

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

The Journal of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

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Couple's Odyssey:

FINALLY HOME

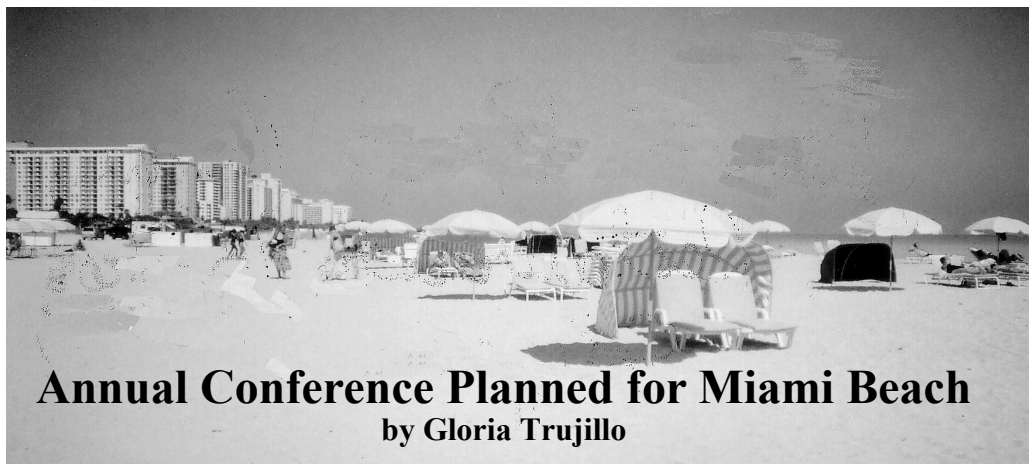
by

Michelle Guerra de Ramos
and Daniel M. Ramos

Too much of Daniel Ramos' childhood revolved around the church. His mother, Elizabeth Garcia Ramos, a minister's daughter who became a minister's wife, and his father, Ismael, spent a lot of time on his ministry and, as a result, so did their family. Daniel, the youngest of five siblings, was never at home there. His discovery of why would shape his future in ways he could never imagine.

For Daniel, church was full of contradictions he could not reconcile against his mother's teachings at home—"original sin," the "trinity," and the idea that some commandments were followed and some were obsolete did not make sense and were in conflict with what he was learning from his mother. What he heard in church seemed to go directly against what his mother would teach him about the Bible. It was not until he was twelve

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Annual Conference Planned for Miami Beach by Gloria Trujillo

Imagine walking off the back terrace of your hotel onto a beach with white coral sand and a turquoise blue ocean lying just beyond. Or of swimming in the large pool to the side. Think of brightly hued colors of flamingo pink, parrot lime green and yellow, and Caribbean blue. You'll see all these colors and more in Miami Beach, FL this year. Clear blue skies and green palms

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COMPARING DNA PATTERNS OF SEPHARDI, ASHKENAZI & KURDISH JEWS

Considering the diverse origins of the Israelites, the large numbers of conversions into and out of the Jewish community, and major disasters which have befallen Jewish communities throughout history, what is the genetic composition of Jewish communities today?

by Abraham D. Lavender PhD

In the days before genetic testing, the famous Jewish anthropologist Raphael Patai used cephalic indexes and blood groups to show the similarities between Jews and other groups. He and a number of other scholars discussed the mixed origins of the ancient Hebrews and the major extent to which male Hebrews married women from diverse ethnic groups (1971). Shaye Cohen has shown that in antiquity there was not a strong boundary between Jews and Gentiles. By the second century BCE there was a boundary, but it could be crossed, and

"gentiles crossed it and became Jews in a variety of ways, whether by political enfranchisement, religious conversion, veneration of the Jewish God, observance of Jewish rituals, association with Jews, or other means" (1999: 342). For the first time, there was now the notion of conversion to Judaism, and religion overcame ethnicity. In the second century CE, the concept of matrilineal descent was begun. Debate continues over the reasons, but Patai notes that it was only after the Roman Exile, when "violation and impregnation of Jewish women by foreign conquerors, invaders, armies, bands, or marauders" became common that Talmudic law changed to recognize matrilineal rather than patrilineal descent (1971: 61).

The genetic composition of the Jewish people became even more mixed after the *major* dispersions from Israel. After the fall of Israel in 721 BCE (the dispersal of the ten northern tribes), the fall of Judah in 586 BCE (the Babylonian exile and the beginning of the Egyptian Diaspora), and

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will greet you upon your arrival, and we would like you to join us August 7-9 in Miami Beach, FL for our upcoming annual conference. The ocean breezes keep it comfortable during the sunny summer days.

The conference hotel is The Marseilles, with its original and graceful 1930's style art deco ambience. Located oceanfront in South Beach at 1741 Collins Ave in Miami Beach, the Marseilles is a short stroll to the well-known South Beach (SoBe) outdoor dining and shops.

The meeting area faces the large outdoor pool and is close to the white sand beach. You'll enjoy the cool ocean breezes when you explore the colorful area after days of informative presentations and events. And, of course, the hotel is pleasantly air conditioned. We have been able to get a great room rate of \$89 per night.

There is no lack of outdoor activities in Miami such as walking, bicycling, ocean fishing, and all types of boating and water sports. If you have extra time, you can explore Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park. You can also drive across southern Florida from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico in a few hours.

Greater Miami is close by. The Miami-Dade County Transit System links Miami and Miami Beach by bus, Metro-rail and Metromover. The whimsical pastel-painted art deco hotels on South Beach are unique refurbished landmarks along with vibrant sidewalk cafes, nightclubs and white sandy beaches adjacent to the hotels.

We will have more information for you very soon in a special mailing and our next *HaLapid*. We will also include up-to-date news on program highlights by Program Chair Stan Hordes. In the meantime, write "SCJS Conference" in on your calendars for August 7-9.



Left: shops, restaurants and clubs adorn South Beach streets. Below: Marseilles hotel guests enjoy breakfast on the cool terrace.



From the Editor

Issue Features Porto *Anusim*, DNA, Crypto-Jewish Experience

By Dolores Sloan



SCJS Member **Naomi Leite** teams with **Sérgio Castro Pinheiro**, bringing us up-to-date on developments in Porto, in "The *Anusim* Presence in Northern Portugal," beginning on page 6. Sérgio is President, and Naomi, a member, of the *anusim* cultural association, Hanamel.

Daniel Ramos has been a SCJS member since attending the San Antonio conference in 2003. **Michelle** and **Daniel**, tell us about the history and discovery of their Jewish ancestral roots, in "Finally Home." See page 1.

President **Abraham Lavender** writes on the genetic composition of Jewish communities today, in "Comparing DNA Patterns of Sephardi, Ashkenazi and Kurdish Jews," beginning on page 1.

HaLapid Editor **Dolores Sloan** reviews **Miriam Birnbaum's** extensive research work on Doña Gracia, "The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes," on page 10.

Each issue features an article about a Society member who has served SCJS and its members through the years. This time the spotlight is on **Bob Hattum**, historian and first editor of *HaLapid*, by Co-editor **Arthur Benveniste**, page 14.

And, of course, the photo of a lovely coral sand beach in Florida on page 1 has caught your eye by now as you enter this issue of *HaLapid*. You can be here, near glamorous South Beach, this summer, when you attend our fifteenth annual conference in a Miami Beach art deco hotel. Read Conference VP **Gloria Trujillo's** story and make plans now.

CALL FOR PAPERS

SCJS Fifteenth Annual Conference

We invite papers on crypto-Judaism from any discipline (e.g., anthropology, history, sociology, philosophy, literature, music, etc.) and from any geographic location or time period. We also welcome papers on other aspects of the Sephardic experience and other communities whose historical or sociological experience is similar to the crypto-Jewish community.

All interested scholars and professionals, including advanced graduate students, are invited to submit proposals for papers, presentations or workshops. Proposals are also welcome from individuals with personal stories and genealogical or other research relating to crypto-Judaism

Proposals may be for individual papers, presentations or for complete sessions on specific topics.

Proposals must include a 200-word abstract and a brief bio.

Please send proposals or inquiries to
Stanley M. Hordes, Latin American and Iberian Institute,
University of New Mexico, at:

smhordes@aol.com

Proposal Deadline: June 1, 2005.

