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Dr. Richard Flores
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Dear Dr. Flores:

This grant application seeks funding for my dissertation research, which aims to reconcile how the Carvajal family transformed itself from a singularly Jewish family into separate arms of model Castilian Catholics and crypto-Jews in early modern Spain and the colonial Borderlands.

While scholarly literature on the Spanish Imperial project focuses on its idealized Castilian Catholics, such as Juan de Victoria Carvajal who served with the 16th century Oñate expedition in New Mexico, the folklore of colonial San Antonio de Béxar, Monterrey, and Santa Fe, is peppered with accounts of crypto-Jewish *converso* families. These include, among others, Don Luis de Carvajal “The Younger.” Luis found his way to the Monterrey, Mexico, with many other Portuguese and Spanish *conversos* in the late 16th century. Unfortunately for Luis, in 1596 the Mexican Inquisition tried and condemned him and his family for their persistent Jewish beliefs.

My own initial investigations at the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid) and reviews of the indexes of the Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico) suggest that Luis’ case was not an isolated one. The Carvajals were “the pursued” and “the pursuers” of lapsed *conversos* in Spain and colonial Mexico. I have identified eight Inquisitorial cases of the Carvajal family in Spain and over 60 unique Mexican Inquisition *expedientes* relating to the family.

What is lacking from the scholarly meta-narrative about colonial Mexican *conversos* is the diversified familial survival strategies employed by families like the Carvajals. Their story, representative of the thousands of *conversos* that immigrated to the Borderlands, is one that can resolve how families pursued multiple confessional, vocational, and geographic initiatives in order to endure Spain's vehement pursuit of those with ancestral Jewish blood. During the 16th and 17th centuries the Carvajals flowed back-and-forth across the Atlantic Ocean and within those familial currents were not only hidden Jews, but also exemplary Castilian Catholics, and other religious hybrids. Yes, Carvajals publicly staffed the Catholic clergy, Christian military orders, and royal bureaucracy—but they privately held disparate religious identities.

For instance, consider the case of Spanish Cardinal Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal from the Spanish Extremadura, which is the ancestral home of the Mexican Carvajals. On a damp October evening in 1511, the Florentine Machiavelli labored to persuade Bernardino to delay his actions at the schismatic Council of Pisa. Yes, the excommunicated French King Louis XII and a scattering of cardinals would buttress Carvajal's initiative, but his ambition could not assure success. Fatefully, Carvajal ascended his papal throne at Pisa and there sat in opposition to Pope Julius II. Jerusalem's seed, cultivated into an aggressive Castilian Catholic exemplary, now presided over a defiant element in the holy Roman Catholic Church.

As Mexican Americans in Texas, the descendents of Bernardino and Luis, how can we reconcile how this emblematic family generated both the model ardent Catholic and the condemned Jew?

My dissertation aspires to confront this question and its ramifications, especially in terms of how *conversos* transformed their identities to thrive in the colonial Borderlands. This proposal requests \$2,000 in funding for two months of research in fall 2005 to review the previously discussed *expedientes* at the Archivo General de la Nación. Additionally, using these and other

colonial records I hope to recompile a 75-year gap in my genealogical database that charts the transatlantic relationship of the Iberian Carvajals to their descendents in the Borderlands. Unifying the contradictory perspectives of the Carvajals—model Castilian Catholics and crypto-Jews—will allow historians and Mexican Americans to comprehend how the momentous religious shifts in early modern Spain and colonial Spanish America pressured religious minorities to alter their identities to negotiate a transforming world.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Roger L. Martinez
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