

Chapter Thirty

The Ottoman Empire, Judaism, and Eastern Europe to 1648

In the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, while the Portuguese and Spanish explored the oceans and exploited faraway lands, the eastern Mediterranean was dominated by the Ottomans. Mehmed II had in 1453 taken Constantinople and made it his capital, putting an end to the Byzantine empire. The subsequent Islamizing of Constantinople was abrupt and forceful. Immediately upon taking the city, Mehmed set about to refurbish and enlarge it. The population had evidently declined to fewer than two hundred thousand by the time of the conquest but a century later was approximately half a million, with Muslims constituting a slight majority. Mehmed and his successors offered tax immunity to Muslims, as an incentive for them to resettle in the city. Perhaps two fifths of the population was still Christian in the sixteenth century, and a tenth Jewish (thousands of Jewish families resettled in Constantinople after their expulsion from Spain in 1492). The large and impressive churches of Constantinople were taken over and made into mosques. Most dramatically, Mehmed laid claim to Hagia Sophia, the enormous cathedral that for nine hundred years had been the seat of the patriarch of Constantinople, and ordered its conversion into a mosque. It was reconfigured and rebuilt (it had been in a state of disrepair since an earthquake in 1344), and minarets were erected alongside it. The Orthodox patriarch was eventually placed in the far humbler Church of St. George, in the Phanari or “lighthouse” district of Constantinople. Elsewhere in the city Orthodox Christians were left with relatively small and shabby buildings.¹

Expansion of the Ottoman empire: Selim I and Suleiman the Magnificent

We have followed - in Chapter 26 - Ottoman military fortunes through the reigns of Mehmed II (1451-81) and Bayezid II (1481-1512). Although Bayezid is not renowned as a conqueror, his son - Selim I, who ruled from 1512 to 1520 - resumed the aggressive policies of his grandfather. Selim’s repression of the Shiites of southeastern Anatolia (he killed thousands) embroiled him in a war with the founder of Safavid rule in Iran, Shah Ismail I. In the course of this conflict Selim was attacked by the Mamluk ruler of Egypt and the Levant, who was allied with Ismail. Selim defeated the Mamluks (1516), after which all the Levant surrendered to him. Early in 1517 Selim attacked Cairo and assumed control over Egypt. Two years later an Ottoman sea captain took Algiers. Bowing to the inevitable, the sharifs of Mecca and Medina declared their loyalty to Selim. Selim assigned a military commander (*pasha*) to keep order in Egypt, but left most of the Mamluk governors in their districts. Over time, the system proved unsatisfactory, as the Mamluks regained much of their independence and Ottoman rule in Egypt was often nominal at best.²

The Abbasid califs had been residing in Cairo since 1261, where they had served as an ornament to the Mamluk regime in Egypt. Upon conquering Egypt, Selim deported the calif - Muhammad al-Mutawakkil III - to Constantinople, and then required him to surrender the office and its outward symbols (the sword and mantle of the Prophet Muhammad). For the next four hundred years the Ottoman sultan was also the Calif of Islam (the califate was abolished by

Atatürk).

Selim's son and successor was Suleiman I, "the Magnificent." Ruling from 1520 until his death in 1566, Suleiman enjoyed the longest reign in Ottoman history and was the grandest of all the sultans. His military conquests matched those of his father. In North Africa Suleiman allowed the pasha of Egypt to add to the empire the city of Tripoli and other profitable parts of Libya. In Europe Suleiman himself led his armies to victories and conquest. On his northwest frontier was the kingdom of Hungary, and in 1521 Suleiman took the Hungarian king's great fortress at Belgrade, where the Sava flows into the Danube. Five years later Suleiman marched to the Hungarian plain and his victory there put an end to the Hungarian kingdom. That brought Suleiman face-to-face with the Holy Roman Empire, which he decided to abolish: insofar as a "Roman empire" still existed, so he believed, it was the Ottoman empire, which had succeeded the Byzantine. Suleiman's opponents were the Habsburg brothers: Ferdinand I in the traditional Habsburg territories in Austria, Slovenia and Bohemia, and Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor from 1519 to 1556) in Spain.

The time was propitious for Suleiman to attack the Habsburgs because they were contending with the Reformation that Luther had ignited. Both Selim and Suleiman followed the religious policies of Mehmed II. As we have seen at the end of Chapter 26, after Mehmed took Constantinople in 1453 he instituted the *millet* system. Every millet (religious community) was protected, was allowed a considerable degree of autonomy, and was responsible for collecting the moderate taxes owed to the sultan. As heir to this tolerant system, Suleiman the Magnificent offered to all European Christians the same security enjoyed by his Jewish and Muslim subjects: whether Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox, that is, Christians could be certain that the government would not harass or persecute them as heretics. In the 1520s the millet system was especially attractive for Protestants, who in most kingdoms of Europe had good reason to fear the Catholic establishment.

In 1526 Suleiman personally led a huge Ottoman army against the youthful king of Hungary, Louis II. On August 29 they met at Mohács, on the right (west) bank of the Danube near today's southern border of Hungary. The Ottoman army was victorious, Louis and some 15,000 Hungarian troops were killed, and the kingdom of Hungary was essentially ended. Hungary west of the Danube was annexed by Ferdinand, but the vast central plain - including, after 1541, the city of Buda - became part of the Ottoman empire. Transylvania became a quasi-vassal of the Ottomans, although it was in many ways independent.

In the campaigning season of 1529 Suleiman marched from Constantinople to the walls of Vienna. During the long march, however, he lost much of his heavy artillery and therefore was ill-equipped to take Vienna. He besieged the city for three weeks in the fall of the year, but he lost many of his troops, especially from hunger and disease, and had to withdraw. He returned to Vienna in 1532, and although he was again unable to take the city he extracted from Ferdinand I a peace treaty in which the Habsburgs conceded the eastern half of Hungary to the Ottomans.

Suleiman's successes in Asia were equally significant. In his three campaigns against

the Safavids of Persia his armies tried unsuccessfully to bring their opponents to battle, the Safavid shah prudently deciding to keep his forces at a distance from Suleiman's army and to let the Iranian desert take its toll on the invaders. Nevertheless, the Ottomans' military superiority was clear and Suleiman took Baghdad and the rest of Iraq from the Safavids, giving him access to the Persian Gulf. Essentially, the Ottoman empire reached its greatest extent under Suleiman: with a very few exceptions, such as the islands of Crete and Cyprus, no significant additions to the empire were made after his death.

The reign of Suleiman I was a Golden Age not only of political and military power but also of monumental architecture. Extensive and lavish building was made possible by the revenues that poured into Constantinople from the empire. The chief architect for Suleiman, as for his son Selim II, was Sinan, who as a child was Christian but entered Ottoman service through the *devshirmeh*. Sinan designed aqueducts, bridges and hospitals but was especially famous for the great domed mosques which he built as an old man. The most daring of these were the Suleimaniye mosque (the largest mosque in Constantinople) and the Selimiye mosque in Edirne. The dome of the latter slightly surpassed that of Haghia Sophia.

In the sixteenth century the vast majority of Turkish speakers were Sunni Muslims. Arabic was the language of their Quran, their Friday services in the mosques, and their five daily prayers. Although few Turkish speakers understood Arabic, for a very long time the idea of translating the Quran into Turkish was anathema. Typically, a Turkish boy memorized - in Arabic - much of the Quran, and perhaps succeeded in memorizing all of it and so earning the title of *hafiz*. But although Turkish Muslims were able to recite the prayers and suras of the Quran in Arabic, few knew what the words meant. To assist the faithful, scholars wrote Turkish commentaries, which paraphrased and explained the Quran verse by verse. Not until the nineteenth century was there a demand, especially among the "Young Turks," for a Turkish translation of the Quran. This finally materialized in 1913, when Ibrahim Hilmi's translation was printed and published in Istanbul.

Sufism, soldiers, and the spread of Islam in the Balkans

Islamic mysticism - Sufism - was not much dependent upon the Arabic language, and already in the Seljuk period Sufism had been an important part of Turkophone Islam. The Sufi dervish, or initiate, believed himself capable of drawing much closer to God than could the ordinary Muslim. Each Sufi *tariqa* ("order," or "school"; plural *turuq*) had its own form of devotion or "remembrance" (*dhikr*). Music, dance, silence, prayer and meditation, breathing exercises, and long repetition of the holy names of Allah were all forms of *dhikr*. Poverty and asceticism were paths to enlightenment, and many of the Sufi dervishes were mendicants. A wealthy Turkish Muslim would often see to the building of a *tekke* - a house, or lodge - in which dervishes of the benefactor's *tariqa* could gather, and which could serve as a temporary home for traveling members of the order. In Anatolia the Mevlevi order, centered in Konya, was especially prominent. From the beginning of the fifteenth century the sultans had patronized the Mevlevi *tariqa*, whose white-robed dervishes performed a whirling dance.

During the Ottoman period, conversion from Christianity to Islam was quite common in

the western Balkans, thanks in part to wandering Sufis. Just as they had contributed much to the Islamizing of central Asia in the tenth and eleventh centuries and of Anatolia in the twelfth and thirteenth, so did the Sufi brotherhoods play a central role in the expansion of Islam into Bosnia and Albania. Attracted by Sufi mystical practices, music, and dance, many Albanians eventually joined one or another Sufi tariqa. The Rifai and Naqshbandi tariqas had been popular in Anatolia and Constantinople and expanded steadily in the Balkans.³ Even more attractive was the Bektashi tariqa: at the fall of the Ottoman empire approximately a fifth of Albanian men were dervishes in the Bektashi order.⁴

In the long tradition of Muslim rulers, the Ottoman sultans did not coerce their dhimmi subjects to convert to Islam. Nevertheless, Muslims enjoyed privileges that Christians and Judaeans did not have, and in some areas of the Balkans the churches were too weak to hold their communicants when Islam offered advantages. This was true especially in Albania and in the *sanjak* of Bosnia. These were mountainous lands that provided their inhabitants with few opportunities to earn a livelihood. The wide Sava river separated Bosnia from Croatia in the north (Croatia was less mountainous and more arable than was Bosnia). The Drina river - fast and deep where it was not wide - marked Bosnia's eastern frontier with Serbia. In Albania Orthodox Christianity had been shallowly rooted. Whereas in Serbia, Bulgaria and even Bosnia the liturgy in Church Slavonic was at least partially intelligible (the Church Slavonic language was cognate with the South Slavic vernaculars), in Albania that was not the case. The Albanian language, although Indo-European, was not related either to Greek or to Slavic. For a time most Albanians were nominally Orthodox Christians, but in the thirteenth century Roman Catholicism began to arrive with Venetian control of the Adriatic's Dalmatian coast. Neither in Church Slavonic nor in Latin was the Eucharistic mass very meaningful for most Albanians.

In the Ottoman period Albanian and Bosnian were not yet literary languages, and almost all Bosnians and Albanians were illiterate. An indication of illiteracy in these lands comes from research done by Milman Parry in the 1930s. In his attempt to find a contemporary analogy to the "formulaic" poetry that flourished in ancient Greece during Homer's time, Milman Parry took his tape recorder into the mountains of Bosnia and there recorded the songs of an illiterate bard named "Avdo" Medjedovic. Avdo, or Abdullah, accompanied his songs with a primitive one-stringed instrument called a *gusle*, and he was regarded by many villagers as the best *guslar* in all of Bosnia. The songs that Avdo Medjedovic sang had for centuries been handed down from one generation of *guslars* to another, and a few songs celebrated events as far back as the fourteenth century. The coming of radio, and the spread of literacy and modernity, spelled the end of oral poetry and of the *guslar* tradition in Bosnia.⁵

Impoverished Albania and Bosnia had traditionally produced hardy soldiers, and in the fifteenth century the Albanian prince Skanderbeg - who for a time had himself been both a Muslim and a general in the Ottoman army - won many victories over his former Ottoman employers. After Skanderbeg's death in 1468, however, Albanian resistance collapsed and Mehmed II conquered the land. Recognizing Albanian valor, Mehmed and his successors impressed many Albanian boys and adolescents into the Janissary corps. In the Ottoman practice of *devshirmeh* (see Chapter 26) a Christian community was required annually to surrender to the conquerors a quota of boys at least twelve years of age. Most of the Albanian

boys were trained for the Janissary corps, an elite and well-paid standing army directly subject to the sultan. During their training the young Albanians necessarily converted to Islam (the sultans' Christian and Jewish subjects were not allowed to bear arms). Through the seventeenth century most of the Janissaries were taken from Balkan Christian families. Many other Albanian men voluntarily converted to Islam, often in order to qualify for at least temporary employment as mercenaries in Ottoman armies. The Quran was no more intelligible for Albanians than the Bible had been, but that was not much of an obstacle to conversion: Turkish-speaking Muslims were in that respect no better off, because for them too Arabic was entirely a foreign language. Five times a day, an Albanian and a Turkish Muslim could prostrate themselves side-by-side, reciting Arabic prayers that neither understood.

