
Stones of Memory: Revelations from a Cemetery in Curaçao

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The Sculptured Tombstones of Ouderkerk and Curaçao in Historical Context

In a garden like setting at the Ouderkerk Portuguese Jewish cemetery in the Netherlands lies the marble monument to Mosseh de Mordechay Senior, who died on July 2, 1730. The white slab was prepared in his lifetime, according to the terse Portuguese epitaph. It is covered with reliefs of elaborately garbed men and women posing and gesturing within an ornate framework of arches and tall pilasters. The composition resembles a Baroque building facade. The names, carved in Hebrew Bible phrases beneath each image, match the first names of all the members of Mosseh's family: his parents and grandparents as well as his ten siblings, their spouses and offspring (Figures 1–3).

Mosseh's father, Mordechay de Judah Senior, was born in Amsterdam to Portuguese New Christian refugees from religious persecution. Mordechay and his brother Jacob de Judah spent their young manhood in Recife, Pernambuco, in service to John Maurice, governor general of Dutch Brazil, until its recapture by the Portuguese in 1654. Mosseh, born around 1676, was ninth in a family of eleven siblings: Judah, Jacob, Ester, David, Isaac, Abraham, Rachel, Benjamin, Mosseh, Ribca, and Selomoh. Mosseh's eldest brother Judah and cousin Judah de Jacob Senior Henriques (married to Mosseh's sister Ester) belonged to the group of Jewish magnates in the Hague circle of Stadholder William III, later King William III of England. Mosseh's mother Sarah Lopes, aunt Ester Lopes (married to his uncle Jacob de Judah), aunt Ribca Lopes Henriques (married to Dr. Daniel Semach Aboab), and uncle David Lopes Henriques were allied, through



Figure 1: Left side: Tombstone of Mosseh de Mordechay Senior, July 2, 1730, Ouderkerk. Right side: Tombstone of Abraham and Isaac Rephael Senior, sons of Benjamin Senior, September 16 and 24, 1727, Ouderkerk

Photo R. Weinstein

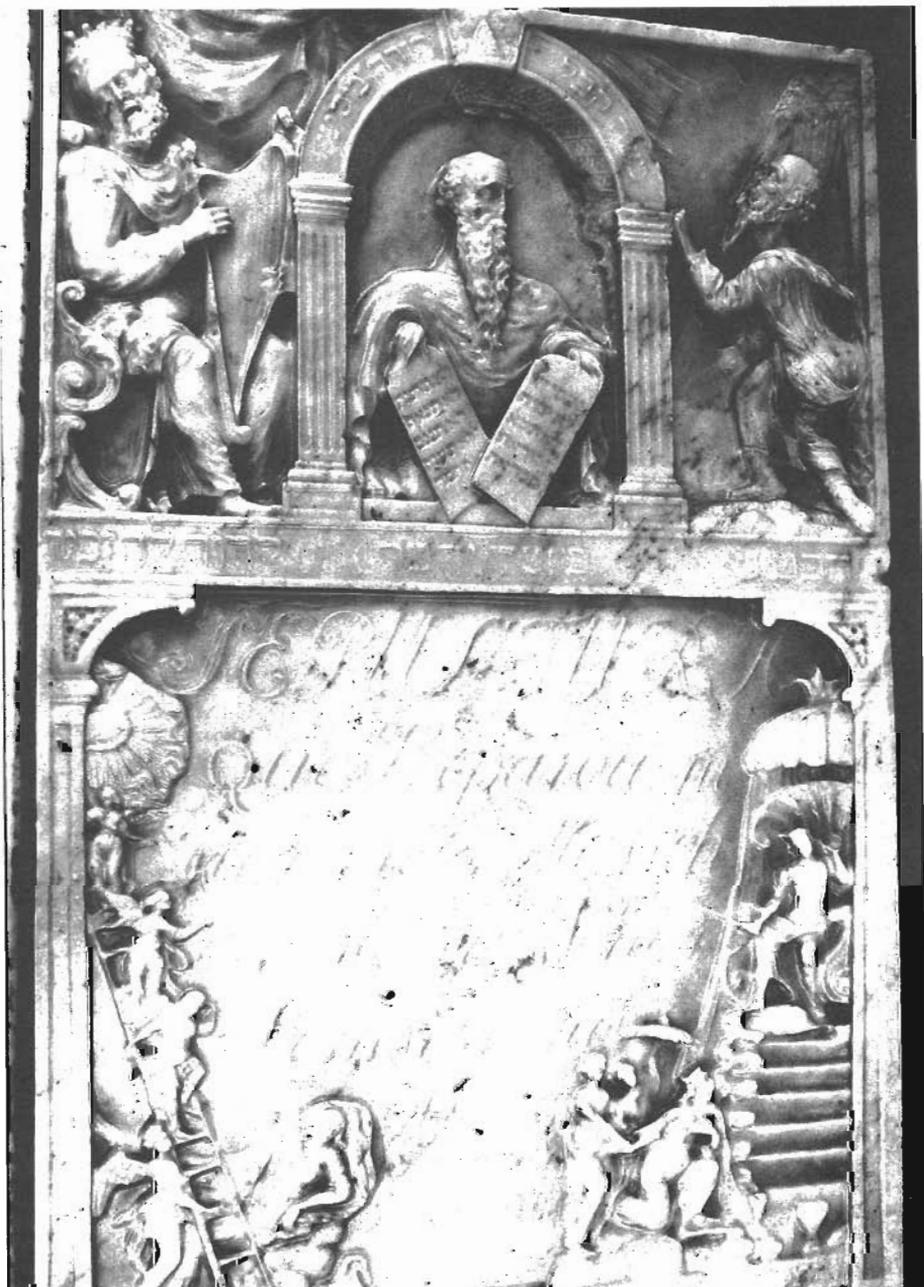


Figure 2: Detail of the top portion of the tombstone of Mosseh de Mordechay Senior

Photo R. Weinstein

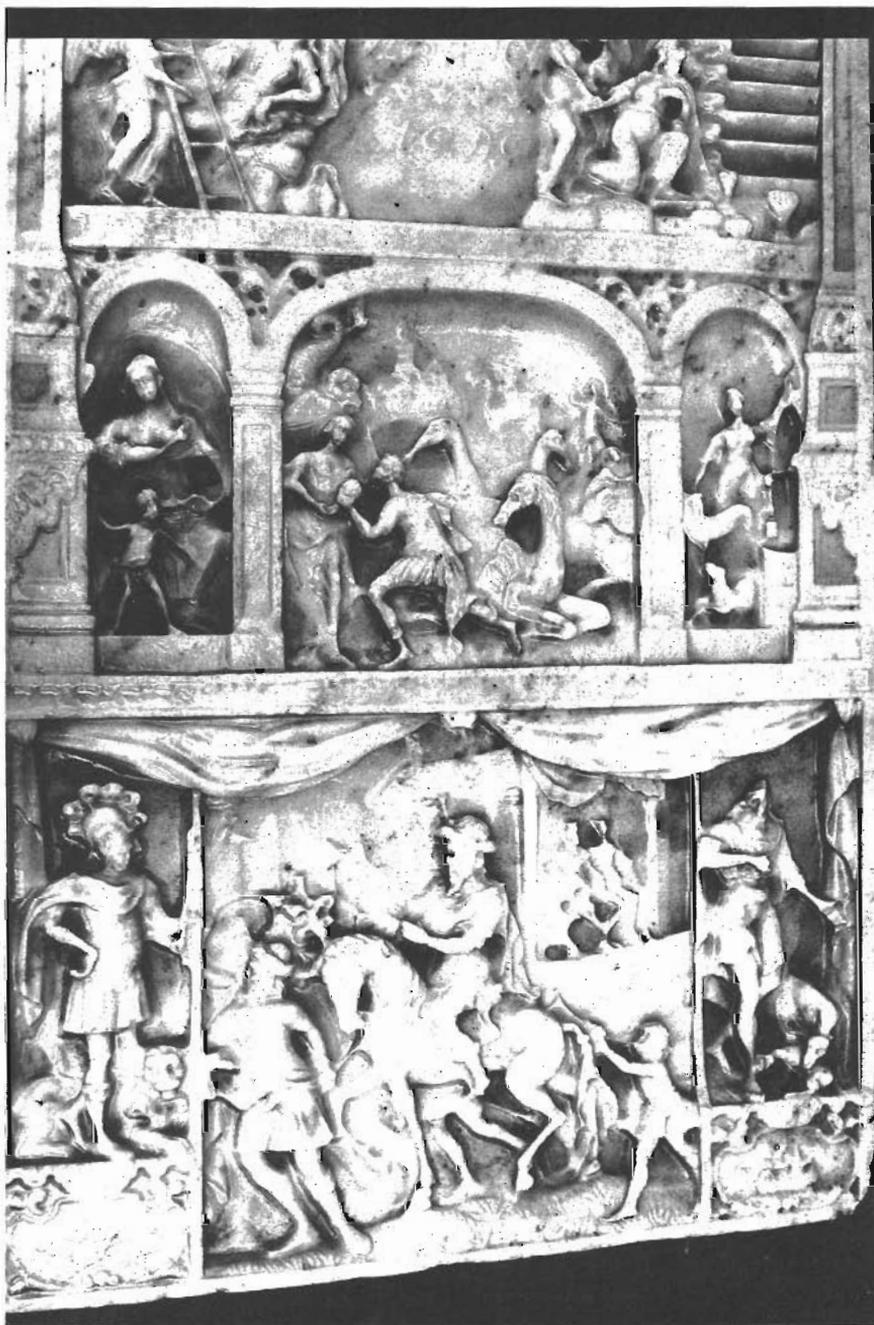


Figure 3: *Detail of the bottom portion of the tombstone of Mosseh de Mordechay Senior*

Photo R. Weinstein

David's wife Abigail Isidro, to the powerful Hamburg merchant family Isidro, alias Baruch. They had obtained economic leverage unavailable to Dutch Sephardim by serving Portugal after it regained independence from Spain in 1640. Mosseh's sister Ribca married Isaac, community circumcisor (mohel), and son of Dr. Daniel Semach Aboab. Mosseh's aunt Ribca Senior and sister Rachel married, respectively, Abraham and his son Jacob Fundam, traders based in Recife, Barbados, London, and Curaçao. Brother Abraham Senior married Batseba Aboab Cardoso, of the family based in Amsterdam and Curaçao. Brother Benjamin was business partner and universal heir of bachelor Mosseh. Unmarried Curaçao brother Jacob, as Captain Philippe Henriques, commanded brigantines through the trade lanes of the Spanish Main as factor for the States General of the United Netherlands, the king of England, and the Royal African Company of Portugal. We have been able to confirm these and other family ties and obligations with archival sources. Especially useful are the 1680 will of Mordechay Senior, the 1686 will of his widow Sarah Lopes, the 1728 will of Mosseh Senior (copied and grouped with other Senior instruments in the Amsterdam Municipal Archives collection Da Costa 946), and the 1733 will of David Senior (stored at the Hague National Archives as Old Archives of Curaçao, no. 1.05.12, portfolio 821). Also very useful is the Portuguese Jewish community archive of the *Dotar*, the ("Holy Company for Dowry of Orphans and Young Girls"), stored at the Amsterdam Archives as PA 334:1141-1145 (1615-1787). The numbered membership places in the society were usually passed down from father to eldest son, and the members were named with full patronymics as well as aliases.

Half a world away, in the Jewish cemetery on the Dutch island of Curaçao, lie four more stones for members of the Senior family, ornamented with biblical personages in compositions echoing Mosseh's. They form part of a group of about forty slabs with similar figural reliefs and epitaphic date range in a cemetery of around 2,500 stones, the oldest dated 1660/69. Like all monuments on Curaçao, which is poor in building stone, they had been prepared in the home country and shipped to the island. Like Mosseh's they were prepared in life, for the families of his brothers, David, Jacob, Isaac and Selomoh, who sought their fortunes and made their homes in the New World. Rec-

ognized since 1657 by the States General as Dutch nationals, and permitted freedom to trade and settle in all Portuguese colonies according to the 1661 treaty, Jews were protected from foreign persecution at home and abroad. Doubly represented, at Ouderkerk and at Curaçao, are symbolic tombstone portraits of brother Selomoh's wife Ester, brother David, David's son Ishac Haim Senior, and Ishac Haim's wife Rachel (Figures 12, 16, 14, 15).

