecost were replaced by fasting. With the same intention, celebrations that in traditional Judaism occupied a less important position became, for being less accusing, the central theme of the Marrano resistance, as it was the case of the “Fasting of Ester – a Jewish queen who hid her origins from her own husband, living, like the Crypto Jews, of dissimulation -, the ‘Prayer of Ester’ became the “Marrano prayer by excellence”. It is very significant the fact that it was a woman the heroin of the New Christians, and the example of Ester would be constantly repeated due to the necessities imposed to the Crypto Jews. The ‘indoor’ Judaism would show to be, in the most negligible details, influenced by the figure of the woman (POLIAKOV, 1996, pp. 198.199). Anita Novinsky portrays well the picture: “with the synagogue prohibited, the school, the study, without religious authorities, without masters, without books, the weigh of the house was heavy”. The house was the place of the cult, the house became the Temple. In Colonial Brazil, like in Portugal, only at home the men could be Jews. They were Christians to the world and Jews at home. This would be impossible without the participation of the woman”. Here as there, the family nucleus became a privileged *locus*

for the irradiation of the Mosaic Law, hoisting the women, to the *status* of great responsible for its reproduction.

Despite not offering any privacy and enough discretion for its dwellers, the colonial home would root as the propitious environment for the Hebrew continuity. The constant need for displacing in a region where the distances were not easy to go through caused a frequent absence of the head of the family, changing even more the dimensions of the role of the woman, giving them a greater importance in the organization of the family environment, responsible for the good working of the house, acting in the raising and education of the descendents, experiencing traditions impossible of being performed in another space, molding the religious orientation of the sons, serving as a bond between the members of the clan. Home-school-synagogue: a multifunctional space where the woman would exercise all together the tasks of provider, mother, educator, catechist and rabbi. Pillars of the prohibited religion, the “New Christian women presented in Brazil a passive and deliberated resistance to Catholicism. They were proselyters, received and transmitted the oral messages and influenced the younger generations” (NOVINSKY, 1995, pp. 549-555), aware of the necessity of covering up their real objectives. Transmitting the religious rites while practicing them at home, they performed a small feminine and oral rabbinate that became possible and that, although it went against the Mosaic codex, guaranteed its survival. As remembers Elias Lipiner, it was said at the time that the newly converted women were, “devoted and mourners, and went on Sundays and holy days to listen to the mess”, trying to avoid, before society, the suspicions regarding their true surrender to Catholicism, “but on Saturdays they dressed up in their best outfits” (LIPINER, 1969, p. 46), preparing for the sacred day of rest of the Jews, gathering the family to celebrate the manners of their ancestors.

The new importance given to the New Christian woman would not pass unnoticed to the representatives of the Holy Office. Therefore, unmasking the source of dissemination of the Jewish heresy and repressing exemplarily the ones responsible for it was indispensable. In the documentation produced by the Portuguese Holy Office during the visitation to the sugar captaincies of the Northeast between 1591 and 1595 we can find evidence of the Judaism experienced in the colony, one especially connected to rites, to the practice of the “*esnoga*”, funeral cults, feeding interdictions, heterodox ways of blessing, denials towards the dominant religion and its symbols and dogmas, where, undoubtedly, the importance of women is obvious (VAINFAS, 1999). The roll of reports about women who insisted in keeping the fidelity to Judaism is varied, practicing them in moments of privacy, although publically,

imbued of the fears that oppressed the sympathizers of Israel, concealing, stating to be true Christians. It weren't few the denounces picturing the dubiety experienced by the New Christians in the colony, not only externally – baring the weight of the social borders -, but also in their inside, confusing many times the Christian tradition with the Jewish teachings, divided between the imposed faith and the one of the heart, not knowing both in details, practicing them in an equally wrong way.

Ana Rodrigues, a Judaizer in colonial Bahia

One of the most appalling cases involving women accused of Jewish practices in the documentation referring to the first inquisitorial visit to Brazil, without any doubt, would be the one of the New Christian Ana Rodrigues, resident in Matoim, in the Recôncavo Baiano (Bahia lowlands).

