

The Perils of Living the Good and True Law

IBERIAN CRYPTO-JEWS IN THE SHADOW OF THE
INQUISITION OF COLONIAL HISPANIC AMERICA



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During the mid-1600s, tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition in Lima and Mexico Town prosecuted the "Great Conspiracy" trials in response to the crypto-Jewish practices of conversos, or New Christian converts of Jewish descent, who experienced immigrated from Spain and Portugal to these centers of colonial power. Matthew D. By doing this, the book aims to comprehend why they risked their lives and those of family members in the name of a forbidden belief system, and how their chameleon-like identity permitted them to live as Jews and Catholics at once. Taking its title from a description of top secret Judaism by one of its topics, Duarte de Leon Jaramillo, the work shows how, despite a lack of regular usage of books or teachers, crypto-Jews forged a recognizable Jewish identification at the very time when the Inquisition most actively prosecuted them for doing this. The stories of the individuals also shed light on the complex relationship between Spain and Portugal during the 1600s and particularly on how this romantic relationship affected New Christians from both countries who traveled to Spain's American territories. These accounts claim that relative financial prestige and imputed racial otherness made conversos experience "in and out," a situation that in many cases caused their interactions with fellow conversos to become as complex and also contradictory as those with Christians free of Jewish lineage. Written utilizing a nuanced approach that neither demonizes the Inquisition nor depicts the tribunal's victims as unblemished heroes, *The Perils of Living the nice and True Rules* describes crypto-Judaism in colonial Hispanic America in terms of the experiences of these who lived it and the organization that tried to get rid of it. Additionally, as the book demonstrates both authenticity of crypto-Jewish procedures and their variance from normative Judaism, it also dispels the idea that similarities in heritage and belief intrinsically unified new Christians. Contending rather that, due to various examples of Catholic sincerity, conversos were not Jewish ipso facto, the work uses the life tales of the five people and their own families analyzed here to research what sort of proscribed belief program survived, and also the impact of oppression upon this belief program. Each chapter of *The Perils of Living the nice and True Laws* tells a definite but complementary story about the response of secret Jews to inquisitorial attempts to coerce them to renounce their identification. Some of the topics these stories explore include the function of economics in spiritual persecution, the notoriety of personality that transcended the Jewish personality of beliefs and procedures, and the geographic and spiritual peregrinations of individuals from positions of relative basic safety to the riskier one of crypto-Judaism. The work makes a very important contribution to Jewish, Hispanic, and trans-Atlantic tests by elucidating the legitimacy of crypto-Judaism in colonial Hispanic America and of Inquisition trial records as an accurate source of information regarding this syncretistic belief system and its complex, frequently contradictory practitioners. Based on original archival information and released transcriptions of Inquisition trial testimony, this research examines the complicated lives and clandestine practices of five obvious crypto-Jews who were the main topic of such trials. He co-edited, with James A. Warshawsky is definitely associate professor of Spanish at the University of Portland. Parr, *Don Quixote: Interdisciplinary Connections* (Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, 2013). Series: Estudios judeoespanoles Samuel G. Armistead y Joseph H. Silverman, No. 8



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