President's Message

SCJS Thrives, Expands as Nonprofit, Joint DNA Conference Planned

By Abraham D. Lavender

The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies is thriving and expanding professionally and geographically. A major recent accomplishment has been the attainment of tax exempt status, making possible the solicitation of major grants and the resulting expansion of publications and other activities of the Society. Plans are being made for a major joint conference on the exciting developing field of DNA, with special emphasis on Sephardi genetics and diseases. For the first time, this year we will meet on the east coast, recognizing the presence of numerous crypto-Jews in major Hispanic communities from Miami to Rhode Island. Numerous other activities are happening, as indicated below. To further plans for the Society, the Board of Directors met in Dallas, February 12-13. Treasurer Jerry Salomon laid the foundation for a good meeting, noting that the Society is in good financial conditions.



Vice President for Membership Lupe Mandujano Garcia gave the membership report. It was noted that we have now changed to an evolving membership year—that is, the membership year is calculated from the date of renewal, not calendar year as previously. Members will receive four issues of *HaLapid*, published quarterly, from whenever the payment is made. This year of transition, renewal reminder notices will be mailed on a quarterly basis. Letters of invitation will encourage renewal by current or lapsed members, and a letter mailed acknowledging receipt of membership dues. A newcomer who wants to be welcomed as a member in *HaLapid* can indicate that on the form. All of these changes will help add a personal touch.

Gloria Trujillo, VP for Meetings and Conferences, gave the final report on the August 2004 annual conference in Portland, OR, and it was noted that registration revenues covered the cost of the conference. Points were made on improving the conference every year.

Report on *HaLapid* and Website

Dolly Sloan, VP for Communications and editor of *HaLapid*, and Art Benveniste, Past President, co-editor of *HaLapid*, and website manager, reported on *HaLapid* and the website. Dolly described how *HaLapid* has been improved, using a heavier paper with a cream color, and noted that the journal would be sixteen pages instead of twelve pages when necessary. A discussion was held on the number of photographs to include, and on how to continue balancing news items, personal stories of returnees and academic research articles. The board strongly believes that all three areas should continue to be included.

Art Benveniste noted that *HaLapid* will soon go to a bulk mailing as a way of reducing mailing expenses. The issue of publishing a journal was discussed again, and Dolly Sloan will present a proposal including cost analysis. Abe noted that our current twelve-page combination newsletter and journal, because of the small print, is the equivalent of a thirty page journal. Art reported on some of the problems maintaining a heavily used website, and Jerry volunteered to monitor the website.

A discussion followed on the recently acquired tax exempt status, and it was emphasized by several officers that this necessitates a more formal style of operation of the Society. It was agreed that each board member would submit budget proposals in October of each year.

President Abe Lavender reported that he had conducted preliminary research on finding a hotel in the South Beach area of Miami Beach for the 2005 Conference, August 7-9, and showed interior, exterior, and neighborhood photographs of an Art Deco hotel which he is recommending. The board was impressed by the possibility, discussed specific issues, and authorized Gloria Trujillo to make a trip to Miami Beach to finalize plans for this hotel or another one to be the conference hotel.

Stan Hordes, VP for Programs, reported on progress for the call for papers for the 2005 conference. Plans are proceeding successfully. Stan also reported on the planning for the DNA Conference to be held jointly with geneticists, anthropologists, sociologists, etc., in Albuquerque, New Mexico, around November 2005. A proposal for funding is being submitted by April 15, 2005. A Phase II Conference is planned for the spring or fall of 2006, sponsored by the SCJS.

Finance Committee Established

A Finance Committee was established to solicit grants, now that we have tax exempt status. The President appointed Dolly and Stan to the committee, with Dolly responsible for obtaining other interested members for the committee.

Jerry and Art were urged to continue in a timely manner to complete all requirements for obtaining insurance for the Society. Lupe suggested the need for, and volunteered to develop, standardized formats for reports from board members. Art will consult with a specialist on the maintenance of past issues of *HaLapid* and SCJS papers. Lupe renewed the discussion of a logo for the Society, and after a spirited discussion on the design, was appointed to develop one to bring back to the board.

A lengthy discussion followed on the location for the 2006 conference. It was noted that the Society has expanded its meeting locations, meeting for the first time in the northwest (Portland, 2004) and the east coast (Miami Beach, 2005). The consensus was that the 2006 conference should be in the Southwest. The decision was made to meet in El Paso, Texas, with Gloria researching the feasibility of this location.

Dolly emphasized that the Society has grown into a national and international organization, and she and Abe noted how important it is that all volunteered activities be completed on time. A detailed discussion was held on the goals and missions of the Society. Stan noted that the Society's mission included serving as a clearinghouse of information for people who are interested in crypto-Judaic issues, and that this is accomplished through the annual conference, *HaLapid* and the website. The feasibility of hiring a part-time administrator was discussed. Abe stated that current wrinkles were mainly the result of growing pains, and were mostly functional rather than philosophical issues. It was decided to adopt a wait-and-see attitude regarding a part-time administrator. The president appointed Stan, Gloria and Dolly as the Nominating Committee, for elections to be held at the August 2005 Conference.

So, as we see, the Society is working hard to increase the involvement of members, to expand the membership to a larger geographical area, and to increase the goals of the society as a clearinghouse for people who are interested in crypto-Judaica as either academicians, descendants, or other interested folks. We are on the cutting edge of an increasing phenomenon as more Hispanics discover their Spanish-Portuguese Jewish roots.

years old that he began to understand why he felt caught between what seemed like different traditions. It was then Daniel learned that his mother's family was once Jewish.

Dan's mother's family, the Garcías, came to New Spain in the early 1500s and settled in what quickly became known as Garciasville, due to the prevalence of that surname (today, part of Texas). They came to New Spain fleeing the Inquisition and settled down as outward Christians with a fear of the Roman Catholic Church. They remained heavily monotheistic and their Jewry remained a secret handed down within the family. From what is known today from family trees, they remained tight-knit and tended to marry into other crypto-Jewish families—Perez, Saenz, Farias, Sepulveda; all names that recur throughout the family tree. They also retained an aversion to consuming blood.

Armed with the knowledge of his true history, Daniel no longer felt comfortable at church and eventually stopped attending, feeling unable to stomach listening to what, to him, were contradictions in faith. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and became a submariner, serving in the first Gulf War. On his own, he was free to explore Judaism and began attending services in a Navy synagogue. Suddenly, religion began to make sense.

In 1996, having finished his tour in the Navy, Daniel moved to Austin, Texas. In 1999, at a wedding in the Rio Grande Valley, he met Michelle Guerra, a native of San Juan, TX, who was a senior at a Pennsylvania college. It was no coincidence that they met at a wedding; Daniel, a groomsman, was assigned to escort Michelle, a bridesmaid and friend of the bride. The two hit it off from the start. After graduating from college later that same year, Michelle moved to Austin, partly for the thriving job market, but mostly to continue seeing Daniel. After a lengthy courtship, the two became engaged and made plans to marry in May 2003.

Michelle had grown up in a devout Roman Catholic family; however, as a teenager, she began to question her faith and her agreement with the teachings of the Church. By the time she was in college, she had stopped attending services and frequently got into tiffs with her family because of her criticism of Church doctrine and her refusal sometimes to go to services at all. Unfortunately, Michelle's father, Ruben, was often blamed by her mother, Juanita, for their daughter's aversion to the Church. "She takes after your side of the family!"

Three months before Michelle and Daniel's interfaith marriage (Christian and Catholic), Michelle's par-

ents were visiting with the couple. The discussion turned to World War II and Michelle mentioned to her parents that Daniel's uncle, Canuto Garcia, had been shot down over Germany during the war and, after having been captured by the Nazis, was put into a concentration camp. Tío Canuto had insisted to the Germans that he was Hispanic, would speak to them only in Spanish, but was labeled "Juden" and taken to a camp until liberated at the end of the war. He came home weighing less than 100 pounds.

Ruben's response to the story would change the couple's lives. "You know, the old *tías* say our family, your *guelita's* family (Perez), was Jewish, too. That's why we came here with a land grant, because of the Inquisition. We *had* to leave."

Michelle's family history suddenly received a major renovation. The simple story of having received a land grant "for service to the King" was not entirely true. Instead, the family had come to New Spain, land grant in hand, fleeing the Inquisition, and settling not far from Garciasville in the La Gloria/San Isidro area. It is possible that a "service to the King" was responsible for getting them a land grant—and a chance to escape—but the truth of the matter was that the family was Jewish and no longer safe in Spain. Suddenly, several things made sense: why her father's family notoriously never went to church; why Michelle, as a baby, had worn a charm against *ojo*, the "evil eye," on a red string when she was a little girl (a kabbalistic symbol); why the mirrors were covered when her grandmother passed away; and, in a "eureka!" moment, it became clear why Daniel and Michelle had marriages between their two families going back generations—it was "safe" to marry other crypto-Jewish families. They now understood why even today, they have so many relatives in common: Farias, Sepulveda and Saenz on both sides. Now, the families would be joining again, this time through Michelle and Daniel's marriage.