In Bosnia also thousands of men converted to Islam and found employment in the Ottoman army. The vernacular in Bosnia was a South Slavic dialect related to - but distinct from - Serbo-Croatian. Evidently missionaries from Orthodox Serbia had visited the mountains of Bosnia by the end of the first millennium, and other missionaries from Catholic Croatia arrived by the end of the twelfth century. For a time the Christian Bosnians may have been attached to the Roman Catholic church, but by the end of the thirteenth century they were no longer subject to Rome, and the Catholic kings of Hungary accused "the Bosnian Church" of various heresies (Manichaeism, Bogomil, Gnostic). While many Bosnians converted to Islam during the Ottoman period, others were brought over either to the Catholicism of Croatia or to the Orthodoxy of Serbia. As a result, "the Bosnian Church" ceased to exist.

Ottoman progressivism and Muslim traditionalism

For a long time the Ottoman empire was quite open to new ideas. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to the Sublime Porte in the years 1555-62, noted this in one of his letters. "No nation," he wrote, "has shown less reluctance to adopt the useful inventions of others."⁶ Much of what the Ottomans adopted from western Europe pertained to the army and the navy. The Ottomans pioneered the use of cannon on ships, and for most of the sixteenth century their navy was the most feared in the Mediterranean. The Ottoman army was also, Busbecq thought, much stronger than any available to the Holy Roman Empire, and he believed that the only thing preserving the Habsburgs was Suleiman's chronic trouble with the Safavids of Persia. In addition to what the Ottomans borrowed for military purposes they also adopted other practical innovations from western Christendom: the telescope, reading glasses, shoes and hats, and even portraiture, of which - according to the Hadith - Muhammad had disapproved.

But openness to innovations had its limits. Busbecq went on, in the same letter, to note that some Christian inventions were firmly resisted in the Ottoman empire:

They have, however, never been able to bring themselves to print books and set up public clocks. They hold that their scriptures, that is, their sacred books, would no longer be scriptures if they were printed; and if they established public clocks, they think the authority of their muezzins and their ancient rites would suffer diminution.⁷

We must therefore make a distinction between the Ottoman empire's readiness, for its secular purposes, to borrow from outsiders, and Islam's refusal to borrow, lest the tradition of Islam be shaken.

As had been the case for Muslims since the seventh century, so also in the Ottoman empire everything connected to the worship of God had to be authorized by Muhammad: what did not go back to the Prophet was incompatible with Islam. In addition to God's direct commands in the Quran were of course the traditions of worship: when, what and how to pray, for example, or what must be done and must not be done on the *hajj*. On all such matters detailed guidance for Muslims was supplied by the Hadith. Because the mechanical clock and the printing press were not mentioned in the Hadith, the presumption of the muftis was that these novelties would violate the traditional worship. Because the Quran had always been copied by hand, and the times for prayer had always been called out by muezzins, these traditions must be maintained.

The Ottoman ban on printing, and a lag in reading and education

The ban on printing extended far beyond the Quran. Because the letters of the Arabic alphabet were the medium in which manuscripts of the Quran had always been written, these letters must always be written rather than printed. So it happened that while most of Europe was undergoing its printing revolution, in the Ottoman empire books continued to be written by hand. The empire's Christian and Jewish millets were permitted to set up printing presses for pamphlets, broadsides and books in Slavic, Greek, Armenian, Hebrew and other languages, but nothing could be printed in the Arabic script. The most widely used languages under the printing ban were Arabic and Turkish, but they were joined by Persian, Kurdish and other languages written with the Arabic alphabet. A minor consideration may have been the worry of Arabic calligraphers that their well-paid profession would become obsolete if Arabic letters were printed instead of written, but the religious concern was paramount. Not until 1729 did the Ottomans give permission - briefly - for a printing press to publish books in the Arabic script. By way of comparison, printers in Amsterdam and London were publishing weekly newspapers in the 1620s (the first daily, *The Daily Courant*, appeared in London in 1702). The sultans closed down the sole Arabic printing press in 1742, after it had printed editions of only seventeen titles, and the printing of Arabic and Turkish books was not resumed until close to the end of the eighteenth century.⁸ By that time, western Europe had already passed through the Enlightenment.

Literacy was also lagging, while an elementary literacy was becoming almost universal in the cities of Protestant Europe. Writing in the Ottoman court had initially been done in Persian, a language written with a modified Arabic alphabet. In the fifteenth century the Arabic script was further modified to express the Turkish language. The Turkish used in the Ottoman court included a great number of loan-words from Arabic and more often from Persian. Because of the loan-words, "Ottoman Turkish" was difficult for the average Turkish speaker to understand. Until well into the nineteenth century the vast majority of Turkish speakers were illiterate. The oral tradition of Turkish poetry remained vigorous for some time. An early Turkish poet was Yūnus Emre, who ca. 1300 composed Sufic poetry in his native Turkish language. His poems

and hymns (more than 10,000 verses) circulated orally until the fifteenth century, when a few seem to have been written down.⁹ All of Emre's poems were eventually collected and written down by a Sufi dervish, perhaps in the seventeenth century, but long after that they were known mostly from recitation and memory.

Just as consequential as the lack of Arabic printing presses and the low level of literacy was the absence of universities in the Ottoman empire, and Suleiman did nothing to remedy this. During his reign many madrasas were operating in the Ottoman empire, perhaps the most important being one in Constantinople and another at the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, but the madrasas were devoted to "the Islamic sciences" and provided little or no secular education. While dozens of universities were attracting teachers and students in what recently had been Catholic Christendom, nothing like a university was to be found anywhere in the Dar al-Islam.¹⁰ This did not change until the nineteenth century: in 1846 Sultan Abdülmecid I saw to the founding of the *Darülfünun* ("house of sciences," a synonym for "university"), an institution now known to English speakers as Istanbul University. The oldest universities in western Europe and Britain had then been standing for more than six hundred years. The vitality of higher education was a major factor in the transition from western Christendom to modern civilization, and the absence of universities in the Dar al-Islam drastically slowed the coming of modernity there.

Perspectives on history in eastern Europe and the Ottoman empire

More broadly, by the middle of the seventeenth century eastern Europe - whether Christian, Muslim or Jewish - was perceptibly more "backward" or less progressive than was western Europe. By 1650, in what until the Reformation had been Catholic Europe, many Catholics and almost all Protestants were pleased to have abandoned a variety of religious beliefs and practices that had been around for more than a millennium. As we shall see in Chapter 31, they congratulated themselves for living in a "new" or "modern" age.

None of this had any real parallel in Orthodox Christendom or in the Ottoman empire and the rest of the Dar al-Islam. For almost everyone here, of course, the main focus was religion: Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. The few people who were skeptical of the revealed religions had no community and no public face. For Muslims, the time before Muhammad was still the *al-jahiliyya*, "the time of ignorance": enlightenment had come only with Muhammad's revelation of the Quran, and nothing since then had made - or could make - any significant improvement. In addition, for many centuries after the Hijra the Dar al-Islam had flourished militarily, politically, economically and culturally. What for most Christians in western Europe was a backward "middle age" was for Muslims a Golden Age. Nor did Judaeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth century look back to a "medieval" period. Most Judaeans, and especially the tens of thousands of Sephardim evicted from Spain, sensed that the present was worse than the centuries that had preceded it. They looked back with nostalgia to the days when the temple still stood in Jerusalem, and their great hope for the future was that the Messiah would soon appear. For most Judaeans the Renaissance was a strictly Christian episode. For them modernity began in the second half of the eighteenth century, when Moses Mendelssohn pioneered the *haskalah* ("enlightenment").

Orthodox Christianity in the Ottoman empire

Nor were Orthodox Christians aware that the present was in any way better than the past. They deplored the decline and fall of the Byzantine empire, and regretted that now the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian Orthodox patriarchs were all subject to the sultan (only in Russia did Orthodox Christianity remain the established religion). As Orthodox Christians looked around themselves in the Ottoman empire they saw that they were now inferior not only to the Muslim but even to the Jewish subjects of the sultan. Thus the centuries that European Protestants saw as a trough appeared to the sultan's Orthodox Christian subjects as a relatively happy period of imperial power and of Orthodox Christian dominance.

One alternative to Muslim control seemed even worse to most Christians in the Ottoman empire. On the eve of Mehmed's assault on Constantinople some upper-class Byzantines had been in favor of subjecting themselves to the pope in order to receive military aid from the Catholic rulers of western Europe. But with memories of the Fourth Crusade and its aftermath still alive, most of the population saw Catholicism as a greater evil than an Ottoman victory. Loukas Notaras, the Grand Duke under the last Byzantine emperor, expressed this popular sentiment succinctly: "It is preferable for us to see the Turkish turban prevailing in the midst of the city rather than the tiara of the Latin cardinal."¹¹

The sultans made some effort to keep the goodwill of Orthodox Christians, but did so by policies which over time resulted in centralization and bureaucratization. The vast and single "Rum millet" included all Orthodox Christians, and was headed by the patriarch in Constantinople, who was honored with the title, "Ecumenical Patriarch." The sultans performed their confirmation of a newly elected patriarch with great pomp and ceremony. The patriarchate was located in the Phanari district of Constantinople. By the seventeenth century "the Phanariote Hellenes" had become a privileged and influential class, and they were often appointed to important political positions by the sultan and his advisors. The favored position of the patriarch in Constantinople was balanced by the declining importance of his Serbian and Bulgarian counterparts, who eventually became subject to the patriarch in Constantinople. The Serbian and Bulgarian churches thus lost their autocephalous standing.

The gradual centralization of Orthodoxy in Phanari also resulted in widespread corruption and criminality. Competition for the patriarchate was intense, and often the successful candidate had to bribe not only the bishops who elected him but also the sultan who confirmed him. Once in power, a patriarch typically tried to recoup his losses and turn a considerable profit. Many patriarchs died untimely deaths, the victims of poison or "accidents." Between 1623 and 1700 some fifty patriarchs held office.

The Reformation and Counter-Reformation in eastern Europe: Hungary

Orthodox Christendom was not immediately affected by the Reformation, in part because in the early sixteenth century it was less autocratic and much less centralized than was Catholic Christendom. Neither the patriarch in Constantinople nor any of the other patriarchs had anything resembling the power of the pope in Rome. The rebellion against the papacy in

Catholic Europe was therefore not repeated in Orthodoxy. To the contrary, the decline of the Byzantine empire and the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 made the Orthodox church something of a rallying point for the Ottomans' Christian subjects. Indulgences, which were the immediate spark that set off the Reformation in Germany, were not issued in lands where Orthodox Christianity was the established religion. More importantly, as we have seen, these lands were slower to join the "printing revolution," and written communication was therefore much more difficult than it was in western Europe. Still more important was the absence of universities and of an educated minority. Finally, in Orthodox Christendom there had been no Renaissance: the revival of classical Latin literature, followed by the translation of classical Greek literature, was more or less confined to Catholic Europe.

In several lands of eastern Europe, nevertheless, the Reformation had deep consequences. Although the established church in most of eastern Europe was Orthodox, in a few monarchies it was Roman Catholic. These Catholic kingdoms experienced much of the same religious turmoil that rocked their counterparts in western Europe. Hungary was a case in point. By the time that Martin Luther ignited the Reformation the kingdom of Hungary had been Roman Catholic for five hundred years.¹² Despite their Catholicism, Hungarians felt the same linguistic alienation from Rome that irritated German, Scandinavian, Dutch and English speakers. Hungarian translations of parts of the Latin Vulgate Bible had been made already in the early fifteenth century, during the Hussite upheaval. Because these were done before the invention of the printing press, they circulated only in a few hand-written copies.

Beginning in the 1520s Hungarians by the thousands left the Catholic church and followed Luther or, later, Calvin. A Hungarian translation of the New Testament, made from Erasmus's Greek text, was published by Gaspar Heltai in the 1540s. Heltai was both a scholar (he was a graduate of the University of Wittenberg, where he had studied with Luther) and the owner of a printing shop in Kolozsvár, which is now Cluj in northwestern Romania. By the end of the sixteenth century the entire Bible was available in the Hungarian vernacular.

