

**Remaking Spain's Jews:  
*Conversos* and the Carvajal Family of Early Modern Spain and Colonial Spanish America**

My dissertation research aims to reconcile how the Carvajal family of early modern Spain and colonial Spanish America transformed itself from a singularly Sephardic Jewish family into separate arms of Jewish, Christian, and mixed-faith descendents. The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century persecution of the *conversos* (Jewish converts to Christianity) and expulsion of the Jews forced the Carvajal family to adopt survival strategies that involved religious, vocational, and geographic decisions. The Carvajals were typical of *conversos* who had, in essence, two options. They could mask their Jewish ancestry and solidify their positions as Castilian Catholic exemplars, or two, could leave Spain. In the second instance they might initially conceal their Jewish identity, but ultimately revert to their Jewish faith once outside the reaches of the Spanish Inquisition. My research documents the Carvajals' difficult family and confessional choices as they negotiated a changing world.

My research requires extensive field research in three separate stages in Spain, Mexico, and Portugal; this fellowship application seeks to fund three of the six months of research of my first stage of research. With the funds provided by the fellowship, I will commence with 1.5 months of research at the Archivo Histórico Nacional to examine eight inquisitorial inquiries of Carvajal family (1536-1671). At the Real Academia de la Historia I will review the *Salazar y Castro Collection*, which includes over 20 folios on Cardinal Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal, a key 16th century Castilian Catholic exemplar, and over 50 other on the Carvajals during the 15th through 17th century. The last 1.5 months of my investigations will shift to archival explorations in Cáceres and Badajoz. These archives are relevant to my endeavor of reconciling the Christian and Jewish Carvajal family identities and networks because the earlier identified eight Toledan Inquisition cases geographically and temporally overlap with my existing database of over 250 interrelated Carvajal family members. Put succinctly—and provocatively—the Carvajals implicated by the Inquisition simultaneously resided in the same cities as the exemplary Castilian Catholic Carvajals.

My research will innovate by unifying two differing trajectories of scholarly thought on the *conversos* of Spain, Portugal, and Mexico. On one hand, scholars such as Y. Baer and B. Netanyahu, have superbly explored the lives of Sephardic Jews and Jewish *conversos*, yet they neglect their Christian *converso* familial and kin relations. Other scholars (I. Altman, R. Kagan, and C. and W. Phillips) have focused on the early modern Spanish imperial project with particular attention to its agents in the military orders, clergy, and royal administration. However, they rarely allude to the *converso* and Jewish ancestries of many of these agents. As of yet, there is no reconciliation of these two diametrically opposed scholarly visions of the Carvajals—model Castilian Catholics and crypto-Jews. My work on the Carvajal family is critical to the field of early modern Spanish, colonial Spanish American, and religious history because it unifies Sephardic-focused *converso* scholarship with research on the Spanish imperial project in Europe and the Americas by rejuvenating the bonds of family relations.