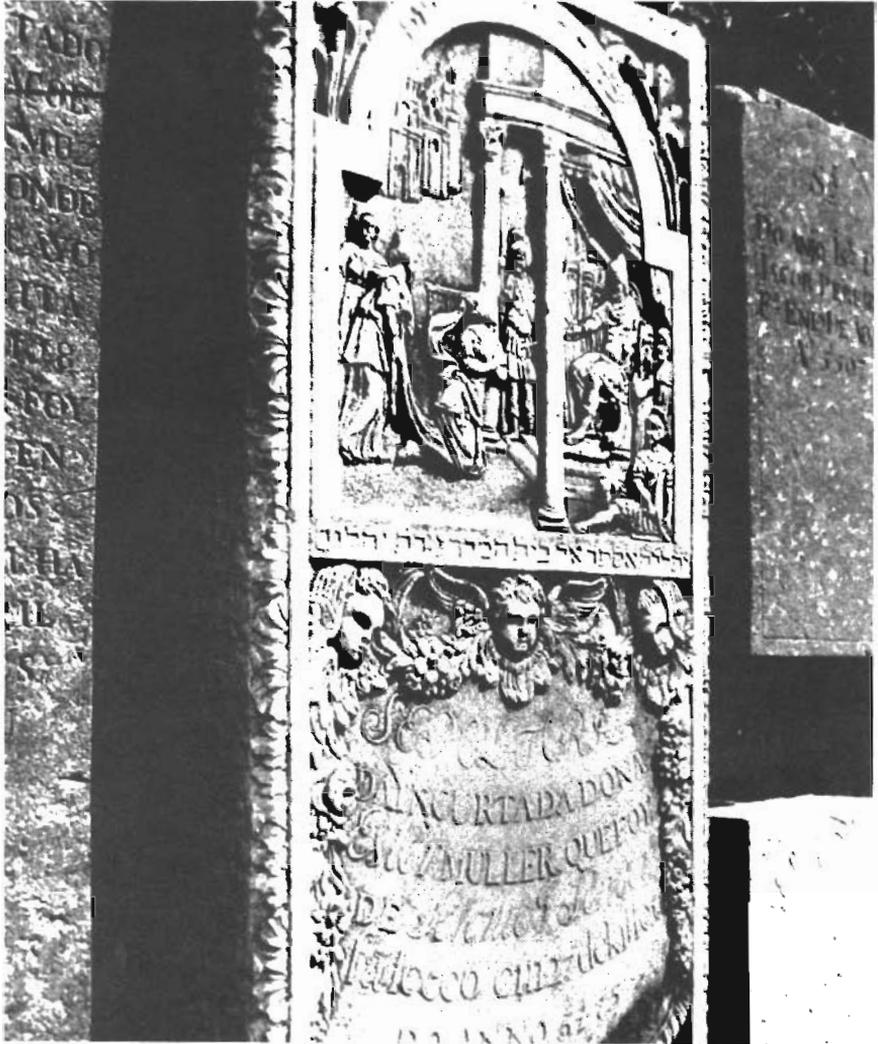


Figure 12: Tombstone of Esther, wife of Selomoh Senior, December 4, 1714, Curaçao
Collection of the American Jewish Archives



Figure 16: Tombstone of David Senior, September 14, 1749, Curaçao
 Collection of American Jewish Archives



Figure 14: Tombstone of Ishac Haim Senior, April 17, 1726, Curaçao
Collection of the American Jewish Archives



Figure 15: *Tombstone of Rachel, wife of Ishac Haim Senior, July 14, 1746, Curuçao*

Collection of the American Jewish Archives

Furthest back in time of Mosseh's family namesakes in stone is that of grandfather Judah Senior, Amsterdam freighter of Brazilian sugar, and scion of the family Henriques Pimentel, alias Abeniacar. In Constantinople Judah's father Mordechai and uncle Alvaro Pimentel, alias Rabbi Jacob Abeniacar, were Jewish community leaders as well as diplomats in the sultan's service. They were closely connected to the Venice Jewish community, home base of Judah's brother Afonso Henriques, alias David Senior. As a New Christian merchant in the French court of Henri IV, Judah's uncle Manuel Pimentel, alias Isaac Abeniacar, won fame as the king's favorite gambling partner. He stayed at court as late as 1608, increasing the monarch's treasury through his notorious skill at cards and dice. With Manuel in France was brother Garcia Pimentel, alias Mordechay Abeniacar, as a Portuguese merchant, operating in Lisbon, North Africa and the Levant and also, as of 1594, in Amsterdam. Young Judah Senior visited the French court and traveled with and for uncle Manuel to Florence, Livorno, Venice and Dubrovnik. He survived occasional robberies and even murder attempts while receiving valuable tutoring in international trade and diplomacy. The brothers Pimentel/Abeniacar

moved to Venice and then to Amsterdam. Garcia/Mordechay was the first Jew buried in the first Jewish cemetery in the Netherlands: Groet near Alkmaar, purchased in 1602 and inaugurated with his burial in 1607. Groet predated Ouderkerk but went into disuse after the new site's official 1616 opening. By 1626 the remains of seventy-four Groet burials had been transferred to Ouderkerk, in actual use since 1614 and the oldest European Jewish cemetery still in use. Manuel/Isaac, instrumental in the purchase of Ouderkerk, was the first adult buried there, in 1614.

Commemorated symbolically at Ouderkerk but buried at Curaçao is Mosseh's brother Jacob, who carried grandfather Judah's alias, Philippe Henriques. He disclosed his Jewish name as well as his alias when he was arrested in 1699 by the Inquisition at Cartagena while on a trading mission for William III of England, former stadholder of the Netherlands. Next to Mosseh's stone, bearing the relief of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, is the 1727 stone for two "anjos" (boys under thirteen years of age), Isaac and Abraham Raphael. The children had previously been identified as members of the family Senior Teixeira. But in view of new Senior Henriques family information and the absence of the name Teixeira in the epitaph, it is equally possible that Mosseh, a bachelor, was deliberately placed in eternal spiritual guardianship over two infant nephews. They were sons, according to the epitaph, of Senior, Mosseh's brother and, according to his 1728 testament, his universal heir.

The figures on the monuments of Mosseh and his Curaçao brothers represent Jewish heroes and heroines of religious history, copied in stone from contemporary prints. Such images served as popular models of thought and behavior in the national imagination of the Dutch Republic, a highly visual culture. For the Protestant Dutch, who had attained independence from Catholic Spain in 1609, Hebrew Bible protagonists represented nobility and courage. They were historical embodiments of human virtue to imitate, not churchly idols to bow down to. For Mosseh, art collector and booklover, and for those who visited the Jewish cemetery, these images served as a gallery of symbolic family portraits. Mosseh's stone is the most complex in a group of forty or more slabs, among the 27,000 in Ouderkerk's oldest part (pre-1800), carved with figured biblical reliefs during a century

beginning with a monument dated 1667.

Mosseh's ancestors were New Christians who had fled Portugal for Venice and the Netherlands in the 1590s, under numerous aliases. For them to take biblical names was a way of asserting and reaffirming ancestral ties they had almost lost. For them especially, re-entry into Judaism, with all the accompanying precepts and rituals, including circumcision, was a pledge of body and soul to renewed faith. This identity became the heritage of their progeny. Inscribed on the tombstone, the names and images served to remind those who inherited the names of their forebears and of their religious and social responsibilities.

The atypical Baroque Jewish monuments with figured reliefs are found only in regions governed by the Dutch or near the free city of Hamburg, whose official religion was Lutheran. These competing sometimes allied, sovereignties permitted Sephardic settlement at about the same time. They welcomed affluent refugees from Portugal and Spain. Comparable figured reliefs are found on two upright slabs, dated 1713 and 1717, at the Dutch Ashkenazi cemetery of Muiderberg, inaugurated in 1648. A 1746 stone with figured relief is at the Hague Scheveningsweg Jewish cemetery ground purchased in 1694. Reliefs on Sephardic monuments epitaphically dated 1648–1737 are found on approximately forty horizontal slabs and prisms among the 2,500 at the Jewish cemetery of Altona-Königstrasse, now part of greater Hamburg. They share the burial site with approximately 6,000 Ashkenazi upright slabs, the two main groupings separated by a pathway. The first Sephardic burial in Hamburg/Altona cemetery took place in 1611, the year of purchase; the first Ashkenazi burial took place in 1616. It was closed in 1869 when the Jewish section at Hamburg's Ohlsdorf cemetery was opened. Founded in 1620 as a short-lived Danish competitor to Hamburg, the port city of Gluckstadt preserves a small Jewish cemetery of approximately fifty slabs, for Ashkenazim and Sephardim who worked or settled there during the ensuing century. Among them are two Sephardic figured slabs dated 1694 and 1716.

In their exuberance and visual appeal these monuments are unlike any other markers associated with traditional Jewish or Protestant monumental ritual. Most members of the Dutch Jewish community,

Ashkenazim and Sephardim alike, had simple native bluestone slab grave monuments. They were similar to those of their Dutch Protestant countrymen except for the epitaphic language. For Ashkenazim, the script was Hebrew on a vertical slab; for Sephardim it was Portuguese and Hebrew, with occasional Latin, on a horizontal slab, more rarely on a rectangular or triangular prism. The latter structure represents the more usual type of tent tomb (*ohel*) favored by Ashkenazim to commemorate rabbis and other community leaders. The prototype, which had arrived in Europe with the Romans, evolved as a tabletomb monument in all religious denominations.

Like the Jews, the majority of Dutch Protestants and the smaller Catholic populace placed their modest monuments outdoors; by their tradition in the churchyard. In contrast, Protestant gentry, including the newly evolved aristocratic merchant class, as well as those with titles of nobility, commissioned slabs for placement in churches as either floor stones or wall epitaphs.

Among patrician Protestants and many Dutch and also Hamburg Sephardim, ancestral crests crowned the more elegant, sometimes marble, architectonic Baroque slabs. Such Sephardim also commissioned marble prism-form table tombs as seen in Jacob van Ruisdael's two seventeenth-century paintings of the Portuguese cemetery at Ouderkerk. Prominent in both paintings is the tomb prepared in 1614 for Dr. Elijah Montalto by his patron, Queen Marie de Medici of France. Many stylish Protestant and Sephardic slabs and table tombs were embellished with Renaissance reworkings of classical mortality motifs, such as winged hourglasses, scallops and other seashells, skull and bones, genii, smoking torches, urns, plus wreaths of laurel and symbolic flowers and fruits.

Many tombstones of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries at the Prague and Czernowitz Ashkenazi cemeteries have vivid reliefs as a play on the name, profession, or tribal descent of the deceased. These emblems of trade or brotherhood recall similar seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reliefs in the Netherlands. Members of some Dutch craft guilds commissioned for their tombstones figured narrative or allegorical reliefs showing particular occupations. Special sailors' cemetery markers included ship reliefs. The motif might first have appeared as the facade stone of a home or a place of business, or

as the distinguishing element on the medallion issued with entry date to each dues-paying member of a guild. At the burial of a guild brother, all members were expected to attend or to send their medallions as tokens of attendance.

We know that Uri Phoebus Halevy, who became a member of the Amsterdam book publishers' guild in 1664, owned such a medallion with the image of a winged Mercury, armed with book and staff. The guild had opened its doors to Jews as proofreaders and printers after its 1661 separation from the St. Luke's artists' guild. The St. Luke's guild, like most craft guilds, refused Jews admittance.

This restriction severely hampered Amsterdam publishers. They wished to maintain their justly deserved reputation throughout Europe for the most accurate editions of the Bible and its translations. In 1661 Joseph Athias (1635–1700), was the first Jew admitted to the guild. In 1661 and again in 1667 Athias published a translation and commentary on the Bible by Dutch Reform theologian and Hebrew scholar Johannes Leusden. For its beauty and accuracy the later edition, subsidized in part by Jeronimo Nunes da Costa alias Moses Curiel, earned the gold medallion and chain of the States General. Rabbinical approbations for it, in Hebrew and Latin, dated Nisan 5, 5427, came from Aaron Sarfati, Moses Raphael d'Aguilar, and Isaac Aboab da Fonseca. Shortly after Athias, David de Castro Tartas gained admittance and, in 1664, an administrative post. In this milieu Dutch Jews had easy access to prints for ornamenting their books or for collecting as art objects with diverse applications.

Rarest of all among the sepulchral adornments which added dignity to the burial service in early modern Europe are examples of the brass armorial which covered the casket of the deceased. In shape and size they resemble Torah breastplates. We know that just such a shield with armorials in the style of a casket plate, was commissioned in Amsterdam in 1656. The assignment to brassfounder (*geelgieter*) Gillis Wijbrandts came from Johan Lopes Chilon and Ruleff Lobatto. We know that in 1657 the parnassim of Amsterdam sent the Jewish community of Barbados two Torah scrolls and their ornaments. They charged Abraham Chillon and Abraham Messiah with delivery of the first scroll set. In Amsterdam also at that time was Abraham Cohen Lobatto and son Isaac alias Rehuel.

The most ambitious Dutch Protestant monuments were prepared in marble for national leaders such as stadholders and admirals. In these, the recumbent effigy was surrounded by free-standing allegorical figures and richly populated narrative and emblematic wall reliefs, all placed as close as possible to the main altar in the chief church of their birth city. The complexity of the chapel-sized monuments for Dutch national heroes contrasted with the austerity of the interiors in which they were placed. During the iconoclastic 1590s, Northern Netherlands churches had been divested of all Catholic imagery as prelude to the "alteration" when Reform Dutch Protestantism replaced Catholicism as the new official religion of the United Provinces. In the early decades of the new Dutch Republic, major commissions went to emigre or migrant sculptors from the South Netherlands, still under Spanish Catholic rule. These were sometimes the only artisans deemed able to produce monuments with the degree of skill and evocative power to match the importance of the deceased. Formally, the Dutch marble sepulchral tours de force echoed the design of Baroque Catholic monuments in churches throughout Europe. But the Dutch made a careful distinction between painted and sculptured imagery in houses of worship to which one bends the knee in idolatrous worship, and those images of heroism and history, both religious and classical, from which one takes a moral lesson in how to live a better life. Prefaces to readers, in editions of profusely illustrated Bibles, spelled out the distinction.