After the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, at which the forces of Suleiman overwhelmed and killed King Louis II of Hungary, the Great Hungarian Plain fell under Ottoman control while western Hungary (the hilly land south and west of the Danube) was taken over and ruled directly by the Habsburgs. Although Ferdinand I favored Catholicism he made allowances for Protestants in some of the cities he ruled. Under his son, Maximilian II (Miksa, to the Hungarians), who ruled as Holy Roman Emperor from 1563 to 1576, the Protestants did quite well: Maximilian remained a nominal Catholic, but his sympathies were with Lutheranism. At Maximilian's death the religious tide turned slightly. His son and successor was Rudolf II (Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary from 1572 until 1612), and Rudolf was a more fervent Catholic than his father had been. For more than thirty years Rudolf did little or nothing to prevent the Catholic majority from coercing the Protestant minority. Toward the end of his reign he was forced to give the Protestants some guarantees of toleration, which were dictated to him in 1606 at the Peace of Vienna. In the negotiations Stephen Bocskay, the prince of Transylvania (supported by the Ottomans), insisted upon concessions to Hungarian Protestants as the price of the peace. The treaty was brokered not by Rudolf but by his brother and rival, Matthias. Matthias himself ruled as Holy Roman Emperor from 1612 to 1619, years of relative

peace between his Catholic and Protestant subjects. Dying without an heir, he was succeeded by his cousin, Ferdinand II (1619-1637), whose goal it was to re-catholicize all of his realm. In this Ferdinand was supported especially by the Spanish wing of the Habsburgs.

As we have seen in Chapter 29, the naming of Ferdinand as Matthias' successor convinced the Protestants that the Counter-Reformation was imminent, and that their only recourse was armed rebellion. In 1618 militant Czech Protestants in Prague threw Ferdinand's aristocratic supporters out of an upper-story window (the second "Defenestration of Prague"), violence that quickly led to the Thirty Years War. That war ended with the Peace of Westphalia, in which the rulers agreed to the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle. Thereafter, Habsburg Hungary, like the rest of the Habsburg realm, was publicly Catholic, although Protestants were usually permitted to meet and worship in private.

Protestantism in Poland and Lithuania

Also Catholic rather than Orthodox was the state formally named the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania. By the beginning of the sixteenth century this united monarchy controlled a vast territory, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. We have seen in Chapter 26 that medieval Poland and Lithuania were uncommonly tolerant of religious minorities, including paganism, and welcomed Jewish immigrants from the former Khazar kingdom and from western Europe. Perhaps the early Jagiellonian monarchs of Poland-Lithuania were religiously tolerant because - like the Ottoman emperors - they had patently secular ambitions. Whatever its genesis, this attitude of religious tolerance continued for a very long time. Sigismund I (ruled 1506-1548) personally remained loyal to the Catholic church, but either by inclination or by force of circumstances he often followed a soft line against religious dissidents. As noted in Chapter 28, Sigismund offered protection to his nephew Albert, Duke of Prussia, when young Albert dared to make the church in Prussia evangelical. By the middle of the sixteenth century the Jagiellonian dynasty had added a considerable Lutheran population to its religiously diverse realm.

It was in this nominally Catholic but effectively pluralist kingdom of Sigismund I that Copernicus (1473-1543) wrote his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, the work that shocked both Catholics and Protestants as well as the astronomers of his time. Although Copernicus studied at three north Italian universities, for the last forty years of his life he lived in Poland, serving both the Catholic Sigismund and the Protestant Albert of Prussia. Over the centuries Copernicus became easily the most famous figure of Renaissance Poland, but in the early sixteenth century he was one of several dozen distinguished Polish scholars (almost all of whom wrote in Latin) and artists.

The Reformation came early to Danzig (Gdansk), a trading city on the Baltic shore at the mouth of the Vistula river. Many of the German-speaking commoners of Danzig eagerly embraced the Lutheran Reformation. Their riots in 1522 forced the city's governors to make the city's religious establishment "evangelical." Four years later Sigismund sent an army into the city, executed the reformist leaders, and restored the city's churches and religious property to Catholicism. The sentiments of the city's German majority remained Lutheran.

The Reformation stirred little interest in Lithuania,¹³ but found many adherents within the Polish nobility. Some of the nobles in the Polish Sjem (parliament) were Lutherans and more were Calvinists (because anti-German feeling was strong in Poland, Protestants there favored Calvinism over Lutheranism). Seeing that the Reformation was advancing especially in universities, Sigismund forbade his young subjects to study in foreign universities, but the ban was hardly enforced. The first Polish translation of the New Testament was published not in Poland but in Prussia. This was Stanislaw Murzynowski's *Nowy Testament*, printed in Königsberg in 1551. An entire Polish Bible was produced in Brest-Litovsk in 1563, translated from the Hebrew and Greek by a circle of Calvinist scholars (they prudently dedicated their translation to King Sigismund II Augustus). Fourteen years later the Socinians - whom we shall meet presently - published their own Polish translation of the New Testament. In contrast to this scriptural publishing in the Polish language, the Bible remained unavailable for another three hundred years in the East Slavic and South Slavic vernaculars. Throughout the liturgical year priests in the Orthodox churches of Slavic-speaking Europe continued to read to their congregations short pericopes from the Church Slavonic Bible. For the congregations, if not for the priests themselves, Old Church Slavonic was virtually unintelligible. Not until the nineteenth century were the first Bibles published in the Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian vernaculars.

Unitarian Christianity in Poland

By the middle of the sixteenth century Poland was becoming the crucible for a reformed Christianity even more radical than Calvinism. The Christianity in question was that of the anti-trinitarians, who had been influenced by Michael Servetus' writings and were not discouraged by his fiery death.¹⁴ Although they were monotheists, the anti-trinitarians were adamantly Christian and Bible-based, insisting that their brand of Christianity was what the New Testament taught. They referred especially to the synoptic Gospels, which they charged the Protestants with ignoring in favor of the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul. Trinitarianism, they claimed, was a heresy that had been concocted when Constantine ruled the Roman empire. Jesus was not God, but the Son of God.

In addition to its biblical basis, monotheistic Christianity was appealing because - in comparison with trinitarianism - it could more easily be reconciled with the natural theology of the ancient philosophers. In the fifteenth century the writings of Plotinus and other Neoplatonists had been brought from Constantinople and translated into Latin by scholars in western Europe. Printed editions made the translations readily available.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, Italian humanists were prominent in the anti-trinitarian movement of the sixteenth century, although not in their native land.

One of the most influential of the early "unitarian" Christians was Giorgio Biandrata. Biandrata received his medical degree from the University of Bologna in 1538 and was soon celebrated for his success as a gynecologist. In addition to his medical profession Biandrata was a humanist and by the early 1550s had left the Catholic church. He made his way to Geneva, where he joined the city's small anti-trinitarian congregation. In the late 1550s the Calvinists

hounded him out of their city. Biandrata found shelter and sympathy with the royal family of Poland-Lithuania, to whom he had long given medical care. One of his early patients had been Queen Bona Sforza, born to the House of Sforza in Milan but wed to Sigismund I. When Sigismund “the Old” died in 1548 he was succeeded by his and Bona Sforza’s son, Sigismund II Augustus. The young king remained a nominal Catholic, but both he and his queen-mother were receptive to new religious ideas. Sigismund II (1548-72) hoped for reforms out of the Council of Trent, especially worship in the vernacular and utraquist eucharist, neither of which would disturb the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church. But the reforms were not forthcoming.

A daughter of Sigismund the Old and Bona Sforza was Isabella, and she too had been one of young Biandrata’s early patients. In 1539 Isabella had been given in marriage to Zápolya János (John Zapolya). In 1511 Zápolya had been appointed *voivod* (governor) of Transylvania by the royal house of Hungary. Fifteen years later, when Suleiman the Magnificent defeated and killed the youthful King Louis II of Hungary at the first Battle of Mohács (1526) Zápolya became the de facto ruler of Transylvania (now central and western Romania) and also claimed the vacant throne of Hungary. In this claim Zápolya János was supported by Suleiman but not by any Catholic king of significance (the Habsburg Ferdinand was the other claimant to the Hungarian throne). Zápolya János’ marriage, at the age of fifty-two, to the young Princess Isabella of Poland was therefore seen as a diplomatic triumph for him. Isabella became pregnant immediately, and Queen Bona Sforza sent the gynecologist Biandrata to Transylvania to look after her daughter. Isabella’s child was János Zsigmond. A month after his son’s birth, Zápolya János died, leaving his crown to the infant, but real power to Isabella. As regent, Isabella was de jure the ruler of Transylvania (and claimed to be regent of Hungary) from 1540 at least until 1556, when János Zsigmond was old enough to assume power. She was de facto the Transylvanian ruler until the 1560s.

Thanks to the medical help Giorgio Biandrata had given them in his earlier years, in the late 1550s he was able to influence the religious views of Bona Sforza in Poland and of Isabella in Transylvania. By 1560 Biandrata had converted both to unitarian Christianity, and he enjoyed the protection of King Sigismund II in Poland-Lithuania. Because unitarianism was so radical, its royal adherents did not try to establish it as the state religion in their realms. Instead, they were satisfied that unitarianism, along with the new Protestant faiths from western Europe, be given a safe place alongside the traditional religions of their kingdoms. In all of Christendom, therefore, these rulers of Poland, Lithuania, Transylvania and eastern Hungary were pioneers of religious toleration. Elsewhere in Europe, unitarian Christianity was treated as a pariah.

Religious pluralism in Transylvania

The reasons for religious toleration in Transylvania and eastern Hungary at this time were somewhat different from those in Poland-Lithuania. Because Suleiman the Magnificent had conquered Transylvania and eastern Hungary in 1526 he was their absentee lord, while Isabella and her son, János Zsigmond, were his vassals. The Ottoman sultans followed the Islamic tradition of providing protection for all “people of the book.” Thus Suleiman’s own subjects, so long as they worshiped God, were allowed to do so according to their own religious traditions

(except for Shiite Muslims, who were harassed). Through his millets, Suleiman provided protection for both rabbinic and Karaite Judaism and for a wide assortment of Christianities: Monophysite, Orthodox, Nestorian, Catholic, and most recently Protestant. In the eyes of this Muslim ruler a unitarian brand of Christianity was not merely permissible but positively welcome.

As Transylvanian vassals of the sultanate, Isabella and János Zsigmond had the full support of Suleiman in guaranteeing to their subjects freedom to worship God in their own way. In 1568 János Zsigmond called together a diet at Torda, which issued a formal edict of toleration that guaranteed freedom from persecution for Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and unitarians, all of whose clergymen were free to “preach the gospel according to their own understanding.” Although the edict did not explicitly mention them, it of course assumed that Judaism, Islam, and the Orthodox church of most Transylvanians would continue to receive the royal protection that they had always enjoyed.

Fausto Sozzini and “the Socinians”

The unitarianism of the royal court in Transylvania was much in debt to Dávid Ferenc, Isabella’s court chaplain, who was successively a Catholic, a Lutheran, a Calvinist, and - after Giorgio Biandrata’s arrival - a unitarian. By the 1570s Dávid Ferenc had become more extreme than his mentor Biandrata, especially on the nature of Jesus the Christ. Ferenc concluded that a Christian should not worship Jesus or pray to him, for such actions implied that Jesus was indeed God. Although Biandrata did not deny Ferenc’s logic, he thought that so revolutionary a teaching would alienate what little public support the unitarians had from other Christians. He therefore tried to persuade Ferenc to tone down his radical views, which opponents characterized as more Jewish than Christian. Dávid Ferenc refused to compromise, and in 1579 was imprisoned in the Transylvanian fortress of Deva, where he died after a three-month ordeal.

Toward the end of his controversy with Ferenc, Biandrata had called in Fausto Sozzini, who was soon to become the leader of the anti-trinitarian movement in Poland. Fausto (1539-1604) grew up in the prominent and liberal Sozzini family in Siena. Because his father died when Fausto was only two years old, the boy was supported by his uncles, most of whom were Protestant sympathizers. Fausto was especially influenced by the teachings and writings of his uncle Lelio. Lelio Sozzini was well educated in the humanities, and although he had eagerly embraced the Reformation he moved beyond the doctrines of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, and was attracted to the anti-trinitarianism of Michael Servetus. So, too, the nephew Fausto became a unitarian Christian and moved to Switzerland, where he wrote several anti-trinitarian pamphlets, although under an assumed name (a condition apparently laid down by his benefactor, Francesco de Medici, the grand-duke of Tuscany).

After he was brought to eastern Europe by Biandrata, Fausto Sozzini began to publish under his own name, the Latin form of which was Faustus Socinus. In Poland Sozzini was also free to set up a church organization, complete with schools for the training of preachers. These Christian unitarians called themselves the *Fratres Polonorum* (“Polish Brethren”), or the “Minor Reform Church of Poland,” but because of Sozzini’s prominence in their community they were

commonly called “Socinians” by outsiders. The same name, “Socinians,” was applied by trinitarians to the unitarian Christians of Transylvania. Such nomenclature was the traditional means by which the Christian majority stigmatized “heretical” movements: from the “Montanists,” “Arians,” and “Nestorians” of antiquity to the “Lutherans,” and “Calvinists” of the sixteenth century, a supposedly heretical movement was named after the supposed arch-heretic who had supposedly invented its doctrines.

