

HALAPID



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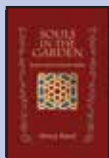


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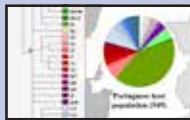


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Fostering research of
the worldwide history
of the crypto-Judaic
experience and
the emergence of
hidden descendants from
the Iberian Peninsula.

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Contributions from writers all over the world are
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may or may not be historically accurate; we
reserve the right to edit material and correct
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Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of
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FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Debbie Wohl-Isard
SCJS President

As SCIS president, approaching the conclusion of my term, I am thrilled about our growth and accomplishments in 2019. We had a banner year with an outstanding conference filled with many fine memories, new alliances and a substantial growth to our membership. At the recent Denver conference, we were proud to offer the honor of the inaugural Stanley M. Hordes Distinguished Scholar Lecture to an outstanding individual, Dr. David Gitlitz. In appreciation and in recognition of his contributions to the field of crypto-Judaic scholarship, David was presented with an elegant framed certificate designed by Risa Aqua of Denver (below). We look

forward to bestowing this award upon other deserving academics in the future.

I am also pleased to say we have added several distinguished scholars to our advisory council – Genie Milgrom, Bryan Kirschen, Leonard Stein, Matthew Warshawsky, and David Gitlitz. As an organization whose mission is to gather and disseminate information, we are grateful to have some of the best in this field to help guide us forward.

Sadly, we lost a long-time friend and valued board member, Chana Cohen who succumbed to illness. Her family has generously donated her personal library to SCIS in her loving memory. With this impressive list of volumes on Jewish history and especially crypto-Judaic research, we begin our formal archive of reference materials in Chana's name.

We are pleased to announce that our 30th Annual Conference will be held in Dallas during the summer of 2021 (date and venue to be determined). We continue the search for a locale for our 2020 regional conference and welcome a host commitment to help make this a reality. Watch for details in our e-newsletter, *La Granada*, and website, www.cryptojews.com.

Continued thanks to the Bennett and Robin Greenspan Fund at the Houston Jewish Community Foundation for their ongoing support. We invite and welcome underwriting and benefactor sponsorships to help SCIS realize all our dreams. Let us know if there's room in your life or family to help perpetuate the work of SCIS long into the future.

We commend many in our midst for newly published works, peer recognition and achievement during 2019. We are proud to count you among us. We also wish our founder and senior advisor, Dr. Stanley Hordes, good health as he recovers after surgery last summer.

Stay in touch, one and all,
Debbie Wohl-Isard
President



The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, an international academic and secular association, fosters research, networking of people and ideas, and the dissemination of information regarding the historical and contemporary developments involving crypto-Jews of Iberian origins and other hidden Jewish communities around the world. Membership dues fund the programs and publications of this non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, open to any and all individuals interested in learning more about this cultural phenomenon.

FROM THE EDITOR

Worldwide interest in crypto-Judaic studies keeps growing!



Corinne J. Brown
Editor in Chief

With the Denver conference behind us, I can again don my editor's hat and get back to the job of sharing the news relevant to members of SCIS. It appears that interest in the subject of crypto-Judaic studies continues at an unprecedented pace in all areas – new books, films, conferences and programming at universities around the world. In

our midst, we applaud the growth in academic research as our members reach new milestones and university appointments.

In this issue, you'll find in print a few lectures presented at the Denver conference; these were just too good not to be shared, either again, or for the first time. I hope you enjoy them. Each has a message worth repeating. We wish we had room for more.

Book reviews couldn't be more exciting; some close to home by authors you know and love, others by scholars we are yet to meet. All tempting reads, worthy of our time. Plus, don't miss the intriguing article on tarot cards; the hidden world of crypto-Jews further uncovered

In addition, enjoy the conference summary. Look for some quips and quotes heard throughout the presentations and the few, hurried breaks. (Choice phrases worth repeating.) We also give space to those members who have passed recently, leaving a terrible void. May they be long remembered.

With this, my 10th edition as editor of *HaLapid*, I can only say "amazing"—that is, who we are, what we do, and what the future holds. The information just keeps unfolding. I am grateful to be able to share it with you. Please let me continue to hear from you wherever you are and help tell this story to the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corinne J. Brown". The script is fluid and cursive.

Corinne Joy Brown
Editor

Corinne found
this sombrero
on a wall in a
Mexican restaurant,
hiding in plain sight

ABOUT THE COVER



*Within every
hidden Jew is a
flame that
seeks to be
reunited with
the light of
Judaism but
stays covered
for fear of
discovery and
complete
extermination.*

THE HOPE OF THE HEART
Monotype by
Mercedes Gail Gutierrez.

Mercedes Gail Gutierrez is a visual artist of *converso* Mexican ancestry with links to Spain through Don Luis de Carvajal's New Christian colonist of Nuevo León in the late 16th century. She returned to her Jewish roots over 20 years ago and made *aliyah* to Israel in 2007. Her monotypes and conceptual installations focus on experiences of identity as a *b'nai anusim*.



Volveramos a la Fuente

Let Us Return to the Fountain

In my first novel, *Spirits of the Ordinary* (Chronicle Books, 1997), a fountain is described in the home of the protagonist's parents:

Within the enclosure was a miniature garden almost gem-like in its perfection. Low boxwood hedges hugged the wall on two sides, filling the air with their pungent odor. A veranda or portico flanked the other two sides along the house. Next to the portico grew blood red roses, almost funereal in their intensity of color. Huge pots of fuchsias hung from the protruding vigas of the portico, catching the sun and contrasting sharply with the deep shade against the house.

At the center of the garden, a fountain as squat as the house itself, gurgled softly; the cold spring water spilled over its thick, green-stained lips and ran obediently along channels in the flagstone paving to form a shining ribbon that laced the garden in severe Moorish symmetry before disappearing under the hedges. The fountain had run steadily since the house was built, the springs within the earth seemingly inexhaustible.

At a certain point, the mother realizes that she can see little figures moving around in the garden – that it has become a *mapa mundi* – a miniature of the world, and a way to track the progress or tribulations of her wayward son. It offered an idealized situation, in which if we could not divine the future, we could at least keep up with what was happening at the present time.

In looking back 500 years or more, it is easy to wonder what our ancestors were thinking; why they did not get out when they had the chance. We are looking backwards in time to people facing threats that seem obvious now, but might

not have been so clear at the time. Did they ever really have a chance? Would you stand up right now and walk out the door, leaving everything behind because you were told you would be killed if you stayed? Hadn't our ancestors been hearing this for at least 200 years before 1492?

In 2015, the Spanish government decided to make reparations for the death and destruction of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. A three-year window was opened during which descendants were offered Spanish citizenship at an expedited rate. When this was announced, many friends, knowing I am a descendant, wrote to see if I planned to take advantage of this offer. At the time, I decided not to, thinking it merely a ploy to bring tourist dollars to Spain. In Fall 2018, the window was extended for one more year and my son, Ben Roth said, "Let's do this. Spain is a member of the E.U."

"Seriously?" I asked. "It calls for all this paperwork, plus proof from people who spent 500 years hiding this information." I have lots of genealogies, lots of names and dates, but they only go back to the founding

KATHLEEN
ALCALÁ



Kathleen Alcalá

of Saltillo in the 1500s. While all of my relatives freely admit our Jewish ancestry, I had failed to find any written confirmation.

"Oh, just treat it as an adventure," Ben answered. "If we don't succeed, nothing lost." So reluctantly, I agreed. >>>



What does it mean
to be a citizen?
Beneath that is the
fundamental question,
'Who am I?'

It has been even more complicated than I expected. In October 2018 we began to study for a Spanish language exam and a citizenship exam. Meanwhile, I wondered how to make heads or tails of the charts I had of my ancestral names, so many of them married to each other, names repeating over and over.

Suddenly we were informed that we had to take the language exam by the end of February 2019 in order to receive the results in time to apply. I had expected to have until the Fall of 2019 to recover my childhood Spanish. We immersed ourselves in the materials. I used an online program called DuoLingo, and Ben listened to *Harry Potter* as a Spanish audio book. Now we were screaming at each other in Spanish when he came to visit once a week, about where we wanted to go on vacation or what kinds of vegetables to buy for lunch, all topics aimed at carefree college students in intensive summer programs, not a middle-aged writer and an intellectual hipster.

Meanwhile, a genealogist in New Mexico connected me with a genealogist in Spain who said, "Send me the names you have." I did so, not expecting to hear back. Miraculously, she responded after a month with enough proof to be accepted by the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, but that was not the end of it. It turned out we needed a complete generation-to-generation accounting of our ancestors back to practicing Jews in Spain. We have since been collecting certificates and letters of recommendation, sending for certified copies of our birth certificates, getting fingerprinted and having FBI background checks. I had always tried to keep a low legal profile. But had I ever intended a life of crime, that possibility is gone. All these people know so much about me now and I must say, I still feel very ambivalent about the whole adventure. This is about more, of course, than just citizenship.

What does it mean to be a citizen? Beneath that is the fundamental question, "Who am I?"

For a while, I told no one. I was embarrassed. I have always identified as Mexican, since both of my parents were born in Mexico. I grew up with the music of Agustín Lara and embroidered tablecloths, *téde canela* and flour tortillas. Yes, I was born into a turbulent mix of ethnicities in Southern California, but how was I to reconcile that with becoming a Spanish citizen?

Once we confirmed our ancestry, I wrote to my two sisters and one of my father's cousins to share the charts,

and euphemistic, but I looked up one term I suspected of implying a terrible fate, and was not wrong.

Alonso Rodríguez de Sevilla, doctor en medicina, vezino de Çaragoça, hereje judio; relaxado en persona a 12 de Março de 1488. Catalina Rodríguez, mujer do Alvaro de Gauna, defuncta, vezina de Çaragoça, heretic a judia; relaxada en los huesos en 27 de junio de 1497.



L

et us listen to the gentle flow of the fountain, and talk about things we are incapable of remembering, but can never forget.

in case any other family members were interested in applying. As far as I know, no one else in my family felt so compelled. One of my nephews lives in Spain with his wife Sarah, who has dual Mexican and U.S. citizenship, but he said it had been so much trouble to register his two daughters as American citizens, he was not inclined to complicate it.

When I first received the genealogical proof, I read part of it, then had to stop. It included direct quotes from the records of the Inquisition. The language was vague

"To be relaxed in person in the church. To be relaxed in her bones in the church. Or, to be burned at the stake, either alive or dead."

I had this problem before, when I researched the lives of my grandmother and great-grandmother in the Sonoran Desert. When I realized what had happened to my Opatá Indian ancestors, I cried.

And so I had to stop and weep for these individuals in Spain as well. For Catalina



Rodríguez. For Pedro Rodríguez, a young, single man of 18 years, accused of Judaizing in several communities. For my Alcalá ancestors who converted and appointed one of their number to try to claim the properties and goods of their relatives who had either been murdered or who had chosen to leave.

Of course, legal records tend to document the worst of humankind. Legal records seldom say, “She led a good life and was known as a fine cook.” We do not remark on the quotidian, the everyday miracle. We do not sue — or murder — over these things.

It had never occurred to me to contemplate the fates of those who converted and stayed, as many did. Miguel de Cervantes was the child of such people, as were thousands of others. Some of these people took the names Alcalá or Rodríguez when they converted. It could not have been easy. They would always have bad blood, according to the Catholic Church. They would always be considered heretics by their own people. Families were split apart by these decisions. Juan Rodríguez de Ocaña chose to convert, while his sons Mose, Sisa and Yucaf Abravalla did not.

El 8 de Agosto de 1492 se ordenaba a los justicias de Herrera del Rio Pisuerga (Palencia) que volvieran a Antón Rodríguez, judío converso, vecino de esa villa, los bienes inmuebles que sus padres habían tenido que dejar al marchar al exilio.

The genealogist did not research my mother’s father’s name, Narro, about which I have written all these years. Instead, he used the name Rodríguez, belonging to my great-grandmother, Eleuteria Rodríguez Narro. He probably started here because he already had information on the Rodríguez, and knew where to start looking for the link to my family. Ironically, Eleuteria was fanatically Catholic, and went so far as to have my grandfather, Miguel Narro, disinherited

and excommunicated for leaving the Catholic Church to become a Methodist minister at the turn of the 20th century. I should derive some satisfaction from tracing my Jewish ancestry back to Spain through her.

Two years before we started this process, my son, a world traveler, had visited Spain with his girlfriend. I had visited Barcelona the year before that with my husband, as well as the village in the French Pyrenees supposedly founded by my Narro ancestors. When Ben returned, he said Spain was the first place he had visited where he felt at home somehow, felt that people “looked” like him, so I should not be surprised that he wanted to fulfill the possibility of citizenship. To me, the people of Barcelona exhibited a wider range of looks — height, color — than people in the Northwestern United States. My own looks are so generic I get asked for directions wherever I go.

Although we live near Seattle, which has the third largest Sephardic population in the United States, we did not use a local Sephardic Jewish entity because no one was providing the certificates when we started the process in 2018. The very first member of the Sephardic community in the United States to claim her Spanish citizenship, Doreen Alhadeff, lives in Seattle, but when the rabbi at Ezra Bessaroth left, no one continued the program. Most of the Sephardic Jews in Seattle descend from ancestors in Turkey or Rhodes, and have a continuous line of Jewish practice from which to provide proof, so the process is a little easier for them. Anyone who was going to apply, they reasoned, had already stepped forward. When

I met Doreen a few weeks ago, she said the synagogue is again offering the certificate, but I could never get any more information from them.

In February 2019, Ben and I flew to Albuquerque and took the four-part language test at the Hispanic Cultural Center, along with hundreds of other people from not only all over the United States, but the world. There was a distinct air of “Don’t I know you?” as we recognized family traits in each other, tried not to stare at familiar eyes or hair. Later in Seattle, we took the civics test, the equivalent of that required for citizenship in the United States. We have passed both exams, and contacted a lawyer who works on such cases. If and when we are able, we will connect with a notary in Spain and fly there to sign documents in person. Finally — again if all goes well — we will appear at a consulate in the United States to receive our Spanish passports. I don’t know how many others are on this journey (see sidebar on page 6), or what they hope to gain from it, but I wish them well.

Somewhere in Spain is a fountain. It might be in Jaca, en el Pirineo Aragonés, where, my Alcalá ancestors were already established by 1377. Or perhaps it is in Çaragoça, where Alonso Rodríguez, born in Sevilla, practiced medicine. I imagine that fountain runs with severe Moorish symmetry, still cooling a courtyard during the burning days of summer. Hidden somewhere in that garden, might be a trace of my history. >>>



Jaca, en el Pirineo Aragonés,

According to *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean, in Senegal the polite expression for saying someone has died is to say, “his or her library has burned.”

“Our minds and souls contain volumes inscribed by our experiences and emotions; each individual’s consciousness is a collection of memories we’ve cataloged and stored inside us, a private library of a life lived.” I cannot help but wonder how many libraries were burned ahead of their time, inside of the doctors and shoemakers, mothers and fathers *relaxados en persona o ensus huesos*.

We cannot recreate the past, because we bring our modern sensibilities to it. We can only imagine it in fleeting details, both good and bad. I am trying to get used to the idea of Spanish citizenry. It opens up possibilities that might be welcome. Could my son, a software engineer with a company that does business all over the world, use Spain as a base? Could I teach creative writing to Spanish citizens, or to ex-pats who want to write? Would it be easier to research my current novel in progress, set in 11th-century Spain?

Invitation to Return

Over 130,000 ‘Sephardic’ Jews accept Spain’s offer and apply for citizenship

The descendants of those exiled over 500 years ago for refusing to convert to Catholicism are mostly from Latin America.

