

# SHEALTIEL GAZETTE

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE FAMILY NETWORK



*The Second International Reunion of the Shealtiel Family, Salonika, Greece, July 1997*

## SALONICA '97 *Special Edition*

How we got to the Salonica  
Reunion—*Miles Saltiel*

A Gathering of the Shealtiel  
Clan—*Michael Halevy*

Reflections on the Reunion—  
*Eduardo Motola Saltiel*

Crypto-Jews of New Mexico—  
*Professor Stanley Hordes*

The Dorot Genealogy  
Centre—*Diana Sommer*

Salonica follow-up

*Kakyah Saltiel* of Istanbul—  
*Professor Shlomo Saltiel*

Lianne Kolirin's farewell  
*View from Gloucester Square*



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# ORGANISATION



## THE FAMILY

The current family has three known lines: from the North Sea ports, the Levant, and the Danube valley, with links between them certain but as yet undocumented. All are the descendants of *Sephardic*—that is Spanish-Jewish—family from Barcelona and *environs* which left before the expulsions of 1492-7. We are variously known as Chaltiel, Chartiel, Saltiel, Sealtiel, Sealtiel, Shaltiel and Shealtiel, all derived from the Biblical **שאלתיאל**, generally translated as “asked of God”.

## SHEALTIEL GAZETTE

The *Gazette* is an outgrowth of the *Magazine* published by Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen at the reunion in Amsterdam which first brought us together in August 1994. It is intended to be published and printed on an occasional basis—that is two or three times per year—in London, England. It is distributed to subscribing members of the family and *gratis* to libraries and scholars, as well as to others with a professional interest in our subject matter.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Gazette* is to act as an international medium of communication between members of the family; and to support the re-establishment of ties between us. For the time being, the *Gazette* is being edited by Miles Saltiel, who welcomes contributions of all kinds, including material enabling us better to understand our own history, that is personal reminiscences, as well as genealogical or historical material.

We are not, however, to be only backward looking. The *Gazette* is intended also to be the forum for the exchange of family news, advice of forthcoming events of interest to members of the family, and reports of newly discovered members or branches of the family; as well as for the organisation of co-operative endeavours.

## MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION

As the *Gazette* very much relies on contributions from members of the family, we look forward to continuing to hear from you. The *Gazette* welcomes text and illustrations that relate to any aspect of the family, its history or its members; as well as opinionated articles and personal reminiscences of any kind. The Editor will acknowledge—but does not undertake to return—material. It is particularly convenient to receive files by e-mail. The mail-box no. is: Shealtiel-Gazette@compuserve.com or 100605,2677@compuserve.com.

For those unconnected to the Internet, please help by sending material intended for publication on a 3.5 inch disc, either in ASCII text, or formatted for Word for Windows 2.0 or above. to the address below.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual fee is £30. Please remit **in UK funds** to the address below. Payment can be made by phone or fax (**but not e-mail**) by advising number and expiry date of credit card.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor welcomes letters from readers, whether or not members of the family. Please write to the address below. If intended for publication, please mark accordingly.

## OUR COVER

We show the family assembled in the lobby of the Capsis Hotel Salonica. Those who were there will remember the chaotic sequence of events which led our photos to be taken by members of the family rather than the professional who had been laid on. In the event the Group Photo was one of the highlights of the week-end, culminating the Israelis leading us in signing: “What a beautiful thing it is to have brothers!”

## PUBLICATION

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**Software** Desktop published in Microsoft (MS) Word for Windows 7.0 ® and CorelDraw! 6.0 ®.

**Clip-art** Material may include graphics based on clip-art © New Vision Technologies Inc.

### TrueType® fonts

Body texts Monotype (MT) Plantin™  
Title MT Old Style Bold Outline™.  
Greek MS Symbol™.

Hebrew    Biblescript, Galaxie Software. |

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OF THE FAMILY NETWORK

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**MY** REMARKS ON THIS PAGE usually draw together the content of the *Gazette* at issue. But in this editorial I choose to examine one of the issues arising at Salonika and subsequently. This is the question of why those of us involving ourselves with the family have done so. I am not easy with public discussion of personal motivation, as I recognise the extent to which many of us take public action for very private reasons. Suffice it to say that for most of us, our personal motivation doubtless arises out of a mixture of past and present perceptions of our immediate family.



**MOTIVATION** ON THE PART of the family as a whole may be easier to discern. Jewish families over the past two millennia have been to some extent a model of what many families are becoming over the last two centuries. Jewish families have always been disrupted by migration & social catastrophe. This has been the condition of many—if not most—since the dislocations of the discovery of the New World and the industrial revolution. Jewish families have contrived to hold together with a universal literacy and international communication links. So too have families in the world as a whole as literacy has become more common and communications improved.

In the most recent decades both processes have intensified. Families have been disrupted by accelerating geographical and social mobility, with children often living hundreds—if not thousands—of miles away from their parents and following occupations undreamed of by the previous generation. At the same time new patterns of family formation & self-identification

have emerged: single-parent families, same-sex liaisons and other such novelties. We offset the centrifugal force of these developments with cheap intercontinental phone calls and air travel—as inexpensive to Chicago as to Paris, so I discover—as well as such relatively novel media as faxes, e-mails, and the Internet. Amid all these social innovations and the stresses they create, there remain some human eternal. Principal among these is our search for meaning and our need for and impulse to offer unqualified love. These find contemporary expression in the self-esteem movement or the outpouring of grief at the death of Princess Diana.



**WE** SHEALTIELS ARE BLAZING OUR OWN trail through the same jungle—the dislocations of modern life—and in search of the same destination—a place of meaning and safety. We are reinventing our family by searching out kinsmen and offering them what I have called the “virtual family”. By this I mean no challenge to the authenticity of our roots. Rather do I have in mind our increasing reliance on electronic links and our redefinition as a hybrid form, with neither the unconditional commitment of blood relations, not the absolute discretion attaching to our choice of friends. This is the journey we have begun and which the success of the Salonika reunion so reinforced. In it we are sustained by experiences which are singular to the family—the name and its implications; the *Sephardim*—the expulsion from Spain; the Jews at large—the Holocaust and links to Israel; and all of modern humanity—dispersion, dislocation, and the search for love and

meaning. It is a thrilling journey, on which

| we have done well to launch ourselves.



## SALONICA SPECIAL

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*Here we reproduce the slides supporting the introductory presentation given by **Miles Saltiel** at the opening session at Salonica on 4 July 1997.*

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Slides 1-3

Slides 4-6

Slides 7-9

Slides 10-12

Slides 13-15

Slides 16-18

Slides 19-21

Slides 22-24

## A Gathering of the Shealtiel Clan in Salonica

*This article is based on the translation of a recent article written by historian Michael Halevy, published in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, 7 August 1997.*

THE MAGIC WORD that overcame all barriers, was *cousin*—the members of the Shealtiel family (also known as Saltiel, Sealtiel, Shaltiel, Sealtiël, Scieltiel, Chartiel, Saltelli etc.) embarked on the long journey from their various homes across 16 countries, to be in Salonika for the second gathering of their family.

Quite an achievement considering that not so long ago every Shealtiel believed himself to be the only bearer of this name world-wide. But since Miles Saltiel (London), Moshe Shaltiel Gracian (Chicago), Vibeke Sealtiël Olsen (Amsterdam) and Maurice Saltiel (Villiers-sur-Marne) began their search for the descendants of King David, the size of the family has steadily grown. Over the past few years more than a thousand cousins have been discovered in twenty-six countries. The family has its own genealogical tracing service and publications—*Shealtiel Gazette* and *Le Trait d'Union*.

An Israeli producer is currently working on a three-hour film for the BBC and Israeli television about this remarkable family. Moshe Shaltiel Gracian has been diligently pestering numerous researchers for years to comb the Spanish archives in search of family members and their deeds. So it was that he succeeded in tracing the Shealtiel family to the Spanish town of Gerona, as well as the date of 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1061 as being the first reference to a Shealtiel on Spanish soil.

Well-known experts from Israel were invited to attend the family gathering. Iris Fishof, curator of Jewish studies at the Israel Museum, spoke of the magnificent fourteenth century illuminated manuscript, the Shealtiel Haggadah (Brother Haggadah), now in the British Museum. Shlomo Shaltiel, historian of Jewish Life of the late medieval Eastern Mediterranean, devoted himself to *Kakyah* Shealtiel, an important family member who led the Jewish community of Istanbul, shortly after the Jews were expelled from Spain. Diana Sommer, Director of the Dorot Genealogy Centre of Tel Aviv, gave an account of Jewish genealogical practice, and Michael Halevy, who

is currently engaged in a research project of the Portuguese Community of Hamburg, spoke about the Sealtiël family of Hamburg.

It was in Salonica that members of the Shealtiel family made their homes, even prior to the Jewish expulsion from Spain. In 1580, the family founded their own communal synagogue—the *Katalan Hadash*, derisively known as *Figo Loco* (Wild Fig), a name still used today. After the devastating fire of 1917, in which nearly all the city's synagogues were destroyed, the Shealtiëls joined the *Sinagoga Mayor* and played a major role in the reprinting of the prayer book in accordance with the Catalan rite. Later, many Shealtiëls left and emigrated to all corners of the world. Decades later, those remaining became victims of the German extermination policy. Sixty-three Greek Shealtiëls are listed in *Yad Vashem*.

Over the centuries, many Shealtiëls turned their backs on the faith of their forefathers. However, just as their Portuguese-Spanish blood was more important than religion to the first Marranos in Northern Europe, so it is that the Shealtiëls welcome all who regard themselves as a cousin.

The family and the small Jewish community of Salonica gathered in a moving ceremony to commemorate those members of the family who were murdered in the last war: 120 from Holland, 63 from Greece, 54 from France, six from Italy and five from Germany. The commemoration took place in the new Jewish cemetery. The old cemetery, with more than half a million graves, had been desecrated and destroyed by the Germans.

There is talk of another reunion in Barcelona in three years time—those who attended Salonica were certainly enthusiastic about the idea. Everyone, particularly the young, felt proud to be a member of the Shealtiel family. And this sentiment is an enduring one.

## Reflections of Eduardo Motola Saltiel

*Ed Motola reflects on the Second International Shealtiel family reunion in Thessaloniki, Greece, July 1997, while flying over the marshes of Labrador, at 35,000 feet.*

I SPENT TEN YEARS playing Jacques Cousteau in the world's oceans as a young oceanographer before I settled out of the plankton and anchored to the shore and a family. Scuba metaphors come naturally to me. This long flight is like hanging on the decompression line after a very deep dive: time to reflect; time to stop and count the breaths and observe all that is normally taken for granted; time to thank God for safe passage through the adventure, for knowledge gained and renewed hope felt; time to peer into the darkness below and gaze longingly up at the feeble sunlight penetrating the murky solitude and with appreciation see the sun again bursting through.