The couple had struggled with the issue of religion; they both felt God was missing in their lives and longed to return to services but neither wanted to take part in the faiths in which they had been raised. With the revelation that they came from the same secret, Jewish history, they turned their thoughts to Judaism. The couple began attending services at Congregation Beth Israel in Austin. Their first service made an impression on both. For Daniel, it was a return to the faith he had found a home in during his Navy years. For Michelle, it was the feeling that she had finally found a home. Both were acutely aware that they felt closer to God than



Michelle and Frank display many objects of Judaica in their home. Shown above, a hamsa; below, plaque of the Priestly Blessing and a hannukiah, blazing brightly on the eighth night



they ever had; worship suddenly made sense.

At the wedding, Daniel's mom surprised the couple by reading a Jewish wedding blessing during the ceremony, in Hebrew. After their marriage, Michelle and Daniel enrolled in a Living a Jewish Life class—"basic Judaism"—and, after celebrating a full year of the Jewish calendar and having learned to read Hebrew, they both returned to Judaism formally with their conversions in July 2004.

At Congregation Beth Israel, which is home to a surprising number of Sephards, they have found more

than a community; they have found an extended family, where they have been welcomed warmly.

FLASH! As *HaLapid* goes to press, we learn that Nathaniel Uriah was born on March 30 to Michelle and Daniel. The *brit milah* was April 6, with SCJS Members Walter Cohen as *sendak* and Lupe and Frank Garcia as Godparents

Today, Michelle and Daniel are anxiously awaiting the birth of their first child, a son, in April 2005. Both feel deeply how important this birth is to them—with the *brit milah* of this baby, the couple knows it will be the first child to be raised as a Jew, openly, in either of their families, in nearly 500 years. They cherish the old traditions they will be bringing back to their family,

the covenant, long abandoned but not forgotten, now being fulfilled.

From the early middle ages, a long and venerable history



The *Anusim* Presence in Urban Portugal

by Naomi M. Leite and Sérgio Castro Pinheiro

The *b'nai anusim* (children of the *anusim*) presence in Porto (Oporto), Portugal's second-largest city, has a lengthy history. From the community's origins in the early middle ages, to a large-scale revival movement in the 1920s,



Naomi Leite

to the recent florescence of activities coordinated by a local *anusim* cultural association, Porto has been the site of some of the most important developments in the history of Portugal's *anusim*. The Jewish presence in the Porto region extends back many centuries, to an era long before Portugal became a nation in 1140. Today few traces remain of the medieval community's several synagogues and Jewish quarters; in Porto, as throughout the Iberian Peninsula, outward signs of Jewish communal life were decimated by the Inquisition. Crypto-Judaism flourished here for centuries, but it was only in the twentieth century that descendants of the Portuguese *anusim*, forced converts, began to re-emerge from hiding.

In 1917, a Polish-Jewish mining engineer, Samuel Schwarz, discovered a community of crypto-Jews in the now-famous mountain village of Belmonte. He gained their trust and soon discovered that there were many more pockets of crypto-Judaism in northeastern Portugal. He traveled throughout the region, finding secret communities wherever he could, and ultimately estimated that there were at least 15,000 crypto-Jews living in Portugal at the time. Over the next few years he was able to record many of their traditions and rituals, and in 1925 he published a book presenting their religious practices and outlining the history of crypto-Judaism in Portugal. Although this book

was never fully translated, a shorter English version was published in the *Menorah Journal* in 1926. These publications attracted international attention to the plight of Portugal's hidden Jews, prompting a movement to support their return to "mainstream" Judaism.

The most important group in this effort was the Portuguese Marranos Committee. Formed in London in 1926, in response to Schwarz's book, it was made up of members of the Alliance

Israélite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London, with additional financial support from congregations in Europe and the United States. The Committee's first act was to send a representative, Lucien Wolf, to Portugal to evaluate the situation. After a month of traveling throughout the country, guided by Samuel Schwarz, Wolf's conclusion was that Porto should serve as the religious and educational center of the Committee's efforts. He recommended the establishment of a permanent "Jewish Mission" there, including a religious school for adults.

Porto was the obvious choice for two reasons. First, most of the Portuguese crypto-Jewish communities were located in the northern and northeastern parts of the country; as the "capital of the North," Porto was much closer and more accessible to crypto-Jews than Lisbon, which lies much further south. Second, and more importantly, there was already a small Jewish community in Porto, founded by Capt. Artur Carlos de Barros Basto, a crypto-Jew who had returned to "mainstream" Judaism. At this time there was an active synagogue in Lisbon (Shaare Tikvá), frequented primarily by Jewish immigrants from Morocco and Gibraltar, as well as Eastern Europe; Barros Basto made his initial return by attending the Lisbon synagogue and learning from its members.

The Portuguese Marranos Committee selected Barros Basto as its representative and leader in Portugal. Over the next few years, based in Porto, he worked closely with the Committee to reach crypto-Jewish communities throughout the north, traveling continuously and ultimately establishing personal and written contact with groups of *anusim* in some 34 localities. His efforts, which he referred to as the "Obra do Resgate," the Work of Redemption, focused on providing education to *anusim* and encouraging the creation of openly Jewish communities throughout northern Portugal.

With funds from the Portuguese Marranos Committee, in 1929 Barros Basto established a theological school in Porto to train future leaders and educators, offering instruction in Hebrew, Jewish religious practice, and general subjects such as Portuguese and French. By 1938, this school had trained more than 90 young men from dozens of towns. In 1927 he also began publishing an educational periodical, "Ha-Lapid" ("The Torch"), for distribution to *anusim* throughout the region. The newsletter included explanations of Jewish theology and practice, messages of support from Jews in other countries, and news on the "Work of Redemption" being carried out all over north-



Sérgio Castro
Pinheiro

ern Portugal.

At Barros Basto's instigation, plans were made for a grand synagogue in Porto, to serve as the center of outreach activities and, in Barros Basto's words, "the religious lighthouse of the Portuguese Marranos," a "Jewish Cathedral" that would "give to the Marrano who may visit it a worthy conception of [his] ancestral religion". The result was an imposing four-story building, now known as the "Kadoorie synagogue," built with funds raised by the Portuguese Marranos Committee and underwritten largely by Elly Kadoorie, a hotel magnate living in Shanghai.

The dedication of the synagogue was held on January 16, 1938, with more than 300 people in attendance, including many crypto-Jews. At the time it seemed that the Obra do Resgate would be a great success. Ultimately, however, it was not. In a Catholic country, particularly one that had fallen under control of a far right-wing dictatorship, trying to turn the outwardly Catholic crypto-Jews into "official" Jews did not put Barros Basto in the good graces of the Church or the State. Continuously persecuted by Salazar's regime and falsely accused on charges of inappropriate behavior with his students, Barros Basto was found guilty by a military court and dismissed from the Army. His followers were also denounced, and several lost their jobs. In the end, he was able to convert only a handful of people to "mainstream" Judaism, and not one of the 90 students who attended the theological school became a rabbi or even a prominent lay leader. Many returned to their villages and married Catholic women. By 1946 the Jewish organizations funding the Obra do Resgate had withdrawn their support; the President of the Dutch Pro-Marrano Committee went so far as to suggest that

public, with freedom of religion guaranteed by law. This new climate of openness was enhanced by Portugal's accession to the European Community in the mid-1980s. Today, as part of the European Union, Portugal has joined other European countries in preserving its Jewish heritage. Guidebooks, tourist maps, and municipal heritage projects lead tourists to the country's medieval Jewish sites, and a number of Jewish museums are scheduled to open within the next year.

Within this new context of openness and apparent tolerance, and with the support of foreign Jewish visitors, over the past five years or so *anusim* throughout Portugal have begun to come forward and openly declare their Jewish identity. This is not, however, a "triumphant return" of marranos onto the Portuguese Jewish scene. On the contrary, although rarely known to those outside Portugal, urban *anusim* have united with greater and lesser success in a series of community associations over the past three decades.