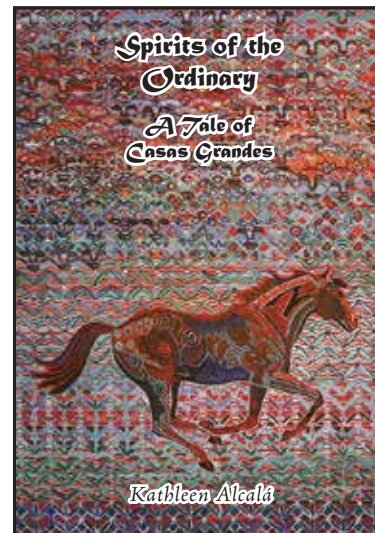
According to World Israel News writer Batya Jerenberg as of October 1, 2019, some 132,000 descendants of Spanish Jews who were forced into exile over 500 years ago have applied for citizenship in the land of their ancestors by the September 30 deadline set by a law passed by Spain in 2015. The law was specifically enacted “with the intention to amend the actions carried out by Spain in 1492 that expelled Jews from the Iberian Peninsula.” Estimates suggest that 200,000 fled, including Don Isaac Abarbanel, one of the greatest Jewish philosophers and Bible scholars, who once served as Royal States Treasurer.

The Alhambra Decree or Edict of Expulsion was only revoked in 1968 which then allowed Jews to practice their faith openly. Most applicants for return have come from Venezuela, Columbia and Mexico. Applicants do not have to reside in Spain or give up citizenship of their birth country.

Come through this archway with me, and let us enter the garden. Admire the fine workmanship, the skill with which the tiles were set. I hear water splashing on stone, the soft cooing of doves. The ancient Persians, the Zoroastrians, believed that eternity is a garden. Their word for it — *pari-daiza* — is a term adopted by Christian mythology to describe the garden of Eden.

It is the origin of the word Paradise. And isn’t a garden at the center of all origin stories? It certainly describes mine — as a Jew, as a Mexican, as the descendant of Opata Indians — cast out over and over again from the garden, first in the Old World, then in the New. I hold this ideal garden in my heart.

Let us sit here, in the shade of these palms, and breathe in the aroma of the roses. Let us listen to the gentle flow of the fountain, and talk about things we are incapable of remembering, but can never forget. 🍷



Spirits of the Ordinary *A Tale of Casas Grandes*

WINNER OF WASHINGTON STATE
GOVERNOR'S WRITERS AWARD
& THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
BOOKSELLERS AWARD

“This book entered my dreams.”
—Alberto Ríos

“I’m still dazzled by *Spirits of the Ordinary* . . . That vision of hope and progress is just as necessary today as it was yesterday.”

—With a new foreword by
Rigoberto González

When the tale opens in the 1870s in a village in northern Mexico, the Caraval family has long been clandestine Jews. This wondrous novel of several generations in a passionate family is in the great Latin American tradition of García Márquez and Isabel Allende, told by a writer with roots in two worlds.

“Kathleen Alcalá is exceptional among Latina writers. Her voice is a compass to navigate the corridors of history so as to approach our common past anew.”
—Ilán Stavans

“Alcalá-land. It lies across the border between the living and the dead, across all the borders—a true new world.”

—Ursula K. LeGuin

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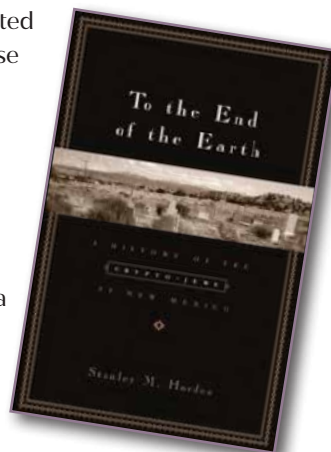


Telling Crypto-Jewish Stories Through Jewish Historical Societies

Storytelling is a high art, a means of transmitting knowledge and experience from generation to generation. As I recall, at age 13 in 1956, I told a story for the first time at a B'nai B'rith Girls storytelling event at the Jewish Community Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The story was "Three Gifts" by Polish author Isaac Leib Peretz, a descendant of Sephardic Jews, which was written in Yiddish at the turn of the last century. A man died whose good deeds and bad deeds in life weighed equally on the scales that determined whether a soul went to heaven or hell. His soul could not enter heaven until he presented three "Gifts of Pure Virtue." The soul searched and found three remnants of Jewish martyrdom — a handful of soil from the Holy Land for which a Jew was stabbed to death while he protected it, a bloody pin from a Jewish woman who was dragged to death by a wild horse and who pinned her skirt to her legs to protect her modesty, and a bloody yarmulke of a Jewish man who was killed when forced to run a gauntlet of soldiers wielding whips. The gifts were accepted, and the soul was admitted to heaven. The story inspired me to perform good deeds all my life.

Stories matter. How can we spread knowledge of crypto-Jewish stories? One way is through Jewish historical society publications, events, and films. The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society (NMIHS) acquaints its members and the public with crypto-Jewish history which is

of great interest in New Mexico and southern Colorado. Of course, New Mexico is fortunate to have Dr. Stanley Hordes whose pioneer research about crypto-Jews, *To the End of the Earth: The Crypto-Jews of New Mexico*, published in 2005, contributed greatly to the rise in scholarship and public interest. Stan was a founder of NMIHS in 1985, later its president, and a recipient of the Society's Hurst Award for outstanding contribution. He served as New Mexico state historian from 1981 through 1985 and has been a Research Associate Professor at the Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico. Further, he is a founder of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies in 1991. Currently, Stan is at work on a book about crypto-Jews in the Spanish Caribbean islands of Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and pre-British Jamaica.



NMIHS holds a fall conference and programs throughout the state each year, including Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Taos, Las Vegas, and Las Cruces. Crypto-Jews have been both presenters and the subjects of presentations. Topics covered depend in part on proposals submitted. A review of conference schedules for the past six years, 2013-2018, found Sefarad and crypto-Jews were the themes of the 2013 and 2016 conferences. The 2016 conference was held in Santa Fe to accompany the exhibition *Fractured Faiths: Spanish*

DIANNE LAYDEN



Dianne R. Layden

Judaism, the Inquisition, and New World Identities at the New Mexico History Museum — a history of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Spain, and of the conversos and crypto-Jews of New Mexico. These themes were the subjects of six presentations and the keynote address in 2013, and eight presentations and two keynote addresses in 2016. The 2015 and 2018 conferences each had two presentations about crypto-Jews; the 2014 and 2017 conferences had none.

Legacy, the 12-page NMIHS newsletter published since 1988, has released many articles about crypto-Jews and related subjects such as genealogy. It is sent to members, other subscribers, historical societies in New Mexico and neighboring states, and the authors and subjects of its articles. Issues are also available online at www.NMIHS.org, dating back to August 1995. I served as *Legacy* editor for three years and most issues in 2014-2015 and 2017-2019. Out of 101 issues



TELL
your
STORY

published since 1988, 48 contain about 60 such articles. Four articles that follow demonstrate the tie between *Legacy* and NMIHS conferences and programs. *Legacy* frequently publishes presentations from these conferences and programs. For example, Yvette Cohn Stoor is a descendant of New Mexico Pioneer Jew Louis Cohn, who arrived in Santa Fe in 1864. He and business partners operated businesses in the Taos region and the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. Louis bore seven children with an Hispanic woman, Juana Maria Ruperta Valdez. Yvette told her family story at the 2013 NMIHS conference, which was published in the Winter 2013 issue of *Legacy*, and again at the 2018 conference. She also appears in *Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico*, a full-length film made by Paula Amar Schwartz and Isaac Artenstein.

From the Summer 2018 issue: "University of Colorado Scholar Discusses Crypto-Jews at Temple Aaron," provides a story and pictures by acclaimed author Sharon Niederman, a past NMIHS president. Temple Aaron is a historic synagogue in Trinidad, Colorado that celebrated its 130th anniversary in June 2019. The scholar referred to in Niederman's title is Dr. Janet Jacobs of CU-Boulder, whose talk was sponsored by CU-Boulder's Peak-to-Peak Lecture Series, Trinidad Humanities and Arts, Temple Aaron, and the CU Office for Outreach and Engagement.

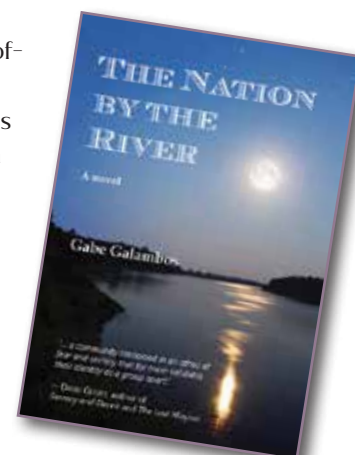
In the Fall and Winter 2013 issues, when Dorothy Corner Amsden was *Legacy* editor, the Fall conference focused on crypto-Jews. "The Coca Family and the Gusdorfs: Crypto-Jewish and Ashkenazi Transition," by Mona Hernandez, was a significant conference paper. The families lived in the Taos area at the turn of the last century, and brothers Alex and Gerson Gusdorf were pioneer

Jews. Hernandez found Gerson's name on the birth record of a Coca family child. In conducting her research, she contacted Stan Hordes and Naomi Sandweiss, an NMIHS past-president and author of *Jewish Albuquerque: 1860-1960*. Hernandez wonders if the Cocas are descendants of crypto-Jews.

Another article, "From the Azores to Massachusetts," tells

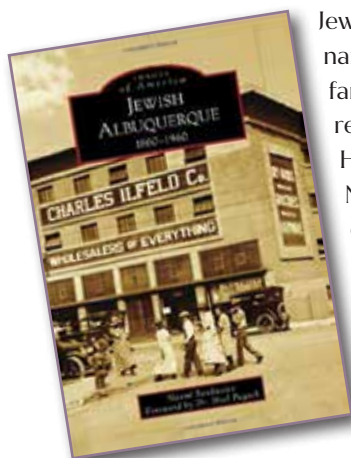
stories matter. How can we spread knowledge of crypto-Jewish stories? One way is through Jewish historical society publications, events, and films.

about Gabe Galambos' coming-of-age novel about crypto-Jews, *The Nation by the River*. Galambos and his family fled the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 for the United States. The article informs the reader of his interesting background and NMIHS-sponsored book talk held in February 2014 at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque.



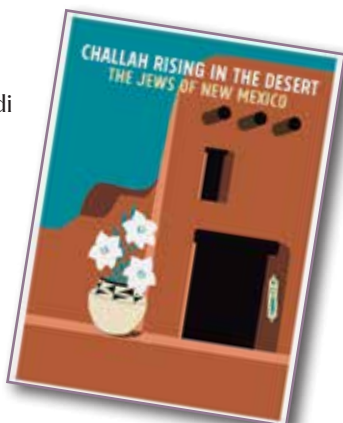
In an article entitled "Don Isaac Abravanel and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492," Pat Carlton, NMIHS archivist, writes that Don Abravanel was born in Portugal as a member of the oldest and most distinguished Jewish Iberian family. He served as treasurer for the King of Portugal. Carlton presents excerpts from Don Abravanel's speech in fierce opposition to the Edict of Expulsion issued in Spain on March 31, 1492, by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

The film *Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico*, by Paula Amar Schwartz and Isaac Artenstein, was first shown in New Mexico in 2017, then at the SCIS conference in Philadelphia, and soon in other states and at film festivals. Schwartz served as NMIHS president during the filming. NMIHS endorsed the film at the outset, members of the board served on the film advisory committee, and a 60-minute preview was shown at the 2016 NMIHS annual meeting. The film includes interviews with descendants of crypto-Jews Maria Apodaca and Isabelle Sandoval, as well as genealogist Schelly Talalay Dardashti. Information about the film is available at www.ChallahRising.com. Notably, Schwartz and Artenstein are at work on a film about crypto-Jews which they expect to complete by December 2019, entitled *A Long Journey*:



The Hidden Jews of the Southwest, with appearances by 2019 SCIS presenters Marcia Fine, Rabbi Jordi Gendra-Molina, Sara Koplik, and others.

I would further like to share Stan Hordes' thoughts about the growth in understanding of crypto-Judaism in New Mexico. (Stan was unable to attend the 2019 SCIS conference, so I asked him for his perspective on his research since the 1980s.) In essence, since Stan became aware of secret Judaism while serving as state historian in the early 1980s, he has observed the transitions from anecdotal stories of practices by some Hispanic New Mexicans that suggest a Jewish past to publication of sophisticated research analyzing how these customs evolved over the past 500 years; from tentative hypotheses regarding the participation of crypto-Jews in 16th- and 17th-century expeditions to New Mexico to firm, documented evidence; from skepticism among Jews and Hispanics about crypto-Judaism – for Jews about the survival of a Jewish consciousness for hundreds of years and for Hispanics about the relationship of Jewish ancestry to their



Catholic faith; and in official circles in the Catholic community, from not wanting to discuss crypto-Judaism to embracing the concept, including offers of citizenship by Spain and Portugal to proven descendants of Sephardic Jews and crypto-Jews.

Also significant, according to Stan, are the recognition of crypto-Judaism in the 2016 *Fractured Faiths* exhibit, which featured priceless documents and artifacts from Spain, Mexico, and New Mexico; the stimulation of publications, films, and works of art and literature about crypto-Judaism; and growing awareness in the scientific and medical communities of certain diseases and genetic mutations within the Hispanic community that are associated with Jewish populations.

When asked why he studies crypto-Judaism, Stan answered, "To show who we are as a community and how we got to where we are today, now that we know that Jewish heritage and Hispanic culture are richer and more complex than we thought." 🕯



Beit Hatfutsot and Jewish Heritage Alliance Team Up to Give Voice to the Story of Sefarad

Jewish Heritage Alliance is proud to announce a first-of-its-kind mobile Capsule Exhibit detailing the Saga of Sefarad (Jews of the Iberian Peninsula). The exhibit presentation took place on November 12, 2019 at Beit Hatfutsot Museum in Tel Aviv, with the formal launch to follow in Porto, Portugal in early 2020, and thereafter it will be available worldwide.

"At the Crossroads of Sefarad — In the Footsteps of the Crypto-Jews" mobile exhibit was created in partnership with the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, a well-respected global institution focused on telling the ongoing story of the Jewish people, and Jewish Heritage Alliance, a global platform, representing alliance members worldwide, with a mission to research and deliver the story of Sefarad to the public domain.

The mobility of the capsule exhibit offers a unique opportunity to engage the world with the saga of Sefarad by distributing and sharing the story around the globe. The exhibit will serve as the launching pad for educational programs in schools and other learning

institutions, community centers, synagogues, and churches, as well as a host of museums around the world.

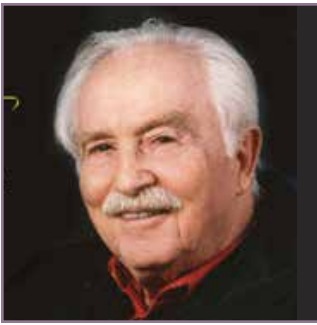
The exhibit is presented on panels that will be available via PDF files allowing electronic delivery of the exhibit across the globe. The exhibit details the narrative of Sefarad in a concise presentation of the period, from achievements to calamity; the pogroms, massacres, forced conversions and eventual exile.

The initiative was conceived by Michael Steinberger, founder and CEO of Jewish Heritage Alliance, and Itamar Kremer, educational director at Beit Hatfutsot. The design and development of the exhibit is attributed to Dr. Orit Shaham Gover, chief curator of Beit Hatfutsot and her devoted team – Dr. Dvir Zur and Dr. Meirav Balas. The project is supported by strategic partners; key among them is ATP (Porto and

Northern Tourism Association), represented by Rui P. Gonçalves with the aid of Ruth Calvão, board member of JHA and founding member of Centro de Estudos Judaicos de Trás-os-Montes (Center for Jewish Studies in Trás-os-Montes). The exhibition is endorsed by the President of the Portuguese Republic; the Portuguese Parliament, and the Spanish Jewish Network, as well as other public and private NGOs and institutions worldwide.

For more information go to
<https://jewishheritagealliance.com/at-the-crossroads-of-sefarad/>
 or call JHA at 786.528.3154.