Why Reunions? Giving birth is such a painful process. But what rewards! Remembering how I felt after attending my first reunion in Amsterdam in 1994, I was exhausted but elated. After much labour, Amsterdam gave birth to a series of local reunions and much research about our family. This "child" required a lot of attention and care, but she gave back much love in return. Could I do it again in Salonika? Salonika has helped me remember that I can love the second child as much as the first, and that love grows as the family expands.

Catching brief naps, I am awakened by troubled dreams about genealogy and provisional connections between lines of Shealtiels. Driven by a compulsive addiction to sort out such puzzles, the dreams will not go away quickly despite the other aspects of life that demand my attention: work, children, wife and church. Although I worked for 20 hours a day in Salonika, it was truly a vacation to get far away from those other responsibilities for a few days.

What is this thing called family -- extended family seldom seen, dispersed and diverse, but intensely felt, that would cause me to leave home, wife and children and devote so much effort? ...for this cause shall a man leave father and mother... What is the motivation for which Miles of London and Moshe of Chicago invest so much heart and soul? And not just for a few weeks like me, but constantly over the course of years, they invest so much that they can't justify the cost but can't stop either. It's bigger than they are and consumes them, then envelopes them in its love and fills them.

Why did they do it? Why did I come? What will we do with all of this information, and with these memories? There were too many new attendees for me to meet them all. Was I too busy gathering in ancestry to get to know their posterity? How could I have done it differently? Will there be another opportunity?

### Memoirs of Salonika

In Salonika, I saw the homeland of my grandfather, changed, but again the same. It looks so much now like the Mexico City he moved to has become: street vendors, family-run stores, neighbourhoods full of local commerce, cafes and life on the streets. So much ambience. So much culture. So much life.

I visited the cemetery, and knowing that the old tombs had been lost, I expecting nothing. But we found a memorial plaque bearing the names of my great-grandmother's family. Inspired, I sat down with my mother and cousin Enrique, and dug through the newly translated and compiled database of birth, death and marriage records from Greek Salonika, the result of two years of determined effort and dogged investment. We found the death certificate of their grandmother, Hana Nahama de Saltiel. There on paper, was a living memorial to her existence, and an anchor to our past.

And on the Holocaust Memorial at the cemetery, I placed a diskette containing all the names of all of our family trees, and all the translated records, names that will some day need to be correlated with what has been recorded on the Roll of Honour, a memorial not only to those who were deported, but to all whose existence has been assimilated into the fabric of our mishpacha.

### My Living Cousins

The living: so many countries, so many languages, so many types. We have dispersed again, and this generation of post-war survivors bred a diverse and talented family. Assimilated into new cultures, the Dutch are typically Dutch, the French quintessentially French, the British so very Brit, the Americans a melting pot of Americana, and each Greek, Bulgarian, Israeli, Yemenite, Canadian, Mexican, Argentine, Italian, Swiss,

Dane, Belgian, Malaysian, etc. looks and sounds just like their fellow countrymen, within the type or diversity typical of their new homeland. And whether Protestant, Catholic or Mormon, Jewish, Secular or Agnostic, and however we practice our faith within those broad definitions, we have come to behave so much like our co-religionists that we struggle to be sensitive to each other's diverse beliefs.

### Suggestions for the Future

The professional flavour of these past two international reunions can not easily be reproduced. And who will stand the cost? Even though we shall be obligated at some point to celebrate our return by going to Spain, and in a similar commemoration, to *Eretz Israel*, I would appreciate a different focus during the next few years. Having focused during the last two reunions on: finding our common roots, commemorating our Holocaust dead, and exploring our ancient heritage, as we approach the new age of the millennium, I would love to see us now celebrate our diversity and the cultural identities we have assimilated through our new diaspora.

What I envision is a more rustic reunion, not staged for a few days at an expensive hotel in a memorial homeland to celebrate our ancient cultural identity. For the same cost, let us spend an entire week based at a kibbutz in Israel, to celebrate our new gathering. Focused on celebrating who we are now, I propose activities where we interact more with each other. Israel's abundance of cultural and natural recreation opportunities would easily entice many who have not previously attended.

One thing the Shealtiels have no problem doing is communicating over a meal, regardless of the language. So let us prepare meals for each other to share our acquired as well as traditional culinary cuisines. Similarly, we could organise plays and skits where we could spoof the uniqueness of the cultures we have assimilated. We could benefit from having a good laugh at ourselves. Field trips, tours and excursions would build new bonds between the family. Considering the com-

plexity of languages, religions, ages, economic levels, etc., let us provide more opportunities to forge new links.

In Greece we discovered that much of the food was reminiscent of the Ladino cuisine our foremothers prepared, and which many of us remember fondly from our youth. Another cultural icon for which many of us have preserved a common affection is the game of backgammon. Food and games transcend the language barriers and speak a universal language of smiles and laughter and fun. I suggest a friendly competition at the next reunion, full of chip slapping and dice throwing, and if there is a deficit, let us donate the profits of those who chose to gamble at this ancient game.

One of the great successes of this reunion was the ample time to socialise and visit with each other. I was so impressed to see the circle of 20 or so youth on the last evening planning their future together. I want to be sure that the next event offers the kind of vacation worth the sacrifice of bringing all my children, and yours, not

just grandparents and for the wealthy. I suggest we refrain from live scholarly presentations, and instead prepare in advance a multilingual issue of a reunion newsletter translated into

French, Hebrew, English, Spanish, Dutch and Greek. Allow more time to visit, more events that elicit interaction, more of a celebration.



**D**URING THE COURSE OF the next few years, I invite all of us to communicate more frequently, via gazette and the internet web site, letters and e-mail. Organise local reunions that celebrate the qualities of life in your own countries. In the US, I propose we organise a summer camp at one of the grand National Parks of the American west. Or why not join with other sports enthusiasts in the family at a Club Med in the Caribbean?

I invite your feedback.

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***“One of the great successes of this reunion was the ample time to socialise with each other”***

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## HISTORY



## **Kakyah Shealtiel of Constantinople**

*The following is based on a lecture entitled: The Religious and Economic Leadership of the Jewish Community: Rabbi Eliah Mizrahi and Kakyah Shealtiel, given by Shlomo Shaltiel, at the reunion in Salonika on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1997.*

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE absorbed tens of thousands of Jews in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries who wandered from western Europe to the Balkans. Two factors combined to produce this migration which continued for some 150 years. The first stemmed from social, economic and religious changes Europe was experiencing, which heightened the persecution and expulsions. The second is connected to the ascendancy of the Muslim Ottoman state, and its readiness to absorb immigrants and treat foreigners tolerantly, as it required manpower and money. The immigrants found a safe haven there, and a chance to establish themselves economically.

Exiles from France and *Ashkenaz*, and refugees from the 1391 decrees in Spanish Catalonia, were received with some reservations by their *Romanio*te brethren, the Jewish inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire. The *Sephardic* Jews among them, most of whom were educated, acquired a respectable standing both among Ottomans, who employed several of them as doctors and consultants, and among their Jewish peers, who sought their society.



### **The organisation of the communities**

The Jewish Community in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire was split up into secondary communities, *kehalim*. The latter established autonomous institutions, with the government's authorisation. This separatist organisational structure derived from the social tradition of particularism which the *Sephardic* exiles had brought with them, and was linked to the migratory process: immigrants to a new country preferred to dwell among their compatriots. This aspiration suited the conception of the Ottoman regime, which organised all of its subjects—Turks, Greeks, Jews, and others—into professional associations or guilds, possessed of a religious/cultural character and a legal and fiscal status.

Each community dwelled in its own neighbourhood, called a *mahalle* in Turkish (Hebrew: *kahal*). The central institution was the synagogue, and alongside it were the other communal institutions, such as the Talmud Torah, study hall and yeshiva, public bath, soup kitchen, and so forth. Over time, the first immigrant communities split up into several dozen communities in the larger cities. Whoever wished to join the community had to pay taxes to the king and *kakyah*. In the Ottoman Empire, a Jew was forbidden to live in the city without belonging to one of the communities. At times, communities refused to accept poor immigrants, even if they came from the same city of origin. In comparison, wealthy newcomers were always in great demand.

Cultural, social and economic motivations, as well as particular interests connected with personal enrichment and competition for positions of power, produced schisms in the community. Disputes over tax assessments multiplied. The influx of immigrants led to the founding of new communities, and the partition of older ones. Even the fires which sometimes ignited in cities with wooden houses, such as the conflagrations of 1545 in Salonika in 1545 and 1573 in Constantinople, uprooted populations and broke up communities which had resided in a particular *mahalle*.

The communities' veteran leadership were usually interested in perpetuating the divisions, for both personal and social, cultural and traditional reasons. In contrast, many individuals strove to establish a joint leadership for all the communities in a given city, which became a matter of necessity. The impulses towards separatism and unification manifested themselves differently in the cities of Constantinople and Salonika. Constantinople's Jewish population was divided fairly evenly between *Sephardic* and *Romanio*te Jews, and the communities were unable to agree on a joint leadership. In Salonika, however, the *Sephardim* predominated, which fact eased the

creation of an overarching organisational framework uniting the various communities.

### **Tradition and custom in *Sephardic* and *Romaniote* communities**

The encounter between *Sephardic* and *Romaniote* Jews underscored the social and cultural distinctions between them. The *Romaniotes* adhered to *Ashkenazi* customs. The *Ashkenazi* influence on this community derived from the period when parts of Greece and Crete were controlled by Venice, and *Romaniote* Jewish scholars studied in the yeshivas of northern Italy, such as that of Padua, headed by *Ashkenazim*. The *Sephardic* were set apart from their Romanite peers in a number of ways: by the laws of *kashrut* and ritual slaughtering; by different versions of the prayers; and by assorted daily practices and laws. During their sojourn in Italy on the way to the Balkans, the *Sephardim* absorbed the spirit of the Renaissance, and upon their arrival in the new country they sought to implement customs and fashions which had been influenced by the spirit of the times. In preponderantly *Romaniote* locales, the *Sephardic* Jews accepted the Greek practices, and in areas which had absorbed large waves of Sephardim, heavy pressure was exerted on the *Romaniotes*.

Constantinople in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century was characterised by an established *Romaniote* majority. The community was headed by a rabbi-leader, who exercised greater authority and left a *Romaniote* imprint on the Jewish population. The *Sephardic* immigrants were constrained to accept practices which were not to their liking. Towards the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of the Portuguese, Jews from the Iberian peninsula overtook their *Romaniote* brethren numerically. Their economic success also augmented their influence, and led to the imposition of a cultural and religious lifestyle which was predominantly *Sephardic*. In contrast, in Salonika, which had always featured a *Sephardic* majority, the *Sephardic* cultural traditions prevailed from the outset, assimilating the *Romaniote* and *Ashkenazi* traditions.

