The universal mother of the peoples, Nature, felt such anger at the incredulity of the Jews and the malice of the crimes they inflicted upon her Creator, that at His death the sun was eclipsed, the rocks shattered, the veil of the Temple was torn and the whole of Creation was moved to pity and displayed signs, as I have said, of sorrow.¹ After this event (their general affront), Nature itself attempted to redeem her reputation by offering evidence in the birth of the Jews that they were monsters of hers and deformed offspring of her perfection not only for their past deeds but also in the propagation of their descendants. If men have taken the care to impose symbols upon Jews so that they should be recognizable because of their treasons,² then God took no less care to distinguish them both in order to embarrass them and as the punishment that their ancestors deserved. Some of the signs that nature has inflicted upon them because of their wickedness are not very obvious but others are evident and clearly visible so that those people cannot hide or mask them. It seems that God foretold His eternal vengeance when, addressing everyone, He told them: Et erunt in te signa, atque prodigia & in semine tuo usque in sempiternum.³

I say, then, that the hand of God distinguished many of them through signs after they crucified His Divine Majesty. Some of them have a small thing or short tail that emerges from their body at the bottom of their spine. Others bleed from their shameful parts every month as if they were women. Others cannot spit or emit any saliva from their mouths. Others, when they lie down and sleep, are afflicted by a huge number of worms

¹ A reference to Matthew 27:51 et ecce velum templi scissum est in duas partes a summo usque deorsum et terra mota est et petrae scissae sunt (“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”).
² A reference to the symbols – stars or circles of different colours – that Jews were compelled to display prominently on their clothing in medieval Europe, including Spain and Portugal.
³ Deuteronomy 28:46 “And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever”.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REGARDING THE SIGNS BY WHICH DIVINE PROVIDENCE DIFFERENTIATES THE JEWS
that emerge in and out of their mouth and bite their tongue. This is what Seucio relates in *contra haereses*.

It is particularly noteworthy amongst the Jews that their direct descendants are living proof of the ancient tradition that they accepted responsibility for the death of Christ upon themselves and their sons. They were the ones who told Pilate, when he sought to avoid having Christ our Redeemer put to death that His death and blood would be upon them, saying: *Sanguis super nos, & super filios nostros*, so that they suffer from a purge: bleeding and menstruating every month. This is what Marcellinus states in his *Historia*, Saint Vicente Ferrer in the *Sermon de Passion* and Cantimpré in book 2, chapter 29, number 23, folio 315. The latter author further adds that when the children of that caste of Jews are born, their right hand is full of blood and stuck to their head. Others assert and state that, on Good Friday, all the Jews and Jewesses menstruate. Still more authors maintain that this occurs to them on the twenty-fifth of March and that, because of this, nearly all of them are pallid (see *Fortalitium Fidei*, book 3, fol. 87; Lorin’s commentary on Psalm 66 and Salmerón, tome 2, tract. 32). These authors state that in order to cleanse and free themselves of this plague and punishment, the Jews trust in the custom, invented by some of them, of killing innocent children because one of their rabbis told them when he was at death’s door that they could not cure this illness except with the blood of Christians. This is how Valle recounts it in *Incantationibus*.

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4 Despite extensive efforts, it has not been possible to identify this source. The other sources cited in the initial paragraphs of this chapter are all derived from chapter 18 of Vicente da Costa Mattos, *Breve Discurso contra a heretica perfidia do judaismo* (Lisbon, 1623), fols. 130v–132v.

5 Ammianus Marcellinus (c. AD 325/300–c. 391) was a Roman historian and author of the *Res Gestae*, an account of the history of the Roman Empire from AD 96 to 378, only parts of which survive. Torrejoncillo is referring to book 22, chapter 5 but Marcellinus calls the Jews *foetentes Iudaeos* (“stinking Jews”) without explicitly referring to menstrual blood.

6 This appears to be a reference to Saint Vicent Ferrer’s famous *Sermon on the Medicine of Christ’s Passion*.

7 Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–1272), was a medieval theologian and preacher born near Brussels (in the Duchy of Brabant). The work to which Torrejoncillo refers is the *Bonum universale de apibus*, available in numerous printed editions.

8 Alonso de Espina, *Fortalitium Fidei* (Nuremberg, 1485); in some later editions of the *Centinela* the folio number is wrongly printed as 27; Jean de Lorin (his name is misspelt Lorico either by Torrejoncillo or the typesetter of the 1674 edition), *Commentarii in librum Psalmorum* (Lyon, 1612). Alfonso Salmerón (1515–1585), was a Jesuit theologian. The reference here is to volume two of his twenty-two volume work *Commentarii in Evangelicam Historiam, & in Acta Apostolorum* (Madrid, 1598), 305–317.

9 Manuel do Vale de Moura (1564–1650) was a Portuguese theologian and deputy of the Portuguese Inquisition. The work referred to here is his treatise on witchcraft *De incantationibus seu Ensalmis Opusculum Primum* (Évora, 1620).