

# HALAPID

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## A HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE MARRANO<sup>1</sup> WORLD PATRIMONY

BY David Elijah ibn Neryahu Ramírez

As it is well attested in many history books, 1492 was a fateful date, not only for Spain, but for the world at large. Historians often link this year with the events that lead to the creation of the Anglo American Democracy, and abysmally overlook the transformation that took place with the discoveries and the Colombian exchange. 1492: the year the European territory claimed for Islam was lost, the year when the most glorious epoch of Jewish religious, intellectual and cultural development was severed from Europe and the Jewish world, the year when two very different worlds and civilizations on a new continent would start to collide, with the Spanish kingdoms achieving their ambitions for power and supremacy for three centuries afterwards. Also, this was the year when hundreds of thousands of Jewish conversos, now called New Christians, were finally brutally separated from their ancestral faith and whose identity was cast into oblivion. With the expulsion edict not only came the end of a brilliant era, but also the commencement of a revolution whose effects we still experience. This revolution would not have been possible if it not were for the New Christians, the Marranos, who remained behind and gave life to what was going to become the Spanish Golden Age. This age would be one of uniformity, where Church and State were inseparable entities, and the Tribunal of the Holy Office, the Inquisition, the catalyst in the midst of all. Eventually, this would become a self-rotting entity, as Octavio Paz explains in his analysis of a 17th century Mexican poem, *Grandeza Mejicana*:

The "Mexican Greatness" is that of an immobile sun, premature afternoon that does not have anything else to conquer, except its own decomposition.

This sun would bring many changes to the world. Lewis A. Tams writes:

The immense human tragedy of the Expulsion of the Jews from Castile and Aragón often overshadows the great cultural contributions by Marranos and New Christians both prior to and after 1492. As the Sephardi prepared for either forced exile or integration, Don Abraham Senior and his son-in-law, R. Meir Malamed, were baptized at Santa María de Guadalupe. Senior, treasurer-general of the Holy Brotherhood (Santa Hermandad) and lessee of most of Castile, served as the last Jewish court-appointed rabbi of Castile. Sponsored by the King, Queen and Cardinal Archbishop González de Mendoza of Toledo, the pair took the names of Fernándo Nuñez Coronel and Fernándo Pérez Coronel. This distinguished Catholic

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family was among the many New Christians such as Fernándo Rojas, author of the first Castilian novel *La Celestina*; Juan Luis Vives, Christian humanist and Catholic apologist; Luis de León, theologian and poet; Juan de Polanco, secretary to St. Ignatius Loyola, Vicar General of the Society of Jesus, and assistant to St. Francis Borgia of the Council of Trent; and quite possibly Diego Lainez, second General of the Jesuits, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila, who contributed to the literary and religious Golden Age of Spain. . . Luis de Torres, whose fluency in Hebrew and Arabic would be essential when Columbus made landfall in the empire of the great Khan. Torres would later be granted extensive estates in Cuba and is credited with introducing American tobacco to Europe. . . Antonio de Nebrija published his *Gramática de la Lengua Castellana* at Salamanca. Written with the Queen's encouragement. . . it marked "the transition of Castilian from the status of vernacular language to that of a cultivated one. This grammar, the first Romance language to be standardized, would form the basis for imperial linguistic unity in the Peninsula, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific. . . which would endure for three centuries. . . Conversos and New Christians would contribute mightily to the Golden Age of art, literature, empire, and counter reformation."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed already in the 16th century, Marranos were making headway in introducing Western culture in the New World, and exporting American goods and fantastic tales to the Old World, tales that would fire the imaginations of the brilliant baroque poet Góngora, and the inventor of the first modern novel, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra with his *Don Quixote de la Mancha* – both of *converso* descent, whose

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unparalleled literary work have influenced writers the world over until our days.

We can only make assumptions for the American continent based on typical *converso* names; nonetheless, these are educated choices based on the fact that the majority of the intellectual body from Spain was of Jewish descent, given the Jews' historic cultivation of learning and the humanities. In Mexico alone, we find that a Jew was elemental for Cortes' last siege on the feared Aztec empire, whose boats helped to conquer the awesome city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the so called "Venice of America." Chroniclers of the Conquest of Mexico in the 16th century, such as Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Juan Suárez de Peralta and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, gave us vivid and poetic renderings of the Spanish conquest, curiously giving birth to the first studies of anthropology and ethnology. Defender of the civil rights of the indigenous people of Mexico, Fray Toribio of Benavente, arrived in Mexico in 1524. The first printing press in the American continent, arrived in Mexico in 1533. The first press editors were Antonio de Espinosa and Enrico Martínez. These printing presses reproduced the first American studies on indigenous languages and literature compiled by Fray Alfonso de Molina and Fray Juan de Córdoba; the medical treatise *Opera Medicinalia* by Bravo; the nautical treatise by García del Palacio; and literary works like *Diálogos y el Tùmulto Imperial* by Cervantes de Salazar.<sup>3</sup>

The first European center of higher learning, the University, was founded in Mexico City, at the petition of New Spain's Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, on September 21, 1551, where "*the naturals [meaning the indigenous people] and the children of the Spaniards were instructed in the matters of our holy catholic faith, and all faculties, providing them with all the privileges, frankness, and liberties that are given in study and University of the city of Salamanca.*" Also, this was the first university that would impart higher learning to all people, regardless of race or social status (if you could afford it, of course), more than 400 years before the Civil Rights laws were enacted in the United States, thus achieving the same goal. The Pontifical and Royal University of Mexico City, as it was called, would be the center of cultural life for the Viceroyalty of New Spain for 300 years.<sup>4</sup>