The relations between the sexes provide an accurate portrait of the differences in background and social conventions. In cities in which the different ethnic groups began to intermingle, these were the cause of the considerable strife. *Sephardic*

Jews, particularly those who came from Italy, had been influenced by the permissiveness which prevailed in their countries of origin during the Renaissance. The *Romaniotes*, in contrast, were more conservative and fearful of innovation, regarding the latter as licentiousness which endangered the unity of the nation. Thus, for example, *Sephardim* were not strict about relations between the sexes, and permitted cohabitation between couples before the wedding. Despite their opposition to the practice, many *Romaniotes* were forced to come to terms with this reality. Their apprehensions were not without grounds. As in any migratory society, bachelors of shady origin abounded in Turkey. Young newcomers without financial backing sometimes sought to marry into respectable families, and entered into liaisons with women without the parents' consent. No small number of personal tragedies resulted. Some of these generated public scandals which rocked all of the Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire. The Arta dispute is a case in point.

Arta, in Epyrus, was home to three communities of Italian origin, one *Sephardic* and one *Romaniote* community. The *Romaniotes* were farmers, "settled in their castles and courtyards, who did not deviate from the customs of their fathers". By comparison, the Italians disregarded the laws of modesty, practiced mixed dancing, and were considered to view the honour of married women lightly. Given that they were the majority, the *Romaniote* minority were compelled to violate its own customs and permit its daughters to cohabit with their fiances before the Chuppah.

A few girls happened to get pregnant without benefit of marriage. All the inhabitants of Arta, *Sephardim* and *Romaniotes*, rose up in arms. Xenophobia erupted, and the guilty parties were handed over to the gentile authorities for punishment. The *Romaniotes* asked the Torah scholars of Constantinople and Salonika to excommunicate the guilty. Stringent ordinances were enacted in the town. Although the Italian Jews understood the seriousness of the incident, they refused to accept the restrictive ordinances.

### **The Rabbi, leader of the communities—his role, status and the payment of 'Rabbi Tax'**

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***"The Sephardim were set apart from their Romaniote peers by the laws of kashrut and by different daily prayers"***

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As the authority of the joint framework uniting all the Jewish communities grew in strength, the Jews demanded that the regime recognise their autonomy. They also asked to be allowed to appoint a chief rabbi as leader, promising in exchange to pay the state 'rabbi tax'. Rabbi Moshe Kafshali, the *Romaniote* leader in Constantinople, was appointed 'rabbi-leader' of all Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire. The appointment was a significant achievement for the Jews, as it symbolised the recognition of Jewish autonomy in Constantinople and the empire as a whole. The Jews wanted their leader to represent them vis-a-vis the government with regard to taxes, and to arbitrate disputes concerning the internal apportionment of the tax burden.

### The Struggle for Ethnic hegemony

Constantinople was in the midst of a process of development and renovation, and many of the Jews who had been dislocated from their homelands quickly prospered there. Some of them, principally members of the *Karaite* community, were wealthy and engaged in money-lending, whereas the majority were craftsmen who joined the city's professional guilds. Soon after the arrival of the first *Sephardic* immigrants, two controversies arose in the city, which exposed the conflicting interests of *Sephardim* and *Romaniotes* in the struggle for ethnic hegemony in the city.

### The climax of the first controversy—the *Herem* against the teachers

The educated individuals among the refugees outshone the indigenous population, and were equally expert in secular fields and the Torah. A close association formed between the wealthy *Romaniotes* and *Sephardic melamdin* (teachers). Yet the latter drew close not only to the *Romaniotes*, but also to the *Karaites*, who embraced them with open arms. Some of the *Romaniotes* viewed the introduction of *Sephardic* influence and the proximity of the *Karaites* with alarm. The controversy expressed conflicting religious outlooks and a struggle between two social movements: one of them preservationist, which feared the cultural, social and economic ascendancy of the *Sephardim*, and the second more liberal, championing ethnic integration and the cultural intermingling of all Ottoman Jews. The conservatives demanded that the teachers who were servicing the

*Karaites* be put in *herem* (excommunicated), and Rabbi Moshe Kafshali, the rabbi-leader, bowed to the pressure.

The ban damaged the *Karaites*, as well as the livelihoods of the *Sephardic* teachers. The latter were constrained to distance themselves from the *Karaites*, and they were no longer welcome in the homes of wealthy *Romaniotes*. With the death of Rabbi Kafshali and the appointment of Eliah Mizrahi to the post of rabbi-leader, the *Sephardim* anticipated a turnaround. The selection of Mizrahi, in 1496, bore witness to the increased *Sephardic* influence in the city. As leader of all the communities, Rabbi Mizrahi adopted a policy of unification and conciliation, and worked for inter-ethnic amity, acceptance of the *Karaites* and the absorption of the *Sephardic* immigrants into the society of veteran inhabitants. The teachers requested that the ban be removed, and Mizrahi acceded. In so doing, he wrought a far-reaching change in the internal relations among the Jewish public. His opponents among the *Romaniotes* had no choice but to accept the decision, yet their opposition did not wane. It transmuted into a latent discontent, which continued to percolate until it erupted some years later, through the excommunication of *Kakyah* Shealtiel.

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***“Shealtiel belonged to the group of Catalonian Jews who sought refuge from the 1391 decrees”***

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continued to percolate until it erupted some years later, through the excommunication of *Kakyah* Shealtiel.

### The economic leadership of *Kakyah* Shealtiel

A major crisis transpired with the excommunication of *Kakyah* Shealtiel in the fall of 1518, a ban which was revoked some 18 months later, in the spring of 1520. Who was *Kakyah* Shealtiel, and what role did he play? The name Shealtiel indicates his *Sephardic* origin, and presumably Shealtiel belonged to the group of Catalonian Jews who sought refuge from the 1391 decrees. The latter settled in Turkish Adrianopolous in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, and migrated to Constantinople upon its conquest by the Ottomans in 1453. Shealtiel was appointed *kakyah* around 1498, soon after Eliah Mizrahi's appointment as rabbi-leader. The *kakyah* enjoyed a lofty and respectable position. Eliah Mizrahi called him 'the governor', for Shealtiel had access to the Sultan's court. He was a man of noble mien, who was commissioned to serve as an advocate and go-between the Jews and the government. Eliah Mizrahi was already old and tired, and had difficulty coping with the burden of the job. Shealtiel was appointed by the Sultan on behalf of the regime. His chief responsibility was to collect taxes

and transmit them to the authorities, yet the appointment was requested by the Jewish leadership, and constituted a significant achievement for the community.

Most of the population in Constantinople, including the Jews, was organised economically and socially in professional guilds. The role of the *kakyah* was to manage the practical affairs of the guild. He levied taxes, and represented the guild to the authorities. Internally, the *kakyah* monitored the integrity of the guild and the quality of its products, and judged and arbitrated disputes among members. In addition, he administered the guild's charity fund, which extended loans to needy members and supported soup kitchens. The *kakyah* was chosen by the elders of the guild from among themselves, and his appointment required the confirmation of the government. Alongside the *kakyah*, who headed the guild, two councils operated: the council of elders, whose members were selected from among the veteran craftsmen, and the *longiah* council, which presided over the internal matters of the guild (collecting members' debts; monitoring product quality and the reliability of weights and measures; arbitrating disputes, and preventing members from turning to the courts; and overseeing the guild's mutual aid fund).

The *kakyah* did not collect the rabbi-leader tax (which the Jews paid through the framework of their individual communities), but rather the economic taxes associated with the production and commerce, such as the commission on money-changing and the striking of coins, and the transit tax for paving and maintaining roads. By virtue of his responsibility for these taxes, Shealtiel was the intermediary between the regime and those guilds in Constantinople which, due to the Jewish identity of their members, effectively constituted 'communities'. The representatives of the communities of artisans were incapable of holding their own against the agents of the regime, and Jews were occasionally turned over to the gentile courts without being afforded any kind of protection by the Jewish establishment. *Kakyah* Shealtiel was able to stand up to ministerial decrees, and to get them rescinded. Through his connections and his official status, he served the Jews well.

At the time of the great Jewish immigration from Spain, many of the newcomers required licenses to open a business. Yet these were difficult to obtain, either because they were considered craftsmen, or because the veteran members of the guilds did everything in their power to prevent new members from being accepted, for fear of competition. The immigrants, who found the existing guilds closed to them, sought an advocate who would get them permission to open a new guild, or persuade the existing guilds to sell them a work permit. Shealtiel fulfilled this function, as he wielded considerable influence both in the Sultan's court and among the guilds.

The Jewish community had achieved an important victory: the unification of all the communities under one autonomous umbrella organisation, whose rabbi leader, Rabbi Eliah Mizrahi, represented the religious authority, while Shealtiel, the *kakyah*, represented the secular-economic authority, and acted on behalf of the guilds. Yet this achievement conflicted with ethnic allegiances. The guilds in Constantinople were not ethnically uniform, and the unification

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***“Shealtiel was the intermediary between the regime and the Jewish guilds of Constantinople”***

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of all of the professional guilds ran afoul of the various ethnic leaders' aspirations for exclusive hegemony. The *Romanioles* represented the veteran organisations—the tanners' guild, the silk-weavers' guild, etc., while the *Sephardic* Jews engaged primarily in wool-weaving. During the first part of Shealtiel's tenure, things went smoothly. The *Sephardic* population, which was still few in numbers and lacking in economic clout, did not constitute a threat to *Romaniole* supremacy. The *kakyah's* *Sephardic* identity did not initially, therefore, give the *Romanioles* pause. Yet over the course of time, the *Sephardic* population became wealthy, and economic competition accelerated. The *Romaniole* artisans became apprehensive that the *Sephardic kakyah* was favouring their *Sephardic* competitors, and exhibited opposition to him. Affluent merchants and craftsmen, who served as teachers, cantors, judges and agents of charity, suffered from Shealtiel's authoritative leadership style, which they felt undercut their leadership of the guilds.

Additional factors sparked opposition to Shealtiel. His twenty-year tenure as a tax collector had rendered him rich. Some of the gratuities which were channeled through him as bribes for the ministers, ended up in his own pocket. In addi-

tion, Shealtiel decided to transform his office into a hereditary entitlement, which he could bequeath to his sons. This was not an accepted practice in the Ottoman guilds, in which the post of *kakyah* was transferred from one appointee to another, at the will of the guild members. Many came to resent Shealtiel, and subsequently managed to have him excommunicated. The communities then split over whether to support *kakyah*, or to ostracise him. His adversaries belonged to the guild leaderships, chiefly the *Romaniote* ones. Who, then, overturned the ban? In his bid to rescind the ban, Shealtiel approached the community officers, offering to relinquish his exclusive control and promising to consult on every matter with community and guild officials. The officials gathered in the Zaiton community synagogue, and the presiding rabbi, Rabbi Eliah Mizrahi, persuaded them to revoke the ban. The signatories on the letter of release in Constantinople, where a process of mutual assimilation had been underway for some time, included members

of every ethnic group: *Romaniotes*, *Sephardim* and *Ashkenazim*.