One such Dutch Protestant Bible history, first published in Amsterdam in 1704 and illustrated by Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708), chief print maker, pamphleteer, and commissioner of mines for William III, contained in its list of subscribers the names of Sephardim Joseph Barsely, Abraham van Aaron da Fonseca, and Benjamin Signora. The last-named was possibly Mosseh Senior's brother. Two of de Hooghe's etchings served as models for reliefs on Curaçao stones: one for that of Haham Eliau Lopes, d. 1713; the other for that of Jaha-cob Alvares Correa, d. 1714. Lopes, the community's second chief rabbi, had followed Josia Pardo in service beginning in 1692; Alvares Correa, a community parnas and leader, was one of the richest settlers on the island.

During the century 1650–1750, when the most elaborate Sephardic monuments were designed, the most ambitious Dutch Protestant sepulchral monuments were commissioned for heads of state and military heroes. Recognizing the unique historical situation of the Dutch Jews and of certain Sephardic families in particular, plus conditions of religious and artistic monumental style in the Dutch Netherlands, we are better prepared to comprehend the nature of the Sephardic monuments typified by those of the Senior family and others like them at Ouderkerk and Curaçao. The monuments express not only an attitude toward the Jewish religion but a sense of being at home, at last, in a specific moment and place, in a long history.

Some members of the Dutch Sephardic community, with great political influence in the home country, left dignified, architectonically elegant, monuments. They are simple by comparison with the narrative fullness of the Senior stones and others like them. But wills and other documentation from these families indicate a life equally rich in personal possessions, such as portraiture, jewelry, and handsomely furnished homes in town and country. Mid-eighteenth-century family papers contain payment receipts for tombstone cutting from craftsmen whose names are associated with church sculpture, and stucco and marble ornament for mansions and town halls. Pieter Pantel's name appears; François Absiel's name appears repeatedly. In 1704 Johannes Ebbelaer prepared two marble wall plaques for the Circuits House (Rodeamentushuis) at Ouderkerk.

The question of these Jewish monuments' suitability does not hinge on their degree of extravagance, however much virtue may be attached to simplicity. A self-conscious show of austerity might also be interpreted as a form of vanity. Stones, ornate or simple, are traditionally agents of memory for Jews. Their chief function is to serve as a sign, to activate in the beholder the memory and spirit of the departed, and thereby keep the loved one forever alive in the heart of the living; by means of memory metaphorically "bound up in the garland of everlasting life."

The sculptured Curaçao and Ouderkerk tombstones of the Senior family can be traced to images printed in Bibles originating or available in Amsterdam. Archives from Curaçao, Amsterdam, and the Hague have helped to identify the specific family members symboli-

cally portrayed. The century and a half during which this dynasty evolved was unlike any other in Jewish or general European history. The stones and the archives help us to reconstruct a time and a place which nurtured the growth of certain aspects of human freedom and understanding and the expansion of scientific and economic methods which are enduring legacies to our world.

*Description and Analysis of the Senior Monuments of
Ouderkerk and Curaçao*

Although the Senior stones under discussion have been reproduced previously, they have never been analyzed as a group of related monuments. David Henriques de Castro was responsible for the initial restoration of many of the handsomest stones and for recording the epitaphs or epitaphic dates, and for mapping the location of approximately 27,000 monuments in the oldest (pre-1800) part of Ouderkerk cemetery. His 1883 Dutch publication about the stones of Ouderkerk (*Keur van Grafsteenen*) reproduced, among others, the Senior stone when it was first unearthed. Because of the cemetery's marshy terrain, most of the stones had sunk below the ground surface in the course of the almost three centuries the site had been in use. The epitaphs were gradually lost to posterity, but this situation had the advantage of protecting the subtle sculpture on many stones. De Castro set the stones he reproduced on brick platforms to prevent their re-sinking. The contrast between his original black-and-white photos and the color slides I took in the 1970s and 1980s shows the erosion that occurred over the last century. Some figured stones which de Castro had not supported with bricks were brought to light and photographed in black-and-white in raking light, for maximum epitaphic clarity, in the 1970s and 1980s. This was part of an up-to-date conservation program under the direction of the Hague Monumental Restoration division: the Portuguese-Israelitisch Begraafplaats Werkgroep. The recently unearthed stones retain the delicacy of carving which so moved de Castro; after photographic records were made some of the stones were reburied to maintain their surface integrity.

Isaac Emmanuel's richly documented publications on the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles featured photos of the visually outstanding

stones of Curaçao but with no discussion of their relationship to the imagery and forms of related stones at Ouderkerk. Curaçao's Jewish cemetery was originally surrounded by West India Company plantations less than a day's journey from Willemstad, the capital city built on the two arms (Punda and Otrabanda) of Schottegat harbor on St. Anna Bay. As the island's economy shifted to oil production, fumes from the Shell refineries built on these plantations, especially after the 1940s, began to erode the surfaces of many of the tombstones in varying degree. There have been attempts at restoration. Maquettes of some of the handsomest figured stones have been installed in the courtyard of the Jewish Historical Museum, site of the recently restored ritual bath (mikveh). The courtyard adjoins the present site (the fourth structure, inaugurated in 1730) of synagogue Mikve Israel–Emanuel. It is the oldest Jewish congregation in continuous operation in the New World, founded in 1674 on a plantation near the cemetery site whose earliest stones date from that decade. Of the four chandeliers hanging in the present synagogue, two date from the 1703 third building. One of the later ones was donated by Mordechay de Isaac and Ester de Marchena. Carilho Marchena is the surname of Ester, wife of Selomoh Senior; of Sarah, wife of Selomoh's brother David Senior; and of Rachel, wife of Ishac Haim Senior, David's son. Set next to Ishac Haim's tombstone is the equally ornate figured stone with epitaphs for Isaac de Marchena, with Ester and young son Mor-dachay. Despite erosion of the reliefs on the Curaçao stones, we have been able to match many of them with prints from illustrated Bibles. By retrieving details of form in this way we can perhaps recover some of the initial impact of the stones and see what the families saw in them.

Mosseh Senior's Stone at Ouderkerk

The organization of Mosseh's stone at Ouderkerk, the most complex of the monuments of the Senior family, also governs the general composition of four of the Senior stones at Curaçao. The impression is that of a four-story Baroque building facade, probably similar to one in which Mosseh lived in Amsterdam or which he used as a warehouse or office for his family business. The attic or top course, set on

a parapet, is divided into three parts by a central window-like niche. It rests on a pair of colossal order pilasters which frame the second and third stories. The pilasters rest atop the fourth story, which resembles a stage with a carved curtain drawn up to reveal a central dramatic episode flanked by two narrators standing on platforms. The left platform is inscribed with a pair of entwined letters *M*, probably the Senior company monogram "Mosseh de Mordechay," which Mosseh called his "cypher" in his will. The right platform is embellished with a relief of a three-masted ship in full sail, probably one of the seagoing galliots referred to in documents written by Mosseh's Curaçao brothers David and Jacob.

Inside the top niche a half-figure representing Moses holds the tablets of the law, which are inscribed with the Hebrew initial words of the Ten Commandments. On a projecting ornamental keystone above Moses' head is a small relief of a figure kneeling on a mountaintop; at its base stands a crowd of witnesses, from its summit a cloud billows up and out. Inscribed in Hebrew in the niche arching over Moses' head is the phrase "Moses received the Law from Sinai," from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Avot, chapter 1, which follows the Sabbath prayers in the Siddur.

On the parapet below Moses is inscribed part of Exodus 19:19: the moment "Moses spoke," after the sounding of the horn, and before God answered him by a voice. The scene in the keystone comes from Exodus 19:20: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up." The specific nature of the Hebrew inscriptions and the passages represented in stone reveal Mosseh's attention to the details of his symbolic portrait. Outside the niche, on the viewer's right, a full-length figure in a long robe, representing Abraham, kneels bare-headed at the entrance to his tent, gazing up at the moon and star-studded heavens. Beneath him, on the parapet, are inscribed words from Genesis 15:5, when God told him to "look toward heaven" to count the stars, so numerous would be Abraham's progeny. To the left of the niche sits a crowned, bearded David on an elegantly carved throne; he plays a harp embellished with a genie head; his backdrop a richly embroidered curtain. Beneath him, on the parapet, are the Hebrew words which preface Psalms 38 and 70,

referring to David as God's "chief musician," who brings God's promise to our "remembrance."

In the center of the high second story, framed by the pilasters, is the Portuguese epitaph flanked on the right and left respectively by reliefs from the lives of Solomon and Jacob. The epitaph reads: "Sepultura/qua Preparou em/sua vida Mosseh/de Mord:y Senior/F:o em 17 Tamus/A:o 5490/S:A:G:D:G." The abbreviations stand for *Sua Alma Goze da Gloria*, the Portuguese Jewish equivalent of the Hebrew acronym for "let his/her soul be bound up in the garland of life."

In the Solomon relief the young crowned king, enthroned under a canopy, scepter in his right hand, feet resting on a pillow, wears a classical warrior's breastplate over his robe. On each of the six steps of the throne rest a pair of lions, traditionally representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The six lions on the far right are partially hidden by the pilaster. At the foot of the steps, near a collection of precious vessels, kneels the Queen of Sheba, on sacks of gifts. She is accompanied by three maids-in-waiting, one of whom shelters her with an umbrella. The Hebrew inscribed beneath, from I Kings 10:13, identifies the scene of Solomon's generosity to the Queen: "King Solomon gave to the Queen . . ."

At the left of the epitaph rises a ladder of angels toward a sun framed by a gloriole. At the foot of the ladder Jacob sleeps near his vessels of food and water, walking staff firmly grasped in his right hand. The Hebrew beneath, from Genesis 28:12, translates as "And he dreamt, and behold, a ladder set up on the ground."

The third story resembles a triple-arcaded porch or balcony. The wide, lively center scene is skillfully carved so as to show receding surface levels in imitation of aerial perspective as our attention moves from close up into the distance. In the arches on either side are tableau-like figures set within slightly curved recesses. The tableau at right shows Rachel at the well with two of her flock. Below her are inscribed Hebrew words from Genesis 29:6: "Behold, Rachel comes with the sheep." In the left arcade the infant Isaac frolics at the knee of his mother Sarah; the Hebrew below, from Genesis 21:6, referring to how God made Sarah laugh, translates as "And Sarah said, God made (laughter) for me." It is a word-play on the noun for "joke" (*tz'khak*) and the proper noun "Isaac" (*Itzkhak*).

The wide center arcade is a marvel of atmospheric and linear perspective rendered in stone. At right an exotic caravan of camels and drivers progresses from the foreground up and back toward a turreted city near the horizon. The figures gradually get flatter and smaller as they recede. At the left, close up, is the encounter scene between Rebecca and the servant of Abraham, as indicated in the Hebrew below from Genesis 24:45: ". . . behold, Rebecca came forth with a pitcher on her shoulders and she went down to the spring." Rebecca is attired in a gown whose low-cut décolletage reflects contemporary royal portraits. The servant wears the boots, cape, and short jacket of a cavalier. The sculptor drew on a popular set of images first created in the 1590s but revised details for the 1730 commission. In the background left a dolphin rears its flukes to the arcade frame. In the original print the fountain was embellished with a statue of a sea god reclining on the beast, but this pagan image was removed to suit the sensibilities of the Jewish client. The cityscape in the distance is a reference to Genesis 24:18, wherein Abraham's servant Eleazar stands outside his home city, Nahor, in the evening, near a well, praying for the event which will fulfill his mission.

The bottom story of the composition is designed to resemble a stage divided into three sections; a carved curtain is shown drawn up to reveal the drama taking place. In this the relief reflects an aspect of stage practice of the mid-seventeenth century which followed principles established with the 1637 formation of the Amsterdam theatre. Rather than imitate lifelike behavior the actors assumed strictly regulated emblematic gestures and stance. To the degree that they were recognizable to an educated audience it was a kind of collaborative theatre. In the center section a symbolic tableau-vivant plays out in front of a spacious backdrop of architecture and landscape. Both side sections contain allegorical representations in traditional costume: shepherd at right, Roman warrior at left. They were stock figures found in many plays, an allusion to the classical, venerable and therefore solemn nature of the presentation.

The Hebrew inscription from Genesis 49:27 under the figure in the right section identifies him as the symbol of the tribe of Benjamin, the head eroded even in de Castro's time; at his feet the "wolf devouring its prey." Beneath Benjamin, in a cartouche, is a three-masted ship, a

symbol of the seagoing galliots in which Moses Senior Henriques and Company plied their trade. The Hebrew under the left figure, from Genesis 49:9 describes him as the symbol of the tribe of Judah; "the lion's whelp" crouching beside him. In the cartouche below is the pair of entwined *M*'s for "Mosseh de Mordechay": most likely Mosseh's company monogram. In real life Benjamin and Judah were Mosseh Senior's closest brothers. Metaphorically in his monument they form the supporting and enclosing components of his extended family structure. They form the symbolic base of the family together with Mosseh's father Mordechay, represented in the center section with Hebrew from Esther 8:15.