In the matters of trade, the New World did not fall short either. With the discoveries of new nautical winds, the Spaniards and the Portuguese were eventually reaching their dream, to reach the mystical land of Cipango (Japan). Marrano seamen and cartographers (like Juan López de Velasco) would eventually map the whole world, thus establishing the first steps towards globalization. *La Nao de China* was the biggest, and first trading enterprise.<sup>5</sup> This was an entirely subsidized Mexican enterprise, that would last well into the eighteenth century, and through whose shipments America, Europe, Africa and Asia would be finally connected. In a frenzy of commercial growth prompted by the *Nao*, the New World was introduced to cattle ranching (which would create the Mexican vaquero, which in turn would give birth to the legend of the American cowboy), fine Asian silks; Old World produce, like onions, cucumbers, rice, garlic, spices, coffee, etc.; exotic woods and ceramic techniques; and also diseases and slaves. At the same time, the *Nao* would bring the novelties of the New World to the Old, like cotton, tomatoes (signature of Italian cooking), potatoes (which

became the staple food for many European countries), tobacco (famous now worldwide), avocados, peppers (essential to Asian cooking), corn maize, chocolate (what would Switzerland be without it!), squashes, etc. With the help of their Sephardim brethren in the Netherlands, Turkey and North Africa,<sup>6</sup> the Marranos consolidated the spread of articles all over the world. Other trading routes would also serve as a vehicle to transport the Spanish golden goose egg, the silver and gold of Mexico and Peru. New World bouillon accounted for 60 to 70 percent of the world's silver and gold resources from the sixteenth to eighteenth century. Entire ships full of gold and silver were sent from Mexico and Peru to Spain during those centuries; some sunk, some were stolen by British and Dutch pirates, but many reached their Iberian destiny. Unfortunately for the Spaniards, their ambition and envy got the best of them. Most of the bouillon was going towards the expenditure of wars against the different European kingdoms and principalities that hated Spain with a passion, and in the defense of the "holy faith," the Counter Reformation. The other part was to be spent in lavish royal and ecclesiastical projects. Eventually, the Spanish monarchy emptied its pockets to the benefit of those who sold them armament and food, the British, Dutch and the Turks. The same people they were fighting, benefited the most. Through

the bouillon obtained in this irrational way, northern Europe got the base to create the first banking systems and stock markets. By the end of the eighteenth century, Spain was a tired, overgrown, and mismanaged empire. Like Medusa in front of a mirror, she became petrified. Isaac Abravanel's

prophecy finally came into realization:

... so your nation will suffer from the forces of disequilibrium that you have set in motion. For centuries to come, your descendants will pay dearly for your mistake of the present. As it is might of arms you most admire, you shall verily become a nation of conquerors -- lusting after gold and spoils, living by the sword and ruling with a fist of mail. Yet you shall become a nation of illiterates; your institutions of learning, fearing the heretical contamination of alien ideas from other lands, and other peoples, will no longer be respected. In the course of time, the once great name of Spain will become a whispered byword among the nations.

What became of the Spanish empire in the nineteenth century is well known. When Napoleon invaded Spain, the American viceroyalties seized the opportunity to declare their independence. New Spain, now Mexico, was thrown into a civil strife that would last well into the 20th century between monarchical and republican powers, which weakened all of her political and economic infrastructure. This in turn led the emerging power of the United States to invade Mexico, coercing her to sell half of her territory under Antonio López de Santa Ana's rule. After the corrupt sale President Santa Ana, obviously of Marrano descent, was forced to resign and was sent to permanent exile to New York.

All in all, after the taking of Cuba and Puerto Rico by U.S. forces, Spain was finished. She laid decomposing in her own glory. No longer would Spain recuperate. The golden aspect of Spain and New Spain would be repeated in the Peruvian and Brazilian territories, but have the same terrifying fate. However, and despite all these catastrophies, the Spanish-speaking creativity never ceased to flourish. Today, much of the best literature ever produced is from Spanish and

Marrano seamen and cartographers ... would eventually map the whole world, thus establishing the first steps towards globali-

## President's Corner

by Gloria Trujillo

I am amazed how everything is coming together nicely for this year's conference, but I'll be the first one to admit there were a few bumps along the way. I apologize for omitting Judy Frankel's name from the spring issue. Judy told me she is planning a special program for her Sunday evening concert.

As I mentioned in a previous message, Dolly Sloan, Art Benveniste, and I met with David Scholder, the President of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. We met to exchange information on events and news of the two groups in future newsletters. We hope to have someone from the NMJHS speak at our conference.

Thanks to Lorenzo Dominguez for all of the tremendous help he has given our group. Lorenzo is the popular host of Albuquerque's *Mi Seferino* radio show, dedicated to the awareness, history and cultural background of New Mexico's Sephardic Jews. He is also helping us bring together several rabbis for a panel to discuss issues that the Hispano Sephardim are experiencing. We will ask the audience before the panel discussion begins to write down questions for the rabbis.

New Mexico writer Mario Martinez will present a reading of his screenplay *Converso* Saturday evening, August 5 at El Rincon Books. And for those early risers who are pre-registered, we will be meeting Sunday morning in front of the Museum of Albuquerque for a docent led tour of Old Town.

I would also like to thank Miguel Spiegel, owner of *El Rincon*, who provided several great leads. There is more information in the newsletter on his bookstore/coffee shop in Albuquerque. Mike will have tables set up at the conference, along with Cynthia Zimmerman owner of the *Bashert Art Gallery* located inside Felipe's Indian Jewelry on the Old Town Plaza. There will also be a table for *La Herencia*, quarterly publication on New Mexican culture, whose publisher, Ana Pacheco, will address us on Monday.

The reason this issue is running a little late is because we wanted to make sure that we had the most up-to-date information on the conference. A special mailing has gone out to those who have already registered for the conference, which contains more information on the conference and activities.

Our 2001 Pueblo local chair, Michael Atlas-Acuna has several events planned to coincide with that conference and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Temple Emmanuel.

A committee of our members has been formed to review the bylaws and to make recommendations and suggestions for future bylaws. I want to thank everyone on the committee who made time in their very busy schedules to help out.

The Board of Directors thanks everyone who sent in renewals this year. We do not want our members missing any of the newsletter issues. We would also like to let you know that we truly appreciate the support from our members, and again, thank you for renewing for the year 2000.

