

Tudo se ilumina para
aquêlê que busca la luz
BEN-ROSH

HALAPID

All is illuminated for
one who seeks the light
ARTURO CARLOS
BARROS BASTO

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Were Crypto Jews in Early New France Settlements?

by David Dugas

The story of Esther Brandeau, known to many as the first person of Jewish origin to set foot in New France, exemplifies the situation that many possible Jewish emigrants faced when they arrived in this northern land, today known as Quebec. Esther Brandeau was the daughter of David Brandeau, of Bayonne, France. Esther, disguised as a boy, Jacques La Fargue, arrived in Quebec on the ship "The St. Michel" in 1738. Esther remained true to her Jewish faith and was eventually returned to France in 1739. But she did remain for about one year and numerous attempts to convert and welcome her into French-Canadian Society were made (see p.5).

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SCJS Meets in El Paso August 6 to 8

by Gloria Trujillo

It seems like it's been forever, but we're happy to be holding our conference in the southwest in El Paso, TX this year. We all enjoyed the warm tropical ambiance in Miami's South Beach area and when we had time managed to get to the ocean which was close to our hotel. The location for this year's conference is the Holiday Inn Sunland Park Hotel, and the dates are August 6-8.

Keynote speaker is Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, and a tentative roster of presenters includes Ronald Duncan-Hart, Harry Ezratty, David Graizbord, Bennett Greenspan, Beth Hirschman, Stanley Hordes, Seth Kunin, Roger Martinez, Abe Lavender, Ginnie Logan, Donald Panther-Yates and Jessica Romer. See pages 12, 13 and 14 for abstracts.

We were able to arrange some great rates of \$75 for single/double rooms per night. Holiday Inn amenities are free parking, complimentary airport shuttles, high speed internet access, large pool, exercise/fitness center and onsite restaurant. The cutoff date for making your registrations is July 21. You can make reservations on line by logging



Downtown El Paso mixes old with new.

EXPLORING ETHICS AND CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

Ethical Framework for SJCS

By Seth D. Kunin, PhD

Some of the perennial issues that have been raised in many recent conferences and meetings relates to the ethical stances taken by the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. These issues have related to the conduct of our conferences, both in respect of the papers chosen for inclusion and the way that members respond to those papers and perhaps even more importantly to the stance taken by the society in relation to particular ways of expressing or developing crypto-Judaic identity. In this article I will address some of these issues and suggest a way forward for the society.

The ethical issues that impact on the work of the society and the individual researchers who are members of the society can be divided into a number of interrelated categories. The first of these covers the relationship of the society and its work to various forms of community both existing and emer-

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Identity and DNA Testing

by Abraham D. Lavender, PhD

Genetic testing has become a major form of research in the last few decades. Reactions have ranged from those who view it as the definitive answer to long-sought questions to those who view it as a resurgence of the racism of the early 1900s eugenics movement. There also is some concern that "Big Brother" either in the form of a governmental entity (e.g., a police force) or a private entity (e.g., an insurance company) will use genetic information in an illegal and unethical manner. Despite these concerns, genetic testing, including for genealogical purposes, has been growing rapidly. Jewish families have been a part of this increasing interest, and for people searching for a secret crypto-Judaic heritage, DNA has also been of special importance.

What are the potential benefits, problems and ethical issues involved with DNA research, especially when researching possible crypto-Jewish ancestry? From an ethical perspective, anyone advising someone to undergo

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Alleles* Have No Religion

by Seth Ward, PhD

The science of genetics is a recent one. It dates only from 1900, when a paper by Gregor Mendel was presented using what we now call genetics to explain heredity. Watson and Crick's discovery of DNA is only half a century old, and advances in science in only the past two decades have allowed for substantial application of genetics to explaining the history of human demography. This is a science very much still in its infancy. Genetic inheritance has the potential to tell us much about the ancestry of groups of individuals, including how closely related a particular population is, possibly to track movements between populations and so forth.

Complex issues of scientific discipline, treatment of human subjects, and medical and counseling applications are

*Alleles: different versions of the same gene

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to the Holiday Inn-Sunland website, www.holiday-inn.com/el-paso-sundlnd.com and entering our three-letter code SCJ. Registration forms have already been mailed out to all of our members and can be found on page 15.

Sonya Loya and the Bat-Tzyion Hebrew Learning Center will sponsor the Third Annual Anousim Conference in El Paso, August 4-6, with Rabbi Stephen Leon's Congregation B'nai Zion. For information on conference and registration, see article on page 3, email tav_22@yahoo.com or phone 505-257-0122. The two conferences are scheduled consecutively and those interested can attend both. If you are planning to do so, there is a \$10 discount offered. Registrations for both conferences must be prepaid to receive discounts.

For all adventurers, vacationers or researchers, El Paso is a great starting or ending point for your travel itinerary. Las Cruces, NM is less than an hour away, and Old Mexico is minutes away. So make plans to join us in El Paso. Contact GTRUJ@sbcglobal.net for further information. registration or membership.

In addition to formal papers, past SCJS conferences combined panels (right, Stan Hordes and Gloria Trujillo) and personal stories (below, Steve Gomes with listeners in semi-circle)



TENTATIVE CONFERENCE PROGRAM , AUGUST 6-8

Sunday, August 6

Keynote Address

Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez, Arizona State University, "Semitism and Anti Semitism in Arizona and Sonora: An Ethnobiography of Experience and Insight"

Monday, August 7

Personal Explorations and Case Studies

- 9:00 - 9:30 am Harry Ezratty, Puerto Rico and Baltimore, "Discovering and Attending to Anusim in Puerto Rico"
- 9:30 - 10:00 Elizabeth Hirschman, New Jersey, "Faith of Our Fathers: The Jewish and Muslim Presence in Colonial North America"
- 10:00 - 10:30 Nissan ben Abraham, Israel, "The Return of a Chueta to Judaism"
- 10:30 - 10:45 Break
- 10:45 - 11:15 Rabbi Stephen Leon, El Paso, "Anusim Who Choose to Return to Judaism in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez Region"
- 11:15 - 11:45 Commentary, followed by discussion
- 11:45 - 1:00 Lunch

HaLapid Panel on Ethical Issues:

- 1:00 - 2:30 pm Seth D. Kunin, University of Durham, Chair; Abraham Lavender, Florida International University; Seth Ward, University of Wyoming

Contemporary Issues

- 2:30 - 3:00 Abraham Lavender, Florida International University, "Why the Reluctance to Accept Spanish-Portuguese Returnees to Judaism? An Exploration for and Analysis of Possible Answers"
- 3:00 - 3:30 Rabbi David Kunin, Edmonton, Alberta, "When is a Top Just a Top?"
- 3:30 - 4:00 Commentary, followed by discussion
- 4:00 - 4:15 Break

DNA and Genetic Studies

- 4:15 - 4:45 pm Bennett Greenspan, Family Tree DNA, Houston, TX, "Removing the Sephardic Veil of Secrecy with DNA"
- 4:45 - 5:15 Elizabeth Hirschman, New Jersey, and Donald Panther Yates, Santa Fe, NM, "Toward a Sephardic DNA Haplogroup Profile in the New World"
- 5:15 - 5:45 Commentary, followed by discussion
- 5:45 - 7:00 At leisure
- 7:00 Dinner, with screening of film, "Jewish Culture in Segovia, Spain," by Kate Regan, Portland State University

Tuesday, August 7

History of Crypto Judaism in Spain and the New World

- 8:00 - 8:30 am Roger Martínez, University of Texas at Austin, "Before the Collapse of Coexistence, 1423-1469: How the Carvajal Family, Ha-Levy Family, and the Jewish Aljamas of Burgos and Plasencia Collaborated through the Institution of the Catholic Bishopric"
- 8:30 - 9:00 Michelle Hamilton, University of California, Irvine, "The Carvajal Family of Nueva España and the Judeo-Iberian Oral Tradition"
- 9:00 - 9:30 David Graizbord, University of Arizona, "'Philosemitic' Notions of Judaism in Seventeenth Century Iberia: Evidence from 'Judeophiles' and 'Crypto-Jews'"
- 9:30 - 9:45 Break
- 9:45 - 10:15 Ronald Duncan-Hart, Institute for Tolerance Studies, Oklahoma City, "Illegal Jews and the Inquisition of Cartagena in Seventeenth Century Colombia"
- 10:15 - 10:45 Commentary followed by discussion

Hidden and Emerging African and African American Judaism

- 10:45 - 11:15 Ginnie Logan, University of Colorado-Boulder, "Exploring the Little Known History of African-American Jewish Communities"
- 11:15 - 11:45 Jessica Romer, University of Colorado-Boulder, "The House of Israel in Ghana: The Jews of Sehwi Wiawso"
- 11:45 - 12:15 Commentary, followed by discussion
- 12:15 - 1:30 Lunch

Business Meeting:

- 1:30 - 3:00 pm Annual Meeting of SCJS members

President's Message

Academic Trip to Israel with a Sephardic Touch

by Abe Lavender



I began composing this President's Message in Jerusalem, Israel, and I am completing it after returning to Miami Beach, Florida. Fifteen of us, mostly professors from Florida International University and the University of Miami, were in Israel for six full days and two partial days, leaving on May 16 and returning on May 23, 2006. The trip was organized by Professor Henry Green of UM, and partly sponsored by Michael Sabet of Miami Beach. It was an intense, but very fulfilling trip, filled with meetings with professors at Tel Aviv University, the University of Haifa, and Hebrew University in Jerusalem, as well as talks from Israeli officials and representatives of Arab communities, and some sightseeing. This was my second trip to Israel. The first was many years ago when I lived in Turkey for a year and a half, and made the short trip to Israel as a tourist for an enjoyable sightseeing trip. This trip was different, being more intense and very academic.