Accordingly, despite the opposition of many of the residents of Constantinople, Shealtiel was reinstated, and the office *kakyah* continued to exist in Constantinople for many years to come. Shealtiel's victory was a victory for all those who had championed trans-communal and trans-ethnic organisation. Such organisation had begun with the appointment of a rabbi-leader in 1455, who represented the Jewish subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and continued with inauguration of the office of *kakyah*, which symbolised the autonomy of the economic leadership of Constantinople Jews.

It appears then, that the contributions of the *Romaniote* leader, Rabbi Eliah Mizrahi, and of the *Sephardic* Kahiya Shealtiel, were decisive in unifying the Jews of Constantinople socially, economically and ethnically.

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## The Crypto-Jews of New Mexico—A Sephardic Legacy

*The following is based on a lecture given by Stanley M. Hordes, at the reunion in Salonika on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1997.*

**Editor's note:** *In the normal course of things, the Salonika Reunion would have been delighted to offer a audience to Dr Hordes' remarkable findings. As it happened, however, his remarks were made relevant to us in the most forcible manner, when he presented to his discovery of the word "Shealtiel"—written in Latin script—as part of two names annotating documents associated with the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico. This is the only finding so far linking the name of our family to this community and remains completely unexplained. MS*

**INSULARITY AND ENDURANCE**—one could hardly imagine two terms that could better describe the experience of the crypto-Jewish (or secret Jewish) communities of Iberia and the New World over the course of the past five centuries. Descendants of those who were compelled to convert from Judaism to Catholicism in Spain and Portugal in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries have been found within the New Mexico Hispano community. Although many have assimilated into mainstream Hispano Catholic (or Protestant) society, some appear to have continued to observe Jewish practices in their remote mountain villages, or in their urban *barrios* (neighbourhoods), with or without

consciousness or their *converso* (converted) family heritage.



**I**NTERESTING AS IS THE HISTORY of these individuals, the story of my own awareness of their existence is also intriguing. In 1980, while completing my doctoral dissertation, 'The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649: A Collective Biography', I had drawn up a variety of documentary sources in Spain and Mexico, including inquisition records, civil and criminal court files, notarial documents, and shipping and immigration records. They led to a reconstruction of how the secret Jews of Mexico fit into the political, social, religious and commercial context of the colony. Assuming that, generation by generation, the *conversos* of New Spain gradually assimilated into the mainstream of Spanish Catholic society, eventually losing any unique ethnic identity, I was unaware of any present-day manifestations of crypto-Judaism in either Mexico or the US Southwest.

In 1981, I assumed the position of New Mexico State Historian, maintaining an office in the Records Centre and Archives in Santa Fe. I had not

been there more than a few weeks before I began to receive some very unusual visits in my office. People from within the Hispano community would come in, close the door behind them to make certain that no one could overhear them, then lean across my desk and whisper, "So-and-so lights candles on Friday nights", or "so-and-so doesn't eat pork". I initially dismissed these people as cranks, but over the succeeding weeks and months the visits continued, during which the Hispanos representing various walks of life, from different parts of New Mexico, felt compelled to relate to me stories of their *compadres* observing customs suggestive of a Jewish background.

Gradually it became clear that I should be asking myself some critical questions. Could it be possible that the same phenomenon that I have studied in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Mexico—that a secret Jewish community—could have survived over 300 years—and in a place as distant as New Mexico?

Once I formulated the questions, many other pieces of information began to fall into place. I asked my Hispano friends and colleagues if they had heard of similar accounts of secret Judaism practised in their families. They would respond with such answers as, "Well, grandma always said that we were Jews, but we never took her seriously", or "Grandpa told us that eating pork was unhealthy".

My search finally took me to two colleagues at the University of New Mexico, who, from different disciplinary perspectives, had been investigating similar themes. Sociologist Dr Tomas Atencio, who grew up in Dixon, New Mexico, had been aware of the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism in his home town, and was interested in how these people fit into the context of contemporary Hispanic culture. Dr Rowena Rivera, of the Spanish Department, had been studying similarities between the music, literature, and folklore of modern day Hispano New Mexicans and the same genres of Sephardic culture in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain.

The result was that in 1987 the three of us initiated an inter-disciplinary sponsored by the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico, 'The Sephardic Legacy in New Mexico: A History of the Crypto-Jews'.

Although the research project is still in its early stages, it is apparent that there is in New Mexico

a Sephardic legacy—vestiges still carried on by descendants of crypto-Jews who emigrated to the reunion as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This cultural remnant spans quite a wide spectrum of Hispano society. At one extreme are individuals who are biological descendants of the original 15<sup>th</sup> century *conversos*, but retain neither a consciousness of their ancestral faith, nor any vestigial Jewish customs. The other extreme, very few in number, encompasses those who profess a retention of a consciousness of the family's Judaism and who continue to observe Jewish practices, either openly as Jews or in secret under the cover of Catholicism or Protestantism. The vast majority, however, fall into a middle category, those Catholics or Protestants whose families display observances suggestive of Judaism, but with no knowledge as to why they do so.



**B**UT HOWEVER WEAK OR strong the crypt-Jewish presence in New Mexico, quite a bit is known about the history of the *converso* settlement in the viceroyalty of New Spain and its far northern

frontier. With the conquest of Mexico by Fernando Cortes in 1521, the long arm of the Inquisition extended across the Atlantic Ocean. The small number of Judaizing

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***“Could a secret Jewish community have survived over 300 years as far away as New Mexico?”***

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cases tried by the Mexican Holy Office during the first half century of Spanish colonisation in New Spain indicates that crypto-Jews were able to practice their faith in an atmosphere of relative toleration.

The situation began to change in the 1580s, when crypto-Jewish immigration to New Spain increased dramatically. The establishment of Spanish hegemony over Portugal in 1580 motivated Portuguese *conversos* to move in unprecedented numbers to other areas of the world, including the Indies. The new arrivals were considerably more educated and better versed in Jewish doctrine than their predecessors, and their presence resulted in a new infusion of religiosity in the viceroyalty.

Among these Portuguese immigrants was an ambitious explorer and entrepreneur, Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva. Carvajal was no stranger to New Spain. Born in the Portuguese town of Mogadouro to a *converso* family, Carvajal made his first journey to Mexico in 1567, as a merchant

carrying a cargo of wine to sell in Veracruz, Mexico City and Zacatecas.<sup>i</sup>

Recognising the opportunities for exploiting the agricultural and mineral resources in the far north-eastern frontier of New Spain, Carvajal sailed back to Spain in 1578 to submit a proposal to King Philip II. In return for opening up the Nuevo Reino de León for Spanish colonisation, Carvajal asked the King for two major concessions: one, that he be appointed governor; and two, that no investigation be conducted into the ethnic background of the colonists he recruited to populate the new settlement. Under the terms of the royal *cedula* (order) issued by King Ferdinand in 1501, it was illegal for anyone of Jewish or Moorish descent to emigrate to the Indies. To be sure, many *conversos* and their offspring did come over legally, but they came under assumed names or falsified documents, attesting to their *limpiezas de sangre* ('purity of blood'). Philip agreed to these terms, and by means of a formal contract signed on June 14, 1579, Luis de Carvajal received the mandate to initiate his colonisation effort.<sup>ii</sup> He immediately began to recruit some 200 families from Spain and Portugal, many of *converso* origin, and brought them to New Spain, establishing his capital at Cerralvo in Nuevo León.

The young colony survived the material challenges presented by a hostile environment. In religious matters, as well, it appears that the settlers were left alone to worship as they pleased, as long as they did so quietly. However, this atmosphere of calm was soon to be shattered when one of the colonists betrayed the standard of discretion.



**S**HORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL in New Spain, the governor's 14-year-old nephew, whose name was also Luis de Carvajal, was told of his Jewishness by older relatives. In contrast to the response of his contemporaries, young Luis de Carvajal decided that if he was a Jew, he was going to live openly as a Jew. Not only did he begin to practice his religion in full view, but he also initiated efforts to re-convert other New Christians back to Judaism.<sup>iii</sup>

Even in an atmosphere of relative toleration demonstrated by the New Spanish society, this behaviour could not be endured. The Holy Of-

fice of the Inquisition, recently elevated to the status of *Tribunal*, had been watching the growth of the Portuguese *converso* community in New Spain over the course of the previous few years, and had expressed concern over the potential for the spread of the practice of *la ley muerte de Moisés*—the Dead Law of Moses.<sup>iv</sup>

The reaction on the part of the inquisitors in Mexico was strong and swift. Between 1589 and 1596, almost 200 persons were arrested for the crime of *judaizante* (Judaizing), focusing on the Carvajal family and extending to crypto-Jewish activity all over the viceroyalty. Young Luis de Carvajal was arrested in 1589, and was reconciled in the *Auto de Fe*—the public ceremony of the Inquisition—of 1590. Undeterred by this castigation, Carvajal resumed his proselytising efforts, was rearrested by the Inquisition, and was convicted. He was burned at the stake in the *Auto de Fe* of 1596.

Carvajal's uncle, the governor of the province of Nuevo León, also had been arrested, not for being a *judaizante*, but for countenancing the widespread presence of this heresy under his jurisdiction. Having been found guilty, the governor appeared in the *Auto* of 1590 and died in the Inquisition cell shortly thereafter.<sup>v</sup>

Upon his arrest, Governor Carvajal had left behind in Nuevo León, as lieutenant governor of the province, a seasoned military leader, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa. Like Carvajal, Castaño was born in Portugal. Unlike Carvajal, however, it is uncertain whether Castaño came from a crypto-Jewish background, though investigations are currently underway to ascertain his family history. While no specific tie has yet been established, several other Portuguese 'Castaños' and 'Sosas' were identified as crypto-Jews in Portugal and New Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Moreover, Martin Cohen, in *The Martyr*, has suggested a link between Gaspar Castaño de Sosa and the crypto-Jewish community of Nuevo León.<sup>vi</sup>

But it is known that immediately upon receiving word of Governor Carvajal's death in the Inquisition jail, Castaño rounded up some 170 colonists (men, women and children) in Cerralvo and left on an uncharted expedition to the north. The Castaño party headed for the Río Grande, travelled upriver to its confluence with the Río Pecos, and trekked up the Pecos, crossing Glorieta

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***“The governor of Nuevo León was arrested for tolerating secret Jews in his entourage”***

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Pass into the Río Grande Valley, finally stopping near the Pueblo of Santo Domingo, in an attempt to establish the first permanent Spanish colony in New Mexico.