Ana Rodrigues came from the kingdom with Heitor Antunes, her husband, sugar baron and “knight of the king's house”. According to what people said, Heitor owned a synagogue in his lands in the *Recôncavo da Bahia* for about thirty years. The couple had seven children, always married to sons-in-law of “pure blood”. With her husband dead, Ana Rodrigues buries him according to the tradition, in virgin land, mourning him the Jewish way. She waited for the moment to join her husband again, also according to the faith she followed: witnesses stated that she kept “the jewels from when she married to be buried with them when she dies” (*Denúncias da Bahia*, 1922-1929, pp. 337-338). The presence of the Inquisition would be the end of the family's tranquility, time and again accused of Crypto Judaism and of disrespecting the Catholic faith. Among the Antunes family, it would be Ana the one denounced with greater severity and insistence. Foreseeing the tragic consequences of the Court's visit, some members of the clan took advantage of the period of grace to confess their mistakes, getting ahead to the avalanche of clan accusers, trying, thereby, to show goodwill with the Holy Office and ease the guilt that were imputed to them.

An extreme Judaizer and elder, she was known for the blasphemies she pronounced. The biblical kinship her husband was once proud of was now a symbol of public derision of which she was a victim together with her daughters, pejoratively called “Maccabean”. Their histories generated scandals. In the baptism of a great-granddaughter, Ana would have stated: “look at the black baptism!” During the birth of one of her daughters, who was crying for Our Lady, she said, “don't speak of it for I can't say it” (*Denúncias da Bahia*, 1922-1929, pp. 275-276)! An old Christian relative would tell about the old matriarch, who once was sick, that “her daughters showed her a crucifix and she didn't want to see it, saying: *get it out of there*”,

receiving the help of a son to get rid of the uncomfortable presence. The fear of having her prohibited belief unveiled and of the social rejection that would come made one of her daughters retort: “mother, do not dishonor us because we’re married to noble and old Christian men”. When she was lucid, she tried, as her daughters did, to keep the appearances, “being devoted to Our Lady and making pilgrimages, going to churches, giving alms and making other good works of good Christians” (*Denúncias da Bahia*, 1922-1929, pp. 250-251). Despite the covert effort, to the eyes of the people her residence was transformed in a true Jewish temple, where she taught the traditions of the old law to her sons.

The old lady would be accused of Judaism, and her denouncers would parade the roll of her guilt repeatedly. With more vehemence, she would be denounced for retaining the sacred day of the Jews; for not eating certain kinds of food; for vowing by the world that has the soul of her husband and keeping the mourning the way the Jews do; for throwing out the water of the house in case of death; for fasting and making Jewish prayers, for moving her body the way the Jews do; for refusing a crucifix when she was sick, and for blessing sons and grandsons by sliding the hands on their faces. Other close relatives of the old lady – mainly sons and grandsons – would confess or be accused of some of these practices, although in any case the same number of accusations that weighed on the family’s matriarch was repeated. The involvement of sons, grandsons and nephews in the accusations of Judaism allow us to have a glimpse of the grade of complexity of the Crypto Jewish phenomenon among the Antunes family through the preservation of many traditions of “indoors” Judaism”, reproduced in the domestic environment and transmitted to the new generations, although these costumes suffered a kind of “filtering” in the reception, with the growing abandon of some of these practices by descendants trying to hide the forbidden faith.