At Tel Aviv University, some of us made a hurried visit to the Museum of the Diaspora, and especially enjoyed the models of historic synagogues. At the University of Haifa, our group had a seminar with Professor Sammy Smooha, and heard his interesting talk on "The Jews from Arab Lands in Israel." As the only sociologist and the only professor in our group who teaches in the area of Jewish world communities, I was particularly interested in his talk and pleased to see others learn more about the Mizrahi and Sephardi presence in Israel. I also met personally with Professor Oz Almog who, with Professor Tamar Almog, is developing a fascinating computerized multimedia database on subcultures and lifestyles in Israel.

Follows up on family research

At Hebrew University, I met with Professor Josef Kaplan, a history professor who, although of Eastern European heritage by way of Argentina, specializes in the study of the Sephardic community in Holland. The Spain-Holland connection is of special interest in my family research, so this chance meeting was of special interest to me. Professor Kaplan and I agreed and disagreed (as professors do) on differing aspects of western European Sephardic identity, and we had a stimulating and informative discussion. It turns out that the professor and Rabbi Manuel Armon, my rabbi at Temple Beth Tov in Miami, both have ancestry from Eastern Europe, grew up in Argentina, and had met at Hebrew University years ago.

One night we drove out from Haifa to a Bedouin village, and spent an enjoyable few hours with Ismail Khalqi and his family. We visited the Knesset, and had a private meeting with Avishay Braverman who recently resigned as president of Ben Gurion University to become a member of the Knesset. Dr. Alice Shalvi, noted Israeli feminist, was our dinner speaker one evening. We visited Caesarea (founded c. 22 BCE), the top of Masada, the Dead Sea, Yad Vashem, and a kibbutz which works toward peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Our tour

guide in Israel, Yaacov, was from a German family which had lost relatives in the Holocaust. Our bus driver, Moishe, was from Iraq. His driving, and traffic in general, were calm and courteous compared to Miami (although Jerusalem also has quite a rush hour traffic congestion).

On shabbat, our group from Miami attended services at a modern Orthodox synagogue, and then went, in groups of two, to dinner at homes of synagogue members. Totally by chance, the home where I went for a very enjoyable dinner and evening of discussion was that of a Sephardic family where the paternal family had left Spain in Inquisition times, gone to Holland, then to Surinam, and now, Israel. The Lionarons family are also members of a Spanish-Portuguese synagogue in Jerusalem.

Meet s crypto-Jewish friends from Miami

In Jerusalem, I met with two young friends who used to attend my synagogue in Miami. They were originally from Nicaragua, moved to Miami as children, and with their parents returned to Judaism two years ago under Rabbi Armon. Last year the family made aliyah. We spent an enjoyable evening on Ben Yehuda Street's sidewalk cafes talking about friends in Miami and their new life in Israel. The fellows, 16 and 20, like Israel very much. One cannot help but be amazed by the multicultural diversity in Israel.

There is not room to mention all the other things we did even in this short time, but this gives some idea of the trip while also mentioning some specific Sephardic contacts I had while there. Israel is an intriguing place. I felt "at home." Now, back at my apartment in Miami Beach, looking at the abstract painting of a crypto-Jew by Daniel Cuellar of Kingsville, TX, the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish world looks even more complete.

I'm looking forward to greeting members and friends of the Society at our annual conference in El Paso. As our agenda (page 2) and abstracts of papers (pages 2, 12-14) show, the topics are diverse and challenging. See you there!

Third Annual Event

Anousim Meet in El Paso Before SCJS Conference

by Sonya Loya



The Third Annual Sephardic Anousim Conference will be held August 4-6 at Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso, TX, sponsored by Bat-Tzyion Hebrew Learning Center with B'nai Zion.

The conference features SCJS Vice President/Programs Stanley Hordes, speaking on "The History of the Sephardic Anousim." Other speakers include Bennett Greenspan, President, Family Tree DNA, "The Anousim and DNA Testing Today, Rabbi Nissan Ben Avraham, on his personal discovery and becoming a rabbi; and Harry A Ezratty, on his family history from 1492 and his work with anousim.

Rabbi Stephen Leon of B'nai Zion will lead all services with Cantor Marc Philippe. Sonya Loya, Director, will speak on the Hispanic-Judaic Cultural Center and Bat-Tzyion events. See page 15 for special discount information.

New France from page 1

The question that remains is, were there others? How many others did come and eventually convert to Catholicism? The presence of Sephardic families throughout Latin America is well documented and recorded. Next to no official documentation on the presence of Jews in New France exists. New research from a variety of angles is hoping to dispel the myth that Jews did not come; exploring the possibility that they came in substantial numbers to this new land, far away from the persecution that existed for them in Europe.

The existence of Jews in France dates back to Roman times. After the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, thousands of Jewish captives arrived at Bordeaux, Arles and Lyons. Through the middle ages, their fate was often tied to the ruler at the time and many Jews were forced to move from region to region



DNA study "hopes to combine genealogical and historical research along with Y-DNA and mtDNA results of French Canadians to demonstrate the presence of Jewish ancestry in New France, one day giving them their rightful recognition among the first settlers"

based on the politics of the day. Unlike Spain, this was not a golden age for Jews living in France. Nevertheless, they existed and thrived until 1305 when Phillip IV the Fair expelled 100,000 Jews from France. They were allowed to return in 1315 under Louis X. Large numbers of "Marranos" came to southwestern France in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. They settled many cities; Bayonne, Peyrehorade, Bidache, Bordeaux and La Rochelle in the southwest. They also settled in Rouen. Their numbers were large but eventually dwindled. Where did they go? Many used France as a way stop to other more established Jewish centers like Amsterdam. But many others also assimilated into French society; and made their way to New France.

So how can researchers determine whether there were Jewish people of France that made their way to New France? Approaching this difficult task has been a raison d'être for Deborah Jensen, head of the Canadian Anusim DNA project at Family Tree DNA. Jensen hopes to combine genealogical and historical research along with Y-DNA and



mtDNA results of French Canadians to demonstrate the presence of Jewish ancestry in New France, one day giving them their rightful recognition among the first settlers.

The research has yielded some surprises, including a possible Ashkenazi heritage among some of the first settlers. Take my family for example. My first ancestor, Jean Ducas, came to New France from the deep southwest of France, so far south, his listed origin was only a few miles from the Spanish border. The surname Ducas is quite rare, but mainly considered of Ashkenazi origin, a name carried by some Jewish families originating from the Rhine region of France. The DNA testing confirmed a middle eastern heritage for my paternal line, haplogroup J2 which is the most common haplogroup assigned to Jewish people overall, 23% among Ashkenazi and 28% among Sephardim. But further research into the surname showed it was most likely linked with these families of Alsace. Many of the Jewish families of Alsace were merchants and had been living and trading all along the routes of St. Jacques Compostelle (The way of St. James). The name Ducas appears in records in Nimes, Toulouse, Auch, Pau, Tarbes, St. Jean de Luz and Tudela, those in Nimes and Toulouse found in the 1808 census of Jews. These families were also identified by Juan Carrasco Perez, Professor at the Public University of Navarra as likely of French origin, even though many were living in Navarra, Spain.

The DNA testing also showed a series of DNA results indicating middle eastern origins among other families from more northern areas of France, like the historical province of Perche. Many of the surnames bare a striking resemblance to common Ashkenazi surnames of today. There is also the case of the Gautron dit La Rochelle family test which came out as a 100% match to the "Levite Modal Haplotype" in haplogroup R1a. Seeing as the LMH shows its origins in Eastern Europe, why was this ancestor carrying the same DNA markers in La Rochelle, France? R1a is relatively rare in Western France. Many of the J2 results show a close or exact match to other well-known DNA markers like the "Cohen Modal Haplotype."

There are also some common Sephardic surnames found in French Canada like Rodrigues, Dassylva, Miranda, Cardinal among many others. DNA test results for one Rodrigues participant also indicated a Middle Eastern origin, haplogroup E3b. Overall, French Canadians show about 14% Y DNA in haplogroups J, E3b and G, DNA groups associated with the Mediterranean and Middle East. These numbers can be seen as quite average for a country like France which is also a Mediterranean country, but given that many of the settlers of New France came from northern France, they could be considered significantly higher than average.