UNDER THE TERMS OF THE Spanish colonial system in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Castaño de Sosa *entrada* of 1590 constituted an illegal expedition. Not only had Castaño not secured permission from the viceroy to leave Nuevo León (although his emissaries had made attempts to do so), but he had not informed anyone in authority that he was embarking on such a venture. Moreover, Castaño's was the only expedition into the northern frontier of its day not to include a priest or any member of a religious order.<sup>vii</sup>

The close ties maintained by Castaño to Governor Carvajal, the coincidence of the timing of his hasty and illegal departure for the north upon hearing of Carvajal's death, the absence of a priest on the expedition, and the allegations of his own secret Jewish practices all suggest strongly that Castaño might have initiated the dangerous *entrada* for the purpose of leading other crypto-Jews to a secure haven on the far northern frontier. This hypothesis is strengthened by a comparison of the colonists' names with those found in contemporary Inquisition records accused of the crime of *judaizante*, names such as Rodríguez, Nieto, Carvajal, Díaz, Hernández and Pérez.<sup>viii</sup> Investigations are underway to trace the genealogy of the members of the Castaño de Sosa expedition to see if any link exists between them and those who were in trouble with the Inquisition in Spain or Portugal.

When the viceroy of New Spain was informed of Castaño's departure from Nuevo León, he sent Juan Morlet, a former associate of Castaño's, to arrest Castaño and his entire party—not for practising Judaism, but for having conducted an illegal expedition. Castaño was convicted of treason and exiled to the Philippine Islands, where he died shortly thereafter.<sup>ix</sup> Many survivors of the *entrada* returned to Nuevo León and participated in the founding of the town of Monterrey in 1596.<sup>x</sup> (It is no small coincidence that today some individuals in the Monterrey area are coming out and acknowledging their Jewish heritage.) Other of the *entrada* survivors remained in Central Mexico, fearful, perhaps, of attracting the attention of the Inquisition, by then, in the mid-1590s, in the throes of its vigorous campaign against the *converso* community of New Spain.



BY THE LATE 1590s, the King had realised the efficacy of establishing a defensive outpost in the far northern frontier of New Mexico. Several candidates placed their names under consideration to lead such an expedition. One enjoyed the support of the Mexican Inquisition, Francisco de Urdiñola. Urdiñola was a *comisario*—a lower-level Inquisition official—of the Holy Office, who, in the eyes of the inquisitors, would be in a position to ensure the purity of the blood and orthodoxy of the colonists heading north.<sup>xi</sup> Viceroy Velasco, however, had no intention of allowing a competing jurisdiction to interfere in such a secular venture. Charges were proffered against Urdiñola for the murder of his wife and several servants, and in the face of such serious allegations, Velasco simply could not permit the *comisario* to remain under the consideration to lead the *entrada* to the north. The viceroy declared the mission suspended indefinitely.<sup>xii</sup>

The next year, Velasco chose Juan de Oñate, the son of a wealthy and powerful miner, and a descendant of converted Jews,<sup>xiii</sup> to serve as *adelantado*—he who advances the frontier—and charged him with the task of establishing a new colony in the distant frontier of New Mexico. Among the people whom Oñate approached to join him in this effort were some of the survivors of the Castaño de Sosa expedition. After all, they had returned from New Mexico just a few years earlier, and consequently knew well the route northward and the terrain. In addition, they had firsthand knowledge of the Pueblo Indians who inhabited the lands to be conquered and occupied. In short, Oñate must have realised the potential of these survivors of the Castaño expedition to help him establish his new colony on a strong footing.



FOR THEIR PART, THOSE survivors who did not return to Nuevo León might well have felt themselves somewhat vulnerable to arrest by the Inquisition, which, as we have seen, was in the midst of its heaviest phase of activity against Mexican crypto-Jews. Regardless of their motives, at least two members of the Castaño *entrada* decided to return with Oñate in 1598, Juan de Victoria Carvajal and Juan López. Another member of the 1590 expedition, Alonso Jaimes, could also be found in Oñate's military encampment at Casco in 1596.<sup>xiv</sup> It appears that they were joined by others seeking to escape the clutches of the Holy Office, including Juan Ro-

Rodríguez, Francisco Hernández, Miguel Rodríguez and Antonio Rodríguez, all cited by the Inquisition as 'fugitives'. Three of them were burned in effigy in the *Autos de Fe* of 1596 and 1601. Sebastian Rodríguez, another member of the Oñate expedition, was possibly one of two individuals by that name taken by the Holy Office.<sup>xv</sup> Another of Oñate's soldiers, Cristóbal de Herrera, was arrested several years later in Zacatecas, accused of teaching the Law of Moses to Indians in Oaxaca.<sup>xvi</sup>

Bartolomé Romero, a soldier accompanying Oñate to New Mexico in 1598, was listed on the muster roll as born in Corral de Almaguer, in the region of Toledo, the son of Bartolomé Romero. Records of the Holy Office of Toledo from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century contain reference to father and son, Bartolomé Romero, married to members of the Alonso family, accused of the crime of practising secret Judaism.<sup>xvii</sup>

Other coincidences suggest further links between suspected crypto-Jews and the Oñate expedition as well. The supplier of the Oñate expedition was a merchant by the name of Balthasar Rodríguez. Could this have been the same Balthasar Rodríguez, merchant of Nuevo León and brother of Luis de Carvajal, who had eluded attempts by Inquisition agents to arrest him several years earlier?<sup>xviii</sup>

Consider also the case of Francisco Gómez, implicated a generation later in the Inquisition trial of his son, Francisco Gómez Robledo. Gómez, born in Coima, Portugal, came to New Spain in 1604 in the retinue of Oñate's brother, Alonso. About five years later, Gómez left the Oñate household in Mexico City to accompany the expedition of Pedro de Peralta in 1609 to New Mexico. During his nearly half-century in the colony, Gómez held several civil and military positions. Witnesses later accused Gómez and his family of practising Jewish observances, including ritual male infant circumcision.<sup>xix</sup>

Suspicion of Judaic background extended even as far as to the Franciscan missionaries who exercised the authority of the Mexican Inquisition in the New Mexican colony. The investigation into the *limpieza de sangre* of Fray Esteban de Perea, nominated to the position of *custos* (superior) in 1629, contained testimony alleging that the nominee's ancestors had been Jewish.<sup>xx</sup> The Franciscan authorities chose to overlook this po-

tentially damaging evidence, however, and confirmed to Perea.



IN THE WAKE OF THE RECONQUEST of New Mexico by Governor Diego de Vargas in 1692-1693, 13 years after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, came a new wave of settlers to recolonize New Mexico. The account of the new colonists that accompanied Vargas in 1693, and of those recruited by Juan Páez Hurtado two years later, reveal some familiar names and demographic profiles, strongly suggesting a renewed crypto-Jewish presence. Vargas's secretary, for example, was Alonso Rael de Aguilar. A persistent family legend recounted by the present-day descendants of Rael holds that the name derives from 'Israel'. This story is supported by an examination of the baptismal records from the mission church of Isleta, where two entries from the year 1756 include references to María Manuela Israel de Aguilar, the grand-daughter of Alonso.<sup>xxi</sup> Alonso Rael de Aguilar was born in the south-eastern Spanish town of Lorca, in the province of Murcia in 1661, the son of Juan de Osca and Juliana Rael

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***"The colonists of the 1690s  
reveal names with a  
crypto-Jewish character"***

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de Aguilar.<sup>xxii</sup> Fifteenth century records from Lorca reveal the Jewish origins of the Rael family, citing the presence of a dry-goods merchant, known as 'the son of Rael, who had turned to become a Christian'.<sup>xxiii</sup> Furthermore, documentation from the Inquisition of Murcia indicates that the Holy Office had embarked on a concerted campaign against the crypto-Jewish community of Lorca in 1681-1682, just prior to the appearance of Alonso Rael de Aguilar in the New World,<sup>xxiv</sup> suggesting a possible motivation for his migration to the far northern frontier of Mexico.



INTERVIEWS WITH HISPANOS in various parts of New Mexico reveal traditions suggestive of the continuity of a Judaic heritage. Although the customs practised by these individuals still await analysis by Latin American Institute folklore scholars, a description of some of these observances might be helpful in exploring cultural links between the practitioners and their possible converso forbears.<sup>xxv</sup>

Certain customs revolve around Sabbath observances, where several informants speak of celebrating the Sabbath on Saturday rather than

Sunday. Typically, these families would stop all work on Friday afternoon, change bed linen, take baths, give children haircuts and prepare a festive meal. Following the meal, according to some oral accounts, an elder would read to the family from the Old Testament. No work would be performed all day Saturday, and the family's labours would resume on Sunday.

Welcoming the Sabbath on Friday night by lighting candles is perhaps the most common folk practice encountered during the course of the interviews. This custom would normally take place away from public view, either in an interior room, behind drawn curtains, in a bathroom, basement or underground storage room. Some informants recall a blessing accompanying this ceremony, but none could specifically remember the nature of the prayer. One informant related that his family would gather in front of the bay window every Friday evening, kneel and pray rosary; but with each decade of the rosary, off in a corner out of view, a candle would be lit.

Observance of Jewish dietary customs is also common among many informants. Abstinence from eating pork appears to be the most prevalent, and avoiding consumption of dairy and meat products together in the same meal

occurs with some regularity. Another custom reported is the slaughtering of meat in the traditional kosher fashion. The butcher recites a benediction prior to the killing, indicating to God that the animal's life is not being taken wantonly, but only for the support of the family's sustenance. The animal is then tied upside down and the jugular vein is quickly slit, allowing all the blood to drain, for the consumption of blood is considered to be a sin. In certain cases, the meat is soaked in salt in order to ensure that not one drop of blood remains. In only one case have I encountered an informant removing the sciatic nerve from the forequarter in accordance with the Jewish custom of porging.



