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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RUTGERS' BILDNER CENTER PRESENTS  
"JEWS, CONVERTS, AND INQUISITORS IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN:  
RECENT REVELATIONS" ON APRIL 27**

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, N.J. – It is well known that between the years 1480 and 1530, during the Spanish Inquisition, some 2,000 Jewish converts to Christianity met death at the stake. It is also well known that in 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain and that the official justification for the expulsion was that Jews were corrupting converts. According to Paola Tartakoff, professor of Jewish studies and history at Rutgers University, it is less widely recognized that over one hundred years prior to the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition, Jewish converts were already being prosecuted for judaizing, and Jews were already being accused of attempting to bring converts back to Judaism. Tartakoff will present new research on this "inquisition before the inquisition," focusing on the gripping case of a fourteenth-century convert from Aragon who accused a group of Jews of pressuring him to return to Judaism.

The program will be held on Tuesday, April 27, at 7:30 p.m., in Traves Hall, Douglass Campus Center, 100 George Street, New Brunswick. The talk is free and open to the public. Advance registration is requested. Presented by the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers, the lecture is supported in part by the Sagner Family Foundation.

Paola Tartakoff received her B.A. from Harvard University and her Ph.D. from Columbia. Her work focuses on the history of conversion, inquisition, and Jewish-Christian

relations in medieval Spain. She regularly teaches the undergraduate courses: “Jewish Society and Culture I,” “Jews, Heretics, and the Inquisition,” “Jewish-Christian Relations through the Ages,” and “The Development of Europe, Part I.” In 2009, Tartakoff received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to complete her book *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*. Next fall, she will be a fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

For more information, visit [jewishstudies.rutgers.edu](http://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu). To RSVP, email [csjlrsvp@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:csjlrsvp@rci.rutgers.edu) or call 732-932-2033. The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life connects the university with the community through public lectures, symposia, Jewish communal initiatives, cultural events, and teacher training.