In 1808, France issued the "Decree of Bayonne" which forced Jews to take and keep a single surname. This decree led to many census lists of Jews from all over France and gave Deborah Jensen and her team an excellent window into which names were taken and which bore a resemblance to names found in French Canadian society. The task in the months ahead will be to find participants with surnames found on these lists to submit for a DNA test. Should the results show an affinity with Middle Eastern groups, then the hard work of proving a Jewish background can begin.

The settlement of Sephardim in France along with their seemingly quiet dispersal coincides time-wise to the settlement of New France. Furthermore many of the settlers of New France came from cities like Rouen, La Rochelle, Bordeaux and Bayonne, cities with known Sephardic settlement and subsequent dispersal. The project has its hurdles. Names were often changed to assimilate with French society and records on the movement of Sephardim in France are sparse. Many people don't see the settlement of Quebec as having a significant founding Jewish population; maybe it is not a very popular theory in some circles. Deborah hopes to eventually show conclusively, combining this historical and genealogical data with DNA, that many of French Canada's first settlers shared a Jewish ancestry, one that was suppressed in a region essentially run by the Catholic Church.

Who Was Esther Brandeau?

The adjacent article refers to Esther Brandeau as the first known Jew in New France. In *The JPS Guide to Jewish Women*, Emily Taitz, member of SCJS, and her co authors, writes about this courageous young woman.

Her name was Esther Brandeau, and she had traveled by ship from La Rochelle in France disguised as a boy. Under the name of Jacques La Frague, Esther found work on a ship bound for North America. Upon her arrival in Quebec in 1738, "this passenger had attracted considerable attention until the remarkable discovery was made that the comely, spirited youth whose manners were so refined was in fact no 'Jacques' but 'Esther.'"

With no Jewish community and no known Jews living in New France, the Quebec authorities could think of nothing better to do with Esther Brandeau than to arrest her and send her to the local hospital since there were no suitable prison facilities for women. There, officials made efforts to convert her so that she might be enabled to remain in Canada. Despite the prisoner's confession that she had lived as a man for five years and did not want to return to her parents' home where she would be unable "to enjoy the same liberty as the Christians," she steadfastly refused to convert.

Efforts to find suitable lodgings for Esther Brandeau as well as continued attempts to convert her, became an *affaire officielle*, with a continuous stream of letters being sent back and forth across the Atlantic for several years. A final report to the Minister in France informed him that "her conduct has not been wholly bad, but she is so frivolous with regard to the instruction the priests desired to give her [that] I have no other alternative than to send her back." Esther Brandeau was returned to France at the expense of the French government, and we hear no more about her.

—from Taitz, Emily, Henry, Sondra, Tallan, Cheryl. *The JPS Guide to Jewish Women, 600 BCE-1900 CE*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003

gent. The second covers the impact of the research and the nature of the research upon the specific individuals participating in studies (this may have both direct impact on specific individuals interviewed or observed, and indirect impact upon individuals directly descended from people included in genealogical and/or historical research). The third covers the responsibility of academics within the society to their scholarly communities. It may be that some would argue for an additional area, responsibility of the society to particular religious communities. It will be one of the contentions of this article that this final area is precluded by the implications of the first three.

In order to establish the basis from which the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies' ethical position emerges it is important to note from the outset some key issues in relation to the nature and foundation of the society. These issues set the fundamental parameters for the ethical positioning of the society in relation to the three categories (and indeed the fourth category) outlined above. The summary of the society's mission statement reads as follows:

The Society for Crypto Judaic Studies serves the following purposes: The fostering of research and networking of information and ideas into the history and contemporary development of crypto Jews of Iberian origins.

As indicated in the statement the main purpose of the society is research and the dissemination of knowledge. The nature of the research is specified as both historical and contemporary, thus broadly including the academic disciplines of history and the social sciences. Each of these academic domains implies a set of ethical parameters.

The crypto-Jewish community is composed of individuals who have made or are making a wide range of different religious choices; some choose to move towards 'normative' Judaism others do not; indeed some choose to remain Christian or indeed to move to particular Messianic groups that they believe allow them to express both aspects of their

In relation to historical research it might be thought that the ethical issues were mostly in relation to academic integrity, particularly in relation to the data and the nature of the historical analysis arising from it. As indicated, however, in the 2004 ethics statement of the Royal Historical Society [UK], historians also have responsibilities towards living individuals or communities. The RHS ethics document states:

The maintenance of high professional standards includes... taking particular care when evidence is produced by those still living, when the anonymity of individuals is required and when research concerns those still living.

This statement emphasizes the need to protect the anonymity of living individuals and the need to have concern for how the presentation of the data may reflect on them and communities.

This last implication might be seen as potentially being in conflict with the need for historical integrity. This might for example be found in the potential conflict between an individual or community's understanding of its authenticity and the evidence provided by historical data. In such cases it is clear that the historian or other scholar cannot and should not ignore or hide the data. The scholar, however, has responsibility towards the individual or community both in respect of indicating the limitations of their data and in how they chose to present the implications of their data respecting the living communities or individuals.

It might be thought that the historian has a responsibility for how others might use their data. This argument in the social sciences can be used as a means of censorship and limiting academic freedom. If we chose to limit our research to the safe areas which could never be used by others in an unethical way, social scientific research would in effect become a pawn of the status quo and thus abandon any basis in integrity or the search for knowledge.

Social scientists must be responsible for their own ethical choices within the conduct of their research. They also bear some responsibility for making sure that their research is properly understood both in terms of its limitations and implications and that their research is not misrepresented and responding as necessary.

If, however, taking these provisos into account, others chose to use the data for purposes other than research, for example, as building blocks for constructing their identity or community structures, this becomes their own responsibility and must be guided by their own codes of ethics or other means of making ethical decisions.

In relation to the Society of Crypto-Judaic Studies, as opposed to individual researchers and research projects, it may be argued that there is an additional level of responsibility, that is, that the society is responsible for the content of the research and therefore to support communities and or individuals affected by the research conducted by members of the society. This view would suggest that the Society had responsibility for the research and its content. SCJS, however, in no sense has this responsibility. It does not fund its members' research, nor does it vet the content of their research proposals or the outcomes of that research (qua research, its public responsibilities at its annual conference are a separate issue). Researchers (even if members) are independent from the society and are thus solely responsible for the content of their work. In general the researchers are bound by the particular ethical positions of their disciplines and/or the institutions within which they work or who fund the projects.

As indicated in the society's mission statement its primary role is as a forum for discussion and dissemination. Thus, its responsibility is to allow the research to be presented and discussed. It does have a responsibility to make sure of the quality of the research presented in either its newsletter (*HaLapid*) or in its annual conference, in terms of both data and analysis, but it cannot and should not take on any liabilities in

relation to the content or position of the research undertaken and presented. Perhaps its only responsibility to the community beyond discussion and dissemination is to provide a locus for communities and individuals to respond to the research and explore for themselves how the research may affect their identity or position within their wider communities.

As indicated above, some have argued that the society has an obligation or perhaps minimally a role in enabling people to make particular religious choices, for example, supporting or advocating for crypto Jews to "return" to "normative" Judaism(s). There are two primary reasons for rejecting this position. First, the crypto-Jewish community is composed of individuals who have made or are making a wide range of different religious choices; some choose to move towards 'normative' Judaism others do not; indeed some choose to remain Christian or indeed to move to particular Messianic groups that they believe allow them to express both aspects of their identity; other individuals reject any particular religious stance and see crypto Judaism as part of their 'cultural' or ethnic identity. Thus, there is no one religious tradition or direction of religious journey that would include a majority of those individuals identifying themselves as crypto Jews. If the society were to select one tradition or journey as opposed to others it would be marginalizing the validity of the alternative positions and journeys.

The second reason for rejecting this view arises from the Society's emphasis on research as its primary task. It is my view that high quality research cannot be motivated by a particular religious stance on the part of the researcher. It has long been recognized by the social sciences that an individual researcher's own points of view or indeed values must be bracketed off for the purpose of research – this is often called methodological relativism. This view is also indicated in the RHS's ethics statement specifically in relation to the past:

The (RHS) Society recognizes the need for academic freedom of speech and writing. Since ethical standards are not constant, there is a need to eschew anachronistic value judgments when investigating and describing the past.

The need to “eschew” one’s own value judgements in the context of research is even more important when one is dealing with living communities, the members of which may have very different understandings and values. This process of methodological relativism for some ends with the conclusion of the research, after which the individual may choose to make judgements and use the research to support some instrumental goal, for example, supporting the development of a center whose goals are to lead individuals to make a particular religious choice (and the research may give information on how this might be done). The individual may also choose to share the research with a society that has goals in relation to the development of policy or other instrumental ends. SCJS, however, has chosen to place research and open discussion as its primary drivers and thus it is my contention that as a society it needs to maintain a position of methodological relativism and not support any particular religious tradition or instrumental goal.

This role as a locus for discussion and dissemination relates to both the annual conference and the quarterly newsletter. SCJS does have certain ethical responsibilities in relation to the content of both of these forums. The primary responsibilities lie in four areas: (1) the veracity and quality of the content of presentations or articles, (2) to insure that the content does not include approaches specifically against the mission statement of the organization, (3) to insure that the tone of presentations and discussion is appropriate to academic debate, (4) to ensure that the communities/individuals researched have a voice.