We will be accepting registrations up through the start of the conference. But, please try to get them in to us, as soon as you can.

See you in Albuquerque!

## INTERESTING WEB SITES

We are very grateful to the Sephardic Connection for hosting our webpage. You can see articles from Halapid online at <http://sephardiconnect.com/halapid/halapid.htm>. We update the page after each issue of Halapid.

The Sephardic Connection homepage is filled with information that will be of interest to our members. They have recently added a very good genealogy page. You can see it at: <http://sephardiconnect.com/>

Other sites:

Medieval Spanish Jewish Names of the 13th and 14th Centuries:

<http://www.panix.com/~mittle/names/juliana/iberian-jewish/>

Trudi Alexy's Page: <http://home.earthlink.net/~talexy/>

Art Benveniste's Page: <http://home.earthlink.net/~benven/>

Harriet Rochlin's Page:

<http://www.rochlin-roots-west.com/>

Schulamith Halevy's Page:

<http://www.csgso.cs.uiuc.edu/~nachum/sch/>

Judaísmo & Cultura by Helio Daniel Cordeiro (Brazil) :

<http://www.stbnet.com.br/hpf/sefarad/>

Saudades, Portuguese Anusim by Rufina Bernardette Silva Mausenbaum (South Africa):

<http://www.lusoamerican.com/saudades/>

Ben Nahman's Home Page:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~bnahman/>

Sephardic Jewish History:

<http://www.bsz.org/lsephardichistory.htm>

Museo Sefardi, Toledo España:

<http://www.servicom.es/museosefardi/>

Beit Yaakov, a page dedicated to the Jewish Heritage of the Portuguese Jews and Bnai Anusim.

<http://grichen.hypermart.net/stats/index.htm>

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## CONRIQUE = Cohen-Henriquez: The Evolution of a Name

My name *was* Roberto Jaime Conrique del Pulgar (del Pulgar being my mother's maiden name). Today I *know* I am Roberto Hayim Cohen-Henriquez del Pulgar. It is a mouthful isn't it?

I was born in Mexico City in an area south of the city called Mixcoac, an ancient suburb and which, at the time I was born, was largely populated by crypto Jews. I arrived at this conclusion only after finding about my roots. My parents were from Crypto-Jewish families (Roberto Conrique Moreno and Alicia del Pulgar Hernandez) and basically non-religious. I found the truth out when I was 41, about thirteen years ago. Since then, I discovered that both of my parents knew of their past but, as unbelievable as it sounds, never told my brothers or me. I would never have arrived at the truth by myself.

All my immediate family lives in Mexico; I am the only one living in the USA. After my son was born and G-d named him (this in itself is another story), I called my mother to announce Isaac's birth. "What did you name him?" she asked, as I knew she would. I said "Isaac," and she went catatonic and would not answer. I repeatedly asked "Are you there?" She finally said "Yes," and I asked, "What is wrong?" She answered, very nervously and with a broken voice, "Talk to your father, talk to your father... I have to go!" I refused to let her go and kept asking for an explanation, but none came. I finally became angry and irritated and she finally replied, "He is not the first Isaac in the family, OK! Talk to your father!" And she hung up.

I called her back, but could not get her to answer the phone. She lives alone, as my parents divorced when I was about ten years old. I had no contact with my father, who I had seen for the last time about twenty years earlier.

So, I called around searching for my father and found him about two months later. I told him about my new son and his name. He seemed to have no reaction, so I explained what had taken place with my mother and asked if it was true that my son was not the first Isaac in the family. He said, "Yes! Your great grand father's name was Isaac."

"Ok! Then we are Jews or Arabs?" I asked. He responded that my great uncle, Isaac's brother, was named Aaron and then said "So... take your pick!" I asked why he and my mother never said we were Jews and he replied "For what purpose? What is the difference?" So I said, "It is important to me."

All my life I have felt as if I do not belong and for some reason, I never quite seemed to fit. If this is true, I am happy. I finally fit somewhere. To me that was like finding home, and overnight I was proud of being a Jew.

My father then told me my real last name was Cohen-Henriquez, that Isaac had married a woman, Mena, who also was Sefardita and had seven children, all boys, in the small town of Zinaparo in the La Piedad area, an area where three states come together, Michoacan, Guerrero and Jalisco. Isaac was a foreigner, but we are not sure from where. I found out later that he either married or lived with two non-Jewish women in town. The women were half sisters whose last name was Cabello. He later left the area to marry a fourth woman in Guadalajara. Since then, I found descendants of the other three marriages, some even in the USA, but no other family

with that name exists in either Mexico or California and Nevada. My grandfather, Braulio (Baruch) Conrique married another Sefaradita, Paz Moreno Shalom, moved to Mexico City and died during the construction of the Palace of Fine Arts either before or shortly after my father was born. My father was reared by a child of one of the two Cabello sisters and Jesus, a non-Jewish half-brother of my grandfather, Baruch. He, Jesus, was a wonderful man who never married but raised about twelve or thirteen children, all relatives of the two Cabello sisters or descendants of them and my father. He was a teenager when he made himself responsible for Paz Moreno and my newborn father.

I never knew any of this. He sent me books about the inquisition or rather the so-called "Holy Inquisition," that contain verbatim records of the trials. I then began a fact-finding search about Conrique, aided by Carol Clapsaddle, genealogist in Jerusalem. When I first contacted Carol, she replied explaining her limited experience with Sephardic research and asked for my permission to send my letter to David L. Gold, who then lived in Haifa. Two weeks after I agreed, she sent

another letter asking permission, on behalf of Dr. Gold, to publish my letter in the *Hebrew Language Review*. Then she wrote something unbelievable.

"He had just finished a long research project on the same family which has, to this date, members in Curacao where the very first Sephardic synagogue in North America was built in

the American Continent. New Amsterdam may have been the next."