In the 1980s, the widespread publicity surrounding the "rediscovery" of crypto-Jews in Belmonte prompted many Portuguese of Jewish descent to begin concentrated research into their origins. While the majority of these *anusim* lived in coastal urban areas and worked in the liberal professions, their grandparents were typically villagers from Portugal's rural interior. Like Belmonte's former crypto-Jews, so too were these "new" Jews the spiritual descendants of Barros Basto and his "Obra do Resgate." Very often, however, they remained isolated, their research into their Jewish origins inconclusive: the *anusim* who migrated to Portugal's major cities have been cut off from their familial and religious roots. Many



*Participants in the historic
Second National Meeting
of Anusim, 2004*

the synagogue should be sold and the proceeds returned to the Kadoorie family. The school was soon closed and outreach efforts stopped entirely.

The Holocaust fundamentally changed the configuration of the Porto Jewish community. In the late 1930s Portugal became a haven for Jews fleeing other parts of Europe, and the synagogue's membership grew and changed accordingly. At the same time, many crypto-Jews were fearful of the government, which although officially neutral seemed to support Nazi Germany, and over time many began to fear an invasion by Hitler's armies. After a decade of tentative openness, most of the country's *anusim* returned to a state of near-invisibility, where they remained for almost fifty more years. Lacking a full-time rabbi, and with an aging and dwindling membership, in the latter part of the twentieth century the Kadoorie synagogue stood as a nearly empty monument to Barros Basto's dreams for a large-scale Jewish revival.

Anusim Activities After Barros Basto

The Revolution of 1974, which overthrew Salazar's dictatorship, paved the way for Portugal to become a democratic re-

have family histories of emigration to Portugal's African colonies or to the common labor-migration destinations of France, Spain, and Brazil. Thus removed from their villages of origin by three or more generations, most have no "proof" of their Jewish ancestry; as a result, although they may now practice Judaism, they have been largely rejected by the "mainstream" immigrant-based Jewish communities in Lisbon and Porto. Without a supporting movement, such as that organized by Barros Basto, and lacking significant contacts with the Jewish world beyond Portugal's borders, most initially felt their aspirations frustrated.

The situation changed significantly when these urban descendants of crypto-Jews began to find one another and create new communities, based on shared religious and cultural interests rather than common village origins or familial ties. Often these new communities were lent moral support by the Israeli embassy.

In Lisbon, *anusim* have come together through the Associação de Juventude HeHaver (HeHaver Youth Association), originally an Ashkenazi Jewish youth organization that welcomed *marranos* in the middle of the last century.



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during and after the fall of the Second Commonwealth in 70 CE, “conversion of individuals and groups to Judaism became, if not frequent at least not exceptional.” There are at least three reported cases of groups converting to Judaism: the Kingdom of Abiabene of Iraq, in the first century CE (Wexler, 1996: 28), the Himyars in Yemen in the third to fifth centuries CE (Ben-Zvi, 1957), and the Khazars of Georgia (Eastern Europe) in the ninth century CE (Brook, 1999). Patai and Patai note that in pre-Islamic Arabia, “intermarriage between Jews and pagan Arabs was frequent....With the expansion of Islam, Jews intermarried not only with Arabs but also with members of the nations drawn into the Muslim orbit by the Arab conquests” (1980: 103). As parts of Arabia were conquered by Islamic forces, there also were numerous cases of Jews converting, sometimes voluntarily but often involuntarily, to Islam. Stillman (1991), Patai (1971, 1997), Ben-Zvi (1957), Goitein (1974), and DeFelice (1985) give numerous examples. Wexler, especially, gives examples of conversions going both ways.

There are also examples of descendants of the lost tribes of Israel claiming Jewish origins, with many of them now returning to Judaism. So far there has been little DNA testing, but regarding the Bene Israel Jews of the Bombay area of India, Parfitt concludes that his DNA research “clearly suggests that the Bene Israel are a very ancient, probably Jewish, group” (2003: 11). He also concludes that he has “likely evidence” that the Black Jews of Cochin are descendants of “an early migration of what were probably Jews from the Near East to India in ancient times” (p. 15). The examples of Jews converting to Christianity in the last thousand years or so are too numerous to mention, and there is no question that millions of people who identify as non-Jewish today have Jewish ancestry. The Jewish community, while bemoaning the loss of so many people, frequently because of discrimination or oppression, also has not sufficiently recognized the large number of people who have joined Jewish communities. The world Jewish population in the first century of the Common Era (CE) was about four to five million, with 1.5 to two million in Israel. Massive conversions, persecutions, and murders have led to drastic population decreases which also have affected the specific genetic distribution of worldwide Jewry (because some Jewish groups and areas have suffered more than others).

The extent of interaction of Jews and non-Jews has been the topic of a number of genetic studies, with the majority of researchers suggesting little interaction and others suggesting substantial interaction. Part of the controversial differences are because of different loci (points on the genetic chain) being tested, different levels of comparisons being utilized, or small samples which can lead to variable results. Space prohibits discussion of all of the genetic studies on this topic, but for an

idea of the overall findings, results of some major studies follow.

Santachiara noted in 1993 that mtDNA (female) studies had already been published, by Batsheva Bonne-Tamir *et al* (1986) and by Tikochinski *et al* (1991), but that genetic comparisons for male Ashkenazim and Sephardim (Y-chromosomes) had not been done (p. 56). Tikochinski, using Israeli samples, had analyzed twenty-one Ashkenazi women from Eastern Europe and thirty-eight Sephardi women (mostly from Morocco). Her data implied that these Jewish women descended from a diversity of maternal lineages that had been distinct for four to five thousand years. Thomas *et al*, in 2002, published data on Jewish women in nine geographically separated areas, and concluded that, contrary to non-Jews, there was greater differentiation for mtDNA than for the Y-chromosome, that “cultural practice—in this case, female-defined ethnicity—has had a pronounced effect on patterns of genetic variation” (p. 1417). By the early 1990s, however, methodological advances were beginning to make it possible for Y-chromosome studies also to be conducted. In 1991, Livshits *et al* compared twelve pairs of Jewish and non-Jewish populations from the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe with each Jewish/non-Jewish pair sharing the same (or close) geographic area: Yemen, Iran, Iraq; Morocco and Libya; Poland, Russia, and Georgia; Germany and Czechoslovakia; Bulgaria and Turkey/Spain (Turkish Jews were compared to Spanish non-Jews because most Turkish Jews were exiled from Spain by the Inquisition). Their conclusion: modern Jewish populations in general derived from an earlier common gene pool which had undergone relatively little admixture with non-Jewish neighbors after dispersal from Israel. Somewhat differently, Kurdish Jews had experienced considerable interaction with non-Jewish Kurds, and Yemenite Jews may have had a substantial component of different genes from conversion into Judaism (p. 145).

In 1993, Santachiara *et al* compared eighty-three Sephardim (mostly from Tunisia and Morocco), eighty-three Ashkenazim (mostly from Russia and Poland), and 105 non-Jews from Czechoslovakia, and made comparisons to non-Jews from Lebanon. They found strong genetic affinities between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, almost no relationship with non-Jews from Czechoslovakia, and a very close relationship between Sephardim and Lebanese non-Jews. They found about 23.4% to 28.6% non-Jewish Y-chromosomes in the Ashkenazim, and concluded that this represented about one percent or less of admixture per generation for the centuries the Ashkenazim had lived in Central or Northeastern Europe (p. 63).

In 2000, Hammer *et al* compared seven Jewish groups (Ashkenazim, Roman, North African, Kurdish, Near Eastern [Iran and Iraq], Yemenite, and Ethiopian) with sixteen non-Jewish groups from similar geographical locations. They concluded that most Jewish groups were similar to each other, and had experienced little genetic admixture with non-Jewish groups. They found a strong genetic similarity between most Jews and Middle Eastern non-Jews. The Palestinians and Syrian non-Jews were most closely related, but Saudi Arabians, Lebanese, and Druze also were close. The authors attributed the genetic closeness to ancient common Middle Eastern origins. They estimated the admixture rate of Ashkenazim (for all haplotypes) to be 22.7% plus or minus 7.8% over a period of about eighty generations (p. 6773). Interestingly, Ethiopian Jews and the Lemba did not match closely with the cluster of Jewish groups (p. 6774).

