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INTRODUCTION

Mercedes García-Arenal and Stefania Pastore

This book was born out of an absence, and reflects all of the many and often contradictory developments which we encountered as we attempted to address it.

The absence in question is a history of doubt in the Iberian world, a world that has traditionally been left out of a historiography on doubt and secularization. Iberia has been typically viewed as confined to a Catholic and Inquisitorial obscurantism that left no space for the great anti-dogmatic philosophical constructions which, from Montaigne on, marked the history of European Scepticism. Neither was it in general believed that there was space, on a different plane, for the existence of any doubt or protest within everyday Catholic life which might have shaken the concept of revealed truth, or the increasingly heavy baggage of dogma that religious belonging came to entail. It is an absence largely due to a problem of perspective, a point to which we shall return further on.

One of the objectives of this volume is to identify the distinctiveness of the Iberian contribution to that period and to connect Catholic Europe to the narrative of modernity traditionally centred squarely on Northern Europe, where doubt is not only the foundation of modernity but the main reason for toleration. By assuming an absolute lack of tolerance in Spain — a lack of doubt, of internal debate — this narrative has left entire areas of Iberian intellectual and cultural history largely unexplored. What we aim to address is the basic question of how, in an Iberian world that was apparently far removed from the battlegrounds of modernity and secularization, doubt and unbelief found fertile soil, stimulated by the tensions of Iberia's singular social and religious development. Adopting a multidisciplinary perspective, this volume shows how the crisis of identity produced by forced mass conversion touched off inner crises about the nature of Truth.

Even a brief glimpse at the list of essays in this volume will reveal a number of difficulties and multiple developments concerning the real object of this study — doubt — and its manifold, mercurial nature. What is doubt? How, and to what extent, did it spread? Is it part of a hermeneutical process to arrive at the truth, an intrinsic element for all cognitive processes? Or is it rather an element that erases the possibility of reaching any form of certainty? Does it negate the very idea of finding firm, unshakeable truths in the human conscience and in the beliefs, particularly religious beliefs, that regulate peoples' lives?

Our book is situated at the confluence of these questions and, in chronological terms, covers a period in which, with the revival of ancient Scepticism, religious and epistemological doubt came to overlap with one another. Some essays will

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specifically address these problems, and will show the points where they converge. In any case, we must distinguish between, on the one hand, a philosophical or epistemological stance connected to well-defined philosophical schools (academic Scepticism, Pyrrhonism, etc.), and, on the other, a looser, less defined approach that cannot be traced back to a specific philosophical system, and which affects the truths of faith and brings into question a system of dogmas and rituals that are imposed and defined in increasingly oppressive and pervasive ways.

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Our volume opens with a well-known image that represents a key story in the history of Christianity and Western thought: the episode in which the Apostle Thomas doubted Jesus's resurrection, even though he was seeing him with his own eyes; he was not sure that it was indeed Christ risen, and he asked for proof. Jesus then put Thomas's fingers inside his wounds and Thomas's doubt was instantly replaced by total conviction. In a recent book titled *Doubting Thomas*, Glenn W. Most suggests that Thomas, or rather the story about him in the Gospel of John, seems to have been introduced by the Apostle John as a means of invoking, exaggerating, and eventually resolving doubt. According to Most, the story that John inserted into his Gospel had an undesired long-term effect, giving doubt an ambiguous status, revealing it to be inseparable from judgment, evidence and testimony, part of a dialectical process needed to arrive at the Truth. What we believe is infused by what we doubt.[1]

Indeed, the essays in this book address the equivocal nature of doubt both as a producer of unbelief and free thinking, but also as a critical tool for arriving at the Truth. Doubt is important, especially in the Christian tradition, as a trial of faith, as an essential tool for religious life which serves to bring about religious reflection. In fact, this book presents doubt and belief as two facets of the same phenomenon. Therefore, in exploring doubt we will at the same time be considering the changing nature of belief.

Our point of departure is the premise that in Spain religious doubt stemmed mainly from two key events that revolutionized conceptions of identity and religious belonging. These were the forced conversions of Jews and Muslims to Christianity from the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the birth in 1478 of the Spanish Inquisition, an institution created to deal with false converts to Catholicism. These forced conversions are, in our view, one main factor of religious doubt. The imposition of a single faith took place simultaneously with the emergence of other new conceptions about faith and belief. The measure of allegiance that Catholicism demanded from the believer increased: it was now necessary to be knowledgeable in order to believe; the comfortable faith in the ancestral traditions of one's family or group was no longer enough.[2]

Changes in the conception of belief were engendered, at least in part, by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Catholicism's simultaneous emphasis on inner focus and exterior action, mysticism and materiality.[3] Once the forced conversions had broken with the traditional medieval system whereby each community had a

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firm, clean-cut religious identity, faith and religious belonging ceased to be taken for granted, and were no longer seen as a merely hereditary matter. Rather, these aspects were now something that the judges of the Inquisition could verify and assess based on a person's knowledge and practice. Jean Wirth has written a crucial article on the passage from a medieval world, in which the word 'fides' could indicate religious and political belonging, to an early modern world that, alongside confessional plurality, discovers the many possible degrees and variables that belief and religious belonging can take on. In this process, the divide between internal and external grows wider and wider, until there is enough room to accommodate the modern conscience. Confessional belonging thus gradually separates from its effective adhesion to a faith and, even from a lexical point of view, the terms for defining faith, religious belonging and belief multiply, with nuances that reflect the gradual but irreparable fragmentation of a single 'fides' that is the same for everyone.[4]