On page seven is a copy of a letter I recently received from Dr. Gold. His ascertains, by the way, that my family "has been Catholic (at least nominally) for generations." This did not come from any statement I made, but rather appears his or Carol's assumption. As I had mentioned, my family was totally unaffiliated with any religion. Only my mother's aunt was a Catholic. She married a man from a very Catholic family, Pedro Guisa y Acevedo, with many priests as relatives. No other relative gave a sign of being Catholic. My adopted grandfather, Jesus Conrique, went to church every Sunday, but never spoke about it to my brothers or me. Nevertheless, now that I am learning so much about us, I can look back and see many signs and little events and incidents that were clearly hints and gave away our identity. The Cohen-Enriquez family is definitely Sephardic and has been present in the USA from at least 1652. A baker, Jacob Cohen-Henriquez, was among those responsible for gaining permission to establish the first cemetery in New Amsterdam and somewhere around 1662 or 1659 there was another Cohen-Henriquez arriving in Newport, Rhode Island. These two are recent findings that now have opened the possibility of my great Grandfather, Isaac Cohen-Henriquez being an American rather than Dutch.

After years of exchanging letters with Carol Clapsaddle, she became insistent on knowing about my mother and I kept ignoring her questions. She thought I wanted to migrate to the land of Israel needed help in meeting the new requirements. I was afraid to confess to her about my mother's family because I thought her family was not Jewish. It was known that my maternal grandfather was Spanish, whose family had been in

All my life I have felt as if I do not belong and for some reason, I never quite seemed to fit. If this is true, I am happy. I finally fit somewhere. To me that was like finding home, and overnight I was proud of being a Jew.

Mexico only two generations. His father, a doctor, arrived in Mexico in the 1860s with wife and child and died shortly during an epidemic that killed thousands in Mexico City. He died helping the sick. The wife went insane and the child was placed in a hospice. Relatives from Spain took the wife back but left the child in the orphanage because he was only a few months old and they feared he would not survive the trip. They returned when the child was older, but he refused to go with them. They are direct descendants of a family from a town called Pulgar near Toledo in Castilla. The family is aristocratic and the Del Pulgar Castle still exists. They also were related to Cristobal Colon Pérez del Pulgar, better known as Christopher Columbus. Also of the same place and family is a well known writer and author of the Golden Age of Spain and counselor of Queen Isabel I, Don Hernando Del Pulgar. I was afraid that Carol would no longer help me if she knew my mother's ancestor had served the queen who expelled the Jews. Eventually, as we became good friends, I told her the "dark truth" and she responded, "not so fast, my friend."

She sent me excerpts of Hernando Del Pulgar's writings. Certainly, he was a Jew like many others around the monarchs. Then we proceeded to verify and she asked for all documents. I found a birth certificate of my maternal grandfather, Agustín Del Pulgar. I sent it and, to my surprise, she called and said, "Did you know that in Mexico the Church did all registry of births, marriages, deaths, etc. until not long ago? Did you know that your grandfather was born not long after the new law requiring registry with the government was adopted?" She pointed out that even if my family was not religious, the date December 24<sup>th</sup> had to be of significance. She was right because in Mexico everybody has a special meal the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup>. She then pointed out that my grandfather was born on December 16<sup>th</sup> and registered on December 24<sup>th</sup>. If they were non-Jews, why would they go to register a child on the 24<sup>th</sup>? Such a thing is a full day affair in Mexico, due to the long lines and lengthy documentation. Didn't they have anything else to do? Didn't they have to prepare a special meal? Unless you are a Jew and you must name your child on the eighth day, the date of registry does not make sense. Do you see that  $16 + 8 = 24$ ?

With this, I went to question my mother, who in tears confessed.

"Why do you think I have read more than once every single book Isaac Bashevis Singer ever wrote or why I became so mad when the family of one of your friends offered you a scholarship to attend a Catholic private school?"

She reminded me of how several families "allowed" me to enter their houses to play with their children when no one else ever got invited, and of how certain people always sought my friendship.

"Well, they all are Jews also and they knew. Our families have known each other for a long time, they all are good families. How about Doña Nona Oñate or Doña Nona Varela who always gave you food or invited you for lunch when no one else was there to eat with them?" I had no idea then that "nona" meant grandmother in Ladino.

With more research, I came across a Rabbi Del Pulgar in 1438 who lived in Córdoba, Spain, and was one of the Jewish community who debated with Christians about the

validity of Jesus being the Messiah. I searched further and found his name actually was Isaac Joseph Del Pulgar, *the same name as my son 560 years later*. I got goose pimples, as they say.

My children are learning Hebrew prayers to bless their food and light Shabbat candles. We celebrate all biblical holidays and my boys were circumcised and except for Isaac, named on the eighth day. Their names were chosen because they sound the same or similar in Hebrew and in Spanish: Isaac Joseph, Jathniel Israel, David Aroniel, and (my princess "Morenica") Sarah Elisheba.

G-d sees the intentions of the heart and accordingly, He has called me out of my ignorance and shed light on my parents "secret." Now my children have no other concept of themselves but that of being Sephardic Jews. *Sefaraditos* being gathered by G-d again. Dried old bones in the desert, becoming alive again! That is what we, the Crypto Jews are. I wish Hitler could see us coming back to life too.

Note: For Dr. David L. Gould's Response to Roberto Conrique please see the next page.

*Roberto J. Conrique is an engineer who lives in San Diego, California. He says, "I know, without doubt that it was G-d who led me to find my roots"*

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#### JUDY FRANKEL CONCERT AT HARWOOD CENTER

SCJS member Judy Frankel will present a concert on Saturday Aug. 12th at the Harwood Center in Albuquerque, NM at 7:30 pm to raise money for Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb's new synagogue. Tickets are \$8 and \$10. For more information contact Michael Spiegel at: (505)830-0599.