In 2001, Nebel *et al* compared three Jewish and three non-Jewish groups from the Middle East: Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Kurdish Jews from Israel; Muslim Arabs from Israel and the Palestinian Authority Area; Bedouin from the Negev; and Mus-

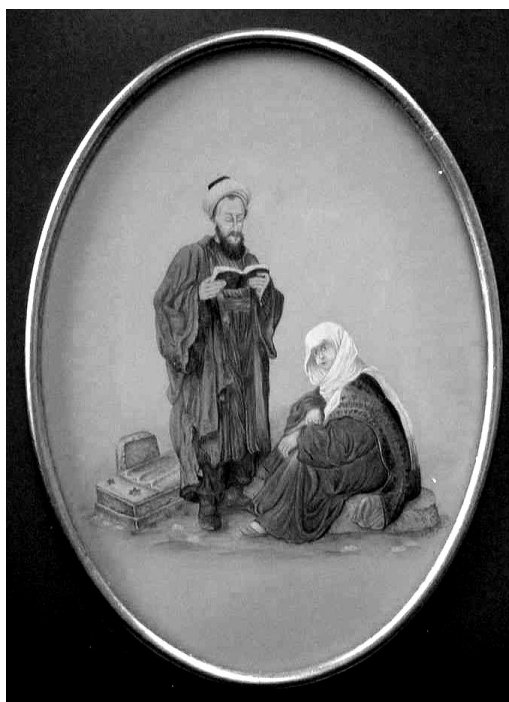
lim Kurds. They concluded that Sephardim and Kurdish Jews were genetically indistinguishable, but that both were slightly significantly different from Ashkenazim (who were most closely related to the Muslim Kurds). Nebel *et al* had earlier (2000) found a large genetic relationship between Jews and Palestinians, but in this study found an even higher relationship of Jews with Iraqis and Kurds. They 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).

Interestingly, Nebel *et al* (2001) also found that the Cohen Modal Haplotype (CMH), considered the most definitive Jewish haplotype, was found among 10.1% of Kurdish Jews, 7.6% of Ashkenazim, 6.4% of Sephardim, 2.1% of Palestinian Arabs, and 1.1% of Muslim Kurds. The CMH and the most frequent Muslim Kurdish haplotype (MKH) were the same on five markers (out of six) and very close on the other marker. The MKH was shared by 9.5% of Muslim Kurds, 2.6% of Sephardim, 2.0% of Kurdish Jews, 1.4% of Palestinian Arabs, 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). Rabbi Yaakov Kleiman has suggested that the CMH is "likely the marker of the Jews' and Arabs' shared Patriarch, Abraham" (2004: 20), but much more analysis is needed on the CMH in populations throughout the world.

In 2004, Behar *et al* compared data from Ashkenazi groups in ten different European areas (France, Germany, the Netherlands; Austria-Hungary, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine) with data from non-Jewish groups in seven different countries (France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Russia). They found that nine of the Jewish groups were similar, with low rates of admixture with non-Jewish groups, but that these Ashkenazi groups were closely related to non-Ashkenazi Jews and to some non-Jewish Near Eastern groups. Within Europe, these authors suggested an admixture rate of 5-8% for all the Jewish nationality groups except Dutch Jews who had an admixture rate of 46.0% plus or minus 18.3%. This supposedly resulted from a long history of relative tolerance from non-Jews, with Jewish women marrying non-Jewish men (p. 362).

Researchers frequently have used haplogroups to measure the genetic distance between various groups in the world, and combined data allows the comparison of these three Jewish groups—Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Kurdish Jews—with sixty-nine non-Jewish Eurasian populations. The lower the number, the less genetic distance there is between the groups, i.e., the closer the groups are related genetically. The lowest number for the Jewish groups (closest relationship) was 18, and the highest number (least relationship) was 88. It is important to note that these relative average genetic distances will differ as more samples are added, as data from different methodological techniques are evaluated, and as different judgments are made on adjusting different studies to make them comparable to each other. Genetic research is a relatively recent, and rapidly evolving, area of research, and there will be constant refinements and adjustments as more research is added.

Of all the groups, the Ashkenazim are most closely related, in order, to Palestinian Arabs (18), Muslim Kurds (21), Cypriots (22), Greeks (23), Kurdish Jews (25), Bedouin (26), Sephardi Jews (27), Egyptians (27), Turks (28), and Pakistani Parsi (31). Sephardim are most closely related to Italians (18), Turks (20), Ossetians, Georgia (20), Kurdish Jews (22), Muslim Kurds (24), Greeks (24), Armenians (26), Cypriots (26), Ashkenazi Jews (27), and Pakistani Parsi (28). Kurdish Jews are most closely related to Sephardi Jews (22) and Muslim Kurds (22), Pakistani Parsi (23), Ashkenazi Jews (25), Turks (26), Palestinian Arabs (28), Ossetians (30), Cypriots (31), Greeks (32), and Armenians (35). On the other hand, for nineteen Central and Eastern European populations, the Ashkenazim averaged 55.1, the Sephardim averaged 48.2, and the Kurdish Jews averaged 55.5. The Georgia Ossetians ($X=29.7$) and the Romanians ($X=33.0$) were the closest to all three of the Jewish groups. For thirteen western European populations, the Ashkenazim averaged 71.6, the Sephardim averaged 47.9, and the Kurdish Jews averaged 63.0. The Sephardim were most closely related to the Southern Portuguese (33), Dutch (36) and French (36), and Northern Portuguese (40). None of these were particularly close, but they were much closer than they were for Ashkenazim or Kurdish Jews.

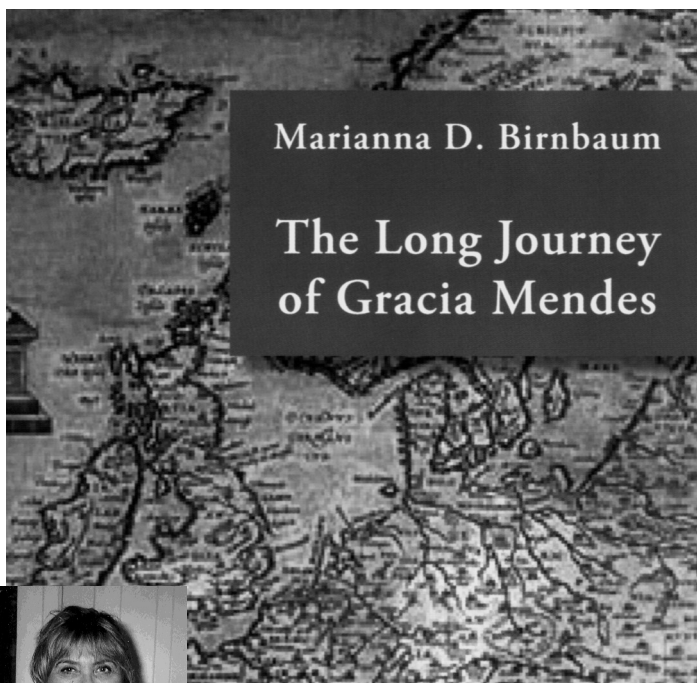


The genetic distances shown in the previous paragraph are in general agreement with the studies reported in this article, showing that all three Jewish groups are relatively closely related to each other. The close relationship between Sephardim and Kurdish Jews is possibly at least partly a result of the significant interaction between the Jews of Iraq and the Jews of Spain and North Africa, especially from the eighth to the tenth centuries CE. The three Jewish groups differ in their rankings with their closest ten groups, but generally the differences in rankings for the closest ten groups are small and subject to changes in ranking as more samples are added. All three Jewish groups are closely related to Kurdish Muslims, the closest neighbors of the Kurdish Jews. Kurdish Jews were close to Muslim Kurds, but so were Ashkenazim and Sephardim, suggesting that much if not most of the genetic similarity

between Jewish and Muslim Kurds is from ancient times. Considering their physical closeness, however, it is reasonable to believe that there has been some genetic admixture not picked up because the two groups started with similar genetic patterns.

Ashkenazim are not closely related to their Central and Eastern European neighbors or to any group outside the Middle East or Near East. Sephardim are more closely related to their neighbors than are the Ashkenazim, but the Sephardim still are much more closely related to the other two Jewish groups, the other Middle Easterners, and the Mediterraneans than they are to their western European neighbors. The Jewish community in the Netherlands is the most obvious example of genetic admixture, a pattern which will be seen more often due to major increases in intermarriages. The other side of the coin, the extent to which Jewish genetic patterns have entered non-Jewish groups, is also a topic which needs much more specific research.

Recently, there also has been specific archaeological interest given to the origins of the early Israelites, a controversial topic within archaeology. Dever has recently written that the proto-Israelites consisted of local pastoral nomads, refugees fleeing Egyptian injustice, social rebels and social



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It is easy to come under the spell of Gracia Nasi or Gracia Mendes, as Marianna Birnbaum prefers to call her. This figure from post-expulsion, sixteenth-century Sephardic history, inspirational and revered in her day by Jews and *conversos* alike, appeals to the twenty-first century enchantment with women who have expanded the gender boundaries of their eras.