In the Iberian world, the process described by Wirth begins to take place at least a century earlier. The fabric of identity and religious belonging is violently and irremediably torn apart starting in 1391, the moment of violent pogroms against Jewish communities and the subsequent forced conversions of Jews. As a consequence, the Iberian Peninsula had to face, before any other place in Europe, the problem of multiple religious beliefs and the possible discrepancy between religious adherence and inner belief, between the external and the internal. At the same time, the birth of the Spanish Inquisition completely breaks with a traditional canonical system that regarded the inner realm of the conscience as an inviolable private space that was neither judicial nor subject to judgment, as in the famous dictum, 'Ecclesia de occultis non iudicat'.[5]

This is precisely the starting point for our reflection on doubt. We explore the spaces opened up to doubt by the discrepancy between religious belonging and adhesion, and the many complex ways such as dissimulation in which this breach is reflected in the history of Iberia. As may be seen in our table of contents, this is a story that arises in the context of religious pluralism and of passage from one faith to another, but it does not remain confined to this setting. Rather, it spreads out and significantly complicates the life of Catholic and mono-confessional Spain as well. Indeed, one of this book's most significant challenges is to retrace the convoluted paths through which religious doubt stretches into sixteenth-century and Tridentine Spain.

The new religious situation in Iberia demanded that all people (not only converts) be familiar with religious dogma in order to be considered good Catholics. This pressure increased when Philip II became, in 1564, the first sovereign to approve the decrees of the Council of Trent, weeks before their papal promulgation. The Inquisition then had the new tasks of disseminating the doctrines clarified at Trent and developing ways to implement them correctly, of reducing the spheres of ignorance and doubt. It was not the only institution dedicated to the control of inner belief: oral confession became an extraordinary means which often produced another kind of doubt,[6] the scrupulous doubts of people who were anxious about

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their correct observance of every precept and ritual.[7] There were also the doubts of those who wanted 'seguridad de conciencia' when confronted with practical decisions.[8] The Inquisition considered inner conversion and total and full adhesion to the whole corpus of Catholic belief to be imperative. For the Inquisition, doubt about the faith was equated with infidelity. On account of its nature, doubt tended to lurk in attitudes that the Holy Office deemed hypocritical or defined as heresy, and it therefore had to be unearthed and then crushed.

Let us trace the rough outlines of the contemporary context in Europe and the prevailing historiographical approaches to this subject. The period of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was a time of crisis and paradigm shift in myriad areas of cultural, intellectual and spiritual life throughout Europe, as a long century of religious strife ended in a stalemate between Catholics and Lutherans but also culminated in the consolidation of numerous sects among the followers of the *Sola scriptura*. The main issue was defining true Christianity. 'Scripture alone' was not a solution to this problem — far from it. Beginning in the 1520s this doctrine raised questions about the nature of knowledge and evoked the spectre of radical doctrinal scepticism and relativism.[9] Jonathan Israel has argued that in about 1570 Christianity grew weary of confessional strife and explored a new and different complex of secular politico-economic thought that historians call mercantilism. According to Israel, an upsurge of radical scepticism characterized philosophy in the age of Montaigne, and Christianity embarked on a centuries-long retreat, compelled to compete with a host of rival outlooks and attitudes and, in particular, a rising tide of doubt, deism and atheism.[10]

Clearly, Israel's vision fits perfectly in an analysis that regards intellectual history as the privileged field for reflection. Obviously, from the seventeenth century onward, the experience of doubt was the breeding ground for philosophical ideas that would become the pillars of a definition of truth as being both verifiable and independent of divine revelation. But this way of thought fails to consider the many ways in which other sectors of the population expressed their convictions or lack thereof.

In contrast to this narrative of de-Christianisation, historians have applied a different model, which has become known as the confessionalization thesis. Developed by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling during the 1980s as an explanation for historical developments in Germany, this thesis sees the institutional and theological standardization of religious difference as a tool of political government and social discipline that was characteristic of the early modern period. According to the confessionalization thesis, the early modern period witnessed not so much a retreat of *religion* but rather the expansion of *religions*, and that it is this development toward religious pluralism that had its characteristic effects even outside the areas that were immediately affected by religious differentiation. The political fragmentation of Christianity went hand in hand with the early modern crisis of faith. The criteria for establishing the nature of Truth underwent irreversible

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transformations, as did the notion of proof, in an important dialogue between faith and science. Doubt was an important tool for reflection and for judgment.