The unitarian Christians or “Socinians” had only one creed, the Apostles’ Creed. They not only regarded themselves as Christians, but claimed - with some justification - that theirs was the original Christianity: the faith of Christians from the Apostolic age until Constantine’s Council of Nicaea, which sent the church down the wrong path for the next twelve hundred years. The Socinians believed that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world and the Son of God, but they insisted that he was not God.

An unusual feature of Socinianism was its embrace of reason, perhaps not surprising given the contribution that Italian humanism made to the movement. Although the Socinians, like the Protestants, based their Christianity on the Bible, they conceded that the Bible contained serious contradictions that needed to be sorted out. For such an operation, they assumed, the only effective tools were reason and the power of persuasion. The slow drift toward rationalism in seventeenth-century Europe and England owed much to Socinian unitarianism. More specifically, the deists and the “English Arians” (including John Milton) continued the Socinians’ attempt to bring their critical intelligence to bear upon Christianity.

One of the Socinians’ most notorious doctrines was their denial of eternal Hell. Skepticism about Hell may have been voiced fairly early in Poland by Judaeans focused on the Kabbalah, and this skepticism had evidently been shared by some fifteenth-century Neoplatonists in northern Italy. It did not, however, come to public attention until the sixteenth century, in the heated religious discussions spawned by the Reformation. In 1550 a synod of Anabaptists meeting at Venice went so far as to declare that “there is no hell but the grave; the souls of the wicked perish with their bodies.”¹⁶ The Socinians’ heresy was not so radical as that of the Venice Anabaptists, but Lelio Sozzini and his nephew did teach that Hell was a temporary rather than an eternal punishment: at the End of Time the saved will be raised to life everlasting in Heaven, and the damned will be sent to Hell, where they will be quickly annihilated by its fires. The Socinians based their belief not so much on the Bible, which was ambivalent on the subject,¹⁷ but on the rational argument that if God is indeed good he can not inflict on most of humankind something so heinous as eternal Hellfire.

The main center of unitarian Christianity in Poland was the newly-built city of Rakow, about fifty miles northeast of Cracow. In all of Poland were perhaps a hundred unitarian congregations, most of which were small and formed around a nucleus of humanists and nobles. Grass-roots participation was rare, most of the population continuing in its traditional Catholicism while a minority of Christians in the cities embraced one or another of the new Protestant faiths.

Unitarianism in Transylvania survived well into the seventeenth century, although

without state protection. When János Zsigmond died in 1571, at only thirty years of age, the nobles of Transylvania elected in his place Stephen Báthory. Báthory's religious views were fluid, but he was a practical man and concluded that it was in his and Transylvania's interest that he make overtures to the Catholic kings and the emperor. Báthory summoned a diet in 1572 which did not abridge religious freedom but forbade any further religious innovations in Transylvania.

In Poland, Sigismund II Augustus in 1569 put through the Union of Lublin, which created the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, an elective monarchy to be established at his death (Sigismund II, the last of the Jagiellonian dynasty, died in 1572). The republican experiment was a consequence of Sigismund's childlessness, and the tradition of the Polish Sjem, an assembly of bishops and nobles that had been functioning on and off for almost a century. Sigismund himself was Catholic, but his favorite wife (Barbara Radziwill) had been Calvinist, and his mother (Bona Sforza) was an eclectic unitarian.

For a time freedom of religion remained a remarkable feature of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, which was something of a republic with an elective monarchy, although over the decades religious freedom was whittled away. At the death of Sigismund II, and after a brief interregnum, the nobles of Poland and Lithuania in 1576 elected the Transylvanian Stephen Báthory to be the first elected king of their commonwealth. As war with Ivan the Terrible loomed, Bathory sought allies among both the Catholic and the Protestant rulers of northeastern Europe. The war was about Ivan's desire for an outlet to the Baltic. He wanted Livonia - now Latvia and Estonia - and that project was successfully resisted by Bathory, with help from the Lutheran kings of Sweden and Denmark. At the same time, Bathory was worried about protecting Ukraine from Ottoman ambitions. Here he could have used assistance from Ivan, but had to do without it.

The Counter-Reformation in Poland-Lithuania

The Counter-Reformation in Poland-Lithuania can be said to have been launched by Stanislaus Hosius, the bishop of Ermland in East Prussia, and eventually a cardinal. From 1551 to his death in 1579 Bishop Hosius was tireless in combating Protestantism and promoting Catholicism. Hosius was also an advisor to Sigismund II, having considerable diplomatic experience and influential acquaintances and friends throughout Catholic Europe. After Sigismund's death, and toward the end of his own life, Hosius persuaded the newly elected Stephen Bathory to permit the Jesuit order to establish "colleges" in his realm. A diet that Bathory called in October of 1579 gave the Jesuits the permission they sought. Their arrival stemmed the tide of both Protestantism and unitarianism in Poland, and initiated the gradual restoration of Catholicism as the commonwealth's established religion. Bathory's successor, Sigismund III (1587-1632), was especially helpful to the Jesuits and did little to protect the Protestants from the Catholic majority. At Cracow, Posen and Vilna crowds attacked and destroyed Protestant churches. In addition to royal support, Catholicism profited from the divisions among its opponents. As the Calvinists, Lutherans and unitarians of Poland exerted themselves to identify each the others' "errors," the solidarity and the long tradition of the Catholic church became ever more appealing. The Polish nobility - embodied in the Sjem -

included Protestants and even Socinians, and was regarded as a protector of the Jewish minority. At the grassroots level, however, sentiment was heavily in favor of making Poland thoroughly and uniformly Catholic.¹⁸

After the forty-five year reign of Sigismund III (the longest in Polish monarchical history) the Sjem elected to the throne Wladyslaw IV (1632-48). Wladyslaw restored a few privileges to the Protestants and hoped to find a formula that would allow both Catholics and Protestants to acquiesce in his reign. He failed, however, in part because of Jesuit opposition and also because of increasing tensions between Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Sweden was in the Thirty Years War emerging as the strongest of the Protestant states in Europe, and therefore as a dangerous neighbor to the Catholic commonwealth. The commonwealth nevertheless maintained at least a semblance of religious tolerance until the disasters known in Polish history as “the Deluge,” which began at Wladyslaw’s death in 1648, just as the Thirty Years War was ending in western Europe. By the end of the seventeenth century Poland was once again thoroughly Catholic. Despite sporadic episodes of internal violence, it must be noted that in the commonwealth the Counter-Reformation occurred more peacefully than in western Europe: Poland was spared the “wars of religion” that wracked France and England and devastated Germany.

The rise of Russia

A constant worry for the Polish-Lithuanian kings was the rise of Muscovite Russia. Here the brand of Christianity was Orthodox rather than Catholic. In their worship, strongly sacramental and sacerdotal, the Russians - like other Slavic speakers in the Orthodox church - used the Church Slavonic liturgy and a Church Slavonic version of the Bible. By the fifteenth century at the latest Old Church Slavonic had been modified into the three forms of Church Slavonic - Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian - which still remain the liturgical languages of the Orthodox Church in Russia, Bulgaria, and Serbia (and, now, “Macedonia”).¹⁹ Except for the clergy, most speakers of Russian could not understand Church Slavonic, which by the fifteenth century was further removed from Russian than Latin was removed from Italian, French and Spanish. But because Old Church Slavonic was the language that had - many centuries earlier - ushered Christianity into Russia and triumphed over paganism, some form of it was cherished as the virtually indispensable medium of Christianity.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, elements of paganism persisted in Russian-speaking lands. Still in evidence were charms, witchcraft, and magical incantations from the pre-Christian period. Russian Orthodox monasticism owes much to Sergius of Radonezh (Radonezh was a village near Moscow), whose ascetic example and alleged miracles in the second half of the fourteenth century inspired many young men to become monks. Eventually, several hundred monasteries traced their roots to St. Sergius and his followers.

In the 1440s, as the Ottoman noose tightened around the Byzantine empire, the patriarch at Constantinople began making overtures toward reunion with the Roman Catholic church. This rapprochement was opposed by most Russian bishops, who felt no need for help from Catholic kings. In 1448, the Russians of Moscow consecrated their own man - Jonah, or Jonas -

as Metropolitan of Moscow and all Rus. This was a direct challenge to Isidore, the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus, whom the Constantinople patriarch supported and who ardently advocated reunion with Rome. Despite this quarrel, the Moscow Metropolitan remained fully within the Orthodox hierarchy. After Constantinople's fall to the Ottomans in 1453, Moscow evolved toward complete autonomy within the Orthodox church. All other Orthodox communions were now under Ottoman rule, while the Grand Duchy of Moscow was alone as a sovereign state in which Orthodox Christianity was the established religion. From 1462 until his death in 1505 Ivan III was "Grand Prince of Moscow and All Russia." In 1472 he married Sophia Palaiologa, the niece of Constantine XI, the last Byzantine emperor. The marriage had great political and religious significance, and encouraged the idea that Moscow was to become "the Third Rome," the center and seat of the true religion.²⁰

The power and ambition of the Moscow-based regime grew steadily in the sixteenth century. In 1547 the title of the youthful Ivan IV, who would soon become "the Terrible," was elevated from Duke to Tsar ("Caesar"), a dignity matching the expansion of the duchy into the beginnings of a Russian empire. Ivan ruled from 1547 until 1584, and he greatly extended his realm, especially at the expense of the Tatars. In his wars with Poland-Lithuania and with Sweden Ivan was defeated, but toward the east he conquered the Kazan khanate (the city of Kazan stood on the middle Volga, some four hundred miles east of Moscow) and began the conquest of Siberia. Toward the south Ivan pushed his rule to the Caspian sea, taking over the Tatar khanate of Astrakhan, on the lower Volga.

The Russian Orthodox church grew apace with Russian political power. As the Grand Duchy of Moscow became the Tsardom of Russia the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan bishop of Moscow expanded. In 1589, the other patriarchs in the Orthodox communion elevated the Moscow Metropolitan to their own company. Led by its own patriarch, the Russian Orthodox church was now autocephalous: no longer, that is, was it subordinate to the patriarch in Constantinople.

As a result of their conquest of Tatar khanates to the east and south, the tsars became the rulers of a considerable Muslim population, and their policy was generally to allow the Muslims to remain in their traditional faith. The Muslims were forbidden, however, to make loud noises during Orthodox Christian worship services or to show disrespect to the Christian icons when these were paraded through the streets. Most emphatically, Muslims were forbidden to proselytize among Christians. In a decree of 1649 "it was prescribed that Muslims who 'by force or by fraud should convert a Russian to their Muslim religion' were liable to death by burning, while their Russian converts were to be handed over to the patriarch or to the local bishop for trial according to ecclesiastical law - presumably for apostasy."²¹

Although forced by circumstance to tolerate Muslims, the tsars had no reason to make similar allowances for Judaeans. In 1526 a Russian ambassador to the pope stated that "the Muscovite people dread no one more than the Jews, and do not admit them into their borders."²² Jewish merchants from the realm of the Polish-Lithuanian king did occasionally make their way to Moscow, but the venture was dangerous. When in 1550 Sigismund Augustus requested that Ivan IV ensure safe passage of the merchants, Ivan replied, "It is not convenient to allow Jews to

come with their goods to Russia, since many evils result from them. For they import poisonous herbs into our realm, and lead astray Russians from Christianity.”²³ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the tsardom included no Jewish minority.

So far as Christianity was concerned, most of the tsars (Boris Godunov was an exception) insisted upon a rigidly Orthodox realm. As we have seen, the Bible was not translated into Russian until three hundred years after the Lutheran Reformation. Eventually several quasi-Protestant movements did take root among the peasantry. In the eighteenth century the Molokans (“milk drinkers”) and Doukhobors caused some trouble for the Orthodox church. The tsars ordered the persecution, torture and killing of the dissident leaders, and in the nineteenth century most of the surviving Molokans and Doukhobors were driven into exile, many of them into North America.

