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**THE GENERAL PARDON OF 1605  
AND THE ORIGINS OF  
HAMBURG'S PORTUGUESE-JEWISH COMMUNITY**

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In the late 1630s, the Lisbon tribunal of the Inquisition held a number of trials against Portuguese Jews living in Hamburg for having offended against the Catholic faith.<sup>1</sup> Various witnesses testified that the accused, while still living in Lisbon, had been business partners of Rodrigo de Andrade and Henrique Dias Milão. The first was a merchant who had been involved in the negotiation of a general pardon in 1605 and the second a close relative of his.<sup>2</sup> After the promulgation of that pardon a group of Portuguese, including those accused in the 1630s, felt compelled to leave the country. They would eventually form the core of the Portuguese-Jewish community in Hamburg. Most of these refugees, according to the Inquisition testimonies, had enjoyed a reputation of being good Christians in Portugal; they had attended church, participated in Mass, and done pious deeds. Everything seems to indicate that they had fled not because of their faith, but because they had been subject to serious pressure from the Inquisition, the clergy, parts of the nobility, and even from the New Christian population itself.

**Judaism and the Inquisition in Portugal**

Jews are documented to have lived in Portugal for as long as we have historical records. There was a massive increase in the Jewish population in 1492, however, when the Spanish Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella gave the Jews in their territories an ultimatum: convert to Christianity or leave the country. Most of the Jews who left Spain at this time went to Portugal. Estimates of their number differ widely, but current research indicates that almost 30,000 Jews

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on my forthcoming book *Migrating Merchants*.

<sup>2</sup> ANTT [Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, National Archive Torre do Tombo], TSO [Tribunal do Santo Ofício], Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 3922, 11448, and 12212. There are more trials linked to these cases.

emigrated to Spain's Iberian neighbor.<sup>3</sup> At that time, Portugal had almost one million inhabitants, of whom between five and eight percent were Jews. The newcomers increased their proportion to eight to ten percent. Yet five years later Judaism was banned in Portugal as well. The impetus for this change was the marriage of Portuguese king Manuel to Isabella of Aragon and Castille, the daughter of the Spanish monarchs, which was contingent upon Manuel's ending the Jewish presence in Portugal as it had previously been ended in Spain. But because many of the Jews served important functions as craftsmen and shopkeepers in predominantly agrarian Portugal, the king was unwilling to dispense with their skills and services. In order to prevent their emigration, he imposed a mass conversion, which only a few were able to avoid by fleeing. Manuel promoted the rapid assimilation of the baptized Jews, forbidding them to possess Hebrew books, expropriating their synagogues and cemeteries, and placing them on an equal legal footing with the Old Christians. These policies opened to the former Jews entirely new opportunities for social, political and economic advancement. However, Manuel's plan was only partially successful. Although there were no longer any Jews in Portugal, over time the former Jews and their progeny, the so-called New Christians, remained distinct from the rest of the population.

Many Portuguese viewed the converts and their descendants with suspicion. They doubted both their religious sincerity and their political loyalty. They believed that in character and nature they would always remain different from the Old Christians whose blood was "pure" – that is, free of a supposed Judaic taint that was passed on inescapably from generation to generation, changes in professed religion notwithstanding. Having Jewish ancestry was equated with unreliability and cunning, with duplicity and arrogance. The former religious anti-Judaism was thus transformed into an early modern racial anti-Judaism.<sup>4</sup> However, unlike in Spain, formal discrimination by statutes on the "purity of blood" that excluded New Christians from offices in the ecclesiastic and civil administration was introduced in Portugal only after

<sup>3</sup> Ferro Tavares. *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV*, 74, 252-257. Contemporary figures were considerably higher; Abraham Zacuto, for example, estimated the number at 120,000; according to the chronicle of André Bernaldez, 93,000 Jews were involved; see Salomon. *Portrait of a New Christian*, 14.