## Dr. David L. Gould's Response

### to Roberto Conrique

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is the letter, dated February 18, 1998, that Linguist Dr. David L. Gould wrote Roberto Cohen-Henriquez del Pulgar, referred to in the accompanying article*

In reply to your letter of 15 February, here is what I have on the name about which you ask:

Carol Clapsaddle, a genealogist, wrote me a few years ago that a client of hers, Roberto J. Conrique had determined that all people now bearing his family name were then living in California or in Mexico. He had ascertained that all of them descend from his paternal great-grandfather, Isaac Conrique Leyva, who arrived in Mexico from Spain around 1846. R.J.C. had reason to believe that ancestors of his were Jews, though the family has been Catholic (at least nominally) for generations. C.C. wondered whether the name Conrique meant anything to me.

Both the spelling and pronunciation of Conrique are Spanish in every way: all of the letters are frequently used in Spanish; the sequence of the letters conforms to Spanish rules; hence the name not only looks Spanish but sounds Spanish. The only red flag which the name raises is that it appears to be inexplicable as a non-Jewish name. The flag can easily be lowered if we consider it to be Jewish.

Indeed, as soon as I saw the name, I realized it must be a variant of a compound Sephardic family name, each of whose two elements occurs in several spelling variants: Coén ~ Coen ~ Cohén ~ Cohen and Enriques ~ Enríquez ~ Enriquez ~ Henriques ~ Henríquez ~ Henriquez, the two elements either being joined by a hyphen or separated by a space (not all of the forty-eight possible combinations occur). For example, Cohen Henriquez is now found in the Netherlands Antilles and Cohen-Henriques in the British Isles. From the first part of the name we know that its bearers belong to the Priestly Caste.

On 15 February 1998, R.J.C. wrote me that his father had given him the same derivation of Conrique as I have just offered. When the same explanation comes from two independent sources, one of them being a linguist unacquainted with the family and the other a member of the family, we may be certain that it is right.

If you can offer any additions or corrections, I would be happy to have them.

With respect to your having found a Cohen Henriques in New Amsterdam in 1616, I wonder whether that date is right. In 1609, Henry Hudson explored the river later named for him. In 1613, the Dutch had built four houses on Manhattan Island. On 3 June 1621, the Dutch East India Company founded New Netherlands, but the first permanent colonists did not arrive until the spring of 1623. Thus, 1616 is possible but unlikely. I would appreciate seeing a photocopy of the document in which you found the name and that year. If you could send me a family tree, that too would be useful.

## MARRANO WORLD PATRIMONY FROM PAGE 2

Portuguese speaking countries. People with Marrano surnames, like Antonio Machado, Octavio Paz, Enrique Molina, José Lezama Lima, Oswald de Andrade, Mario de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Ernesto Sabato, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Gabriel García Marquez and many, many more, have given us serious modern literature, and with them, their complex philosophy derived from the Quixote, from the heritage of complex Jewish thinking. All these in the tradition of King Alfonso, the Wise, who in the twelfth century gathered Christian, Muslim and Jewish intellectuals for the creation of a common language, the Spanish language. This is a language that has been lovingly kept by everyone who grew up speaking it, whether they are Sephardim, Iberians or Americans; this is part of Jewish heritage given to the World that cannot be denied. A heritage that speaks with a soft "s" of *sonrisa*, a sweet smile.

<sup>1</sup> I will use the word "Marrano" invariably to describe all Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity, and their descendants. (see p. 9 for Halapid policy)

<sup>2</sup> Tambs, Lewis A., *Religion in the Age of Exploration: The Case of Spain and New Spain*, Creighton Univ. Press, 1996, p.50-52.

<sup>3</sup> Literary information taken from: Millan, María del Carmen, *Literatura Mexicana*, Editorial Esfinge, 18th edition, 1991, pp. 32, 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, p. 40

<sup>5</sup> For more detailed information, please read: Fernández, Miguel Angel, *La Nao de China*, Vitro Corporativo S.A.de C.V., 1st edition, 1998

<sup>6</sup> Clandestine communication between Sephardim and Marranos continued for centuries after the Expulsion.

<sup>7</sup> Isaac Abravanel's response to the Expulsion Edict of 1492. Cited by <http://www.sirius.com/~ovid/abravanel.html>, p. 2, taken from notes on Crypto-Jewish History, Lehrhaus Judaica, Berkeley, CA, Spring 1996, The Wahrburg's class.

*David Ramirez is a researcher and prolific writer on crypto Jews, inspired by his own family experience.*

Join us at the Best Western Rio Grande Inn  
in Albuquerque, August 6th, 7th and 8th.

# A Story of the Lemba and Me

By Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum\*

*"Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness."*

Johannesburg, South Africa

My interest was first ignited a few years ago, when I read an article about South Africa's "Black Jews." I knew very little except what most others in the Jewish community knew - that there were Black Bantu-speaking people in our country who claimed to be descended from Jews, lived as Jews and practiced Judaism as remembered and passed down to them orally through the ages. Believe my surprise when I received a call from Professor Mathivha, resident of Louis Trichardt, South Africa, last year. We had a mutual friend in Washington, Dr Jack Zeller, a pathologist who is president of Kulanu -- "all of us" in Hebrew-- an organization active in 22 countries, and for whom I had written a story about my personal life as "a child of the Anusim" (forced converts).

President of the Lemba Cultural Association and former vice-principal of the University of the North, this charming gentleman told me how he identified with many of the things I had written about; the identity problems, the rejection and the pain I had experienced and felt growing up, without "belonging." This was the beginning. Things snowballed after that. Another mutual friend, an ex-Pretoria medical doctor, Shmuel Wapnick, now living in New York, had visited Professor Mathivha and Ephraim Selamolela last year. He started including my friend Sylvia Magid and me in e-mails. A network grew and developed, a network of interested Jews, researchers, historians, and anthropologists. This network included Tudor Parfitt who was instrumental in the recent news-breaking discovery of the DNA results, proving the relation to Jews of this centuries-old oral Lemba history.

