



The Lima Inquisition: The Plight of Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Peru

Ana E. Schaposchnik

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The Holy Office of the Inquisition (a royal tribunal that addressed issues of heresy and offenses to morality) was established in Peru in 1570 and operated there until 1820. In this book, Ana E. Schaposchnik provides a deeply researched history of the Inquisition's Lima Tribunal, focusing in particular on the cases of persons put under trial for crypto-Judaism in Lima during the 1600s.

Delving deeply into the records of the Lima Tribunal, Schaposchnik brings to light the experiences and perspectives of the prisoners in the cells and torture chambers, as well as the regulations and institutional procedures of the inquisitors. She looks closely at how the lives of the accused—and in some cases the circumstances of their deaths—were shaped by actions of the Inquisition on both sides of the Atlantic. She explores the prisoners' lives before and after their incarcerations and reveals the variety and character of prisoners' religiosity, as portrayed in the Inquisition's own sources. She also uncovers individual and collective strategies of the prisoners and their supporters to stall trials, confuse tribunal members, and attempt to ameliorate or at least delay the most extreme effects of the trial of faith.

The Lima Inquisition also includes a detailed analysis of the 1639 Auto General de Fe ceremony of public penance and execution, tracing the agendas of individual inquisitors, the transition that occurred when punishment and surveillance were brought out of hidden dungeons and into public spaces, and the exposure of the condemned and their plight to an avid and awestricken audience. Schaposchnik contends that the Lima Tribunal's goal, more than volume or frequency in punishing heretics, was to discipline and shape culture in Peru.

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