The Rurik dynasty, which had ruled Moscow since the twelfth century, died out with Ivan’s son. In 1613, after Godunov’s interim reign and a subsequent time of troubles, the Romanovs took control. This noble family had supplied Ivan the Terrible with a wife, the first tsarina, but after Ivan’s death Godunov attacked and suppressed the family. The first Romanov tsar was Michael (1613-45). Only sixteen years old at the time of his coronation, Michael was chosen for the position because he was the son of a strong and famous father, Fyodor Romanov. Tsar Godunov had been wary of Fyodor and had therefore exiled him to a monastery. As a monk Fyodor was given the name Philaret, and under Godunov’s successors he became a bishop, a metropolitan, and finally the patriarch of Moscow. From 1619 until his death in 1633, Philaret virtually ruled Russia as patriarch, while his son - Michael - was tsar. One of the important actions of father and son was to tie the millions of peasant serfs more tightly to the land, making flight a crime. Under Philaret and Michael and under Michael’s son Alexei (ruled 1645-1676) the tsardom prospered, benefitting especially from the Polish-Lithuanian “Deluge” debacle in the 1640s and 1650s. The established church in Russia was for a very long time a partner as well as a beneficiary of the tsardom. When revolution came in 1917 both the tsars and the Russian Orthodox church were among its targets.

Judaism in western and central Europe, 1500-1648

The Jewish minority in Catholic Christendom had been harried since the First Crusade. During the period of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation Judaeans were seldom physically attacked by Christian mobs in western and central Europe. For this personal safety, however, Judaeans paid a high price: they were physically separated from Gentile society, being in some lands socially ostracised and from other lands banished entirely. A few exceptions must be noted: Judaeans in the Netherlands were relatively both free and secure, as they were in Poland-Lithuania. The Dutch cities, and Amsterdam especially, welcomed Jewish exiles from the Iberian peninsula, in large part because of the immigrants’ experience in trading, manufacture, and banking. The influx of Judaeans to the Netherlands began before the Reformation and increased thereafter. The Portuguese Inquisition, which began in 1536, sent thousands of Jewish families from Portugal to the harbor cities of the Netherlands. Most Dutch Protestants regarded the Jewish immigrants as allies against Catholic designs to re-Catholicize their land.

In other lands Judaeans either were banned altogether or were subject to new restrictions which tended to “ghettoize” them. At the end of the fourteenth century, as the *Reconquista* progressed, Christians in Spain began to demand a purely Catholic society. Religious diversity, which for a long time had characterized Muslim Spain, was now obsolete: under the Almoravids and Almohads Christians had been treated much more severely than Judaeans, and the *Reconquista* gave Christians the opportunity to revenge themselves upon not only the Muslims but also the Judaeans. During the fifteenth century the Spanish Catholics became more and more intent upon religious homogeneity. Pressures on Muslims and Judaeans to convert to the Church did produce *conversos*, but because many of these were suspect the authorities established the Spanish Inquisition in 1470. Finally, in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the expulsion from Spain of all Judaeans who persisted in their religion. The rulers of Portugal followed the same course.

Other rulers in Catholic Christendom attempted to convert their Jewish subjects, although not so brutally as Ferdinand and Isabella had done. In the Holy Roman Empire an anti-Jewish campaign began early in the sixteenth century but did not last long. In 1509 a convert from Judaism, whose Christian name was Johannes Pfefferkorn, was authorized by Emperor Maximilian I to confiscate and destroy those Jewish books that Pfefferkorn deemed hostile to Christianity. Pfefferkorn’s idea seems to have been that if these books were destroyed, Judaeans en masse would convert to Christianity, just as he and his family had done. Pfefferkorn began confiscating Talmuds and other Jewish books first in Mainz, and he then moved on to other German-speaking cities. At Stuttgart, however, he was opposed by Johann Reuchlin. Reuchlin was greatly admired as a scholar (his prestige was close to that of Erasmus), and was clearly the most accomplished of all Christian Hebraists. His textbook, *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (1506) had provided an introduction to Biblical Hebrew for many Christian scholars. Although a devout Catholic, Reuchlin was also much interested, as was Pico della Mirandola, in Kabbalah. Against Pfefferkorn’s campaign, Reuchlin argued that anti-Christian sentiments in the Talmud were very limited, and that the truly anti-Christian books of Judaism - especially the *Toledoth Yeshu* - were not taken seriously by Judaeans other than the most ignorant. Emperor Maximilian saw some validity in Reuchlin’s arguments and appointed him to a commission which was to look at all sides of the question and reach a consensus on what was to be done with the Talmud and other “anti-Christian” Jewish books. The argument between Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn raged until 1520, when Pope Leo silenced Reuchlin. By that time, however, the Reformation had begun, and the German translation of the New Testament was much more worrisome to Catholic authorities than was the Talmud. Charles V, the new emperor, did not revive the campaign to convert the empire’s Judaeans. For the next hundred and thirty years both Protestants and Catholics in Germany made occasional gestures at banishing the Judaeans, but were too busy fighting each other to follow through with the project.

In England, as we have seen, there had been no Jewish minority since 1290, when the few Judaeans in his kingdom were expelled by Edward I. In the kingdom of France Judaeans had been virtually absent since 1394, when Charles VI expelled them. In the sixteenth century Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal began surreptitiously to filter across the Pyrenees into southwestern France. Much more conspicuous was an addition of Judaeans to the kingdom

during the seventeenth century, as France expanded eastward and annexed the German-speaking lands of Alsace and Lorraine. Here almost every city included a Jewish minority of long standing. Although these Judaeans were tolerated *de facto*, they had no *de jure* rights until the French Revolution.

A substantial Jewish minority lived in central and northern Italy. Jewish merchants, craftsmen and moneylenders had been attracted to Venice and other cities in northern Italy because of the cities' trade with the eastern Mediterranean and the Dar al-Islam. Through the fifteenth century Judaeans in Italy were subject to only occasional episodes of repression. Early in the sixteenth century the Christian authorities began to impose much harsher restrictions. In 1516 the oligarchic government of Venice ordered that all of the republic's Judaeans must live on one of the Venetian islands, where a metal foundry and its slag - its *getto* - had once been located. Judaeans were allowed to leave the island during daylight hours, but after nightfall any Judaeans discovered elsewhere in Venice was subject to severe penalties. Initially several hundred Judaeans were confined to the island, but as the generations passed it became more crowded (when Napoleon took Venice at the end of the eighteenth century, and gave the Judaeans permission to live wherever they wished, the number of residents was close to five thousand). From the Venetian *getto* seems to have come the generic "ghetto," standing for a municipal area to which Judaeans were confined.²⁴ The generic term, and the spelling *ghetto*, first appeared in the papal bull *Dudum a felicis*, issued by Pius IV in 1562. Because it was an island, the Venetian Ghetto was a more rigid variation of the "Jews' quarter" or "Jews' alley" (in German, the *Judengasse*) that had been a regular feature of cities in western Christendom. In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* Shylock, the "gentle Jew" eager to carve his pound of flesh from the merchant Antonio, is a moneylender from the Venetian Ghetto.

In restricting the city's Judaeans, the leaders of Venice claimed to have been taking care lest the Judaeans corrupt Christians. Also contributing to the confinement was a suspicion that "the Jews" had diabolical powers (a suspicion that proliferated during the Black Death in 1349). Eschatological enthusiasm, widespread among Christians in the early sixteenth century, was also a factor: many Christians believed that Judgement Day would come once the Judaeans had been converted to Christianity, and such a mass conversion might be hastened if onerous restrictions were placed on the Judaeans. Most important of all, however, was the desire of most Catholics to live in a purely Catholic society. According to Kenneth Stow, the driving impetus for restrictions on Judaeans "was the passion for discipline and uniformity that had become the motto of the monks and friars, devotees of the Roman Inquisition, who were coming to dominate the Italian episcopal hierarchy and would, indeed, soon dominate the papacy itself."²⁵ The Roman Inquisition banned the Talmud in 1553, and the next year Pope Julius III implemented the ban with the bull *Cum sicut nuper*, calling for the burning of whatever Talmud copies could be found. This set off a flurry of Talmud burning in Italy, but the episode lasted only a few years and then subsided.

Much more lasting was the establishment of ghettos. In Rome itself this was the work of Pope Paul IV, although he did not use the word. On July 17 of 1555 Paul issued the bull, *Cum nimis absurdum*, which imposed a host of new regulations upon the Judaeans of Rome and the Papal States of Italy. This *bolla* began with a long concessive clause:

Inasmuch as it is utterly absurd and inconvenient that Judaeans, whom their own fault has subjected to eternal slavery, have - thanks to the fact that Christian piety makes a place for them and permits their cohabitation - been so ungrateful to Christians that instead of thanks they give them insults, and that instead of the servitude owed to Christians they attempt to establish domination over them..., [we have determined]....²⁶

There follows in the *bolla* a list of restrictions, applicable to all Judaeans in Rome and the other cities of the Papal States. Judaeans are to live only in a stipulated area of each city. The traditional Jewish quarter of medieval Rome, on the east bank of the Tiber, is to be reduced to a smaller area, walled and subject to a curfew. All houses and buildings that Judaeans own in other parts of Rome they are to sell immediately to Christians. Judaeans are not to play with or eat with Christians. Judaeans are not to employ Christians as wetnurses, maids, or servants of any kind. So that they may be readily recognized when going about elsewhere in the city all Jewish men are to wear yellow hats, and women some readily visible yellow cloths. No Jewish doctor is to attend a Christian. No Judaeans shall work on Sundays or on any Christian holy day. Jewish merchants are not to deal in grain or in any other commodity "necessary for human use." No Christian pauper is ever to address a Judaeans as "Sir."

In this way began the ghettoizing of Judaeans in Italy. Only in Livorno (Leghorn) on the coast of northwestern Italy were Judaeans free to live among the Gentiles. It must be said that Judaeans at least were allowed to live in the Papal States, while from England, Spain, Portugal and much of France they were entirely excluded. The restrictions upon Judaeans in Italy, however, deepened the divide between them and Christians and turned the Jewish minority into an underclass. By the eighteenth century "the Jews of the ghetto had significantly retreated from advances in secular learning...; they had developed a Judaeo-Roman mode of speech and become outwardly distinct through the obligation to wear the *biretta gialla* or *rossa*."²⁷ The restrictions were not lifted until 1870, when the Papal States were incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy and the Roman ghetto was abolished.

The separation imposed by Christian governments was not entirely deplored by Judaeans. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religion was still the center of life. This was just as much the case for Judaeans as it was for Muslims and Christians. Because secularism had not yet begun to provide an alternative to religion, whatever confirmed your religious beliefs and facilitated your religious practices could be seen as a good thing, however burdensome it might otherwise have been. Although the new living conditions were humiliating for Judaeans, and resented on that account, separation from Gentiles was in itself not something to be regretted. By the middle of the seventeenth century, as the "Scientific Revolution" gained momentum in western Christendom, many rabbis feared that the new science and its applications would undermine their congregations' devotion to Judaism. From the standpoint of these rabbis, physical separation from Gentile society helped to defend and preserve the religious tradition. For the individual Judaeans there was always the invitation, sometimes by force, to enter Gentile society by conversion to the established church, but in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy (in contrast to eighteenth-century England) the invitation was rarely accepted: "in the Jewish consciousness, the alternative of thoroughgoing separation was the preferable one."²⁸

Judaism in Poland-Lithuania

Although in western Europe the situation of Judaeans worsened in the period from 1500 to 1648, Judaeans in eastern Europe fared quite well. Poland, or more precisely the vast Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (stretching almost from the Baltic to the Black Sea), welcomed the immigration of many Judaeans from Spain, Portugal, Italy and Germany. The Jewish minority in Poland-Lithuania greatly increased in size during the first half of the sixteenth century, and it is likely that by 1600 more Judaeans were living in lands controlled by Poland-Lithuania than in all the rest of Christendom. No reliable figures are available for our period. By the nineteenth century much of the land in question lay within the Pale of Settlement ruled by the Russian tsar. In 1897 Tsar Nicholas II ordered the only census ever conducted in the Russian empire, and the census found that at that time 5,063,156 of Nicholas' subjects spoke Yiddish as their first language. In the 1640s the number of Judaeans was certainly much lower, but how much lower is unknown. It is possible that at that time several hundred thousand Judaeans lived in Ukraine alone, and that in all of the lands ruled by the commonwealth the Jewish population was well over a million.²⁹

The immigration of Judaeans to Poland-Lithuania was due in part to the protections promised by the rulers of the kingdom. In 1503 King Alexander had appointed Rabbi Jakob Polak as spokesman for all Judaeans in the realm. This "Chief Rabbinate" was in some ways similar to the millet system of the Ottoman empire, and gave to Judaism in Poland a centrality and an influence that it did not have elsewhere. Judaeans in the monarchy, and later in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, enjoyed most of the same legal rights given to Christian city-dwellers (a relatively small portion of the population), and many more than were assigned to the numerous Christian peasants of the countryside.³⁰ These rights continued when the monarchy was transformed into the Commonwealth. After "the Deluge," the series of disasters that in 1648 began to overwhelm the Commonwealth, the Judaeans were occasionally threatened with expulsion from Poland-Lithuania. But - except disastrously in Ukraine - the threats did not materialize and the Jewish population remained very high until the Holocaust in the twentieth century.