In the center panel, Mordechay's biblical namesake, Mordecai, in royal apparel, goes "out in the presence of the king" while the city of Shushan rejoices. The sculptor displays the same bravura handling of atmospheric and linear perspective evident in the Rebecca panel above. At the far right, on a five-stepped viewing stand draped with swags, sit King Ahasuerus and Queen Esther on an ornate double throne. The stand resembles a small Roman temple. On the spine of the roof stand two or three little figure resembling acroteria or guardian spirits. In this instance they are city people who have climbed up for a better view of the parade. On the long side of the temple, framed by two pillars, two larger figures lean out to watch the proceedings. Farther back, toward center, smaller and in flatter relief, a workman appears to be operating the winch of a gibbet or gallows or perhaps pushing someone up the ladder. To the left a woman, her head draped in a veil, leans out of a window of a building, pouring something from a basin in her hands. A figure cringes at the base of the building as if to avoid the direct impact of what is coming from the basin. In Amsterdam, by then the century-old global center of the Bible translating and publishing industry, the Dutch sculptor was probably familiar with the episode from Midrash Megillah 16a wherein Haman's daughter pours refuse on her father's head, mistaking it for Mordecai's.

In front of this animated backdrop Mordecai passes majestically along a high grassy road, riding a horse with a tasseled saddle and plumes in its mane. He is outfitted like a Renaissance condottiere, in classical breastplate, skirt, cape and boots, but crowned with an East-

ern potentate's feathered turban. Trumpet-blowing young equerries accompany him on both sides. The legs of one or more can be seen behind the horse's legs. A bearded man his own age, more sedately attired in a many-buttoned jacket, leads the horse. It is possible that this is Haman, although he already appears in a less-dignified situation in the background. Alternatively it is Harbona, one of the chamberlains who reminded the king, at the moment Haman's villainy was exposed, that the vizier had prepared a gallows for Mordecai. Whereupon the monarch ordered Haman's execution on it. According to Midrash Esther Rabbah 7:9, the prophet Elijah appeared in Harbona's guise to urge Haman's punishment. This story of political intrigue, hidden identity, and the triumph of virtue through divine but masked intervention (the name of God never appears in the Book of Esther) has counterparts in the personal histories of the Senior family.

The Artistic Milieu of Amsterdam and the Hague

The curtain as an artistic device was popular in painting of the Dutch Golden Age, such as Jan Vermeer's *The Artist's Studio* of the mid-seventeenth century. The curtain alluded, among other things, to the amateur and professional dramatic and literary societies called rhetoric chambers, popular in both the South and North Netherlands in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the years preceding and shortly following Dutch independence the chambers performed pageants with political messages. They were often drawn from biblical episodes, designed to encourage the populace in the fight against Spanish tyranny. A favored subject was the story of Esther. Plays based on the Book of Esther were among the most frequently written and performed in the nation. Designs for the dramas must have abounded in Amsterdam, offering countless opportunities for artistic invention within the boundaries of the written scriptural directives. The chief playwrights of the day, such as Pieter Hooft, Gerbrand Bredero and poet-Laureate Joost van Vondel, contributed to these productions. In the United Provinces in 1637 the rhetoric companies evolved into the Dutch national theatre with these and other writers among its founding fathers.

The Muiderberg literary circle, a loose association of some of the most famous writers, included Hooft, Casper van Baerle, Anna Maria Schurman, Roemer Visscher, his daughters Anna Roemer and Maria called Tesselschade, Jacob Cats and Constantijn Huygens the elder (1596–1687), secretary to Stadholders Frederick Henry, William II, and William III, later King William III of England. Van Baerle corresponded with Manasseh ben Israel, and wrote poetry in praise of the rabbi, including an encomium to his *Creatione Mundi*. Jacob Cats was an investor in overseas enterprises of Amsterdam Sephardim. The Antwerp art dealer Gaspar Duarte, his son Diego (who later settled in the Hague as Jacob), and Gaspar's daughter Francesca "De Fraansche Naghtegael" attended musical soirees at Muiderberg. Francesca's nickname was a play on words of the title of Cats' famous poetry collection *De Zeeuwsche Naghtegael*. Huygens the elder, and his son Constantijn the younger, who followed him as secretary to the princes of Orange, was regularly in touch, officially and socially, with Sephardic magnates such as the Suassos, the Lopes de Liz, Machados, Pereiras and the members of the Senior Henriques family established at the Hague. Huygens wrote a eulogy for Gaspar Duarte, who died in 1654; it is the subscript to an engraved portrait of the collector by Lucas Vorsterman, the printmaker on whom Rubens relied for engraved records of all his paintings.

Mosseh Senior, his brothers Benjamin and Jacob, and his Hague-based uncle Jacob de Jeuda Senior Henriques were in touch with the literary and artistic currents of the day. Certainly they were familiar with the concept of the rhetoric chamber from two examples in the Amsterdam Sephardic community: Los Floridos (fl. 1685) and Los Sitibondos (fl. 1676–77), formed by Isaac Nunes Belmonte, alias Manuel Baron Belmonte.

The Art Collections of Mordechay and Mosseh Senior

From Mosseh's testament we know that he had a library and an art collection ("Syn Bibliotheecq, en Curiosityten") which he willed to be equally divided among those of his brothers' sons bearing the name of his father, i.e., the name Mordechay. We have begun to trace that collection to see what was in it that might have served as models for

the remarkable tombstone designs in his family. We have constructed a genealogy of the Senior/Henriques family, using archives of the Portuguese Jews housed at the Hague and the Amsterdam Municipal Archives, plus records of engagement and burial. Amsterdam has recorded its inhabitants' baptisms, engagements, and burials since the late sixteenth century, to form one of the fullest extant demographic files in Europe, if not the world. Using these we have come to a tentative conclusion about the fate of the library and art collection.

We know of six siblings' sons named Mordechay as well as a son and a grandson of Mosseh's uncle Jacob. Two named Mordechay Senior, with the respective patronymics Jacob and Judah, died in Curaçao in 1756 and 1757. Sons to brothers Selomoh and David of Curaçao died, respectively, in 1711 and 1750. Of sons to sisters Rachel Fundam and Ribca Semach Aboab, Rachel's son died in Curaçao in 1763; Ribca's son died before 1781. A son of Benjamin, Mosseh's universal heir and executor, died in 1766. Benjamin de Mordechay Senior himself died November 23, 1750. Of Benjamin's sons who were circumcised by his brother-in-law Isaac Semach Aboab we have records for Jacob in 1712, Judah in 1718, David in 1719, although none, apparently, for son Mordechay (1707–1766). We know that a Jeuda de Benjamin Senior died April 21, 1782.

We suggest that whatever had been owned separately by the sons named Mordechay eventually reverted to a single universal collector in the family, most likely the son of Mosseh's universal heir. This guess is supported by evidence of an auction in Amsterdam, between November 4 and 9, 1782, of the collection of books, dramatic scripts, musical instruments, paintings, drawings, and prints belonging to the late Juda van Benjamin Senior. The different spellings here of Judah/Jeuda/Juda reflect the diversity in archival spelling. They also signal the caution to be exercised when attempting to stabilize the identity of the owner of the 1782 collection and locate him within the Senior genealogy. On the basis of the richness of the collection, it is likely that Mosseh and his brothers owned or had ready access to all the illustrated publications which served as print sources for the reliefs on his tombstone and those of his family in Curaçao. We plan to analyze the auction catalogue of that art collection in depth in the future.

Of all the brothers, Judah, Mosseh, and Benjamin stayed closest to the arts. The Seniors contributed to the Amsterdam, Curaçao, and Hague synagogues and participated in special prayer honors. But it was Benjamin Senior, living in Amsterdam (“morador a Amsterdam” in David da Fonseca’s manuscript report of the planning and inauguration), who gave to the new 1726 Hague Honendel synagogue a cover for the “Teba and Sepher” of green velvet bordered with gold and silver, on June 23, 1726. In February 1725, the sons of widow Ester Senior Henriques (Mosseh’s sister, married to his cousin Judah de Jacob [d. 1716]) had donated ornamental cedarwood paneling in her name. The synagogue’s construction, in the style of state architect Daniel Marot, was supervised by his student, François Dusart. A portrait bust of Antonio alias Isaac Israel Baron Lopes Suasso I (1614–1685), has been ascribed to Rombout Verhulst (1625–1696), who with a François Dieussart (1600–1661) portrayed many of Europe’s nobility. Suasso financed William III’s ambitions, both military and political, which finally put him on the English throne. At the Hague, seat of government and center of high society and fashion, a Judah Senior supported new directions in opera and theatre, as did members of the De Liz, Pereira, and Arredondo families.

It was to Judah that Mordechay, in his 1680 will, bequeathed five family portraits: two of Mordechay’s parents, and three of his grandparents, one of the latter perhaps a double portrait. These were probably miniatures, following the fashion of the time. They have yet to be located and identified. They would have portrayed Judah/Philippe (1589–1656) and his cousin Ester (b. 1600), whom he married in 1617, daughter of Judah’s uncle Garcia/Mordechay. The grandparents would have been Violante Pimentel and Mordechay (Henriques?) of Constantinople; and Garcia Pimentel/Isaac Abeniacar and wife Leonore Gutierres, alias Sarah Lindes. Prudentia Pimentel, alias Abigail Abeniacar, Ester’s sister, depended first on Judah and then on his son Mordechay. During a 1621–1623 dispute between the heirs of Manuel Pimentel/Isaac Abeniacar over his 250,000-guilder legacy, Judah was proxy for Abigail and her husband Simao Vaz Silva, alias Jacob da Silva. The couple was then living in Gluckstadt, where Jacob was trying without success to start industries for the processing of soap, oil, and sugar. They returned to the

Netherlands, where Jacob died in 1626. When Abigail died intestate in 1661, her *Dotar* no. 263, of which she was prime possessor, was ceded to Mordohai Abenjacar with Mordechay Senior as one of the witnesses.

In Mosseh's 1728 will he bequeathed his gold snuffbox, engraved with his cypher, to Ester de Jacob Fundam, daughter of Ribca, Mosseh's aunt and wife of Mosseh's brother Judah. To brother Benjamin's wife Rachel, daughter of their uncle Jacob de Judah Henriques, Mosseh bequeathed a gold ring with an emerald and a sack of fine solid gold instruments ("een goud sack kookertje daarin Vyff massive gouwe instrumenten"). To his nineteen-year-old nephew Abraham de Isaac Semach Aboab, son of sister Ribca and mohel Isaac, Mosseh bequeathed a ring with a green emerald and two diamonds. Emerald was the generic term for Brazilian topaz. We know that at the 1712 liquidation of the assets of jeweler Abraham da Fonseca the bookkeeper was an Abraham Semach Aboab (possibly a relative) who owned a group of Hebrew manuscripts, with catalogue, of the works of Haham Saul Levy Morteira. Many of Morteira's works are lavishly decorated with biblical illustrations drawn from printed Bibles by community artists. On such was Judah Machabeu, who returned from Brazil to Amsterdam and among other artistic pursuits from 1650–1661 was forging permits for Dutch trade in the Spanish East Indies. The 1650 Spanish Dutch commercial treaty had freed Dutch ships in Spanish ports from boarding and inspection as long as their certificates, signed by Dutch admiralty college officials, affirmed that no French or Portuguese cargo was aboard.

The Prototypes for the Tombstones of Mosseh and His Family: Isaac Aboab's "Parafraſis" and His Portrait

The title page on which Mosseh's stone is based also governs the composition of the Curaçao stones of his brother David, David's son Ishac Haim, and Ishac Haim's wife Rachel. No doubt the book which it—and its frontispiece—adorned was in Mosseh's collection. (Figure 4: frontispiece; 5: title page; 14: Isaac Haim's stone 15: Rachel's stone; 16: David's stone).

The title-page plate, prepared by etcher Johan van den Aveele, was used by the Amsterdam publisher Jacob Haim ben Moses Raphael de



Figure 4: Mezzotint portrait of Rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca by Aernout Naghtegael, 1686

Collection of the American Jewish Archives

Cordova e Brazil for the 1681 commentary on the Five Books of Moses written in Castilian by Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (ca. 1605–1693). At the time Aboab was chief rabbi (haham) of the Amsterdam synagogue Talmud Torah, the congregation formed from the 1639 union of Bet Jacob, Bet Israel, and Neve Shalom. The title of the work reads:

Parafraſis Comentado Sobre el pentateuco por el illuſtriſſimo s'(eñor) Iſhak aboab H(aham) del K(ahal) K(ados) de amſterdam eſtampado en caza de Iaacob de Cordova 5441. It translates as: "Commentary paraphrasing the Pentateuch by the illustrious Chief Rabbi of the sacred congregation of Amsterdam printed at the shop of Jacob de Cordova 1681." The etcher's signature at lower left and right reads: "Ioh. vander Avele (in)ventit et fecit"; translated as: "Johan van den Aveele designed and made." Below these are the Hebrew words for "year" and "truth," the latter a chronogram word-play on the date.

In Aveele's etching two fluted pillars enclose the title and continue up past a parapet to terminate as a niche. The pillars rest on a platform with two projecting side sections. On the platform stand two bearded, robed representations of patriarch Isaac: at right he sows, at left he carries the harvest. Below, in the recess between the projections Isaac stands and supervises workers who dig and resurface a well. The Hebrew on the projecting edges comes from Genesis 26:12 referring to Isaac's sowing and harvesting with God's blessing. On the recessed edge the phrase from Genesis 26:18 refers to Isaac's restoration of the wells dug by his father Abraham which the Philistines had stopped up after his death; wells which Isaac called again by the names which Abraham had given them. This is a remarkably apt and dramatic allegorical description, in words and images, of Aboab's mission in Recife, where he served as rabbi from 1642 to 1649. During that period he guided the New Christian Portuguese settlers back to the ancestral faith and supervised the rites and rituals whereby they assumed new identities and new Hebrew names.