Martin Sosin

Old Friends, Benefactors and Legacies



Gloria Trujillo



Mona Hernandez



Randy Baca



Dennis Duran

In 2006, I posted an ad in the *Jewish Journal's* section for singles wanting to connect. Little did I know that the connection I would make was to take a very different path from the one expected, but that it would be exciting and rewarding.

Martin Sosin, a retired tax attorney, responded to the ad and soon after meeting him for lunch at a Santa Monica café, I learned he was volunteering to help local non-profit arts organizations attain 501(c)(3) status. I told him about SCIS and how we were about to apply for the same, and he volunteered to help us. Then he described the Martin Sosin-Stratton-Petit Foundation he had set up to support the arts, and that he could offer us a grant supporting the crypto-Judaic arts when we received our IRS non-profit status.

Marty was as good as his word. We received non-profit designation and in 2007, the Sosin-Stratton-Petit Foundation made the first of what has become an annual award to SCIS, supporting presentations, performances, exhibitions and literature by artists of all genres at our conferences. I became chair of the arts programs for the Society, and the award has been enriching and preserving the crypto-Judaic arts ever since.

In 2012, Marty initiated a second annual grant designed to advance research and scholarship in the crypto-Judaic arts. This funds related academic and keynote presentations at conferences and their dissemination through SCIS media — the semi-annual magazine, *HaLapid*, the annual publication, *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Crypto-Judaism (JOSPIC-J)*, and the online newsletter, *La Granada*.

Marty became an active member, hosting our annual mid-year board meeting at his condo complex in Santa Monica in 2011 and attending conferences well into the last year of his life when facing serious health challenges.

The annual awards he initiated continue, and make possible the rich programs in the arts we enjoy and learn from. One of these was the 2019 premier of the musical/literary production, “Hiddenness and Reawakening as Music Drama,” by David Wohl, with poetry by Miriam Herrera, presented at the 2019 Society conference. SCIS is grateful for the continuing support of the foundation and its director, Randy Bellous.

The work of SCIS has been enriched over the years thanks to members like Marty who have found different ways to continue to preserve the millennia-plus crypto-Judaic story. Time allows only a few examples of some of these.

We begin with our earliest days, and with **Gloria Trujillo** and **Mona Hernandez**. Sisters and descendants of the Coca family in northern New Mexico, they attended the first SCIS gathering in 1991 near Taos. Gloria served as president and in other offices, primarily as conference chair. She was remarkable in finding comfortable hotels for conferences, then persuading their staff to offer generously-reduced rates for lodging and food. Mona served as treasurer and contributed to our knowledge through presentations and research. Coming to mind is one exploring a possible connection between crypto-Judaism and the revered statue of *La Conquistadora* in Santa Fe’s cathedral.

Randy Baca attended her first SCIS conference in 1999 in Los Angeles, and was a most active member until she passed away in 2008. Her full name was Veneranda Ana Chavez y Chavez de Baca y Hensel — so you can see why she was called Randy. Genealogical studies revealed her descentance from Spain’s Sephardic Jews. During her decade of SCIS service, she was vice president of membership and worked with Marty Sosin to secure 501(c)(3) status for the Society.



DOLORES SLOAN



Dolores Sloan, past SCJS president and senior advisor; and chair of Landmarks Commission, City of Santa Monica; with Arnold Trujillo, at his retirement, November 2015.

Our heartfelt thanks to all SCJS founders, leaders, members, and supporters!

Jewish youth to Israel and helped resettle them and their families. He discovered SCJS and spoke about our subject to his friends and at events, igniting their interest and winning their membership. In travels to Portugal, he supported individuals discovering their Sephardic ancestors, actually bringing one person who wanted to return, without conversion, to Temple Emanuel in New York. Yaakov passed away early this year, and his niece tells us that up to the last days of his life, he continued to recruit members from his assisted living center in Toronto, mailing their dues to our treasury.



Yaakov Gladstone

Randy hosted us in Scottsdale, Arizona for board meetings and other related events, and advocated for contributions to help those investigating potential Sephardic heritage to attend our conferences when their finances didn't permit it. In her memory, the SCJS board established the Randy Baca/Dennis Duran Fund. **Dennis Duran** was a Santa Fe New Mexican who had also learned of his Sephardic heritage and was a participant in SCJS' early years before his passing. Society members and friends always have the opportunity to donate to this fund, an option presented in the year-end update to members so we can continue supporting individuals investigating this potential.

Arnold Trujillo's talk at the 2019 conference was one of many presented by this descendant of early *converso* settlers. He retired as vice president of the Church of Seventh Day Adventists and has long pursued research on the Sephardic Jewish ancestry of his family in New Mexico and the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. Arnold initiated the genealogy workshop at our 2013 conference in Colorado Springs. This recurring workshop has become a cherished tradition at our conferences. Arnold continues to contribute to our learning each year.

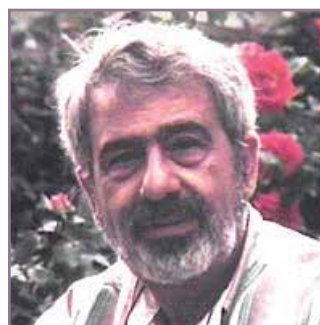
Yaakov Gladstone participated in the airlift that brought isolated and poverty-stricken Ethiopian

Abe Lavender is founder and editor-in-chief of the SCJS academic, peer-reviewed *Journal of Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian Crypto-Jews (JOSPIC-I)*, which all members receive when new issues are published annually. Recently retired as a professor at Florida International University, he has long known that his family is descended from Spanish and French Sephardic Jews.



Abe Lavender

Art Benveniste, our historian and a past SCJS president, is another contributor to the Society's mission from its earlier days.




Art Benveniste

Corinne Joy Brown represents the more recent leadership among us. Her special paths include editor of *HaLapid*, chair of the recent conference, and now arts programs chair for the Society — a mantle I confidently place in her hands. Corinne also serves as our chair of goodwill, an indispensable ingredient of her participation.



Corinne Joy Brown

Like the venerable Marty Sosin and the friends spoken of here, each of us finds our own course in SCJS as we continue to study the persistence of memory and identity that produced crypto-Judaism. What special skill or gift is your legacy to share with us? 



LETTERS

from

SEPTEMBER 2019

ARRIVAL: BOM DIA DE LISBOA -
GOOD MORNING FROM LISBON

Most of my travels focus on issues of tourism security. This trip to Portugal is different. I am here due to my work with the Center of Latino-Jewish relations. Normally the CLJR takes Latino leaders to Israel. This trip is the reverse, taking both Latinos and Jews to the gateway of the world of Sephardic culture and the jumping off point for many who came to the lands of America.

Portugal's relationship with the Jewish people is one of highs and lows. On the negative side, the Portuguese Inquisition was so extreme that people actually fled Portugal for Spain deciding to take their chances with the Spanish Inquisition! On the more positive side, Portugal was the preferred refuge of Spanish Jews who fled Spain in 1492. So many Spanish Jews went through Portugal to Latin America to escape the Inquisitional flames that in many parts of Latin America the term



portugués is synonymous with "Jews." In more recent history, Portugal served as a main transit point allowing Jews fleeing the horrors of German-occupied Europe to find freedom in the Americas and to escape the Holocaust.

Jews greatly contributed to Portuguese society. It was the science of Abraham Zacuto that allowed for precise navigation on the open seas many centuries before any ever imagined a GPS. It was Doña Grácia Mendes who showed the world that a woman could be just as capable as a man in both major commerce and banking. This political hodgepodge is woven into the very nature of Portugal's soul. Being on the European continent, Portugal, like much of Europe, is a place of Old World charm,

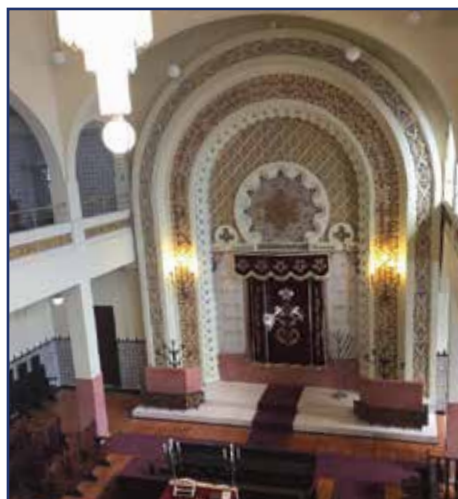
BY RABBI DR. PETER TARLOW
CENTER OF LATINO JEWISH RELATIONS AND
THE JEWISH HERITAGE ALLIANCE

elegance, prejudices and animosities. Portugal not only faces west, but it is Europe's most western nation, the farthest western point on the European continent. As such, this is a land whose body is in Europe, but its soul is in the Atlantic Ocean, and its eyes gaze toward a new world of renewal and hope.

For all these reasons our CLJR, along with the Jewish Heritage Alliance, decided that our first joint non-Israel trip would be not only to this land that symbolizes the spirit of exploration, but is also the place from which so many Jews and Latinos across the Americas hail. Yesterday was our first almost full day here in Lisbon. We were out of the airport by 10:00 a.m. local time and lucky enough to get an early check-in. Then we combined the charm of Lisbon with a visit to its first pre-Inquisitional synagogue. Those in the group tasted the city's famous *Pasteis de Belem*, sampled its wine, and came face-to-face with its Jewish community's hopes and challenges, entering a world that bridges old and new.



The official menorah of the City of Belmonte



Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, Porto



Shaaré Tikvah (Gates of Hope) Synagogue, Lisbon



DESTINATION: TRANCOSO AND BELMONTE, PORTUGAL
SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 02:30

In our recent travels though Portugal with the Center for Latino-Jewish relations, the group visited the country's northern inland. We visited such cities as Trancoso and Belmonte, the heart of Jewish Portugal. Perhaps no European country, with the exception of Germany, has accepted and embraced its responsibility for the past suffering of its Jewish population more than Portugal. Throughout the nation there are interpretative centers dedicated to Jewish life and culture, and new Jewish communities are arising from the ashes of the past. In reality, there are many places like Belmonte throughout the nation. One such location is Castelo de Vide whose mayor of 15 years was Jewish and during his administration and term of office created multiple centers for the study of Portuguese-Jewish history. It was in Castelo de Vide that the government of Portugal in 1992 formally expressed its profound sorrow and regrets for the past sufferings of its Jewish community.

For the most part, the Portuguese have not run away from past prejudices and tragedies, but actively teach about them. The constant reminder of the sins of the past are tools not only to remember, but

also to assure that they never occur again. Portugal both embraces its Jewish past and strives to assure a bright and successful Jewish renaissance.

Modern Portugal is proud of its growing Jewish population, of its population of *anusim* (people who were forced converts and who now after 500 years are returning to their Jewish roots), and of its growing economic ties with Israel, best symbolized perhaps by regular flights between Lisbon and Tel Aviv. Unlike many other European cities, and much of the Middle East, Portugal practices freedom of religion. People can walk the streets of Portuguese cities without fear. For the most part, Portugal is a "live and let live" society. No one seems to care about who one is, but rather what one does.

Friday night I attended Shabbat services at the local synagogue. Like Portugal itself, the service is a blend of East and West; liberal and orthodox, a revolving door between the 15th and 21st centuries. There were vestiges of the past — at least some men made it clear that women were merely tolerated and were second-class citizens. Yet the men's service was joyful, mixing ancient Sephardic customs with music that seemed to spill into the city's soul and reach the very gates of heaven — more of a musical interaction with God than a formal service, reflecting a sense



Rabbi Peter E. Tarlow, Ph.D.

A long-time SCJS member and regular contributor to *HaLapid*, Rabbi Dr. Peter E. Tarlow is a world-renowned expert on the impact of crime and terrorism on the tourism industry, plus event and tourism risk management and economic development. Fluent in many languages, he speaks throughout the world including Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Eastern Pacific, and Asia, lecturing on a wide range of current and future trends in the tourism industry, rural tourism economic development, crime and terrorism, and more. As an expert on Sephardic and crypto-Jewish history, Tarlow speaks and writes about the crypto-Jewish experience in the Americas, and the history of Jewish life on the Iberian Peninsula.



The chapel in Don Pedro's summer palace



Eduardo VII Park, Lisbon



Monument to the Discoverers, Lisbon



of freedom after five centuries of religious bigotry.

The northern internal regions of Portugal are filled with beautiful landscapes, formal gardens and mystical manor houses, and are a part of Portugal's wine country. The internationally recognized local wines are plentiful and pleasing to the senses; the surrounding mountains provide a wealth of visual richness. Belmonte has a history a world apart from other places. It seems to defy the laws of history. Isolated in 1496 from the rest of the Jewish world, the Jewish descendants of Belmonte believed they were the world's only Jews. They held this belief for five centuries until the early 1900s. It was only after a Polish engineer "discovered" them that they came to realize the Inquisition had finally ended and it was safe to come into the daylight of freedom and the wider Jewish world in which they could participate. Only then did they emerge from centuries of fear.

Today, Belmonte not only has a fully functioning Jewish community, but the Israeli flag flies proudly next to the Portuguese flag and the Hebrew language appears on buildings next to Portuguese. By embracing the past, new products, a religious and spiritual revival, and new economic opportunities have occurred. For example, the region now produces excellent Kosher wine and visitors flock to this village — almost a pilgrimage point — from around the world. Belmonte reminds us to embrace who we are, celebrate our own culture, learn from others, and smile more. That's a destination worth reaching.

FAREWELL

This letter will be the last one before we return home. The Center for Latino-Jewish Relations, in collaboration with the Jewish Heritage Alliance is proud to have made Portugal its first discovery tour to the lands that compose the Sephardic

Diaspora. In the past we have only traveled to Israel. This trip opens a new chapter in the CLJR's offerings. Biblical Sepharad (see chapter I of the Book of Obadiah) is a land of uncertain geographic locations. Was it a real place or a state of mind? Might it have meant the furthest land from Israel, the land beyond the sea? Eventually over the centuries the word came to mean the Iberian Peninsula and then Spain.

Portugal symbolizes many of the twists and turns of Jewish history. Being on the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal is part of biblical Sepharad. Portugal was also the first, and for many, the last stop on a historic journey that would carry Spain's Jewish exiles to lands as diverse as Turkey, Israel, and to the countries that compose Latin and North America. These exiles created not only the Ladino language but also here in Portugal, these Spanish exiles helped create many of the scientific tools that permitted Europeans to dominate the world for centuries.

The Portugal of the Sephardic Jews was, and still is, a diverse land. Facing the sea, this maritime nation had one foot in Europe and the other in the world beyond the narrow confines of Europe. These Portuguese explorers very much reflected the duality that is Portugal.

Jews have always symbolized this duality. They held an integral thread in the fabric of Portuguese society and at the same time, they were forced to live as a people apart

from it. During some historical periods, life for Portuguese Jews was better than that of other European Jews, and at other times much

worse. As such, Portugal was a land both of tolerance and hate, cultural darkness and enlightenment. This dichotomy is symbolized by the key to a 16th-century home in Jewish Castelo de Vide. Owned by a family expelled in the 1500s, the key traveled around the Mediterranean lands and only recently returned to Portugal from Israel by a member of that same family. Given to a former mayor of Castelo de Vide, today the key holds an honored place in the city's restored synagogue and Jewish museum.

Portugal is a land of great medieval beauty mixed with tragedies of biblical proportions. It a place of castles and cathedrals, artists and writers. Portugal is the home of one of Europe's oldest universities, yet ironically the campus' main plaza contains a statue of João III, one of history's most evil personages. As is too often the case, the best educated fail to create the hoped for tolerance but instead produce fanatical extremism. To visit Portugal is to step into Jewish history. To see the beautiful and the tragic, to almost

taste the despair and witness rebirth. The story of Portuguese Jewry is more than a tale of one people caught between the currents of history. It is also the story of humanity, its failures and its successes, its tragedies and creativity. To visit Jewish Portugal is to know that from the ashes of evil, goodness can sprout and life can begin again.

