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To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico, by Stanley M. Hordes. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. 348 pp. \$39.50.

According to this publication, a substantial number of “secret” or crypto-Jews who fled the Spanish Inquisition were among the Spanish Catholic founders of today’s New Mexican Hispano community. The book’s first two chapters reflect the author’s doctoral research on the well documented settlement of Portuguese crypto-Jews in colonial Old Mexico. But the balance of the book is a procrustean effort to identify Old Mexico’s indisputably Portuguese crypto-Jews as modern New Mexico’s indisputably Spanish founding fathers. In this way Stanley M. Hordes attempts to justify his own well documented history of misrepresenting the region’s modern, and largely Protestant, folkways, as colonial and “crypto-Jewish.”

Hordes’ claims were disconfirmed in my article in *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* in 1996 and thus remain noteworthy for their ongoing popularity, rather than their scholarly accuracy. To a significant extent, local Hispano acceptance reflects the traditional mode of asserting overvalued, white ancestral descent in the multiracial Spanish-Americas, where, as Raphael Patai wrote in his article “The Jewish Indians of Mexico,” “Spanish [white] descent, even Spanish Jewish descent, means a step up on the social scale.” At the same time, widespread Jewish acceptance seems to reflect a beleaguered peoples’ need to believe itself indomitable, as evidenced by a miraculous crypto-Jewish survival. However, despite acceptance at the popular level, it is ultimately Hordes who must go “to the end of the earth” to defend a thesis that scholarship can only refute. Not surprisingly, he does it the only way it can be done: by abandoning scholarly method and relying, instead, on serious violations of scholarship norms.

For example, Hordes introduces me to his readers as “Folklorist Judith Neulander, who has dismissed any crypto-Jewish presence in New Mexico, either historical or contemporary . . .” (p. 221). He thus misrepresents my disconfirmation of 1996, as well as my doctoral dissertation, both of which are cited in the book, and both of which clearly state: “I have consciously avoided suggesting that a crypto-Jewish presence never existed in New Mexico,” not to mention “I insist only that the crypto-Jewish canon is no evidence of that presence . . . [I keep] an open mind on the possibility of cultural variation, and that would include crypto-Judaism in New Mexico.” My position could not be clearer. Yet, in every reference to my work, Hordes makes no attempt to provide better scholarship. Rather, as in the example above, he responds to

scholarly argument the only way he can: by voicing righteous indignation at irrational positions that I have never taken.

As always, Hordes' primary research strategy is over-generalization of superficially related cultural items. In this new book he resurrects an ancient Roman gambling top (in global Hispanic use), which he earlier claimed was a variant of the Hanukkah dreydl. Long before he made this claim, however, it was refuted by scholars whose work he never consulted; the dreydl is a Yiddish toy that appeared much later, borrowed from a pagan tradition in England and Germany, which was never used by Iberian Jews. In response to this criticism, Hordes has revised the claim, now citing the toy as "crypto-Jewish" in that it was (purportedly) used by crypto-Jewish Hispanos to celebrate Hanukkah when they first learned of the Ashkenazi custom. For support, he cites a colleague who eagerly provides it (unless Hordes misrepresents him, as well) by defining "bricolage" incorrectly, sweeping it into the same category as cultural "borrowing":

Kunin believed the toy may well exemplify the anthropological concept of bricolage, or the borrowing by one culture of elements from others. . . . He held that the identification of [the local toy] with crypto-Jewish culture was: "clearly explicable within *bricolage*. . ." (p. 248)

But in his groundbreaking opus *The Savage Mind*, anthropologist Levi-Strauss used the term to describe both the process and the end product of concrete, or pre-critical, sense-making, the over-inclusive cognitive strategy by which myth-makers (e.g., would-be crypto-Jews and their academic enablers) bring self-empowering world order out of ambiguities in their environment—as by sweeping superficially related Roman and Yiddish gambling toys into an over-inclusive, self-authenticating, "Judeo-Spanish" origin myth for New Mexican Spanish-Americans. It is precisely this concrete, or over-generalizing myth-making process that Levi-Strauss describes as bricolage.

Cultural borrowing, on the other hand, refers to the highly strategic process by which cultures incorporate each others' traditions without weakening, or losing, their own cultural boundaries. A case in point is the dreydl, borrowed from a pagan winter solstice tradition and embossed with the letters of a Hebrew acronym, in order to recall a Jewish national event. Borrowing is thus an exercise in strategies of diversity, not homogeneity; it permits assimilation of other peoples' cultural items without subsuming one's own identity to the cultural Other.

What Hordes and Kunin describe—and enable—with regard to the entire crypto-Jewish canon (serial, reactionary revisions of history and tradition, the better to lose indigenous identity and gain recognition *as* the cultural

Other) differs from both bricolage and borrowing. It is, instead, the hallmark of ethnic identity-switching.

Apparently unschooled in either Iberian-Jewish history or any form of ethnography, Kristine Bordenave, a dermatologist in the Southwest, has followed Hordes' lead in subjective, crypto-Jewish over-generalization. A reprise of her article, co-authored by Hordes, appears as an Appendix to his book (pp. 289–295). For a discussion on the biological fallacy of disease-based religious labels, see my forthcoming article in *Patterns of Prejudice*. For access to an objective research design that draws conclusions based on relevant genetic data, readers should see the article by Wesley K. Sutton, et al. (in press for *Annals of Human Biology*, 2006). This study found that for all relevant Y-chromosome markers, paternal ancestry of New Mexican Hispanos is identical (except for 2.2 percent American Indian admixture) to that observed in modern, post-exilic Spain, and is highly significantly different from that of Jewish populations, including Iberian Jews. Had Hordes' claims been based on solid research, there would be a higher rate of Iberian Jewish ancestry in New Mexico, reflecting a component of post-exilic Jews among the region's Spanish settlers. But the evidence from New Mexican Hispano males is unequivocal; Hordes' claims are refuted by the genetic profile of this population.

The unsuspecting general reader will be badly misled by Hordes' book—not only on the history, culture, and genetic composition of Spanish New Mexico, but on the nature and application of scholarship norms.

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Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain, by Lucy K. Pick. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004. 239 pp. \$65.00.

Lucy Pick uses the figure of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, who was archbishop of Toledo from 1209 to 1247, to convey a rich understanding of the meaning of *convivencia* in thirteenth-century Spain. Archbishop Rodrigo is ideally suited for this purpose. Not only was he an administrator, actively contributing to the Christian victory at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, he did everything he could to enhance the position of the see of Toledo, which had a sizeable Jewish population. As a scholar he penned numerous histories, including the *De Rebus Hispanie* and a *History of the Arabs*, and he was the author of a remarkable Christian-Jewish disputation, the *Dialogus libri vite*.