Mosseh's father, Mordechay Senior, and his uncle, Jacob Senior, spent their young manhood in Brazil. Mordechay Senior and Jaacob Senior signed the Minute Book (dated 1648–1653) of Congregations Zur Israel of Recife and Magen Abraham of Mauricia, Brazil. Egon and Frieda Wolff made a detailed examination of signatures and paraps of the names, among others, of Jacob and Mordechay Senior. Paraps are signature flourishes which are as personal as fingerprints and also at times help guard against forgery. They firmly matched the Minute Book signature of Mordechay Senior with that among those added to the complimentary letter written to Sabbatai Zevi in 1666 by the members of the Amsterdam charitable society Yeshuot Mashiho

("Nobility of the Anointed"). The letter was never sent, as it coincided with delivery of the news of the apostasy of the false messiah. The letter was reproduced in J. S. da Silva Rosa's 1925 history of the Amsterdam Portuguese Jews; in Moses Gans's sumptuous 1971 atlas of Netherlands Jewry, *Memorboek*; and most recently in the 1980 Jerusalem catalogue of the loan exhibition of a selection of manuscripts in the Amsterdam Ets Haim Library.

We have matched the signature of Mordechay Senior (1620–1680) on the letter with the one he used in 1674, signing in as Mordechaj de Jeudah Senior, member no. 396 of the *Dotar*. Mordechaj's *Dotar* paraph, especially the "j" descender, is identical with that of 1666, except that in 1674, he added the patronymic "de Jeuda." In 1682, Jacob de Judah Senyor signed into the *Dotar* as no. 409. In public and private papers Jacob de Judah Senior and his offspring regularly used the double surname Senior Henriques. We assume this was Mordechay's brother Jacob (1631–1705) and the uncle of Mosseh and his siblings. On the basis of surname consistency, signature paraphs, and *Dotar*, we have been able to develop a fairly reliable genealogy of the Senior–Senior Henriques family.

The upper-class membership of Yeshuot Mashihō was pious rather than given to diligent Torah study. In their 1666 letter they cite another, sent from Amsterdam's yeshiva Torah Or ("Law is Light"), which praised Haham Isaac Aboab as their revered spiritual leader and example. Mordechay's signature on the 1666 letter suggests the love and esteem he must have felt for the haham. It dated from his days as one of Aboab's congregants in the New World Jerusalem of Dutch, lately Portuguese, Brazil. In Mordechay's family the image of the haham was potent enough to incorporate as a symbolic name portrait on a tombstone. It appears in a niche, in a design based on the Aveele titlepage, at the top of the 1726 Curaçao monument for Mordechay's grandson, David's son Ishac Haim Senior. We have determined that the prototype for the image on Ishac Haim's stone is a 1686 mezzotint of Haham Isaac Aboab da Fonseca. We believe that it was an author portrait, placed as a frontispiece facing the Aveele title page to his 1681 *Parafraſis*. The late Moses Heiman Gans kindly provided the photo of the *Parafraſis* title page, from the volume in his collection, which we here reproduce.

In the Aveele title page, the top register, with parapet and niche, shows images, right to left, of Abraham, Moses and David. It governs the design of the stones for Mosseh and three of his Curaçao kin. Abraham kneels near his tent looking up at the stars and a flood of rays, a landscape in the distance. In the niche Moses holds the tablets of the law inscribed in Hebrew with initial phrases from the Ten Commandments. At left sits a crowned David on an ornate throne playing a harp capped with a genie head, in front of a richly embroidered curtain. Beneath Abraham, on the parapet, are inscribed the first words of Genesis 15:5, referring to God's pact with the patriarch, as in the tombstone relief. Beneath David, as in the relief, is the Hebrew preface to Psalms 38 and 70, alluding to God's faithful servant. Surrounding Moses, on niche and parapet, are Hebrew phrases from Deuteronomy 4:44, 33:4, and Psalms 19:8, referring to his mission as law-giver. This Hebrew differs from that inscribed in the relief, from Genesis 19:19 and the Talmud. It shows that Mosseh made sure that the cutter of the stone followed his inscriptional choices, not what came with the image. The image of Abraham, moreover, differs slightly from what appears in the relief. The actual sculptural model came from the printed source used for most of the reliefs below the top register.

Aveele (b. mid-17th cent., Netherlands, d. 1727, Stockholm) was a lay preacher who later emigrated to Sweden in the service of King Charles XI. He had studied with Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708), William III's chief printmaker, two of whose etchings for the 1704 Bible history served as models for Curaçao tombstones. Like his teacher, Aveele produced topographical views and plans of buildings and gardens which were much in vogue in the Netherlands in the late seventeenth century. The Dutch, who had spent so much energy rescuing their land, first from Spanish tyranny and then, with dikes, from the encroachment of the North Sea, took great pride in their landscapes, both urban and rural. In the early 1690s Aveele produced a series of large-scale and detailed images of "Het Schoone Perk van Sorgvliet" (Beautiful Sorgvliet Park), a Hague suburban villa on the route to Scheveningen, owned since 1675 by Lord William Bentinck, who became King William III's closest confidant. Its gardens and sculpture impressed the circle of the princes of Orange. It became a model for other suburban gardens, including those of Hague-based

Sephardim with country retreats along the Vecht and Amstel rivers. Nearby was the Portuguese Jewish cemetery for Jews from the Hague area which opened around 1698, the time they began to gain financial and social access to the refined precincts of the capital city. In 1691 the Sephardic artist Bartolomeus Brandon, who with brother Jan Hendrick entered the Hague artists' "Confreri Pictura" at this time, painted a watercolor frontispiece for just such an album of sculpture-garden views. He was paid for it in 1692 from the account of William Bentinck, privy purse for King William III.

Accounts show that well-to-do Sephardim took pride in sculpture gardens, as artist, owners or visitors. It would seem then that the Dutch Jewish cemetery, known as the House of Life (Bet Haim) was perceived as an extension of the concept of garden: a Garden of Eden.

Because of Jacob de Cordova's connection to the flourishing Amsterdam book publishers' guild he was able to acquire Aveele's etched titlepage. Jacob had apprenticed to both Joseph Athias and David de Castro Tartas and had also worked for Uri Halevy. His father, Moses de Isaac Cordova, a proofreader from Constantinople, arrived in Amsterdam in 1641/42. Jacob's son Isaac Hisquiahu de Cordova Kuzin was inscribed in the publishers' guild after his arrival from Brazil at the end of the seventeenth century. In 1688 Isaac printed the Spanish sermons of Jehosua de Silva, d. 1679, a disciple of Amsterdam rabbis Aboab and Saul Levy Morteira, who served as haham in the London Sephardic synagogue. By 1721 Isaac de Cordova had returned from Hamburg to Amsterdam and was working for Ashkenazim as well as Sephardim.

The "Theatrum Biblicum" and Antwerp Print Ateliers

The remainder of the print prototypes we have matched to Mosseh de Mordechay's stone come from an album of engraved Bible illustrations, which, in its different editions, had as many as 470 images. These were drawn from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and, as a separate section, the Acts of the Apostles. The album is entitled *Theatrum biblicum, hoc est Historiae Sacrae Veteris et Novis Testamenti tabulis aeneis expressae*, issued in Amsterdam by Claes Jansz Visscher in a number of editions beginning in 1614. The 1674 edition we consulted, folio size, with two prints per sheet, comes from the Robert L. Stuart Collection,

Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation. We gratefully acknowledge the Library's permission to reproduce six engravings from the work.

Many of the *Theatrum* prints were first published together in oblong quarto format under the title *Thesaurus Sacrarum*, by Gerard de Iode, 1585, Antwerp. In the two-volume set in the Spencer collection of the New York Public Library, the 1585 engravings are handcolored, with superscripts in ink by a previous owner. The *Theatrum*, while later in date, is more complete, as it contains images that seem to be missing from certain identical engraved series in the *Thesaurus*. The albums belonged to that class of illustrated religious and classical history found in all homes of the educated European bourgeoisie after the advent of movable type. The most typical was the illustrated Bible, especially popular in Northern Europe, embellished profusely with woodcuts, engravings or etchings by master craftsmen working for the presses of Lyons, Strassburg, Paris, Wittenberg, Frankfurt on Main, Antwerp and Amsterdam. With exotic renderings of ancient locals and costumes, sometimes based on actual report, these miniature print galleries became affordable luxury items of anthropological and spiritual edification. In the top course of Mosseh's stone, the kneeling Abraham is actually derived from the front center figure in an Ascension scene in the *Theatrum*, inscribed "Luke 24:51," in a series designed by Martin de Vos and engraved by Anthony Wierix.

The *Theatrum* engraving of the sleeping Jacob, missing in the *Thesaurus* group, comes from a de Vos design in a four-plate series, here inscribed "Genesis 28:20" (Figure 6). Parts of the engraving were used in the same sense, parts reversed and protracted to fill the elongated space to the left of the epitaph on Mosseh's monument. The image represents, among other persons, Mosseh's brother Jacob, alias Philippe Henriques, whose tombstone at Curaçao is dated November 15, 1718. A similar elongation transforms the *Theatrum* engraving of Selomon and Sheba at the right of the Epitaph (Figure 7). Inscribed "I Kings 10," it is part of a multi-print cycle, probably engraved by Jan Sadeler after a design by de Vos. The stone cutter added the six-stepped throne to fill up the space. The image of the king refers to Mosseh's brother Selomoh, who died in Curaçao November 28, 1758, widower of Ester de Marchena y Carilho, whose 1714 tombstone is part of our discussion.



Figure 6: *Jacob asleep near the ladder of angels, engraving, Theatrum Biblicum, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam*
Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

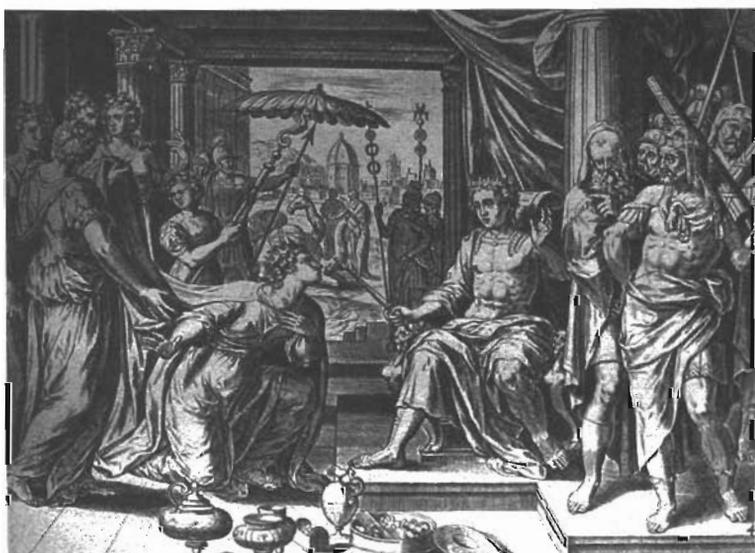


Figure 7: *Solomon and Sheba, engraving, Theatrum Biblicum, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam*
Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The relief with Rebecca and the servant in the center of the third register of the stone has as prototype a de Vos engraving from the *Theatrum* inscribed "Genesis 24" (Figure 8). The naked river god adorning the fountain is absent; the dolphin flukes fill its space; the remaining entourage around the fountain has been omitted for clarity and dramatic effect. In the bottom register, the figures right and left showing the tribe-brothers Benjamin and Judah, inscribed, respectively "Genesis 49:27" (Figure 9), and "Genesis 49:9" (Figure 10), come from a twelve-plate *Theatrum* set called "The Sons of Jacob," designed by Crispin van den Broeck, engraved by Jan Sadeler. They are further inscribed with Latin distiches by Dutch poet-laureate Joost van Vondel praising them as heroes of religious history worth emulating by the Dutch. In the Mordechay scene a match exists between the porch couple and a detail in the *Theatrum* set of Acts of the Apostles, inscribed "Acts 25:23." It was reproduced in our unpublished 1979 doctoral dissertation, "Sepulchral Monuments of the Jews of Amsterdam in the 17th and 18th Centuries." It shows Paul standing before Agrippa and Berenice (both nominally Hebrew according to New Testament scripture) on their stepped throne, surrounded by an audience. This episode was engraved by Acts publisher Philip Galle after the design of Johan Stradanus.