<sup>4</sup> On early modern racism see, for example, Yerushalmi. "Assimilierung und rassischer Antisemitismus." Schaub. *Pour une histoire politique de la race*.

the two Iberian kingdoms were united under the Spanish Crown in 1580.<sup>5</sup>

While the state and society at large stigmatized New Christians, the actual persecution was carried out by the Inquisition. In 1536, under pressure from the Spanish Crown and with the consent of Pope Paul III, King João III introduced the Inquisition in Portugal very much along the lines of that in Spain. According to the pope, its task lay in prosecuting heretics, but from the very beginning both the Crown and leading Old Christians took aim at the New Christians.<sup>6</sup> About 32,000 trials were conducted in Portugal between 1536 and 1767, the 230 years during which the institution operated. In 70 to 80 percent of the cases, the accusation was crypto-Judaism. But according to its opponents, which not only included Portuguese Old Christians of upper social status but also parts of the Roman Curia, this claim was rarely based on facts.<sup>7</sup> In their view, both the accusations and the confessions were the result of arrest, torture, and violence. The Inquisition, so the opponents argued, was legitimizing its activities and its very existence by forcibly turning New Christians into Jews. Many of the accused learned about Judaism only once they were tried on allegations of secretly practicing the Jewish faith. Even some New Christians and Jews made this observation. For example, the Portuguese Jew Fernão Álvares Melo, who had been imprisoned by the Inquisition in Portugal and, following his release, arrived in Hamburg in 1622, wrote in the foreword of his translation of the Psalms into Spanish, which was published in 1626:

Not to our ancestors in Spain was the divine text referring when it said that the nations would say about us "surely a great and wise people is this," since they exercised such poor judgment in not teaching their children, that if the Blessed Lord had not permitted the Inquisition in that realm, a school where knowledge of Him is taught and the squandered blood is renewed, I do believe that to judge by its oblivion, by now knowledge of Him would have been completely lost.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mass conversions of Jews began considerably earlier in Spain than in Portugal; for that reason, they penetrated the urban elites earlier as well, from where the Spanish purity of blood laws largely originated; see Bethencourt. *The Inquisition*, 323-330.

<sup>6</sup> Bethencourt. "A Inquisição," 99. Marcocci. "A fundação da Inquisição," 69-92.

<sup>7</sup> Bethencourt. "A Inquisição." Salomon. "New Light on the Portuguese Inquisition," 178-186.

<sup>8</sup> Salomon. *Portrait*, 167 (English, slightly different from the quoted above), 293 (Spanish).

The notion that the Inquisition functioned as a “Marrano factory,” Marrano being used as a pejorative term for a New Christian who practiced Judaism in secret, was especially widespread during the eighteenth century, anticipating the abolition of the institution. It was given renewed attention when António José Saraiva’s *Inquisição e Cristãos-Novos*, first published in 1956, was translated into English in 2001 under the title *The Marrano Factory*.<sup>9</sup> In the case studied in this article, however, it was not only the persecution by the Inquisition which led the New Christians who fled to Hamburg to adopt Judaism, but also the bitter experiences they had made when negotiating an amnesty from its brutal proceedings.

### The General Pardon of 1605

Apart from being discriminated against, there was little that united the New Christians in Portugal. They formed no organizational structures of their own and there is not much evidence of broad solidarity among them. Most of what we know about the New Christians comes from their persecutors, who in fact accused them of an all-encompassing crypto-Judaism that gave them unity of purpose. Thus, for example, in 1601 the archbishop of Évora warned his colleagues in Braga and Lisbon that the New Christians, no matter how far apart, were in constant contact with each other.<sup>10</sup> But the events surrounding the negotiations for the General Pardon of 1605 demonstrate just how little coordinated the New Christians were. Although some scholars take the view that their solidarity became evident precisely on this occasion and even speak of the existence of a New Christian political administration and well-coordinated logistics, the events rather indicate that any attempt at organization was doomed to failure.<sup>11</sup>

General pardons were legal instruments passed by the pope which granted absolution for all transgressions of faith committed in the past. To achieve such pardons, the New Christians paid substantial financial tributes to the Crown which then would advocate for the pardon with the pope. Other royal favors repeatedly paid for by the New Christians included the exemption from the seizure of goods of the sentenced and the permission to leave the kingdom. The largest transaction of this sort was the General Pardon of 1605, which compelled the New Chris-

<sup>9</sup> Saraiva. *Inquisição e Cristãos-Novos; The Marrano Factory*.

<sup>10</sup> Marques. “Filipe III de Espanha (II de Portugal),” 180-181.