A number of studies in recent years have shown how the pathways leading to modernity quite often intersected with those of doubt, not only in the mainstream Western philosophical tradition but also in the fields of Biblical philology, ethnography, and antiquarianism. And yet the relationship of Spain and the Spanish Empire to this history of the early modern genesis of doubt and modernity has scarcely been explored. Whether we turn to Paul Hazard's now classic account of the crisis of European conscience and the birth of a new critical conscience unhampered by dogmas and confessionalisms, or to the great master-narratives of European tolerance — from Richard Popkin's crucial history of European scepticism, to Guy Stroumsa's recent effort to spotlight the origins of the comparative study of religion, to Benjamin Kaplan's monograph on the birth of toleration — France, Holland, Germany, and England always take centre stage.[11] In general, Iberia figures at best in these narratives as the place whence certain individuals hurriedly depart or flee, as in Yirmiyahu Yovel's *Marranos*, where these individuals' 'split identities' and hence their modernity are explained exclusively in terms of their Jewish origins, without taking into account the social context in which those split identities were formed.[12] The 'Radical Enlightenment' that Spinoza put in motion is considered to be the product of debates that took place inside a Republic of Letters from which southern Europe was excluded.[13]

And yet, as (Spanish) explorers expanded the limits of the known world and scholars engaged the classical past in new ways, established truths were increasingly questioned.[14] The encounter with the Americas, and in consequence the emergence of comparative ethnography and religion, seem to be the only Iberian aspects considered in this literature about modernity. Recent scholarship has noted that the sheer diversity of non-European societies created a complex set of rhetorical aims and ideological possibilities that have yet to be fully appreciated and that impinge on the questions addressed in this book.[15]

For quite some time the two editors of this volume have been working, both together and separately, on the spaces for tolerance and dissent in early modern Iberia, and on the long-term effects of the forced conversions. We have both explored the violent world of the Inquisition, the debates and protests that the creation and imposition of the Tribunal sparked within Iberian society, the aftermath of the forced conversions, and the complex world of Iberian minorities and their fluctuating identities.[16] In studying Spain's passage from multi-confessional to mono-confessional society, the authors have examined the many traces of multiculturalism and non-conformism, of heresies or acts of resistance, that the Inquisition and the new rules from Trent were incapable of fully quashing. In doing so, we have paid particular attention to the ways in which individual identity emerged out of minority identity, a phenomenon that was to take hold not only in the Iberian world, but throughout Europe as a whole.

These concerns have accompanied us for quite some time, slowly taking the shape of an international conference and then a coherent volume, and were tested and

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presented on a number of occasions before being tackled independently. Recently, they have come back to influence our own work once more as we now focus on the polemical milieu in Iberia since the Middle Ages,[17] thus addressing doubt as separate from the emergence of modernity.[18] Among these discussions and previous publications of members of our research group, the work of Felipe Pereda has been particularly relevant. In his recent book on sacred images from the Spanish Golden Age, Pereda explores art as an exercise dedicated to dispelling doubt in those who see it, as a testimony of Truth, but he also explores the sceptical reflection of artists confronted with the link between images and truth.[19]

Naturally, along the way we have been aided by the various exceptional contributions in the historiography that came before us, which staked out the ground that we have attempted to explore in greater detail. As to Iberia, we have to refer in the first place to John Edwards's article 'Religious Faith and Doubt in Late Medieval Spain' (included in his book *Religion and Society in Spain, c. 1492*),[20] that first rejected the long-standing notion that religious dissent among converts should automatically be attributed to an unshakable attachment to Judaism or Islam. Edwards also was the first to link inquisitorial material on Judaizers with the general incidence of heresy and scepticism across Europe. He was the first to consider doubt and scepticism as part of the religious landscape of Iberia. Before him, but using literary fictional sources, Albert Mas had shown how Spanish humanists had used 'the Turk' as a means to express religious relativism.[21] Another landmark for us has been Stuart B. Schwartz's book *All Can Be Saved*.[22] This book focuses on the proposition 'cada uno se salva en su ley' (each person can be saved in his own law). Schwartz interprets the proposition uttered at Inquisitorial trials as evidence for a 'popular tolerance' which has gone unnoticed until now because historians have focused on the process by which religious identities were inculcated during this period rather than looking into the cracks that opened up during that process. In his view, expressions of tolerance in Spain did not differ from those spreading across other parts of Europe at the time. In our opinion, the words, deeds, and attitudes of those accused of believing the propositions — including Old Christians, conversos, Moriscos, and Lutherans — do indeed partake of a degree of relativism, a loss of faith, or at the very least a sense of detachment from religion, if not scepticism. Above all, as we interpret the records of these Inquisition trials, what they indicate is a desire to distance oneself from the contentious rhetoric of Truth and salvation, a rhetoric that was not confined to Counter-Reformation Spain but was wielded by all sides in the religious battles of Reformation Europe.

The works of Edwards, Schwartz, and others (such as Miriam Bodian)[23] frame doubt within an intellectual tradition, but they also show personal doubt as a key element in an individual's faith journey. We have to consider those two aspects of doubt but also doubt as sin, which was a problem of authority and for authorities. From the point of view of religious authorities, doubt gave rise to a space that lacked a defined identity, within which the solid outlines of mainstream religious identities were no longer recognizable. This is why doubt had to be monitored and supressed, because it was by its nature linked to attitudes judged by the Inquisition

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to be either hypocritical or facilitating unbelief and heresy. Some of the attitudes and manifestations of this crisis were also related to a widespread feeling of deep pessimism. Recent historiography has established a link between that feeling of pessimism and a sceptical attitude. Increasing interest in epistemological scepticism in late sixteenth-century Spain reflected an awareness of the moral and political consequences of human ignorance and a worldview predicated on the ubiquity of deceit and the incongruity between appearance and reality. Jeremy Robbins has vividly described the main features of a mentality steeped in epistemological (and thus moral) pessimism, largely fostered by the sustained creative interaction between scepticism and stoicism that was so characteristic of seventeenth-century Spain. This interaction forged a distinctive view of the nature and extent of human knowledge and had a decisive influence on questions related to agency, morality, reason of state, trust, and honour.[24]