Figure 8: *Rebecca and Eliezer*, engraving, *Theatrum Biblicum*, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam

Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations



Figure 9: Benjamin, engraving, *Theatrum Biblicum*, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations



*Felix ante alios fratres ego dicor Iuda; Non mihi verba pater invidiosa dedit,
Sed me uictorem dixit, fortisq; Leonem. Hostes qui superet urbis ecce suos*

Figure 10: Judah, engraving, *Theatrum Biblicum*, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam
Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Alongside Mosseh's stone at Ouderkerk is that for the "anjos" Abraham and Isaac Raphael, sons of Benjamin Senior, with epitaphic dates of Tisri 3 and 11, 5488/September 16 and 24, 1727. In a more naive sculptural handling Abraham, in long buttoned jacket, boots, and beret, wields a scimitar over Isaac, who kneels in a loincloth on the altar of stacked wood. An angel emerges from clouds at left to stay Abraham's hand. Incense rises from an urn at right, and the ram stands with its horns tangled in the brambles at left. The eighteenth-century Portuguese Jewish community records show that the grave site next to that of Mosseh was reserved for an Isaac Senior. The much later maps by de Castro identify the two graves by the names in the epitaphs. The probable prototype for the boys' stone was the *Theatrum* engraving inscribed "Genesis 22" from a cycle designed by Martin de Vos (Figure 11).



Figure 11: *Abraham's Binding of Isaac*, engraving, *Theatrum Biblicum*, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1674, Amsterdam

Robert L. Stuart Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The Senior Stones of Curaçao

On Curaçao is the stone for David Senior's son Ishac Haim Senior, dated Nisan 16, 5486/April 17, 1726 (Figure 14). In the central niche at the top is a relief of a bearded man in a skullcap holding a book; he is seated against a background of table, curtain and bookshelves. At bottom is a relief of a deathbed scene. We have discovered that the prototype for the niche relief is a mezzotint portrait of Haham Isaac Aboab, aged eighty-one in 5446/1686, by the artist Aernout Naghtegael (1658/59–after 1719) (Figure 4). It may have been planned as the author-portrait frontispiece for the *Parafrasis* of Aboab (d. II Adar 27, 5453/April 4, 1692) (Figure 5). The mezzotint was probably done from life, in a Dutch tradition of rendering important personages. Another Aboab portrait, posthumous, by the proselyte Abraham bar Jahacob, has much less artistry. Unlike Ashkenazim generally, the acculturated Sephardim were pleased to commission images of still-living hahamim. We have the undated image of Jacob Sasportas, by P. van Gunst and the three portraits of Manasseh ben Israel by Rembrandt, Jan Lievens, and Sephardic artist Salomo Italia. The 1629 engraving of Joseph del Medigo by Willem Duyster after Willem Delff, was a frontispiece to his *Sefer Elim*, Aboab's portrait must have been very popular, as it circulated in two editions, the second of 5449/1689 with the haham's age changed to eighty-four and the substitution of Spanish for the Hebrew inscription on the parapet. Most importantly, it must have commanded sufficient name-recognition power to be appropriate as a model for a symbolic memorial portrait on Isaac Haim's stone. Identical in print and relief are details such as the clerical gown with square-tabbed plain collar, the cloak encircling the shoulders. The symbolic portrait of Isaac Haim, framed by the niche, is a variation on the niche portrait of Mosseh.

The figure of Abraham half-kneeling at right of the niche borrows directly from the Aveele title page, as shown by details of drapery and the position of the legs. However, Abraham in the relief appears to wear a skullcap, which sets him apart from the bareheaded versions in Aveele and in Mosseh's relief. Mosseh chose his image of Abraham not from Aveele but from a detail in the *Theatrum's* "Luke 24:51." The figure of David comes directly from Aveele. His crowned



Figure 5: Johan van den Aveele's etched title page for Isaac Aboab's Paraphrase, printed by Jacob de Cordova, 1681, Amsterdam
Collection of Moses H. Gans

head rests straight on his shoulders as he gazes to the left. In Mosseh's relief his head tilts downward, eyes closed, dreaming to the sacred melody. The crowned parapet in the Aboab mezzotint is replaced in Isaac Haim's stone with a fringed curtain bearing the Portuguese epitaph. On the frame of Ishac Haim's niche and on a horizontal band beneath the curtain are biblical Hebrew phrases.

Because the inscriptions were never published by Emmanuel, who first published the photo of the stone, we have here transcribed and translated the Portuguese and the Hebrew. The Portuguese reads: SEPULTURA/Do Incurtado Virtuozo/e muy Capas Varao Ishac/Haim Senior qui nascer de/Sua Ydade Passou desta/amihor Vida o Segunda dia/de Pessah Sendo 16 de Nissan/do Anno 5486 Avendo/Padezido Inferittos/Martirios na Enfermidad/(Hebrew acronym). Translated as: "Tomb/of the Departed Virtuous and Very Able Gentleman Ishac/Haim Senior who, born of/His Age Passed from This/to a Better Life on the Second Day/of Pessah being 16 Nissan/of the Year 5486, Having Suffered Infinite Martyrdoms of Illness/(Hebrew acronym for Let His Soul be Bound Up in the Garland of Life)." The Hebrew around the niche, reading right to left, translates as: "Look now to heaven" (Genesis 15:5); "a crown of glory shall she deliver to you" (Proverbs 4:9); "to David for remembrance" (Psalms 38:50 and 70:50). The Hebrew below the curtain translates as: "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net" (Psalms 25:15). It is conceivable that the stone was designed and the motifs were chosen by David Senior. The eloquent epitaph confirms the feelings of a grieving father predeceased by his son. In his 1733 will David repeatedly refers to Ishac Haim as the son whom God has taken.

The tombstone for Isaac Haim's wife Rachel is dated Tamuz 26, 5506/July 14, 1746 (Figure 15). The top register resembles the format of the stones of Mosseh and Ishac Haim. But the side figures of Abraham and David differ in details. Abraham, at right, lacks a tent, but has the moon and stars. His outstretched arms and upturned head complete a spiral dance-like movement rising from his sandaled feet. The body turns partly to the front as though to engage the viewer in the emotion. The David figure is crowned but now in warrior costume. No longer enthroned, he appears to be seated on a rocky ledge. He plays the harp as though taking a break from maneuvers in the

wilderness. The banderole between the figures is inscribed in Hebrew "the pillar of Rachel's grave" from Genesis 35:20. The arched niche beneath is inscribed "Sepultura" (grave). Rachel is symbolically portrayed as a shepherdess, partially undraped in a classical chemise and sandals. A hair ribbon flutters in back of her. Staff in her right hand, she guards three sheep. With Isaac she had three sons: David, Abraham and Mordechay. Mordechay, like her husband, predeceased her and died young in 1737. According to Emmanuel, Rachel was the daughter of Abraham de Marchena and Sarah Carilho. She was related to Sarah, wife of David Senior.

David Senior's stone is dated Tishri 1, 5510/September 13, 1749 (Figure 16). The top register resembles the format of the stones of Mosseh, Isaac and Rachel but the figures at the side in the niche are entirely different. In the niche is a winged hourglass; above it is a scallop with a cloud billowing to the left. Both niche elements are post-Renaissance reworkings of classical motifs. The hourglass represents mortality as time's flight; the scallop represents eternal life and was the vessel upon which the goddess of love reached earth's shores from her ocean birthplace. The arching banderole is inscribed in Hebrew "and David's days grew near to death," from I Kings 2:1. At right a young crowned king in flowing cape, short gown and boots sits on a pedestal playing a harp, his face turned to the right. On the left side of the niche is the confrontation between David and Goliath. The young hero looks almost childlike with his softly curled hair, shepherd's jacket and boots, and the huge sling hanging from his right shoulder. He is dwarfed by the helmeted warrior in boots, billowing skirt and chest armor resembling chain mail. Goliath carries a lance in his right hand; the hilt of a sword emerges from behind his left hip, in a sheath slung from his right shoulder.

Born in 1664, David was the longest-lived of all the Senior brothers. Third eldest of Mordechay's sons after Judah and Jacob, he outlived his Curaçao brothers, except for Selomoh. Brother Isaac had died in an epidemic on June 25, 1693, shortly after arriving on the island. Brother Jacob had died in 1718, apparently unmarried. David's son Ishac Haim, with whom he had gone into business, had died in 1727. In the Hague, cousin Judah Senior Henriques (d. 1716) and brother-in-law Abraham Fundam (d. 1717) had left thousands of guilders in

unresolved accounts partly connected with Curaçao enterprises. Much of David's 1733 will was concerned with explaining to his surviving sons, Jacob, Abraham, and Mordechay Haim, how to pay off the debts of the company of David Senior and Sons. Some of the accounts were registered in the name of Philippe Henriques, others in the name of Isaac Senior. As Mosseh noted in his 1728 Amsterdam will, David's affairs were hamstrung by legal entanglements (*bodemaryen*). Like his father Mordechay before him, David told his sons to pay off strangers first, so as to keep an honorable name; then pay off relatives. Above all, don't sell property unless forced to by natural catastrophe or war. And in that case let the city houses go but keep the plantations, especially Bloempot (Flowerpot), so beloved by David's late wife Sarah Hana, who died in 1730. In 1715 David owned a warehouse near the waterfront in the name of Philippe Henriquez (Senior). He lived on the same street as the synagogue, in a townhouse about five doors away. His son Ishac Haim had donated the *tebah* for the 1703 synagogue. The Marchena Carilho in-laws had contributed one of the chandeliers to the 1730 synagogue building. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, when he was truly prosperous, David had purchased from the government the plantations Suikertuin and Habaaï.

The source of the David imagery is a series of ten engravings from the life of David designed by Martin van Heemskerck and published by Hieronymous Cock, 1555-1559, Antwerp. The image of David with harp comes from the scene where David tries to cool Saul's wrath with music and turns aside to avoid the king's javelin (Figure 18). The engraving is inscribed "I Kings 18," aimed, as it was, for a Christian audience. The episode comes from the Hebrew book of I Samuel 18:10. The scene between David and Goliath comes from the engraving inscribed "I Kings 17" (Figure 17). In reality the episode comes from I Samuel 17:49. The engravings are from the Print Collection of the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs of the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. We gratefully acknowledge the Library's permission to reproduce them. The main elements from each print are boldly translated into relief on the stone. The relief at left of the niche suppresses the figures, tents and landscape of the Goliath print. A simpler armor



Figure 18: *David before Saul*, engraving after Martin van Heemskerck, in *"The History of David"*, Hieronymus Cock, 1555-59, Antwerp

Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations



Figure 17: *David and Goliath*, engraving after Martin van Heemskerck, in *"The History of David"*, Hieronymus Cock, 1555-59, Antwerp

Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

style replaces the Mannerist intricacies. The lance is now in the right hand. But the hilt of the sword still emerges menacingly at the hip. The relief of David as a shepherd omits his lance but retains the sling, boots, and the flutter of his garment. And it carries all the bravado of the original: the young hero still strides boldly out; still thrusts his left arm forward in challenge to the giant. The relief on the right side of the niche selects only the image of David with harp from the Saul print. In the engraving, David stands as he turns away from the king's anger. The relief retains the twist of his body and grasp of the harp. But it transfers the serpent head from Goliath's sword hilt to the harp. And the addition of a crown and a simple throne has transformed the now-seated youth into a confident young king.

The tombstone for Ester (de Marchena y Carilho) Senior is dated Kislev 27, 5475/December 4, 1714 (Figure 12). Ester was the wife of Selomoh, who died November 28, 1758. David does not mention brother Selomoh in his will. Selomoh's sorrows included, besides the early death of his wife, the death of his son Mordechay in 1711. Selomoh took his son's place in the Amsterdam *Dotar* as no. 493, which Mordechay had inaugurated and held for only about half a year. In 1740 the *Dotar* went to Mordechay's son David. Selomoh, who outlived David by nine years, appeared in lists of shipowners in 1738, 1740, 1746, 1748. After 1748 the name Senior in independent capacity appears to have vanished from Curaçao's maritime records.

Illustrated Bibles from Lyons

The relief on the stone for Ester comes from Esther 8:3-4, wherein the young queen reveals her Jewish identity to the king and begs him to set aside Haman's decree of destruction to her people: ". . . and Esther fell down at his feet and wept, begging him to set aside Haman's cruelty. . . then the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose."

The relief is almost a line-for-line copy of a woodcut by Pierre Eskrich (also called Pierre du Vase), which appeared first in 1562, and again in 1581 in the *Biblia Sacra* published in Lyons by, respectively, Phillipe and Guillaume Roville (Figure 13). It is one of two illustrated Lyons Bibles which served as print sources furthest removed in



Figure 13: *Esther before Ahasuerus*, woodcut by Pierre Eskrich, *Biblia Sacra*, Guillaume Roville, 1581, Lyon

Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Founda-
tions

time from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tombstone reliefs we have studied. The delicate French woodcuts were copied for two centuries in Bibles all over Europe. The images emerged in applications ranging from embroidery, to furniture carving, to stucco wall decoration. A similar Esther scene ornaments the title page of a book of biblical poetry by the Sephardic poet Juan, alias Mosseh, Pinto Delgado, who died in Amsterdam on December 23, 1653. His *Poema de la Reyna Ester*, dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu, was published by David du Petit Val, 1627, Rouen. The Rouen image was copied from a woodcut by Bernard Salomon for *La Sainte Bible*, first issued by Jean de Tournes, 1553, Lyons. We consulted the 1581 copy of the Roville *Biblia Sacra* in the Rare Books and Manuscript Division; The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. We gratefully acknowledge the Library's permission to reproduce the woodcut.