<sup>11</sup> Stuczynski. “New Christian Political Leadership in Times of Crisis,” 45-70, for example, speaks of such an administration.

tians to pay 1,700,000 cruzados to finance, among other things, a fleet that was supposed to force the Dutch and English out of the India trade, on which Portugal claimed a monopoly. In addition, they paid a bribe of 50,000 cruzados to the duke of Lerma, the favorite and minister of Philip III, as well as bribes of 50,000 to 60,000 cruzados to other intermediaries.<sup>12</sup>

The initiator and leader of the pardon negotiations was the Lisbon businessman Heitor Mendes de Brito, who claimed to be acting on behalf of all New Christians.<sup>13</sup> He advanced significant sums of money and to the very end kept in contact with the negotiators in Madrid and Valladolid, where the Spanish king, also the head of Portugal during the years of the Iberian Union (1580-1640), resided with his court. Mendes de Brito was not only extraordinarily wealthy, he was also interested in the well-being of the people who surrounded him, which earned him the epithets “the Rich” and “Father of the Oppressed” (*pai dos afligidos*). Furthermore, he had close relationships with a number of successful New Christian businessmen who held key positions in the Portuguese economy as contractors in the India and Africa trade and as tax collectors. In fact, the historian James Boyajian claims that the payments agreed to for the General Pardon were part of a strategy by wealthy Lisbon merchants to secure their role in the India trade.<sup>14</sup> In the end, however, the New Christian negotiators hardly derived any business benefits from it, rather to the contrary, the Pardon spelled financial ruin for some of them.<sup>15</sup>

One of the persons who personally negotiated the General Pardon at the court was Rodrigo de Andrade. He came from a well-known Portuguese banking family, the Rodrigues d’Évora, and he was heir to a large estate in the diocese of Leiria and holder of important royal trade and tax contracts.<sup>16</sup> In 1600 he and Jorge Rodrigues Solis went to Madrid on behalf of Heitor Mendes de Brito to convince the king to ask the pope for a general pardon for the Portuguese New Christians. During his

<sup>12</sup> Pulido Serrano. *Os Judeus e a Inquisição no Tempo dos Filipes*, 47-76.

<sup>13</sup> Regarding the negotiation of the General Pardon see Pulido Serrano. “Las negociaciones con los cristianos nuevos,” 345-376. López-Salazar Codes. *Inquisición Portuguesa y Monarquía Hispánica*. Stuczynski. “New Christian Political Leadership in Times of Crisis.” Borges Coelho. “Política, dinheiro e fé,” 109-152. Marques. “Filipe III de Espanha (II de Portugal).” Almeida. “O Perdão Geral de 1605.”

<sup>14</sup> Boyajian. *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs*, 11, 92-93.

<sup>15</sup> Pulido Serrano. *Negociaciones*, 361.

<sup>16</sup> Salomon. *Portrait*, 42; see also Pulido Serrano. *Negociaciones*, 357.

stay in Spain, the Inquisition arrested Rodrigo de Andrade's wife, Ana de Milão, in Lisbon.<sup>17</sup> A lady of about 60 years of age, she was accused of preparing food in accordance with Jewish dietary laws and of staring out an open window at the heavens instead of at a crucifix while praying. Besides, she had expressed sympathy for several people who had been condemned to death by the Inquisition. In all probability her arrest was motivated, however, by her husband's negotiations which ran counter to the interests of the inquisitors. But the king, who was concerned about the profitable conclusion of the negotiations, intervened on her behalf, and the pope threatened to excommunicate the inquisitors and halt the Portuguese Inquisition if Ana de Milão were not given a fair trial.<sup>18</sup> Yet she was released only after the General Pardon was finally decreed in 1605, having spent three years in prison. Her husband died in the same year, probably without having seen her in freedom.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the inquisitors, the most severe opponents of the General Pardon belonged to the Portuguese clergy, headed by the principal ecclesiastical dignitaries of the kingdom, the archbishops of Lisbon, Braga, and Évora. They were joined by parts of the nobility and other sectors of the population. When the pardon was promulgated in January 1605 and more than 410 prisoners were released from Inquisition prisons, this led to massive rioting throughout the country. There was particularly heavy unrest in Lisbon and Coimbra, which included stoning and led to severe punishment of the leaders. Yet the majority of the priests who had stirred the riots during their Masses and the students who had massively supported them got off scot-free.<sup>20</sup>

Further unrest ensued when the board established to organize the payment of the General Pardon started its work. It compiled a list with the names of 6,000 well-to-do New Christians who were intended to contribute their share and established the amount that each had to pay,

<sup>17</sup> ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, procs. 14409, 16420.

<sup>18</sup> The pope's letter is reprinted in Salomon. *Portrait*, 203. See also Pulido Serrano. *Judeus*, 63-64; López-Salazar Codes. *Inquisición Portuguesa y Monarquía Hispánica*, 44-49.

<sup>19</sup> Salomon. *Portrait*, 45. According to Borges Coelho he died in Rome where he had gone to negotiate the pardon; Borges Coelho. *Inquisição de Évora*, 44.