Até logo, and love from Continental Europe's most western nation. 🇵🇹



Renowned 16th-century key



A repast of Port and Pasteis de Belem on the Portugal coast



FOOD

From

“My 15 Grandmothers”

BY GENIE MILGROM

In her newest book, *Recipes from My 15 Grandmothers*, Genie Milgrom continues the journey, discovering her Sephardic past — this time through foods from the past. Here are two delicious recipes we’re sure you’ll enjoy! (See page 22 for more about this exciting book.)



EMPANADAS MATI

Light and fluffy pastries shaped like small turnovers. Level: Medium. Kosher: Dairy

This recipe is from my maternal grandmother, Dora (I called her Mati). She is the one that I remember most — especially when I prepare this recipe. She used to make these all the time and not only did I love them, so did everyone else in the family. I’ve made them often since I started cooking at the age of 12 or so. I always made them using the recipe that I had memorized, because, in the back of my mind, I could always call her if I forgot. On the day she died, I was 19 years old, and even while saddened to the core, on the way to the funeral home, I finally wrote the recipe down. I will always remember her gentle and humble ways. I made these recently and took them to a friend’s house for a break-fast, and they were snatched up faster than the bagels! The actual hand mixing of this recipe and baking brought me very close to the wonderful memories of baking with my Mati.

INGREDIENTS

1 pound butter, softened
2 large (8-ounce) packages cream cheese

2 pounds all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
10 heaping tablespoons sugar
Fillings: Use guava, guava and cheese, or a mixture of tuna, olives, and raisins. (I always make them with guava.)
2 eggs, lightly beaten, for egg wash

Combine butter and cream cheese, then add flour, baking powder and sugar. Mix by hand until well blended. Refrigerate for 2 hours. Roll out on a floured surface and cut out circles 2-3 inches in diameter. Put a small piece of guava or other filling in the center of each circle and fold over to make a half moon. Press sides together with a fork and make fork marks all around the empanada. Brush lightly with egg wash. Place on a very well-greased cookie sheet, preferably aluminum, and bake at 350°F for 20 minutes. They will bake fully but never get dark golden brown, because of the large amounts of butter and cream cheese. Eat when cool, because filling could be very hot.



DARK FRUIT CAKE

A rich and dark fruit cake. Level: Difficult
Kosher: Pareve

I waited until the day before Rosh Hashanah to make this recipe myself, as I felt that with all the dark, rich fruits and honey it was the perfect one for the New Year holiday — and I was right! I was rushed because there was so much cooking to do but it was worth it once I got this cake into the oven! In my whole life I have never had my house full of these most amazing and spicy aromatic scents! The cake itself is rich but not overpowering, and I drizzled dark honey all over it. A keeper for the holidays



Dark Fruitcake — perfect for the holidays!

for sure! I have already included my modifications in the recipe below. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour
2 teaspoons allspice
2 teaspoons cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup turbinado sugar, divided into 2
½ cup margarine
3 large eggs, separated
¼ cup dark honey
1 cup dark raisins
1½ pounds other dried fruits, cut up small (apricots, figs, cherries, dates, and other fruits may be used; I do not use candied fruit as I feel it might be too sweet)
¼ cup grape juice
½ teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate)
1 tablespoon hot water

Sift together flour, allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ground cloves three times. Beat ½ cup sugar and margarine together, making sure it is creamy. Beat egg yolks with other ½ cup sugar and add honey. Mix egg yolk mixture with sugar and margarine mixture. Lightly beat the egg whites and fold in. Slowly add 1¾ cups of flour-spice mix until well combined. Toss the dried fruits in remaining flour-spice mix, and add to the batter. Add grape juice. Dissolve baking soda in hot water and add to mixture. Grease a large (9 x 11-inch), deep, glass baking dish (like a lasagna dish) and line bottom with greased parchment paper. Put mixture into the dish and bake at 300°F for 1¾ hours. Check often for doneness. Remove from oven and drizzle dark honey over the top with a little bit of liqueur if desired. 🍷



Sharing Sephardi Heritage Through FOOD

BY RIFKA COOK · NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Thinking about food usually connotes a dream or wish fulfillment — a satisfaction of our stomach's hunger and need to sustain life. However the food itself goes beyond more than just a physical meaning. It refers to identity; it brings us childhood or special memories, sometimes happy and not so happy. Thus the word food is surrounded with select words, among them identity and tradition, with powerful symbols of social and cultural meanings. Therefore food can be understood as an expression of singularity, of subjectivity and solidarity.

As a language teacher, I love to bring culture to class. I am convinced that when I teach a language, I introduce my students to a world that perhaps is unknown to them. Teaching languages goes farther than just a list of vocabulary and several rules. Learning a language is to open a window to a new world! For example, it can afford a glimpse into the traditions and cultures surrounding our kitchen and dining tables.

I love to cook and invite students into my home for lunch or dinner. I like to spoil them. We chat, share experiences related to classes, roommates, movies or anything related to their life "away from home." Sometimes I am surprised to hear them saying, "Rifka, this is the first time since I have left home that I have eaten a home-made meal!"

When my students make such candid and avowedly joyous statements, I discern that, although they are happily enjoying the newfound freedoms of college life and exploring their independence from their families, deep-down they do miss all the nurturing and intimacy they experienced in their own homes. Thus by inviting them and preparing meals for them, I long to lift their spirits with some of that home-cooked comfort.

In the light of these ideas, I give lectures and invite students not only to share a



A simple Shabbat table

single dinner or lunch with me, but also to learn how to prepare Sephardi dishes, and tell them the story behind each one of the dishes. As I wrote before, "food is identity." By preparing different Sephardi recipes, I show the students how a "simple dish" can tell us the "hidden secret" each one of the dishes contains, and what it meant to prepare each of these foods in 1492.



Rifka Cook

Born and raised in Venezuela, Rifka completed her both undergraduate education in Israel (1974) and in Caracas (1980). Holds the equivalent of an ABD (here in the USA) in Linguistics. During Winter and Spring 2010 she attended three courses concerning the Sephardic language at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. She taught at a religious school in Caracas and at the Universidad de Oriente in Nueva Esparta, Venezuela for more than two decades. Currently she teaches first- and second-year Spanish at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA. Her research interests include: the Judeo-Español language and literature, Sephardi culture, Crypto-Jews cuisine; teaching with technology and learning styles. In addition, Rifka is a faculty fellow at Shepard Residence College (2009-present) and a Faculty in Residence at Allison Hall (2017-present).



It is hard to grasp the fact that the preparation of a food dish could result in a death penalty, but it really happened during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. We can learn about this in a passage from *Trees Cry for Rain* written by Dr. Jeri Fink:

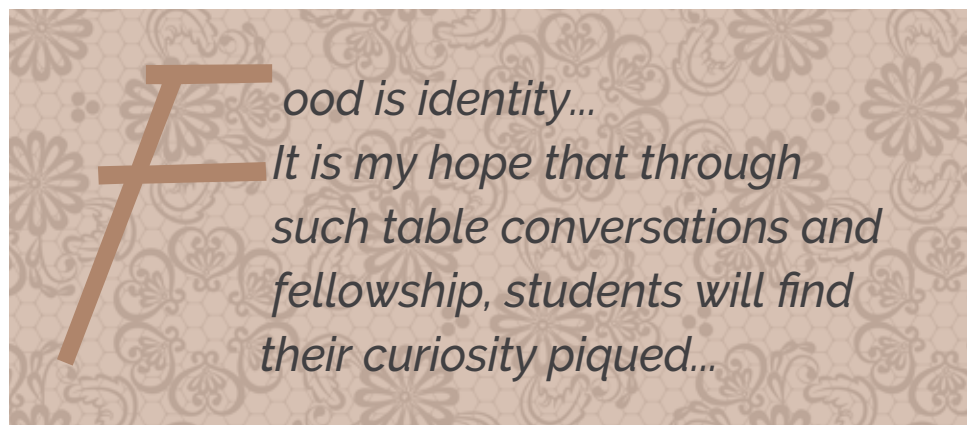
“It’s 1492, and the Holy Office of the Inquisition is hungry for *converso* Jew blood. Sighing, I examine my big black cooking pot. The beef will make a delicious stew, cooking for twelve hours over the fire... Everything I’ve done to prepare the meat can cost me my life. I smile at yet another secret – my Jewish feast.”

After reading this, I asked myself two questions: What is the meal/dish to which the character in this book is referring? What is this “Jewish feast?” For the first question, the answer was *Adafina/Jamin/Trasnocado*; and for the second, Shabbat.

Usually students come for Shabbat meals, and also for this event, I enjoy serving Sephardi dishes since most of the students are Ashkenazim and not familiar with our cuisine. When, for example,

on Friday night I serve a dish made of eggplant or a garbanzo bean salad, and ask them if they like it, they all answer together in the affirmative! I receive the same response when I serve the *jamin con huevos jaminados* for Shabbat lunch. When I ask what they like about the dishes, it is often the way that the flavor is very distinctive; that it does not taste like a “meal from a can.” Then I tell them that the preparation for eating this kind of dish or any could once result in a death penalty for the person who prepared or ate it. Of course, their faces show shocked surprise. To continue the conversation, I ask them what ingredients or mode of preparation could possibly result in a death penalty? They do not have an answer. So I take the opportunity to speak about the Inquisition and the suffering of the Jews during that time. I also tell them, for example, about eggplants. As author Gil Marks, (*Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*) wrote, “During the Spanish Inquisition, a sign of ‘eating Jewish’ was a preference for eggplants. The Jews popularized this vegetable wherever they went, although in some places of Europe it was considered poisonous and utilized only as a garden ornament.”

It is my hope that through such table conversations and fellowship, students will find their curiosity piqued to investigate more deeply matters of food preparation — as well as the symbolism and consequences in certain specific instances — and the “hidden secrets” of some dishes. Likewise, I believe it would benefit students greatly to conduct their own research into these darker periods of Jewish history. For them, and all of us, it can help to heal, somehow, this darkness through the light of their own understanding and love. 🕯



JAMIN CON HUEVOS JAMINADOS

INGREDIENTS

- 3-5 big potatoes washed, and cut in medium pieces
- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 can red beans, rinsed and drained
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon *HAWAJ* (traditional spice mix from Yemen)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 3 cups of water
- 4-6 pitted prunes
- 5-6 uncooked eggs, leave in shell (depends on how many guests)

Simple —
and simply
delicious!
Perfect for
Shabbat
lunch.



Jamin con huevos jaminados

PREPARATION

Three or four hours before Shabbat starts, mix potatoes, chickpeas, red beans, garlic, cumin, *HAWAJ*, and olive oil in a slowcooker and cover. Let sit two to three hours. Then add water, prunes, and whole eggs. Set slowcooker to low and cook overnight.



Thanks for joining us in DENVER!

Words cannot express my gratitude to everyone who made this conference what it was: foremost, to Debbie Wohl-Isard, Seth Ward, and to the many volunteers, especially Donna Medina and Patty Streltzer, Cindy Seton Rogers, Bonnie Oderberg, Linda Katchen, Beverly Chico, Diane Gilboa, and even our bookkeeper Sara McQuaid and our web master Clayton Sellers. Thanks to Rabbi Merrill for stepping in as needed as well.

Hats off to the many wonderfully prepared presenters, the musicians: pianist/composer David Wohl and his ensemble, narrator Debra Gallegos, Hal Aqua and the Lost Tribe, and especially Lorenzo Trujillo and his vivacious musicians. We must not leave out Grisha Nisnevitch, the talented Russian flamenco guitarist either, nor the elegant Honorary Consul from Spain, Señor José Luis Parrado. A thousand thanks to the talented Ami Dayan, actor and playwright, who brought "Conviction" alive in a stunning performance that left one-and-all deeply moved. Everyone did their part, flawlessly.

The intimate DoubleTree Hilton Hotel - Greenwood Village was the perfect size for our group and went above and beyond in creating a theater-in-the-round for us, mounting our AV needs, and catering to our every whim. From the minute things got underway, the flow of events was almost seamless. Our first ever silent auction raised almost \$1,000 for our Baca-Duran fund, created to help people attend conferences.

Here's to next year's regional conference, and our 30th anniversary in 2021 in Dallas!

Rather than go on about how much I loved it, see for yourself on the next page, and below, read what some participants had to say!

— **Corinne Brown, Conference Chair**



28TH ANNUAL SCJS CONFERENCE

Place & Identity

REDEFINING
THE CRYPTO-JUDAIC EXPERIENCE
IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

Quotes Heard During the Sessions and Breaks

Sara Koplik —

New Mexico Jewish Federation

"There have been over 20,000 certificates of return forwarded to our office. Sometimes I would just sit at my computer and cry over the stories I heard."

Kathleen Alcalá — Application to Spain

"Code switching — you are who you need to be depending on the context. I am foremost a Jew. Our souls contain memories of past experiences... Let us talk about things we are incapable of remembering, but can never forget."

Genie Milgrom — "Those Who Stayed"

During the expulsions, Sultan Beyazid II, ruler of the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople) from 1481 to 1512, said, "Those who say Ferdinand and Isabella were wise are fools — he gives me their national treasure, the Jews."

Maria Apodaca — "Choose Life!"

Maria's family has been in New Mexico since 1598. "I have taken on the mantle of Judaism; the right of return. I know I belong to the worldwide Sephardic community."

Dianne Layden —

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

"Stories matter. How else can we preserve history?"

Norma Libman — Road Scholars and New Mexico Crypto-Jews

"We help people reclaim something stolen from them. Two reasons why they are still keeping the secret: because they must (to protect the family) and because it's hard to say you've been misrepresenting yourself..."



MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

SCJS again recognizes the support of the organizations and individuals who went the extra mile to create our event. Whether you live in Denver or come for a visit, we invite you to support them too!

OUR WARMEST THANKS TO



ROBIN AND BENNETT
GREENSPAN FUND
at the
HOUSTON JEWISH
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



OUR GENEROUS CONFERENCE PATRONS

BONNEE ODERBERG
LORETTA AND DENNIS WORTHINGTON
LARRY MIZEL

RABBI STEPHEN LEON
GENIE MILGROM
JOAN WOHL

AND OUR DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY PARTNERS



MIZEL MUSEUM
400 So. Kearney St.
Denver, Colorado

The Mizel Museum is dedicated to fostering cross-cultural understanding, combating racism and promoting social justice. We achieve our mission through educational programming, events and exhibits that connect universal Jewish values to the larger world.



MUSEO DE LAS AMERICAS

861 Santa Fe Dr. • Denver, Colorado

Museo de las Americas is dedicated to educating our community through collecting, preserving, interpreting and exhibiting the diverse arts and cultures of the Americas from ancient to contemporary, through innovative exhibitions and programs.



GAON WEB - BOOKS AND FILM
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Ron Hart and Gloria Abella Ballen

Publishers of quality books and documentary film about Sephardim, Jews, women's voices, life in the Southwest and more. A 501(c)(3).



MY HERITAGE

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MyHeritage provides an easy way to find new family members, discover ethnic origins, and to treasure family stories, past and present, for generations to come.



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Preserving Jewish life and values in the South Central Colorado Rockies for over a century



THEATRE OR - DIANE GILBOA

Denver, Colorado • TheatreOr.com

Theatre Or (the Hebrew word for light) is a non-profit professional theater company producing plays of Jewish interest and universal appeal, with a specialty in Israeli plays.

Cindy Seton Rogers —
Jews in the Diaspora - Tudor, England-
“The first Jew to serve in public office occurred in Ireland in 1580!”

David Gitlitz —
Jewish Silver Mining Dynasty in New Spain
“Meet the earliest Jewish family to settle New Spain, Gabriel de Castellanos. Transmitting Jewish identity over generations is open to dissolution; if cultural transmission is broken anywhere along the way, that trait is lost.”

