Between Toleration and Persecution: The Relationship of the Inquisition and Crypto-Jews on the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1589–1663*

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To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico, was published by Columbia University Press in 2005 with a generous grant from the estate of Eva Feld. In 2006 the book was awarded the “Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá Prize” by the Historical Society of New Mexico for outstanding historical publication of the year. In 2007, the book won the Southwest Book Award, given by the Border Regional Library Association. This article originally appeared in Religion in New Spain, eds. S. Schroeder and S. Poole, University of New Mexico Press, 2007, pp. 218–237, and is reprinted in issue 23 of Conversations, with permission.

Introduction

To the popular mind, the Mexican Inquisition conjures up images of torture chambers, prisoners strapped to the rack, their screams echoing throughout the Palacio de la Inquisición, or perhaps autos de fe, with countless numbers of Jews burning at the stake, the stench of their flesh permeating the streets of Mexico City. Did these ghastly events really take place? Certainly, but rarely with the frequency or intensity that many authors would have us believe.

The perception that the Holy Office of the Inquisition had engaged in the relentless and continuous persecution of crypto-Jews[1] in New Spain (and throughout the Indies) is largely the function of the Black Legend, anti-Spanish historiography that developed from the early nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, represented principally by Protestant, Northern European scholars, and, later by authors analyzing the Mexican Inquisition from the perspective of Jewish history.[2] The works produced by this school of historiography placed a heavy emphasis on the role that the Holy Office played in the persecution of crypto-Jews, despite the fact that the Mexican inquisitors concerned

themselves far more with such mundane breaches of faith and morality, as blasphemy, bigamy, witchcraft, impersonation of priests, and solicitation of women in the confessional. Moreover, these authors often engaged in the inappropriate imposition of moral value judgments backward in time, ranting against the "moral depravity" of the Inquisition, and its "corrupt," "unjust" procedures, such as holding "unfair trials," where "flimsy evidence" was admitted.[3] If such outrage were directed at modern contemporary institutions, few would dispute these harsh words of condemnation. The imposition of such twentieth-century judgments backwards to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a decidedly less-enlightened and less ecumenical age, however, runs counter to standards of responsible historical scholarship.[4]

It is the thesis of this article that, in contrast to the interpretation outlined above, the policy of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Spain toward crypto-Jews was one more of toleration than persecution, relative to the experience between the two entities in Spain. Furthermore, the more distant one found oneself from the metropolis, the less intense and less frequent the attention paid by the inquisitors to the *conversos*, even within the context of this policy of relative toleration.

Iberian Backgrounds

The roots of New Spain's crypto-Jewish settlement penetrate deeply into the history of Spain and Mexico. While legend placed Jews in the Iberian peninsula as early as the sixth century bce, more solid accounts trace the origins of the community to the Diaspora that occurred in the Late Roman Empire, when Jews expelled from their ancestral homeland found themselves scattered all across the Mediterranean region. Under the rule of the Visigoths, patterns of economic life began to emerge among Spanish Jews that would change little for centuries to come. Concentrated for the most part in the towns of Cataluña and Andalucía, and in Toledo, they engaged in commerce, both internal and overseas, and administered estates of Christian nobility. Some Jews owned their own land, and farmed it themselves, or utilized slave labor. Relations between Jews and the ruling Visigoths were by no means peaceful. Codes were enacted that severely restricted the opportunity for Jews to hold office, intermarry, and build synagogues. Increasingly through the sixth and seventh centuries, zealous Visigoth kings sought the conversion of Spanish Jews, achieving some moderate success. Those who retained their faith, like their descendants in New Mexico who were also forced to pursue their religious beliefs in a hostile environment, tended to observe such basic rituals as sanctification of the Sabbath and festivals, dietary laws, and circumcision.[5]

With the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711, Spanish Jews received a reprieve from persecutions and attempts at forced conversions. While the Muslims by no means pursued a policy of total religious freedom, the general atmosphere was one of toleration of non-Muslim religious practices.[6] Barriers to social and economic mobility, imposed earlier by the Visigoths, were by and large removed. Jewish communities in areas under Muslim rule, and eventually in Christian areas as well, were allowed a large degree of autonomy in the administration of their affairs. Geographically, Jewish settlement expanded throughout the peninsula, initially to the major cities of Andalucía, such as Córdoba, Seville, Granada, and eventually through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, into the more heavily Christian regions of Castile, León, and Aragón. During this period Jews tended to pursue urban trades, as artisans, craftspeople, and shopkeepers, in addition to serving as tax farmers for Christian nobles. In so doing, they often found themselves the object of scorn and hostility at the hands of their poorer, and relatively more rural Christian neighbors.[7]

This hostility to the Jews of Spain that had been growing among the Christian common people, nurtured by generations of civil wars, taxes, and religious crusades against the infidel, began to manifest itself more clearly through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The church mounted a concentrated campaign to convert the Spanish Jews to Christianity through a combination of both peaceful and violent means. This conversion effort achieved a high degree of success, especially among those wealthier and better educated elements of the Jewish communities. For many of them the transition from Judaism to Christianity was made without a great deal of inner spiritual conflict, for it represented a change of religion in name only. But many *conversos* and their offspring did not take

their new faith seriously. They continued to participate in the social, political, and religious affairs of their old synagogues. The pain of conversion was further eased by the new and unprecedented opportunities now available to these "New Christians." Barriers that hitherto prevented them as Jews from rising to economic, social, or political prominence now disappeared, and there came upon the scene instantaneously a new class of nobles, courtiers, municipal office holders, and literary figures, obviously distinguishable from their Old Christian counterparts by their origin, manner, and appearance.[8]

The presence of a large and prosperous group of apparently insincere converts became increasingly disturbing to the Old Christian community through the fifteenth century. Anti-*converso* sentiment, which spread throughout Spain, soon found itself manifested in the official policies of ruling monarchs. The two emerging rulers, Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabel of Castile, capitalized upon this strong emotion in order to unite their subjects and thus solidify control in their dominions. The establishment of the Holy Office of the Inquisition by the Catholic Monarchs in concert with Pope Sixtus IV in 1483 may be seen as a logical institutional manifestation of the deeply-rooted religious feeling against the *conversos* and also of the royal desire to implement their sovereignty over their newly consolidated realms. Moreover, the Catholic Monarchs, through the Inquisition, sought to break down the economic power of the increasingly influential middle class, largely composed of Jews and *conversos*.[9]

The ranks of the Spanish *converso*s were further swelled as a result of the edict issued on March 31, 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabel expelling the Jews from Castile and Aragón. Estimates vary on the number of Jews who opted to leave the Spanish realms, but it seems safe to conclude that of the estimated 200,000 Jews living in Castile and Aragón in 1492, well over half of them fled to safer havens. Of these exiles, most sought refuge across the frontier in Portugal, the others fleeing to France, Italy, and Turkish-controlled regions of the eastern Mediterranean. Those who remained in the Spanish kingdoms submitted to the conversion process and became, at least nominally, *cristianos católicos*. From this time forward, Catholicism was to be the only legally practiced religion, both in Spain and in the vast empire of the Indies that was about to be uncovered by Christopher Columbus in the very same year of the expulsion.[10]

