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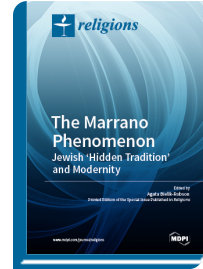
## The Marrano Phenomenon

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What we call here the ‘Marrano phenomenon’ is still a relatively unexplored fact of modern Western culture: the presence of the borderline Jewish identity which avoids clear-cut cultural and religious attribution, but nevertheless exerts significant influence on modern humanities. Our aim, however, is not a historical study of the Marranos (or conversos), i.e., the mostly Spanish and Portuguese Jews of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, who were forced to convert to Christianity, but were suspected of retaining their Judaism ‘undercover’: such an approach already exists and has been developed within the field of historical research. We rather want to apply the ‘Marrano metaphor’ to explore the fruitful area of mixture and crossover which allowed modern thinkers, writers, and artists of the Jewish origin to enter the realm of universal communication—without, at the same time, making them relinquish their Jewishness, which they subsequently developed as a ‘hidden tradition’. What is of special interest to us is the modern development of the non-normative forms of religious thinking located on the borderline between Christianity and Judaism, from Spinoza to Derrida.



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