Aware of social critics regarding her behavior and fearing the presumable denounces against her abuses to the inquisitor, the matriarch of the Antunes family would attend the Court to confess some of her Jewish practices, but presenting excuses for everything, stating to ignore their heretic origin: she didn’t eat ray or fresh shark meat because it attacked her stomach, but before the disease, she ate them; when a son died she threw out the water of the jars, stating “the first eight days without eating meat”, as had taught her an old Christian comrade; she swore “by the world that has my father’s soul, or my husband’s, or my son’s”, but without understanding “it to be a Jewish oath”. Terrified, the visitor seemed not to accept the explanations, reminding her that “the presumptions against her for being Jewish and living in the Law of Moses were too strong”, for it wouldn’t be “possible to make all the said Jewish ceremonies, notorious and well known”, without knowing their origin, “and because of that it

is clear that she's Jewish and did them as a Jewish" (Confissões da Bahia, 1997, pp. 281-286). Exposed, the old lady would be arrested and sent in a cage to the Court of Lisbon, while her noble and old Christians sons-in-law attempted in vain to prove her innocence. Old and ill, she would take revenge on prison by dying in jail, what would not make her escape condemnation by the "secular arm" and relaxed in effigy, having her memory cursed and her bones unearthed, burned and made dust of in detestation of such huge crime". To avoid her example to be repeated, a painting picturing her amidst flames and demoniac beings would be exposed in the church of Matoim, where she had lived, by behest of the Holy Office. In addition to the Maccabean matriarch, other family members would be accused, and some of them, would be sued by the Inquisition: Heitor Antunes, her deceased husband; Beatriz, Violante and Leonor, her daughters, and the grand-daughter, Ana Alcoforado. Her younger son, Nuno Fernandes, would still be arrested and sent to the Inquisition in Lisbon in 1611, accused of Judaism, but he would end up being released because he was arrested by a false member of the Holy Office, and was authorized to return to Brazil, if he wished so.

Her condemnation would bring, apart from the social complications for the members of her family, renowned as Jewish and/or accessory and cover ups for Crypto-Jewish practices, another aggravating claim for her descendents: the properties belonging to the old lady would be confiscated by the Inquisition, what would make her sons-in-law, years later, in 1600, to present, in person, many petitions in Lisbon for the revision of the penalty, again claiming old age and insanity of the old matriarch, trying not only to clean the name of the family, but to recover the properties taken by the inquisitors to continue the family business in Bahia. As Elias Lipiner defines, "the jurisdiction of the Court of faith was not extinguished by the flames of the bonfire in which its victims were sacrificed. It did not stop on who was condemned by it, but it stretched to the living descendents to be directly hit, forbidding to them any job in public services and certain liberal professions, and exposing them, particularly, to the public malevolence" (LIPINER, 1969, p. 137).

During the second inquisitorial visit to Brazil, initiated in 1618, echoes of the disorderly behavior of the Antunes family would still be heard, and they were once again pointed to the visitor as a Jewish group. The histories regarding Ana Rodrigues and her descendents were still alive in the memory and were repeated, causing the mentioned theft of the image that represented the matriarch burning in hell of the door of the Church of Matoim, in a desperate attempt to preserve her and of her relatives memory, saving the descendents of the old Maccabean of greater infamy.

Ana Rodrigues was, without any doubt, one of the heroines of the Jewish resistance in the colony, and the top representative of the Brazilian Crypto-Judaism in the century XVI. But we only know her history because she was denounced, arrested and sued by the Inquisition Court in Lisbon, to her disgrace and to the luck of the historians, who found in her inquisitorial process vast and rich information about the colonial everyday life, in its many aspects.

Like her, certainly, many other women lived ambiguously, divided between the Catholicism which they repudiated and the Hebraism which was denied to them; prevented from following the faith in which they believed and obliged to revere a religion that didn't accept them; sometimes Jewish, sometimes Christians, practicing both beliefs, according to the place and conveniences. But it was this ambiguity that allowed the Jewish survival, if not of a pure Judaism, at least, of a Judaism that was possible to them. Martyrs of the forbidden religion, they would suffer anguishes, pressures, offenses, slanders, persecutions and discriminations while fighting to keep alive the ideals of the occult religion they insisted in believing. Maybe, impregnated in the soul by the biblical passage of the Maccabeus (2Mc 7, 9), *But the King of the world will make us resurge to an eternal life, we who die for its laws.*

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