The observance of Jewish rites and customs, now outlawed, was forced underground, to be practiced only in the secrecy of one's home. No longer Jews, those New Christians who chose to continue these observances did so as Christians, in violation of ecclesiastical law, and were often prosecuted for these relapses by the Holy Office of the Inquisition, the institution charged with the enforcement of Catholic orthodoxy among Spanish Christians, both Old and New alike. The situation was markedly different for those estimated 60,000 Spanish Jews who migrated westward across the Iberian Peninsula to join the smaller native Jewish population of Portugal. Although they were forced to either convert or leave the country by edict of Manoel I in 1497, conversion was for the most part nominal, and the enforcement of orthodoxy lax. In sharp contrast to the pressure on Spanish *converso*s to abandon all vestiges of their old faith, the attitude in Portugal was far more tolerant, and Portuguese New Christians tended to continue to observe Judaic laws and rituals discreetly, yet in an atmosphere of relative security. Thus, through the sixteenth century in Portugal there arose a new and distinct group of crypto-Jews, differing from the Spanish *conversos* by the retention of their old faith and religious practices.[11]

The Portuguese *conversos* distinguished themselves by their vigorous activity in the economic sphere, not only in the Iberian Peninsula, but also in Portugal's overseas colonies in America, Asia, and Africa, where these individuals played a crucial role in organizing and financing the initial commercial enterprises. For a variety of reasons, the last half of the sixteenth century witnessed an intensity of royal and ecclesiastical activity against crypto-Jews in Portugal. As in Spain, New Christians represented a threat by rising middle class, bourgeois elements against the older ruling aristocracy. Furthermore, the Protestant Reformation sparked a new spirit of vigilance among religious elements within the country, and a consequent strengthening of the powers of the Inquisition. Sealing the fate of the Portuguese crypto-Jews was the union of Spain and Portugal under the rule of Philip II, which came about as a result of a crisis of succession in 1581. The resulting increase in the activity of the

Portuguese Inquisition against the crypto-Jewish community stimulated a veritable invasion of Portuguese New Christians into the Spanish realms from the 1580s through the early decades of the seventeenth century.[12]

Crypto-Jewish Settlement in New Spain

Within a few years, Portuguese crypto-Jews were also finding their way to distant parts of the Spanish Indies, including the viceroyalty of New Spain. The heaviest period of immigration occurred in the 1620s. This was owing to a variety of factors. Undoubtedly many crypto-Jews sought to take advantage of the relaxation in the immigration laws.[13] However, it is also clear that an equally strong motive for emigrating was the improvement of their material condition. In addition, New Spain served as a potential haven for crypto-Jews who wished to practice their secret religious rites in an atmosphere of relative security. In contrast to the Iberian Peninsula, where the Holy Office posed a constant threat to New Christians, the Mexican Inquisition was not particularly concerned with the persecution of *judaizantes*. With two exceptional periods of activity against crypto-Jews, one in the 1580s and 1590s, and the other in the 1640s, the Holy Office focused its attention upon less spectacular breaches of Catholic orthodoxy, such as witchcraft, bigamy, blasphemy, and the solicitation of women by priests. Thus, once the troubled Iberian crypto-Jews left their homeland for New Spain, they would be able to begin new lives, relatively free from the persecution of the past, and pregnant with the expectation of a comfortable material existence.

Those *conversos* who arrived from Spain and Portugal in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries did not find themselves in a completely alien environment. Viable crypto-Jewish communities had flourished in Mexico City and other towns in New Spain since the early 1500s. Mexican crypto-Jews tended to pursue mercantile trades in greater numbers compared with other endeavors. Their careers encompassed a wide variety of trading activities. Some crypto-Jews, stationed for the most part either in Mexico City or Veracruz, engaged in trade across the Atlantic, importing goods from Spain, as well as slaves from Angola, while exporting silver, dyestuffs, and other New Spanish products. Others worked out of Acapulco, and concerned themselves with the Philippines trade. Still others sought to take advantage of the profitable cacao trade with Maracaibo and Caracas, while certain other *conversos* maintained commercial ties with Peru. Exploiting the sources and markets within the viceroyalty of New Spain, itself, offered opportunities to many more crypto-Jewish merchants, including those who carried goods to remote areas of the far northern frontier of New Spain.[14]

As indicated above, Mexican crypto-Jews were able to practice their secret faith in an atmosphere of relative toleration, with the exception of the late 1580s and 1590s, and the 1640s. During these two periods, due to a series of complex factors, the Holy Office of the Inquisition embarked on vigorous campaigns against the *conversos*. The first of these, which lasted from 1589 to 1601, was initiated in response to the activities of one Luis de Carvajal, *el mozo*, Portuguese New Christian, and nephew of Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva, the governor of Nuevo León.

The elder Luis de Carvajal was born around 1539 in the small Portuguese mountain town of Mogadouoro to a *converso* family. He made his first journey to Mexico in 1567, as a merchant carrying a cargo of wine to sell in Veracruz, Mexico City, and Zacatecas.[15] Recognizing the opportunities for exploiting the agricultural and mineral resources in the far northeastern frontier of New Spain, Carvajal sailed back to Spain in 1578 to submit a proposal to King Philip II. In return for opening up the Nuevo Reino de León for Spanish colonization, Carvajal asked the king for two major concessions: (1) that he be appointed governor; and (2) that no investigations be conducted into the ethnic background of the colonists he recruited to populate the new settlement. Under the terms of the royal *cédula* issued by King Ferdinand in 1501, it was illegal for anyone of Jewish or Moorish descent to emigrate to the Indies. To be sure, many *conversos* and their offspring did come over legally, but they came under assumed names or doctored *limpiezas de sangre*. Philip II agreed to these terms, and by means of a formal *capitulación* signed on May 31, 1579, Luis de Carvajal received his mandate to initiate his colonization effort.[16] He immediately began to recruit approximately one hundred people

from Spain and Portugal, most of *converso* origin, and brought them to New Spain, establishing his capital at Cerralvo in Nuevo León.

The young colony survived the material challenges presented by a hostile environment. In religious matters, as well, it appears that the settlers were left alone to worship as they pleased, as long as they did so quietly. However, this atmosphere of calm was soon to be shattered, when one of the colonists betrayed the standard of discretion. Shortly after his arrival in New Spain, the governor's fourteen-year-old nephew was told of his Jewishness by older relatives. In contrast to the response of his contemporaries, young Luis de Carvajal decided that if he was a Jew, he was going to live openly as a Jew. Not only did he begin to practice his religion in full view, but he also initiated efforts to reconnect other New Christians back to Judaism.[17] Even in an atmosphere of relative toleration demonstrated by New Spanish society, this behavior could not be endured. The Holy Office of the Inquisition, recently elevated to the status of *tribunal*, had been watching the growth of the Portuguese *converso* community in New Spain over the course of the previous few years, and had expressed concern over the potential for the spread of the practice of *la ley muerta de Moisén*—the Dead Law of Moses.[18]