ONE OF THE LEAST AMBIGUOUS Jewish customs encountered to date is that of infant male circumcision. Not only is circumcision generally not found among Catholic communities, but the custom is decidedly non-Catholic. In the early years of Christianity, an intense debate raged between advocates of adherence to ancient Jewish tradi-

tions and those who rejected most of these rites. The Apostle Paul served as the principal spokesman for the latter position, focusing on the elimination of the requirement of circumcision in the conversion of Gentiles. Paul argued that in the age of the new religion, circumcision was irrelevant, that it was far more important for Christians to follow other aspects of the law. Circumcision of the heart, in Paul's view, was more important than circumcision of the flesh. Moreover, conversion of the Gentiles could be accomplished far more effectively with the elimination of this exclusivist requirement.<sup>xxvi</sup>

In the apostolic assembly that was convened to determine the matter, Paul's position triumphed. From that point on, circumcision was no longer to be practised in Christians. So sharp was the difference between those who engaged in this practice and those who did not, that centuries later, the discovery of circumcision among defendants accused of practising secret Judaism in colonial Mexico was cited as compelling evidence of guilt by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.<sup>xxvii</sup>

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***“Welcoming the Sabbath  
on Friday night by lighting  
candles is the most com-  
mon folk practice”***

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Because of the popularity of circumcision in the United States after the 1930s, and especially after World War II, I concern myself with informants who related accounts of cir-

cumcision that predate this era. In some cases, informants indicate that they are the only ones in their peer group who had undergone the ritual procedure. In others, I find entire communities that observe this tradition. In one town I interviewed two brothers, both in their 70s or 80s. When I asked them about their practice, they expressed surprise that I would ask such an obvious question, and responded that every male in the community was circumcised, the function performed by the midwife. An interview in another town revealed that all the circumcisions were performed by an old man who had a reputation for praying in secret with a shawl over his head. The head of a midwife referral clinic imparted to me that she had been told by an elderly woman that the circumcision represented a secret covenant with God.

Certain Jewish holidays appear with greater frequency than others. Purim, or the fast of Esther, seems to be one of the most observed occasions. It has been reported that in some communities in northern New Mexico, people venerate a St. Esther. Passover, which falls during the Christian

Holy Week, is often marked by the consumption of unleavened bread in the form of *pan galleta* (cracker bread) or *pan de semita* (bread with small seeds).

Emphasis on the Old Testament, often to the exclusion of the New, appears to figure prominently in the belief structure. Tomás Atencio has hypothesized that many crypto-Jews took advantage of the opportunity to convert from Catholicism to Presbyterianism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for the purpose of gaining access to the Old Testament. As Catholics, they were not traditionally encouraged to read the Bible. Old Testament first names began to surface among New Mexico crypto-Jewish families, both Catholic and Protestant alike, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and have continued to the present. Names such as Abrán, Jacobo, Isác, Moises, Salamon, Rubén, Leví, Efren, David, Sara, Rebeca, Raquel, Lea, Esther and even Adonay (the Hebrew word for God) are common among this group. Last names, too, sometimes reflect Hebrew origins. Traditions in certain families hold that 'Cobos' derives from 'Jacobos', 'Leiva' from 'Levy', and as seen above, 'Rael' from 'Israel'.



IN THE 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY, endogamy was extremely prevalent

among the crypto-Jews of Mexico. This tradition appears to have continued in New Mexico as well. Several informants indicate that marriage to other crypto-Jews was considered essential, especially in the years prior to World War II when most marriages were still arranged by families. Even among those who are not aware of their Judaic origins, certain families are considered to be 'safe' to marry into, and others forbidden. As recently as 1987, one young woman in her early 20s related to me that her family coerced her to break off a relationship with her boyfriend because he was not 'of the faith'.

Evidence from medical research, as well, appears to link Hispano families with a Jewish past. The emergence of a rare skin disease, *pemphigus vulgaris*, has been diagnosed in 18 patients in New Mexico and El Paso, 13 of them Hispanos. This dermatological disorder normally occurs in about one in every million people, and is found four times more frequently among Jews than among the general population. HLA (Human Leucocyte Antigen) genetic testing was performed on the 13 Hispano pemphigus patients, and 12 of the 13 re-

vealed the genome and protein sequencing associated with Jewish patients. Oral history interviews were conducted with seven of the 12 individuals. Two were conscious of the Jewish heritage of their families, and four others demonstrated cultural practices associated with crypto-Judaism but expressed no awareness of any Judaism in their background. Only one of the seven patients displayed neither a consciousness nor admission of practices.<sup>xxviii</sup>



THE INCREASING AWARENESS OF a crypto-Jewish heritage among the Hispano community in New Mexico provides us with the opportunity to re-examine several fundamental questions relating to the motivations for exploration and settlement of the far northern frontier in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, migration and trade relationships between Mexico and New Mexico through the Spanish colonial period, demographic patterns demonstrated by Hispanos over the course of the past 400 years, relations between the crypto-Jewish community and the *Ashkenazim* who arrived from Germany and Eastern Europe in the mid-

19<sup>th</sup> century, and the predisposition of crypto-Jews toward certain diseases. But more importantly, perhaps, the emergence of the

ethnic element allows us to reconsider some basic cultural assumptions about Hispanos and about Jews—that some of our long-held stereotypes about the origin and makeup of both groups are subject to question. These findings, preliminary as they are, permit us to examine the commonality of the cultural history of both groups, and help us understand in a more meaningful way who we are as a community.

#### Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge The Max and Anna Levinson Foundation, The Albert and Ethel Herzstein Foundation and The Hyman and Marjorie Weinberg Foundation, for their support of the research that formed the basis of this article.

A version of this article was presented as part of a session entitled, 'Insulation and Endurance', at The Power of Ethnic Identities in the Southwest Conference, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, September 24, 1994. This article was first published in the Journal of the West, Kansas State University Press, Manhattan, Kansas.



## NOTES

- i. Alfonso Toro, *La Familia Carvajal* (Mexico: Editorial Patria, 1944), I, 25-26
- ii. *Ibid.*, 39-40; Archivo General de Indias (Spain) (hereafter cited as AGI), Indiferente, 416, Legajo 7, fols. 1-27v.
- iii. For details on the activities of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo, see Seymour B. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain: Faith, Flame and the Inquisition* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1970), chaps. 7 & 8; Martin Cohen, *The Martyr* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973); Seymour B. Liebman, *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1967); Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 169-171; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal*.
- iv. Archivo Histórico Nacional (Spain) (hereafter cited as AHN), Inquisición, Legajo 1047, fols. 168r&v, Correspondence from Supreme Council of the Inquisition to Mexican Tribunal, Madrid, Aug. 20, 1588.
- v. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition*, 170; Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, 131-182; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal*, I, 354.
- vi. Cohen, *The Martyr*, 103-104.
- vii. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamascado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 28-39.
- viii. Seymour B. Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews in the New World* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1974), 1-164.
- ix. Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery*, 39-48.
- x. Alonso de León, *Relación y discursos del descubrimiento, población y pacificación de este Nuevo Reino de León* ((México), 1649), republished in *Historia de Nuevo León* (Monterrey: Centro de Estudios Humanísticos de la Universidad de Nuevo León, 1961) 60.
- xi. AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 1049, fols. 7r&v, Correspondence from Mexican Tribunal to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, Mexico, Mar. 31, 1595.
- xii. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 5; Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador: Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 58.
- xiii. José Antonio Esquibel, 'The Jewish/Converso Ancestry of Don Juan de Oñate', lecture presented to the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, Albuquerque, July 23, 1996.
- xiv. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 130, 148, 158-160; Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery*, 245-295.
- xv. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 158, 286-301; Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews*; Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico) (hereafter cited as AGN), Inquisición, Tomo 154, exp. 2, 'Proceso contra Costanza Rodríguez, Portuguesa, muger de Sebastian Rodrigues, Portugues, tratante en mercaderías...', fols. 50-64v.
- xvi. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 297; Tulane University, Latin American Library, Liebman Collection, Box 2, Vol. 5, fols. 194-197, AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 309, fols. 171-200 (typescript), 'Causa contra Cristóbal de Herrera, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Zacatecas...' (1614). Both the Inquisition trial and the Oñate muster roll indicate that Herrera was born in Jerez de la Frontera, the son of Juan de Herrera.
- xvii. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 293; AGI, Contratación, Legajo 2455, no.2, ramo 27, Pasajeros a Indias; AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 132, exp. 17; Legajo 133, exps. 1-4, 45-46.
- xviii. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 102-108; AGN Inquisición, Lote Riva Palacio, Tomo 12, exp. 3, 'Proceso contra Baltasar Rodriguez de Andrada, o de Carvajal...' (1589).
- xix. Fray Angelico Chavez, *Origins of New Mexico Families in the Spanish Colonial Period* (1954; Santa Fe, NM: William Gannon, 1975), 35-36; AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 583, exp. 3, 'Proceso y causa criminal contra El Sargento Mayor Francisco Gómez Robledo por sospechoso de delitos del Judaismo...' (1661), fols. 341, 360, 379v-380v.
- xx. AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 268, exp. 5, 'Carta de la inquisición de Llerena acompañando datos acerca de la genealogía de Fray Esteban de Perea, franciscano' (1630), fols. 1-3v.
- xxi. Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Baptisms, Mission of Isleta, Reel 5, frames 227, 229.
- xxii. Archivo Parroquial de San Mateo (Lorca), Libro de Bautismos, Feb. 8, 1661.
- xxiii. Archivo Municipal de Lorca, Libro de Propios, 1473-1474, 8 de octubre de 1474, fols. 3v-4r, cited in: Francisco de Asís Veas Arteseros, *Los judíos de Lorca en la Baja Edad Media* (Múrcia: Real Academia Alfonso X El Sabio, 1992), 63-64; and Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar, 'La frontera murciano-granadina: crisol de hombres y culturas (1470-1475)', in *Proyección histórica de España en sus tres culturas: Castilla y León, América y el Mediterráneo* (Madrid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1993).
- xxiv. Juan Blázquez Miguel, 'Catálogo de los procesos inquisitoriales del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de Múrcia', *Murgetana*, 74 (1987). Further research is planned into the trial records of the Inquisition of Múrcia to ascertain if specific reference is made to Alonso Rael de Aguilar or his family.
- xxv. I claim no credentials or expertise as a folklore scholar, nor do I make any attempt to offer any sophisticated anthropological analysis of the customs described below. Not as a folklorist, but rather as an historian, I use the observations herein as a means to identify individuals who might have descended from *conversos* who migrated from Spain and Portugal to the northern frontier of New Spain centuries ago.
- xxvi. See, for example, Wayne A. Weeks, ed. *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 11-12, 20-22, 33, 72-75; Lucien Cerfaux, *The Spiritual Journey of Saint Paul* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 165; Gunter Bornkamm, *Paul* (1969; New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 10, 32-34, 38; Benjamin W. Robinson, *The Life of Paul* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1918), 95-101; Giuseppe Ricciotti, *Paul the Apostle* (Miwaukee, WI: the Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 272-277.
- xxvii. See Stanley M. Hordes, *The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649; A Collective Biography* (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1980), 120-122; Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, 75-76.

xxviii. Stanley M. Hordes and Kristine Bordenave, M.D., 'Pemphigus Vulgaris among Hispanos, and its

Connection to Crypto-Judaism in New Mexico', *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Latin American*

*Jewish Studies Association* (forthcoming).