Dr. Shmuel Wapnick, on his way back to New York after four days in South Africa to attend his niece's wedding, hosted a get-together at a kosher restaurant where my friend Sylvia Magid and I were honored to be. It was yet another beginning. We met with a number of Lemba people, all identifying as Jews. One was Dr. Rudo Mathivha, pediatrician and US trained ICU specialist, daughter of Professor Mathivha. Also present were Ephraim Selamolela, the prominent businessman, his two sons, a niece whose name means "great person," her mother, and the gentleman who is president of the Lemba Burial Society. I looked into Rudo's warm smiling eyes, felt enveloped by her acceptance, felt humbled that these gracious people were willing to accept me, part of the white Jewish community who had ignored their existence and claims for years. They asked for nothing. Educated, charming and economically successful, all they had hoped for was acceptance.

Dr. Wapnick left with the go-ahead to arrange for a *shaliach* (emissary), one of our little networks of caring Jews from around the world, to come and start the Lemba Educational Center, in Louis Trichardt. Yaakov Levi's arrival as

that *shaliach* is now widely known and celebrated. Regarding the results of the news breaking genetic testing, David B. Goldstein, a population geneticist at Oxford University, took the discovery one step further. Goldstein's research showed that the proportion of Lemba men carrying the genetic signature of the *cohanim* (priests) was similar to those found among the major Jewish populations, strongly supporting the Lemba tradition of Jewish ancestry. The DNA sequences were particularly common among Lemba men who belong to the Buba clan, the senior of their twelve groups. The Lemba, from South Africa and Zimbabwe, believe they were led out of Judea by a man named Buba.

In a separate study, Dr. Parfitt, who is Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, has discovered the route the Lemba say they used to emigrate. He was told they traveled from a place called Senna to Africa. Parfitt, who has studied the Lemba for ten years and described his work in a recent book, *Journey to the Vanished City*, said he found a village called Senna in Hadramawt, a former site of Jewish

communities in Yemen. He believes that is the "Senna" referred to in Lemba oral tradition. "It turned out what they are saying about themselves is substantially correct."

Which leaves us, the South African Jewish Community, with a moral dilemma: What is our responsibility as Jews, our future obligation to help those inter-

ested back to halachic Judaism? Now that we know, can we continue to pretend they do not exist?

*Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum hosts the popular website Saudade (<http://www.lusoamerican.com/saudades/>). She speaks and writes widely on her experiences and those of other who have discovered their Crypto Jewish roots.*

## READING OF CONVERSO AT EL RINCON

Writer Mario Martinez will present a special reading of his screenplay *Converso* at El Rincon Libros Y Cafe at 7:30 pm on Saturday, August 5.

El Rincon is located at 6001 San Mateo Blvd NE, Suite D-1 (see page 11 for map). Space is limited and we ask that you RSVP to our host Miguel Spiegel at 505/830-0599. Miguel will be happy to assist you with directions and can give you more information on the evening's events.

There is no charge for admission.

## INCA JEWS

In search of Inca Jews, in August, 1998, I accompanied Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn to a block of apartment buildings on the outskirts of Lima, Peru.

We entered an apartment and were greeted by a thin, middle-aged woman. On the wall is a certificate with the name Blanca Zuli Argandoña Astudillo. We had come to interview Blanca. She is an Inca Jew.

We have heard of other communities of Inca Jews in Cajamarca and Trujillo. These Jews are not descended from the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of 500 years ago who were forced to become Catholics. They are native Peruvians, raised as Catholics, who decided on their own to adopt the Jewish tradition.

We asked Blanca about her community, how many there are, whether they are all of Incan origin, and have formally converted. She answered, "We are about 30 to 40 people. All are pure Inca, except one whose father is Jewish and mother Inca. None of us here now has converted yet. Those who have converted have gone to Israel. But, we all practice Judaism, the men are circumcised according to the rules, we maintain purity, go to the sea for Mikvah. The women go every month, the men on the Jewish holidays.

Q. How were the people first drawn to Judaism?

A. Each one has a different personal experience. Mine: for almost a year I fasted and prayed to the creator of the universe to show me the way. I studied a lot and searched. I did not find the right way until I met a man who taught me that there is one God. I continued searching, searching and became so happy to learn to love only one God, to practice the law and came to understand what it is to be a Jew. I am very thankful to Hashem for his boundless mercy who united me to our people and the delights of the law.

We may not be formally converted, but, as King Solomon says, "The law is like gold and silver." Even if we are not converted, we are grateful for having found grace in the eyes of Hashem and in our eyes.

Q. What caused you to fast for a year?

A. Since I was very small I have been very religious. Hashem made many miracles for me, I lost my father when I was very young. We were left orphans. My mother, with seven or eight children, would make us get on our knees and pray and know that our father was in heaven. We thanked God that our mother was so good with us. My mother was also orphaned very young. She grew up in the province of Lima.

Q. Did you grow up as a Catholic?

A. Yes, I even considered becoming a nun.

Q. Was there something missing from your life?

A. When I prayed, I found that it was not enough, so I prayed to Hashem to teach me how to serve Him.

Q. Did you have a priest to instruct you?

A. No. I would go to the fields or hills and pray to Hashem for guidance. Even my mother didn't know.

Blanca went on to describe the man who had introduced her to Judaism. His name was Alvaro Villanueva. In 1982, Villanueva, who had been an evangelical Protestant before turning to Judaism, taught her the basics of Judaism. She

studied with him, but, as she explained, at first the study was more to have philosophical arguments than to learn. But he was very patient with her and would explain each point by referring to what God said in the bible. "Soon I realized that when the bible says Hashem said this and Hashem said that, it meant something to me. How can I please God, How can I not answer?"

Q. So there were other people studying with Villanueva?

A. There was a group practicing the holidays their own ways, before they met Villanueva. It was a Christian group, but we followed many Jewish laws. In the beginning we followed the laws incompletely, for instance, we did not eat bread at Passover, but we did not do the ritual cleaning of the house.

Q. So how did the group get started?

A. At first we were a group of Adventists, so we were already keeping the Sabbath. We didn't want to study any books other than the bible. Half of them have converted and gone to Israel and half are still here.

Q. What have you heard from those who went to Israel?

A. I can't judge. Each one has his conscience in front of God and how it should be. We are not in Israel, we are here, we have no rabbis to guide us, our conscience is with God.

