

The Jews in New Spain. Faith, Flame and the Inquisition. By SEYMOUR B. LIEBMAN. Coral Gables, 1970. University of Miami Press. Illustrations. Notes. Glossary. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 381. \$12.50.

Though it sometimes daringly surfaced, Judaism was an underground faith throughout colonial Spanish America. How many Jews there were is moot; the use of a racial definition by some Mexican writers to embrace all New Christians as Jews has misled many into positing a wider degree of Judaizing than is justified by primary evidence. Three facts are indisputable. First, not all New Christians were Judaizers. Second, with few exceptions, all the Judaizers in New Spain were of New Christian stock, hence officially and presumptively Catholic. Third, again with few exceptions, their religious practices diverged dramatically from traditional Judaism.

These facts are not always apparent from Mr. Liebman's book, which traces the history of New Spain's crypto-Jews from 1521 through the end of the colonial era. On reading the book it is difficult to avoid the impression that there were everywhere large numbers of Jews seemingly untied to Catholicism and practicing a traditional Judaism. Conclusions regarding the numbers of the Jews are usually derived not from primary material like Inquisitional documents, but from assertions in secondary sources (some of them confounding racial and religious definitions of a Jew), inferences (e.g. unlearned friars must have "overlooked the presence of Jews") and such statements as "In the Inquisition records many Jews were simply called Portuguese, as the terms Portuguese and Jewish were *sometimes* synonymous" (italics mine). Affirmations like "Jews swarmed to the shores of New Spain after the conquest of 1521" and "from 1541 to 1571, Judaism was practiced openly in New Spain," are not documented at all, despite evidence to the contrary in the primary sources.

So too, in the area of Judaism, we vainly seek primary documentation for assertions like "circumcision was generally observed as it is traditionally practiced among Jews," or "rabbis and their sons-in-law are easily identifiable;" or statements to the effect that in the 1640s Mexican Judaizers could be compared "in a loose fashion" to today's Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews, with Treviño de Sobremonte belonging to the Orthodox camp or that the immigrants arriving with the Carvajals in 1580 spurred a "great revival of learning and ritual observance." The sources seem to give a different picture: The most learned Judaizer in the 1580s, Luis de Carvajal, the younger, was the

product of a Catholic education and a Jesuit school. There is no evidence that he, much less anyone else around him, was learned in Hebrew or knew any rabbinic Judaism, at least not first hand. Liebman's statement that Carvajal quoted from Maimonides' Thirteen Principles requires clarification. He did quote from them, but there is no evidence he knew their original source. He picked them up from Oleaster's commentary to the Pentateuch. So too the Judaizers' leaders, called "rabbis" by the Inquisition, give at best little evidence of traditional Jewish training especially for the period in question; and there is evidence to show that circumcision was not performed regularly or in accordance with traditional rituals, and so on.

Regrettably, also, the book contains quite a few infelicities and inaccuracies in detail. Some will be evident only to scholars working with the primary, especially manuscript, sources. Others, including misspellings of personal names, an incorrect transcription of Hebrew and imprecise definitions of terms like *judaycas* and *limpieza de sangre*, can easily be corrected. Nevertheless, the book contains much valuable data culled with painstaking care from the original sources and for the most part presented for the first time in English. It is written with verve and is very readable.

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La ciudad de México en el siglo XVII. By FRANCISCO DE LA MAZA. México, 1968. Fondo de Cultura Económica. Illustrations. Pp. 135. Paper. \$2.50.

Professor de la Maza finds the seventeenth century a time of change in Mexico City, particularly in the realm of architecture. The original Mexico City, as distinct from Aztec Tenochtitlán, he describes as medieval in its physical aspect, with houses that were more aptly described as castles, featuring moats and merlons. Beginning late in the sixteenth century, the change transformed the face of the city to something more pleasant. Renaissance, plateresque, and Moorish styles made their appearance, and the viceregal capital was slowly converted from the city of the conquistador to that of the colonist.

One way in which this very brief study attempts to delineate some aspects of the new metropolis is by describing the arrival of changes in architectural styles, such as carved ceilings, arches, and cupolas. He also describes specific structures, allotting more space—fourteen