# GENEALOGY



## The Dorot Genealogy Centre & the Shealtiels

*This is the lecture given by Diana Sommer, of the Jewish Genealogy Centre in Beth Hatefutsoth, Tel-Aviv, at the reunion in Salonika on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1997.*

IN 1984, A YOUNG medical student named Douglas Goldman came to Beth Hatefutsoth, the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, with a very large family tree. He wanted to record it in the museum's database, but at the time there were only two databases: The Origin of Jewish Family Names and The History of Jewish Communities. When he was told that there was no database of family trees, he replied, "Then I'll give the money to create one." It may seem strange that a medical student could afford such a project, but Douglas Goldman is the great great nephew of Levi Strauss, the jeans manufacturer.



IN 1985, THE DOUGLAS E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Centre opened with 20 family trees taken from published family books: Douglas' family on four sides—the Haases, the Goldmans, the Steins and the Kaufmanns; the Sassoons, a well known Iraqi family; the Rothschilds; the Guggenheims; the Servadios; the Lauterbachs; two family trees of retired General Aharon Doron, BH director at the time, the Weilheimers and the Neuburgers; the Lurias; the Picciottos; the Feuchtwangers; the Kaullas; the Ellises; the Frumkins; the Auerbachs and others.

Since then, Jewish families from around the world have registered their own family trees in our database, in order to preserve their family histories for future generations and to help them find links with other families. Today the database comprises over 700,000 names on almost 3,000 family trees, and is growing daily as new trees are registered.

### Registering a family tree

The best, easiest and least expensive method of registering a family tree is to use a genealogy software program. The Jewish Genealogy Centre is now coming out with a new software program specifically designed for Jewish genealogy—*Ilanot* for Windows—which should be available by the end of September. Anyone wishing to be notified

when the program is available can send us their name, address, phone number and e-mail address and we will notify them. In addition to our program, any genealogy software program with a GEDCOM utility can be used to register a family tree in the Jewish Genealogy Centre. To register a tree, one can send us a family tree on diskette in GEDCOM format (PAF form) and it will be entered into our database, free of charge. GEDCOM files can be sent to us by mail or by e-mail as an attachment, or of course brought to us at the Centre.

Family trees can also be registered manually by sending us the information in graph or list form showing the relationship between family members. The cost for manual registration is US\$1.00 per name.



WHY IS THE JEWISH Genealogy Centre so important? Jewish families, like the Shealtiel family, were dispersed all over the world. They often left behind personal belongings and loved ones. They took with them only their memories, but rarely wrote them down. Today it is possible to record the information we have and preserve it for future generations. What we know today will be lost if it is not recorded.

One day a Danish trapeze artist by the name of Jean Ascher came into the Centre and told us the following story. After his mother died, he received a phone call from the Jewish community in Copenhagen, asking him if he wanted his mother to have a Jewish burial. It was the first time he had heard that he was Jewish. From that time he began to research his family. When he came to Israel with his traveling circus, the first thing he did was to come to the Jewish Genealogy Centre to register his family tree so that his daughter would know her roots.

Not only do we affect individual lives, but we sometimes affect Israeli foreign policy too. We were contacted by the Israeli Foreign Office with a request they had received from the Foreign Minister of Capo Verde, an island off the west

coast of Africa, formerly a Portuguese colony. Diplomatic relations with Israel had been established just the year before. The foreign minister, who happens to be the brother of Capo Verde's Prime Minister, was looking for his Jewish roots. The family name was Wahnon. We searched our records and sure enough, we found his entire family tree. The Foreign Minister was so excited that he changed his itinerary for his first visit to Israel to include the Genealogy Centre. When he and his entourage came to the Centre, they brought pictures of the gravestones of their ancestors with Hebrew inscriptions. Since then diplomatic relations have flourished and included cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries.

As an institution, the Jewish Genealogy Centre provides the family researcher with the opportunity to deposit his/her life's work for safekeeping, with the assurance that it will be preserved and made available to future generations.

#### **What is our connection to the Shealtiel Family?**

In November 1993, Miles Saltiel from London visited the Genealogy Centre and told me that the family was holding its first international reunion in Amsterdam in 1994, and that they would like me to participate. At the Amsterdam reunion I gave a talk on the Genealogy Centre, and worked with Moshe Shaltiel and Ed Motola in the genealogy workshops to connect the various branches of the family. At the end of the Reunion I was presented with the diskettes of the family trees that were gathered at the reunion, and these were entered into the Genealogy Centre's database at the Museum. Since that time we have received many diskettes with updates and additions to the family trees. Today more than 3,000 Shealtiel family members are recorded in our database.

Some time after the reunion, I was approached by Natan Caspi of Israel Television, who told me that he wanted to make a program about a Jewish family or families and asked if I could suggest anyone. As I had been very impressed by the family reunion and the fascinating history of the Shealtiel family, I immediately suggested he contact Miles Saltiel—the rest is history.

Since then I have been in frequent contact with Moshe Shaltiel (Chicago). Moshe has been doing

incredible work researching the family history. I invited him to talk at a course on preparing family trees that I gave this year, and he was a great success!



THE GENEALOGY CENTRE has thousands of visitors each month. Amongst them are tourists from around the world, Israelis, new immigrants, school children, soldiers, youth groups from abroad, VIPs and teachers. People contact us from all over the world. We receive over a hundred letters, faxes, e-mails and phone calls each week from people looking for information... one may be your long lost relative and if you have registered your tree, they will find you!

In May 1996 a small advertisement was placed in the *Nachrichten aus Israel*, a periodical of the German Church in Israel. The wording in loose translation was "Were Your Forefathers Jewish?... As a Christian with a special love for Israel and the Jewish people, maybe you have Jewish ancestry. If you would like to know, write to this address..." The ad also claimed that I speak

German, which I don't. Since the article appeared, we have received almost 200 letters from Germany, Switzerland, Scotland,

the US, Jerusalem and even from a monastery in the Northern Galilee, asking us to check whether their names have Jewish roots. The letters generally contain quotes from the Bible, expressions of love for Israel and the Jewish people, and a hope that we will find that they do indeed have Jewish roots.

And some do indeed come from Jewish families. For example, one man named Daniel Bender from Frankfurt, came to us seeking his Jewish roots. It seems that there was a Jewish banking family in Frankfurt by the same name. Another man wrote that his grandfather was illegitimate and that his parents were Abraham Rosenfeld and Sarah Birenbaum who converted on the day they were married. During the Nazi era his father made sure that he was not registered as a half-Jew. One or two letters were even anti-Semitic. One man wrote that people say he looks Jewish and therefore he thinks he's Jewish. One woman wrote that she looks Jewish and that in school she was harassed because of this. We also received a letter from a missionary in Kenya who wanted us to verify that the Massai are one of the ten lost tribes!

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***"In November 1993, Miles Saltiel from London visited the Centre"***

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### How to access the Genealogy Centre's database

The Visitors' Centre has three computer stations for the public. There is a docent in attendance at all times to assist with the database and answer questions. Opening hours of the Centre are: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm, Wednesday from 10 am to 5 pm, Friday from 9 am to 1 pm.

The cost is US\$2.00 for a 15-minute computer session. Information can be printed out. Descendant charts of family trees can be ordered for \$1 per page, the number of pages depending on the size of family tree.

Search requests (up to 4 names per search) can be made through our web site. We will let you know what we find and how many names appear in the database. We will send the list of names (up to 100 names). The cost for a search is \$5, which can be paid by credit card or cheque. We can also provide the names and addresses of the submitters of the family trees.

The Genealogy Centre has a small but growing reference library with approximately 600 family books and reference books on Jewish genealogy. In addition we have a collection of 1152 microfilms of Jewish birth, marriage, and death records from Poland, dating back to approximately 1830-1880.

These microfilms are being translated and transliterated, and entered onto special forms which are being computerized. So far we have translated over 17,500 records—7,500 records from Warsaw, approximately 1,000 records from Tarnow, 6,000 from Bendzin, 1,500—2,000 records from Bialystok and 1,000 from Krakow. REIPP (Russian Era Indexing of Poland Project) is entering the computerized records into their website.

This year we held our second annual family tree competition called "My Family's Story" among junior high school students in Israel. More than

5,000 students, from Carmiel in the north to Yotvata in the south, participated. This year, a school from Venezuela participated. Next year we hope to include more schools from around the world. The awards ceremony was held on June 9 and was attended by over 300 people including Mr Moshe Katzav, Deputy Prime Minister and Tourism Minister of Israel, Mr. Roni Milo, Mayor of Tel Aviv and other notables as well as the winning students. Next year's competition will be held under the theme of Israel's 50th Independence Day.

The Genealogy Centre also gives teaching seminars and roots workshops for various groups: teachers, employees of the Israel Aircraft Industry, youth groups from abroad, UJA family missions, soldiers, adult education groups, and police officers.

In the Beth Hatefutsoth website you can access information on the Museum's activities and latest exhibitions and request searches from the Genealogy Centre, from the Origin of Jewish Names database and from the History of Jewish Communities database, as well as receive information about the other departments of the Museum. Our website is: <http://www.bh.org.il>.

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***"Jewish family trees are recorded to ensure that our great grandchildren will find their family"***

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In late September we will be coming out with a new software program—Ilanot for Windows, designed especially for Jewish genealogy. This program is designed to record a family tree on a home computer and to send a copy of the family tree on diskette to the Genealogy Centre for registration.



THE DOUGLAS E. GOLDMAN Jewish Genealogy Centre is the genealogy Centre of the Jewish people. Jewish family trees are recorded and preserved to ensure that our grandchildren and great grandchildren, in 50 or 100 years from now, will find their own family recorded here. The search for family history will strengthen each person's ties with his own family and with his Jewish past, present and future.

## Follow-up to Salonika '97—a message from the Editor

### **The future**

I wrote to all of the family after the reunion, seeking thoughts as to how we might go forward. Many thanks to all of you who replied.

As a result of the responses which have come in, a number of those most interested in taking up the baton are getting together over the next few months.

I expect to have more to report on this in future issues.

### **Other follow-on**

The following must be—I fear—something of a litany of apologies.

Since the end of the Reunion I have been plunged into a frenzy of activity at work, which— together with my obligations to this *Gazette* and other family business—has left me with insufficient time to discharge some of the duties which I took on at Salonika.

Specifically, I have been slow—if not altogether failing—in my preparation of such materials as the Reunion Video, The Archive interviews, the Family Book, and the Group Photo.

### **Reunion Video**

This is now complete and has been sent out to all those who placed orders. I enjoyed editing the video and I hope that those of you who have it will also enjoy it as souvenir of a thrilling occasion.

Unlike last time, that is for the Amsterdam reunion, I do not propose to solicit further orders. This is because I have learned that I cannot hope to recover my expenses from any charge that might be reasonably acceptable to members of the family. So if you want a copy, may I suggest that you make one from that of a Saltiel in your neck of the woods.

### **Archive interviews**

The hold up here has been that we agreed to let the film-maker, Ilan Ziv, hang on to these for a while, in return for the camera and film he provided to make them. I have now got them but not yet reviewed them.