In both relief and print King Ahasuerus sits back languidly on a canopied throne, his feet on a pillow. With his right hand he stretches out his scepter toward Esther, who kneels before him. Two maids attend her; one holds up her train. She clasps her hands in supplication. Surrounding the king within his columned porch are his attendant soldiers and advisers. Four of the hooded advisers and two of the soldiers, one standing with a spear and one sitting at lower right with sword and shield, appear in identical poses in print and relief. In the upper left the relief reproduces the round tower with high doorway and the building behind with high gable seen in the print. The relief omits everything else, including the gallows. Instead it substitutes, behind the building, two tall towers. The oblong frame of the woodcut becomes, in the relief, an arched proscenium to frame the dramatic scene. Plays based on the Book of Esther had long enjoyed popularity in the Dutch Republic. The 1714 Curaçao relief for Ester Senior found its complement in the Mordechay relief sixteen years later on the tombstone of her brother in law Mosseh at Ouderkerk.

Emmanuel published the relief detail of Ester's tombstone but he never transcribed or translated the Portuguese epitaph below it or the Hebrew inscribed in the frame around it. We take the opportunity to do so here. The Portuguese is on a fringed curtain below the

framed relief. On either side hang clusters of fruit and flowers, a *vanitas* device alluding to mortality. Three winged genie heads, also mortality symbols, nestle amidst two more swags of vegetation at the top. The Portuguese reads: SEPULTURA/Da yncurtada dona/Ester muller que foy/De Selomoh Senyor/Faleceo em 27 de Kisleu/Do anno 5475/S(ua) A(lma) G(oze) d(a) G(loria). It translates as: "Grave of the departed lady/Ester who was wife to/Selomoh Senyor/who died on Kislev 27/Of the year 5475 (Let her soul drink of glory)." Leaf fronds as mortality devices fill the two top corners around the relief. On the arch is a conflation of passages from Esther 2:15 and Jacob's dream episode in Genesis 28:11: "... found grace ... and lay down to sleep and dreamed." Below is a conflation of a phrase from Esther 2:8 and a paraphrase from 8:5: "... and Esther was brought to the king's house ... and nullified the decree."

The Amsterdam-Hague-London-Hamburg Orbit

Romeyn de Hooghe's 1704 etchings served as models for two Curaçao stones. His student Aveele produced a title page dated 1681 which influenced the design of five more, there and at Ouderkerk. De Hooghe had earlier completed a cycle of etchings for the Sephardic publisher David de Castro Tartas. They graced a collection of sermons and addresses by community scholars celebrating the 1675 inauguration of the new Portuguese synagogue of Amsterdam. Besides various views of the new Sephardic building, he depicted the new 1671 structure housing the Hoogduits, or German Jewish, congregation across the way on Houtgracht plaza (site of the present Amsterdam Jewish Museum on Jacob Meijerplein), rituals of the Portuguese Jews, and Amsterdam townhouses of three prominent Sephardim. The homes were those of: David de Pinto, Breestreet, later called Jodenbreestraat (restored and now a public library); Manuel Baron Belmonte, alias Isaac Nunes Belmonte, on Herengracht (Gentlemen's Avenue, now no. 586); and Jeronimo Nunes d'Acosta, alias Moses Curiel, on what is now Nieuwe Herengracht 49 (restored as the site of the present municipal waterworks administration). Da Costa/Curiel was, with Belmonte, the Jewish community representative to the Hague government. He was also consul in

the Netherlands for the king of Portugal with power of attorney for the deputies of the Portuguese Brazilian Company.

The Nieuwe Herengracht was an extension of the original avenue in the section newly laid out southeast of the central city. Da Costa/Curiel lived on the same street as Judah de Jacob Senior, who also lived in the Hague. Judah owned two houses facing what had been the Academy Tuin, Botanical Gardens for growing herbs and other medicinals used by the medical profession. To enter the Gardens one had to present a token, for which one paid annual dues after passing a license exam; it was similar to the medallion of the craft guilds. It is likely that the Semach Aboab relatives were members. In 1711 Judah Senior Henriques of the Hague gave his Amsterdam-based brother, Moses de Jacob Senior Henriques, proxy to mortgage the properties as pro forma security on his promise to deliver rye he owed the City of Amsterdam and its private investors. He also mortgaged his two houses on the southeastern side of Nieuwe Amstelstraat, a street parallel to and northwest of Nieuwe Herengracht. Cousin Mosseh de Mordechay Senior lived nearby in the house of Benjamin Senior, on Weesperstraat off Nieuwe Keisersgracht. Weesperstraat is a cross-street between Nieuwe Keisersgracht on the southeast and Nieuwe Herengracht on the northwest.

Judah Senior Henriques (d. 1716) was the son of Mordechay Senior's brother Jacob de Jeuda Senior Henriques. On November 19, 1695, a Jeuda Senior Henriques signed a certificate of noninheritable rights of citizenship (*poorterscedul*). It was likely he who participated in a 1698 contract to deliver forage for the company Machado and Pereira, provisioners (*Providoors*) in King William III's service. In 1730 Judah's heirs were still liable to the state for outstanding debts. Judah (de Mordechay) Senior and sister Ester, widow of Judah Senior Henriques, were co-executors of his will. In 1718–1719 they had to sign numerous papers on behalf of the late Judah, who was described as an Amsterdam merchant with considerable business negotiations and who had left many accounts open at his death. In order "to avoid shame and difficulties to families" some agreements required the signatures of Judah Senior Henriques' two London-based sons Jacob and Judah (*sic*). Included in these agreements was Mosseh's sister Rachel, then in London to attend to the affairs of her

late husband Abraham de Jacob Fundam, partner of the late Judah. Jacob Fundam had been a comrade from the days he, the brothers Mordechay and Jacob de Jeuda Senior, and their father Judah Senior/Philippe Henriques managed Brazilian sugar. Fundam's children intermarried with Seniors first in Amsterdam and then in Curaçao, completing the cycle of return to the New World.

In 1704 the company of Moses Senior Henriques and Company, together with brothers and brothers-in-law at home and abroad, imported cocoa, cotton, pepper, sapon wood, snuff tobacco and Varinas tobacco. We know this from records of the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company, the 1728 will of Mosseh, and the 1733 will of David. Mosseh stored diverse merchandise in a warehouse on Swanenburgerstraat, and tobacco in a shed on the Breestraat under the aegis of Semach and Lopes. Mosseh's uncle, David Lopes Henriques, was brother to: (1) Mosseh's mother Sarah, who had married Mordechay Senior in 1658; (2) Ester, who married Mosseh's uncle Jacob de Judah Senior the same date; and (3) Ribca Lopes Henriques, who in 1668 married Dr. Daniel Semach Aboab.

David Lopes Henriques' wife Abigail was the daughter of Isaac Rodrigues Isidro, alias Isaac Baruch. Isaac was the nephew and business associate of the wealthy Hamburg-based Manuel Isidro, alias Manuel Dirksen, alias Jacob Baruch, who handled Portuguese Moroccan trade after the 1640 restoration at a time when this enterprise was closed to the Dutch. Manuel (d. 1666) and son Jacob the younger spent time in Madrid and Cadiz. From the latter city in 1668 Jacob sold their Hamburg house on Walstrasse to cousin Isaac. For a Sephardic Jew to own property in the city of Hamburg at that time betokened a great deal of wealth. As a young man Isaac tended to stretch the rules by which the Hamburg Jewish community operated; his uncle interceded for him regarding fines and demerits. In 1666 he got a sharp reprimand from the governing board for upsetting his family by traveling to Lubeck for two weeks in the company of non-Jews. In 1670 Isaac was recorded as a new settler in Gluckstadt. In 1674, when Isaac's daughter signed the marriage bans with David Lopes Henriques, David's mother Rachel attended. Abigail was identified as from Seville, and it was her grandmother who attended her.

In the 1674 Amsterdam tax assessment on the 200th penny, David Lopes Henriques was recorded as living in the city with his mother and two brothers, not named. No mention was made of his three sisters who had already married. The 1668 Amsterdam marriage bans for sister Ribca and Dr. Semach Aboab note her living on Batavierstraat. This was about half an hour's walk south to the synagogue area, Vlooienburg, where David's mother lived, and the Nieuwe Herengracht. Daniel Levy de Barrios' 1683 saga of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam, "Triumpho del gobierno popular," notes that members of the charitable society Aby Yetomim that year included Jacob de Juda Senior and deceased legatees Jacob Lopes Henriques and Raquel Lopes Henriques. Jacob Lopes Henriques may have been David's father although David entered the *Dotar* on his own in 1675, as no. 367, right after Mordechay Senior's 396. In 1716 David's son Jacob inherited his place in the *Dotar*.

One of David's brothers may have been Selomo de Jacob Lopes Henriques, who in 1678 married Sara de Moses Gabay Henriques. She was the sister of Ester, who married Daniel de la Penha, later president of the Rotterdam Portuguese congregation. The figured de la Penha tombstones of Ester (d. 1697) and Daniel (d. 1717) are as beautiful as those of Mosseh Senior and his family. Widower Selomo remarried in 1689 to Rebecca Henriques Faro, branches of whose family settled in Curaçao and Hamburg. A Moses Lopes Henriques based in Curaçao may have been David's other brother.

*The Curaçao Connection:
Jacob Senior and the Inquisition at Cartagena*

Manuel Belmonte, with David and Jacob Senior among others in lesser capacities, was a silent partner in the Koeymans 1685–1689 Curaçao assiento. Earlier and afterward he managed the fortunes of the Dutch state especially in its maritime negotiations with Spain. Apart from trade agreements he secured Dutch aid to Spain, the erstwhile oppressor, now an ally against the common enemy, France. Belmonte was considered so important in these matters that, as count palatine and resident of the king of Spain in the Netherlands, he was given a place of honor in the 1677 funeral cortege for battle

hero Admiral Michiel de Ruyter. He had successfully lobbied to obtain a dukedom for de Ruyter from the Spanish crown. Unfortunately it was posthumous, as the admiral had died on April 29, 1676, in the battle of Syracuse, the month the title was conferred. Belmonte was placed not with the official leaders of the Sephardic Jewish community, or even with other consuls, such as those of Spain and Genoa, but farther ahead, with the commissioner of the crown of Denmark and the immediate de Ruyter family members. The royal pomp and circumstance of the procession in Amsterdam's Dam Square, with horses, equerries, trumpets, banners, an honor guard, and scores of diplomats, scholars and community leaders, was commemorated in a contemporary print of the event by Daniel Stopenael, the same artist who made engravings of Amsterdam country homes along the river Vecht, including those of prominent Sephardim.

The stones are our visual, metaphorical connection to a group of people whose skills and motivations, conditioned in part by their religion and national origin, brought them into the center of history at a critical moment. These monuments were not aberrations and not marginal to Judaism at the time and the place in which they were commissioned. They were very fitting monuments; in the world system of that time the families who commissioned them might have been invented had they not already existed. Their financial, linguistic and diplomatic skills, and their family and business networks in an evolving global economy, made them welcome in the developing maritime capitals of Venice, Constantinople, London, Hamburg and Amsterdam. Political and religious despotism, which forced them to leave their earliest European homeland, Roman Catholic Spain and Portugal, confirmed their adherence to Judaism. It also gave them an advantage as agents of countries competing with Spanish imperial ambitions. Their widespread business and kinship associations nurtured Dutch fortunes as long as Spain remained an economic threat and before England assumed maritime dominance in the mid-eighteenth century.

By examining situations selected from 150 years of Senior history, and by placing them within a known general historical framework, we can begin to form a collective biography of a family. This is a the-

oretical construct, subject to later refinements and revisions. Documents presently available have permitted us to see exactly how particular family members responded to events. They offer glimpses of how they perceived themselves and what they did. When we review personal wills, deeds and reports, and read beyond the formulas of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century officialese, we are able to hear the particular voices and temperaments of various members of the family. We get to know who and what they cherished, desired, feared, honored, dismissed or held in contempt. This documented self-awareness and the sense of the moment and meaning of an act carries over into their choice of Jewish gravestones. The monuments should be compared to those of other public figures in Dutch history who took the greatest risks due to their historical situation and achieved the greatest measures of success and glory.

The greatest risk-taker in the family Senior was Jacob Senior, alias Philippe Henriques. He was the Curaçao factor for the Portuguese Royal African Company and commander of a fleet of brigantines and galliots that plied Spanish trade routes. Relatively poor in arable land, Curaçao had the best harbor in the Western Hemisphere. In 1675 Curaçao was recognized by as a free port and hub by all participants in the Spanish/Portuguese slave *assiento* in the New World. The *assiento* had become an instrument of international diplomacy. It had begun as a joint asset during Spain's annexation of Portugal, 1580–1640. Afterward, as their bankruptcy increased, the two countries competed in assigning the *assiento* to the highest bidder at international peace conferences. To obtain this exclusionary trade agreement was equivalent to signing a treaty of alliance. The contract went from the Genoese in 1660 to the Dutch in 1661. At first the Dutch were guarantors for the Genoese, but by the 1670s the Dutch West India Company took over active management. The West India Company subcontracted to Denmark, Sweden, Brandenburg and England. The French won it as part of a settlement with Spain in 1696 but lacking the necessary finances, ceded it to the English in 1713. The English South Sea Company managed it until its suspension and cancellation, 1739–1748, during Anglo-Spanish hostilities. By that time foreign penetration into the Spanish Empire, encour-

aged by the *assiento*, had weakened the contract's effect as Spain's bargaining chip.