The first of these responsibilities seems clear and unambiguous, and to an extent it is. There are vetting processes within both the conference organization and editing of *HaLapid* to ensure that these issues are addressed. It is important, however, not to let this criteria be used to silence alternative points of view. Thus, if an appropriate academic paper were offered that challenged the authenticity of crypto-Jewish origins we should allow it to be presented and appropriately debated. Equally if a paper which argued for the ‘truth’ of something we generally consider ‘true’ were offered but was based on a misuse of data that paper should be rejected. The society in its publications and conferences has an obligation to make sure that poor academic argumentation is not offered as acceptable or quality research.

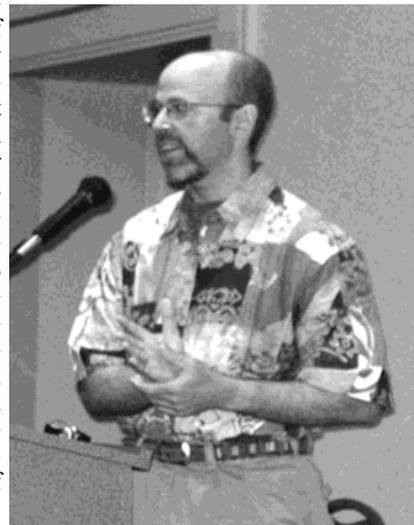
This responsibility arises from two interrelated areas – responsibility to the various academic communities that interact within the society and the broader academic community, and perhaps even more importantly to the wider community to whom the papers (published and presented) are also addressed. The first of these demands that papers are judged in terms of the highest standard of academic argumentation, so that their findings will be considered sustainable in academic debate and thus form part of an ongoing argument rather than the noise that obscures it. The second of these arises from our responsibility to the wider audience in terms of both communication of the nature of the data (and its limitations) as well as educating them in terms of what makes a good and therefore sustainable academic argument. If we ignore this responsibility we support the acceptance of books like the *Da Vinci Code* as scholarly historical products. The key point is that we must not censor the data or the conclusions of papers we publish or allow to be presented but we must insure that what ever the conclusions the arguments are academically sustainable rather than delusions or illusions created by poor argumentation.

The second of these responsibilities is derived directly from the mission statement and its implications. The Society’s role is to research and discuss issues relating to crypto Judaism – which as suggested above includes both arguments for and against the his-

torical authenticity of the phenomena or particular aspects of it. As discussed above a key implication of the mission statement is that the society is not and cannot be associated with any particular religious group or stance in relation to religious choices. Thus, it would be inappropriate for papers to be published or presented that have as their primary purpose the conversion of individuals or communities to any particular religious tradition. This, however, does not preclude papers on how different religious traditions responded to crypto Judaism or the religious journeys of individuals or communities.

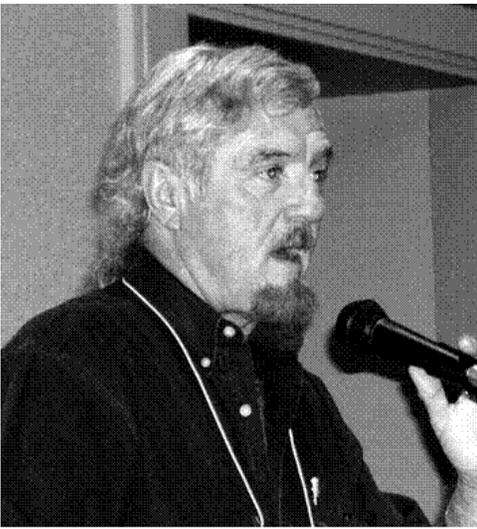
The third responsibility presents a clear statement of the responsibilities of the society to ensure that its meetings (and publications) are conducted in a way that is respectful to all of the participants, both those who present papers and those who respond to them. This does not mean that questions and responses should not be challenging—this indeed is a key part of all academic debates—does, however mean that the tone of discussion should remain within the confines of accepted academic decorum.

The final area of responsibility relates to the obligation of the society to allow the community that it researches to speak in its own voice and to address issues of concern to it. Historically, academic societies tended to privilege the academic voice as the only authoritative voice in relation to the individuals or communities being studied. Increasingly there is the recognition that this approach turned these communities into passive objects of study with no right to challenge or respond to the authoritative academics. Societies like the SCJS need to balance the academic analysis and discussion by allowing individuals from within the communities being studied to speak both of their own concerns and in response to the issues raised by the academics. The society therefore has a responsibility to give something back to the community being studied; by making the conference and publications a locus for expression from within the community and a place from which crypto Jews (and others) can draw on high quality research the society is able to make an important contribution to both individuals and communities.



Seth Kunin addresses SCJS San Diego Conference

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from Lavender page 1

The author,
SCJS President,
speaks at Miami
Conference

details).

What is the genetic composition of Jewish communities today? The extent of genetic intermixing of Jews and non-Jews has been the topic of a number of recent genetic studies, with the majority of researchers suggesting little interaction during nearly 2000 years in the diaspora. Space prohibits discussion of all of the genetic studies on this topic, but to give an idea of the overall findings, results of some of the major studies follow.

Considering DNA patterns of Jewish women, Tikochenski et al (1991) concluded that Jewish women descended from a diversity of maternal lineages distinct for four to five thousand years. Thomas et al, in 2002, concluded that, contrary to non-Jews, there was greater differentiation for mtDNA than for the male Y-chromosome, and concluded that the practice of female-defined ethnicity has had a pronounced effect on patterns of genetic variation (p. 1417).

Considering DNA patterns for Jewish men, Nebel et al (2000) found a large genetic relationship between Jews and Palestinians, but in a 2001 study (with different groups in the sample) they found an even higher relationship of Jews with Iraqis and Kurds. These authors conclude that the common genetic background shared by Jews and other Middle Eastern groups predates the division of Middle Easterners into different ethnic groups (p. 1106), and that Sephardim and Ashkenazim have close (but not exact) genetic patterns.

While Nebel and others have shown a genetic relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish men in the Middle East, other researchers have shown the strong degree to which Jewish men in various parts of the world have maintained a basically Middle East DNA pattern even after two thousand or more years in diaspora (e.g., Livshits et al, 1991). In 2000, Hammer et al also concluded that most Jewish groups were similar to each other, had experienced little genetic admixture with non-Jewish groups, and still overall had a strong genetic similarity with Middle Eastern non-Jews. But, even a small per-generation intermixture can add up over about 2000 years and sixty generations. Santachiara et al (1993, p. 63) conclude that Ashkenazim have about 25% non-Jewish Y (male) chromosomes, representing about one half of one percent of admixture per generation during centuries in the diaspora (p. 63). In 2004, Behar et al came to the same general conclusions although they suggested a much lower admixture rate (p. 362). These results also are discussed in more detail in Lavender (2005). Results are similar for Sephardim.

Specifically looking at descendants of Jews and crypto-Jews of Iberia, a Middle Eastern genetic pattern is suggestive of Jewish ancestry. However, there also were Arabs in Spain who also might have had

testing should answer several questions before research begins. The adviser should make sure that the person being tested knows which questions about potential Jewish ancestry can and cannot be answered by DNA testing, and should advise the person of potential embarrassing or disappointing results. Some specific medical problems are found more frequently in individuals with Jewish ancestries, and the advisor must also be sensitive to this situation.

The most frequent question concerning possible crypto-Jewish identity and genetic research is: Can I prove my Jewish heritage using DNA tests? This question is based on another question: Is there a Jewish gene that differs from non-Jewish genes?

In 1994 Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza published his *The History and Geography of Human Genes*, a book and atlas showing DNA relationships between scores of national and ethnic groups throughout the world. Cavalli-Sforza, born in Genoa, Italy, in 1922, became a professor of genetics at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, in 1970, and is the founder of genetic anthropology. For our purposes here, his major contribution is his explanation and demonstration that groups genetically overlap and/or merge with each other on a continuum that has few dividing points (Lavender, 2006). Many other researchers have now added to his conclusions in more detail, including researchers who have analyzed Jewish genetics.

We now can answer the question asked earlier: Is there a Jewish gene that differs from non-Jewish genes which potentially can prove Jewish heritage? The simple answer to this question is no, although we will see that this simple statement will be modified. One reason for this negative answer is that Jews did not originate as a distinct genetic group. Historically, Jews were part of the Middle East, and their major genetic pattern is a Middle Eastern genetic pattern that is shared with other Middle Eastern groups. A second reason is that Jews historically have intermixed genetically with other groups. Millions of Jews have become Christians (and to a lesser but significant degree, Muslims) either through force, social pressure, or choice. Jewish "genes" thus have become a noticeable part of some non-Jewish communities. After the crushing defeat of Israel in 135 C.E., many of the seven million Jews in the world "disappeared" into the Gentile world. In modern history, the Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal are the major examples of large-scale conversions to Christianity, and it is from these conversions that most crypto-Jews descend. This point is of major importance to this paper.

