

**Roger Louis Martinez, UT-Austin, Ford Dissertation Fellowship  
Proposed Plan of Completion and Long-Term Goals**

**My Steady Doctoral Progress**

Now midway through my 5<sup>th</sup> year in the Ph.D. program at the Department of History at the University of Texas-Austin, I expect to complete and defend my dissertation by May 2008. My expeditious academic progress can be measured by my admission to candidacy in November 2005, the completion of my Ph.D. qualifying examinations in June 2005, and my previous passing of two required language examinations (Spanish and Portuguese.) Further, I successfully secured over \$11,000 in external fellowship funds for dissertation research travel for the 2005-2006 academic year from the Mellon Foundation, Council for European Studies, Spanish Ministry of Culture, and the UT-Austin College of Liberal Arts.

I recently concluded extensive field research in three separate stages from 2004 to 2006 in Spain and Mexico where I worked in over 25 municipal, church, provincial, and national archives; my targeted research focused on four archives, the *Archivo de la Cathedral of Plasencia*, *Archivo Municipal de Plasencia*, *Archivo Historico Nacional-Seccion de la Nobleza* (Madrid), and *Archivo General de la Nacion* (Mexico).

In addition to my steady academic performance, my scholarly contributions to the field continue to gather momentum. During August and September 2006, I presented original research at the meetings of two academic organizations, the *Society for Crypto Judaic Studies (SCJS)* and the *Texas Medieval Studies Association*, and I expect my first publications, a book review of John Martin's *Myths of Renaissance Individuality*, to appear in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, and my paper, "Before the Collapse of *Convivencia*," to appear in the SCJS' quarterly publication, *Ha-Lapid*, later this year.

## **Dissertation Outline, Writing, and Defense**

During summer 2006, I finalized two academic papers for presentation and finished revisions to my dissertation outline, and in September and October 2006, I completed a draft dissertation chapter, titled, “With the Blessings of the Crown and Church.” This fifty-page chapter presents original research on the intermarriage of the Catholic Carvajal family and the first generation Jewish converts to Catholicism, the Ha-Levi/Santa Maria family. The chapter contextualizes this emblematic intermarriage within the period’s political and historical conditions. Overall, my dissertation includes eight chapters and the following corresponding themes:

- Chapter I: Introduction, Mending Historiographies, and My Approach (Theme: The Carvajales as an emblematic *converso* family),
- Chapter II: With the Blessings of the Crown and Church (Theme: The creation of the conditions for religious-cultural hybridization and a critical *converso* intermarriage),
- Chapter III: Religious Beliefs and Negotiating Acts of Faith (Theme: The family’s use of religious institutions to enhance wealth and power, and its interaction with Jewish communities),
- Chapter IV: The Benefits of Family Relations (Theme: The employment of endogamic marriage strategies and extended family networks to consolidated family power in ecclesiastical and royal affairs),
- Chapter V: Women’s Bonds (Theme: The family’s dependence upon women’s matrilineal bonds to transfer wealth to successive generations and propagandize the family’s Catholic identity),

- Chapter VI: At the Service of the Court (Theme: Family power tied to royal obedience),
- Chapter VII: Exploiting the Americas (Theme: The family's exploitation of its inside knowledge and access to Americas to secure lucrative opportunities. Jewish family members flight to the New World.), and
- Chapter VIII: Concluding Thoughts.

Currently, I abide by a strict writing schedule that involves the preparation of one chapter every two months. This process includes working independently and writing a draft chapter each month followed by a second month of consultations with my dissertation adviser, Dr. Denise Spellberg, and revisions to the draft chapter. The additional members of my committee, Dr. Ann Twinam, Dr. Neil Foley, Dr. Janet Meisel, and Dr. Cory Reed, will receive components of the dissertation every four months.

### **Long-Term Goals: University History Professor**

As I expect to defend my dissertation in early spring 2008, it is my goal to be a competitive applicant for a university academic position for the fall 2007 hiring season and to pursue job interviews at the American Historical Association's annual meeting in January 2008. As a university professor I will enthusiastically engage my students, but also remain a committed research academician. I especially relish the opportunity to expose middle-class and minority students to the intricacies of medieval Iberian history, which is heavily punctuated with periods of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic cooperation and competition. This period of intensive cultural and religious exchange and negotiation provides fertile ground for students to wrestle with both historical issues, and contemporary ethnic and religious issues in the United States and the world.

I have thrived in my past teaching experiences as a teaching assistant lecturing in large survey courses (over 150 students) and guiding debate in more intimate seminar courses. Both present unique challenges that exhilarate my intellectual interests and grant me great personal satisfaction when I see my students first struggle with difficult concepts and issues, and later find their own intellectual and emotional pathways to interpreting and making sense of historical events. Likewise, as my extensive archival experience demonstrates, I remain personally committed to the intensive activity of conducting primary research. Frankly speaking, reading the wills, letters and other writings of men and women that lived 500 years ago is a powerful intellectual aphrodisiac for me. Unlike my prior eight years government service, I find communicating through the historical record with these long-deceased individuals an overwhelming personally satisfying experience that I enjoy sharing with other people, whether those are students, academic colleagues, or next-door neighbors. In short, I consider it a privilege to be granted the opportunity to pursue a career as a university professor—a great privilege that I will generously share with those around me.