The reaction on the part of the inquisitors in Mexico was strong and swift. Between 1589 and 1596, almost two hundred persons were arrested for the crime of *judaizante*, focusing on the Carvajal family, and extending to crypto-Jewish activity all over the viceroyalty. Young Luis de Carvajal was arrested in 1589, and was reconciled in the *auto de fe* of 1590. Undeterred by this castigation, young Carvajal resumed his proselytizing efforts, was re-arrested by the Inquisition, and convicted for relapsing into Judaism. He was burned at the stake in the *auto de fe* of 1596, along with several members of his family.[19] After 1604, the policy on the part of the Holy Office returned to one of relative toleration towards the crypto-Jews of New Spain, with only sporadic arrests in the 1620s and 30s. During the first four decades of the seventeenth century, the *converso* community grew substantially both in numbers and in commercial influence.[20]

The second intense campaign began in 1642, motivated in large measure by events across the ocean. In 1640, a successful revolutionary movement for Portuguese independence from the king of Spain stimulated in New Spain a fierce xenophobic reaction against all those of Portuguese background. It was feared that the Portuguese in Mexico City, Veracruz, and the northern mining areas would rise up in revolt against Spanish authorities, and attempt to deliver the viceroyalty to the new Portuguese king. A newly appointed anti-Portuguese viceroy initiated a comprehensive crackdown against this perceived foreign threat. Included among this target group were the estimated two thousand crypto-Jews in the viceroyalty, most of whom possessed Portuguese roots. By 1649, hundreds of crypto-Jews were arrested, tried, and convicted of the crime of "Observing the Law of Moses." As in the previous campaign, a few were executed, but most were "reconciled," and returned to resume their lives and careers.[21]

After the mid-seventeenth century, the policy on the part of the Holy Office toward the crypto-Jews of New Spain returned to one of relative toleration. From this point until the death of the Mexican Inquisition with the independence of Mexico from Spain in 1821, the inquisitors had very little interest in prosecuting *judaizante* cases, concentrating instead on more mundane breaches of heresy as blasphemy, bigamy, witchcraft, and censorship of Enlightenment literature. Many of the descendants of New Spain's crypto-Jews, generation by generation, assimilated and acculturated into mainstream Catholic society, losing all vestiges of Judaism. But others appear to have held on to elements of their ancestral faith, either retaining residual Jewish practices, or even passing along a consciousness of a Jewish heritage.

The Frontier as Refuge

Before, during, and after the two aberrant periods of inquisitorial persecution against the crypto-Jews in New Spain, it appears that the far northern frontier served as a haven for *conversos* attempting to avoid arrest by the Holy Office. Solange Alberro, in her ground-breaking 1988 work, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571–1700*, emphasized this fact in her analysis of seventeenth-

century Zacatecas. The second-most important city in the viceroyalty of New Spain, Zacatecas served as an important mining center and mercantile distribution point for the region.[22]

Alberro argued that the great distance of Zacatecas from the center of authority in Mexico City, and its geographical isolation from other major communities "facilitated laxity and backsliding, practically assuring exemption from punishment" by the Holy Office.[23] The permissive atmosphere of this northern mining community fostered an environment where heretical acts lost their character as social transgressions, and, as a consequence, behavior that would not have been tolerated in the capital passed virtually unnoticed in *tierra adentro.* The frontier offered two major advantages for crypto-Jews seeking anonymity: remoteness from inquisitorial officials and an ample market for the goods and services provided by *converso* merchants. Alberro observed that, although several members of this community were denounced before the Mexican tribunal, only a minority of these cases were ever prosecuted.[24] The testimony provided by inquisition records, however fragmentary, represents a unique window through which the role that these crypto-Jews played in the economy and society of the northern frontier can be viewed better.

On the basis of this documentation, a clear picture emerges of *converso* participation in commerce from a variety of perspectives. The trade with the northern mining area was largely controlled by merchants based in Mexico City, who received on consignment such diverse items as wine from Spain, silk from the Philippines, cacao from Venezuela, cloth from *obrajes* in Tlaxcala, and wax from Campeche and then sold this merchandise on credit to traveling merchants bound for Zacatecas and other mining towns. These individuals comprised a mobile, adventuresome group, seldom remaining in one place for more than a few years at a time. For many, their trading experience in the mining areas was but one of several spheres of mercantile activity in which they had engaged during their lifetime. With few exceptions, these crypto-Jews were immigrants from Portugal and Spain who had come over at a young age to seek their fortunes. Their experiences reflected the needs and the hardships of the environment in which they lived. Some of them participated in the defense of the mining frontier against Indian attacks. Others suffered the loss of their wares along the highway at the hands of robbers. The danger and risk of their enterprises necessitated the development of interdependence and cooperation among the travelers, both crypto-Jews and Old Christians alike. Often, groups of traders undertook journeys together or joined in *compañías* for mutual aid and protection.[25]

Most of the traveling crypto-Jewish merchants tended to transact their business with certain other *conversos* who stationed themselves in the various communities of the northern mining areas. Most prominent among these individuals was Simón López de Aguarda. López received shipments from his contacts in Mexico City sent to Zacatecas by mule train and exchanged them for silver, which he sent southward. Several crypto-Jewish merchants, based on other towns, also brought their goods to López, depositing them in his store on the *plaza pública*.

López performed other important functions in the northern mining community, most significantly in his role as a source of credit. At the time of his arrest in 1642, debts owed to him by residents of the mining region totaled almost ten thousand pesos.[26] In addition he served as *fiador* for several miners, thus enabling them to purchase mercury, a crucial commodity in the processing of silver. Residents of Mexico City also entrusted López to transact business for them in Zacatecas by means of powers of attorney. In the noncommercial area, López served the Spanish mining community with distinction as captain of the presidio of Atotonilco.[27]

Religious observance on the part of crypto-Jews of Zacatecas and the surrounding areas tended to follow the same pattern demonstrated in other parts of New Spain. Customs included abstaining from eating pork, porging of animals prior to slaughter, and fasting on Yom Kippur.[28] Inquisition records even cite the existence of a synagogue in the city from the early seventeenth century.[29] Moreover, like their coreligionists living elsewhere in the viceroyalty, Zacatecan *conversos* followed similar patterns of endogamy, taking care to marry within the community.[30]Despite the formal prohibition of judaizing activity in New Spain, the practice of the Law of Moses in Zacatecas was, according to Alberro, "conscious, coherent, and deliberate," thus indicating that the northern mining region functioned effectively as a zone of refuge.[31]

Crypto-Jewish Settlement in New Mexico

"If Zacatecas constitutes a zone of refuge in comparison with the central region of the viceroyalty," according to Alberro, "New Mexico is, as [France V.] Scholes states, 'a heaven for social outcasts from the mining camps of Zacatecas, Santa Bárbara and Parral'…. That is to say, the zone of refuge from the zone of refuge."[32] Indeed, it appears that New Mexico, like the mining areas of Zacatecas, also served as a focus of settlement of crypto-Jews seeking to escape persecution from the Mexican Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

The origins of European exploration of New Mexico date back to 1540, when Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led an expedition of over one thousand men and women north and west from Mexico City into what is today the U.S. Southwest.[33] The Spanish explorers, in search of the mythical, wealthy "Seven Cities of Cíbola," found little in the way of precious metals. But, perhaps more important, they encountered groups of sedentary Indians, whom they labeled "pueblos," due to the concentration of the native population in towns. A combination of severe winters, failure to discover the treasures of "Cíbola," and a debilitating injury to Vázquez, compelled the Spanish to return home to Mexico, thus leaving the colonization of New Mexico for another, more permanent enterprise five decades later.[34]

The campaign of the Mexican Holy Office against the crypto-Jews of Nuevo León of the 1580s and 1590s, discussed above, was to have a direct impact on the later exploration and settlement of New Mexico at the end of the sixteenth century. Upon the arrest of Governor Luis de Carvajal by the Inquisition for tolerating the presence of *judaizantes* under his administration, he left behind in Nuevo León as lieutenant governor of the province a seasoned military leader, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa. Like Carvajal, Castaño was born in Portugal, and was possibly of crypto-Jewish origin.[35] Soon after receiving word of Governor Carvajal's conviction and appearance in the *auto de fe* of February 24, 1589,[36] Castaño rounded up the some one hundred seventy colonists (comprising men, women and children) in Cerralvo and left on an uncharted expedition to the north. This "Colony on the Move," as Matson and Schroeder[37] referred to it, reached the Río Grande,[38] traveled upriver to its confluence with the Río Pecos, and trekked up the Pecos, crossing Glorieta Pass into the Río Grande Valley, finally stopping near the pueblo of Santo Domingo, in an attempt to establish the first permanent Spanish colony in New Mexico.

Under the terms of the Spanish colonial system in the late sixteenth century, however, the Castaño de Sosa *entrada* of 1590 comprised an illegal expedition. Not only had Castaño failed to secure permission from the viceroy to leave Nuevo León (although his emissaries had made attempts to do so), but he had neglected to inform anyone in authority that he was embarking on such a venture. Moreover, Castaño's was the only expedition into the northern frontier of its day not to include a priest or any member of a religious order.[39] The close ties maintained by Castaño to Governor Carvajal, the coincidence of the timing of his hasty (and illegal) departure for the north upon hearing of Carvajal's problems with the Inquisition, the absence of a priest on the expedition, and the allegations of his own familial ties to the crypto-Jewish community, all suggest strongly that Castaño might have initiated the dangerous entrada for the purpose of leading other crypto-Jews to a secure haven on the far northern frontier.

Unfortunately, little is known about the background of the members of the Castaño de Sosa expedition. No muster roll has ever been found, which would provide clues as to the Iberian, or possible crypto-Jewish origins of its participants. While certainly not conclusive, possible links may be established by comparing the colonists' names with those found in contemporary trial records of the Mexican Inquisition, tried for *judaizante*, names such as Rodríguez, Nieto, Díaz, Hernández, and Pérez.[40] The participation of Juan de Vitoria Carvajal
also raises some interesting questions. Certainly the coincidence of his tenure in Nuevo León suggests a familial connection to Governor Luis de Carvajal.[41] Could Vitoria Carvajal have represented a hitherto unidentified branch of the family attempting to escape to the north?

Not all of the participants in the Castaño enterprise remain lost to history, however. One of the members of the Castaño expedition who can definitely be linked to *converso* origins was Alonso Jaimes. Born in the Canary Islands, Jaimes tried to pass himself off as an Old Christian before immigration officials in an attempt to emigrate to Mexico in 1574. He had convinced Francisco Rodríguez to perjure himself by alleging that Jaimes was "free from all Muslim or Jewish blood." Recognizing the attempt to circumvent the prohibition of descendants of Jews to emigrate to the Americas, inquisition officials in the Canaries arrested Jaimes and accused him of being "a descendant of a line of *conversos*, reconciled by the inquisition." Unbeknownst to either Jaimes or Rodríguez, the inquisitors had maintained a dossier on Jaimes's family, tracing them back five generations to Jews from various parts of Spain and Portugal who, after converting to Catholicism in 1492, had sought refuge in the Canaries. Rodríguez was fined eight ducados for his perjury. And, despite all the attention from the Las Palmas tribunal of the Holy Office, Jaimes apparently was able to emigrate to New Spain within a few years after this unpleasant encounter with inquisition officials.[42]

When the viceroy of New Spain was informed of Castaño's departure from Nuevo León, he sent Juan Morlete, a former associate of Castaño's, to arrest him and his entire party, not for practicing Judaism, but for having conducted an illegal expedition. Castaño was convicted of treason and exiled to the Philippine Islands, where he died shortly thereafter.[43] Many of the survivors of the entrada returned to Nuevo León and participated in the founding of the town of Monterrey in 1596.[44] Others remained in central Mexico, fearful, perhaps, of attracting the attention of the Inquisition, now in the throes of its vigorous campaign against the *converso* community of New Spain.

By the late 1590s the king had realized the efficacy of establishing a defensive outpost in the far northern frontier of New Mexico. Several candidates placed their names under consideration to lead such an expedition. One enjoyed the support of the Mexican Inquisition, Francisco de Urdiñola. Urdiñola was a *comisario* of the Holy Office, who, in the eyes of the inquisitors, would be in a position to ensure the purity of blood and orthodoxy of the colonists heading north.[45] Viceroy don Luis de Velasco, however, had no intention of allowing a competing jurisdiction to interfere in such a secular venture. Charges were proffered against Urdiñola for the murder of his wife and several servants, and in the face of such serious allegations, Velasco simply could not permit the comisario to remain under consideration to lead the entrada to the north. The viceroy declared the mission suspended indefinitely.[46]

The next year, Velasco chose don Juan de Oñate, the son of a wealthy and powerful northern miner, and, himself a descendant of converted Jews,[47] to serve as *adelantado,* and charged him with the task of establishing a new colony in the distant frontier of New Mexico. Among the people whom Oñate approached to join him in this effort were some of the survivors of the Castaño de Sosa expedition. After all, they had returned from New Mexico just a few years earlier and consequently knew well the route northward, the terrain, and had firsthand knowledge of the Pueblo Indians who inhabited the lands to be conquered and occupied. In short, Oñate must have realized the potential for these survivors of the Castaño expedition to help him establish his new colony on a strong footing.

For their part, those survivors who did not return to Nuevo León might well have felt themselves somewhat vulnerable to arrest by the Inquisition, which, as has been demonstrated, was in the midst of its heaviest phase of activity against Mexican crypto-Jews. Whether for push or pull factors, at least two members of the Castaño entrada decided to return with Oñate in 1598, Juan de Victoria Carvajal and Juan Rodríguez Nieto. The latter appears to be the same Juan Rodríguez, identified by the Mexican Inquisition as a fugitive the previous year, and who was burned in effigy in the *auto de fe* of 1601 for practicing Judaism.[48] Another member of the 1590 expedition, Alonso Jaimes, whose Jewish origins are discussed above, could be found in Oñate's military encampment at Casco in 1596.[49] Another of Oñate's soldiers, Cristóbal de Herrera, was arrested several years later in Zacatecas, denounced before the Inquisition on suspicion of practicing Judaism.[50] Alberro, in her discussion on the history of the Inquisition in Zacatecas, referred to Herrera as "un verdadero judaizante," a true Jew.7[51] The supplier of the Oñate expedition was a merchant by the name of Balthasar Rodríguez, possibly the same Balthasar Rodríguez, merchant of Nuevo León and brother of Luis de Carvajal, who had eluded attempts by Inquisition agents to arrest him several years earlier.[52]

Bartolomé Romero, a soldier accompanying Oñate to New Mexico in 1598, was listed on the muster roll as born in Corral de Almaguer, in the region of Toledo, the son of Bartolomé Romero.[53] His mother was María de Adeva, possibly a relation of the Benadevas, a prominent Jewish, and later *converso*, family of Sevilla at the turn of the sixteenth century.[54] Baptismal records from Corral de Almaguer note that other Romeros from the town either served as godparents of New Christians, or were, themselves, descendants of *conversos*.[55] Yet another Romero from Quintanar de la Orden, located about fourteen miles from Corral de Almaguer, was convicted of *judaizante* by the Inquisition of Cuenca in 1589.[56]

Despite the presence of New Christians in New Mexico from the earliest years of Spanish settlement, the Inquisition, represented in the colony by the Franciscan friars, appeared unconcerned about the possibility of the practice of Jewish heresy in its midst. This was due to a variety of factors, including the general disinterest by the Mexican Holy Office in *judaizante* cases in the early seventeenth century, and the remoteness of New Mexico from the capital. Perhaps most significantly, the Franciscans were preoccupied with the struggle for power with the civil authorities in this far northern frontier outpost.[57]

During this period of inattention it appears that several more descendants of *conversos* emigrated northward along the Camino Real into New Mexico, including Simón de Abendaño, from Ciudad Rodrigo,[58] along the Spanish-Portuguese border, Diego de Vera, from the Canary Islands, [59] and the Portuguese Manuel Jorge.[60] Suspicion of Judaic background extended even to the ranks of the Franciscan order. The investigation into the *limpieza de sangre* of fray Esteban de Perea, born in Villanueva del Fresno, on the Spanish-Portguese border, nominated to the position of *custos* in 1629, contained testimony alleging that the nominee's ancestors had been Jewish.[61] The Franciscan authorities chose to overlook this potentially damaging evidence, however, and confirmed Perea to the post.

It was not until 1662 that Inquisition agents in New Mexico began to focus on crypto-Judaism. At 4:00 on the morning of August 27, comisarios of the Holy Office burst into the home of Governor Bernardo López de Mendizábal, arresting his wife, Teresa de Aguilera y Roche. Also taken that year were the governor, himself, and Sargento Mayor Francisco Gómez Robledo. All three were charged with secretly practicing Judaism. Arrested on unspecified charges of heresy were Capitán Cristóbal de Anaya Almazán, Sargento Mayor Diego Romero, and Capitán Nicolás de Aguilar.[62] The documentation generated by these politically-motivated trials of these individuals offers a glimpse into crypto-Jewish activity in New Mexico during the period preceding these arrests, when neither the inquisitors, nor anyone else in the colony appeared to be bothered by such heretical practices.

Testimony emanating from these trials revealed customs clearly identified as Jewish being practiced by early New Mexican settlers. Several witnesses testifying against Francisco Gómez Robledo insisted that it was common knowledge in the colony that his father, Francisco Gómez, was a Jew.[63] The elder Gómez, born in Coina, Portugal, came to New Spain in 1604 in the retinue of Juan de Oñate's brother, Alonso, heading north to New Mexico shortly thereafter. During his nearly half century in the colony, Gómez held several civil and military positions.[64] Not only was Francisco Gómez Robledo found to have been circumcised,[65] considered by inquisitors as a certain indication of judaizing,[66] but his younger brothers, Juan and Andrés, were as well. It is worthy to note that in 1662 testimony against the latter two, the witness, Domingo López de Ocanto, conveyed the impression that knowledge of the circumcisions was widespread among the community:
They were asked if they knew, or if they had heard of any person or persons who were circumcised.

He replied that he only knows that Juan Gómez and Andrés Gómez, sons of Francisco Gómez, deceased, citizens of the Villa of Santa Fe, who are of the age of this witness, when they were young boys used to bathe together, and that it appeared to him that they had their parts circumcised, *and that all of the young men of that age know this . . .* (emphasis added).[67]

As a result of this revelation, Inquisition prosecutor, Rodrigo Ruíz suggested that:

Juan and Andrés Gómez, brothers, sons of Francisco Gómez and doña Ana Romero [read Robledo] with regard to the aforesaid sign of circumcision or cutting, which demonstrates that they are observers of Judaism, as a consequence should be severely castigated by the Holy Office with the penalties established by law. . . .[68]

Despite the clear indications of Judaic identity and practice, and the stern admonition by prosecutor Ruíz, Francisco Gómez Robledo was acquitted of all charges, and neither Juan nor Andrés were ever prosecuted by the Inquisition.

So, too, did the record generated by the trials of Governor Bernardo López de Mendizábal and his wife, Teresa de Aguilera y Roche suggest a connection to Jewish background. López, arrested for *judaizante* in 1662, swore that he was of pure Old Christian noble origin, and that none of his ancestors had ever been castigated by the Inquisition.[69] He rather conveniently neglected to mention that one of his maternal great-grandfathers, Juan Núñez de León, had been penanced by the Mexican Inquisition for *judaizante* in 1603.[70] Testimony against Aguilera included Sabbath observance, such as changing linens and bathing on Fridays, and reciting prayers in secret on Friday evenings.[71]

Cristóbal de Anaya Almazán, as cited above, had been arrested on an unspecified charge of heresy. His testimony, however, appears to have suggested a fear of charges against him for practicing Judaism:

Item—he also says and declares that in August of the previous year, in the pueblo of Sandía, having complied with the order brought by the Holy Tribunal, don Fernando de Durán y Cháves said to the witness that he had taken back that which the Holy Tribunal had ordered, to which the witness responded to him, I, too, take back what I said so that the people should not be saying what is being said, that perhaps they arrested me for practicing Judaism, which was said before don Agustín de Cháves, Padre fray Raphael, and doña Catalina Vásques, from whom I also ask for mercy as a Catholic Christian.[72]

During the course of the 1660s persecutions in New Mexico, testimony emerged from the trial of Governor López that shed light on the Jewish practices of another early colonist. Padre fray Nicolás de Villar, related that during lent of 1657, one of his Franciscan brethren had told him of a young girl, the eldest daughter of Portuguese blacksmith Manuel Jorge, who had confessed to him that “she observed the Law of Moses with exquisite rites and ceremonies.” The priest did not report her heresy to anyone, since the Mexican Tribunal was 500 leagues distant, and he was not aware of the presence of any Inquisition official in the colony.[73]

Conclusion

The examples cited above suggest that the crypto-Jewish identity and practices of early New Mexico colonists were quite well known both to the general populace and to religious officials. But, absent extraneous factors, in this case the effort in the 1660s on the part of the Franciscans to break down the political power of Governor López de Mendizábal, the authorities, both civil and religious, appeared to be unconcerned about this heresy in their midst. In this sense, the New Mexico experience supports the thesis that the frontier served as a haven for those fleeing from the authority of the Inquisition. The farther one found oneself from the metropolis, the greater the sense of toleration. In the case of the crypto-Jews, those who fled from their homes in Spain and Portugal found a relatively safe haven in central Mexico. During the two aberrant periods of persecution by the Mexican Holy Office in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, New Christians were able to escape to an even more secure environment on the far northern frontier of New Spain. Indeed, it appears that the distant outpost of New Mexico represented, in Solange Alberro’s words, “the zone of refuge from the zone of refuge” with regard to its policy of toleration of a crypto-Jewish presence.

Notes

* The author would like to acknowledge the Estate of Eva Feld for its support of the research that formed the basis of this article. His book, *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico*, was published by Columbia University Press in 2005.

[1]. The term, *crypto-Jews,* refers to those people baptized as Catholic Christians and living outwardly as such, but secretly practicing Judaic rites and customs. While the terms *converso* and *New Christian* strictly should pertain to those Jews who actually converted to Catholicism, it will be extended in this article to the descendants of the original *conversos*, who lived as crypto-Jews.
[2]. See Stanley M. Hordes, "Historiographical Problems in the Study of the Inquisition and Crypto-Jews in Mexico," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (November 1982), pp. 138–152.
[3]. Seymour B. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain: Faith, Flame and the Inquisition* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970), pp. 88, 101, 105; Cecil Roth**,** *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia and New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1932; Meridian Books, 1959), pp. 102–105.
[4]. The twentieth century was not without more objective, analytical treatments of the history of the Mexican Inquisition, which placed inquisitorial activity within proper social and political contexts, e.g., France V. Scholes, *Church and State in New Mexico, 1610–1650* (Albuquerque: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1937), *Troublous Times in New Mexico, 1659-1670* (Albuquerque: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1942), and "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 10 (1935), pp. 195–241; Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition: 1536–1543* (Washington, DC: Academy of Franciscan History, 1962); "The Inquisition in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (1985), pp. 29–60; Eva Alexandra Uchmany, *La vida entre el judaísmo y el cristianismo en la Nueva España, 1580–1606* (Mexico City: Archivo General de la Nación and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992; and Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571-1700* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988).
[5]. Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews of Christian Spain*. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), Vol. 1, pp. 15–22; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*. 2 vols. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), Vol. 1, p. 12.
[6]. For a more elaborate discussion of the nature of religious toleration in Muslim Spain, see: Philip K. Hiti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1937); Gabriel Jackson, *The Making of Medieval Spain* (Norwich: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972); and Américo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

[7]. Jackson, *The Making of Modern Spain*, pp. 100-107; Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, Vol. 1, p. 18; Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Vol. 1, pp. 22–24.
[8]. Detailed accounts of upward mobility of Spanish *conversos* may be found in Baer**,** *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Vol. 2, pp. 270–277; Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Orígenes de la dominación española en América* (Madrid: Bailly-Balliere, 1918); Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Álvarez Gato* (Madrid, 1960); Márquez Villanueva, "Conversos y cargas concejiles en el siglo XV," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, Vol. 63 (1957), pp. 503–540; Márquez Villanueva, "The Converso Problem: An Assessment," in *Collected Studies in Honour of Américo Castro's Eightieth Year* (Oxford: Lincombe Lodge Research Library, 1965), pp. 317–333; Benzion

Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995); Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition : A Historical Revision* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).
[9]. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, Vol. 1, p. 209.
[10]. Several specialists of Jewish history theorize that Columbus's departure from Spain in 1492 was no mere coincidence, but that he and other crypto-Jews sought to avoid the new restictions imposed by Fernando and Isabel by sailing westward in search of the Indies. See, for example, Roth, *A History of the Marranos*, p. 271; Jacob Beller, *Jews in Latin America* (New York: Jonathan David, 1969; Simon Wiesenthal, *Sails of Hope: The Secret Mission of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Macmillan, 1973).
[11]. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, Vol. 1, pp. 229–230; Julio Caro Baroja, *La sociedad criptojudía en la corte de Felipe IV* (Madrid: Imprenta y Editorial Maestre, 1963), p. 23.
[12]. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, Vol. 1, p. 230; Caro Baroja, *La sociedad criptojudía*, p. 36.
[13]. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, pp. 188–189.
[14]. See Hordes, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620–1649: A Collective Biography" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1980).
[15]. Alfonso Toro, *La Familia Carvajal* (Mexico: Editorial Patria, 1944), Vol. 1, pp. 25–26.
[16]. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40; Archivo General de Indias, (hereafter cited as AGI), Indiferente, Legajo 416, L. 7, "Asiento y capitulación con el Capitan Luys de Carvajal sobre el descubrimiento y población del Nuevo Reyno de León" (Aranjuéz, May 31, 1579), f. 1v.
[17]. For details on the activities of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo, see: Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, Chapters 7 & 8; Martin Cohen, *The Martyr* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973); Liebman, *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1967); Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 169–171; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal.*

[18]. Archivo Histórico Nacional (Spain) (hereafter cited as AHN), Inquisición, Legajo 1047, ff. 168 R&V, Correspondence from Supreme Council of the Inquisition to Mexican Tribunal, Madrid, August 20, 1588.
[19]. See Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, Chapters 7 and 8; Cohen, *The Martyr*; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal*; Liebman, *The Enlightened*; Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 169–171.
[20]. See Hordes, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain," Chapter 3.
[21]. Hordes, "The Inquisition as Economic and Political Agent: The Campaign of the Mexican Holy Office Against the Crypto-Jews in the Mid-Seventeenth Century," *The Americas*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (July 1982), pp. 31–38.
[22]. See Peter J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546–1700* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
23. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, p. 390.
[24]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, pp. 390–402.
[25]. Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico) [hereafter cited as AGN], Ramo de Inquisición, Tomo 414, exp. 2, Testificaciones de Manuel Rodríguez Núñez contra diversas personas (1644), f. 170. See also, Hordes, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain," pp. 88–94.
[26]. AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 1737, exp. 20, Libro de la razón de la visita, ff. 415-448, computed from the *relación de los pleitos* pertaining to López.
[27]. AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 1736, exp. 4, Diferentes autos y papeles tocantes a la visita, ff. 289v, 293, 296-297, 302, 304. López also received praise from both the capitan general of Nueva Vizcaya and the alcalde mayor of Guanaceví for his actions in the defense of Spanish settlements against Indian attacks in 1626 and 1627.
[28]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 510, f. 334, Denuncia contra Gabriel, mozo, Cuencamé (1625); T. 435, f. 445, Denuncia contra Thomas de Sosa, Zacatecas (1650), as cited in Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad*

en México, p. 403; Hordes, “The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain,” p. 120.
[29]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, pp. 401, 403–404.
[30]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, pp. 401, 404; Hordes, “The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain,” p. 119.
[31]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, p. 408.
[32]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, pp. 391–392. The quote from Scholes derives from France V. Scholes, “The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1935), p. 216.
[33]. No studies have yet been undertaken to ascertain the participation of crypto-Jews on the Vázquez de Coronado expedition, but recent genealogical research has established that Vázquez’s wife, Beatríz de Estrada, was the granddaughter of Men Gutiérrez, relaxed in effigy by the Inquisition of Toledo, for practicing Judaism. See José Antonio Esquibel, "The Jewish-Converso Ancestry of Doña Beatriz de Estrada, Wife of Don Francisco Vásquez de Coronado,"
Nuestras Raíces, Vol. 9, No. 4, Winter 1997, 134–143.
[34]. See Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Coronado: Knight of Pueblos and Plains* (New York, London & Toronto: Whittlesey House; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949); Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint (eds.), *The Coronado Expedition to Tierra Nueva: The 1540–1542 Route Across the Southwest* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1997).
[35]. Martin Cohen in *The Martyr*, pp. 103–104, suggested a familial link between Castaño de Sosa and the crypto-Jewish community of Nuevo León. Richard Santos, in *Silent Heritage: The Sephardim and the Colonization of the Spanish North American Frontier* (San Antonio: New Sepharad Press, 2000), pp. 297–298, referred to Castaño as a “suspected Crypto-Jew”. Unfortunately, neither author provided references, archival or otherwise, for these assertions. Investigations are currently underway to ascertain the family history of Gaspar Castaño de Sosa; while no specific tie has yet been established, several other Portuguese "Castaños" and "Sosas" were identified as crypto-Jews in New Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
[36]. AGN, Inquisición, Lote Riva Palacio, Tomo 11, exp. 3, “Proceso contra Luis de Carvajal, Governador del Nuevo Reino de León,” f. 69; Jose Toribio Medina, *Historia de la inquisición en Mexico* (Mexico: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1905), p. 128; Eva A. Uchmany, *La vida entre judaísmo y el cristianismo*, p. 55.
[37].Albert Schroeder and Dan Matson, *A Colony on the Move: Gaspar Castaño de Sosa’s Journal, 1590–1591* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1965).
[38]. The precise location of Castaño’s crossing of the Río Grande is a subject of scholarly debate. Schroeder and Matson, as well as George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, placed the site near Del Rio, Texas. On the other hand Santos claimed that the expedition made the crossing farther downriver, near Piedras Negras. He identified the name of the crossing as *el paso grande de los judíos*, but offered no primary citation for this, beyond his reference to its use by the US-Mexico Border Commission in 1850. See: Schroeder and Matson, *A Colony on the Move*, pp. 32–33; George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580–1594: The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete, Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), p. 249; Santos, *Silent Heritage*, pp. 286–287.
[39]. Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580–1594*, pp. 28–39.

[40]. Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews in the New World* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1974), pp. 1–164.
[41].AGI, Sección de Audiencia de México, Legajo 25, Pt. 1, pp. 244–245 (pagination from University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research photostats).
[42]. Museo Canario (Las Palmas), Fondo Antiguo, CXXXIII-20 - Proceso seguido en el S.O. contra Francisco Rodríguez, vecino de Garachico, porque en cierta información de limpieza de sangre que para pasar Indias con cierta cantidad de vino hizo Juan Núñez Jaimez, declaro ser este cristiano viejo, siendo notorio descendiente de los Almonte, naturales de Lepe, reconciliados por el Tribunal. ff. 941r-943v; CLII-2 - Libro Segundo de Genealogías, ff. 1r, 36v.

[43]. Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico*, pp. 39–48.
[44]. Alonso de León, *Relación y discursos del descubrimiento, población y pacificación de este Nuevo Reino de León* (Mexico, 1649), republished in *Historia de Nuevo León* (Monterrey: Centro de Estudios Humanísticos de la Universidad de Nuevo León, 1961), p. 60.
[45]. AHN, Inquisición, Correspondence from Mexican Tribunal to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, Mexico, March 31, 1595. Microfilm, Reel 3, ff. 7r&v.
[46]. Hammond and Rey, *Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595–1628*, p. 5; Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador: Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), p. 58.
[47]. José Antonio Esquibel, "New Light on the Jewish-converso Ancestry of Don Juan de Oñate: A Research Note," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 174–190; Esquibel, "Four Additional Lines of Descent from the Ha-Levi Family of Burgos, Spain, to the Present," *Beyond Origins of New Mexico Families* (http://pages.prodigy.net/bluemountain1/halevi.htm), Special Feature, January, 2001.
[48]. Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews in the New World: Summaries of Procesos, 1500–1810 and Bibliographical Guide* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1974), p. 130; Alfonso Toro, *Los judíos en la Nueva España: Documentos del siglo xvi correspondientes al ramo de inquisición* (Mexico: Archivo General de la Nación y Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1932, 1993), pp. 12, 62. The latter source lists the trial of Ruy Díaz Nieto and Juan Rodríguez in succession as expedientes 1 and 2 of AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 157.
49. Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, pp. 130, 148, 158–160; Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico*, pp. 245–295.
[50]. Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, p. 297; Tulane University, Latin American Library, Liebman Collection, Box 2, Vol. 5, ff. 194-197, AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 309, ff. 171–200 (typescript), "Causa contra Cristóbal de Herrera, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Zacatecas . . ." (1614). Both the Inquisition trial and the Oñate muster roll indicate that Herrera was born in Jeréz de la Frontera, the son of Juan de Herrera.
[51]. Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México*, pp. 405–406.
[52]. Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, pp. 102-108; AGN, Inquisición, Lote Riva Palacio, Tomo 12, exp. 3, "Proceso contra Baltasar Rodríguez de Andrada, o de Carvajal . . ." (1589).
[53]. Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, p. 293.
[54]. AHN, Libro de Bautismos, Corral de Almaguer, Libro 1, (19002), April 5/7, 1557, Baptism of Bartolome Romero, f. 359v; Juan Gil, *Los conversos y la inquisición sevillana* (Sevilla, Universidad de Sevilla, 2000), Vol. II, pp. 37, 80, 330. Following the persecution of the Benadevas in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, several members of the family fled from Sevilla; The Benadevas of Sevilla were also cited as the maternal line of Diego de Ocaña, one of the earliest crypto-Jews penanced by the Mexican Inquisition in 1528. See AGN, Inquisición, T. 77, exp. 35, fojas 63: Autos y diligencias hechas por los sambenitos antiguos y recientes y postura de los que sean de relajados por este Santo Oficio (Mexico, 1574–1632), f. 221 r, Testimony of Bernardo de Albornoz (Mexico, July 9, 1574); AGN, Inquisición, T. 223, exp. 43, Abecedario de Relaxados, Reconciliados y penetenciados en la Nueva España con nombre y tto. del Sto. Officio assi por los ordinarios del districto como por la Inquisición Apostólica despues que en la tierra se fundó a los 4 de Noviembre del año de 1571 (1576), f. 718r.
[55]. AHN, Libro de Bautismos, Libro 3, March 26, 1581, July 8, 1589 and May 27, 1590.
[56]. Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Archivo de la Inquisición, Legajo 323, exp. 4642, Isabel Romero, muger de Alonso del Campo, Quintinar de la Orden, 1589, judaísmo, reconciliada.
[57]. See France V. Scholes, "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico"; Scholes, *Church and State in New Mexico, 1610–1650* (Albuquerque: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1937); Scholes, *Troublous Times in New Mexico, 1659–1670*; Joseph P. Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier, 1540 to 1692: A History of Early Colonial New Mexico* (Albuquerque: The Albuquerque Museum, 2nd ed., 1996).

[58]. Secondary sources on the history of Ciudad Rodrigo indicate that the Abendaños were a prominent fifteenth-century Jewish family. Moreover, baptismal and marriage records from the town's diocesan archives document several Abendaños living in the old *judería*, on the same street where the synagogue had stood.
[59]. Research through the inquisition records of the Museo Canario (Las Palmas), suggests a common ancestry of Diego de Vera and Pedro de Vera, convicted of practicing secret Judaism in the Canaries in 1609. Museo Canario (Las Palmas), Fondo Antiguo XLIV - 10 - Proceso seguido en el S.O. contra Esteban de Jerez, por declarar en cierta información que Francisco de Vera Muxica era cristiano viejo siendo como era, descendiente de judíos, conversos, etc. (1609).

[60]. See below, p. 22.
[61]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 268, exp. 5, "Carta de la inquisición de Llerena acompañando datos acerca de la genealogía de fray Estéban de Perea, franciscano" (1630), ff. 1–3v.
[62]. AGN, Concurso de Peñalosa, Legajo 1, no. 3, "Prisión y embargo de bienes de doña Teresa de Aguilera y Roche en 27 de agosto de 1662 años," ff. 396r-397r; Legajo 1, no. 5, "Auto de prisión, embargo y remate de bienes del Capitan Nicolás de Aguilar, año de 1662," f. 475r; Legajo 1, no. 6, "Autos de prisión embargo y remate de bienes del Sargento Mayor Francisco Gómez Robledo, fecho el año de 1662," f. 245r; Legajo 1, no. 7, "Autos de prisión embargo y remate de bienes del Sargento Mayor Diego Romero—Año de 1662," f. 294r; AGN, Inquisición, T. 594, exp. 1, "Primera audiencia de don Bernardo López de Mendizábal, por proposiciones irreligiosas y escandalosas. Mexico, April 28, 1663," f. 2r.
[63]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 583, exp. 3, "Proceso y causa criminal contra el Sargento Mayor Francisco Gómez Robledo . . . por sospechoso de delitos de judaísmo" (1663), ff 270v, 275r, 278v, 293r, 295r-v; 308v.
[64]. Fray Angelico Chávez, *Origins of New Mexico Families in the Spanish Colonial Period* (Santa Fe: William Gannon, 1954, 1975), pp. 35–36.
[65]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 583, ff. 353r-v; 373v-374r; 379v-380v. On September 5, 1663, three surgeons appointed by the inquisitors found that Francisco Gómez Robledo had three scars on his penis that appeared to have been made with a sharp instrument. The defendant protested that he was not circumcised, but rather that the scars were caused by small ulcers that he had suffered. He asked for, and received a second examination, conducted on June 23, 1664. This time the three surgeons were accompanied by an Inquisition doctor. The second inspection not only confirmed the findings of the first, but revealed two other scars. They concluded that the scars were created "by a sharp instrument . . . [and] could *not* have originated from any another cause." [emphasis added] (f. 380v). Scholes appears to have misread the original document when he indicated that the inspection revealed, "'it *was* possible that they had resulted from another cause'"[emphasis added]. See Scholes, "Troublous Times in New Mexico," p. 193. Unfortunately, in her effort to discredit the historical basis for crypto-Judaism in New Mexico, folklorist Judith S. Neulander failed to consult the original record, relying instead on Scholes. See Neulander, "The Crypto-Jewish Canon: Choosing to be 'Chosen' in Millenial Tradition," *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1–2 (1996), p. 49.
[66]. See Hordes, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain," pp. 120–121; and David Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of Amerca, 1996), pp. 202–207. In the case of Gómez Robledo, it appears that the foreskin was not entirely removed as part of his ritual circumcision. This is consistent with the observation by David Gitlitz: "By the seventeenth century in Mexico, some Judaizing *conversos* did not remove the foreskin at all, but rather scarred it with a longitudinal cut in an attempt to comply with the requirement of the law and deceive the Inquisitors. When Inquisition doctors examined Gabriel de Granada in Mexico in 1645 they 'found a mark . . . running longitudinally and with a scar, made apparently with a cutting instrument.' . . ." *Secrecy and Deceit*, p. 206.
[67]. AGN, Inquisición, T.598, exp. 7, "Testificaciones que se an sacado a pedimiento del dr. fiscal de uno de los quadernos que se remitieron por el comisario del Nuevo México contra Juan Gómez, vezino de dicho Nuevo México" (1662–1663), Testimony of Domingo López de Ocanto Convento del Sr. San

Francisco del Pueblo de Sandía, April 4, 1662, f. 119v.
[68]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 598, exp. 7, "Testificaciones que se an sacado a pedimiento del dr. fiscal de uno de los quadernos que se remitieron por el comisario del Nuevo México contra Juan Gómez, vezino de dicho Nuevo México" (1662–1663), Petition by Dr. Rodrigo Ruiz (México, July 23, 1663), f. 116r.
[69]. AGN, Inquisicion, T. 594, exp. 1, “Primera audiencia de don Bernardo López de Mendizábal, por proposiciones irreligiosas y escandalosas,” (1663), ff. 5v-6r.
[70]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 210, exp. 2, “Proceso contra Juan Núñez, balanzario de la Real Caja, por alumbrado y sospechoso de judaizante.” (1598–1609).
[71]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 596, exp. 1, “El Señor Fiscal del Santo Oficio contra doña Teresa de Aguilera y Roche, mujer de don Bernardo López de Mendizábal, por sospechosa de delitos de judaísmo.”(1663), ff. 10r–40r. Scholes, in “Troublous Times in New Mexico,” dismissed the value of the testimony presented against the governor and his wife, as well as against Francisco Gómez Robledo, arguing that “Actual eyewitness accounts . . . were given by only four or five persons who were members of the López household” (p. 160), and that such testimony represented nothing more than “petty gossip and spiteful rumor-mongering” (pp. 196–197). Furthermore, he pointed out, both López and Aguilera either denied the charges, or explained that the timing of their practices was purely coincidental. It is this author’s opinion that testimony by a number of eyewitnesses should not be summarily disregarded simply because they were servants. Nor should the obviously self-serving explanations of the defendants be given particularly heavy weight, either. Many scholars of the Mexican Inquisition, including this author, have suggested that the Holy Office was often motivated by political concerns extraneous to the issues of heresy. But the mere fact that the inquisitors, or even the witnesses, themselves, may have maintained other agenda, does not necessarily discredit the validity of the charges of crypto-Judaism. See, for example, Hordes, “The Inquisition as Economic and Political Agent: The Campaign of the Mexican Holy Office Against the Crypto-Jews in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,” *The Americas*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (July 1982).
[72]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 610, exp. 7, “Denunciaciones contra Juan Domínguez de Mendoza. Nuevo México”. (1667), Denuncia de Christóbal de Anaia Almazan (Santo Domingo, May 3, 1666), ff. 66v–67r.
[73]. AGN, Inquisición, T. 593, exp. 1, “El Santo Oficio contra Bernardo López de Mendizábal por proposiciones hereticas y sospechosos en el delicto de judaísmo” (1662), f. 162r.