Rabbis do not supervise us, Hashem does.

Q. Did some go to Israel for economic gain?

A. I cannot speak for them. You know what happens when you judge people?

She told of having learned Jewish songs and prayers from Villanueva and from a Rabbi Kraus, who provided them with prayer books and helped to make sure that rabbis would accept them. In addition, Rabbi Zuber and many Lima Jewish families have sent them books and things. "Like rainfall, it is a blessing," comments Blanca.

When asked if they were accepted by Rabbi Kraus and the Jews of Lima she replied that they had been going to synagogue, but the synagogue is too small and there are too many of them and the rabbi "doesn't enough space." She explained it philosophically, "It has been a great blessing because now we don't have to travel on Shabbat anymore, we have our own services here." She added that they felt uncomfortable because everybody looked at them. The rabbi said that he had room for ten but no more.

Q. Then you don't go there anymore?

A. For about a year we haven't been going there. Especially so as not to travel on the Sabbath.

About this time several neighbors arrived, Blanca introduced them as the Gomez family and part of her group, B'nai Moshe. Mr. Gomez is the president of the group. One of the older women told about her sister who has moved to Israel and whose three children are in the Israeli army. She went on

### EDITORIAL POLICY OF HALAPID

Halapid contributors come from all over the world. The editors respect different national writing styles and, where possible, have left each item in the author's style. We edit for grammar, spelling and typographical error.

Many contributions are memoirs or retelling of family stories and legends. They may or may not be historically accurate, although they are indeed valid, sacred memories that have been passed along through time. We do not attempt to change individual perceptions as long as they are reported as such, but we do change obvious misstatements or historical error.

The editors reserve the right to edit any material. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily SCJS or Halapid.



to tell about their inability to attend services at Rabbi Kraus' synagogue in Lima. She pleaded with the rabbi that she would be very sad if she could not hear the shofar. The rabbi finally agreed to allow them in five at a time and but not for the entire service and he lent them a shofar. He went to them and taught them how to blow the shofar. But they have no shofar for this year.

Rabbi Cukierkorn told them that we would send them a shofar from the U.S. after we returned.

When asked about the future of the community, Blanca replied that their goal is to make aliyah, but each person has free will.

This group has tried to take the exam for aliyah, but the first time it was given they took only people who had been studying in the synagogue. The second time the exam was in Trujillo and they were unable to travel there. They are looking forward to the third exam.

"We have a synagogue five blocks from here in a house and we have a prayer room upstairs in this building. We made a torah. We made photocopies and put it together so that the kids would have an idea of what it looked like. Now we have decided that each one will write his own torah. We plan to do it someday before we get very old. We will write it in Hebrew and in Hebrew. We will copy the print from a Humash."

Blanca took us upstairs to see the prayer room. It was a plain, moderate sized room containing about 20 chairs. There was a small bima at the front and a Mogan David on the wall.

Downstairs again, Blanca served us apples dipped in *sharope*. We thanked her for the visit and took our leave of the Inca Jews.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BRAZIL

Bob Feron reports that the following activities have taken place in Brazil.

1. Archaeological discovery and excavation of the remains of the first mikve in the Americas, located at the rear of the ground floor of the first synagogue in the Americas (dating from 1642). Bob has visited the site.

2. Renovation of the building currently on the site that will be turned into a Jewish cultural center and museum, containing a reproduction of the first synagogue in the Americas on its second floor, in the traditional Sephardic style. Bob saw the architect's model of how it will look after the restoration.

3. Complete unification of the Sephardic-led crypto-Jewish congregation in Recife (which runs the Saturday morning services) with the main Jewish congregation in that city (which runs the Friday night services). In fact, one of the Bnai Anusim is now a member of the main synagogue's board of directors.

4. New and stronger leadership of the small Jewish community in Natal, where they hope to rebuild the synagogue, which needs a new exterior wall, roof, etc. Several of the most active members of this congregation are Bnai Anusim.

5. Development of an impressive and relatively comprehensive database of Sephardic names by the Brazilian Jewish Genealogical Society in São Paulo.

*Bob Feron is a translator for the Portuguese Embassy in Washington.*

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## Halapid's Policy Toward Use of "Marrano"

The word "Marrano" is not generally used in *Halapid* articles because of the common understanding of its pejorative nature, generally believed to have come from the Spanish word for swine. Exception to this policy are made when the term is inimical to an article. Our page one article by David Ramirez is one of these exceptions.

In his work *A History of the Marranos*, Historian Cecil Roth presents an analysis of its derivation. He lists terms used by the general population of early modern Spain. Among these are *converso*, or convert and New Christians, as distinguished from Old Christians.

Roth next describes another, less known term, such *Al-boraycos*, from *al-Burak*, Mohammed's steed "which was neither horse nor mule, male nor female – much like the persons to whom the name was applied, who were neither Jews nor Christians." He then addresses the term Marrano, giving some of its "fanciful" derivations. Some come from Hebrew, such as *Mar'at 'Ayin*, Appearance of the Eye; *Mumar*, apostate; *Mohram Atta*, Thou Art Excommunicated; and *Mar Anuss*, Master Anuss. From the Arabic, there is *Mura'in*, or hypocrite and from the ecclesiastical, *Anathema Maranatha*.

Then Roth calls "all this linguistic speculation...needless," claiming the Spanish swine as the correct source, and closes with an attempt to reinvent the word as an in-your-face term.

Halapid editors know that many present day descendants of those who have lived in terror and insecurity for centuries see little romantic in the experience, and so we have abjured the term unless used in a historical or academic context. We will continue to do so, and invite readers' comments.

The Board of Directors and Halapid Staff send sincere wishes for speedy recovery to Rabbi Joshua Stampfer and Ray Baca, son of SCJS member Randy Baca.

Buen Salud, Saludos,  
Good Health, Zie Gezundt

## 2000 Conference Update Albuquerque New Mexico

Gloria Trujillo

I have already included some information on the conference in my President's message on page 3. A tentative draft of the conference program has been included in the newsletter for your review.