Jewish writers usually have emphasized the loss of Jews throughout history but usually have overlooked the numerous individuals who converted to Judaism and joined Jewish communities. But, the mixing has gone both ways. Particularly in the early centuries of Judaism there were many non-Jewish individuals who merged into the "Hebrew tribe" (Patai, 1971). There also are special situations such as the Khazars in the area of Georgia who converted to Judaism in the seventh century C.E. The number of Khazars involved is still debated, but clearly some non-Semitic genetic patterns entered Ashkenazi communities (Brook, 1999). Numerous other examples of both out-flow and in-flow are found in the literature (see Lavender, 2005, for a more

Is there a Jewish gene that differs from non-Jewish genes which potentially can prove Jewish heritage?
The simple answer to this question is "no"

a Middle East genetic pattern. This possibility must be considered, although there were many more Jews than Arabs in

Spain by the time of the Inquisition, and most Arabs went south or east to Arab regions rather than to Europe and the Americas.

A second question is: But if I have the Cohen Gene, doesn't that prove my Jewish heritage? Since 1998, when Thomas et al published their "Origins of Old Testament Priests," specific attention has been given to the so-called "Cohen Gene" or the Cohen Modal Haplotype (CMH). Analyzing a specific DNA pattern that was found among men who claimed to be descended from ancient priests (Cohanim) of Israel, the researchers found that this specific pattern was routinely found among Cohanim, but very seldom found among other Jewish men. Using mutations among Cohanim today, and going backwards, they suggested that this pattern could have been originated in the time of Aaron, the first High Priest.

A descendant of crypto-Jews who has the Cohen Modal Haplotype probably does have Jewish ancestors. However, one problem with using the CMH is that only about five percent of Jewish men have this haplotype, thus drastically reducing its usefulness. Another problem is that the CMH is also found among a small percentage of non-Jewish men of Middle Eastern heritage. Nebel et al (2001) found that the CMH was found among 10.1% of Kurdish Jews, 7.6% of Ashkenazim, and 6.4% of Sephardim, but that it also was found among 2.1% of Palestinian Arabs and 1.1% of Muslim Kurds. The CMH and the most frequent Muslim Kurdish haplotype (MKH) are the same on five markers (out of six) and very close on the other marker. The

MKH is shared by 9.5% of Muslim Kurds and 1.4% of Palestinian Arabs, but it is also found among 2.6% of Sephardim, 2.0% of Kurdish Jews, and 1.3% of Ashkenazim. The general conclusion is that these similarities result mostly from the sharing of ancient genetic patterns, and not from more recent admixture between the groups (p. 1099). As Rabbi Yaakov Kleiman has worded it, the CMH is “likely the marker of the Jews’ and Arabs’ shared Patriarch, Abraham” (2004: 20). Undoubtedly, some Palestinian Muslims and Christians are descendants of Jews who converted under centuries of occupation, further complicating this issue. It also must be noted that about one fourth to one third of men who claim Cohen status do not have the Cohen Modal Haplotype, another factor that can cause disappointment and frustration to crypto-Jewish descendants who have surnames suggesting Cohen ancestry.

A third question is: What if I don’t have a Middle Eastern genetic pattern? Indications are that about one-third of Jewish men do not have a Middle East genetic pattern. In most cases, this probably results from a non-Jewish male ancestor at some point in history, either before or after the diaspora. It is safe to assume that most of the descendants of these men have been practicing Jews for centuries, with no question about their membership in a Jewish community. Nevertheless, this presents another hurdle in trying to convince others of one’s Jewish ancestry. Of course, this possibility is shared by “born Jews” as well as by crypto-Jewish descendants, and might be one reason why many “born Jews” are hesitant to have their DNA tested. Some people would rather not know.

A fourth Question is: What if my DNA doesn’t match other members of my family? This question raises serious ethical issues, and requires delicate explanations. Again, this situation happens among all groups of people who have DNA tests, and is certainly not unique to those with crypto-Judaic heritage. This might also be a major reason that some people refuse to have their DNA tested. The assumption usually is that there was an out-of-wedlock birth at some point in the past, either in recent or distant history. There is no question that such situations have occurred, either in a nonmarital situation or in an extramarital situation. In a recent study in England, for example, Baker (2002) has suggested that about 10% of people do not have the genetic father which they think they have. This varies tremendously dependent on some variables, especially social class. Nevertheless, this situation is part of reality and must be faced. In fact, some authors conclude that Judaism changed from a paternal-based identity to a female-based identity because of the large number of rapes which could result when Jews were attacked in anti-Semitic settings. On the other hand, throughout history there have been informal adoptions. In recent centuries in Europe, for example, large numbers of children were orphaned and raised by people other than their genetic parents, and frequently ended up with a surname other than that of their genetic father. Formal adoptions, when unknown, also present problems.

A fifth question is: If I have indications of Jewish genetic ancestry, does that mean I am Jewish? The answer to this question is based on religious and personal attitudes. From an Halachic perspective, one’s Jewish ancestry does not count if one is not born Jewish. On the other hand, if one is born Jewish, and does not explicitly reject Judaism, one is presumed to be Jewish even if one is an atheist. This is an emotional issue, viewed as a double standard, for those descendants of crypto-Jews who consider themselves Jewish and practice Judaism and who object to being required to undergo a conversion rather than a return ceremony. Rabbi Marc Angel, an Orthodox rabbi of Sephardic heritage, writes that some descendants of crypto-Jews “feel that their Jewish ‘blood’—their genetic tie to Jewish ancestors—was somehow a driving force in their decision to ‘come back home to the religion of their ancestors” (p. 93). But, he also requires a halakhic conversion even while writing that “these individuals do have a claim to Jewishness that must not be ignored” (p. 97). Complexity also arises when considering a descendant of an ancestor with the Cohen Modal Haplotype. For example, John Kerry, the Democratic candidate for President in 2004, is the paternal grandson of Fritz Kohn of Austria who was (presumably, based on his name) a Cohen who converted to Catholicism and changed the surname to Kerry because of virulent anti-Semitism. John Kerry’s brother, Cameron Kerry, converted “back” to Judaism when he married a Jewish woman. Is he a Cohen? While not discussing the Kerry family, see Rabbi Yaakov Kleiman (2004) for a discussion of the Cohen issue. Also see www.Cohen-Levi.org.

DNA has tremendous potentials to help crypto Jews and others learn more about their Jewish origins. But, as we have seen, there also are complex questions which frequently raise complex ethical issues.

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raised by genetic research having to do with inherited traits, particularly when genetic inheritance causes disease or disability or leads to a heightened susceptibility. These have been much discussed by scientists, and professional protocols govern how they can proceed. So, too, forensic DNA analysis is now available to identify perpetrators, rule out suspects, free those improperly convicted, and determine the identity of corpses and skeletal remains where there were no fingerprints available; and professional standards must necessarily ensure that such evidence stands up to the demands of our system of justice.

Much less has been done on the ethical and scientific issues raised by the demographic analyses which have only recently become possible. Genetic research is already shedding significant light on relevant issues of historic demography, and it is an important tool for those interested in knowing whether various populations or communities have a hereditary link to the Jewish people. The Society must promote and disseminate it. But we must also be part of the discussion of the ethical and interpretational boundaries of this research.

Various genetic surveys indicate a highly coherent Jewish gene-pool, especially among Ashkenazi Jews, and suggest the degree to which Jews are similar genetically to populations of the Middle East and other locations. Research focusing on genetic material passed down only through a single sex is of particular interest. The Y-chromosome, found only in males and thus passed along from biological father to son; or mitochondrial DNA, inherited only from the mother. Genetics have in some cases appeared to confirm some traditional suppositions—for example, that Jewish communities on the whole have a high degree of endogamy over past centuries. Studies seem to confirm that many Jews who self-identify as *kohanim* share a common male ancestor possibly living during first or second Temple times or even earlier. Other studies suggest that there were a limited number of female ancestors in many Jewish communities; they suggest a high degree of female endogamy although the founding women may or may not have had Jewish ancestry themselves. Such genetic demography is hardly unique to Judaism; a recent study of African Americans found that many had genetic traits consistent with a high percentage of European ancestors. Such studies provide a scientific platform to address a number of a religious, historical, community, and personal identity issues. Theories suggested by this data are often thought provoking and useful, but they are not always completely substantiated by research; indeed the field is young, as are disciplinary standards for determining the meaning of findings and discussing them within the context of more traditional disciplines.

1. Genetic screening as a model for demographic reconstruction

There are a number of protocols for genetic screening; like many scientific procedures performed on human populations, universities or hospitals have established parameters that must be analyzed before ordering a genetic test. Typical considerations

include:

- Screening has real benefit in preventing or treating illness
- Cost is justifiable.
- Results are reliable.
- Adequate followup is provided: medical, psychological, social, educational, and other support measures are available for those people found to be carriers of the tested gene.

