

# JUGGLING IDENTITIES

IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICITY AMONG THE CRYPTO-JEWS



SETH D. KUNIN

Seth Kunin

## Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity Among the Crypto-Jews



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Juggling Identities can be an extensive ethnography of the crypto-Jews who live deep within the Hispanic communities of the American Southwest. Critiquing scholars who challenge the cultural authenticity of these individuals, Seth D. Kunin draws exciting comparisons between the complex ancestry of crypto-Jews and the ones of various other ethnic communities surviving in the United States. He illuminates the complexity of this community, where individuals and groups perform the same practice in varied ways.

Kunin adopts a distinctive approach to the lives of modern crypto-Jews, concentrating mainly on their understanding of Jewish tradition and this is they ascribe to ritual. Kunin health supplements his ethnographic research with broader theories regarding the nature of identity and memory space, which is especially applicable to crypto-Jews, whose lifestyle resides mainly in storage. Kunin's work provides wider implications, not merely for other styles of crypto-Judaism (such as that found in the former Soviet

Union) but also for the analysis of Judaism's fluid character, which helps adherents adjust to new circumstances and knowledge. Kunin builds a solid link between the crypto-Jews of New Mexico and their Spanish ancestors who secretly maintained their Jewish identification after changing to Catholicism, offering the strongest evidence yet of their ethnic and religious origins.



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