The surge of Kabbalah

The mystical enterprise known as Kabbalah, which has greatly enhanced Judaism in the last eight hundred years, was in large part initiated by Jewish writers in medieval Spain and Provence. As part of the Dar al-Islam, Umayyad and Moorish Spain was home to thousands of Sufis. Their Islamic form of mysticism contributed much to the Jewish mysticism practiced by the disciples of Abraham Abulafia, who can be called the father of ecstatic Kabbalah. Especially important for the origins of Kabbalah was the massive *Zohar* that Moses de León "discovered" late in the thirteenth century. For the next two hundred years, however, the mystical texts were seldom read outside of Spain. The revival of Neoplatonism stirred a slight interest in Kabbalah in Renaissance Christendom: we have seen that although the humanist Pico della Mirandola arranged for the translation of Kabbalah texts into Latin, the translations were not published.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Kabbalists greatly elaborated their subject, and brought it to the forefront in Jewish communities throughout Europe and the Middle East. The growing interest in Kabbalah was mostly the result of its content. First of all, the *Sefer yetzirah*, the *Sefer ha-bahir* and the *Zohar* presented a description of God, and of God's relationship to the material world and to humankind, that - despite or perhaps because of the esoteric concepts and terminology with which it was expressed - had considerably more appeal for sixteenth-century Jewish scholars than did either the legal discussions that filled the Talmud or the literal texts of Genesis, Exodus and the rest of the Hebrew Bible.³¹ The ten *sefirot* (emanations) of God were of intense interest for readers of the Kabbalah. The Kabbalist strove to understand the nature of each *sefirah*, and the interplay of the ten. This was what its devotees regarded as theosophy, or knowledge of God.

Secondly, Kabbalah addressed the longings of all Judaeans for a Messiah, and claimed the means with which to hasten the Messianic Age. The Kabbalah texts assumed that the world - the *shechinah* - is entirely separated from God: the *Ein sof*, or "the Infinite." Nevertheless, from the *Ein sof*, or God, emanate the ten *sefirot*, and through these emanations it is possible for a Judaeans to make contact with God (the operation is not possible for a Gentile, whose soul lacks the necessary equipment). In late medieval times many Judaeans regretted that God was no longer intervening in human events so conspicuously as he had done in Biblical times. For this the Kabbalah offered an explanation: Judaeans had forgotten about the *sefirot* and therefore had lost contact with the *Ein sof*. The dissemination of the Kabbalah now made it possible for Judaeans once again to tap into the divine power. By doing so, Kabbalists themselves would be able to speed the coming of the Messiah.³²

Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, Kabbalah texts were prized by Judaeans who may not have been theosophically inclined but sought the same kind of ecstasy that Sufi dervishes attained in Islamic communities. As they recited Kabbalistic mantras, or meditative texts from the *Sefer yetzirah*, the *Zohar* and the *Sefer ha-bahir*, Jewish mystics perceived themselves united to God. In this *unio mystica*, or out-of-body state, the ecstatic Kabbalists felt themselves capable of prophesy and of performing magic or even miracles. The handbooks that had been written in the thirteenth century by Abraham Abulafia were essential for the thousands of Judaeans interested in this "practical" side of Kabbalah.

In many ways Kabbalah differed profoundly from traditional rabbinic Judaism, which had insisted upon God's continuing protection of, and grace to, the corporate entity of Israel. The Covenant, which Adonai had originally made with Abraham and had repeated with Moses and with David, had assured the descendants of Jacob (Israel) that Adonai would come to their aid when they were in danger. The Kabbalist writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were more pessimistic about the corporate community. They essentially conceded that Israel no longer existed and that the Covenant was no longer operative. Only when the Messiah appeared would Israel be restored, and would the natural world be transformed. The Messiah's appearance would not be hastened, however, by traditional obedience to the Torah, but rather through the magical manipulations provided by Kabbalah.³³ In the meantime, while corporate Israel languished, the individual Judaeans could by Kabbalistic means experience a sublime union

with God.

Doctrines and practices so different from Judaic tradition would ordinarily have been seen at least as a radical reformation of Judaism, if not as an entirely new religion. The genius of the medieval Kabbalist writers was to mask the novelty of their ideas and activities by presenting them as “the secret meaning” of the most ancient Hebrew texts: the book of Genesis, and the rest of the Tanakh. The Kabbalists claimed that the secret meaning of the Tanakh had been known all along: Moses himself, who wrote the Pentateuch, had received instructions from God, and subsequently the secrets were transmitted orally through the generations. Thus the Kabbalists retrojected their own beliefs and practices to the very beginnings of Judaism. And with few exceptions the rabbis themselves became enthusiastic promoters of Kabbalah.

Factors in the growing importance of Kabbalah

Aside from its intrinsic appeal, other factors help to explain the vogue for Kabbalah after 1500. One of these was demographic. The expulsion of Judaeans from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492, sent tens of thousands of refugees eastward, and the refugees took with them copies of various Kabbalistic texts. The *Zohar* began to circulate among Jewish readers in Italy. The Ottoman empire especially welcomed Jewish immigrants, several of whom were instrumental in elaborating, publicizing and teaching Kabbalah in Palestine.

The tragedy of the 1492 expulsion was in itself a stimulus for interest in the Kabbalah. Such suffering, inflicted on virtually all Sephardic Judaeans, needed an explanation that traditional Talmudic Judaism was unable to provide. Kabbalists in the early sixteenth century offered an apocalyptic interpretation of the catastrophe, promising that it was the prelude to the Messianic Age. Reassuring was the Kabbalah’s promise that when that age came God would wipe out the Gentiles.³⁴ Kabbalah’s description of the Gentile soul as intrinsically defective was exactly suited to Judaeans’ beliefs in the sixteenth century, when either expulsion from a kingdom or confinement to a ghetto was the typical sentence that Gentiles pronounced upon Judaeans.

Another major contributor to the surge of Kabbalah was the printing of Kabbalah texts. The printing of books in Hebrew type began in southern Italy in 1475 and soon became widespread. The trade flourished especially in northern Italy. Among the most successful printers with Hebrew type were Daniel Bomberg (a Christian) in Venice, and the Soncino family. Joseph of Soncino, a town just north of Cremona, printed a text of a Talmud tractate (*Berakoth*) in 1484, and then published a Hebrew text of the Tanakh, pointed with vowels. On Joseph’s death management of his “Soncino press” was taken over by his nephew, Gershon. By the middle of the sixteenth century more than a dozen Italian cities boasted Hebrew print shops. With such opportunities available, and with a sizeable reading public eager for Hebrew books, students of the Kabbalah found printers for their texts. The first edition of the *Zohar* was published in three volumes at Mantua from 1558 to 1560. The languages of the *Zohar* were medieval Hebrew and a Spanish Aramaic, both of which were set in Ashkenazi Hebrew type by the Jewish printers in Mantua. In 1562 the *editio princeps* of the much shorter *Sefer yetzirah* followed, again in Mantua. The *Sefer ha-bahir* was first printed in 1651, at Amsterdam.

Finally, Kabbalah fascinated Jewish scholars in part because they had few other outlets for their intellectual curiosity. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Christian scholars regularly studied and taught in universities, but universities were closed to Judaeans. Several Jewish experts in Biblical Hebrew were invited to teach in universities, but only if they first converted to Christianity. Restrictions on intellectual activity also came from inside the Jewish communities. As shown by the experience of Baruch Spinoza in the 1650s, a Judaeans who strayed from traditional religious beliefs and practices was likely to be banished from the synagogue. Because the books of Kabbalah were believed to have been revealed by Abraham, Moses, Elijah, or angels in ancient times, almost all Judaeans deemed them a proper subject for scholarly inquiry and speculation.

An early episode of Kabbalist Messianism: David Reubeni and Shlomo Molkho

An episode connected with the surge of Kabbalah was the strange partnership of David Reubeni and Shlomo Molkho.³⁵ Toward the end of the fifteenth century a son was born to Marrano parents in Portugal, and they gave him the Christian name, Diogo Pires. Diogo was raised as a Christian and as a young man he secured employment as a scribe at the royal court of King John III. Ca. 1525, however, Diogo's life changed dramatically, as he came under the spell of a visitor named David Reubeni (both "David" and "Reubeni" seem to have been assumed names, and the visitor's actual names are unknown).³⁶ Reubeni may have been raised as a Muslim. Arabic was his first language, and he was supposedly born in the Khaybar oasis. By 1525, however, he was not only a Judaeans named David Reubeni, but was being acclaimed as a potential Jewish messiah. Reubeni insisted that his brother was the king of a great Judaeans community, or tribe, beyond the Habur river, possibly in India. The great project to which Reubeni devoted his energies was to unite the forces of Europe's Christian kings with those of his supposed brother, and then to wrest Palestine back from the Ottomans who had recently conquered it. Once that holy land had been recovered, he would there restore the kingdom of Judaea - in abeyance for almost fifteen hundred years - and rule over it. Reubeni's dream was probably rooted in the fact that after their expulsion from Spain many Judaeans had fled to Palestine and were there establishing Jewish communities.

It was on his mission to Portugal, where he hoped to bring King John III into his project, that David Reubeni met Diogo Pires. Captivated by Reubeni, Diogo either converted or reverted to Judaism. He circumcised himself, losing much blood in the process but healing quickly, and took the Jewish name "Shlomo Molkho." Because the conversion angered King John and the Portuguese Christians, Reubeni condemned it and distanced himself from "Molkho." After the two had parted ways, Reubeni continued trying to drum up support, in the courts of European kings, for the liberation of Palestine. Molkho went to the Ottoman east, where he devoted himself to the study of Kabbalah. At Thessalonika in 1529 he arranged for the printing of his own Kabbalistic book, the *Sefer ha-Mefo'ar*. Thus fortified, he presented himself as a prophet. Molkho and his followers, together with Reubeni and many Catholics, believed that he prophesied the sack of Rome in 1529 and an earthquake in Portugal.³⁷ Acknowledged as a prophet, Molkho was given protection (as was Reubeni) by Pope Clement VII, and Molkho himself was regarded by some Judaeans as the long-awaited Messiah.

In 1530, however, Inquisition officials arrested Molkho in Rome and sentenced him to be burned at the stake. In this first emergency Clement himself intervened and instructed the inquisitors to burn another man in Molkho's place. Two years later Molkho was not so fortunate. In 1532 Molkho and Reubeni, together again, went to Regensburg to present to Emperor Charles their project of conquering Palestine. Divine help, they informed the emperor, was assured against the Muslim Ottomans. But Charles, who already had seen plenty of Suleiman the Magnificent, would have nothing to do with the project and had Molkho burned at the stake. The emperor sent Reubeni in chains to Spain, where he was burned at the stake ca. 1537. The precise grounds for the sentences are unclear, but Harris Lenowitz suggests that "both were probably condemned on charges of having persuaded conversos to return to Judaism."³⁸

The Safed school of Kabbalah

The center of both speculative and ecstatic (or practical) Kabbalah was the town of Safed, in the heights of Galilee. Along with the rest of the Levant, Galilee had passed into the hands of the Ottoman sultan in 1517. Taking advantage of the welcoming policies first of Selim and then of his son, Suleiman the Magnificent, many Jewish exiles from Spain finally settled in Palestine. At Safed the exiles established a rabbinical court and school, a revival, as it were, of the rabbinic academy that had been established in Galilee after the Bar Kochba revolt. By the 1570s a Hebrew printing press was operating in Safed, for the publishing of works by the city's famous rabbis. This was one of the first printing presses in the Ottoman empire. The printer, Eliezer Ashkenazi, received permission from the Muslim authorities to print books, so long as they were in Hebrew letters (sixteenth-century interpretations of Sharia did not permit printing in the Arabic alphabet). The Kabbalists of Safed created what is sometimes called "modern Kabbalah" (to distinguish it from medieval Kabbalah).

A challenge for the sixteenth-century scholars of Kabbalah was the disharmony between the *Zohar* and the several other texts of the Kabbalah, as well as the obscurity of all of them. Each of the texts was regarded as divine revelations, made in antiquity and recently brought to light, and therefore a repository of profound truths. Because the texts were not readily understandable, however, and seemed to contradict each other, an urgent task was to interpret, explicate and reconcile them. The Kabbalists at Safed did just that, and so provided guidance to theosophy. They wrestled especially with the problem of evil, trying to explain its presence in a world supposed to be good. In the process they deepened and extended Kabbalah, their own voluminous writings being held in almost the same esteem as that enjoyed by the medieval pseudepigrapha. Thus was Judaism enriched by contemporary thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, even while the Kabbalists responsible for the enrichment claimed merely to be salvaging and expounding ancient wisdom.