Rabbi Jordi Gendra-Molina
“I help the families unravel the information. Maps tell us a great amount about trade routes — forget about boundaries. Conversos influence the renaissance of human history. People follow water — those who fled in the New World mainly used the Rio Grande basin and the Camino Real.”

David Nudel
“*Penitentes* pray in Ladino, light candles for the dead, have a novena for nine days. I believe *Penitentes* were crypto-Jews.”

Lorenzo Trujillo
“I just discovered that six people in this room are all related to me!”

Schelly Talalay Dardashti
“Amsterdam was one of the first places Jews went; the oldest synagogue has 66 torahs, one dating from the 14th century. The Ets Haim library there has over 30,000 works. By 1663, 120 Sephardic families were in Hamburg, Germany! But Jewish businessmen had aliases to stay protected.” 🕯





Blanca Carrasco and Marcia Fine



Clockwise from bottom left, Blanca Carrasco, Maria Apodaca, Rosa Marina Siegel, and Schelly Talalay Dardashti



Consul José Luis Parrado and Guitarist Grisha Nisnevitch



Genie Milgrom and Consul Parrado



President Debbie Wohl-Isard, Counsel Parrado, Guitarist Nisnevitch, and Corinne Brown



Linda Katchen and Pres. Debbie



David Gitlitz - honored as first Stanley M. Hordes Distinguished Scholar Lecture



David Wohl and Wendy Davis



Pres. Debbie, Gail Guitterez, Rachel Bortnick, and Kathleen Alcalá



Catherine Flinchum, Stacy LeSartre, David Wohl, Debra Gallegos, Lorenzo Trujillo, and Pres. Debbie



Yvonne Montoya and her 10-year-old son — SCJS fans!



David Acuna, Michael Atlas-Acuna, and Pres. Debbie



Rabbi Dr. Jordi Gendra-Molina, Sara Koplick, Schelly Talalay Dardashti, Genie Milgrom, Seth Ward, and Kathleen Alcalá



Joe Lovett and Pres. Debbie



Cynthia Seton-Rogers, Pres. Debbie, Maria Apodaca, and Corinne Brown



Ellen Premack, Consul Parrado, and Lorenzo Trujillo



Pres. Debbie and volunteer Patti Jo Streltzer



CONFERENCE • DENVER



Ami Dayan presents
"CONVICTION"



Guitarist Grisha Nisnevitch



David Wohl and Debra Gallegos



Hal Aqua...



...and The Lost Tribe



Dancing to the klezmer beat



Lorenzo Trujillo and his band



Carla Sciaky



Dolores Sloan, Rachel Bortnick, and Rosa Marina Siegel



Ramanah Meyers



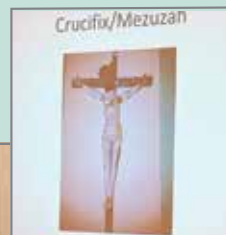
Day One — A full house!



Jeff Wheelwright
Keynote Speaker

2020 Conference
details coming soon.
www.cryptojews.com

Slide from
David Nudel's
lecture



Rebecca Wartell,
Rabbi Merrill Shapiro, and
Abraham Gross (seated)



Andree Aelion Brooks, Beth Lurie, and Yda Schreuder



David Nudel at podium,
Kimberly Sanchez Cawthorne
and Neil Manel Frau-Cortez



Souls in the Garden Poems about Jewish Spain

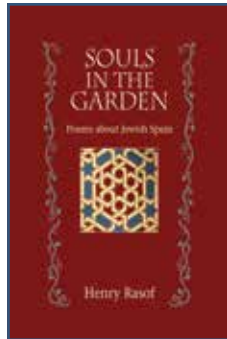
By Henry Rasof
Temescal Canyon Press, Colorado, 2019

Some of you may have met the poet and writer Henry Rasof last summer, sitting among the author tables at the Denver SCIS conference.

Polite and unassuming, Rasof, like Superman's Clark Kent, assumes a quiet public persona. But beneath that benign exterior lies a raging soul on fire; a man who has stepped through the portals of time into Medieval Jewish Spain and dares walk the streets and think the thoughts of sages, rabbis and mystics, men on the edge of losing everything during an era when Spanish Jewry was imperiled. The encounters include persons who are Christian and Muslim as well, a microcosm of the culture.

Souls In the Garden is a compilation of that journey, a time-travelers' glimpse into another era, haunted by the fires of the Spanish Inquisition. Concurrently, it peers into the very soul of man. This reviewer was unprepared for the subtlety of language, richness of emotion, details of setting, and the unique structure of many of the poems, ranging in length from a single page to several.

This book is in some ways a poetic travelogue enriched by conversations with these luminaries of the Jewish medieval world, most told in the first person, as if we are eavesdropping on their innermost thoughts. Though the subjects are long-gone, it's as if they are still expressing themselves with a sense of nostalgia, bitterness, wistfulness, or desperation. Some aspire for love, others long for a homeland lost.



Inspired by a trip through Spain, Rasof identifies these voices as the "souls in the garden," an image taken from the ancient *ZOHAR, the Book of Splendor*, the most important book of Jewish mysticism.

See page 26 for some of Rasof's poetry and details about this unassuming author.

— Corinne Brown



Recipes of My 15 Grandmothers Unique Recipes and Stories from the Times of the Crypto-Jews during the Spanish Inquisition

By Genie Milgrom
Gefen Publishing House, Israel, 2019

Personally, I have always loved reading cookbooks. They are windows into a place and time and how we live our lives. So when I heard that Genie Milgrom was putting together a cookbook comprised of old recipes written down by her many grandmothers and saved over time, I couldn't wait! Further, along with 50 others, I was privileged to prepare one of the recipes, a classic shortbread-type cookie for which I had to determine the oven temperature and baking time. It was a challenge. They never browned — but were delicious.

Genie's treasure trove, stashed away in her mother's kitchen drawers, was a kind of diary or history of this family's remarkable life, albeit written in Spanish and requiring translation. These random, handwritten

notes had survived many travels, as did her ancestors, from Spain to Portugal, to Cuba and finally, the United States. Special credit goes to Milgrom's great-aunt Tia Paulita who was born in Spain in the 1880s. It is thanks to her that many of the recipes were written down, collected and inherited. But these time-worn pages and notes reveal more than just recipes. They are a testament to who her many family members really were: Sephardim. Jews. An iron-clad adherence to kosher dietary laws is clearly evident throughout.

Many of us in SCIS know Genie well, a past president and a dedicated member, now on our senior advisory board. That designation barely begins to describe this passionate, dedicated historian, popular speaker, genealogist, and talented cook who shares what she loves with the people she loves.

Milgrom, who grew up Roman Catholic in Havana, Cuba and then later, in Miami, learned she has crypto-Jewish roots.

Research revealed her ancestors were Jews who practiced Judaism in secret while outwardly living as Christians to avoid being expelled, tortured or killed by the Church.

They were crypto-Jews until the late 17th century, and lived as Catholics from then on. Through a decade-long search, detailed in her first book, *My 15 Grandmothers*, Milgrom discovered beyond any doubt that she has an unbroken Jewish maternal lineage going back 22 generations to pre-Inquisition Spain and Portugal.

As explained in a recent interview in the *Jerusalem Post*, "Milgrom didn't think to question the idiosyncratic customs her mother and grandmothers practiced in the kitchen when she was a young girl. Recipes didn't mix milk and meat, eggs were





Top left - Handwritten recipes
Top right - Tia Paulita
Above - Genie's extended family
Right - Rosquillas



always cracked into a separate bowl and inspected for blood before use, and rice and leafy green vegetables were washed carefully and checked for insects. Curiously, some recipes called for potato or cornstarch instead of wheat flour. And perhaps most unusually, Milgrom was instructed by her Spanish-born grandmother that, when preparing a large batch of dough, one had to always pull off a small piece, wrap it in foil, and throw it in the back of the oven to burn."

The book contains no color images, only ingredients and instructions. But more important, for each recipe Genie describes the particular friend or relative she assigned the various dishes to, introducing the reader to her remarkable world, women throughout Latin America, Spain Portugal and the U.S. It's better than a food photo; you're now part of the circle.

The recipes are full of ethnic and regional individuality reflecting their origins and eras. For example, almost all the recipes reflect the agricultural environment of Feroselle, Milgrom's village of origin in western Spain long, long ago, a place that sits close to the border with Portugal and is not far from the cities of Zamora and

Salamanca. Almonds, olive oil, garlic and anis (liquor), all typical of the region, appear as ingredients throughout the cookbook. The collection includes recipes for chicken, meat, fish, many side dishes and especially, desserts, even beverages as well. All recipes are kosher and listed as either meat or dairy or kosher for Passover.

On page 15, we feature two very special recipes from Genie's book for your pleasure; we encourage you to try them. Then add this book

to your own library or kitchen shelf for more. At the time of this writing, the book was #36 in "All Jewish Cookbooks" and in the top 100 for other Jewish media. Well deserved.

— Corinne Brown



At the Narrow Waist of the World

By Marlena Maduro Baraf
SheWrites Press, 2019

Imagine you are invited to leaf through an acquaintance's family picture album. With a pleasant look on your face for politeness' sake, you take up the album as

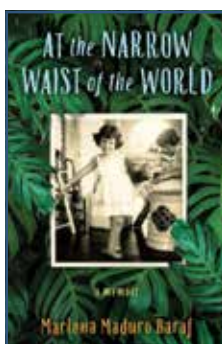
she narrates who is in what picture, what they were doing, and what became of them. You nod, surreptitiously glancing to see how many pages are left. Now imagine that you look up and realize the

day is gone, the sun is setting, and you're holding your breath as the last pages are turned, unwilling to let go of the magical experience you've just lived, deep in Panama, with someone whose insights are painted in light, airy prose across pages of verbal pictures.

Marlena Baraf was born in Panama, endless generations of Jewish Sephardic immigration in her blood. She's Panamanian, the way we are American, eight generations back, but still, and always, a Jew. Her story isn't one of an outsider, because she isn't one, but of a Jewish Panamanian, or a Panamanian Jew (*no es lo mismo, ¿verdad?*). Her mother suffered from anxiety, depression and that enervated condition of an intelligent woman with no real outlet for her brilliance. Her father, patient and loving, died far too young, at 42 of a heart attack. She was shuffled from relative to relative, but that doesn't feel tragic because the family, intermarried over the generations, is so intricately bound together that one household melts into another in the tropical heat.

Panama is the center of the universe. It links the two continents, it holds them together even when the Canal cuts through the tenuous link, and the Canal Zone is an America of lawns and American military crispness against the jungle of plant life and human warmth on either side. Until she's sent to the U.S. for boarding school and college, Marlena accepts her life with a gentle acquiescence and razor-sharp observation.

Marlena Baraf is the master of the list sentence, a form of writing that allows the reader to almost sing with the poetry of the words. The contents of her aunties' curio cabinet: "Cowboy boots, watermelons, bananas, guavas, pineapples, chocolates with a cherry in a box, boy with marching drum, sailboats, airplanes, helicopter, horse, birds, snakes, dogs, cats, frog, donkey, kite, sling, beach ball, baseball, bat." Wow. >>>



So many of our members experienced similar divergence from society's norms, and it makes that little, lasting impact that defines us.

For members of SCIS, the most amazing part of the book may go well beyond the pleasures of a good read. I startled as I read, "Though we were Jewish, we had a Christmas tree at the front window. But we didn't have a crèche like my friends did. My family traced our ancestors to Spain and Portugal, to Jews who fled..." I too had a tree and no crèche. So many of our members experienced similar divergence from society's norms, and it makes that little, lasting impact that defines us. She and her sister "succumb." They sneak pink rosary beads into the house. "I want to convert," she tells the school nun when she's eight. "*Niña, espera.* You have a fine tradition in your *judaismo*." "*Mataste a Jesús!*" a classmate says. All the *tíos* come to break the fast, even the ones who married Catholic women, at the end of Yom Kippur. Black coffee with cinnamon, topped with zabaglione, ham but not pork, shrimp because Panama is shrimp country.

For many of us, that is our life. And while we don't live at the narrow waist of the world, she has told us our own story too.

— Claudia Hagadus Long

Claudia Hagadus Long is the author of *Josefina's Sin*, *The Duel for Consuelo*, *Chains of Silver*, and coming in November 2019, *Nine Tenths of the Law*. She currently serves as the secretary of SCJS.



Living in Silverado Secret Jews in the Silver Mining Times of Colonial Mexico

By David M. Gitlitz
University of New Mexico Press, 2019

HISTORY THAT
READS LIKE
A NOVEL

As a writer
of historical
fiction,

I research the history of my setting meticulously. Months of preparation go into the creation of my fictional world, before I even populate it with my characters. And once my characters are born, I carefully, obsessively keep them in their time, while adding parents, grandparents, partners, lovers, children, homes, crises, and endings, all in keeping with the historical facts of their era. Reading David Gitlitz's *Living in Silverado* is like being immersed in a wonderful historical novel, filled with adventure, love, infidelity, pain and death. But the author is writing history. He's not inventing anything other than an immersive way of telling the world about the secret Jews who lived in Colonial Mexico in 1500s.

The book centers on Tomás de Fonseca, or Old Tomás, Tomás de Fonseca



Castellanos, or Young Tomás, Jorge de Almeida, Antonio Díaz de Cáceres, and Hector de Fonseca. In addition, an assorted cast of characters that include Manuel de Lucena, Clara Enriquez, Manuel Gil de la Guarda, the Carvajal family, including their beautiful daughters, and others, fill out the world of Judaizers, secret and otherwise. If the list seems long, it's because the author includes extensive details of family trees, progenitors, inheritors, legitimate and illegitimate children, spouses and lovers. If anything, the assortment of names is hard to keep track of, compounded, as the author points out, by the fact that it was not unusual for children to have different surnames even when they had the same father. The inclusion of family trees is helpful, but I constantly found myself referring to Appendix I, Origins and Arrivals, which could have been renamed Cast of Characters, to keep people straight.

When there is a limited amount of information available, it is not surprising that historians include just about every detail they can unearth on their subject, and this book is no exception. Sidebars on cacao, cochineal, the origin of a river or a prison's name, enlarge the scope of the book, giving a fuller look at the lives of the protagonists. Professor Gitlitz points out that Judaizing was not the only thing that the crypto-Jews did. They also worked, married, reproduced, bought and sold property and of course, mined silver. But the tension between Christianity and their historic faith and origins informed it all. "[T]he dissonance forced them to agonize over making a decision — where to live, whom to partner with, how to educate their children — and later to regret whichever path they'd chosen."

As we follow the characters on that regrettable path, we learn from the meticulous records kept by the Inquisition what they ate, who their lovers were, what their particular foibles were. We even learn of the hemorrhoids that plagued one of the unfortunate prisoners. One quibble



with the book is that from this mountain of detail Gitlitz extrapolates conversations and views with “no doubt” or “perhaps” or “undoubtedly meant” when the simple quote from the records would have been sufficient. But it’s understandable, when the author is so deeply immersed in his subjects’ lives, that he can almost hear them talk, and longs to share that with his readers.

The portions on mining were fascinating. I will admit to a pre-programmed interest in the subject, having researched it deeply for *Chains of Silver*, but with *Living in Silverado* all the mystique is stripped away and only the harsh, gritty reality is left. With the realization that mercury could dissolve ore from its binding to rock, Spain’s dominance in the silver trade was virtually assured: it was the source of the largest resource for mercury in the world. The discovery of silver in Colonial Mexico

served as a path for those dreaming of riches, and a living replete with risk and debt. As Old Tomás struggles with his mines, his lawsuits, the up-stream water, the downstream demands, the *tortas*, the patio, all the mining risks and woes become real.

Although most of the basic facts in the crypto-Jewish story are familiar to *HaLapid* readers, *Living in Silverado* is a brilliant

resource for those who want to immerse themselves in the real details of daily life. Readers will come away having lived a half century in Colonial Mexico, fearing, outwitting and ultimately succumbing to the Inquisition while growing their passionate families and pulling the tenacious, powerful silver from the earth.

— Claudia Hagadus Long 

Gitlitz... is so deeply immersed in his subjects’ lives, that he can almost hear them talk, and longs to share that with his readers.

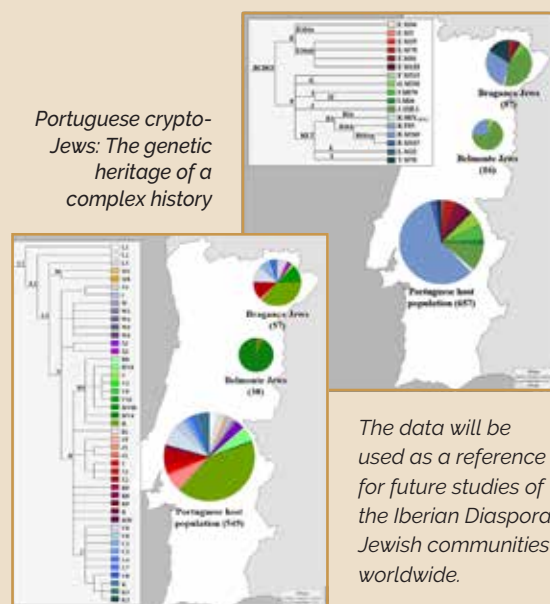
FROM SEPHARDIC AND PORTUGUESE CENTRAL NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2019

Genetics Project on Iberian Sephardic Jews Seeks Next Stage of Funding

Post-doctoral researcher Ines Nogueiro has been conducting extensive research on the genetics of Iberian Sephardic Jews at the University of Porto in Portugal: www.researchgate.net/profile/Ines_Nogueiro/research. In the past year, she has conducted the first stage of a new project together with Professor Karl Skorecki at Bar-Ilan University in Safed. The goal as she explains it: “To use a genome-wide approach to

infer the demographic history of the Iberian Jewish population. There is yet to be defined accurately, an Iberian Jewish reference population, able to represent what the original Jewish communities might have been before the Decrees of Expulsion. The data will be used as a reference for future studies of the Iberian Diaspora Jewish communities worldwide.” To learn more and/or inquire as to how one might assist, please write to inogueiro@ipatimup.pt.

Portuguese crypto-Jews: The genetic heritage of a complex history



The data will be used as a reference for future studies of the Iberian Diaspora Jewish communities worldwide.





Henry Rasof

has been writing poetry since 1964, and publishing and giving readings since 1968. He has degrees in music, creative writing and Jewish studies. He worked in book publishing for 30 years, has edited literary magazines

and a chapbook series, and has taught writing courses and workshops. Although he has written many "traditional" poems, it is the world of experimentation, taking many forms, that has always been his main interest.

Print publications include magazines such as *Partisan Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Bits*, *Black Box*, *Midstream*,

Jewish Currents, and *Poetica*; anthologies such as *Assembling and Text-Sound Texts*; and electronic publications such as *X-Peri*, *Numinous*, *In Stereo*, and the *Boulder Jewish News*. Rasof also has published four books of poems and prose poems: *The House* (2009); *Chance Music: Prose Poems 1974 to 1982* (2012); *Here I Seek You: Jewish Poems for Shabbat, Holy Days, and Everyday* (2016); and *Souls in the Garden: Poems About Jewish Spain* (2019), reviewed earlier in this issue of *HaLapid*. His web site www.MedievalHebrewPoetry.org includes well-known poets' English translations of medieval Hebrew poems, articles and original essays, a bibliography, photographs, and other information.

Henry Rasof lives in Colorado and enjoys travel, especially to exotic places. He has been to India three times and Japan twice, in addition to Latin America, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Israel.

Lament of the Jews of Jérez

Jews in the flames
Gypsies in the hills

Lovers on their backs
Flotsam in the river

Plazas full of spectators
Bitter orange in the scent—

Jews on the racks
Moors on the run

Lovers out of love
Rivers of death

Grapes on the vine
Sherry in the casks

Lovers in the river
Fires in their loins

One last prayer
Murmured to God

Jews in the plazas
Burning in the flames

Gypsies in the hills
Rotting in the chalk

— H. Rasof

Lament of the Jews of Pamplona

*God planted a garden in Eden . . .
created humans
then sent them away*

once we were closer than man and wife
now i run for my life
like the bulls in the streets during holy week
the sun an obscured red disk

in the meandering maze of alleyways in the old quarter
my poor mother struggles to find her way
her clothes in tatters
a strange smell floating over

the city our family lived in
a thousand years from which
we were then banished
till seas and mountains swallowed us

into final disappearance
our descendants sipping sherry
kill their poets then argue whether to exhumate them
meanwhile we continue to wander

— H. Rasof



Postamble

*And the Lord will create over the whole habitation ...
and over her assemblies
a cloud and smoke by day
and the shining of a flaming fire by night ... —Isaiah 4:5*

1

i am camped
near taos, new mexico

under a comma-shaped moon
like the hebrew letter yod

testing the air
for remnants

of campfires long ago
listening for the sounds of hooves

on the hard, bitter earth
hoping for a view through the trees

of dark clouds pushed
this way over five hundred years ago

and for what to pick up traces
of Jewish blood that once flowed this way

in the veins of a desperado army
first from Spain then Mexico

who hid in the hills
mixing with the *penitentes*

piercing their wrists
or bearing an iron cross

today they show up
at city council meetings

display their certificates
from the Spanish government

pardoning them
for past wrongs

some sell *challah* bread at the saturday market
others just keep quiet and eat pork

2

i am in taos
dreaming under a pinyon pine

taking in the scent
of the pine needles

tasting a few molecules
of a strange, smoky smell

from a bonfire
in a public square

the raging flames fed
by satanic spaniards

the faces of their apoplectic clergy
distorted by an ancient anger

turn them in
they cry

turn them out
across the border

back to spain
where machines await

*toca strappado
porto garrote*

hide now
before it's too late

no one
is safe

your former friends
laden with grudges

from the beginning of time
are waiting to take you away

— H. Rasof

Segoviana: A Souvenir of Segovia

From the moment you evicted us
From our white homes in the Segovian hills
I knew I would never love again.

Strange rites consumed us.
Strange men read the Hebrew letters on our foreheads.
A new moon struggled into the heavens.

Only the faint lingering scent of orange blossoms
Remains in the air, undisturbed
By the history of intervening years.

— H. Rasof

Fado for Zaragoza

It's autumn in Zaragoza
Leaves are turning and ready to fall
Over everything hangs a pall
There are no more poets

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

I wander your dark morning streets
Listening for deep-song music
But all I hear are excuses
For poetry from people feigning sleep

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

Students are up all night
But what do they produce?
Wrapped in rhymes that seduce
Only words that are slight

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

The old Jewish market is gone
All traces hidden in the winding alleys
The old Jewish poets had to flee
Before their heartsongs shattered, then dispersed

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

I mourn for them, for their thousands of verses
Scattered throughout this sad, sad land
Lost to a people whose hatred had grown out of hand
Whipped to a frenzy by ungodly priests in ungodly churches

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

Do not feel sorry this country fell into ruin
Or mourn the myth of a spring that could have been eternal
The torture was truly infernal
The Spaniards brought it upon themselves later if not sooner

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

Still I long for the love that could have been
For poems and songs that could have sounded
Like bright bells forged in a supernal foundry
Enchantment in place of sin

*I can't hold back the tears . . .
But singing dispels the grief*

Go my fado
Fateful song of loss
And longing into
The sad sad night.

— H. Rasof





Steve Lissner

Raised in Chicago, Steve Lissner graduated with honors with a BA in history from the University of Illinois. A master's degree in Jewish studies followed from Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

He spent 30 years in the recycling business in Illinois, and after leaving the business world, led two different non-profits, finally turning to education. While working as a teacher of civics, American history, world history, and technology, Steve discovered he relished working with children, developing a love of learning.

He enjoys reading, listening to music, hiking, biking, and writing poetry and prose.

His love of poetry began in high school, thanks to an English literature teacher who instilled an appreciation for poetry from many ages. By 2006, Lissner began to write in earnest and has continued to do so with purpose.

Many years ago while listening to his cantor's daughter chant *Kol Nidre* during a Yom Kippur service, Steve experienced an intense vision of our Sephardic brothers and sisters so sadly and forlornly trudging along Spanish roads in 1492 on their way to their exodus from their beloved land.

"I saw and felt their pain and agony," he says. Several years passed before he set his vision and their suffering to words. "Some overwhelmingly powerful feeling impelled me to write 'All Vows,'" Steve continues. "Now, I humbly delight in letting others share my words."

All Vows

A haunting, mournful, melodic plea
transports me to my land,
once enchanting, beautiful, sweet

Gentle land of sweet wines
grand vistas,
florid poetry,
intoxicating scents
once verdant, lavender scented, honey soothing
ripped from my people,
my nation in a now hostile landscape.

Sobbing
brothers and sisters of Sefarad
warm homes, tight-knit communities,
scholars, sages, tradesmen, merchants,
doctors, farmers, vintners.

I heard their plaintive wails,
sorrowful moans,
anguished cries of despair.

From their deep, raw wounds
I bled the hot spirit of my soul.
I trembled as an Autumn leaf
from their horror.

I hugged them, cried with them.
they wandered
blank stares, dark empty eyes,
parched lips, desert dry mouths
stunned by events
dark, bloody,
evil, sadistic.

I felt the heat
from burning buildings.
I smelled the carnage, charred flesh
the rot and stench.

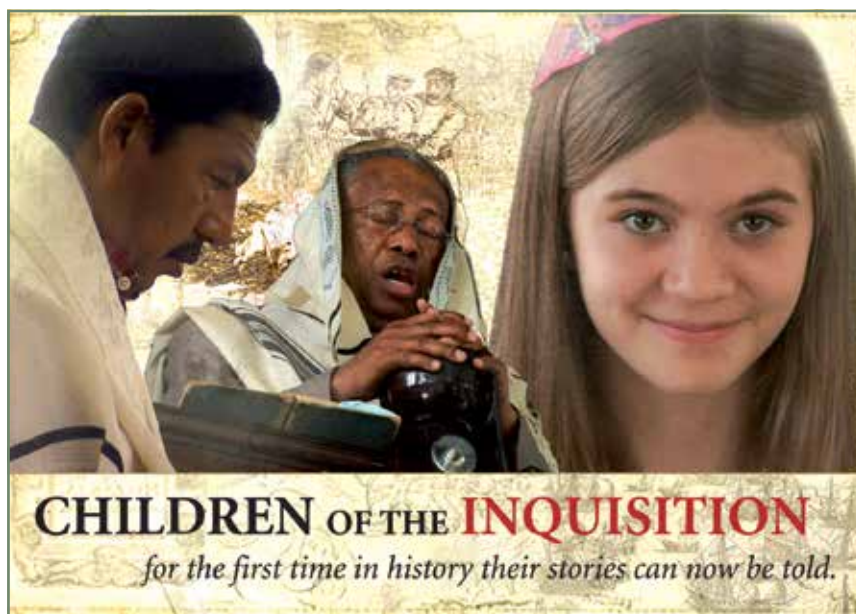
I heard plaintive cries,
mournful wails
praises of God.

I suffered with them
felt their pain, sorrow,
walked with them.
I witnessed their faith.
All Vows.

— S.M. Lissner



FILM CONTINUES TO OPEN EYES AND HEARTS



BY JOE LOVETT • DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Children of the Inquisition had its Spanish premier on October 23 at the Casa Sepharad in Madrid! It has already shown a number of times in the US with more screenings in the offing (see sidebar). Our thanks to all cast, crew and supporters — your help was invaluable in making this film come to fruition!

At this time of unprecedented divisiveness it is heartening to see how *Children of the Inquisition* encourages people to see their commonalities rather than their differences. Every audience so far has been moved by this unique re-examination of history and identity. Over and over we hear, “I can’t believe I have never known this history before.”

We want to reach far and wide to share this exciting information which gives perspective to people’s lives today. If you can refer the film to academic departments, conferences, houses of worship, community centers, libraries and

film festivals, we’d very much appreciate your efforts.

Since our premier at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, screenings have included Congregation BMH-BJ in Denver; the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies in Denver; Congregation B’nai Jeshurun in NYC; the Rhode Island International Film Festival (Hearts, Minds and Souls award!); the Hampton Synagogue Film Festival, the Grail Moviehouse in Asheville, NC; University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Other scheduled screening include the RED network in Spain; Congregation Or Zarua and Lincoln Square Synagogue, NYC; and Miami Jewish Film Festival.

Thanks to the interest in *Children of the Inquisition*, we are considering a limited theatrical release and have begun talks with various public television outlets for later broadcasts. We are also in talks about making the film (perhaps cut into modules) available for schools with a study guide.

CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION

2019

June 5 • Denver, CO
Congregation BMH-BJ, Co-sponsored by El Museo de Las Americas and the Mizel Museum.

June 29 • Denver, CO
Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies Annual Conference

August 8 • New York City, NY
Congregation B’nai Jeshurun

August 11 • Providence, RI
Rhode Island International Film Festival

August 11 • East Hampton, NY
The Hampton Synagogue Film Festival

September 22 • Asheville, NC
The Grail Moviehouse

October 2 • Salt Lake City, UT
University of Utah

October 24 • Madrid, Spain
El Centro Sefarad

November 10 • New York City
Congregation Or Zarua


December 7 • Manhattan, NY
Lincoln Square Synagogue Film Club

2020

January • Miami (tentative)
Miami Jewish Film Festival

If you can suggest foundations or individual funders who would be interested in supporting our outreach, tax deductible donations can be made at www.childrenoftheinquisition.com/donate-now/ or checks can be sent to our 501(c)(3) —

A Closer Look, Inc.
17 Vandam Street,
New York, NY 10013

Thank you once again for your participation. It only took 10 years! 



Comments heard after the June screening of *Children of the Inquisition* in Denver

"There is very little information available that is a clear, concise explanation of the migration of Jewish people from the Mideast beginning around the destruction of the Temple. Lovett's movie explains it better than any other media for the masses."

– **Bonnee Shafner Oderberg**

"Children of the Inquisition is astonishing. I learned so much, and was shocked at what I learned. And at how little I knew. You have a way of rolling out information in a way that is both deeply personal and intellectually elevated."

– **Trai Cartwright, President, Colorado Women in Film and Media**

Read more about *Children of the Inquisition* at

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-jews-expelled-from-spain-forged-a-diaspora-with-ties-to-25-of-latin-america/>



LATINO JEWISH PRINCESS

FROM WALT DISNEY TELEVISION ANIMATION NEWS @DISNEYTVANEWS

This December, the animated television series, "Elena of Avalor" will celebrate a Hanukkah-themed episode guest starring Jamie-Lynn Siglar as a visiting princess from a Latino Jewish kingdom, and next year Elena's royal coronation special. The series centers on Princess Elena Castillo Flores, a 16-year-old who saves her kingdom from an evil sorceress. For the past two seasons, the teenager has been learning to govern Avalor. The third season launched in October.

Sigler, the Jewish actress who played Meadow on "The Sopranos," will provide the voice for the new princess.



Hiddenness and Reawakening on PBS in 2020



David Wohl

The debut of David Wohl's new composition, *Hiddenness and Reawakening as Musical Drama*, as the Martin Sosin Address to Advance Scholarship in the Crypto-Judaic Arts at the 2019 Denver conference, was filmed by Rocky Mountain PBS and will air on "Arts District" in early 2020!

The performance engaged the talents of four collaborating musicians. Lorenzo Trujillo, a 14th-generation descendant from New Mexico and a noted performer in his own right; excerpts from the poetry of Miriam Herrera, a *converso* descendant from Texas; Stacy LeSartre on violin, Catherine Flinchum on flute, and Daniel Masters on guitar.

An established and award-winning composer and lyricist, David Wohl is also a multi-faceted and highly accomplished keyboardist in popular demand. He is the composer and arranger of several original musicals and has composed a wide variety of music for television, multimedia, and concert hall.

Watch your email for details in *La Granada*. You won't want to miss this broadcast! 🎭



Erensya in Seattle

Erensya is a biannual summit organized by the Centro Sefarad-Israel (Madrid) and the government of Spain. The 2019 event in Seattle was the first time the group has met in North America. Maria Apodaca and Schelly Talalay Dardashti were invited as delegates representing the New Mexico Sephardic community. The program included updates on what many communities were offering in programs, Spanish government invitees, architectural and historical projects for Spanish localities, visiting local Sephardic synagogues and other institutions, a concert, meetings with local Seattle community members with delegates representing Mexico City, Istanbul, Argentina, the U.K, Brazil, France and other locations.

On the road

S CIS board members Schelly Talalay Dardashti and Maria Apodaca have been busy speaking at conferences and to societies.

They attended the **International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)** annual conference, July 28-August 2 in Cleveland, Ohio. Schelly presented two sessions: "Jewish Ethnicity & DNA" and "Sephardic Research: The Other Side of Jewish Genealogy." Maria introduced the film, *Challah Rising in the Desert*, which focuses on the Jews of New Mexico.

HOGAR (Hispanic Genealogical and Historical Conference) held its 40th annual event October 3-6 in Dallas, Texas. Schelly presented a well-attended session on "Jewish Ethnicity & DNA," and Maria organized a table in the exhibitors' room shared by the SCIS and Casa Sefarad NM. Many attendees stopped by to take various materials, look at previous *Halapad* issues, sign up for the *La Granada* e-newsletter, check for their names in our reference books, and collect flyers for upcoming events. The team was busy answering many questions concerning unusual family practices; it was quite an emotional experience for both the attendees and for Maria and Schelly. There were two other presenters on Jewish topics and Schelly was interviewed by podcaster David Guajardo Gonzalez. www.buzzsprout.com/84561/1875950-schelly-talay-dardashti-at-the-40th-annual-texas-hispanic-genealogical-and-historical-conference. HOGAR 2020 will be in Houston.

In Houston, October 11-13, for the **Texas State Genealogical Society's annual event**, Shelly presented two sessions on "Jewish Genealogy for Non-Jews" and "MyHeritage's Unique Technologies." Although SCIS did not have a table at this event, Schelly answered many questions about the Society.

Schelly and Maria were invited by the **Jewish Genealogical Society of San Diego** to present a double program at the Jewish Community Center in La Jolla, on November 10. Maria presented her personal journey and genealogical research, and Schelly spoke about new developments in Jewish ethnicity and DNA.

On November 17, **Casa Sefarad** and the **Jewish Genealogical Society of New Mexico** held their annual all-day Jewish DNA & Genealogy



Erensya Seattle 2019 Delegates



Erensya: Schelly (l) and Maria (r), with Don Antonio Sanchez; and...



...with Fernando Fernán Gómez, Instituto Cervantes, Warsaw



SCJS Information table at IAJGS



HOGAR 2019, Dallas: l to r: Arturo Cuellar, Hispanic genealogist; Schelly; Rabbi Juan Dejarano Gutierrez; Maria

Workshop with four speakers, including DNA expert Gil Bardige from Ohio; Todd Knowles of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City; Miguel A. Tòrriz of the New Mexico Genealogy Society's DNA Project; and Rabbi Jordi Gendra-Molina on the archives of Spain and stories from the Sephardic Citizenship Program.

This event was funded by a grant from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.



Maria and Schelly at HOGAR



Coming in 2020

March 20-22 —

The Memphis

(Tennessee) Jewish Historical Society.

Maria and Schelly to

do a double presentation.

April 30-May 5 — The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston. Maria and Schelly will present at Temple Emanuel (Newton) for the Adult Education Program, speak at a Shabbat program held at the Sephardic Synagogue, and also present at the JGSGB's meeting.

April 19 — The Annual Jewish Genetics Conference. Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque. This conference focuses on BRCA1 cancer and other genetic conditions in northern New Mexico among *converso* families. This annual event is co-produced by the JGS of New Mexico and Casa Sefarad NM, and funded by a grant from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.


April 23-28 — Resiliencia! Festival.

Planning is underway for this week-long event, co-produced by Casa Sefarad NM, Instituto Cervantes, and the National Hispanic Cultural Center.

A teaching opportunity

SCIS member Corinne Brown will teach a five-week course on the crypto-Judaic experience starting February 2020 at Denver's Academy for Life Long Learning, an adult education center. Many thanks to Dolores Sloan for her excellent syllabus prepared some years ago for the University of Colorado—Colorado Springs proposed course on crypto-Judaic studies. It proved an excellent guide in part for the condensed 10-hour class curriculum.

We're famous in Canada!

See the article at www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/the-scamper-hunt-prize-for-sephardic-jews-descendants-of-the-inquisition-spanish-citizenship. 



The Torah in the Tarot

BY STAV APPEL

The first tarot cards, originally called 'Trifoni,' possibly a play on the name for a Roman Triumph, were created in Italy in the 15th century for artistic decoration, game play and to commemorate family events. In 17th-century France, a unique visual template for tarot arose that built upon but significantly altered the images of the early Italian decks. This unique template of the French tradition is now known as the Tarot de Marseilles and is renowned for being the primary source of artistic inspiration for the famous Rider-Waite-Smith deck published in 1910.

The French writer and Freemason, Antoine Court de Gebelin, writing in 1781, was the first to speculate that the Tarot de Marseilles was a vehicle for ancient wisdom that could be revealed through careful analysis of its images. Since Gebelin, many other historians and writers have offered wildly divergent interpretations of the intended meaning of the Tarot de Marseilles.

No explanatory theory for its meaning has proven decisively convincing which may be why it endures as an object of fascination. The cards are filled with images of obvious intentionality that promise a coherent story but that ultimately leave the viewer confused about their true meaning.

By chance, three years ago I stumbled upon a copy of the Tarot de Marseilles and was immediately struck by its mystery and beauty. As I collected reproductions and spent time deeply pondering its images, I was reminded of Torah stories I knew from years of study. At first I attributed these associations to playful coincidences until, to my total shock, I recognized that the 22 trump cards contained disguised versions of the 22 letters of the Hebrew Aleph Bet. The letters hidden in the images reveal a deeper layer of Judaic content not

accessible to an uninformed viewer.

Almost nothing is known about Jean Noblet, the card maker who produced the first known example of the Tarot de Marseilles in 1650. But we do know that in 1650s—Jews were still forbidden to officially live in France by order of the mass expulsion enacted by King Charles IV in 1394.

In order to spark a deeper conversation about the hidden Judaic content of the Tarot de Marseilles, I have commissioned and published a reproduction of the 22 trump cards of the Jean Noblet Tarot, along with a comprehensive booklet detailing a revealing and insightful summary of the Judaic content I have found hidden in its coded images. I suspect this publication will be only the first step in fully fleshing out the forgotten Judaic history of the Tarot de Marseilles. Purchase the booklet and the Noblet Tarot deck, and discover more at www.torahtarot.com. 



Stav Appel

When not studying Torah, Stav Appel is an organizational design consultant for Fortune 500 companies. He has held senior leadership positions at RRD, Accenture and Pfizer.



The Magician, the first card of the Jean Noblet Tarot de Marseilles. The figure's arms are held like those of the Aleph X, the first letter of the Hebrew Aleph Bet, and the first letter in Abraham, the first patriarch to be circumcised.

"Occultists suggest that the evolution of the tarot coincides so closely with the rise of both the Kabbalah and the Inquisition that the symbolism entrenched in the tarot is really the hidden remnants of Pagan Europe struggling to survive." — www.trustedtarot.com



The 22 trump cards of an early printed Tarot de Marseilles

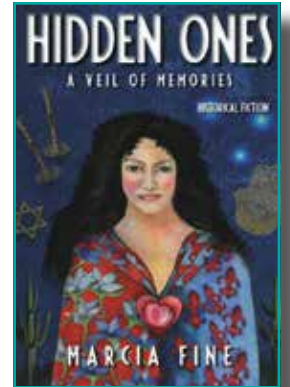


Marcia Fine Receives Literary Honor

Hidden Ones — *A Veil of Memories* by SCIS member Marcia Fine has been chosen as a finalist for the May Sarton Award. Released in 2017, the novel examines *conversos* in Mexico during the Inquisition and crossing borders. It has won first prizes in the categories of historical fiction and multicultural as well as an honorable mention from Arizona Authors. It was also a finalist for the International Chaucer Chanticleer Awards and garnered the 2018 WILLA Award for Original Softcover Novel by Women Writing the West.



Marcia Fine



The recent award, in honor of May Sarton, was chosen by a panel of academic and librarian judges. Ms. Sarton was a poet, novelist and memoirist whose works are part of American literature. She was considered a “poet’s poet” because her works addressed her independence at the beginning of the 20th century. Her themes were feminism, gender and our universal commonalities.

Award-winning author and speaker, Marcia Fine has written seven novels to date, including *The Blind Eye—A Sephardic Journey*, historical fiction chosen by the state library of Arizona for OneBookArizona2015; *Paper Children—An Immigrant’s Legacy*, a story based on a family history and personal letters that tells of a Polish immigrant who forges a life in post-Holocaust New York City and Miami, a finalist for three national prizes.

Paris Lamb, her sixth novel, deals with anti-Semitism in the 1950s. She has also written the only satirical series about Scottsdale, a winner in Women’s Fiction and Humor.

Marcia’s new novella, *Love and Death in Rhodes*, will be published in January 2020. It’s also about the Sephardic community and their history. >>>

Novelist, humorist, social observer, and historical researcher, Fine likes to do what she does best — watch and interact with people. The author has a bachelors degree from Florida State University and a masters from Arizona State University. A frequent presenter and speaker on the history of crypto-Jews, she has been a member of SCIS since 2008. 📖



Holiday services at Temple Aaron in Trinidad, Colorado

Benveniste honored

SCIS luminary Art Benveniste and noted author Claudia Hagadus Long attended the Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation luncheon in Berkeley, California. Art was a guest speaker and was honored for his lasting contributions to the knowledge of the history of Jews of the Iberian Diaspora. 📖



Art Benveniste and Claudia Hagadus Long

Temple Aaron

Beautiful Temple Aaron in Trinidad, Colorado welcomed local attendees from throughout the area to Rosh Hashana services in October. Restoration continues on this important historic treasure in Southern Colorado, home to many *anusim*.

Sincere gratitude to Rabbi Bernard Gerson, Rabbi Shimon Moch, and Rabbi Dr. Robert Lennick, executive direct of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, who led services — a special weekend.

Many enjoyed meals before Sunday evening service and after the Monday service. It was truly wonderful to celebrate together. 📖



INSPIRING VISIT TO ISRAEL ANUSIM CENTER

For many years, I have been corresponding with members of the Institute for Sefardi and Anousim Studies in Netanya, Israel. While on a recent trip to Israel for a personal vacation with my husband, I knew I would be staying in nearby Ra'ana, a city not far from the location of the Center. I made a date with professor Abraham Gross, the Institute's academic advisor, to learn more about their purpose and role in the local and world community.

I was met cordially by the entire staff: Avi Gross, Salomon Buzaglo, founder and general manager; Adina Moryosef in charge of the library and the administration, and Uri Blankfeld, coordinator, new *olim* (émigrés) to Israel from Brazil, who deals exclusively with the many Brazilian families who have settled in the area — over 300 to date. The meeting inspired me in countless ways.

According to Professor Gross, a retired history professor emeritus, the *b'nai anusim* activity was started 40 years ago by Gloria Mound, a British woman who was passionate about the *anusim*. (You might recall her memorial in a 2018 issue of *Halapid*.) She called her organization Casa Shalom and had an association with the college in Netanya and the Institute during its inception. She also had a supportive donor, the dedicated Eli Schalit Leeds, once in the ship building business and owner of the infamous ship, the *Exodus*. He believed in the return of the Jewish people to Israel. All the people.

With his help, the help of other generous donors and the college's kindness, a previously dedicated "safe room" (standard in all buildings in the event of attack) was transformed into a spacious library housing some 3,000 books and a study center, with display cabinets for an assortment of valuable artifacts.

Said Salomon, "We were inspired by Gloria. The institute started with the college, but was a short-lived partnership. It became clear we needed more independence.

continues on page 40



Avi Gross and Salomon Buzaglo chat with Corinne



Corinne holds a facsimile of Queen Isabella's prayer book, one of many rare volumes in the library



Uri Blankfeld (l), with Salomon, Avi, and Corinne



Avi displays another rare manuscript



BY CORINNE JOY BROWN

B'nai Anusim Caucus

Although the Institute was established with an academic orientation, its expressed purpose is to assist people searching their violated identity and making their return trip to Judaism.

Hurdles are numerous. The *b'nai anusim* problems concern the whole Jewish people and in spite of that, relevant public authorities are regarding the problems with a lot of hesitation and suspicion.

The first public institution to focus on the subject is the Israeli Diaspora Ministry that set up a commission on "emergent groups" sympathizing with Israel. Most of those so-called "emergent groups" are *b'nai anusim* groups that are being identified within New Mexico, and Central and South America. We open the *B'nai Anusim* Caucus of descendants at the Knesset. Efforts on those different fronts create better awareness of the phenomenon.

The first event on the subject took place in Brazil November 28-30, 2018. That encounter gathered *b'nai anusim* leaders, leading figures from the academy in Europe and South America, representatives of the Jewish media in Brazil, and above all, a representative of the Israeli Diaspora Ministry and the Institute for Sefardi and Anousim Studies from Netanya, highlighting the centrality of Israel to deal with the global interest. — **Salomon Buzaglo**

There are stars whose radiance is visible on Earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind.

— Hannah Senesh, poet, playwright, and paratrooper (17 Jul 1921-1944)

Yaakov Gladstone

One of our finest members has passed. Although I knew Yaakov Gladstone only at the end of his life, I was overwhelmed by his passion, even at the age of 95. He will be remembered by those he helped in so many ways, offering books, spreading information about *b'nai anusim*, financial support, and giving love. I repeat this letter written by him more than 16 years ago found in our SCJS archives.

— Corinne Brown, Editor

The tragic events which befell the Jews of Spain and Portugal 500 years ago were commemorated in March of 2003 in Deerfield Park, Florida using poetry, Ladino songs and conversations with scholars.

I, Yaakov Gladstone, organized this gathering, feeling there should be a day to recall these tragic events for Jews who know almost nothing about this period of Jewish history. My interest in the crypto-Jews was sparked years earlier as a student at the Canadian Jewish Teachers' Seminary by the famous Jewish anthropologist Dr. Chaim Shoskess lecturing at the Jewish Public Library in Montreal. I also was moved and inspired by the Yiddish song "Zog Marran" (Tell Me Marrano) by poet Avram Reisen. The last verse of the song asks, "Tell me, Marrano, what will happen when your seder songs are heard by your oppressors?" The reply is "If the enemy will capture me, I will die singing."



My first contact with Jews other than American and European was in a camp in Marseille where Jews from North Africa were waiting for passage to Israel. My friend Mischa Cheifetz and I had volunteered to work with the youth. Being Montrealers we were able to communicate with our newly found brothers and sisters in French. We soon learned of the historic connection between North African Jews and those who fled Spain.

The day I was longing for finally arrived. The *Negbah*, a small Israeli ship, was ready to bring the North African immigrants to Israel. Mischa and I were in charge of a large group of youth from Morocco. It was an emotionally exciting experience for us. We celebrated Purim on the ship acting out the Purim story in costume, sang Israeli songs and did some dancing. A spiritual bond developed between us and the youth during the 10-day voyage. When we arrived in Haifa, a representative from Kibbutz Naan took our children from us. We were no longer needed. I was heartbroken.