Geneticists also debate the degree to which detailed technical information is useful to the patient or the family, including what types of information should be provided, and how much information is useful. Clearly many patients and their families cannot adequately respond to specialized medical or scientific information in the same way that researchers or physicians with years of specialized training and experience can, and in some cases, the learning curve to understand this information is inconsistent with—and less useful than—discussion of the ramifications of the information.

At first glance, this “illness” model for demographic genetics would seem to be totally irrelevant to demographic genetics. Yet many individuals evidence strong reactions when they find that the ancestry suggested by genetic testing is quite different from what they had previously supposed, no less so then when anthropologists or folklorists challenge their previous assumptions. We rightly raise such issues in anthropological research, insisting on professional approaches so that researchers to conduct themselves in ways respectful of the potential reactions of human subjects to conclusions drawn about them; so too, a professional attitude towards sharing medical and scientific results with patients and families is an important part of medical practice.

The “Reliability of results” parameter often is rated in terms of the percentages of “false positives” or “false negatives,” and much testing seeks to balance reliability, cost and relative ease. Thus urinalysis is routine for drug testing, due to ease and low cost, and the reliability of the negative result. But a positive result for poppy derivatives is not reliable at all, as it can be triggered by poppy-seed bagels or even hamantaschen; one source estimated “that 70% of DOT opiates positives are due to poppy seeds.” The meaning of this statistic is clear: the test is quite reliable for poppy derivatives, but this source estimates that only 30% of those who test positive use heroin or other poppy-based drugs. Similarly, demographic genetic studies test for shared ancestry and genetic similarity but this model suggests that the degree to which a given ancestry correlates with current religious, ethnic or racial identity (absent decisions made on the basis of genetic results alone) should be taken into account in assessing the meaning of the data.

2. Public health vs. demography

Research suggests that certain genetic traits linked to diseases found in Ashkenazi populations are also present in populations with Hispano backgrounds. In some of these cases, genetic testing has shown highly specific genetic variations. It is statistically unreasonable to assume multiple “founders” —i.e., an original ancestor held in common by all who possess a unique genetic pattern. But it is usually impossible to determine whether the founder in a given population was Ashkenazi, a Spanish-speaking “Crypto-Jew,” or indeed some person with no actual link to either community who happened to pass on the gene. Wide incidence in unrelated Southwestern US communities with known Jewish heritage might be significant; presence of the genetic variant in isolated communities may reflect bottleneck/founder situations in which the variant occurred among the first settlers, and disappeared in some communities and was magnified in others; or that it was introduced later only within specific communities. In any case, the fact that the public health significance is clear does not mean that the demographic significance is as well.

3. Genes and Jewish Identity.

As we have seen, unique genetic markers may determine that two individuals are likely to share a common ancestor, but the



Seth Ward makes a point during an SCJS Conference break

significance of such findings is by no means clear.

Alleles have no religion. Judaism does not have alleles as it is open to anyone to join. People inherit their genes but they construct their religious identity in various ways, some of which reflect their birth or bringing, and some reflect choice. Where ascribed and biological parentage differ (i.e., in cases of adoption) we usually expect ascriptive parentage to correlates much more strongly with religion than the biological one.

Conversion into Judaism has always been possible; indeed it has been common in some periods. Genetic studies all present the Jewish population as being quite coherent, but of course some ancestors of Jews were not Jews. Some may even have been enemies of the Jewish people. Archaeological evidence suggests that coherent Israelite communities emerged only in the 11th or 12th prechristian century, which means that genetic correspondences older than about 3000 years are irrelevant. The Talmud asserts that among those studying and teaching Torah were descendants of Sisera, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar and Haman (Sanhedrin 96b), all enemies of Israel from much earlier days whose latter-day descendants joined Judaism. Significantly, the Talmudic version of the passage does not name names except for Shemaiah and Abtalion (teachers of Hillel) who openly admitted they were converts: the Rabbis protected the identity of those who did not make such statements public. Conversion to Judaism included the conversion *en masse* of Idumeans in the 1st pre-Christian century and documentary evidence suggests significant conversion to Judaism from the first century and perhaps up until Christianity achieved protected status in the 4th century. Many Khazars became Jews in the 8th or 9th Christian century. While it could be argued that their genetic effect is much greater in the Ashkenazi world, presumably their descendants also came to places such as Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, and the Middle East where they mixed in with Sephardic populations as well. Throughout history, too, there have been individuals who have left the Jewish community; their descendants would carry their ancestors genes but not their religious identity. All in all, while Jews in general appear to have a high degree of shared genetic heritage, to be sure, but it is also important to note that Jews share common ancestors with non-Jews; there is no “Jewish gene” found in all Jews and lacking in all non-Jews.

There is continuing tension between “genetic essentialists” who believe that Judaism is entirely heredity, and those who believe it is entirely commitment to God and Torah—ultimately, not a hereditary entity at all. My friend Professor Daniel J Lasker is deservedly famous in some circles for comparing the two attitudes as seeing Judaism as “software” vs. “hardware.” Maimonides is associated with the “software” position; Judah Halevy with the Hardware position. Maimonides, however, stresses the importance of community and of the training one receives in one’s birth environment, and even Ha-Levy accepts that the descendants of converts who are born to parents who were born as Jews are indistinguishable from those who have four Jewish-born grandparents. After the Nazi racial program, it seems to me that it is difficult to support a position that emphasizes Judaism as a matter of biological ancestry—even if it is proud of that ancestry rather than committed to stamping it out.

When contemplating marriage or determining priestly or levitical status, Judaism is in fact usually a matter of biology. The rule is that “offspring from a legitimate marriage follow the father,” whereas “any [woman] who does not have Jewish marriage (Hebrew: *kiddushin*)—not with [her husband] and not with others—the offspring is like her.” Since a non-Jewish woman never has the possibility of *kiddushin* and a Jewish one generally always does, in traditional Jewish law, the child of a non-Jewish mother is not Jewish, and the child of a Jewish mother is. On the other hand,

the hereditary Priestly and Levitical status (Hebrew: *Kohen* and *Levi*) follow the father. So, too, do “Sephardic” or “Ashkenazic” status, to the extent that these have implications in Jewish law and ritual. This rule seems to protect against the possibility that mothers of persons asserting they were Jews were in fact not; no such degree of “protection” seems to have been necessary regarding fathers.

Jewish observance would not seem to play any role in this at all, but traditionally, except for marriage and certain aspects of Israeli law, observance and lifestyle rather than lineage determine in practice whether someone is considered Jewish, including such items as calling them to the Torah or offering them charitable contributions designated for Jews. Historically—up to the 1700s—this almost always meant appearing to follow minimal standards of Sabbath and dietary observances. In the past two centuries this has been complicated somewhat due to a fall-off in observance and Jewish training, a more mobile society, greater intermarriage and conversion, both into and out of Judaism.

The Reform movement endorsed “patrilineal descent” meaning that the child of a Jewish father or a Jewish mother is considered Jewish. Yet here as well, Jewish genes alone do not make someone Jewish. Reform doctrine also requires an explicit affirmation of Jewishness in order to be considered Jewish, a concept also embodied in traditional formulations about the rejection of idolatry or Sabbath desecration. Madeleine Albright is a famous case: most people do not consider her Jewish at all, although she now knows that she had four Jewish grandparents.

In most surveys and many research studies, Judaism is self-determined. Persons who answer affirmatively to the question “Are you Jewish” or who select Judaism as a response to a

question about religious affiliation are considered Jewish, without further determination of parentage.

In the State of Israel and, historically, in many European countries, Judaism is also a matter of public determination, subject to political considerations. The frequent vehemence of debates about “who is a Jew” with respect to the Israeli population registry indicate that this is

no simple matter, and Israeli law has determined that a person cannot claim to be Jewish by “nationality” (what we would probably call ethnicity in the US), but not by religion.

It is usually assumed that throughout history, Judaism has been overwhelmingly a hereditary affair. Nevertheless, conversion, adoption, exogamy, political considerations and other factors led to a complicated situation that must be considered when attempting genetic demographics.

Genetic testing can add much to our knowledge of Jewish demography. I am not arguing that it is unreliable. On the contrary, it offers a tool of enormous power to confirm or reject various propositions about Jewish migration patterns, community coherence and endogamy, and ancestry. Nevertheless, it must be used carefully and with regard to its limitations, both with respect to the kind of information it offers, and to the vagaries of the demographics of the Jewish community. And, to return to the considerations noted in the discussion of genetic screening, considerations about reliability (and the meaning of reliability), interpretation of the results, and counseling based on the results of demographic genealogy merit far more care when we remember that individuals apply the results of such research findings to their own lives.

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SPEAKERS SUBMIT ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS FOR EL PASO CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SEMITISM AND ANTI SEMITISM IN ARIZONA AND SONORA: AN ETHNOBIOGRAPHY OF EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT

Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, Arizona State University

The use of ethnobiography as an illuminating device in which the author uses information from her or his own experience is linked closely to autobiography. Both use the same recalled platform to tell the tale and both are filled with the same error-prone dynamics. The difference between the two is that while both are ego centered the ethnobiography is largely a tool and medium to narrate other events, ideas, figures, patterns and ethnographic details and is highly cognizant of such as transference and counter transference and even displacement. In developing the ethnobiography, one is very cognizant of selective memory, of masking or hiding disagreeable contradictions, or simply shading or shadowing discomfort in one's participation in events or expressed ideas.