Loopholes permitted unofficial (or silent) participation in one or another country's *assiento*. The Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company nominally controlled the Dutch *assiento*, with a factor and associates in the home country serving as a form of checks and balances to a factor and associates on the island. In reality the factors received direct orders from the States General, effectively from the stadholder, bypassing West India Company supervision although they were required to make reports to it. Curaçao was also the depot for transport of manufactured goods or home country items to colonists: merchandise, or "cargacoims," as described in David Senior's will. These were traded for New World goods and reached Europe on the return voyage, with stops in both directions at all ports sharing in the contract. Certificates of control signed by the cooperating countries' admiralty boards attested to the legality of the ship's lading. This was to assure that no contraband was aboard which might be illegally delivered to ports of countries with which the partner countries were at war. This was a typical measure in the first half of the seventeenth century when Spain embargoed all Portuguese ports. In practice there was much contraband trade. It flourished by means of forged certificates and collusion with business partners operating under aliases in countries outwardly hostile to each other. New Christian agents in Portugal especially benefitted from their associations with Sephardic relatives in the Netherlands and Hamburg.

On May 22, 1699, Jacob set sail in command of a fleet of ships ferrying merchandise and slaves from Curaçao to his long-time patron Don Gaspar de Andrade, factor general of the Portuguese *assiento* based in Cartagena. It was also the seat of the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition in the Spanish dependencies. In spring 1697 the city and environs had been sacked by the French. After this attack the tribunal went into a decline from which it never recovered. The seat also became a base from which French religionists, including Franciscan Capuchins, sent out missions. Discovery of embarrassing misdemeanors among ranking members of the Spanish civic and religious personnel caused rapid turnovers and shifts in leadership,

coupled with xenophobia and paranoia. On June 7 Jacob learned that Governor Don Diego de los Rios y Quizada and his entourage had been relieved of their posts and replaced by Don Juan Dias Pimiento and staff.

Jacob reached port on June 10, hoping to recover heavy debts from the king of Spain incurred to his company by the former governor. Spanish royal officials arrived to transfer the cargo of slaves and merchandise to Portuguese vessels and bring them to land. Jacob himself remained in the harbor awaiting permission to land from the lord inquisitor. Friends showed up, surprised at the delay. Midday, June 15, a canoe of twelve soldiers and some civilians approached his ship. Several soldiers, armed, sprang aboard asking for Captain Philippo Henriques. Jacob, incognito, told them they were on the brigantine of Philippo Henriques, that the captain was in town but would return soon, and asked what they wanted. They insisted on delivering the message personally to Henriques and returned to their canoe. Shortly afterward Jacob, in captain's uniform, announced himself as Henriques and asked what they wanted. A man of sixty or seventy appeared who told him he was under arrest and was to be brought by armed guard to the prison of the Holy Inquisition. They ignored his protests that he was a Netherlands citizen not subject to the Inquisition. Jacob/Philippo then instructed his crew to relay this news to Governor Bastiaan Bernagie of Curaçao and to his friends there, and he was led away.

In Jacob's August 21, 1700, report to the West India Company, requested by Curaçao Governor Nicolaas van Beck, he described his seventy-three day ordeal of imprisonment. We have consulted the copy of the report stored at the Hague Royal Library as Hamelberg Collection no. 120-B-10:XVI-E. For the first two months he was kept ignorant of the nature of his crimes while he suffered from a fever and from daily audiences with the inquisitor, Don Juan de la Isaca Alvarado. To his interrogator he pointed out that he was a Jew, born in the Netherlands, who served his country, the States General of the United Netherlands. Additionally, in the last war with France he had served as a captain under the command of the former stadholder, now king of Great Britain. As he gave daily depositions, which a secretary copied down for him to sign, he repeatedly asked to be told the

nature of his crimes and to be confronted by his accusers so that he might respond and acquit himself. He also pointed out that in the days of Governor Don Martin de Gomez de Cavallo y La Cerna, he had been received cordially by the former inquisitor, Don Gomez de Figueroa. To all this Alvarado would repeat that he'd find out everything soon enough, after which Jacob would be marched back to his cell and locked in for the night. Jacob was put in the care of an Augustin padre, Fray Lucas de St. Joseph, who tried to convert him so as to save his soul and mitigate the eventual judgment. He failed in his efforts but visited almost daily with Latin scriptural texts, which Jacob could not read, to discuss the nature of salvation and faith. Concerned about the illness, he obtained a doctor known to Jacob, although not much could be done to ease him. Despite the padre's repeated assurances that things would turn out well, Jacob continued to languish from fever and anxiety. Among other things he worried about the fate of his commanderless crew and fleet, and his financial obligations.

Not until August 13 was Jacob confronted by his accuser, the former secretary and acting *fiscael* of the Inquisition, Captain General Don Miguel de Icharri y Daois. He was the man who had originally captured him. In the trial deposition Jacob/Philippo was accused of: (1) trafficking in the West Indies in a trade where no Jews were allowed on order of the king of Spain; (2) doing this knowing the rules against it; (3) publicly slaughtering and koshering animals; (4) forcing the crew and passengers to eat meat he or a servant had slaughtered; (5) trying to convert his crew and passengers to Judaism by leading them in Hebrew prayers. His responses to the five accusations give some idea of his attitude toward the whole business. He pointed out that: (1) for eleven or twelve years he had been navigating these waters on behalf of the Portuguese sovereign; (2) he never knew the *assiento* was restricted to Roman Catholics; (3) he would never slaughter animals even if permitted because he would have it done by someone who knew the koshering laws; (4) as commander of a vessel which was like a home to him he would not dishonor anyone aboard with the indignity of making them eat or behave in any other manner by force; (5) it would be difficult for the crew and passengers to be converted if they couldn't understand Hebrew prayers. Moreover, he

noted, it was not likely that he was recognized as a Jew because he did not engage in any outward display of the religion in which he was brought up. And in any case he would not merit the trust he had enjoyed from colleagues all these years if he had engaged in the appalling behavior of which he was accused. To the five accusations the *fiscael* added new ones at the last minute, provided by unnamed witnesses, about Jacob's attempts to convert others to Judaism and he asked what he had to answer. Jacob retorted that the whole business was a "bagatelle" not worth dignifying with a reply and that all further questions should be referred to his attorney. The real purpose of the investigation and threats was to discover who his Curaçao investor friends were, who was in his debt and how much was owed him. In fact the king of Spain was his greatest debtor, for 5,000 pesos spent on arms and ammunition. But Jacob had learned soon after his arrival that the present governor was not liable for the debts incurred during a previous administration and that he would have to settle matters directly with the former governor.

His judge was the inquisitor who had interrogated him all summer. His lawyer was the Spanish padre who had daily looked after him. On August 27 the record of the trial and judgment were presented to him in duplicate copies which he had to sign. After he received the judgment, a fine of fifty pieces of eight, he was warned to desist from sailing in the area again or risk a fine of 2,000 pieces of eight and imprisonment in a dungeon for two years. Upon his release Jacob was met with a carriage and taken to the cloister of San Diego to recover. All his papers and personal belongings which were with him in his cell were brought to the cloister. There he was greeted by confidants whom he had known and done business with in the past. Especially upset by news of his experience was Governor Pimiento, who promised to do all in his power to help him, putting his house and domains at his service. On August 28 Jacob received from the inquisitional secretary all of his identification papers. He also received, for signature, a bill for the fine plus a separate bill for 335 pieces of eight and 8 reales, the cost of food and shelter during his imprisonment. Thirteen pieces of eight and 8 reales were deduct-ed from the bill, being the money Jacob had on him when he was arrested. At the end of his report to the West India Company Jacob

wrote that he thanked God he was free of the Inquisition and was chiefly concerned that he could carry out the contract that had been delegated to him by Governor Bernagie and his investor friends in Curaçao. He continued sailing the Spanish Main for Portugal, England and his own country, the Netherlands, until 1711. Outraged at the shabby treatment he had received at the hands of the Inquisition he took the opportunity in 1704 of smuggling to Curaçao a Capuchin friar, Victor de Dôle. The Frenchman was a member of the Franciscan opposition to the Spanish in the competition for Roman Catholic souls. Jacob died November 15, 1718, and was buried with his people in the Jewish cemetery on Curaçao.

Curaçao may have shaped the Senior family's destiny more than any other geographical and economic sphere in which they moved. It was the Dutch stronghold in the New World after the loss of Brazil and New Netherlands. As a colony chartered under the auspices of the Amsterdam chamber of the West India Company, Curaçao was permitted, even encouraged, to evolve in response to local conditions with greater independence than any other Dutch possession. The West India Company had reorganized in 1674 with a director general normally administering Curaçao (and New Netherlands until the English conquest) in the name of the central government at the Hague. The director/governor transmitted procedures designed by the company's board of Ten Gentlemen (*Heeren X*) in direct conferral with the stadholder's executive office. The States General at the Hague gave advice and consent. But West India Company directors, who rotated duties every four years, were more like monitors and reporters of local conditions than strong enforcers of conduct. It was hard to impose a system of economic, political and social conformity and obedience such as had operated so successfully in the territories of the East India Company. The New World was filled with too many competing political entities. The colonists in each national territory were not necessarily bound by ties of loyalty to their home country. The New World was rich in opportunity but also in danger. Piracy on the high seas and attacks on colonies became the way one nation might take revenge for the loss of a battle or negotiating point in Europe. The original West India Company, chartered soon after Curaçao was captured from Spain in 1634, had a

poor economic and defense strategy for the island. This ended in its bankruptcy and loss of faith in it by the settlers. The new 1674 West India Company delegated economic and political power to the island council. The Seniors were leading participants in Curaçao self-government. They were members of the ruling class, like the patricians in the home country. Moreover, because of their strategic geographical placement they were in a unique and unparalleled position to help shape Dutch fortunes both politically and economically throughout the world during the century of the Republic's greatest growth.

Because of his diplomatic and linguistic skills and the fact that he had an economic investment there, David Senior was sent to Coro in 1722 as a personal representative of Curaçao's governor, Jan Noach Du Fay. His mission was to claim reparations for a galliot stranded off the coast of Venezuela while fleeing pirates. He succeeded. It was also David who lobbied in 1726 in the town council against a special surtax to be levied on goods from Spain received by residents, which meant Sephardic merchants. Money for extra fortifications and for a hospital was being raised, in the wake of recent French piracy. Certain anti-Semitic members of the government resented the fact that citizens so connected with the recent Spanish enemy should benefit from civic protection. They claimed that the Jews were responsible for Curaçao's vulnerability. In these and in public and private forums David was an outspoken and fervent defender of his faith. It explains why the Hebrew epitaph to David Senior, by David Franco Mendes, includes the phrase: "and the governor heeded his counsel."

The members of the Senior family effectively, sometimes dramatically, found appropriate outlets for their skills in a dynamic, evolving early modern European world. Their contributions to Jewish life are documented in every city in which they lived during the century and a half of their greatest energy. The high point of their collective visibility and success coincides with that of the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nowhere else at that time could Jews participate in the world and believe in the future with the zest and confidence that should be considered a human birthright.

In this way Mosseh in Amsterdam and his brothers in the Hague and Curaçao affirmed permanent ties to Judaism. Their stones of memory still speak to us today. They recall for us, after more than three centuries, a dynasty spanning the European continent past the Mediterranean, and reaching across the Atlantic to the new worlds in the Americas.

End Note

Data for this discussion were in part derived from published and unpublished material cited in footnotes and bibliography in my 1979 New York University doctoral dissertation, "Sepulchral Monuments of the Jews of Amsterdam in the 17th and 18th Centuries," now being revised for publication. Further data, including the Senior genealogy, were obtained from the following agencies and persons: Released time and funding: from a 1982 National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Summer Grant; a 1982 fellowship from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture; a 1983–1984 City University of New York Faculty Research Award; a 1985–1986 City University of New York Sabbatical and Scholar Incentive Award. Gracious guidance in examining and securing copies of data at Amsterdam's Municipal Archives came from Hans Ernst, S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, and Odette Vlessing. At Amsterdam University's Rosenthaliana Library expert assistance came from Chief Librarian Dr. A. K. Offenbergl and Dr. F. J. Hoogewoud. At Amsterdam's Jewish Museum help and hospitality came from the curator, Dr. Rabbi Edward van Voolen. Coaching in translations came from Wim Heijnen of Amsterdam, who is completing a study of the Sephardic Palache family. At Ouderkerk cemetery, beginning in 1971, help came from late Secretary Emeritus of the Portuguese Jewish Community L. A. Vega, and in summer 1988 from Rabbi and Mrs. H. Rodrigues Pereira. In Hamburg Professor Dr. Peter Freimark, Director of the Institute for the History of German Jewry, provided extraordinary personal and professional support and encouragement, as did Dr. Ina Lorenz and Günter Marwedel. Hamburg Municipal Archivist Jürgen Sielemann provided guidance in examining and securing copies of data. At the New York Public Library Dr. Roberta Waddel

exemplified the fine help given by the Special Collections staff. At the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Chief Librarian Dr. Philip Miller and staff provided the same, plus guidance in Hebrew arcana. Dr. Herman Prins Salomon, Professor of Romance Languages at the State University of New York, Albany, shared his inventory of Sephardic arcana and imagery. Mary Joyce A. Hardey of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Washington, D.C., made, for comparison purposes, recent photos of many of the sculptured tombstones of Curaçao.