The author of this new biography “was smitten” by Doña Gracia, as she indicates in the book’s “Acknowledgements,” while researching the Fuggers, sixteenth-century German merchant bankers. La Señora, as the great woman was known affectionately by her coreligionists, had headed the House of Mendes, prosperous trading and banking firm, which competed with the Fuggers, and had been referred to disdainfully by one of their agents as a Portuguese Jewish woman, living in Constantinople, who, writes Dr. Birnbaum “dared to dress and behave like a European aristocrat.”

The author’s *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* is the result of that discovery. It goes beyond presentation of the notable woman’s remarkable life. The author tells us, early on, that he story of Gracia and her family are “important for the understanding of early-modern Jewish-Christian relations, the dynamics of early modern trade, the construction (and reconstruction) of Jewish self-identities, and of women’s history.”

Dr. Birnbaum brings the reader insight into the skill and effectiveness of Gracia Nasi as businesswoman, philanthropist and patron of publishing, going beyond existing studies in English. The best known of these studies, published in 1948, was English Historian Cecil Roth’s *Doña Gracia*, first in his two-book series, *The House of Nasi*. This has remained the definitive scholarly work in English on La Señora. Earlier, in 1931, novelist Ludwig Lewisohn made Gracia a character in *The Last Days of Shylock*, in which he has her, along with Joseph Nasi, her nephew and son-in-law, rescuing Shakespeare’s merchant from his living death in Venice, where he has been forcefully converted to Christianity and obligated to attend mass regularly.

Then, in the 1990’s, interest in Doña Gracia took several manifestations: a novel, *The Ghost of Hannah Mendes*, by Israeli author Naomi Ragen and a research work by Connecticut journalist Andrée Aelion Brooks, *The Woman Who Defied Kings*. Dr. Birnbaum’s *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes*, however,

goes beyond in detailing La Señora’s acumen as gifted businesswoman, who, as CEO of the banking and trading firm that dominated the spice trade, used effective economic leadership skills to bring the House of Mendes to new heights of prosperity. She had inherited the position from her husband and brother-in-law. Other writers allude to her success in passing, but Dr. Birnbaum adds examples of specific business deals so one can see the great lady’s skills in action.

An example is the chapter “In Business with Ragusa,” in which the author describes a contract negotiated by Doña Gracia for her firm with the port city, now called Dubrovnik, so fortuitously positioned between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Elsewhere, Dr. Birnbaum’s expertise in the political economy of the period enhances the reader’s comprehension of the banking and trading of the day, with information such as the relative values of period currency and products traded.

She also takes care to present the background to the events she covers. For example, Chapter 2, “A Short History of the Conversos,” describes in full the issues faced by New Christians and their origins. This is important if one is to appreciate fully the challenges confronting someone of this background, very much in the public eye, on a seventeen-year odyssey to a destination that must be kept hidden as long as possible. The same attention is given to a wide-screen picture of the Ottoman Empire, necessary if one is to understand the environment that served as stage for the daring political actions and spiritual dreams of Doña Gracia’s later years. Still another example is the author’s portrait of bustling Antwerp, thriving as a crossroads of sixteenth century trade, where the House of Mendes benefited, being in the right place at the right time.

Dr. Birnbaum’s scholarship is artfully combined with her writer’s understanding that readers need more than a chronological recounting of events for the true picture to emerge of personages and periods long gone. Her approach, and its reasons, are clear in the book’s final paragraph of homage. The following shows how her work differs from the often impassioned style one finds in Roth and Brooks.

There are no extant records in which Gracia directly expressed her political ideas or religious feelings, and I do not speculate about them. I have faithfully chronicled her private and public activities, and her role as a *mater familias*, supported by available documents. Those facts alone should prove beyond doubt that Gracia was a woman of singular intelligence, imagination, and perseverance, whose actions were ennobled by her unyielding faith and spiritual grace. She knew how to dream without boundaries and had the courage to make her dreams come true, regardless of the limits forced upon her by her faith and gender. An independent thinker, Gracia presents a life that affirms the fundamental importance of human dignity for centuries to come.

Reviewed by DOLORES SLOAN

MARIANNA D. BIRNBAUM taught Hungarian and Central European literature and culture at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she is Professor Emeritus. She also serves as visiting professor at Central European University, Budapest, in the Medieval Department. DOLORES SLOAN spoke on Doña Gracia at SCJS’s 1999 conference. Her articles on La Señora have appeared in HaLapid, which she edits.



Letter to the Editor

I would like to make some comments on Matthew Warshawsky's, "The End of Jewry in Sefarad, Land of the Hebrew Golden Age," which appeared in the Summer 04 issue, and thank the author for a mentally stimulating and readable article

Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile rightfully took accountability for decreeing the expulsion; they literally put it on the fifteenth century equivalent of the front page. Events of the previous century, specifically ineffective central government, created the urgency for this vital decision. Nevertheless, Jewish expulsion was preceded in time and in importance by the attenuation of the privileges of the semi-autonomous nobility and municipalities, more critical in the short term to centralized monarchical rule than the unifying factor of Catholicism.

In view of these compelling reforms, it is understandable why possible future ramifications of this policy received scant attention. Indeed, implementing the religious unifying factor didn't cease with the Jewish expulsion, but followed in a later reign by the expulsion of the practicing Muslim population and afterward, by that of the rebellious, converted Moriscos.

After 1391, Jews suffered confinement to ghettos. Jews had almost always resided in closed, defined quarters as their designations, *aljama* and *judería*, suggest. This was an arrangement as desirable for Jews as it was for Christians. Jewish massacres before 1391 included comparably bloody excesses during the Black Death and the protracted revolt against Peter the Cruel of Castile by his illegitimate brother, Henry.

The fame of Torquemada owes partly to reputed Jewish ancestry. The inquisitor was the nephew of Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, a known *converso* who, reacting to anti-*converso* sentiment, wrote a treatise in defense of sincere converts.

The inquisition used the groundless or irrelevant testimony of anonymous witnesses. This testimony, in large part, derived from the spouses, children, other close relatives and neighbors of the accused. Anonymity was the only cost-effective protection the inquisition could provide the accused and those associated with them. In cases where a witness' identity became known, he/she was attacked, sometimes fatally.

I presume the bibliography was placed on the net for economy of space in *HaLapid*. I don't understand why the pages of the individual references weren't cited as well. Imagine a reader trying to find the article author's reference by leafing through Netanyahu's 1,400 page tome. [Editor's Note: We agree. Thanks for comment.]

ARYE HAZARY

Lavender, from page 9

"bandits," urban dropouts escaping exploitation, corruption, and inefficiency, former soldiers and mercenaries, and others (pp. 181-182). He concludes that the solidarity formed by these people was ideological, not biological.

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ABRAHAM D. LAVENDER, President of SCJS, is Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Florida International University, Miami. He has addressed Society conferences, as well as written articles and papers, on related topics.

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Arthur Benveniste

from p 7 Focusing primarily on religious education and housed in Ohel Jacob, Lisbon's crumbling WWII-era Ashkenazi synagogue (not to be confused with Shaare Tikvá, the much larger synagogue serving Lisbon's historically North African Jewish community), HeHaver is currently the country's largest association for *anusim* of all ages (hehaver.blogspot.com, s_ohel_jacob@hotmail.com). A second Lisbon-based organization, Zikaron Avoteynu, was created in the 1980s to gather people of *anusim* origin throughout the country, but disbanded before the end of the 1990s.

Much earlier, in the city of Guarda, near the Spanish border, descendants of crypto-Jews formed the Associação de Amizade Portugal-Israel (Portugal-Israel Friendship Association) and lobbied in the 1960s for Israel's formal recognition by the Portuguese government. This association subsequently moved its base to Lisbon and has attracted a broader membership, including Portuguese who are not of Jewish origin.

Porto, too, has been home to a series of *anusim* associations, each linked to Barros Basto's legacy. The earliest, the Instituto de Relações Culturais Portugal-Israel (Institute for Portugal-Israel Cultural Relations), was created by Amílcar Paulo, a former student of Barros Basto who wrote prolifically on Portuguese crypto-Jews. Like the Associação de Amizade Portugal-Israel, Paulo's association brought together *anusim* who focused their efforts on strengthening ties between Israel and Portugal through cultural events and activism. A subsequent Porto-based organization, a B'nai Brith lodge (appropriately named the "Barros Basto Lodge"), was created in the 1990s as a cultural association by and for *anusim* from Porto, Belmonte, and Lisbon. Although currently inactive, several of the lodge's founders subsequently became leaders in other *anusim* activities in the Porto area.