An early luminary of the Safed school was Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575). Born in Toledo, Karo arrived in Palestine in the 1530s and there was honored as both a Talmudist and a Kabbalist. As a scholar he completed a massive study of, and commentary upon, Jewish law. His work remains authoritative in Judaism (the entry for Joseph Caro in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* describes him as "the last great codifier of rabbinical Judaism"). In his huge *Beth*

Yosef, published in four parts in the 1550s, Karo surveyed the conflicting opinions of authorities on rabbinic law from the Talmuds to his own time, and he set out what he considered to be the correct understanding of each law. In 1565 Karo published his *Shulchan Aruch*, an abridgement of the larger work.

In his own day Karo gained wide notoriety as a Kabbalist. He was believed by his students (and probably believed himself) to be the regular recipient of divine visions, and the Judaeans of Safed regarded him as a prophet. In a diary kept over the course of fifty years, the *Maggid mesharim* ("Preacher of Righteousness"), Karo recorded the admonitions and counseling that he claimed to be receiving from a divine source: an angel who was a personification of the Mishnah itself. Karo's admirers also credited him with miracles, some during his lifetime and some posthumous.

Of more importance than Karo for the new prominence of Kabbalah was his student, Rabbi Moshe Kordovero (1522-70), whose acronym is "the Ramak." Kordovero's father evidently came to Palestine from Cordova, hence the surname. The relatively short *Pardes rimonim* ("Garden of Pomegranates"), which Kordovero wrote in Hebrew in 1548, greatly facilitated the spread of Kabbalah. Many times larger than the *Pardes* was Kordovero's *Ohr Yakar*. In both works the Ramak's project was to reconcile and unify the Kabbalah texts and teachings that he inherited.

Most important of all for the creation of modern Kabbalah was Yitzhak, or Isaac, Luria (1534-72). Whereas the Ramak harmonized existing Kabbalah doctrines, Luria added a great deal to them. Already as a young man Luria had a wide reputation as a teacher of Kabbalah. The *Zohar* was not printed until 1560, but long before that Luria had acquired a manuscript copy of it. He spent years in seclusion in Egypt, studying the wondrous text. After this immersion Luria claimed that in his sleep he was regularly in conversation with Elijah and other prophets of the past. With such mentors he was now in a position to explain the *Zohar*. From Egypt he went first to Jerusalem and then, in 1570, to Sefed. There Luria led a circle of Kabbalists, which included the aged Yosef Karo.

Like other Kabbalists, Luria believed that God - the *Ein sof*, or "The Infinite" - and the material world - the *shechinah* - were separated and needed to be reunited. In Hellenistic and Roman Judaea most people still believed that Adonai was regularly active in the world, exhibiting his miraculous power. By late medieval times most Judaeans sensed that God no longer intervened in this world, and the Kabbalists offered an explanation why this was so: Kabbalah, which in Biblical times had been well known but which since then had been widely ignored - was the essential means for tapping into God's power, and the Judaeans soul was uniquely equipped for the task. If Judaeans generally harnessed the potential of Kabbalah, the Messiah would appear and the world would be transformed.

Having through Kabbalah learned how to tap into the divine power, Isaac Luria claimed to work magic or miracles. After his death at a relatively young age, he was known as "the Arizal" (an acronym for "Godly Rabbi Isaac of Blessed Memory"), or as "the Holy Ari." Although he had written nothing, one of his disciples - Hayyim Vital - wrote a massive work, the

Etz hayyim, in which (so he said) were contained all the teachings of the Arizal. These pertained both to speculative and to practical Kabbalah, the latter regarded as useful for working magic or miracles. Hayyim himself was celebrated as a miracle-worker and as a regular correspondent with the spirits of long-dead spiritualists. For many years the *Etz hayyim* (Hebrew for “Tree of Life”) circulated in manuscript copies as a clandestine text, and when it was eventually printed and published it filled six volumes.³⁹ Many Kabbalists today have almost as much reverence for the *Etz hayyim* as they have for the *Zohar* and other earlier texts.

After Hayyim Vital’s death in 1620 the Safed school of Kabbalah began to fade in importance. Shmuel ben Hayyim Vital, whose name proclaimed him to be the son of Hayyim, was also a devoted Kabbalist and wrote extensively on it, but most of what Shmuel wrote circulated narrowly in manuscript form and was never published. His huge *Shemoneh she’arim* (“Eight Gates”), which he wrote ca. 1660, had a much wider circulation within Kabbalist circles, although because of its length its *editio princeps* was delayed until late in the nineteenth century. The appeal of the *Shemoneh she’arim*, which expands on the Lurianic Kabbalah of the *Etz hayyim*, rested on the belief that it was a faithful rendering of the Arizal’s teachings. Shmuel claimed that he based his text on a manuscript that he had exhumed from his purported father’s grave, a dream having instructed him to do so.

The limited skepticism about Kabbalah

By the seventeenth century Jewish rabbis, for the most part, accepted Kabbalah as a divine revelation. It provided, so they supposed, the secret meaning of the Tanakh. They believed that it had been written down (by the students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai) only a few decades after Titus destroyed the Jerusalem temple, and that until then it had been passed down orally by an inner circle ever since God had confided it to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

In the seventeenth century one of the very few prominent rabbis who objected to the Kabbalistic enterprise, and especially to Yitzhak Nuria’s elaboration of it, was Leone Modena. Modena (1571-1648) was a writer before he was a rabbi. A Venetian, his surname came from the city of Modena, where his ancestors had lived. By the time (1609) that Modena was ordained to the rabbinate he was already a middle-aged man and was quite widely known as the author of Hebrew books. His first published work (1594) had been a collection of riddles and medical remedies. He was regarded as something of an eccentric, in part because of his addiction to gambling.

Toward the end of his life Leone Modena wrote a book denouncing Lurianic Kabbalah and attempting to show that the *Zohar*, the Kabbalists’ main text, had been composed not in ancient Judaea but in late medieval Spain.⁴⁰ Modena’s polemic was his *Ari nohem*, written in 1639. In this book Modena portrayed Kabbalah as a complex of “lies and falsehoods.”⁴¹ For the next two hundred years, however, Modena’s book circulated only in manuscript form: the Hebrew text of the *Ari nohem* was not printed until 1840, when it was published at Leipzig by K. Tauchnitz. By the middle of the nineteenth century, as Reform Judaism flourished, Kabbalah was disdained by Jewish intellectuals and Leone Modena and his book enjoyed a belated celebrity. In the seventeenth century, as in most of the sixteenth, Kabbalah was as central to

Judaism as were the Tanakh and Talmud, and all but a few rabbis resented Modena's skepticism.

Even a few Christian Hebraists were attracted to the *Zohar*. In 1684 Christian Knorr von Rosenroth published an excellent edition - in the original Hebrew and Aramaic - of the *Zohar*. Von Rosenroth also translated part of the *Zohar* into Latin, as *Kabbala denudata, sive doctrina Hebraeorum transcendentalis et metaphysica atque theologia* (two volumes, 1677-78). In von Rosenroth's distorted view, the *Zohar* was indeed an ancient text: it provided a key to the real meaning of the Old Testament, and confirmed that the Old Testament recognized the Trinity and prophesied the coming of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the seventeenth century the usual position of even educated Judaeans was to defend the Kabbalah as an authentic element of ancient Judaism. Attempts were in fact made to show that Kabbalah was confirmed by recent scientific discoveries. A case in point is Joseph Delmedigo, a distinguished physician and a student of the natural sciences as well as a rabbi. In 1629 Delmedigo published his *Sefer elim*, a wide-ranging book that described the advancements in science that had recently been made, with special emphasis upon the Copernican theory and Galileo's discoveries. In his correspondence, however, Delmedigo defended the Kabbalah, arguing that it is not reflected in the Talmud or in the writings of the Geonim only because those texts were restricted to legal matters and were therefore not obliged to discuss the "spiritual" meaning of the Tanakh. Although he was abreast of the new sciences of his day, Delmedigo was eager "to establish bridges between them and kabbalistic theosophy."⁴² Skepticism about Kabbalah remained quite rare until the middle of the eighteenth century,⁴³ and even then was limited to educated Judaeans in western Europe (for Judaeans in eastern Europe Kabbalah was arguably just as important in the early twentieth century as it had been in the seventeenth). Academic study of Kabbalah began only with Gershom Scholem, whose publications began in the 1920s and culminated in 1962 with his *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala*.⁴⁴

The Ottoman empire after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent

In the court of Suleiman the Magnificent his concubine - and eventually his favorite wife - Hürrem Sultan had most influence. As a child in Ukraine - possibly the daughter of an Orthodox Christian priest - she was enslaved and sent to Suleiman's palace. She bore to Suleiman one son, who was to become Selim II, and two daughters. Suleiman ordered the execution of his two oldest sons, perhaps on false testimony, and then designated Selim as his successor. The actual government of the empire during Suleiman's last five years was in the hands of his Grand Vizier, Mehmed Sokollu, who continued to run things after Suleiman's death and Selim's succession. Selim grew up in the harem, with no experience in government, and his sultanate (1566-74) is widely seen as beginning the decline of the Ottoman empire. He indulged his appetites while Mehmed Sokollu attended to the administration of the empire. Selim was in turn succeeded by his oldest son, Murad III, who for his education had been sent to govern the province of Manīsa (ancient Magnesia) in western Anatolia. At his accession Murad ordered that his five half-brothers be killed, and throughout his sultanate (1574-1595) he was free to imitate the decadence of his father. He maintained a harem of over a thousand women and spent most of his energies among them.

The *kadinlar saltanati* (sultanate of the kadins)

The wars between Catholic and Protestant rulers in central Europe were to some extent made possible by the passivity of the Ottoman empire after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent. In contrast to Suleiman himself and most of his predecessors, his successors seldom posed a threat to the Christian kings of Europe. They were therefore free either to promote or to oppose the Counter-Reformation on the battlefield, as they did throughout the Thirty Years War (1618-1648).

The passivity of the later sultanate was in part the result of Ottoman traditions. Succession to the Ottoman throne had traditionally been decided by fratricide, but a consequence of "succession by fratricide" was that the Ottoman family was continually reduced to a single thin line. This was not a problem when the new sultan either had already produced heirs or had plenty of time during his sultanate to sire them. But when a young sultan died after only a short reign, he was survived by only a few sons, none of whom had reached adulthood. This happened in 1617, when Ahmed I died a natural death at the age of only twenty-seven. Although all the rest of Ahmed's half-brothers had been killed at his accession, one of them - Mustafa - had been so obviously unqualified for the sultanate that Ahmed had allowed him to live. The result was that at Ahmed's premature death the mentally retarded Mustafa I was proclaimed sultan. Mustafa was clearly not up to the task and a year later was deposed and replaced by Ahmed's son, Osman II, who was only fourteen. Four years later Osman was killed in a palace coup by the janissaries, who brought back his uncle, the retarded Mustafa, for a second try. A year later, in 1623, Mustafa was again deposed.

At this point the only Ottoman males available to replace Mustafa were two young boys, Murad and Ibrahim, both of whom Ahmed had begotten from a Greek *kadin*, Kösem Sultan. Murad was sadistic and Ibrahim was mentally deranged (allegedly Ibrahim had since infancy been kept in a cage in the Topkapi palace). Murad IV was only eleven when he came to the throne in 1623. For the next five years actual power was in the hands of his mother, Kösem Sultan, who was now the *valide sultan*. In 1640, as Murad lay dying of a liver disease and was contemplating the empire's falling into the hands of his mad brother (none of Murad's sons survived infancy), he ordered that Ibrahim be slain. That would have meant the end of the Ottoman dynasty, and more importantly for Kösem Sultan would have meant the end of her role as *valide sultan*. She therefore countermanded the instructions of the dying Murad, and set up his insane brother as his successor. So it happened that from 1640 until 1648 Ibrahim was the nominal ruler of the Ottoman empire, although actual power was again in the hands of Kösem Sultan. In 1648 the Grand Mufti of Constantinople managed to depose Ibrahim and, a week later, to kill him, the charge being that Ibrahim planned to drown all 280 women of his harem. Kösem at this point arranged the succession of Ibrahim's six-year-old son, Mehmed. For the first three years of Mehmed IV's nominal reign as sultan his grandmother continued to rule, but in 1651 Mehmed's mother, Turhan Hatice Sultan (a Russian woman) arranged for her mother-in-law to be strangled. Turhan Hatice Sultan then took over not only as *valide sultan* but as the formal ruler of the empire, a position she held until 1658, when Mehmed was old enough to exercise power for himself.