<sup>20</sup> Azevedo. *História dos cristãos novos portugueses*, 162-163. Borges Coelho. *Política*, 133-134. Pulido Serrano. *Judeus*, 72. López-Salazar Codes. *Inquisición Portuguesa y Monarquía Hispánica*, 118.

depending on their assets.<sup>21</sup> But many of these New Christians were not willing to contribute. According to the report of a witness the collection was accompanied by "the worst scandals and abuses." Manuel de Palácios, one of the New Christians with primary responsibility for collecting the sum, who "had the best information, made no exceptions, and accepted no excuses for nonpayment," was murdered under unexplained circumstances.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, only a small group of New Christians actually profited from the pardon: the prisoners and those accused or threatened with immediate arrest by the Inquisition. But most of the New Christians who were asked to pay for the pardon derived no advantage from it whatsoever. Some of the persons on the list denied that they were New Christians. Others claimed innocence and refused to pay for other people's sins. There were also those who categorically rejected the agreements supposedly made in their name. A group of more than 50 prominent Lisbon New Christian businessmen, who called themselves the "substance of the merchants of this kingdom," complained to the king in a detailed memorandum in 1605.<sup>23</sup> In it they stated that the General Pardon harmed the reputation of all honest New Christians, because it would brand them as potential "Judaizers." The authors decried the freeing of the Inquisition's prisoners as a scandal, because in their opinion the accusations and trials might have been justified. Furthermore, the negotiators, who were accepted by the Crown and the pope as official representatives, had not been authorized by the New Christians to speak for them. The New Christians, so they argued, had no common representatives or internal organization, no government, and no republic of their own. Rather they were part of a "mystical body," which they shared with the Old Christians of the kingdom. The authors of the memorandum therefore vehemently condemned the initiators and negotiators of the General Pardon, accusing them of having acted mainly for their own advantage. They claimed that the negotiators only wanted to gain the release of their brothers, spouses, and relatives from imprisonment or to spare their own property from confiscation by the Inquisition. These were serious accusations that demonstrate just how split the New Christians, and especially the New Christian merchants, were as a group. It is quite probable that the negotiators in fact

<sup>21</sup> Stuczynski. "New Christian Political Leadership in Times of Crisis." Pulido Serrano. *Negociaciones*, 366, 370.

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Borges Coelho. *Inquisição*, vol. 2, 199, 206 (author's translation).

<sup>23</sup> Pulido Serrano. *Negociaciones*, 367-369; Pulido Serrano. *Judeus*, 69-71.

represented only a very small group around Heitor Mendes de Brito, who claimed considerable authority, but was not willing or able to distinguish between his own intentions and the needs of the decidedly heterogeneous New Christian community as a whole. For the Crown, however, it made little difference whether the negotiators were representative of an existent community or not, as long as they helped to fill the empty coffers of the state.

Resistance against the negotiators of the General Pardon developed on all sides. Several family members of Rodrigo de Andrade were arrested by the Inquisition immediately after the agreed one-year grace period had lapsed in 1606. His wife's brother-in-law, Henrique Dias Milão, who was a very successful businessman with trade connections to Angola, Brazil, and Mexico, was publicly burned at the stake in an *auto-da-fé* three years later.<sup>24</sup> The multiple threats from the Inquisition, the Old Christian elites, and also from irate New Christians led the families of Rodrigo de Andrade, Henrique Dias Milão, Manuel de Palácios, and a number of close business associates to leave the country, as they saw no possibility of continuing their lives and businesses in Portugal.

### The flight to Hamburg

According to one Inquisition document, Rodrigo de Andrade's children migrated to Flanders, where most of them died in poverty.<sup>25</sup> While some of his family members did indeed go to Antwerp, the majority migrated to Hamburg, where they became successful merchants. They were joined by the families of Henrique Dias Milão and Manuel de Palácios as well as those of the businessmen Henrique de Lima, Lopo Nunes, Diogo Nunes Veiga, Diogo Carlos, António Saraiva, João Francês, Pedro Francês, and Miguel Francês. As was stated in the trials mentioned at the beginning of this article, all of them left Portugal due to the events related to the General Pardon and the arrest of Henrique Dias Milão. Most settled in Hamburg in 1606 or the following years, and several of their tombstones can still be found in the Jewish cemetery in Hamburg-Altona.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Borges Coelho. *Política*, 117-123.

<sup>25</sup> Borges Coelho. *Inquisição*, vol. 2, 207.