One of the lodge's founding members (and co-author of this article), Sérgio Castro Pinheiro, went on to create Hanamel-Associação de Cultura Hebraica do Porto (Hebrew Culture Association of Porto). Now the primary *anusim* association in northern Portugal, it was formed in 2002 with 13 founding members. Hanamel has a dual focus on religion and culture; in addition to observing major Jewish holidays, members meet regularly to plan future events and to discuss issues facing *anusim* in Porto and throughout the country. As a group, they have traveled to Belmonte, Lisbon, and other communities to meet with other *anusim* and, when appropriate, to provide educational materials and teach them about aspects of Jewish observance. Their membership includes a mix of crypto-Jews, people of crypto-Jewish origin who now observe "mainstream" Judaism, and descendants of *anusim*, newly exploring their ancestral roots, as well as Portuguese not of Jewish descent, but interested in Judaism and Jewish culture.

As an organization, Hanamel's primary goal is to promote awareness of Jewish culture and history in the city of Porto and in Portugal more generally, as well as to create opportunities for interaction between local *anusim* and visiting rabbis, scholars, 12

and other interested individuals from abroad. Working with the Porto City Hall, universities, the Israeli embassy, and other cultural organizations in Porto, Hanamel has put on a series of lectures by visiting scholars on the Holocaust, Hebrew language, Jewish philosophy and history, Israeli politics, and Jewish music. They have also presented concerts of Israeli classical musicians and collaborated in the presentation of films and traveling exhibitions. These events, which are held in secular locations like universities, cultural foundations, and major concert halls, have been well attended; one concert attracted an audience of 700 people.

Although these projects have been planned and organized through the efforts of the organization's leaders—just four or five people—the group has approximately 35 members, including several who reside outside of Portugal. International members are welcome, as are visitors. (Write to hanamel_porto@hotmail.com or Hanamel, Praça Dona Filipa de Lencastre 22, sala 27, 4050-259 Porto, Portugal).

Joining Forces with HeHaver

Since 2003, Hanamel has been "twinning" with HeHaver, Lisbon's *anusim* association. Their formal linkage took place at the First National Meeting of Portuguese Jewish (*Anusim*) Associations. The meeting place was Tomar, a town in central Portugal that is home to an important Jewish monument: the country's sole remaining, fifteenth century, pre-Inquisition synagogue. Held in the synagogue itself, the meeting provided a unique opportunity for *anusim* from the two associations to meet, exchange ideas and concerns, and learn from one another. This first meeting had a larger purpose: as small groups of individuals, neither association could accomplish what might

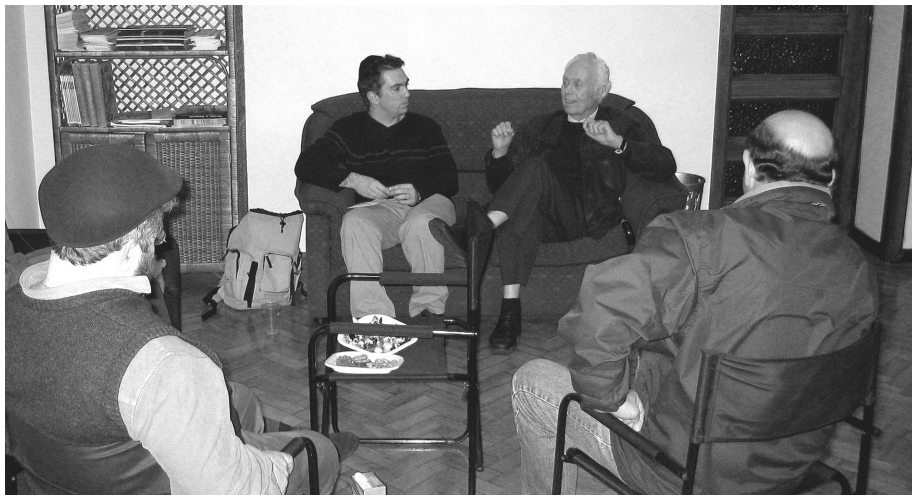
be possible on a national level. By selecting a site of such historical and symbolic significance as their annual meeting place, the leaders of Hanamel and HeHaver hoped to inaugurate a tradition of national collaboration and mutual support among *anusim* associations, and to attract more participants

National Anusim Meetings in Tomar

The Second National Meeting, once again held at the synagogue and followed by several hours of discussion in an auditorium provided by the Tomar City Hall,

took place on October 3, 2004. In addition to the leaders of Hanamel and HeHaver, as well as approximately 30 members of the two associations, those present included two rabbis (Rabbi Boaz Pash, of the Shaare Tikvá synagogue in Lisbon, and Rabbi Elisha Salas, of the Kadoorie synagogue in Porto), an American anthropologist (Naomi Leite, co-author of this article), members of the Associação de Amizade Portugal-Israel, and members of Saudades-Sefarad, an internet forum for people of Portuguese-Jewish descent. An occasion for song, dance, a short period of religious instruction, and much discussion and debate, the meeting focused on issues of communication and outreach, organization and content of future activities, and the continuing difficulty of recognition and integration into the "mainstream" synagogues in Lisbon and Porto.

These are complex matters, none of which could be re-



Professor Adriano Vasco Rodrigues, founder of Portugal-Israel Friendship Association, speaks at Hanamel in late March



*Singing Sukkot
songs, Second
National
Meeting of
Anusim,
2004*

solved in the space of a four-hour meeting. But the energy and focus of those present resonated as a posthumous victory for Capt. Barros Basto, nearly 40 years after his death: today, having read his biography and guided by his example, urban descendants of the crypto-Jewish villagers Barros Basto worked so hard to reach, now base their activities and indeed the philosophy of their associations on his efforts to create an open and dignified Jewish life for all of Portugal's *anusim*.

NAOMI LEITE is a PhD Candidate in Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently living in Porto, completing the research for her doctoral thesis on Portuguese-Jewish revitalization. SÉRGIO CASTRO PINHEIRO is President of Hanamel—Associação de Cultura Hebraica do Porto. Born in Portugal, raised in Paris, his family originated in Bragança (Trás-os-Montes), an important crypto-Jewish community and synagogue during Barros Basto's time.

References for this article are available on our website www.cryptojews.com.

THE BELMONTE PROJECT

by Emily Taitz

One group of *b'nai anusim*, the Jews of Belmonte, are the only descendants of forced converts who remained faithful to Judaism as a group for five hundred years, secretly practicing the Jewish rituals they remembered. Finally, in the 1980s, when they felt it was safe, they openly declared their faith. They were officially converted by a rabbi according to Sephardic practice, the men were circumcised, and they organized a congregation.

Still, the Jews of Belmonte remained on the margins of the Jewish world. It was just about this time that my husband and I, together with Portuguese friends, visited the community and saw their beautiful synagogue and their new burial ground.

During that visit, I made a promise that I would help them become a stronger and more recognized community and would try to supply them with whatever they needed. As I began to network with other interested groups, funds collected were soon transferred to the American Sephardi Federation in New York, in conjunction with Saudades Sepharad, the website run by Rufina Bernardetti de Silva Mausebaum. Rufina is a South African Jew from Johannesburg, descendant of forced converts.

The first order of business was to obtain a computer for them and find someone who was computer-literate with whom we could communicate and establish what was needed. The second priority was for a rabbi or teacher to establish himself in the community. *Saudades*, in conjunction with the American Sephardi Foundation and Kulanu, are now sponsoring a young Belmonte man, José João (Yosef) Rodrigo, who hopes to fill that post in the future. With the help of *Saudades*, Yosef was accepted at a Sephardi yeshiva in Jerusalem almost two years ago. He is studying to become a rabbi and a *shohet* (ritual slaughterer) and plans to return to his community when he is ordained. This will take several more years and many dollars.

EMILY TAITZ is author of The JPS Guide to Jewish Women: 600 BCE to 1900 CE, reviewed in the Summer 2004 issue of HaLapid. For more information on the Belmonte Project and Yosef Rodrigo, contact her at isaacem@optonline.net or see the Saudades website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/saudades-sefarad/>. HaLapid has published several articles about the crypto Jews of Belmonte. See www.cryptojews.com.



