The caution and manners of the Jews differ depending on whether they are amongst themselves or in the company of Old Christians so that, when amongst themselves, they make use of affected names, or names from the Old Testament. When a clergyman received the Lent confession of a child, and wanted to issue him with a certificate of confession, he asked the child what his name was. The child replied: “Are you asking me the name that I have at home or the one that I bear when I am outside?” The friar replied: “I am asking you for the name that you have at home” and the boy answered: “At home, Father, I am called Abraham and outside of my home I am called Francisquito”. When they greet one another, they say: “Greetings, esteemed Jew” but when someone else is present they say: “You are welcome, businessman”. King João of Portugal ordered that they should wear a certain symbol on their heads and that anyone of them who was discovered not to be wearing it should always pay a fine of ten maravedís de oro. If he did not possess that sum, he would receive ten lashes in public. Wherever they are together, the Jews form a mystical body governed in order to benefit all of them. Now pay attention to a letter that those in Rome wrote to those in Portugal at the time when the Inquisition was established in that kingdom. It is brought to our attention by Costa Mattos.

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1 By referring to a Jewish ‘Mystical Body’, Torrejoncillo draws an analogy between the communal identity and allegedly common aims of the Jews and a single living organism. The expression was frequently used to refer to the ‘Mystical Body’ of the Christian Church.

2 Francisquito is a diminutive that literally means "Little Francisco".

3 This would appear to a reference to a law enacted in February 1391 by King João I of Portugal (1385–1433).

4 This letter is translated into Spanish and reproduced in its entirety from Vicente da Costa Mattos's Portuguese Honras christãs nas afrontas de Iesu Christo continuadas nos presentes Apostatas de nossa Santa Fé (Lisbon, 1634), fol. 39r–45v. The content of the alleged letter would date it as having been written in 1547 or 1548.
“Your Mercies will already know how the Holy Father and the cardinals have conceded through the Sacred Rota⁶ that the Inquisition of that kingdom should be established as per the privileges that the kings of Portugal had granted to it and that, if the King is not content with this, then the bishops should be required to follow the derecho común,⁷ which is the fairest and safest. No pardon of any kind could be granted to those who have been imprisoned but rather they should be handed over to the bishops who will act as judges during their trials. The prisoners could then allege the nullity of the cases against them before the bishops. They could do this without being accused of having relapsed by pointing to the inconvenience that results from the great number of them depending upon charity⁸ and of whom the bishops are suspicious, since the latter will become inquisitors and as ministers of the King they are obliged to protect his honour by condemning the prisoners, whose sheer number actually makes them want to run away and hesitate to publish a general pardon in the kingdom. The ambassadors of the King, together with the envoy of the Emperor,⁹ came to an expedient agreement with the Holy Father and cardinals, which has been the basis of all their past discussions, by agreeing that in future no action should be taken concerning the general nature of this agreement. This will appear to be the result of divine inspiration to those who see more than temporal causes, seeing how condemned prisoners, both present and absent, are released without any conditions or blame and can go in peace to wherever they wish. The pardon comes into

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⁵ The events described in this alleged letter from the Jews of Rome to the New Christians of Portugal appear to relate to the negotiations undertaken in the 1540s by New Christian representatives in Rome for the suspension of the sentences of those prosecuted by the Inquisition in Portugal. These negotiations eventually resulted in the issue of the papal brief Cum Nuper Dilectum, on 22 September 1544, by means of which the Pope suspended the sentences issued by the Holy Office until the arrival of the next nuncio, who would examine inquisitorial proceedings. In 1547, however, the Pope responded to Portuguese and Spanish pressure and authorised the Portuguese Inquisition to operate in the same manner as in Spain.

⁶ The Sacred Roman Rota is the highest appellate court of the Catholic Church.

⁷ The Derecho común or ius commune in Latin means “common law” and is a reference to Roman Law.

⁸ Torrejoncillo’s translation into Spanish is “que la miseria mantenía”. In the original Portuguese version provided by Vicente da Costa Mattos, the expression “... que a misericór-dia mantinha” means that the large number of poor New Christian prisoners depended for their sustenance on assistance from the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, a charity for the indigent established in 1498 by Queen Leonor (widow of King João II), the dowager Queen of Portugal and sister of King Manuel I.

⁹ The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V was also ruler of Spain with the title of Charles I.