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## Don't Drink the Chocolate; Domestic Slavery and the Exigencies of Fasting for Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Mexico

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## Don't Drink the Chocolate; Domestic Slavery and the Exigencies of Fasting for Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Mexico

- 1 This paper examines some of the elements of the identity of people who secretly practiced certain Judaic rituals in seventeenth-century Mexico. It is drawn from research on an extensive project that is based on a close reading of the testimonial records of more than a hundred individuals who were accused of and prosecuted for Jewish heresy by the Mexican Holy Office of the Inquisition in the 1640s.
- 2 The second quarter of the seventeenth century was a time of troubles and transformations in the colonial history of New Spain. It is only from the perspective of these circumstances that we can make good sense of the extraordinary and almost entirely unprecedented actions during this time of the Mexico Holy Office of the Inquisition against people who practiced Judaic rituals in secret. Beginning with scores of arrests of crypto-Jews in 1642, the Inquisition conducted four autos-de-fe in successive years after 1646, culminating in the spectacular 1649 Auto-de-fe General, at which thirteen people were executed for Jewish heresy. Most of these people were Iberian immigrants (82 of 121—67.7%-- for whom we have complete data), the majority of them Portuguese (48 of 121—39.6% of the total). It is significant that almost all of these *peninsulares* had been in New Spain for several decades at the time the Holy Office project against them was initiated. A measure of their long tenure in Mexico is fact that nearly a third (35 of 121—28.9%) of those arrested were Mexican-born creoles, most of them the children of crypto-Jewish immigrants, most of whom were in their 20s and 30s in the 1640s (of 34 people who were 29 years old or younger at the time of their auto-de-fé in the 1640s, 28 were creoles). The events of the 1640s did not occur because the Inquisition then suddenly discovered secret Jews in Mexico; the individual files of more than a few of those arrested after 1642 contain testimonies that had been made against them years earlier by suspicious neighbors and associates.
- 3 The sudden burst of inquisitorial activity against Jewish heresy was, I believe, part of a reaction to a complex set of circumstances, the understanding of which is a primary goal of the larger research project of which this paper is a part. This is not the occasion to explore that broader context, and here I will only list the major elements of this general Mexican crisis. One: due to deep-seated economic and political problems, both the Atlantic and the Pacific trades experienced general and specific crises, including the spectacular capture of the entire Atlantic fleet to the Dutch corsair Piet Heyn in 1628, the loss of galleons in 1630 and again in 1640, and the serious interruption of the Asian trade after 1635 in a misdirected and overzealous effort to control contraband at Acapulco. Two: the continuing decline of the indigenous population, struck hard by two separate epidemics during the years 1629 to 1634, led to increasingly severe competition for native labor, competition that raised significant creole criticism against the royal administration. Three: in 1624, for the first time since the Spanish conquest—the second time would take place in 1642—the viceroy was forcefully removed from office by a coalition of high-ranking prelates, crown bureaucrats and creole elites. Four: an absolutely catastrophic series of floods, beginning in 1629, inundated Mexico City, making much of it inhabitable and causing an exodus of thousands. The bitter controversy over relief measures and the inadequate flood control projects that ensued left lasting doubts and concerns about the authority of the viceroy, the royal court, and the city council. Five: the revolt of Portugal

in 1640 created concern over the loyalty of the many Portuguese who resided in New Spain.

There may well be a close connection between these grave troubles and the surge of creole religiosity usually associated with the rise to prominence of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Miguel Sánchez's, *Imagen de la Virgen María madre de Dios Guadalupe*, considered by many to be the most important book in colonial Mexico, was published in 1648). And the dark side of the spirit that promoted the Mexican Virgin Mary may well be manifest in the explosion of heresy persecutions that were carried out at precisely the same time by the resurgent Holy Office of the Inquisition.

4 At some point, often within days of their arrests, most of Mexico's crypto-Jews admitted that they had practiced Judaic rituals. The usual pattern followed an acknowledged tradition, which was to confess one's own behavior and to willingly provide the names of immediate family members with whom the heretical act or acts had been done. Then, when pressured by the inquisitors to reveal more, to give only the names of deceased relatives and others who were hopefully too distant in time and place to be tracked down by the Holy Office.

5 It was a widely shared and strongly held principle, a matter of the utmost honor in fact, that under no circumstances, including torture, should the identities of believers outside the family circle be revealed. Evidence suggests that the need to adhere to this code of secrecy was discussed frequently by crypto-Jews, and that those who had successfully resisted previous Inquisition efforts to make them talk were afforded great respect. Women of modest means, Blanca Méndez de Rivera and her five adult daughters—known popularly as “The Blancas”—were among the first to be arrested by the Mexico Inquisition in May 1642. Blanca Méndez had often expressed admiration for her friend and patroness, doña Blanca Enríquez, who before she came to New Spain had been tortured by the Inquisition of Seville but had not given the names of anyone. Doña Blanca Enríquez had died of natural causes on January 1, 1642, thus missing the disastrous events that began in the spring of that year. But the image of her friend's scarred arms, which bore the mark of the cords that the inquisitors had tightened around them, were foremost in the frightened mind of prisoner Blanca Méndez. Ten days after her arrest the distraught woman was overheard crying out to her daughters in adjoining cells: “...I saw [the scars on] her arms when she was wrapped in her shroud... daughters, daughters, doña Blanca would never have told on us... what would doña Blanca do if she were here?”<sup>1</sup>

6 The Blancas knew a great many of Mexico's crypto-Jews, and their initial concern was that simply by virtue of their arrests it would be widely believed that they had violated, or under inquisitorial pressure would soon violate, the code of silence. Almost immediately after their arrests, calling to one another from their adjacent cells, they exchanged the names of several crypto-Jewish women who they believed would be at that moment thinking that they had denounced them to the inquisitors (as in fact, entirely unwittingly, they were doing, in as much as Inquisition officers in the corridor were clandestinely listening to their conversations).

Blanca Méndez said to her daughters: “that's what is driving me out of my mind and that makes my heart leap because what is going to destroy us is what they [the women they had been discussing] will say.” Her eldest daughter, María de Rivera, confirmed her mother's thought by saying “I know what I would say if I wasn't in here.” And Blanca Méndez exclaimed: “Ay, how has so much misery come to me? They've just thrown us in here and already we're lost and without honor and no one will look us in the face even though we don't say a thing.” And María replied: “we're lost and we'll have to flee to the ends of the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

7 Although the Blancas did not (intentionally) reveal information about other crypto-Jews in the first instance, they did, one by one, give in. The first to break the code was Clara de Rivera, a mildly mentally deficient woman who probably did not understand what was taking place, and almost certainly did not appreciate the consequences of her testimony. The inquisitors went after her directly. Led to believe that if she cooperated she would be reunited with her husband (who was not a crypto-Jew and had not been jailed), on June 6, 1642, after only three

weeks in jail, Clara de Rivera gave the Holy Office the names of many people she knew to be observers of the Jewish faith. That she had at best a dim understanding of the significance of the secret that was so carefully kept by her mother, sisters and many others is revealed in the puzzlement she expressed at the inquisitors' eagerness to find out who followed the Law of Moses: it was obvious who they were, Clara told her questioners, all you had to do was look at their faces.<sup>3</sup> Her mother knew all too well the importance of keeping the secret, but, after a month of solitary confinement in the torture chamber—the site of her worst fears—sick from isolation, and her will broken, on July 7, 1642, Blanca Méndez began to tell all she knew about everyone she knew.<sup>4</sup> Within a week scores of new arrests had been made, a total of fifty during the months of July and August, including among them the Enríquez sisters, daughters of her admired doña Blanca Enríquez, and their prosperous merchant husbands, including the husband of Juana Enríquez, Simón Vázquez Sevilla, one of the wealthiest men in New Spain.<sup>5</sup> The strongest of the Blancas, María de Rivera, and the youngest, Isabel de Rivera, held out until August and October respectively,<sup>6</sup> but by the time they began to talk unguardedly the Inquisition jails were full of accused heretics and the Holy Office scribes had already begun to record what would become a roomful of written confessions and other testimonies.<sup>7</sup>

8 From the beginning of the Mexico Inquisition project against the crypto-Jews in the first months of 1642, to the fourth and final auto-de-fé in April, 1649, more than a hundred individuals were incarcerated in the Holy Office, accused of Jewish heresy. Comparing the lists of names for each of the four autos-de-fé that were held each year from 1646 to 1649 with incarceration dates given in a jail entry log reveals that the average jail term for 117 individuals persecuted by the Inquisition for Judaic practices was almost exactly four years (48.1 months).<sup>8</sup> Of course those whose destiny took them to the spectacular *Auto General de la Fe* of 1649 were held much longer (37 cases; 67.4 months on average) than those who received judgment earlier (38 cases in 1646, 40.5 months imprisonment on average; 21 cases in the 1647, 37.5 months; 21 cases in 1648; 38.5 months). During their detention most prisoners appeared several times in hearings (*audiencias*) before one or more of the inquisitors, sometimes at their own request and sometimes because they were called to testify. The number of hearings varied from case to case, but in general terms each prisoner averaged ten or twelve *audiencias* from the time of arrest until he or she left Inquisition confinement at the auto-de-fé. The hearings themselves varied considerably in duration and content, and while the inquisitors' questions and comments were not usually recorded, the prisoners' statements were noted verbatim by scribes. Most of these records have survived.

9 Considering the contents of these many hundreds of hearings, it is striking to notice the frequency with which Mexico's crypto-Jews testified about rituals that had to do with eating and fasting. There are at least two reasons why this was such a common theme. In the first place, for many *observantes* food-related behavior may well have been the most common expression of their secret faith. Second, since eating and fasting for religious purpose usually took place within the intimate circle of family, testimony about such ritual activities could be given without violating the code of secrecy that insisted that nothing be said about anyone who was not immediate kin. In time the code failed, and as prisoners abandoned secrecy their testimonies more often described instances of collective fasting and food rituals, such as those associated with funerals and betrothals.

10 Since access to the network of fellow believers was cautiously guarded, betrayal was the only significant risk of discovery that Mexico's crypto-Jews faced. This risk was made both greater and, to a lesser degree, smaller in the Spanish Indies by the commonplace presence in their homes of domestic slaves. The risk was made greater because such slaves were easily privy to a variety of household intimacies, including such faith-based activities as food preparation and fasting. Many of the crypto-Jews' Inquisition testimonies pertaining to food describe concerns about slaves and the efforts that had been taken to dissimulate or to otherwise hide from them

ritual eating and fasting behavior. At the same time, especially for *observante* women, the risk of appearing conspicuously idle in observance of the Sabbath and other holy days was diminished since their slaves regularly did most if not all domestic labor. Because slaves prepared and served them food there was a problem of secrecy; the other domestic ritual activities—refraining from work, wearing clean clothes, even (at times) lighting candles and saying prayers—were either not suspicious or anomalous in nature or could be done in private without drawing undue attention. Unlike food testimonies, in which the need to fool slaves in order to do the ritual is usually mentioned, descriptions of other ritual activities mention slaves and secrecy only occasionally.

11 Several Portuguese *observantes* were or had been slave dealers, some major traders in the transatlantic business, such as Veracruz residents Antonio Méndez Chillón and the former factor of the Portuguese slave monopoly, Fernando Rodríguez, and some on a much smaller scale, for example the itinerant trader Antonio de Rojas, native of Guarda, Portugal, resident in Mexico City, who bought slaves in Veracruz and sold them throughout New Spain.<sup>9</sup> During the first decades of the seventeenth-century New Spain was the market destination of several thousand slaves each year, two-thirds, in fact, of all the slaves brought from Africa to Spanish America by Portuguese contractors.<sup>10</sup> The Portuguese monopoly right to import African slaves, and the direct involvement of crypto-Jews in the trade, may have favored the chances of Mexico-resident Portuguese crypto-Jews to acquire them; in any event, many of them owned slaves in domestic service.<sup>11</sup> Even María de Rivera—one of the Blancas, women of very marginal resources—owned the Angolan Juliana (and her young son Pedro), who cooked for them and peddled their embroidery in the streets of Mexico City.

12 Living comfortably at the other end of the social spectrum, doña Blanca Enríquez was the wife of a successful merchant, and, unlike the Blancas, she had many slaves in her household. She also enjoyed a reputation for piety and ritual knowledge. In a testimony given in late 1642 doña Blanca's daughter Beatriz Enríquez described for the inquisitors the details of her mother's secretive preparation of Passover unleavened bread that she would later share with the women of her immediate family, Beatriz's aunt, her sisters and her nieces, whom she named for the inquisitors.

when the children of Israel went out of captivity in Egypt and went to the sea by way of the seven paths that God had opened for them, and having reached the other side of the sea tired and hungry, with the flour they had with them they made they made bread without leavening or salt and they ate it together with a lot of parsley and many herbs and that in the memory of this the *observantes* of the Law of Moses[,] three days before the Passover of the Resurrection that the Christians celebrate[,] should eat the said bread without leavening or salt for the Passover of the said Law of Moses, and that this confessor in the company of her mother made the said bread two or three times, and that they did not do it more than the said three times for the fear they had that their house slaves would see them.

13 After describing the implements that her mother gathered and the other preparations she made, Beatriz explained that

when that time arrived (as she has said it was three days before the Passover of the Resurrection) each time this confessor saw her mother get ready alone without anyone else at all[,] closing herself in her room[,] having sent out all the slaves of the household to watch the [Christian] processions...<sup>12</sup>

14 This testimony is revealing in several ways. If the circumstances were right it was possible to prepare a special ritual meal without a house full of slaves knowing about it. There was always tension however, and if the chance of discovery increased, the Passover meal could be suspended, for years if necessary, but obviously not forgotten, as Beatriz's testimony demonstrates that her mother had instructed her thoroughly in the particulars of its preparation. In addition, it is evident that the sharing of the meal was explicitly confined to the women

of the family, a closed and completely trustworthy circle, although it is possible that each of them shared their portion of the unleavened bread with their male kin.<sup>13</sup>

15 Sooner or later most prisoners told the inquisitors about their observance of holy days, particularly Yom Kippur (“*el Día Grande*”) and the fast of Esther. What is unique about Beatriz Enríquez’s confession regarding the making of Passover matzah is the mention of concern about slaves seeing the preparations. Although often related in precise detail, few testimonies describing holy day rituals contain comments about the problem of keeping slaves from knowing about them or witnessing them. Rather than sending their slaves away or concealing the activities in some fashion, when necessary crypto-Jews simply modified their behavior in ways that did not compromise their integrity of the rituals. For instance, in the same testimony during which she describes her mother’s Passover preparations, Beatriz Enríquez admitted that she did the *Día Grande* fast (*ayuno*) for the first time when she was about thirteen, and that from then until she married (when she was nineteen) she lived with her mother and they always prayed and fasted together on that day and on other occasions. Beatriz testified that they did not always light candles during these celebrations because they worried that their slaves would be suspicious. The absence of candles troubled the pious doña Blanca somewhat, Beatriz said, but her mother had always told her that “it was enough to have the Law of Moses in our hearts.”<sup>14</sup>

16 And yet, the possibility that slaves would take notice did not always inhibit them. Beatriz Enríquez’s description of the celebration that took place in her mother’s house on the eve of the *Día Grande* in 1641 shows almost no sign of concealment or concern over drawing unwanted attention. A year and a month after it had taken place, in the very different setting of the Holy Office *audiencia* room, Beatriz Enríquez recalled the 1641 Yom Kippur with great emotion. She told the inquisitors that after a meal of fish, salad and boiled eggs, she, three of her sisters and two nieces all retired with her mother to the room where doña Blanca slept. They each placed three or four candles on tables and boxes, lighting them in succession and offering specific prayers as they did so. With the whole room illuminated, Beatriz remembered how they had kneeled one after another before doña Blanca and kissed her hand, asking for forgiveness, and how she then gave to them all the benediction that Jacob had given to his children (“it was a very long benediction”). Her mother had gone on to pray at great length and about things that Beatriz said she had not entirely understood. Then they all prayed among themselves, sometimes alone and sometimes in harmony with one another, and although her young nieces knew no prayers (“being girls”<sup>15</sup>), they listened attentively to the prayers of their aunts. So comprehensive was she in her recounting of the activities of that night that Beatriz Enríquez told the inquisitors that she had taken off her shoes and spent the night barefoot, not so that she might move about more quietly, but because her mother had taught her that “the Law of Moses said to do so on such days was of great merit.”<sup>16</sup> However, Beatriz told the inquisitors, “the said doña Blanca, her sisters and nieces did not take off their shoes.” At about 4:00 in the morning they fell asleep on the floor of the room, and when they awoke they all went to their homes where they celebrated the *Día Grande* with their respective families.

17 For all that she remembered, Beatriz Enríquez had nothing to say about any protect-the-secret precautions that had been taken on that occasion. This and other Inquisition testimonies suggest that slave-owning crypto-Jews controlled their domestic space well enough to allow them, with some caution, to practice holy day faith rituals with a fair degree of security that they would not be discovered. Such control was probably an ongoing process. Certainly the intimacies and other give-and-take circumstances of domestic service afforded household slaves some means of offsetting the otherwise absolute power that their masters had over them. Slave owners were well aware that their power had limits; their testimonies indicate clearly enough that the idea that their slaves just might—or at least could—turn them in to the Holy Office was not far from their minds. Whether this was a genuine concern or even

a fear more than a common preoccupation is not so easy to determine however. Given both the nature of slavery, which deprived and denied slaves of family and community of their own choice, and the Mediterranean tradition of the hermetic inviolability of the home, with its focus on the inner patio and its sturdy doors and barred windows insulating it from the street, it is to wonder whether slaves who had become part of a household were indeed readily inclined to go to the Inquisition with their suspicions and troubles. The unlikelihood of this occurring in crypto-Jewish households was made greater by the slaves' mostly recent and often partial Christianization, and by the fact that they were themselves often the target of Holy Office vigilance in matters such as bigamy, witchcraft, and especially in the case of slaves, blasphemy.<sup>17</sup>

- 18 Even in a culture that regarded the house as refuge from the outside world, the homes of Mexico's crypto-Jews stood out for their impermeability. In the convivial and densely populated social setting of Mexico City the constantly closed door of the Blancas' home attracted suspicions about what went on intra-muros. Preparing warrants two days before their arrests in May, 1642, the inquisitors discovered reports about the Blancas filed almost a decade earlier when their husband and father had died. The attending physician had been shocked by the absence of a crucifix in their house and the reluctance of his wife and daughters to find a priest to give him supreme unction, and the doctor had reported his concerns to the Holy Office. Now years later, the inquisitors called the Blancas' former neighbor to testify about what he remembered. The cleric Diego de Sandoval stated:

because they are Portuguese *de nación* and according to what he has heard relatives of Justa Méndez and Duarte de León<sup>18</sup> and in addition this witness presumes that they must be Jews or at least not good Catholics[,] because during the time they lived in the house across the street from his they never had a servant nor did anyone ever come into their house from the outside to work for them and because they always remained behind a closed door that they would not open unless one knocked on it many times.<sup>19</sup>

- 19 Always poor and peripatetic, after their father and husband died in 1633 the Blancas moved even more frequently, renting rooms in six different places during the nine years before their arrests in 1642.<sup>20</sup> Single men, especially newly arrived immigrants, frequently visited the women, and their home was certainly more open and vulnerable than those of other crypto-Jews. Even so, they retained a shared identity—reflected in the name “*las Blancas*” by which they were popularly known—and, more to the point here, this solidarity extended to their slave Juliana, who remained absolutely loyal to them. Even though they had whipped her, and even though she knew all about their religious practices, even as the Inquisition tortured her, Juliana refused to denounce them.

- 20 Again at the opposite social extreme, affluent Juana Enríquez, the eldest daughter of doña Blanca Enríquez, and her husband Simón Vázquez Sevilla owned a large, well-constructed house<sup>21</sup> on the Calle del Aguila next to the plazuela of the convent of Santo Domingo in the center of the city. The household was comprised of Enríquez and Vázquez, their son Gaspar Vázquez and a number of other associates and acquaintances, including a small transient population of immigrant men seeking Vázquez's patronage and employment. All of these people were crypto-Jews. Although many people moved in and out of this house, access was understandably carefully controlled. Night and day a slave in a sentinel's room (*postal*) guarded the entryway (*zaguán*) of the house. Inquisition testimony revealed that fact that the outside door to the house was often closed during most of the day on Fridays and Saturdays raised suspicions about what went on inside, but what did take place was known only to the inner circle. And to some extent that circle included as many as two dozen slaves, both adults and children. At least 18 of the 53 slaves that were being held or had been sold by the Inquisition in December 1643 formerly belonged to Simón Vázquez Sevilla.<sup>22</sup> Juana Enríquez's sister Rafaela told the inquisitors that it was the custom of her sister and brother-in-law to order their slaves to be

whipped—but only on Fridays—using as excuses “that the food was not well prepared or other childish reasons (*niñerías*)”. She claimed to have witnessed this “on more than twenty Fridays during the course of six years.” Presented these accusations by the inquisitors, Simón Vázquez Sevilla had nothing to say about the door, only that it was occasionally shut “by the *negro* who was responsible for it”. Regarding whipping slaves on *viernes santo*, he ignored the reference to Friday and said that “it could be that once in awhile, in response to some provocation of the many that slaves give, and since there are so many of them in his house,” that he or his wife “would order one or another of them to be whipped.”<sup>23</sup>

21 To be sure, Mexico’s crypto-Jews did worry that their slaves might retaliate for the harsh treatment they received by informing the Inquisition of any suspicious behavior the slaves had witnessed. After the Holy Office began to make dozens of arrests, certain that he and his family would soon be taken as well, Simón Vázquez Sevilla and Juana Enríquez called their slaves together and, according to the later testimony of one of them, told them not say anything, even if they were taken to the Inquisition to testify. “If that should happen,” Antonia de la Cruz told the inquisitors with at least a touch of irony, “we were [told] to be good slaves.”<sup>24</sup> Some *observantes* thought that the Blancas’ slave Juliana had denounced her owner María de Rivera and thus started the process that had catastrophically enveloped them all. Two nights after her arrest, on May 21, 1642 María de Rivera and her sister Isabel de Rivera and her mother Blanca Méndez called to one another from their separate jail cells, trying to determine who had betrayed them. Blanca Méndez said: “I don’t know where so much harm could have come from.” “If it was your *negra*, María?” Isabel asked. “It couldn’t be,” María replied firmly. And then, referring to an unnamed incident involving the slave, Isabel insisted: “Well it had to have been something very important (“*un hecho q’ fuese sonado*”) so we have to think about her.”<sup>25</sup> The idea that Juliana had started everything remained strong in the minds of some for several years. Like many others of his faith who immigrated to Mexico, Juan Pacheco de León went to see the Blancas shortly after his arrival in New Spain in 1638. In the Inquisition jails a decade later, he described for his cellmate how he had met and been befriended by María de Rivera. Together the two of them had discussed and otherwise shared their faith,

and we did this in great peace and quiet with no one to disturb us, because we closed the doors to the street. But there was an enemy on the inside, a *negra* of María’s who was called Juliana, who, after her *ama* had whipped her, then threatened to accuse her and everyone else [in the house, of Judaic practices, to the Inquisition]. And I told María: either sell that slave far from here or quit whipping her, because she’s going to cut the throats of all of us, and that’s what I understand she did, and that was the cause of our destruction.<sup>26</sup>

22 But Juan de León was entirely wrong and María de Rivera was right: regardless of the whippings she had received, Juliana did not turn them in to the Holy Office. Several weeks after the Blancas were arrested she was brought to testify, but at great personal cost she lied to the inquisitors and did not tell them what she surely knew about the faith practices in her household. Nor did Antonia de la Cruz seek out the opportunity to denounce the household of Simón Vázquez Sevilla. After her owner, Beatriz Enríquez, was arrested, Antonia de la Cruz was taken to the Inquisition to work; several months later she was caught carrying messages to and from the prisoners, and only then—as she was tortured—did she tell the inquisitors how Simón Vázquez and Juana Enríquez had exhorted them not to talk and to be “good slaves.” Because they had overheard the Blancas wondering among themselves whether Juliana had denounced them, the inquisitors knew for a fact that she was well informed of and in fact complicit in her owners’ religious activities. In response to their questions, however, Juliana denied everything. She claimed that as their cook she did not prepare their food in any particular way (“I killed chickens not by cutting their throats but by wringing their necks and I roasted or fried them in bacon”). She did not see them observe Saturdays as a “*día de fiesta*” by not working, nor did she see them fast on days of the week other than Sunday or fast all day any day. For these

obvious lies and her loyalty Juliana paid a price. “Having denied everything with malice,” Juliana was sold for 350 pesos, not at auction as was customary, but by the inquisitors’ specific order to don García de Valdés, whose sugar mill was a destination slaves dreaded.<sup>27</sup> Surely worse, her young son Pedro, *negrillo*, also the property of María de Rivera and alive when his mother entered the Holy Office in 1642, appears as dead on the 1643 Inquisition listing of the disposition of slaves who had formerly belonged to crypto-Jews.<sup>28</sup>

23 So, for certain active rituals, including the occasional cooking of a ritual meal, discovery by slaves was not seen by crypto-Jews as an insurmountable problem, and, although they worried that their slaves might retaliate for harsh treatment they received by turning them in to the Holy Office, it did not happen. Of all the *observantes* arrested during the 1640s, only one, the slave trader Agustín de Rojas, had ever been denounced for heretical behavior by a slave, and that slave’s rather bizarre testimony (given in 1639) did not result in Rojas’s incarceration.

24 Arrested by the *justicia mayor* on the road outside Zacatecas after fleeing from his new master, in April, 1639, Diego de Sevilla told a story that made the royal officer bring the slave before the Zacatecas regional commissioner of the Inquisition. Diego testified that he had been born in Mozambique and baptized in Portuguese Goa before being taken as a slave to Lisbon when he was very young. After many years in service in Lisbon to a hatmaker he was sold to a Moroccan apothecary in Seville, where he had married a free mulatta named María. He recounted for the commissioner how he had been grabbed one night while fishing on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and turned over to a *sevillano* Indies merchant who brought him to Mexico in the fleet of Carlos de Ibarra. [This *flota* left Cadiz on April 29, 1638 and wintered that year in New Spain.]

25 In Veracruz he had been sold to a Portuguese slave dealer whose name he claimed not to know but who had a very distinctive appearance (ruddy complexion, of average height, very fat, and with only one large tooth in the upper part of his mouth). Taken by the dealer—Agustín de Rojas—to his home in Mexico City, Diego de Sevilla maintained that shortly after he arrived there one night he and another slave named Francisco witnessed Rojas and his wife kick and drag a crucifix around the patio of their house and then whip it with a bunch of thorns tied to a stick. Claiming to have been so shocked that he could not continue to watch, the slave said that he had wanted to immediately report the event to the Inquisition in Mexico City, but before he had the chance his owner had taken him and five others on the road and had sold them in Zacatecas. Now that he was in the hands of the authorities he was eager to tell them what he had seen in the Portuguese trader’s house in Mexico City. He added that when he had pleaded to be allowed to go to mass he had been told, “Mass? What mass? The mass you have to hear is to sweep and clean this house.” Another slave in the house, whose name he said he could not remember, had said to him: “This master of ours is not a Christian but so stuck as a Jew that they will have to burn him.”

26 The Zacatecas commissioner sent his report to the Tribunal in Mexico City, and, evidently in no particular hurry to investigate the case, six months later, in October 1639, the other slave Francisco was located by the Holy Office and interviewed. Francisco said he was of the “*nación Barenba, adelante de Angola*,”<sup>29</sup> had been baptized in the Mexico City cathedral, and that he had been the slave of Agustín de Rojas for about five years. He served Rojas’s household as a water carrier (*aguador*) and other “*ministerios*”. He had accompanied his master three times on slave-selling trips to the interior, to San Luis Potosí, to Guadalajara, and to Zacatecas—the venture that had resulted in the sale of Diego de Seville to a Zacatecas miner. Francisco said that while he was in Rojas’ house in Mexico City Diego de Seville had slept alone in the corral next to the patio, that the newcomer had been in the house for just a few days before Rojas loaned him out to a “*compadre of his*” whose name Francisco did not know, and that the two slaves had not communicated about their master’s behavior or anything else “because Diego de Sevilla was not of his *nación* or his language (*lengua*)”. For

his part he claimed to have never seen anything that would be “a bad example or scandalous” in the time he had spent in Rojas’s house, nothing that happened “with any image of a saint or of Christ our crucified hope and savior.”<sup>30</sup>

27 Diego de Sevilla was an outsider, never belonging to Agustín de Rojas’s household and, finding himself in the cold and harshly alien environment of Zacatecas, he may have felt that he had nothing to lose by denouncing as a Jew the man most immediately responsible for his being there. Francisco, who may have known little or nothing about his owner’s religious activities, had spent several years in Roja’s service, both at home and on the road, and probably felt that there was nothing to gain from giving damning information about his owner to the Inquisition. The more urban, cosmopolitan, Portuguese-speaking Diego de Sevilla—recently arrived, alone and still out of place in Mexico—erred in supposing that the less acculturated Francisco, whom he described as “*boçal un poco ladino*,” would make common cause with him against the slave dealer Rojas. Francisco wanted no part of Diego de Sevilla’s problem, and neither was the Holy Office interested in Agustín de Rojas in 1639. The file on Rojas would be shelved until the spring and summer of 1642, when everything changed, and then it would be the testimony of other crypto-Jews, not slaves, that would lead to Rojas’ arrest.

28 All the available evidence suggests that Mexico’s crypto-Jews had little reason to really fear that their domestic slaves would betray them to the Holy Office. In part this was because they were able to conceal their religious behavior, and in part it was probably because in the household setting bonds—unequal to be sure, and always tempered by the exploitive demands of slavery—were formed with their masters that mattered more to slaves than either religion or the authority and power of the Inquisition, an institution that they had no reason to regard as a place of refuge.

29 Given then the unlikelihood of slave betrayal, and assuming that Mexico’s secret Jews knew this to be the case, it is striking to notice the frequency with which *observantes* in their prison testimonies described their efforts to conceal one particular kind of religious ritual: the fast. There were two types of fasts done by seventeenth-century Mexico’s crypto-Jews. The one that more often prompted measures of secrecy was the traditional Judaic *ayuno* associated with holy-day observance. The other, called *ayuno ordinario*, was more purely ascetic in nature, and was like prayer in that its practice constituted a supplication for divine favor in a specific circumstance. An *ayuno ordinario* might be done for purposes as diverse as to assure safe travel, to cure the sick, or to ask for blessings for the souls of deceased persons. In Mexico certain women<sup>31</sup> were specialists at this sort of fasting, which they did at the request of others and for which they received modest sums of money. The Blancas earned their living as seamstresses and embroiderers and made chocolate for sale from cacao beans, but they also performed *ayunos ordinarios* for pay. As the code of secrecy broke down under inquisitorial pressure and people began to talk about other crypto-Jews who were not members of their immediate families, what prisoners most often confessed first were the names of those who had given them money, or those to whom they had given money, for *ayunos ordinarios*. On her deathbed in late December 1641 doña Blanca Enríquez gave her daughter Beatriz 400 pesos in cash, saying that they were for “masses (*misas*) to be said for her soul.” According to Beatriz’s testimony before the Inquisition, she explained that two days after her mother’s death she gave “a very good quantity” of the 400 pesos to the Blancas (60 pesos in fact), since it had been her mother’s wish that they might “do some *ayunos*” for her soul. Recognizing that the inquisitors might be unsure about the use of the term “*misas*” interchangeably with “*ayunos*,” Beatriz Enríquez offered them a concise explanation of charity, prayer and fasting in the crypto-Jewish funerary ritual. The money designated for “masses for her mother’s soul” was

nothing more than money to be divided among poor *observantes* of the Law of Moses, including some poor who were in hospitals and the shamefully poor who would pray for her soul, and

especially among those *observantes* of the Law to whom it is the custom to give alms so that they will do fasts for the souls of those who die in the observance [of Judaism], concealing them with the name of masses so that the Catholic Christians will not understand.<sup>32</sup>

30 One wonders under what conditions the term “masses” would have been said in Christian company so that the hearers would not know that what was meant was actually Jewish ritual fasting. More than Beatriz Enríquez’s limited sense of concealment, the Roman Catholic tradition of paying priests to say masses for the souls of the deceased and the crypto-Jewish practice of paying pious women to fast for the same purpose seem to be closely parallel if not identical rituals, even if the Judaic one was done by women and in secret. By inflicting upon themselves a state of affliction, secret Jewish women expressed their sincerity and loyalty to God, and presumably in the process they acquired a kind of pious power—a sort of consecration—that gave the *ayuno* its efficiency. Although private fasts which people assumed in order to do penance for their sins or to mourn were a part of Jewish tradition, fasting on behalf of others, the soul of the deceased parent of a friend or to assure the safety of another person’s travels, seems almost certainly to be a borrowing, a hybrid or syncretic adoption, from Roman Catholic practice.

31 In any event, doing *ayunos ordinarios* presented no special problem for the maintenance of the secret of which they were an important part. Evidently they could be done whenever and wherever the faster wanted. Blanca Méndez de Rivera testified that for the 60 pesos she received from Beatriz Enríquez she had done ten *ayunos ordinarios* for the soul of doña Blanca Enríquez during a period of two and a half months (about one a week it seems).<sup>33</sup> At the same time, as always, the constant presence of domestic slaves demanded a degree of prudence and caution. Once again, the testimony of Beatriz Enríquez is revealing. The day after her arrest she told the inquisitors that she had always done *ayunos* in the company of her mother, both *ordinarios* and those done in celebration of the holy days of Yom Kippur and Queen Esther. She left her mother’s home when she married Thomas Núñez de Peralta (in 1637, she was nineteen years old), and two weeks after the wedding, after her husband had left on a trading venture to Zacatecas, following her mother’s instructions she did an *ayuno* for the first time on her own, an *ordinario* for Peralta’s success and safe return. However, Beatriz confessed to the inquisitors, she failed to complete the fast, having broken it by drinking “a little bit of chocolate.” Beatriz did not say whether she did this because she succumbed to the temptation of chocolate because of a desire for it, because she was unaware that consumption of chocolate broke the ecclesiastical fast, or because she had been afraid that her slaves would take notice if she refused to drink it. Any, or all three, of these reasons could have been her motivation. That the problem of the slaves was on her mind is made clear by the rest of this testimony. Nine months later her husband Peralta left again “with merchandise” for the mining district, but this time Beatriz succeeded with the fast. “Standing at window,” she explained to the inquisitors, “she pretended to weep for the absence of her husband, and with this ailment she was able to hide from her slaves the fact that she did not eat at all that day.”<sup>34</sup>

32 The importance of chocolate in early seventeenth-century Mexico is a history that is yet to be written. By the 1630s its consumption was virtually universal. The history of chocolate intersects with the history of Mexico’s crypto-Jews at several points, including most importantly the links between drinking chocolate, fasting, and maintaining the religious secret. There are two essential points to be made: one, although cacao had been known in Mexico since ancient times, the mass consumption of chocolate was a very recent phenomenon, original in fact with the generation of crypto-Jews that experienced the Inquisition’s series of autos-de-fé in the 1640s. There was no European tradition whatsoever associated with chocolate, it was like nothing else. There was great interest and no small uncertainty about its nature; the cacao bean was inherently cold, and chocolate was made from powdered cacao that was also cold, but once turned to a liquid, and especially when mixed with peppers and

other spices, its nature became hot, so hot in fact that when the liquid was stirred vigorously—even if it had not been heated over a fire—it gave off a buttery foam. The combination of cold and hot elements, and the remarkable transformation that took place in the elaboration of chocolate from cacao, fascinated Europeans who thought about it.<sup>35</sup> Although the general opinion had it that chocolate (the drink) was food, and therefore, unlike water, subject to the ecclesiastical rules regarding fasting, this was by no means universally accepted. A major treatise on the issue, based on Mexican data but written and published in Madrid in 1636, concluded that drinking chocolate did indeed break the ecclesiastical fast.<sup>36</sup>

33 The second point is that by all appearances Mexico's crypto-Jews did not hesitate to accept the newly-minted (Christian) view, one that was still questioned in some circles, that fasting required abstention from drinking chocolate. That by refusing chocolate they might well reveal their ritual fast to their slaves, and thus risk the danger of discovery, makes their enthusiasm to deny themselves chocolate altogether more remarkable. If they could suspend the preparation of Passover matzah for years at a time, or celebrate Yom Kippur without candles, why does it seem that they always insisted on keeping their fasts by avoiding chocolate? Especially when, as was certainly true most of the time, their chocolate was prepared and served to them by their slaves, and, to use modern parlance, "to just say no" could not help but be noticed (especially in a social setting in which everyone drank chocolate, usually several times a day)?

34 Crypto-Jews did not hesitate to describe their chocolate deceptions in detail for the curious inquisitors. Many *observantes* testified about this, and, although the trickery came in a variety of forms, because they were mentioned more often, certain strategies to avoid drinking chocolate were evidently more successful than others. They spilled it. They emptied their cups when the slaves weren't looking. Perhaps most common, they feigned arguments of different kinds: a spat the night before could justify not appearing for morning breakfast, or a quarrel at breakfast could result in everyone retiring to their rooms, chocolate left abandoned and cooling on the table. They left home early to visit relatives, and, upon arriving for the visit, claimed that they had already had their chocolate before leaving home. There were dissimulations that did not work, such as pretending to be sick—Beatriz Enríquez tried this the first time her husband left for Zacatecas and ended up drinking a little chocolate—probably because chocolate was widely considered to be very good for one's health, she had given in to her slaves' insinuations. And a strategy that never appeared in any testimony was to allege that there was no chocolate in the larder, that the household had run out. Evidently in early seventeenth-century Mexico there was always chocolate on hand. The excuse closest to this, and what may have been the most disingenuous ploy of all those invented by Mexico's crypto-Jews, was offered by Fernando Rodríguez, former slave trader (he had been the factor of the Portuguese monopoly) and a successful cacao importer and merchant. The chocolate service that was used in his Veracruz home may well have been typical throughout the viceroyalty: small silver spoons, small silver saucers called *cestillos* (little baskets), and deep clay cups known by the Nahuatl term *tecomate*. He and his wife Blanca Enríquez (not the more well-known woman of the same name who lived in Mexico City) used the service every day, but Rodríguez refused to drink chocolate the mornings of fast days, telling his slave servants—rather transparently deceitfully it seems, coming from a successful cacao merchant—that because the price of chocolate was going up he had to cut back on his consumption or face impoverishment.<sup>37</sup>

35 Unfortunately there is no evidence that would allow us to know how the slaves understood these efforts by their masters to fool them, but there seems to be no doubt that the *observantes* understood themselves to be in full control of this domestic theater of the purposefully spilled *tecomate* of chocolate. So much in control, in fact, that they came to use the question of chocolate consumption among themselves as a kind of code. A month after her arrest in July, 1642, Isabel Duarte told the inquisitors that she was sure that Diego Núñez shared her religious

secret, not only because others had told her so, but also because—to test his faith—she had offered him chocolate “at different [proscribed] times” and when she asked him why he refused he had replied to her in a way that they both understood: “he said it was stupid to ask him why.”<sup>38</sup>

36 A stupid question for Diego Núñez and Isabel Duarte, but not necessarily for us. Of course if crypto-Jews were going to fast at all, given that they recognized chocolate as food, they had to address the problem of their slaves giving it to them to drink. That was a challenge, but, if the argument made here is valid, it was probably more of a challenge in terms of domestic management—that is, of keeping house slaves from getting any sort of leverage that they might use to their advantage—than one of truly running the risk that suspicious slaves would go to the Inquisition with stories of their masters’ refusal to accept chocolate on non-fast days.

A fragment of testimony suggests that this is what happened in the Blancas’ home and was what gave them reason to wonder whether Juliana had denounced them. From their cells, after María de Rivera assured her mother and sister that it Juliana would never have gone to the Holy Office, her mother Blanca Méndez was heard to say: “It would have been so much better if we had freed the *negro* [meaning Juliana’s young son Pedro]”.<sup>39</sup> Could it be that Juliana, intimately familiar with everything about the Blancas’ household, and as their cook directly complicit in their practice of their faith, had unsuccessfully bid for her son’s freedom on the basis of what she knew about her owners? And could it be that Pedro’s death, about which we know nothing except that he was alive when his mother was arrested in June, 1642 and dead by the end of 1643, was a consequence of Juliana’s refusal to tell the inquisitors what they knew she knew?

37 The Blancas was an extreme case; to simply keep the house slaves in the dark about chocolate was far more manageable, and not least because everyone involved had a part to play in fooling them. The participation of crypto-Jewish men in other secret rituals and ceremonies was limited by practical realities; a man could not easily close his store, for instance, to honor the Sabbath. But the Inquisition evidence suggests that men were enthusiastic partners in the effort to conceal the fast. Every bit as fond of chocolate as women, they shared equally in the abstinence and in the necessary little dramas of slave deception that the fast required. Perhaps in this way seventeenth-century crypto-Jewish men in Mexico experienced and demonstrated a rootedness in their faith that the demands and dangers of secrecy made difficult or impossible to do otherwise.<sup>40</sup>

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### Notas

1 Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico, Inquisición, legajo 413, no expediente number, folios 32r. – 33r., testimony of Miguel de Almonaçir, 30 May 1642. (Hereafter, documents from the AGN, Inquisition section, are identified only by legajo and expediente; for example, in this case: 413\_no expediente. Documents found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, are identified similarly, but always with the further designation: AHN). The widow Isabel Duarte, kinswoman to the Blancas, testified that Blanca Enríquez had “shown her several times the scars on her arms that were left from the torture they had given her.” Duarte testified that she had also heard the story of Blanca Enríquez’s torture from Blanca Méndez. 487\_21, fs. 615v. – 620r., testimony of Isabel Duarte, 29 August 1642.

2 Ibid., fs. 26r. – 27v., testimony of Miguel de Almonaçir, 24 May 1642. The conversation took place on 21 May, 399\_2a\_4, fs. 366v. – 367r., testimony of Hernando de la Fuente, 23 May 1642. As it turned out, María de Rivera would not get the chance to flee; she died in her cell in November, 1643. 403\_2a\_3, fs. 399r. - 408v.

3 395\_2, 99v. - 100r., testimony of Clara de Rivera, 6 June 1642. In a letter written much later to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Madrid, the Mexico City inquisitors glossed over her mental debility and said simply that “having separated doña Blanca from the rest

it happened that one of her daughters named Clara (who was not quite as bright [*no tan entendida*] as her sisters) became very agitated [*muy sobresaltada*] asked for a hearing and began to confess..." AHN, Libro 1054, f. 107r., Mexico Tribunal to the Supreme Council, 28 November 1643.

4 405\_9, f.479v., (sixth) testimony of Blanca Méndez de Rivera, 7 julio 1642.

5 387\_11, "memoria del día q' entraron todos los presos desta complisidad desde el año 1639 hasta este 1647"

6 411\_1a\_1, fs. 22r., 37r. -40v., testimony of María de Rivera, 7 August 1642; *ibid.*, fs. 34r. - 35v., testimony of Isabel de Rivera, 7 October 1642.

7 After four years of work the original records room (12 X 7 varas; about 33 X 19 feet) was so full of disorganized papers pertaining to crypto-Jew cases that orders were given to expand it (by an additional 10 ½ X 7 ½ varas; about 29 X 20 feet). AHN 1737\_1\_2, fs. 3v. - 4v., 17 July 1646.

8 The autos-de-fé are described and the names of those who were sentenced in them are given in Seymour B. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain; Faith, Flame and the Inquisition*. University of Miami Press, 1970. Liebman has also translated the published account of the large-scale auto of 1649, written by the Jesuit Matías de Bocanegra, *Auto general de la Fee celebrado por el Tribunal del S. Oficio de la Inquisición de México*. Seymour B. Liebman, *Jews and the Inquisition of Mexico: The Great Auto de fe of 1649*. Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1974. The entry log is at 387\_11.

9 There is abundant information in the AGN and the AHN regarding the lives and businesses of Antonio Méndez Chillón and Fernando Rodríguez. Agustín de Rojas was found hanging in his cell shortly after his arrest, and details about his life about his life and career come necessarily from the testimonies of others. See 395\_2, f. 33v., testimony of Simón López, like Rojas from Guarda and a merchant in Zacatecas, 10 May 1639.

10 The total number of slaves brought to the Spanish Indies from 1600-1620 was 69,609, or about 3,300 per year; from 1631-1639 approximately 19,000 were entered, about 2,111 a year. Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God; Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 12-18.

11 An Inquisition document dated 15 December 1643 noted a total of 53 slaves, adults and children, formerly property of crypto-Jews, who had been sold at auction, were then serving the overworked Inquisition warden and jail staff, had died or, in one case, had escaped. AHN, 1737\_1\_3, fs. 79r. - 82v.

12 413\_no expediente, fs. 58v. - 59r., testimony of Beatriz Enríquez, 14 November 1642.

13 405\_8, f. 406v., testimony of Catalina Enríquez (also a daughter of Blanca Enríquez), 5 November 1643. The widow Catalina she confessed that "one time" during Passover her mother had sent her bread *amasado* and that she had shared it with Francisco López "el Chato" and that he had known what it was. This topic is of considerable interest to contemporary scholars. See Susan Starr Sered, "Food and Holiness: Cooking as a Sacred Act Among Middle-Eastern Jewish Women, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 61:3 (July 1988), pp. 129-139.

14 405\_8, f. 449r., testimony of Beatriz Enríquez, 24 July 1642

15 The nieces were Blanca Suárez, daughter of her sister Rafaela Enríquez, and Isabel Tinoco, daughter of her sister Catalina Enríquez. Blanca Suárez was 15 in September 1641 and Isabel Tinoco was 16; although these "girls" were then still too young to have learned prayers, Isabel Tinoco had been married for several years to Manuel de Acosta, and Blanca Suárez would marry Jorge Jacinto Baçan a few months after the 1641 *Día Grande* celebration.

16 405\_8, f. 57r., testimony of Beatriz Enríquez, 24 July 1642. Teresa de Jesús, seventeenth-century Carmelite nun from Puebla, made a religious and a reverberating social statement by going barefoot. According to historian Asunción Lavrin, "Going barefooted in those times, according to her [contemporary] biographer Agustín de la Madre de Dios, was like throwing down a glove to challenge an enemy. To live a barefooted life was not only a challenge to the devil, but to society as well. Teresa de Jesús spent her whole life in struggle." Asunción Lavrin, "La vida femenina," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 2:1, p. 35. My translation.

17 Javier Villa-Flores, "'To Lose One's Soul': Blasphemy and Slavery in New Spain, 1596 – 1669," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 82:3 (August 2002), 435-468.

18 Neither of these observations was exactly right. The Blancas were not Portuguese; Blanca Méndez de Rivera's husband, Diego López Rivero, was from Castelobranco, but his wife and all but his youngest daughter were born in Seville; see 375\_1. The two people named were well-known in Mexico as convicted crypto-Jews. Justa Méndez had been tried and penanced in the auto-de-fe in 1596. She died in about 1636. Her son-in-law Duarte de León Jaramillo had been imprisoned for suspicion of heresy in 1625 and convicted and penanced in the auto-de-fé of 1635. He would be executed as a relapso in the auto of 1649. The Blancas were closely associated with Justa Méndez, they had lived in her house and she had provided Blanca Méndez's daughters with religious instruction, but they were not relatives.

19 375\_1, no folio numbers, testimony of Diego de Sandoval, 5 May 1642.

20 403\_2a\_3, fs. 303r. – 308v., testimony of María de Rivera, 20 May 1642.

21 AGN, Inquisición Real Fisco, 15\_2, fs. 116r. – 117v. The Inquisition took position of Simon Vaez's house after his arrest and used it to store property confiscated from him and from other crypto-Jews. Constant rains had washed away the cobblestones from the street and there was concern about mud flooding into the house, so the Inquisition paid to repave that part of the Calle del Aguila that ran the length of the Váez house, a distance of 20 varas (about 55 feet). The Holy Office accountant described the site: "*desde la esquina de las casas de don Fernando de la Barera, regidor desta ciudad, hasta la plazuela de Santo Domingo, en la cual esta una casa grande de Simón Váez Sevilla.*" When the inquisitors asked him to comment on a testimony that claimed that on a certain occasion the decision had been made to hold a celebration of the Law of Moses at the home of another relative because his house was too small, an offended Simón Váez replied: "...he didn't know who of his wife's family had a house bigger than his, nor did anyone else's house have a fountain inside, and that just before his arrest he had [even] brought running water into his corral..." 398\_1, f. 302, testimony of Simón Váez Sevilla, 31 August 1648.

22 AHN, 1737\_1\_3, fs. 79r. – 82v.

23 398\_1, fs. 201v. – 202r., testimony of Rafael Enríquez, and fs. 284v. – 285r., testimony of Simón Váez Sevilla, 31 August 1648.

24 398\_1, f. 204v., testimony of Antonia de la Cruz, 10 October 1643. The complete file on Antonia de la Cruz is 396\_3, fs. 501v. – 514v.

25 413\_no expediente number, f. 25v., testimony of Miguel de Almonaçir, 24 May 1642, reporting on what he heard on 21 May 1642.

26 Testimony of Gaspar de Alfar, Holy Office informer, 27 January 1646, reporting on a conversation that he heard the night before between prisoners Juan de León and Francisco Botello, cited in Boleslao Lewin, *Confidencias de dos criptojudíos en las cárceles del Santo Oficio (México, 1645-1646)*. Buenos Aires, Talleres Gráficos Julio Kaufman, 1975, p. 130-1.

27 498\_4, fs. 50r. – 55r., testimony of Juliana, 6 June 1642. The fear of the Valdés sugar mill comes from testimony of Antonia de la Cruz, who testified that Simón Váez and Juana Enríquez had told a slave named Isabel de Esperanza, who helped them hide jewels and cash in a secret room in their house, that if she did not tell "anyone in the world" about the hidden items they would free her when the troubles with the Inquisition had passed. If she did tell "it would be very bad for her" in that they would sell her to don García de Valdés "who would take her to his sugar *ingenio*." 398\_1, f. 203v., testimony of 10 October 1643.

28 AHN, 1737\_1\_3, f. 81v.

29 Present-day Gabon. Balemba I and II are small towns on the upper Ogooué River. The Portuguese discovered the Ogooué estuary in the 1470s. Slaves from this region were far less numerous than those taken from Angola to the south.

30 395\_2, fs. 29r. – 38v. These folios contain these several testimonies, dated from April to October 1639.

31 A rare instance of a man fasting for pay appears in a testimony by Blanca Méndez de Rivera, 405\_9, fs. 502v., testimony of 7 July 1642 and f. 503v., testimony of 18 July 1642. Blanca Méndez described Gaspar de Robles receiving 25 pesos from Beatriz Enríquez to do

*ayunos* for her mother's soul. According to Blanca Méndez, Robles told her that he spent the money to get back a suit that he had pawned. Unknown to Blanca Méndez, it was Gaspar de Robles who informed on her and her daughters to the Inquisition in late 1641. He had previously denounced his uncle in Veracruz. His testimonies are published in Testimonies of Gaspar de Robles, 3 August and 1 October 1641, published in Boleslao Lewin, *Singular Proceso de Salomón Machorro (Juan de León). Israelita liornés condenado por la Inquisición (México, 1650)*. Buenos Aires, 1977, pp. 3-13.

32 405\_8, f. 430r., testimony of Beatriz Enríquez, 24 July 1642.

33 405\_9, f. 537r., testimony of Blanca Méndez de Rivera, 18 July 1642.

34 405\_8, f. 449r., testimony of Beatriz Enríquez, 24 July 1642

35 Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, *Curioso tratado de la naturaleza y calidad del chocolate*. Madrid, 1631. Translated as: *Chocolate: Or, An Indian Drinke*. James Wadsworth, trans. London, 1651.

36 Antonio de León Pinelo, *Question moral si el chocolate quebranta el ayuno eclesiastico*. Madrid, 1636. Facsimile edition: Mexico Centro de Estudios de Historia de Mexico, CONDUMEX, 1994. Prologue by Sonia Corcuera de Mancera.

37 The chocolate service is described in AGN, Inquisición, Real Fisco, 18\_3, f. 87r. - 87v., testimony of Fernando Rodríguez, 27 July 1644. Rodríguez's comment about the rising price of cacao and his need to reduce his chocolate consumption is in Genero Garcia and Carlos Pereyra, *Documentos inéditos o muy raros para la historia de México*. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1974), p. 185.

38 372\_21, no folio numbers, testimony of Isabel Duarte, August 1642.

39 413\_no expediente number, f. 25v., testimony of Miguel de Almonaçir, 21 May 1642.

40 Joshua L. Golding, "Jewish Ritual and the Experience of 'Rootedness'," in Daniel H. Frank, ed., *A People Apart; Chosenness and Ritual in Jewish Philosophical Thought*, State University of New York Press, 1993, pp. 229-244.

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