



Heretics or Daughters of Israel?: The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile

Renee Levine Melammed

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Between 1391 and the end of the 15th century, numerous Spanish Jews converted to Christianity, most of them under duress. Before and after 1492, when the Jews were officially expelled from Spain, a significant number of these conversos maintained clandestine ties to Judaism, despite their outward conformity to Catholicism. Through the lens of the Inquisition's own records, this groundbreaking study focuses on the crypto-Jewish women of Castile, demonstrating their central role in the perpetuation of crypto-Jewish society in the absence of traditional Jewish institutions led by men. Renee Levine Melammed shows how many "conversas" acted with great courage and commitment to perpetuate their religious heritage, seeing themselves as true daughters of Israel. Her fascinating book sheds new light on the roles of women in the transmission of Jewish traditions and cultures.

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