I approach the material covered in this keynote address with the same trepidations but there is a scarcity of first hand information as shadowed as it may be of those persons who experienced processes and events in which Mexicans and Jews actually had a developed association or in which the masks over non-told history are taken off. I provide you with this small and modest effort to contribute to the literature and suggest broader cultural inclusions to that area known as Greater Mexico.

THE RETURN OF A CHUETA TO JUDAISM

Nissan ben Avraham

I was born in Mallorca on Dec 11 1957, as Nicolau Aguilo. My father was a shopkeeper from a xueta (Converso) family of Mallorca, married to an "old Christian". I'm the elder of seven children. When I was about ten years old I understood that my family's background was something special, and I started looking for some information about that incognita "The Jews". The first steps were towards the Jewish background, the History, the Culture, the customs, not to the religion.

The way from Christianity to Judaism was hard, because I grew as a good Christian and was quite difficult for a young boy as me to understand the differences between both faiths. But the feeling was so strong that I couldn't overlook it and I went on to the new way. Thanks to good people in the Comunidad Israelita de Mallorca, and to books I found, I learned about Judaism and practicing the Jewish Commandments.

But my way was to practice as much as I can. The synagogue was observant, so they asked me to turn on the lights before the service, and to turn them off at the end. But I told them that while they drove back home on their cars, I did my way walking, and why do they ask me to profane the Shabbath? The truth is that they looked at me as a non-Jew, but I was already acting as a Jew as much as I could.

I met some people who encouraged me to continue my way, and others who try to convince me that it's like to go back two thousands years to the Prehistory. Finally I took my decision by myself, not only by emotions but also not without them. More and more I understood the differences between both faiths and more I was convinced that I am on the right way. And so I came to Israel and made the official conversion to Judaism.

ILLEGAL JEWS AND THE INQUISITION OF CARTAGENA IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COLOMBIA

*Ron Duncan-Hart, Cultural Anthropologist, Institute
for Tolerance Studies, Oklahoma City*

In the seventeenth century there was a continual Jewish presence on the coast of Colombia, then known as Nueva Granada. By Spanish law Jews were not allowed, but many were there. They were usually identified as Portuguese in Spanish records, but the evidence suggests that it was a mixed community between Portuguese anusim and Sephardic Jews from outside the Iberian Peninsula. The presence of significant numbers of Jews and Crypto-Jews by the late 1500's, stimulated the Crown to establish an office of the Inquisition in Cartagena in 1610, responsible for the Caribbean. In the early 1600's Cartagena was a bustling port city, and many foreigners were arriving, attracted by the new economies of mining, land-owning, and slave trading. Among these immigrants were many who practiced Judaism although they were careful about openly admitting it. In the 1620's and 30's the commerce of Cartagena was dominated by men who were recognized as Jewish. Then, suddenly in 1635 the Inquisition arrest-

ed more than one dozen men for practicing Judaism, and the Jewish community publicly disappeared after that.

DISCOVERING AND ATTENDING TO ANUSIM IN PUERTO RICO

Harry Ezratty

The history of two lines of my family, the Ezrattys and the Castros, is not dissimilar from others in the history of the Spanish Expulsion of 1492. They faced the same problems of the ancestors of today's *Anusim*. They also chose to settle in a distant geographic and political venue to escape from the centers of power and government scrutiny – in their cases returning to Judaism after a few generations.

The *Anusim* of the Western States are not unique today; their situation is repeated among Jews in Latin America and Portugal, who sought out the mountainous regions of newly discovered lands opened by the Conquistadores. Here they were reasonably safe from the prying eyes of the Inquisition and curious neighbors too willing to turn them over to the authorities for judaizing. In Puerto Rico, Central and South America, some families are becoming aware of their Jewish roots. Unfortunately, they have less to go by than Ezrattys and Castros whose return was a mere few generations away from their forced conversions. The awakened Jews of today have to go back 400 years and more to establish family lines. They also have to shake off centuries of Christian identities.

REMOVING THE SEPHARDIC VEIL OF SECRECY WITH DNA

Bennett Greenspan, Family Tree DNA

In 2004 and upon completion of a robust Ashkenazi database for Eastern European Jewish populations, Dr. Doron Behar began assembling a Sephardic database for both male and female lineages to investigate genetic diversity among the Sephardic populations and to examine if the finding in previous studies, that of great genetic similarity among Ashkenazi Jewish males contrasting with great diversity among females, would also be found within Spanish Jewish populations.

The implications of this new study are significant for estimating the effective Jewish populations' size 1000 years ago, the possible connection between Sephardic families who many have moved to eastern Europe after 1492 as well as to Hispanic non Jews who have wondered for years if they have Jewish ancestry and haven't been able to make that determination based upon poor genealogies and hidden agenda's on the part of people fleeing the Inquisition.

This paper on this has not been published but the data findings are back and Bennett Greenspan will discuss these preliminary findings.

'PHILOSEMITIC' NOTIONS OF JUDAISM IN SEVEN- TEENTH-CENTURY IBERIA: EVIDENCE FROM 'JUDEOPHILES' AND 'CRYPTO-JEWS.'

David Graizbord, University of Arizona

In this paper I will explore the ideological underpinnings of a phenomenon of radical Iberian "PhiloSemites,"--or, as I prefer to call them, "Judeophiles"--of the seventeenth century. These subjects were so-called "Old Christians" who chose to profess what they understood to be "Judaism." Their behavior and ideas struck inquisitors, some conversos, and diasporic Sephardim (from afar), as "Jewish." Through examples drawn from the archives of the Holy Office in Spain and Portugal, as well as through other documents, I will explain what the self-styled Jewish martyrs I call "Judeophiles," along with the inquisitorial tribunals that prosecuted them, and several of the radicals' crypto-Jewish contemporaries among the conversos, meant by "Judaism." In so doing, I will also question the manner in which modern scholars alike have tended to define Jewishness in their respective analyses of crypto-Judaic identities, often adopting inquisitorial definitions uncritically, and failing, among other things, to clearly distinguish between objective and subjective components of those identities.

THE CARVAJAL FAMILY OF NUEVA ESPAÑA AND THE JUDEO-IBERIAN ORAL TRADITION

Michelle Hamilton, University of California, Irvine

I will compare the texts and performance descriptions of several poems/songs as recorded in Leonor de Carvajal's Inquisition trial record to the best known coplas sefardies of 18th and 19th centuries from the diaspora (mostly in the Balkans).

FAITHS OF OUR FATHERS: THE JEWISH AND MUSLIM PRESENCE IN COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA

Elizabeth Hirschman

Thus far investigations of crypto-Judaism in the New World have focused upon colonization efforts by the Spanish and Portuguese in Mexico, South America, Central America and what is now the southwestern portion of the United States, e.g., New Mexico, Texas and California. There is also increasing attention being paid to Spanish settlements in the Caribbean, with Puerto Rico, Barbados and Cuba now reporting the likely presence of crypto-Jewish communities dating from the earliest European colonization efforts. Within the southeastern United States, Lavender has explored the likely Sephardic component in South Carolina's Huguenot community, and Hirschman has proposed that the Melungeon community in southern Appalachia springs from Sephardic and Native American roots.

Much less explored is the potential Sephardic presence in the early English colonies along the eastern seaboard of North America. Why would we expect to find Sephardic crypto-Jewish communities here? Primarily because many of the earliest colonists in these ostensibly British colonies were not British citizens, but immigrants from different European countries who took oaths of allegiance to the British crown in order to be permitted to settle in North America. Among these were many "displaced persons" from Alsace Lorraine, the German Palatinate, Flanders, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and even Poland who had embraced various forms of Protestantism. Other early settlers from England and the Netherlands included Quakers, Wallons and Calvinists, having links to crypto-Jewish (and crypto-Muslim) communities in France and the Lowlands.

Though less well-documented, we will also argue that forms of crypto-Muslim practice also existed in colonial North America. In some cases, they co-existed with crypto-Jews co-existed in the same community.

TOWARD A SEPHARDIC DNA HAPLOGROUP PROFILE IN THE NEW WORLD

Elizabeth C. Hirschman and Donald Panther-Yates

There are now several large-scale DNA studies underway on Sephardic Diaspora populations in the New World. Among these are data bases constructed for the Azores, Canary Islands, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, New Mexico, French Canadian Anusim, the Cumberland Gap Area of Appalachia and a general Converso DNA project. We have conducted a meta-analysis of the results from these studies and developed a haplogroup profile that calculates modal and standard deviation scores for haplogroups among these Sephardic Diaspora populations. Both y-chromosome and mtDNA scales are developed.

Our results also calculate the degree of intermarriage with Indigenous and African persons by the Sephards in various locations in the New World. It is found that the exogamy rate varies by both gender and population location, New Mexico and Puerto Rico being 'high' in exogamy, while Cuba, Canary Islands and Cumberland Gap/Appalachia were relatively lower. A discussion of settlement patterns is used to interpret these results.