Each year the conference location presents us with a unique opportunity to seek out local scholars, writers, journalists and artists who live and are actively involved in the Jewish community. We are most fortunate that they take the time and effort to participate in the conferences. We also receive several requests from individuals who want to talk about their Sephardic roots in the Southwest, and their involvement with the Jewish community in New Mexico.

We are offering some new presenters as well as several who you already know. We would like to welcome Ana Pacheco, founder and Publisher of *La Herencia* magazine who will start off the conference on Monday morning. Ana will interview SCJS members, Randy Baca and Flavio Montoya on her weekly radio show on Friday, August 4th. Lorenzo Dominquez, host of Albuquerque radio's, *Mi Serferino* will be making his first presentation for SCJS on Monday morning. Both Ana and Lorenzo are well known and respected in New Mexico and bring a wealth of knowledge to the conference.

Michael Perko SJ from Chicago's Loyola University joins us for the first time and speaks about his research on the crypto-Jewish experience. It is also an initial SCJS speaking experience for Jona Armijo-Beltran, native New Mexican and Mona Hernandez, who has written several articles on the genealogy of her New Mexico family. Dolores Sloan, co-editor of *Halapad*, will make a presentation on Luis de Santángel, influential converso and courtier to Ferdinand and Isabella, and how his role in the Columbus voyage affected the Crypto Jewish presence in the New World.

Mona Hernandez, who has done extensive genealogical research on the Gomez Robledo family will speak their relationship to the statue of the Virgin Mary, popularly known as La Conquistadora. Francisco Gomez Robledo, a member of that family was tried in 1661 by the Inquisition in Mexico City as a *Judaizante*.

We are pleased that Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum is joining us. Rufina is well known for her award winning website *Saudades*, whose focus is on those with Portuguese links. Kristine Bordenave, MD joins us to present an update of her medical research in New Mexico and its implication for Sephardim. Seth Ward, Seth Kunin and David Kazzaz, MD are returning this year, and Richard Santos will speak about his new book on the Jews of South Texas and Northern Mexico. Stanley Hordes will present a long awaited update on his research in the Spanish and Mexican archives.

We warmly welcome as presenters Rabbi

Joshua Stampfer, the Society's co-founder, and Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb from Congregation Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque. Rabbi Gottlieb has been serving the Jewish community in Albuquerque for over eighteen years and has been involved with the Hispano Sefardic community as well for many years.

The title of Rufina Bernardetti's presentation sums up the conference theme this year, "A Journey's Full-Circle." Many have now gone full circle and no longer refer to themselves as crypto, but as fully entitled members of the Jewish faith.

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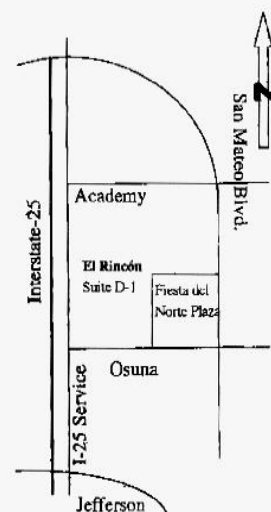
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# Conference Program

## The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

### Albuquerque New Mexico

### August 6 – 8, 2000

#### A JOURNEY'S FULL CIRCLE

##### Sunday

5:00-6:00 PM	<u>Best Western Rio Grande</u>
6:00-6:15	Registration
6:15-6:45	Opening Remarks- Gloria Trujillo, President and Stanley Hordes, Vice President
6:45-7:30	Banquet Speaker- TBA
7:30- 8:30	Kosher Dinner
	Sephardic Concert- Judy Frankel

##### Monday

7:30-8:00 AM	<u>Best Western Rio Grande</u>
8:00-8:45	Continental Breakfast
8:45-10:15	Ana Pacheco– Publisher and Host. <i>La Herencia</i> Magazine and Radio Program
	Seth Kunin & Stanley Hordes- Evidentiary Issues in Researching the History and Anthropology of Crypto-Judaism in New Mexico
10:15-11:00	Lorenzo Dominguez- Host of Albuquerque's <i>Mi Seferino</i> Radio Program
11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-12:00	Kristine Bordenave, MD- Recent Medical and Genetic Research in New Mexico
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch- Best Western
1:00-1:45	Seth Ward- Inquisition Heretic
1:45-3:00	Panel- Facilitator Nan Rubin, with Rabbis Lynn Gottlieb, Joshua Stampfer, Isaac Celnik & Albert Plotkin
3:00-3:45	Jona Armijo Beltran & Gloria Trujillo- Past Memories and Future Hopes
3:45-4:00	Break
4:00-5:00	David Kazzaz, MD- "Mother of the Pond": Memories on the Life of the Iraqi Jews
5:00-6:30	Free Time
6:30-7:15	Dinner at Hotel
7:15-8:15	Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum– A Journey's Full Circle

##### Tuesday

8:00-8:30 AM	<u>Best Western Rio Grande</u>
8:30-9:30	Continental Breakfast
	Michael Perko SJ- The Cross of Contexts: Theology, Culture and Geography in the Crypto-Jewish Experience.
9:30- 10:30	Seth Kunin- Juggling Identities: Crypto-Judaism and the Post Modern Self
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-11:00	Abraham Lavender- "But You Don't Look Jewish" and Other Such Wisdoms.
11:00-11:45	Mona Hernandez- La Conquistadora: La Shekinah
11:45- 12:30	Dolores J Sloan- Luís de Santángel: Converso Bridge to the New World
12:30-2:00 PM	Lunch on your Own
2:00-2:45	Richard Santos- Jews of Northern Mexico and South Texas
2:45-3:30	Dr Stanley Hordes- The Sephardic Legacy Project: Update on Research in Spanish and Mexican Archives
3:30-3:45	Open Mike
3:45-4:00	SCJS Update- Rabbi Joshua Stampfer & Ms Randy Baca

DRAFT  
PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE