



**35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**“Identities and Experiences:  
Navigating the Crypto-Jewish Journey”**  
**SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES**  
**Sunday-Tuesday August 10-12, 2025**

Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel  
10500 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles CA, 90024

*All events at Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel unless otherwise indicated. Program, Abstracts and brief bios for all presenters will be available at <https://cryptojews.com/>. This Program Sketch should not be considered final; expect changes.*

**PRECONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 10**

**10:00 AM**     **Film: *A Long Journey: Hidden Jews of the Southwest* (Isaac Artenstein, 2020)**  
*Extra charge*

**1-2:45 PM**     **Genealogy Workshop**  
*Included in full registration (including presenter full registration); available at extra charge for others \$55.00*

**Genie Milgrom:** Crypto-Jewish Genealogy: A Primer and New Available Sources including an Informative Handout

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**SUNDAY AUGUST 10**

**3:00 PM      CONFERENCE OPENING**

Introductory Comments:

**Blanca Carrasco**, SCJS President

**Seth Ward**, Program Chair

**Isaac Amon**, Emcee

**3:15-5:20      PANEL 1: THE SEPHARDIC TEMPLE / THE CONVERSO DIASPORA**

Chair: **Arnold Trujillo**

**Arthur Benveniste**: The History of the Spanish Jews Who Founded Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel

**Mercedes Temboury Redondo**: Respondent

**Mercedes Temboury Redondo**: A Crypto-Jew Catholic priest in Lima in 1624: Padre Manuel Nuñez Magro de Almeyda

**Avraham Gross**: Portuguese Inquisitors in Search of "Missing" Members of the Nação

**Nancy Katz**: Hidden Voices: Oral History, Identity, and Crypto-Jewish Memory in the Borderlands

**Break**

*During the break, Arthur Benveniste will conduct a brief tour and explanation of some of the historic displays in the Sephardic Temple*

**6:30-7:80      DINNER**

6:30

Welcome and Special Presentation: **Corinne Brown**, Conference Chair

Welcome and introduction: **Irma Elisheva Diaz**, Conference Organizer

Greetings: **Rabbi Refael Cohen**, Rabbi of The Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel,

**Josh Marehbian**, Temple President

6:40

Special Guest Appearance: ***Kol Sephardic Choir***, with singers **Dena Gorilik**, **Margarita Kligerman**, and **Elizabeth Martinez**

7:00 Dinner is Served

**8:00 PM FILM AND DISCUSSION: Sanctuary**

*Between the Stone and the Flower: The Duality of the Conversos* (Genie Milgrom and Michael Milgrom, 2024)

Talkback with Genie Milgrom

**MONDAY AUGUST 11**

**8:00-9:00 PANEL 2: SPANISH CITIZENSHIP**

Chair: **Judith Krieger Macpherson**

**Drora Arussy and Genie Milgrom:** Rediscovering Roots: The Significance of the Certificate of Sephardic Heritage in Strengthening Identity and Cultural Belonging

**César David Ciriano Vela and Magda Ciriano Moreno:** Important news in Spanish Sephardic Citizenship in 2025

**9:15-10:45 PANEL 3: ECHOES OF 1492**

Chair: **Rachel Kaufman**

**Seth Ward:** “Law of Moses” or “Jewish Blood?” Perspectives from 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century popular culture and historiography.

**Naomi Leyh:** Welcoming the Bride: An Affective Reading of *Lekha Dodi* as a reparative response to the Spanish Expulsion.

**Isaac Amon:** Echoes of 1492: Migration, Salvation, & Annihilation

**11:00-12:15 THE STANLEY M. HORDES DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR LECTURE**

Moderator: **Seth Ward**

**Seth D. Kunin:** *The Song of the Sparrow*: Loggie Carrasco’s Poetic Exploration of her Crypto-Jewish Identity

**12:15-1:15 BOX LUNCH**

*Announcement of David Gitlitz Emerging Scholar Award*

**1:15-2:15 MARTIN SOSIN-PETIT ADDRESS TO ADVANCE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE CRYPTO-JUDAIC ARTS**

Moderator: **Corinne Brown**

**Peter Svarzbein:** A Minyan to a Million: The Story of the Returning Crypto-Jews of the Americas

**2:30-3:30**     **PANEL 4A: FINDING YOUR VOICE**

*Chair: César Ayala-Casás*

**David Gonzalez Guajardo:** Targeting Jews and Latinos: Perspectives on the War of Ideologies and the Rhetoric of Antisemitism on Returnees to Judaism

**Rosalinda Méndez-Carrasco:** *Lágrimas de Jacobo*: Converso Traditions, a Personal and Historical Narrative

**3:30-4:30**     **PANEL 4B: WRITING YOUR OWN STORY: A WRITERS' WORKSHOP**

**Corinne Brown and Genie Milgrom:** Facilitators and Discussion Leaders.

An open, pragmatic and informal discussion about crafting a narrative to express your personal story. We look forward to participation from authors (and would-be authors) like Blanca Carrasco, Judith Krieger MacPherson, Diane Mock—and You!

**Break**

**6:00 PM**     **BUFFET DINNER**

**7:00 PM**     **THE JUDY FRANKEL MEMORIAL CONCERT/LECTURE**

**Michelle Green Willner,** Composer and Presenter

**La Señora:** Tableaus from an original contemporary folk-opera based on the life of **Doña Gracia Nasi**, with live and multimedia performances.

**Anna Davidson,** Soprano, Doña Gracia

**Jared Jones,** Baritone, Josef Nasi

Dr. Michelle Green Willner's accompanying lecture will highlight Dona Gracia's journey, and address how Sephardic folksongs impact the opera's creation in both content, musical style and technique.

Talk-Back; Respondent via Zoom: **Andrée Aelion Brooks**

Coffee reception

**TUESDAY AUG 12**

**8:00-8:30**     *SCJS Board Meeting*

**8:30-9:00**     **General Business Meeting**

Blanca Carrasco, SCJS President

Agenda: President's Greetings, Proposal for next Conference, Call for Candidates for Board Positions

**9:00-10:30**    **PANEL 5: CRYPTO-JEWS IN UNEXPECTED PLACES**

Chair: **Lawrence Kanter**

**Ben Donenberg:** Shakespeare's Secret Jews

**Corinne Brown:** Did Crypto-Jews Help Open the Western Frontier through the Fur Trade?

**Rabbi David A. Kunin:** Jewish Descendants in Papua

**10:45-12:15**    **PANEL 6: CONVERSO LEGACY, HISTORY, AND IDENTITY**

Chair: **Joëlle Bahloul**

**Schulamith Halevy:** Revisiting the Case of Roberto Mercado Manzanares

**Daria Berman:** Many More Miles: Tracing the Converso Diaspora in the Mexican Inquisition

**Sean Schifano:** Going Public: Oral History, Educational Spaces, and the Converso Legacy Archives

**12:15**            **BOX LUNCH**

Closing Remarks: Seth Ward and Blanca Carrasco

**SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!**