WHEN IS A TOP JUST A TOP?

Rabbi David Kunin, Congregation Beth Shalom, Edmonton, Alberta

While the interdisciplinary study examining the existence of the crypto-Jewish community of the Southwest United States is less than twenty-five years old, it has already become a focus of scholarly controversy. Some scholars accept the authenticity of the Jewish heritage of the community, while others question the realities of these claims, suggesting fabrication and misrepresentation of the existing evidence. Interpretation of the slim thread of material cultural evidence plays an important role in the controversy. For some scholars, for example, a simple top lends material weight to the claim of authenticity, while to others the same top proves that the community is a fabrication. This scholarly controversy lends an added impetus to the search for unambiguous material evidence to find the proverbial, *mezuzah in the Madonna's foot*, proving once and for all the truth claims of the community. Perhaps, however, some of the scholars from both sides in the controversy are asking some of the wrong questions in regards to the material cultural evidence. Indeed, concepts of absolute interpretation of the meaning of evidence fails to take into account the possibility that objects can bear a whole matrix of meanings, depending on the cultural needs of the possessor or interpreter. Therefore, semiotics and the concept of bricolage can lead to an entire new set of questions in the understanding of the material evidence as utilized to examine the authenticity of the Crypto-Judaic community.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

Seth D. Kunin, University of Durham

See article on page 1.

CRYPTO-JUDAIC IDENTITY AND DNA TESTING: POTENTIALS, PROBLEMS, AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Abraham Lavender, Florida International University

See article on page 1.

WHY THE RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT SPANISH-PORTUGUESE RETURNEES TO JUDAISM? AN EXPLORATION FOR AND ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Abraham D. Lavender, Florida International University

The Jewish community expresses much concern over the decrease in numbers of Jews. At the same time, there is an unprecedented number of people interested in returning to Judaism, people whose ancestors were Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity during the period of the Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal. Despite the Jewish community's concern over decreasing numbers, there is a reluctance to welcome back to Judaism the descendants of anusim.

A major explanation given for this reluctance is Judaism's historical fear of seeking or even accepting converts because of fear of being accused of "stealing Christians," a fear which was real during the Middle Ages. Another explanation is that the Jewish community should not seek or even welcome converts because Judaism does not claim to be the only religion. A third explanation, by Traditional Judaism, is that the converts will be welcomed if they sincerely follow Halachic rules in converting or returning to Judaism. A fourth explanation is that born Jews resent the fact that potential Spanish-Portuguese returnees are descended from Jews who took the easy way out, while the ancestors of today's born Jews maintained the faith through bad times. A fifth explanation is that race is a subtle, but generally unspoken, factor. One researcher has suggested that some Southwestern U.S. returnees are simply trying to pass as white instead of brown by becoming Jews.

This paper attempts to find answers to this situation by analyzing these (or other) possible explanations by reviewing the literature, conducting interviews, and conducting a survey.

ANUSIM WHO CHOOSE TO RETURN TO JUDAISM IN THE EL PASO/CIUDAD JUÁREZ REGION

Rabbi Stephen Leon, Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso, TX

The process of return for crypto-Jews of El Paso, Juarez, and New Mexico; course of study, interview process, ritual, and personal reflections: how and why the return is taking place.

EXPLORING THE LITTLE KNOWN HISTORY OF AFRICAN EXPLORING THE LITTLE KNOWN HISTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Ginnie Logan, University of Colorado-Boulder

The term "Black Jews" is a generic appellation used to describe several diverse Afrodiasporic Jewish communities around the world, including communities in North America, Central Africa, and Israel. Unlike "normative" Jewish groups these communities and their theologies are culturally specific and unique to Afrodiasporian people. While there are certainly Blacks who join and assimilate into normative Jewish communities, this paper is not about Black converts but rather about the culturally specific communities, particularly those in this country. Emerging from a desire to go beyond the usual conversations concerning the social and political relationships and/or conflicts between African Americans and American Jews, this paper explores some of the creative ways that some African Americans have developed culturally unique Jewish communities such as the Commandment Keeper Congregation and Hebrew Israelites. Drawing from similar experiences with extreme levels of persecution, exile, and dispersion that analogously tie Jewish American and African American histories together, Black Jews were able to adopt, modify, and tailor Jewish beliefs and cultural traditions to fit their own peculiar social and historical circumstances.

This paper concludes that Black Jews made use of Jewish traditions, drawing upon their shared historical experiences as well as their own cultural resources in order to modify Judaism to fit specific needs. Whether their identifications with Judaism were allegorical or were exegetical, the appropriation and synthesis of Jewish elements allowed Black Jews to develop their own distinct liberating theologies.

BEFORE THE COLLAPSE OF COEXISTENCE, 1423-1469: HOW THE CARVAJAL FAMILY, HA-LEVI FAMILY, AND THE JEWISH ALJAMAS OF BURGOS AND PLASENCIA COLLABORATED THROUGH



The arts
and social
gatherings
are part of
every SCJS



Abstracts from page 13

THE INSTITUTION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPRIC

Roger Louis Martinez, University of Texas at Austin

Before the collapse of Jewish-Catholic coexistence in early modern Spain, heralded by the formation of the Spanish Inquisition in 1480 and the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, the Carvajal and Ha-Levi families and the Jewish aljamas of Burgos and Plasencia utilized the Catholic church to protect and promote the interests of select Jewish, converso, and Catholic families from 1429-1469.

While the memory of Jewish-Catholic collaboration in the fifteenth century is largely obscured by devastating anti-Jewish riots of the 1390s, fascinating, interrelated events in Burgos and Plasencia from 1429-1469 describe extensive interfaith cooperation well into the fifteenth century.

In particular, in this paper I highlight three pivotal moments to characterize why and how key Jewish, Catholic, and converso families used the institution of the Catholic bishopric to advance their common interests. The first of these events includes the purchase of the succession of the Bishopric of Burgos in 1429 by the Jewish aljama; the second, only six years earlier Gonzalo Garcia de Santa Maria (convert son of Pablo) was named the Bishop of Plasencia; and third, in 1446, the Carvajal and Santa Maria/Cartagena/Ha-Levi families ensured the transfer of the Bishopric of Plasencia to a favorite son, Juan de Carvajal, who later attained the position of Catholic Cardinal and preacher of crusades against Ottoman Turks.

Positioning these three moments and men together, a remarkable picture of collaboration and coordination emerges for the Carvajal and Ha-Levi families, as well as their associated families in both the Jewish and Catholic communities. These closely-knit family ties, only made possible by the mechanism of the Catholic Church, illuminate a fifteenth century Spain that has almost vanished because of the Inquisitorial dangers it posed to many early modern Spanish families.

FILM: "JEWISH CULTURE IN SEGOVIA, SPAIN"

Kate Regan, Portland State University

This documentary about the recovery and restoration of the medieval Jewish quarter of Segovia, delves into the cultural legacy of Sephardic Jews in a post-Inquisition, post-Holocaust world. With elegant simplicity, the film introduces viewers to the complex questions of history and memory that face Jews and Catholics alike as they struggle to protect the cultural patrimony of the Sephardim. The film pays homage to that rich cultural heritage while also capturing the lasting impact of the Sephardic Jews on contemporary Spanish life.

ALLELES HAVE NO RELIGION

Seth Ward, University of Wyoming

See article on page 1.

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL IN GHANA: THE JEWS OF SEHWI WIAWSO

Jessica Romer, University of Colorado

In the Western Region of Ghana, a small community of approximately fifty individuals identify themselves as Jews. The oral history of these Ghanaians traces their roots to Eastern Africa prior to a series of migrations that brought them to their current residence. With a belief that they were participants in the dispersion after the destruction of the first Temple, the people of the House of Israel in Ghana practice a combination of modern and biblical rituals in their community. The centuries of migration and enforced Christianity by a chief in their village of Sehwi Wiawso in the 1950's led to a degradation of Judaic rituals that were, according to villagers, only rediscovered in 1976 by a Muslim man with a religious revelation of the community's Hebraic ancestry. The traditional practices of the Sehwi people closely resemble those of biblical Judaism which is the basis for the community's belief in their Jewish ancestry.

The House of Israel community has evolved into a largely funda-

mentalist sect of Judaism, as witnessed during a two-week long stay in which I conducted ethnographic research regarding the origins and ideological foundations of Judaism in Sehwi Wiawso. Much like the Crypto Jews of the Southwest, the House of Israel members have links to Jewish ancestry, which many may find questionable, but most importantly self-identify as Jews and feel devoted to their religious and spiritual lives.

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Ward from page 11

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by Louise Pitta Polsky, Vice President/Membership

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Many contributions are memoirs of family stories and legends and may or may not be historically accurate, although they are indeed valid, sacred memories that have been passed

along through time. We do not change individual perceptions, but we do change misstatements or historical error.

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- Fourteenth annual conference in El Paso
- Abstracts of conference papers
- Tentative conference agenda
- Articles on ethics and crypto-Jewish studies
- DNA study on crypto Jews in New France

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