The historical body of work which presents doubt as a producer of 'modernity' is also linked to a long-standing tradition claiming that unbelief, in the sense of cynicism, atheism, irreligion, and so on, was impossible in the pre-modern period: that prior to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, nobody was mentally capable of thinking outside the accepted framework of religion.[25] According to the influential proposals of Jacques Le Goff and Lucien Febvre (in his book on Rabelais and the problem of disbelief in the sixteenth century),[26] disbelief was unthinkable and inexpressible until the late modern period, and mere doubting could be (and was) considered heresy. We do not want to go into this debate at length here because Luca Addante's contribution in this volume will analyse and discuss it. We do not agree with Febvre but rather follow other, more recent historiography that derives from the work of historians such as Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, particularly his demonstration that irreligion was expressed as much by individuals belonging to the popular classes as by the learned elites, and in similar terms; and this was true in very different regions of Europe.[27] The debate over whether it was possible to be an atheist in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century has distracted scholars from wider questions about popular expressions of scepticism and religious and epistemological idiosyncrasy, and a fixation on atheism has tended to obscure the fact that an individual can experience varying degrees of scepticism without necessarily being an atheist in the modern sense.[28] The distance between unquestioning belief at one extreme and absolute disbelief at the other is considerable, and the positions between them, which this book explores, are numerous.[29]

Although these works are our point of departure, our proposal is probably more radical: we focus on Iberia (as some of them do) but consider the problem of doubt in isolation from modernity. Our subject is an Iberia marked by religious pluralism, interfaith polemics, religious and communal conflict but also by various forms of coexistence. We will closely examine what happens in Southern Europe, in both Iberia and Italy from the late Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period.

The book is divided into three parts. The first one, 'The Medieval Iberian Legacy and its Aftermath', begins with two essays based on an early sixteenth-century chronicle, Solomon Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* — in Spanish *La Vara de*

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Judá. Both focus on a parable in the book, the parable of the three rings. Ibn Verga's version of this well-known parable tells of a king who asks a Jew which is the best religion, and the Jew answers with the story of a father who bequeathed to each of his three sons a ring, all of them similar to one another, the question being if one is better than the others or whether we can know which is best. Both Kriegel and Gutwirth coincide in showing that the parable supports the opinion of those who maintain that the truth claims of different religions are too shaky for irrefutable conclusions about the superiority of one of them.

The first essay, 'Not Scepticism but Certainty: A Different Plea for Toleration in Late Medieval Spain', by Maurice Kriegel, considers the debate in the *Shevet* about religion, its social and political role, and its value. Three strands of thought are for Kriegel clearly discernible. The first is the legacy of a philosophical view of the role of religion, as found among Muslim thinkers, in different forms, since al-Fārābī, that had been shared by many Jewish authors in Christian Spain during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and was still influential even up to 1492. Ibn Verga intended to translate into a witty and entertaining parable the sceptical viewpoints that were part of Maimonides's thought. The second strand is linked to the legacy of the interreligious 'dialogue' in the Middle Ages. The parable of the three rings is not the only case in point: Kriegel insists on the importance of the Tortosa Controversy in 1413–14, particularly the debate about belief and faith, and on Ibn Verga's vindication of ideas aired on that occasion, such as the notion that faith is unassailable by doubt, is undemonstrable and based on tradition. The last strand gives evidence of Ibn Verga's familiarity with sceptical notions that circulated in the wider Christian world of the early sixteenth century, particularly the notion of the limits of human knowledge, and the correlative discussion of faith. Ibn Verga brought these strands together; indeed, on this issue even more than on others, he stands out as a thinker who, on the one hand, is heir to the 'Medieval Enlightenment', and, on the other, is closely associated with currents in Renaissance sceptical thought which were later tapped by the modern, eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

Eleazar Gutwirth also deals with the parable of the three rings in his essay 'The Three Rings: *Shevet Yehuda*-Lessig/Graetz-Fritz Ishaq Baer'. Gutwirth discusses the reading of the parable by different authors as an icon of Enlightenment scepticism and tolerance, especially by the famous historian of Spanish Jewry Ishaq Baer. But Gutwirth mainly dedicates his essay to his own reading and contextualization of the parable of the three rings and to understanding it from what he calls the 'creative ambiguity' between ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, which he deems characteristic of fifteenth-century Iberian Judaism. He shows that Ibn Verga's is not just another version of the parable. From the classical motifs underlying the parable, to the meaning of the names of the protagonists, to the contemporary social context in Spain which would resonate for Ibn Verga's readers, Gutwirth demonstrates the multifaceted body of references included in the text and the extent to which it is intertwined with contemporary Jewish life in Castile. Gutwirth uses Inquisition files and in particular the trial records of those who deny life after death ('no hay

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sino nascer e morir') and those who maintain that all men can obtain salvation through their own law and therefore that to observe the followers of other religions fulfilling their own law leads to respect for them.

Inquisition files are a rich source of evidence on disbelief, scepticism, and religious doubt. It is necessary to read anew the documents of the Holy Office since, as we have said, doubt and related phenomena have not been generally associated with Iberia and are seldom considered as features of the intellectual or religious attitudes that developed in the Iberian world. 'What Faith to Believe? Vacillation, Comparativism and Doubt', Mercedes García-Arenal's essay, is based on the Inquisition trial cases of individuals (not necessarily converts) who alternated or vacillated between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, without necessarily becoming convinced of any of the three, and thus not settling on a definitive religious identity. She focuses on converts from Judaism, now indifferent Christians, who claim to be ready, if need be, to become Muslims and seem to be detached from any of the Laws; people who vacillate between the three religions, never becoming convinced, as in the parable of the three rings, of the superiority of any of them; and people who seek their own truth by means of converting from one religion to the other and then to a third one, trying out different religious paths. In this essay, García-Arenal argues that forced conversion and forced indoctrination engendered unbelief and irreligion, scepticism and even 'libertinism' in many individuals, and that this is made manifest in the yearning for 'freedom of conscience'. She also contends that the resulting vacillation and doubt were considered by Catholic moralists such as Jerónimo Gracián as conducive to atheism.

Isabelle Poutrin's essay serves as a threshold to the second part of the book, 'Europe and the Iberian Connection'. Poutrin's ' "Dubius in fide infidelis est": Between Faith and Heresy, Is There a Place for Doubt?' begins with the definitions of heresy given by Catholic canonists and theologians (mostly sixteenth-century Spaniards, with the occasional Italian). These definitions at times mention 'dubiousness', though not 'doubt', and describe heresy as a set of false affirmations and certainties. Poutrin explores whether these doctors opened up a space for uncertainty and hesitation, whether they made heretics of anyone who doubted. She bases her analysis on the classics (the great commentaries to the *Decretals* and the *Summa Theologica*), moral theology, and even works of exegesis, but most particularly on the Jesuit Juan Azor and his *Institutionum moralium*, published in Rome in 1600. According to the sources used by Poutrin, doubt, when firmly established in an individual's consciousness and not resisted by the forces of the will, is a sign of disobedience to the Church and an inner rejection of the gift of faith, and as such constitutes an open door to heresy and atheism.

Stefania Pastore's 'Pyrrhonism and Unbelief: Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and the Spanish Tradition', focuses on the legacy of medieval Spain within a European perspective and traces a possible Spanish contribution to the great Pyrrhonian and sceptical tradition in France. In Lyon in 1562, the well-known humanist and printer Henri Estienne produced the first published Latin translation of Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. This anthology, which made the ancient, non-

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Academic sceptical tradition accessible to a much broader audience, was to become a best-seller in modern Europe, finding its way into virtually every library from that time on. Montaigne had mottos from Sextus's text carved into the rafters of his study, and Pedro de Valencia, in 1590, remarked on the wide circulation of the text. As Richard Popkin has pointed out, Sextus's text would become a sort of anti-dogmatic manifesto and would revolutionize not only the history of philosophy but also the history of religious tolerance in Europe, paving the way for religious relativism. However, between 1545 and 1549, a Latin translation had already been prepared by the Spanish humanist Juan Páez de Castro at the request of the imperial ambassador Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, working from a codex in Mendoza's own collection.

The mutual influence of the Radical Reformation and the Renaissance in sixteenth-century Italy, which tended to promote unbelief, is the subject of Luca Addante's chapter, 'Unbelief, Deism and Libertinism in Sixteenth-Century Italy'. This essay offers an overview of current scholarship about unbelief and proposes Addante's own interpretation of libertinism and unbelief that convincingly challenges Fevbre's thesis. The cases of Juan de Valdés and his followers are a clear example of the ideological and religious connections between Spain and Italy, as well as the influence of tendencies within the Reformation on Catholicism.

'Shifting Certainties in the Baroque' is the title of Part III, which shares with Part II a concern with rhetoric and moral issues, and finds its internal cohesion in a discussion of new forms of belief, of ideas about what constitutes belief. As we have noted with the example of the Apostle Thomas, doubt had been a fundamental rhetorical tool of dialectics since Antiquity, but in the period dealt with in this part of the book, doubt came to partake of Scepticism's power to dissolve, its importance in determining how judgment is defined, and in the construction of the moral subject. Part III starts with Jeremy Robbins's essay, 'All Things to All People: Baltasar Gracián, Dissimulation, and the Question of Interpretation'. The work of Baltasar Gracián, and in particular his *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647), has long divided critics over its moral and indeed religious stance because of the absence of overt religious references and statements. How does one interpret the significance of absence when dissimulation played such a major part in early modern political, moral, and courtly discourse? One way is to contextualize Gracián within contemporary moral treatises, and in particular to analyse his own approach to the concept of dissimulation, which was considered by many as the acceptable face of non-truth telling. The use of stratagems to say the opposite of what he appears to be saying is not exclusive to Gracián. Another way to interpret this absence is to explore the nature not simply of early modern doubt and unbelief but, more importantly, of early modern belief. Placing Gracián within the Jesuit culture that formed him, and reading his aphorisms in the context of his use of the notions of dissimulation and of virtue, Robbins reassesses the moral ethos of the *Oráculo* in order to examine the nature of his belief.

Fernando Rodríguez Mediano's 'The Concept of Doubt in the Trial of Miguel de Molinos (1687) and in the Controversy over Quietism' also deals with the moral

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implications of doubt. The word 'doubt' appears in the propositions by Molinos that were condemned by the Roman Inquisition in 1687. These propositions are problematic, because they do not reflect the exact nature of mystical 'Molinosismo'. Rodríguez Mediano tries to explain Molinos's trial in the context of the great moral debates in seventeenth-century Europe around the 'Forum of conscience' and the limits to freedom of conscience. In these debates, doubt emerges as an essential instrument for guiding souls and, therefore, as one of the ways of constructing moral and religious authority. However, in the seventeenth century, moral doubt is inseparable from sceptical doubt, and because of this there is an important epistemological dimension to theological issues. These issues come to a head in Molinos's trial, where doubt plays a key role: the Roman Inquisition understood that Molinos's doctrine, in particular his advocacy of surrendering oneself to God, constituted an attack on religious authority and mediation. Molinos's trial and the construction of the category of 'quietism' demonstrate the centrality of doubt in the battle to control conscience in modern Europe.

Felipe Pereda's 'The *Art* of Believing in Golden Age Spain' takes a look at another kind of rhetoric — the language of visual arts — through the lens of the same kind of Inquisition materials that were used in the essays in the first part of the book. One Inquisition trial in which two people discuss the nature of belief is used to interpret three paintings by Francisco de Zurbarán, Alonso Cano, and Sebastián López de Arteaga depicting the arrival and the dinner at Emmaus, two New Testament episodes that are thematically related to Thomas, the disciple who doubted the evidence of his own eyes and had to use his hand. According to Pereda, the paintings suggest that true faith is not dependent on the evidence offered by our senses, that faith does not reside in those things that we can perceive. That is perhaps among the biggest questions of the time: whether true knowledge of God can be gained from human experience. The differences between faith as an act of allegiance and assent and the cognitive act of believing had opened a divide that was destined to increase wherever any kind of debate took place, even if it was between two lay persons in a tavern, as the trial used by Pereda shows. He also brings to his discussion of faith and belief the writings of the Spanish painter Francisco Pacheco, who argued that the aim of painting was persuasion, moving men and women and leading them to piety. He was proposing therefore a rhetoric in which convincing depends as much on the state of mind that the orator creates in his audience (or the painter in his viewers) as on the signs or proofs that make up his argument. Painting and rhetoric have to move between argumentation and emotion.

The fourth part of the book is entitled 'Marranisms: Inside and Outside Iberia' and continues the discussion of doubt as a rhetoric of caution, distance and irony, proposing an elective affinity between this rhetoric and people of converso descent. It begins with Matthew Ancell's 'Decircumcizing the Heart: The Eucharist and Conversion in Calderón's *Autos Sacramentales*'. Ancell takes up Pereda's discussion about concepts of faith and belief. In *autos sacramentales* such as 'El orden de Melquisedec' (*c.* 1652) and 'El socorro general' (1644), Calderón de la Barca employs the Pauline notion of the circumcision of Christ as baptism. By examining the

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figure of 'decircumcision' in Derrida's analysis of Michel de Montaigne, who coins it as a term for forced conversion, Ancell investigates Eucharistic discourse in Calderón's sacramental plays as both an allegory of the situation of the converso and an examination of the nexus between faith, belief and doubt. Whereas transubstantiation relies on the authority of the priest for the efficacy of the sacrament, other seventeenth-century interpretations of the Eucharist depend on the faith of the communicant. Seen in this light, the theological discourse of the *autos* reveals the converso's predicament, that conversion is a question of fidelity to a covenant (political and religious), rather than of belief versus doubt. One of the *autos* used by Ancell includes a person who affirms 'When I am with Jews I am a Jew, when I am with Christians, I am a Christian,' expressing a kind of religious flexibility (or lack of it) similar to the one described in the first part of the book (especially in García-Arenal).

The rest of the chapters are dedicated to individual 'doubters'. José Luis Villacañas deals with the physician of Ferdinand the Catholic and later of Empress Isabella, Charles V's wife, in 'Marrano Emotions: Francisco López de Villalobos'. Though his suggestive notion of 'marrano emotions' — which belong not strictly to those who are of Jewish descent but to those who feel in a place outside time or space, without a proper sense of belonging — seems uncertain to us, his reading of Villalobos's translation of Plautus's *Amphitryon* is full of insights: the translation as well as the notes of the translator contain ironic hints about Villalobos's suspicions and doubts, his secret misgivings about the possibility of having a religious identity, and irony towards those who believe yet do not know. It also shows how in early modern Spain the rhetoric of the self had a political dimension.

In his 'Literary Discourse between the Eternal Validity of the Torah and Philosophical Doubt: The Polemical Writings of Abraham Gómez Silveira (1656–1740)', Harm den Boer insists on the use of irony, even of irreverent and irrepressible humour towards religious matters, humour that does not preclude curiosity regarding Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Abraham Gómez Silveira was born into a Portuguese converso family in Arévalo (Spain) in 1656. He migrated to Amsterdam at an early age, where he joined the Portuguese Jewish community and received a religious education at the congregation's institutions, and later became one of the most prolific authors of Jewish–Christian polemical literature written in the Spanish or Portuguese language. The polemical manuscripts written by Gómez Silveira take up thousands of pages, full of references to both Jewish and Christian works, and even the Qur'an. These works also cover a variety of literary genres, ranging from a mere listing of titles and phrases, to treatises, dialogues, and several forms of poetry. In fact, Silveira's persistent use of literary devices seems to Den Boer to be a way of expressing doubt or relativism, in contrast to the all-too-simple argument for adherence and obedience to Judaism's eternal truth, contained in the Torah. More emphatic in his denial of rabbinic authority is Uriel da Costa, the famous Amsterdam Jew of Portuguese extraction who, humiliated and expelled from the Jewish community of his town, committed suicide in 1640. Miriam Bodian's 'Uriel da Costa's Career: An Interpretation' is an analysis of the life and

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work of Da Costa and in particular his work *Exemplar humanae vitae* (1623), in which he set out his radical beliefs about religion. He argued that Scripture and all positive religions were fraudulent and that the 'law of nature' was the only law of God. Da Costa's central concern, like that of many individuals who appear in this book, is the human longing for salvation and the difficulties it has caused for mankind. The problem for him was further complicated because he did not believe in the afterlife: neither in eternal reward or punishment. Da Costa, according to Bodian, was aware of a certain male ideal of his period, the solitary and uncompromising seeker of truth. He had a disdain for authority and was not willing to allow his pursuit of truth to be constrained by the need for prudence and dissimulation. He is part of the evidence that Reformation rhetoric about individual conscience and the abuses of the clergy was widespread among crypto-Jews. But he is also extraordinary, unique: in the normative Jewish world of the seventeenth century, as Bodian shows, it was unthinkable for a Jew to compose and publish a treatise laying out an argument based on Scripture that there was no world beyond this one.

Conclusion

This book demonstrates the existence of religious doubt in the Iberian Peninsula in the period before the modern age, in a polemical, pluri-religious context that necessarily produced comparisons between the three monotheistic religions. The heightened awareness of multiple religious traditions — traditions that taught mutually exclusive paths to salvation — raised doubts and discomfort even among the faithful about their creed's monopoly on salvation. Anxiety about salvation set some people on heterodox courses impelling them into unexplored territory, such as the reading of Scripture or of the sacred texts of other religions. It inspired many others to pursue inner religiosity and contributed to the creation of a new idea of the self and a forum of conscience. We are dealing here with ideas and attitudes prevalent in the Europe of the Protestant Reformation, where a new religious plurality had appeared. The most intriguing aspect of these intellectual and religious phenomena, in our view, has been to see how those ideas interacted both with the confusion and blurring of religious identities produced by mass conversion, and with the comparativism inherent to polemical writing and religious indoctrination that accompanied the expansion of the Iberian world and the resulting contact with new peoples.

To our mind, there is a question that has not yet been sufficiently explored and that is how the crisis of the Protestant Reformation interlocks or overlaps in Iberia with the crisis produced by mass conversion and the existence of large numbers of 'converts' struggling painfully with their religious identities. This book provides food for thought on this question and unveils new connections between the two religious crises and between the identification, sometimes even by the Inquisition, between converts and Protestants.

The premises from which we started work on this book are confirmed by many chapters, mainly in its first parts. But there are also crucial lines of questioning that

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arise mainly from how Spain and Spaniards reacted to the religious transformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Protestant and Catholic Reformations compelled Europeans to confront conflicting claims to theological truth. These transformations also affected the Jewish communities in exile. Throughout the book we witness a battle for the control of conscience, how individuals deal with it or try to evade it, and how the 'individual conscience' starts to make its appearance. There is a tension between the imposition of orthodoxy by a political and religious power obsessed with the threat dissenters posed to domestic and international peace, and the desire of dissenters and minorities for freedom of conscience. 'Toleration' and 'freedom of conscience' were the terms more commonly used in contemporary France to defend the rights of religious minorities. We witness most importantly the formulation and discussion of the moral implications of doubt. The new religious plurality brought the need for a moral criterion. In Spain, by the seventeenth century moral doubt becomes inseparable from sceptical doubt. Spanish theologians reacted to these challenges in ways that reflected Spain's pluralistic past, one of which was probabilism, a strain of casuistic reasoning that was advanced by the Dominican Bartolomé de Medina around the last quarter of the sixteenth century and remained extremely influential up to the 1640s, through the work of Juan Caramuel. Probabilism held that, in the face of difficult moral choices, it is enough to choose the option that is not a sin. This doctrine was adopted by most moral theologians: it opened up new possibilities in moral reasoning by seeking moral assurance while daring to take intellectual risks. Although probability did not provide certainty, it did at least eliminate the danger of acting while in a state of doubt. Probabilism sought certainty, at least moral certainty by accommodating doubt and uncertainty in moral choices and decisions. It was a doctrine that was condemned by many for leading to moral laxity but perhaps we can also consider it inside the processes that in Europe led to 'toleration'.

The last part of this book took an unexpected turn and posed provocative and engaging questions, among which is how this early modern Spanish moral theology, in connection with political thought, may nuance paradigms of secularization. We must admit that it opens up new questions and lines of research that are far removed from those we had at the outset. The idea we started with was a coherent and homogeneous scenery, reflected in the first and second parts. However, the research into the legacy of that multi-religious and multi-cultural Spain, and into the doubt that permeated it in the period following the Council of Trent, has led the way to a wide variety of new panoramas and unexpected itineraries. In the attempt to disinter an absence, that of doubt at the heart of the history of the Iberian world, we have cast light on diverse and complex presences which are, perhaps, only contradictory in appearance. However, we have done so using multiple sources and perspectives, in an attempt not to relegate its existence to a purely intellectual history, but rather analysing its repercussions both in the everyday lives of ordinary people and in polemics, in the rich and complex artistic and literary production of the Spanish baroque, and how it was reflected on in the fields of philosophy and theology. Inquisition trials, polemical writings, treatises on theology and casuistry,

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language, rhetoric and visual art; each of these fields has clearly proven that Spain must be included in any *histoire mondiale* of doubt, and that we may now need to change our definition of 'modernity' or maybe reconsider if it is at all a good analytical tool.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Glenn W. Most, *Doubting Thomas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 223.
2. *Belief in History: Approaches to European and American Religion*, ed. by Thomas A. Kselman (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), especially John van Engen, 'Faith as a Concept in Medieval Christendom', pp. 19–67.
3. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), pp. 272–73.
4. Jean Wirth, 'La naissance du concept de croyance (XII–XVII siècles)', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 45.1 (1983), 7–58 [reprinted in Wirth, *Saint Anne est une sorcière et autres essais* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), pp. 113–76].
5. Adriano Prosperi, 'Confessione e dissimulazione', *Les Dossiers du Grihl* (2009); Jacques Chiffoleau, '"Ecclesia de occultis non iudicat". L'Eglise, le secret et l'occulte du XIIe au XVe siècle', *Micrologus*, 14 (2006), 359–481; and for the Iberian World Stefania Pastore, *Il vangelo e la spada. L'Inquisizione di Castiglia e i suoi critici (1449–1598)* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003), pp. 214–53. For a general overview see Stephan Kuttner, 'Ecclesia de occultis non iudicat. Problemata ex doctrina poenali decretalistarum a Gratiano usque ad Gregorium P. IX', in *Acta congressus iuridici internationalis VII saeculo a decretalibus Gregorii IX et XIV a codice iustiniano promulgates*, 5 vols (Rome: Pont. Instituti Utriusque Iuris, 1934–37), vol. III (1936), pp. 225–46; and, more recently, Paolo Prodi, *Una storia della giustizia. Dal pluralismo dei fori al moderno dualismo tra coscienza e diritto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), pp. 92–97.
6. Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996).
7. Manuel Peña Díaz, 'Cultura escrita, escrúpulos y censuras cotidianas (siglos XVI–XVIII)', *Estudis. Revista de historia moderna*, 37 (2011), 73–90.
8. Igor Sosa Mayor, *El noble atribulado. Nobleza y teología moral en la Castilla moderna (1550–1650)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018), especially chapter 1.
9. Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).
10. Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998), p. 30.
11. Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (Paris: Boivin, 1935); Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010); Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). As an exception see Ronald W. Truman, *Spanish Treatises on Government, Society and Religion in the time of Philip II* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), especially chapter 6.
12. Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within. The Marranos: Split Identity and the Emerging Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden: Brill, [1996] 2000).
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15. See, for example, *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. by Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travellers and Cosmographers:*

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Studies in the History of Early Modern Travel and Ethnology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). Also, Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

16. Stefania Pastore, *Il vangelo e la spada*; Pastore, *Un'eresia spagnola. Spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e Inquisizione (1449–1559)* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2004).
17. *Polemical Encounters: Christians, Jews and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018).
18. *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal (Leiden: Brill, 2016). A whole section of this book is dedicated to 'Conversion and Perplexity'; see in particular the essays included there authored by Stefania Pastore, 'Doubt in Fifteenth-Century Iberia', M. García-Arenal, '"Mi padre moro yo moro": The Inheritance of Belief in Early Modern Iberia', and Felipe Pereda, 'True Painting and the Challenge of Hypocrisy'.
19. Felipe Pereda, *Crimen e ilusión. El arte de la verdad en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2017). From a different but related perspective, Stefania Tutino, in her *Shadows of Doubt*, has examined the hermeneutical and epistemological anxieties assailing post-Reformation Catholicism, and has shown the point to which they ushered in modernity. Stefania Tutino, *Shadows of Doubt: Language and Truth in Post-Reformation Catholic Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
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24. This is the general argument of Jeremy Robbins, *Arts of Perception: The Epistemological Mentality of the Spanish Baroque, 1580–1720* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), especially chapters 1–2.
25. See a general overview in the first two chapters of Thomas Kselman, *Conscience and Conversion: Religious Liberty in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2018).
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27. Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, 'La question de l'irréligion populaire, à la rencontré de l'histoire et de l'anthropologie', *Institut d'histoire de la Réformation. Bulletin Annuel*, 36 (2014–15), 55–69. See also Wirth, 'La naissance du concept de croyance'; Alain Mothu, 'De la foi du charbonnier à celle du héros (et retour)', *Les Dossiers du Grihl* (2007) <https://dossiersgrihl.revues.org/3393>.
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