If my experience of Amsterdam is any precedent, there will not be a lot of work to these; simply a bit of editing to get rid of gaps and a few subtitles. Even so this will take an irreducible amount of time over a weekend in an edit suite as well as subsequent copying. I hope to get this done over the next six weeks, but if anyone is screaming with frustration I will let them have their money back with my apologies.

### **Family Book**

I make the same offer to the larger number who are awaiting the family book. If you are simply fed up with waiting, let me know, and I will refund your money.

The book is pretty much complete, that is there is little to be added to the text available as a

sample in Salonika. I do however have to consider the matter of photos, as well as such additional material as has been submitted since, largely through the Shealtiel Web-site.

The business of photos is particularly perplexing to me as a single page of colour photos costs twenty times as much to print as a page of black and white text. I hope that everyone will understand if the economics of the matter make it impossible for your favourite photo—or perhaps any—to appear.

As for the timing of this, I hope—as with the Archive interviews—to complete within six weeks or so.

### **Group Photo**

The sad fact is that this hasn't worked out. You will recall that the busses didn't turn up so we missed our date with the photographer at the White Tower. Although several photos were taken by members of the family, all—for one reason or another—fall short of a satisfactory standard.

In this light, I would invite you to accept the photo on the cover of this issue of the *Gazette* as your souvenir picture of us all.

Many thanks for your understanding

*Miles Saltiel*

It's the end of August and London is experiencing the last days of summer. Having spent the last couple of weeks complaining about the oppressive heat, we are now all mourning the passing of summer. No wonder I find myself looking back to those few days in Salonica. Although not much of a holiday—I rarely had the opportunity to leave the Hotel—the reunion was quite an eye-opener for me.

Let me introduce myself for those of you who don't already know me. I was employed by Miles to co-ordinate the staging of the Salonica reunion. Arranging for over 150 people to meet in a hotel in Greece was certainly no small task. After two months buried beneath a mountain of paper in the basement here at Gloucester Square, I finally flew out to Salonica for the long-awaited Shealtiel Family Reunion.



And what an experience it was. I had not expected to see such emotionally intense scenes which left me feeling overwhelmed, but inspired. Without wishing to sound overly sentimental, I must confess to feeling that the whole experience influenced my frame of mind and outlook for the future in a way that I would never have imagined possible.

With all preparation I had done for the reunion—reservations, dealings with the Jewish community in Salonica, negotiations with hot-headed Greek hoteliers and restaurateurs—I had given little thought to how these administrative details would eventually become a reality. I could reel off the names of all the Saltiels in an instant, but had no idea of the faces or personalities that would accompany them.

The only picture I had in my mind was of the inevitable

chaos that would ensue once the Shealtiels attempted to check in together at the Capsis.

The very nature of the reunion meant that there was little time for small talk. Many people had never met and were hoping to seek out distant family. Others were hoping to catch up with family they had met in Amsterdam—and with only three days to do so. Wherever I was, I overheard snippets of conversations—births, deaths, marriages—fortunes good and bad. But I wasn't just eavesdropping. I connected with some people very quickly. People who shared their life experiences with me with little, if any, prompting. Far from being made to feel like the outsider, I was welcomed as part of the overall experience.



For many British Jews of my

### *The view from Gloucester Square*

generation, the Holocaust is something of an overbearing ghost that we have no idea how to approach or communicate with. A generation or two down the line we are removed from the experience by time, as well as twist of fate that allowed British Jewry to emerge from this attempted genocide virtually untouched. This is certainly the case for my mother's family. My father is a sixth generation Israeli on his mother's side, and the son of a Polish father who arrived in Israel as a child with no knowledge of his family's fate. I have no personal connection with the Holocaust. Meeting people in Salonica whose lives and families had been so deeply affected by this tragic episode in Jewish history was a first for me. Those whose immediate families had originated in Salonica provide living testimony to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Far from being just a family reunion, Salonica was something of a microcosm of the whole Jewish Experience. A generally *Sephardic* culture, mixed with elements of *Ashkenazi* traditions introduced over the generations, and scattered throughout the world.

To see all my hard work come to fruition with relatively few hitches, gave me a great sense of achievement. While I expected nothing in return, I was flattered and touched by the number of people who approached me with thanks for my efforts.

Salonica meant much more to me than a week's 'break' and the chance to add a couple of extra lines to my CV. I came away feeling that I had seen history in the making, and I also learnt a lot about myself. I would never imagined myself capable of staging this event, but I did, and I feel I did it rather well.



Coming home was not easy though. My body had been running on adrenaline for a week. Suddenly here I was back in the basement at Gloucester Square, confronted with all the filing that had built up over the course of the last two months. I was feeling very unloved—the phone barely rang and CompuServe regularly relished in telling me that my mailbox was empty—talk about anti-climax!! I was back in the country for a couple of days before deciding to jet off to a friend's wedding in Israel and spend some time with my own family. Of course they all wanted to know when I would be staging the First International Kolirin Reunion.

It's an unlikely eventuality, but stranger things have happened...

*Lianne Kolirin*

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SHEALTIEL GAZETTE; VOL III,NO III; WINTER 1997.



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- <sup>i</sup> Alfonso Toro, *La Familia Carvajal* (Mexico: Editorial Patria, 1944), I, 25-26
- <sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-4; Archivo General de Indias (Spain) (hereafter cited as AGI), Indiferente, 416, Legajo 7, fols. 1-27v.
- <sup>iii</sup> For details on the activities of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo, see Seymour B. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain: Faith, Flame and the Inquisition* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1970), chaps. 7 & 8; Martin Cohen, *The Martyr* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973); Seymour B. Liebman, *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1967); Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 169-171; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal*.
- <sup>iv</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional (Spain) (hereafter cited as AHN), Inquisición, Legajo 1047, fols. 168r&v, Correspondence from Supreme Council of the Inquisition to Mexican Tribunal, Madrid, Aug. 20, 1588.
- <sup>v</sup> Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition*, 170; Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, 131-182; Toro, *La Familia Carvajal*, I, 354.
- <sup>vi</sup> Cohen, *The Martyr*, 103-104.
- <sup>vii</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamascado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 28-39.
- <sup>viii</sup> Seymour B. Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews in the New World* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1974), 1-164.
- <sup>ix</sup> Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery*, 39-48.
- <sup>x</sup> Alonso de León, *Relación y discursos del descubrimiento, población y pacificación de este Nuevo Reino de León* ((México), 1649), republished in *Historia de Nuevo León* (Monterrey: Centro de Estudios Humanísticos de la Universidad de Nuevo León, 1961) 60.
- <sup>xi</sup> AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 1049, fols. 7r&v, Correspondence from Mexican Tribunal to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, Mexico, Mar. 31, 1595.
- <sup>xii</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 5; Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador: Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 58.
- <sup>xiii</sup> José Antonio Esquivel, 'The Jewish/*Converso* Ancestry of Don Juan de Oñate', lecture presented to the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, Albuquerque, July 23, 1996.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 130, 148, 158-160; Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery*, 245-295.
- <sup>xv</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 158, 286-301; Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews*; Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico) (hereafter cited as AGN), Inquisición, Tomo 154, exp. 2, 'Proceso contra Costanza Rodríguez, Portuguesa, muger de Sebastian Rodrigues, Portugues, tratante en mercaderías...', fols. 50-64v.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 297; Tulane University, Latin American Library, Liebman Collection, Box 2, Vol. 5, fols. 194-197, AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 309, fols. 171-200 (typescript), 'Causa contra Cristóbal de Herrera, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Zacatecas...' (1614). Both the Inquisition trial and the Oñate muster roll indicate that Herrera was born in Jeréz de la Frontera, the son of Juan de Herrera.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 293; AGI, Contratación, Legajo 2455, no.2, ramo 27, Pasajeros a Indias; AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 132, exp. 17; Legajo 133, exps. 1-4, 45-46.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 102-108; AGN Inquisición, Lote Riva Palacio, Tomo 12, exp. 3, 'Proceso contra Baltasar Rodriguez de Andrada, o de Carvajal...' (1589).
- <sup>xix</sup> Fray Angelico Chavez, *Origins of New Mexico Families in the Spanish Colonial Period* (1954; Santa Fe, NM: William Gannon, 1975), 35-36; AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 583, exp. 3, 'Proceso y causa criminal contra El Sargento Mayor Francisco Gómez Robledo por sospechoso de delitos del Judaismo...' (1661), fols. 341, 360, 379v-380v.
- <sup>xx</sup> AGN, Inquisición, Tomo 268, exp. 5, 'Carta de la inquisición de Llerena acompañando datos acerca de la genealogía de Fray Esteban de Perea, franciscano' (1630), fols. 1-3v.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Baptisms, Mission of Isleta, Reel 5, frames 227, 229.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Archivo Parroquial de San Mateo (Lorca), Libro de Bautismos, Feb. 8, 1661.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Archivo Municipal de Lorca, Libro de Propios, 1473-1474, 8 de octubre de 1474, fols. 3v-4r, cited in: Francisco de Asís Veas Arteseros, *Los judíos de Lorca en la Baja Edad Media* (Múrcia: Real Academia Alfonso X El Sabio, 1992), 63-64; and Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar, 'La frontera murciano-granadina: crisol de hombres y culturas (1470-1475)', in *Proyección histórica de España en sus tres culturas: Castilla y León, América y el Mediterráneo* (Madrid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1993).
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Juan Blázquez Miguel, 'Catálogo de los procesos inquisitoriales del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de Múrcia', *Murgetana*, 74 (1987). Further research is planned into the trial records of the Inquisition of Múrcia to ascertain if specific reference is made to Alonso Rael de Aguilar or his family.
- <sup>xxv</sup> I claim no credentials or expertise as a folklore scholar, nor do I make any attempt to offer any sophisticated anthropological analysis of the customs described below. Not as a folklorist, but rather as an historian, I use the observations herein as a means to identify individuals who might have descended from *conversos* who migrated from Spain and Portugal to the northern frontier of New Spain centuries ago.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> See, for example, Wayne A. Weeks, ed. *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 11-12, 20-22, 33, 72-75; Lucien Cerfaux, *The Spiritual Journey of Saint Paul* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 165; Gunter Bornkamm, *Paul* (1969; New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 10, 32-34, 38; Benjamin W. Robinson, *The Life of Paul* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1918), 95-101; Giuseppe Ricciotti, *Paul the Apostle* (Miwaukee, WI: the Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 272-277.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> See Stanley M. Hordes, *The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649; A Collective Biography* (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1980), 120-122; Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain*, 75-76.

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<sup>xxviii</sup> Stanley M. Hordes and Kristine Bordenave, M.D., 'Pemphigus Vulgaris among Hispanos, and its Connection to Crypto-Judaism in New Mexico', *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association* (forthcoming).