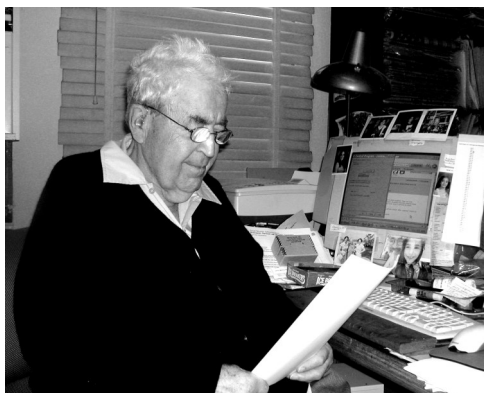
Member Closeup

Early Member of SCJS, He Attended First Conference

BOB HATTEM: FOUNDING EDITOR OF HALAPID

by Arthur Benveniste

A bookshelf takes up a whole wall of the room. History books occupy most of the available space and a large portion of them are California History books. One shelf contains early first editions dating back to the late eighteenth century. Here is an eyewitness account of the American Revolution



Bob downloading an article about Jews in colonial America

published in 1806; next to it a biography of Father Serra published more than 150 years ago. On another shelf, there is a large collection of *Life* magazines dating back to the first issue in 1936. Across the top of the bookshelf are cardboard containers holding the writings of

Bob Hattem. I am in Bob's office.

As I enter the room he is at his computer, on the internet, downloading and printing an article about Jews in colonial America. And this is how I had expected to find him. For the many years that I have known him, I have been impressed with his passion for history. I have accompanied him to conferences on California history, Los Angeles history, archival material preservation and, of course, to conferences of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies.

Bob became aware of SCJS more than fifteen years ago. He was in New Mexico for a conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. There he met Stan Hordes and Gloria Trujillo, who were at that time organizing the society. He joined and attended the first conference in Taos in 1991. He suggested that SCJS start a newsletter and he became its first editor. The publication was at first called simply *The Newsletter* of the Society for Crypto Judaic Studies. After a few issues, someone suggested that we adopt the name used by Arturo Carlos Barros Basto in the publication that he initiated in the 1920s: *HaLapid*.

Bob describes the contents of "that first issue of the newsletter, Winter 1993, Volume I, No.1,...News of the New Mexico Conference, News about Future Meetings, a Spotlight on New Mexico Secret Jews, Seville Has A Major Archive For Crypto-

Jews, Crypto-Jews In Spain Today, by Arthur Benveniste, and other ancillary items."

Bob was born in Los Angeles in 1919. He is from a family with a long history of activism with Sephardim. His grandparents were from Kuskunjuk, across the Bosphorus from Istanbul. His family were among the founders of the Sephardic Community of Los Angeles, now known as Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, his grandfather being treasurer in the early years and his father being President in 1929. Bob himself was a member of the board and the founding editor of *El Shofar*, the organizational newsletter. He edited the publication for six years before leaving it to become founding temple archivist/historian, a position that he still holds.

I asked about his interest in history. "It began when I was in the ninth grade at Audabon Junior High. One of the assignments we were given was to write an autobiography of yourself and that got me started as I remembered the interesting things that happened to me up to that time and I remembered downtown L.A., the plaza and many things that are gone forever."

He continues: "During my lifetime I have been active in many historical societies. I was a President, as well as the Editor of the newsletter, of the Native Sons of the Golden West, Santa Monica Parlor; Editor and past Vice President of the Los Angeles City Historical Society; Editor of the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles; founding Editor of the Department of California, Jewish War Veterans newsletter; founding Editor of the Association of American Jewish Friends of Turkey Newsletter."

Bob adds that he "has been a member of the San Diego Historical Society, Santa Barbara Historical Society, Monterey Historical, California Historical Society, Southern California Historical Society and Los Californianos, an historical genealogical group for which I received two awards for outstanding service to the organization. History is my passion!"

During World War II, the army sent Bob to Syracuse University to study for the Army Specialized Training Program. Later, he was sent to Missouri to train for the Signal Corps. He met his future wife on a weekend pass. When they first met, he told her "I want to marry you." Three weeks later they were married. It lasted 43 years until her passing. They have one son, Michael, who has also been a member of the board and vice President of Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel. Bob's granddaughter, Sarah, is a fifth generation member of the synagogue.

Now in his mid 80s, Bob has had to curtail his activities. His health has prevented him from attending the last few conferences of SCJS but his interest in the society continues. I still rely on him to help



In the Signal Corps, WW II

put mailing labels and postage stamps on the quarterly mailings of *HaLapid*. The society is deeply appreciative of his work as founding editor of this publication and in his continued support of SCJS.

Great work Bob!



Bob studying at Syracuse University

www.cryptojews.com

Website Attracts Postings from All Over the World

Have you visited **cryptojews.com** lately? Check out the website of our society. On it you can access past articles from *HaLapid*, including scholarly studies, personal histories by anusim, book reviews and other items of interest. Go to it regularly for announcements and descriptions of upcoming events. There you can also our bylaws and minutes of board meetings.

The site receives several hundred hits each month. Many interesting postings have been placed on our guestbook and emails are sent to us almost every day.

Here are some examples of the communications we have received. The names and email address have been deleted.

POSTED ON OUR GUESTBOOK:

- Although without ancestors from the Latin countries (as best I can tell, all of my *mishpocha* came from Germany - but then who knows!), since learning of SCJS I have become fascinated with the developing learning about the Jewish contribution to the New World.
- A fascinating topic, researched by true historians. Best wishes to you all.
- I found out about my Sephardic ancestors a few years ago. My family is from the American southwest Four Corners region, mostly New Mexico and Colorado. I don't know much about the Jews who settled this area but I am eager to learn more. I would also like to learn more about the Ladino language.
- Wow, what a treasure of information. Where have I been? Abrazos.

EMAILS SENT TO US:

- My Grandfather, on my father's side, moved to Canada, from Sattel, Switzerland, when he was four years old. When I was a child he told me a story which had been passed on through the generations. The story was that ancestors had moved from Spain to Switzerland during the Inquisition and that the Swiss could not pronounce their Spanish name and the name was changed to Spani.

Contact was lost between the Canadian Spanis and the Swiss, until I visited Switzerland a few years ago. There I found relatives, who had also heard the same story. No one suggested that we might be Jewish; however, recently I have been reading about the Inquisition and the horrendous treatment of Spanish Jews and it came to me that the most obvious reason for our ancestors to leave Spain was because they were Jewish, or they disagreed with the Inquisition.

- I am so glad there is a site like this. I have always felt like I have strong connections to Jewish everything. I am from the Cape Verde Islands, the island of Fogo. My grandfather's last name is: Corriea. My paternal grandparents are: Goncalves. I look like I am a Morrocan woman or Spanish. My grandfather never worked. All I know is that he had massive acres of land that was left for him by his dad. I was wondering if you could help figure some things out because I believe that I am an ancestor of the Sephardic Jews in Portugal. Well, my mom says that we can not have meat and cheese on the same plate because the cheese has milk in it. Pork is discouraged in my home. I actually get sick if I eat it. Anther common name in my family is Rodrigues.

- For some years now I have wondered if I have a crypto-Jewish ancestry. My mother's father was born in Las Palmas, Canary Islands, and was raised as a Catholic, but since I discovered the story about the crypto-Jews of Spain, I have wondered if his ancestors left Spain at the time of the Inquisition and settled in the Canary Islands. I have read several books and articles about crypto-Jews and noticed that several family names which occurred in them were also present in my grandfather's birth certificate, such as Rodrigues, Correa and Torres.

Reviewed by ARTHUR BENVENISTE

HALAPID

The Society For Crypto-Judaic Studies
333 Washington Blvd. #336
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292

FIRST CLASS

INSIDE YOUR SRING 2005 ISSUE:

Comparing DNA Patterns of Sephardic, Ashkenazi and Kurdish Jews
A Couple's Odyssey: Finally Home
The Anusim Presence in Urban Portugal
The Belmonte Project
***The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes*, book review**
Member Close up—Bob Hattem
Our Website Attracts Posting from All Over

SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies serves the following purposes: The fostering of research and networking of information and ideas into the contemporary development of Crypto Jews of Iberian origins. Membership is open to any one who is interested in this immensely fascinating and perplexing area. If you are interested in joining, the annual membership dues are as follows:

Individual	\$ 25
Student	10
Institutional	35
Sustaining	100
Patron	1000

Dues include this quarterly newsletter:

Please make checks payable to: SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES and mail to:
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