

New Mexico Hispanics, Crypto-Jews, Safartic, Converso, Marrano, Jews, or Catholic?

One first needs to understand the different names.

Safartic- The Jews in or from Spain who have unique customs, music, and language.

Converso (Marrano)- New Christians who converted from Judaism and are no longer Jewish.

Crypto- Professed Catholics who secretly keep their Jewish religion and laws.

Old Christians- People who had been Catholic for at least three generations.

Many Catholic New Mexicans have Safartic- Converso- Hebrew genetic lines, some dating back to 11th Century in Spain, and include the same family lines as the Virgin Mary. Catholic New Mexicans are thankful to our Pagan and Jewish ancestors, who were converted by the apostles and saints.

Some recent authors have claimed the early New Mexican settlers were Crypto-Jews hiding their religious practices for 300 years. After 1848 when any of the “Crypto-Jews” were free to worship as Jews how many families left the Catholic Church?

Blood Purity--- Hispanics believe they are a “cosmic race” whose ancestors include all the major peoples of the world ancient and modern. The Catholic Church has never discriminated. Spanish government records show every combination of “interracial Catholic marriage”.

Blood Purity is also misrepresented when it is used in relation to the former Jews the Conversos. It was believed that after three generations as Catholics all Jewish traditions and beliefs that differed from Catholicism would no longer exist, and the third generation Converso Catholics (old Christians) would be able to bring a **pure** form of Catholicism free of heresy to the New World, to monasteries, and universities.

In B. Netanyahu’s book ORIGINS OF THE INQUISITION IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPAIN 1995 ed., he makes it clear the Conversos (Marranos) were no longer Jewish. (crypto-Jews).

When many years ago I first approached the study of the history of the conversos and the Spanish Inquisition, there was no doubt in my mind that almost all the Marranos were crypto Jews who followed the laws of Judaism, thereby arousing the ire of the Church, which could not tolerate such conduct within its ranks. Naturally I viewed the Marranos as moral heroes who courageously withstood the terrors of the Inquisition and adhered to their faith under grueling tortures, frequently even unto death. Once again, I thought, the Jewish people, which produced the first religious martyrs in history and gave so many martyrs to the faith in the Middle Ages, demonstrated its capacity for suffering and self-sacrifice for its moral principles and religious convictions.

In 1944 I began my inquiries into the life and times of Don Isaac Abravanel, the outstanding leader of the Jewish exile from Spain (1492), and soon I was startled to come across documents that threatened to shatter my aforementioned view. To be sure, I found evidence that some of the Marranos were indeed secret adherents of Judaism. But the idealistic conception and heroic image I had of the Spanish Marranos as a group was greatly undermined by the above documents. For what they revealed was that, about the year 1460, most of the conversos were conscious assimilationists who wished to merge with the Christian society, educate their children as fully fledged Christians, and remove themselves from anything regarded as Jewish, especially in the field of religion. What is more, I discovered that this situation resulted from a long-lasting, ongoing process, so that the number of the Christianized Marranos was rising from generation to generation, while the number of clandestine Jews among them was rapidly dwindling to the vanishing point. In 1481, when the Inquisition was established, the Judaizers formed a small minority in both relative and absolute numbers. Inevitably, I came to doubt the common view concerning the reasons for the establishment of the Inquisition. If only a fraction of the Marranos were still Jewish and more and more of them kept becoming Christian, what sense was there in establishing the Inquisition? Surely there was no need to eliminate *by force* a phenomenon that was disappearing by itself.

These were the conclusions I reached in that inquiry and indicated, in part, in my work on Abravanel, which first appeared in 1953 (4th edition, 1982)..., I did not depart from my guideline i.e., the criterion

of free expression. As Jews, the Hebrew authors concerned were not subject to the Inquisition's jurisdiction and, moreover, they wrote after the Expulsion or lived outside Spain before 1492. What was common to these sources was the judgment they pronounced on the Marranos' religious beliefs and conduct. It was a progressive judgment, tending in one direction-parallel to the Marranos' own changing attitudes toward Judaism and the Jewish people; and these changes fully confirmed the results of my earlier partial investigation. What I gathered from them was that Marrano Christianization had been steadily advancing for three generations (from 1391 on), so that at the beginning of the 1480s, when the Spanish Inquisition was established, virtually all Jewish authorities in Spain and elsewhere regarded the mass of the Marranos as *renegades*-that is, as *apostates* or *gentiles*. By any of these definitions they were Christians, and in no way Judaizers or crypto Jews.

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With large numbers of Converso Catholics in the monasteries heresy started creeping in. The Inquisition was established in 1481 to reform and to establish a pure form of Catholicism and it only was used for Catholics.

It should also be understood that the Jews who converted to Catholicism in 1492 could not legally immigrate to the new world for at least three generations.

The Hispanic people have every right to reject terms like Mestizaje and crypto-Jew, that limit and pigeon hole us by race or religious origins.

The term Hispanic is used to show our long historical roots from the Stone Age caves of Altamira Spain to the present in New Mexico and honor our Greco-Roman and Phoenician ancestors who named Hispania.

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