The Ottoman dynasty's close brush with extinction demonstrated the dangers of

“succession by fratricide.” When the child Mehmed IV (1648-87) was placed on the throne his brothers were allowed to live (eventually one of them, Suleiman II, succeeded him).

Administrative experience was no longer necessary for a sultan, since effective government was now entrusted to the Grand Viziers. In 1638 Murad IV had led the Ottoman army against the Safavids of Persia and had captured Baghdad from them, but that was the last time that a sultan personally commanded the army in battle.

The sultan and his subjects

For a long time the Ottoman empire was a relatively benign regime. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as the kings of Christian Europe were burning heretics at the stake, the sultans saw to it that the various religions in their empire were protected from each other. More than that, at various times the sultans forbade the clerics of one millet to proselytize among the members of another: such competition between millets would not have been conducive to the peace and harmony that the sultans desired.

The administration of justice depended also upon the millet. For Muslims, the court of the local qadi dispensed justice according to Sharia, although tempered by the sultans' *qanun* law. Orthodox Christians often made use of a qadi's court, but when judging between them the qadi did not apply Sharia law. Orthodox Christians who engaged in litigation against each other could also have their case heard by a Christian judge, who was ultimately responsible to the patriarch in Constantinople. The sultan's Jewish subjects usually resorted to their own *bet din*, which at the local level was typically composed of three rabbis or of a rabbi and two laymen deemed knowledgeable in the Torah and *halakhoth*.⁴⁵

Although the various Christian millets had national names, they were not national communities. The Greek (“Rum”) millet, for all Orthodox Christians, included as many Slavic speakers as Greek speakers, and in the “Armenian” millet were not only Armenians but also Syriac Jacobites and other Monophysite Christian communities. The sultan's subjects identified themselves not by nationality but by religion and locality. Until the nationalist enthusiasm of the nineteenth century few people in the empire thought of themselves as “Serbs,” “Arabs,” or even “Turks.”⁴⁶ Many of the sultans' subjects were fluent in Turkish and most of them knew something of the language, but Turkish was only a medium of communication and not an expression of nationality. Nor were the Serbian, Greek and Arabic languages yet vehicles of nationalism. Thus people in the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were relatively safe from both religious and nationalist violence.

The realm of the sultans was generally called “Turkey” by western Europeans, but formally it was “the state of the house of Osman” (the Devlet-i Âliye-yi Osmâniyye). It was a regime of material self-interest, designed to increase the wealth and power of the Ottoman dynasty, but taxes were not very burdensome and some of the empire's great wealth filtered back to the subject populations. The regional governors were encouraged to follow enlightened policies in dealing with the governed. Although prone to favoritism and corruption, the empire was spared the execution of heretics and witches and the devastation by religious warfare that characterized the Christian kingdoms of western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. But while western Europe - after the Peace of Westphalia - was moving toward modern civilization, the Ottoman empire was anchored in religion and the past.

1. Arnakis 1952, p. 246.

2. The Ottoman sultan still claimed Egypt as his own when Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798. De facto, the Mamluks then ruled Egypt, and continued to do so after Napoleon's departure. In 1840, at the Convention of London for the Pacification of the Levant, the Ottomans were forced to recognize Muhammad Ali as the ruler of Egypt, thereby effectively surrendering their claim to rule Egypt.

3. On the Naqshbandiyya in the period 1450-1700 see Le Gall 2005.

4. For a discussion of Sufism in the Balkans see Nathalie Clayer, "Tasavvuf, Music, and Social Change in the Balkans," pp. 137-148, in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and the Middle East* (Edited by Anders Hammarlund *et al.* Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2001). The word *tasawuf* is Arabic for "Sufism." On the prevalence of Sufism in Albania see Clayer p. 140. For a broader picture of Sufism outside the Dar al-Islam see Westerlund 2004.

5. On all this see Albert Lord, "Avdo Međedović: Guslar," in *Journal of American Folklore* 69 (1956), p. 320 -330. Lord was Parry's assistant, and continued Parry's work on the South Slavic bards. Lord's article is in effect an obituary for Avdo Međedović, who had died in 1955 at the approximate age of 85. Avdo was born and raised in the village of Obrov, in the Novi Pazar sanjak of the Ottoman empire. As his given name - Abdullah - indicates, he was a nominal Muslim. Far back his family had been Orthodox Christian, but Avdo did not know how or when the conversion to Islam had occurred. He sang with pride of the Ottoman empire, for which Bosnia had supplied many brave soldiers.

6. As quoted by Lewis 2002, p. 118. On pp. 138-150 Lewis has an excellent discussion of change and the resistance to change in the Ottoman empire.

7. See again Lewis 2002, p. 118. Clocks and watches, most of them made in Europe, were common in the Ottoman empire by the end of the sixteenth century, but public clocks were rare. See Lewis 2002, pp. 123-25.

8. Lewis 2002, pp. 142-44.

9. According to Köprülü 2006, p. 302, no 14th- or 15th- cent mss of the *Dīwān* are known.

10. The Pandidakterion in Constantinople, founded by Theodosios II in 425, was hardly a university, and in any case it did not last long. Little is known about this Pandidakterion, beyond its establishment by Theodosius. Its main focus seems to have been grammar and rhetoric. According to C. N. Constantinides, "Teachers and Students of Rhetoric in the Late Byzantine

Period,” p. 41, in Elizabeth Jeffrys, editor, *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2003), Theodosius supported eight teachers of rhetoric in Greek and three in Latin. The Pandidakterion was evidently intended to educate the empire’s civil servants and ecclesiastical officers.

11. Arnakis 1952, p. 235.

12. In 972 King Geza, a pagan who had been courted by both Catholic and Orthodox missionaries, was baptized into the Catholic church. A nominal convert, he made little effort to promote Christianity in his realm. Geza’s son, Stephen, was a committed Christian and saw to it that his Hungarian subjects were converted and baptized into the Catholic church.

13. Martynas Mazvydas’ Lutheran catechism, published in Königsberg in 1547, was the first book printed in in the Lithuanian language. Mazvydas also published a few pamphlets, which included excerpts from the Gospels, but Lithuanians generally remained Roman Catholic. A complete Lithuanian Bible was not published until 1735.

14. On the anti-trinitarians (Socinians) see Mulsow 2005.

15. On which see D. P. Walker’s *Ancient Theology* (Walker 1972).

16. On the Anabaptist and Socinian positions on Hell and physical resurrection, and on the Jewish contribution to these movements, see Walker 1964, pp. 73 ff.

17. Although Hell appears in the synoptic Gospels and was very important to the author of Revelation, it scarcely appears in the Old Testament, the letters of Paul, and the Gospel of John.

18. See Magda Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: a Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Although Teter’s focus is on the Catholic church’s relationship to Judaeans, she also deals with the church’s confrontation with Protestants and Socinians.

19. The languages called Church Slavonic are a substantially revised form of OCS. Words in OCS that had dropped out of usage were replaced by the vernacular equivalents in Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian (and “Macedonian”, which is a regional dialect of Bulgarian). But the grammatical structure of OCS was retained in the several CS dialects.

20. In Russian Orthodox thinking, Rome had been the seat of Christianity until Constantine the Great moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople. For the next eleven hundred years Constantinople was “the second Rome,” and with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans a third Rome was required.

21. Cracraft 1971, p. 64.

22. Dubnow 1918, p. 117.

23. Dubnow 1918, p. 117.

24. The etymology has been the subject of some scholarly debate; see DeBenedetti-Stow 1992, p. 79.

25. Stow 1992B, p. 260.

26. Cum nimis absurdum et inconueniens existat ut iudaei, quos propria culpa perpetuae seruituti submisit, sub praetextu quod pietas christiana illos receptet et eorum cohabitationem sustineat, christianis adeo sint ingrati, ut, eis pro gratia, contumelian reddant, et in eos, pro seruitute, quam illis debent, dominatum vindicare procurent: nos....

27. Stow 1992B, p. 274.

28. Stow 1992B, p. 274.

29. Subtelny 2000, p. 108, estimates that “[t]here were already about 120,000 Jews in all of Ukraine in the early 17th century.” Subtelny also estimates that at that time the total population of Ukraine was slightly below two million, so Judaeans would have accounted for some 6% of the population. The entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had a population of more than 11 million in the early 17th century. It is nevertheless possible that the number of Judaeans in Ukraine in the early 17th century was far higher than 120,000. The Hebrew chronicles written in the 1650s state that 500,000 Judaeans were killed in the Khmelnytsky Uprising. Although that figure is a gross exaggeration, as we shall see in Chapter 31, the authors of the chronicles evidently believed that prior to the uprising half a million Judaeans were living in Ukraine. Today the republic of Ukraine has a population of 45 million, of which no more than 100,000 (that is, ca. 0.2%) are Jewish.

30. See Weinryb 1972, p. 37: p. 37: “Many of the kings’ decrees in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emphasized that Jews, paying the same taxes as burghers, were entitled to the same rights, meaning equal residence, trade, and occupational rights.”

31. On Kabbalistic theosophy see Idel 1988a, pp. 112 ff.

32. In her analysis of the growing spirituality of Judaism in the sixteenth century Rachel Elijor concluded “that this spiritualization was motivated by intense messianic expectation and was founded on the vital connection as formulated in *Tikkuney Zohar*, between the revelation of the kabbalistic secrets through the propagation of the *Zohar* and the attempts to hasten the coming of the Messiah” (Elijor 1986, p. 37).

33. On the close ties between Kabbalah and Messianism see Idel 1998.

34. In his *Zohar* Moses of Leon occasionally told his readers that God would exterminate the “Amelekites,” a name which medieval Jewish writers used synonymously with “Gentiles.” So *Zohar* 1, 25b, in reference to Exodus 17:16, prophesies that “redemption will not be complete until Amalek will be exterminated, for against Amalek the oath was taken that ‘the Lord will have

war against Amalek from generation to generation.” (Sperling and Simon trans.). The extermination of the Amelekites was ordered by Yahweh at I Sam 15:3: “Go now, fall upon the Amelekites, destroy them, and put their property under ban. Spare no one; put them all to death, men and women, children and babes in arms, herds and flocks, camels and donkeys” (OSB).

35. See Lenowitz 1998, pp. 103 ff. (“The Messiahs of the Inquisition”) on Reubeni and Molkho.

36. The name “Reubeni” assisted the man’s claim to be descended from the Israelite tribe of Reuben. The surname “David” encouraged the notion that this man was destined, with the help of Christian Europe (and of his supposed royal brother), to re-establish a Judaeon kingdom in Palestine.

37. Lenowitz 1998, p. 107.

38. Lenowitz 1998, p. 107.

39. In 1772 the *Etz hayyim* was published in Zolkiev, in northwestern Ukraine.

40. On Leone Modena’s lonely campaign against Kabbalah see Ruderman 1995, pp. 118-152.

41. Ruderman 1995, p. 123.

42. Ruderman 1995, p. 152. At pp. 119-125 Ruderman analyzes the tension between Delmedigo’s partial embrace of science and his devotion to Kabbalah.

43. See Ruderman 1995, p. 213: “Well into the first half of the eighteenth century, the issues regarding the place of the kabbalah in Jewish culture...continued to evoke acrimonious debate among the Jewish intellectuals of the Italian ghettos.” In northern Germany Jacob Emden (1697-1776), renowned for his scrupulous observation of the Torah, vigorously assailed the *Zohar* as a late composition and as incompatible with the Talmud. Most other rabbis in Germany were equally keen to defend Kabbalah as ancient.

44. Published in Berlin by De Gruyter, the *Ursprung und Anfänge* was translated into English by Allan Arkush as *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Philadelphia and Princeton: Jewish Publication Society and Princeton University Press, 1987). For Scholem’s earlier work see above, endnote 6 of Chapter 26.

45. Shmuelevitz 1984, pp. 41 ff.

46. Although Serbian and Greek nationalism ignited early in the early nineteenth century, Turkish and Arabic nationalism came considerably later. See Lewis 1995, pp. 322-23: “The people whom we call, and who now call themselves, Turks and Arabs, did not describe themselves by these names until fairly modern times. The language was known as Turkish, but the civilized citizens of Constantinople and other cities did not call themselves ‘Turk,’ reserving that epithet for the primitive peasant and nomads of Anatolia. Similarly, the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent called their language Arabic, but reserved the substantive ‘Arab’

for the Bedouin inhabitants of the desert fringes. It was only in modern times, under the impact of European ideas of nationality, that literate city-dwellers began to describe themselves by these ethnic terms.”