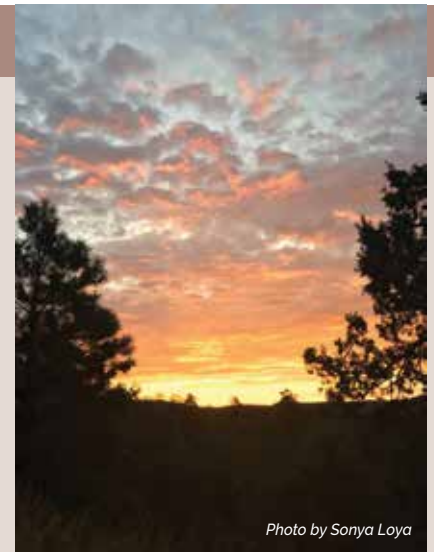


Photo by Sonya Loya

In Israel I joined *Sherut Chalutz L'Yisrael* (Pioneer Service for Israel) and was sent to Kibbutz Afikim in the Jordan Valley to be a youth leader teacher to a group of 48 youngsters from Morocco. I was with them for three and a-half years. A year later I visited Jewish communities in Morocco. It was there in a Hebrew school that I heard Ladino for the first time. Very young boys were seated in a circle on the floor of a small room chanting Hebrew passages and translating them to Ladino just as young boys in the European *cheder* (one room school) and students in the Yiddish schools in Montreal translated the Hebrew passages to Yiddish.

This was my background as a Hebrew-Yiddish teacher in Montreal and New York and a youth leader and educational therapist in Israel. I was introduced to the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies in the early 1990s by my friend Bill Fern who is a supporter of the Society and the American Sephardi Federation. He speaks Ladino, Portuguese and Spanish. The two of us visited Braganca and Belmonte in northern Portugal to meet the crypto-Jews. It was not easy. In Belmonte we met Elias Nunes who was the community leader and after much coaxing he took us to his uncle's home. On a narrow cobblestone street were small houses. In the uncle's house the Eastern wall off the living room was decorated with Israeli posters and a



collection of Hanukah lamps. The home filled quickly with Jewish neighbors wanting to meet the American Jewish visitors. What an experience!

From a recent eulogy by Bill Fern.

Note: Fern refers to Yaakov as Yankel:

One year Yankel urged that we search for descendants of secret Jews in Portugal. I expressed extreme doubt. He promised he would do the talking and searching if I would do the translating, and so we went.

Descendants of Jews forced to convert by the Inquisition 400 years earlier were still living a secret Jewish life in several remote towns in northern Portugal and in Oporto. We met them, gained their confidence, talked with them in their shops, and were even invited to their homes. Yaakov made friends with many, especially with the secret Jews of Oporto, who honored him with a special dinner. Through his influence, the Oporto group eventually migrated to Israel.

We also visited a small Jewish museum with a few artifacts. The wife of the caretaker proudly showed us the silver Magen David necklace she wore and in strong voice announced to us in Portuguese, "We are no longer afraid!" For years I had wondered why there was no date on the Jewish calendar to commemorate the terrors of the Inquisition. Now in 2003, I was living in the midst of a large Jewish cultural community in Century Village in Florida's Deerfield Park. I decided to hold such a commemoration. I decided to call it "From Sad to Glad."

We were surprised how many in the community came forward to participate. As the event moved along we counted a crowd of 180. In my opening remarks I told the assembled community we were observing the sad events of the past but

also using the event to announce the start of a campaign — The Belmonte Project — to support the Jews of northern Portugal, the *anusim* who were returning to the open practice of Judaism.

Dr. Abe Gittelson, former director of the Board of Jewish Education in Broward County, set the tone tracing the history of the crypto-Jews. Shula Robin read a poem she composed for the occasion, "My Lost Brothers and Sisters," while Sylvia Stipelman recited a poem by Shulamith Halevy, an Israeli poet. Cantor Brian Shamash and Sharon Chasan of Congregation B'nai Torah in Boca Raton sang Ladino songs. Storyteller Roslyn Perry related the tragic story of the Portuguese Jewish children forcibly converted to Christianity and sent to São Tomé, an island off the coast of Africa.

Dr. Abe Lavender, professor of sociology at Florida International University and an active member of SCIS, related the latest findings of DNA research as they apply to Jewish ethnicity. In a lighter vein, I invited the audience to take home their copies of *HaLapid* which contained Kitty Teltsch's story on the Belmonte *anusim* (Winter 2003). Volunteers passed around two giant salad bowls. I asked them to fill them up with greens — and I didn't mean lettuce. This was the kickoff of the Belmonte Project. Since renamed *Saudade Sefarad*, the project supports the *anusim* of Portugal as they learn about their ancestors and no longer have to observe their faith in secret.

The American Sephardi Federation has agreed to be *Saudade's* umbrella agency accepting contributions which enable Americans to make tax exempt gifts to the Federation, noting that they are for the Belmonte Project.

We are sending the Belmonte community prayer books which they requested in Hebrew and Portuguese for Jewish holidays, and history books for

Project Springboard

In addition, Gladstone created Project Springboard: "Building Jewish Identity & Empowerment in Jerusalem's Ethiopian Young Adult Community." Project Springboard was headquartered at the Yaacov Gladstone Leadership Development Centre for Ethiopian Jerusalemites in the Young Adults Centre in Jerusalem. The project focused exclusively on mentoring young Ethiopian immigrants along the path towards successful integration into Israeli society. The Yaacov Gladstone Ethiopian Leadership Centre is located in the Canada House community center in the heart of the city.

In August of 2003, Kulanu awarded Yaakov Gladstone a Lifetime Achievement Certificate recognizing his tireless work in the cause of Jewish Diversity. He had developed assistance programs for the Jews of Belmonte, Portugal, the Jews of Uganda and Ghana, and many others. He was the founder of Hatzaad Harishon (the First Step) in the 1960s in New York, a group that brought together black and white Jews. He led active Kulanu chapters in New York and Florida for many years. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College has an annual Yaakov Gladstone Award for Fine Teaching which "honors Yaakov Gladstone whose life exemplifies fine teaching in the fullest sense."

children and youth as well as *mezuzot* and *kipot*. We are also reaching out to the *anusim* communities of Porto and Lisbon. We also hope to send a young man from the community to Israel for rabbinical training. In addition, plans include arranging gatherings of young people from nearby communities to share Jewish educational and cultural experiences. In addition, we are



exploring arranging an English translation of David Agosto Canelo's *The Last Crypto Jews of Portugal*, originally in Portuguese which describes Belmonte's religious and secular practices including words to prayers developed over 500 years in the absence of rabbinical leadership.

• • • • •

Note: At this time Gladstone was a retired teacher of Hebrew and Yiddish who also directed a special education program for a preschool of developmentally disabled children in Harlem, New York City. His passing was commemorated in Israel by many who revered him. May we all follow in his extraordinary example. The memorial service in Jerusalem followed one in Toronto and memorial services in NYC and Portugal will follow in Spring 2020. — *Corinne Brown*

Chana Annette Pascal Cohen

On July 2, 2019, Chana Annette Cohen passed away after a three-year battle with ovarian cancer. She was a resident of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania and Boca Raton, Florida, and is survived by her husband Norman Cohen, sister Charlotte Stranzl, son Ari Cohen and daughter Tara (Sam) Goldstein, and grandchildren Basya, Benny, Lily, Naomi, Sarah Sasha, Shalev, and Ayden.

Chana, a longtime, passionate member of SCIS, always loved to share the organization with her local community. She was a supporter of all things relating to crypto-Judaic studies.

Chana's interest began in 2007, when she discovered André Aelion Brooks' *The Woman Who Defied Kings*. She subsequently took the New Mexico Road Scholar Seminar with Norma Libman and was then directed to SCIS. She attended almost every SCIS conference from that time on and in 2009 was invited to join the Board. More than once she attended the annual Philadelphia Latino festival, *Feria del Barrio*, with a table recommending DNA research as a step to finding your roots, along with SCIS information and an email sign-up sheet for those interested.

Chana made several trips to Israel on behalf of the *b'nai anusim*, including one with Rabbi Steven Leon of El Paso in what is regarded as the first official delegation to Israel on behalf of the



b'nai anusim, and later to the *b'nai anusim* Conference in Netanya at the College of Jewish Studies, and the worldwide Knesset Conference, lobbying for official government attention to the *b'nai anusim*. Chana's research brought her to St. Augustine, San Miguel de Allende, Panama, Peru, Spain, Egypt and Israel.

Chana served as a docent at Mikve Israel, the historic Spanish Portuguese synagogue within which the National Museum of American Jewish History was born. After the museum moved to its new building, she served as a museum docent for many years. Chana regaled visitors with information about crypto-Jews and pushed to include information on crypto-Jews in museum exhibits and materials.

Chana's passion for Judaism, including Judaica, Jewish art, Jewish history, and especially crypto-Jews, was admirable and selfless. She was a frequent contributor to *HaLapid* and assisted

former SCIS board member Ellen Premack in seeking cultural participation for the 2017 SCIS conference in Philadelphia. She was a member of the American Jewish Committee and was an offsite guest at the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. She also sought to raise awareness of Jewish genetic disorders and modern treatments.

A sweet, gentle soul and a loving person, she will be missed by many. Her son-in-law, Sam Goldstein, recently donated her extensive Jewish library to SCIS, an important gift to be cherished and shared for years to come.

Donations may be made in Chana's memory to:

Rabbi's Charitable Fund
Lower Merion Synagogue
123 Old Lancaster Road
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004



Photo by Sonya Loya



Risa Buckstein

Risa Buckstein, a loyal SCIS member and a past president of the L.E.A Hadassah Chapter in Denver, Colorado, lost her valiant fight of six years against ovarian cancer on August 14, 2019.

Risa was a well-known and respected educator, administrator, and mentor to many generations of Jewish youth and adults. Through her work with Community Talmud Torah (CTT) and



CAIE Israel Study Tour (IST), she shared her passion for Jewish culture, heritage and the land and people of Israel with

thousands of children and teens. She loved the Jewish institutions that she worked with. She had a special love and passion for Hadassah and its lifesaving medical research.

Risa had an amazing ability to connect with everyone she met, and she was constantly sought after for her advice and guidance. She will surely be missed by friends, family and the entire community. 🕯️

SYMPOSIUM

Israel hosts global symposium on Hispanic culture

AIH CONFERENCE, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, JULY 2019

The International Association of Hispanists (AIH) held a five-day conference in Jerusalem last summer with over 600 guests in attendance celebrating the deeply embedded Sephardi dimension of Jewish identity.



Dr. Ruth Fine of Hebrew University was elected to head AIH for the next three years. Israel's President Reuven Rivlin sent this message: "The expulsion of 1492 was the end of the Jewish Spanish Golden Age. Nevertheless, Ladino was converted into a Jewish language and a Spanish spirit was fixed in the Jewish essence forever."

Dr. Fine is a Salomon and Victoria Cohen Professor in Iberian and Latin American Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, where she acts as head of the department of Spanish and Latin-American studies.

Her fields of expertise are semiotics and literary theory, the Spanish Golden Age literature, and the literature of the *conversos*. In these areas she has published numerous articles and books, among them: *Una lectura semiótico narratológica del Quijote* (2006); *Cervantes y las religiones* (ed. with S. López Navia,



Dr. Ruth Fine

Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2008); *La Biblia en la literatura del Siglo de Oro* (ed. with I. Arellano, 2010); *Lo converso: orden imaginario y realidad en la cultura española (siglos XIV-XVII)* (ed. with M. Guillemont and Juan D. Vila, 2013); *Reescrituras bíblicas cervantinas* (2014).

Dr. Fine acts as the president of the Israeli Association of Hispanists, vice president of the AIH and of the International Association of Cervantistas, responsible for the Iberian Section of the Masterpieces Translation Program of the Ministry of Culture and member of the board of the AISO (International Association of the Golden Age). In 2013 she was awarded the *Orden del Mérito Civil* by the King of Spain for her contribution to Spanish culture. In 2016 she was appointed correspondent member of the Royal Spanish Academy.

Dr. Fine and AIH surely need to be a link among the many resources of SCIS. 🕯️



INSPIRING VISIT TO ISRAEL ANUSIM CENTER

continued from page 35

The need for full time professional leadership became apparent, and Gross, semi-retired from his job as a professor of medieval studies at Bar Ilan University, was invited to take the academic lead. In 2014 he stepped in.

In 2015 they held their first conference “Mapping the Anusim World” and began to realize the enormous interest and potential of the center. It paved the way to the international conference held in Miami, Florida in 2016, with speakers from throughout the *anusim* world.

Said Gross, “After that conference we made a move to be less academic and more field-oriented. Our goal became to work toward helping those who want to return. Our strength is that we are credible. We produce academic resources, but we also try to reinforce Jewish identity as well as expose the nature of the *anusim* dilemma.”

Added Salomon, “Our ignition point was to look at the reality; now it is to help with the evolution. Today, the state of Israel is the entity which will decide the future.”

Following the visit, I imagined that perhaps one day we might combine our resources and hold a conference together. In the meantime, their spacious home leaves this SCJS member with hopeful envy. 🏠



Medieval model ships



Ceramic plaques of the Twelve Tribes of Israel



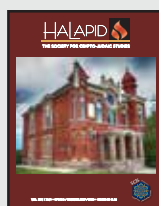
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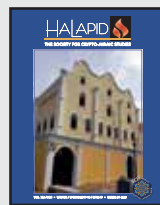
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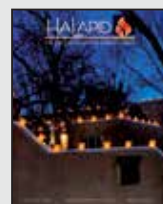
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Spring/Summer 2016



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Spring/Summer 2015



Autumn/Winter 2014



Spring/Summer 2014

Welcome
to all
our 2019
new
members!



YOU are part of a Mission!



Through your support of our studies of the history, cultures, arts and current status of crypto-Judaism in the United States and throughout the world, we continue our mission of nurturing a global organization for those researching the history of crypto-Judaic and hidden communities around the world.

Our first conference, held near Taos, New Mexico in 1991, was organized by a small, dedicated group of people who established SCIS to foster research and the exchange of information about *conversos* who settled in the outer regions of the Spanish empire. The secret observance of Sephardic customs and traditions by many descendants continue still.

Today SCIS is regarded as the primary body of scholars, artists, crypto-Jewish descendants and interested individuals investigating this phenomenon and inspiring new research directions. Although our roots are in the American Southwest, our horizons extend world-wide, with enriched conferences, exciting new media and affiliations.

Our website, www.cryptojews.com, has archival status because scholars and interested individuals may access hundreds of articles and papers from past issues of *HaLapid*. It also features stories and news of SCIS and related events.

Since 1991, we have attracted members from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Latin America, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, England, France, Italy, Israel, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Macao, Goa, Central America, the Spanish Caribbean Islands and elsewhere. Your continued membership and donations make it possible for us to continue our mission. We welcome new and renewing members. We are all active participants in this important field of study.

In addition to membership, we welcome donations to our other funds. The Randy Baca/Dennis Duran Fund provides assistance for those researching possible Sephardic ancestry but cannot afford to attend conferences. A donation to our Conference Fund ensures the participation of outstanding keynote speakers and supports special conference programming. In addition, your contribution supports our mailing and publication expenses.

With continuing support, we look forward to a long future of outreach, encouragement and discovery!

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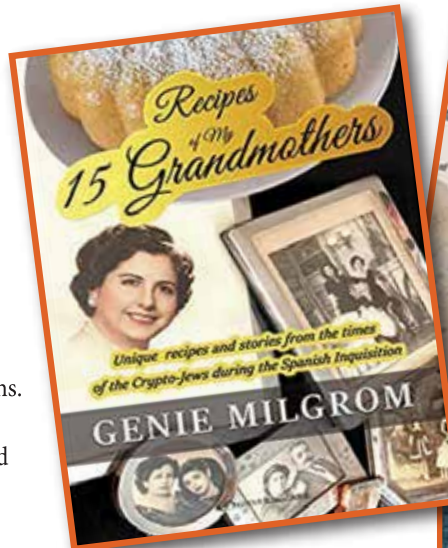
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