<sup>26</sup> Studemund-Halévy. *Biographisches Lexikon der Hamburger Sefarden*, 201, 248, 790-795, 809-810.

Hamburg's recent integration into the Atlantic trade and the city's gradual opening towards foreign merchants meant that by the mid-sixteenth century the city had started to become highly attractive for all kinds of immigrants. Its population doubled from about 20,000 in the middle of the sixteenth century to 40,000 at the beginning of the seventeenth century. By 1643 it had risen to 56,000.<sup>27</sup> In a treatise written in 1628, Michael von Mentzel, who lived in Hamburg as the agent of Field Marshal Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly, estimated that only a third of Hamburg's inhabitants were native-born.<sup>28</sup> Although he held that most of the immigrants had come from outside the Holy Roman Empire, it may be assumed that the majority were drawn to Hamburg from the environs of the city. The newly arrived merchants, however, included Rhinelanders, southern Germans, Balts, Scandinavians, Englishmen, Scots, Flemish, Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards – and Portuguese. The first Portuguese had reached Hamburg around 1590. By 1609 there were already about twenty merchant families from Portugal living in the city.<sup>29</sup> The entire Portuguese community probably numbered about a hundred individuals by this time. Many of these had come due to the events set off by the General Pardon.

Among the first New Christians who came to Hamburg from the group previously discussed was Beatriz de Milão, the niece of Rodrigo de Andrade and daughter of Henrique Dias Milão. Her brother, Paulo de Milão, brought her to Hamburg in 1606, where she married the merchant Álvaro Dinis, who had arrived one year earlier and become successful in trade relatively quickly.<sup>30</sup> Only two weeks after Paulo de Milão's return to Portugal, he was arrested by the Inquisition. He and several other members of his family, including his father and two brothers, were sent to prison. While 81-year old Henrique Dias Milão was burnt at the stake in 1609 because he refused to abjure his "heresy," most of the others were eventually released and managed to leave the country.

<sup>27</sup> Mauersberg. *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte zentraleuropäischer Städte in neuerer Zeit*, 47. By contrast, Heinrich Reincke estimates the population in 1600 at 36,000 to 40,000, in 1620 at 45,000 to 54,000; Reincke. "Hamburgs Bevölkerung," 172-173.

<sup>28</sup> Hesel. "Consilium politicum wegen der Stadt Hamburg," 48-49.

<sup>29</sup> StAHH [State Archive Hamburg], Senat, Cl. VII Eb Nr. 11 Vol. 6.

<sup>30</sup> According to the customs duty registers, a good quarter of the trade volume realized by the Portuguese was carried out by him; StAHH, Senat, Cl. VII Eb Nr. 11 Vol. 6. See also ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 3338.

The flight of Henrique Dias Milão's daughter Isabel in 1610 proved especially dramatic. After the death of her father her mother instructed Manuel Cardoso, the son of an Old Christian merchant from the Azores, to take Isabel, a Chinese servant and two small children to Antwerp. Cardoso was to receive 20,000 reis for this service. As a New Christian, Isabel was not permitted to leave the country without permission by the Inquisition, the granting of which was doubtful due to the various trials held against her family members. Although Cardoso was an Old Christian, he, too, would have needed Inquisition permission to leave the country because he had previously been convicted of Protestant heresy. At the last moment, just as the group was getting ready to board a boat to take them to an English trading vessel that would deliver them to Antwerp, they were arrested by a customs official on the beach at São Bento near Lisbon and handed over to the Inquisition.<sup>31</sup>

But even they were eventually able to flee. Isabel left the country together with her mother and sister in 1611 and turned up again in Hamburg, where she married Pedro de Palácios.<sup>32</sup> He was the son of Manuel de Palácios, the New Christian who had been murdered in connection with the collection of the money for the General Pardon. Evidently he, like his brothers Duarte and Jácome, had felt compelled to leave Portugal.<sup>33</sup> By now Henrique Dias Milão's wife Guiomar Gomes and their daughters Beatriz, Ana and Isabel lived in Hamburg.<sup>34</sup> Paulo de Milão, his son, who had brought Beatriz to Hamburg but then returned to Portugal, lived in Hamburg since 1612 at the latest.<sup>35</sup> Another son of the couple, Manuel Cardoso (not to be confused with the previously mentioned Old Christian Manuel Cardoso) had spent many years in Brazil, where he had had a share in the brazilwood contract. Around 1610 he lived in London, and in 1616 he

<sup>31</sup> ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, procs. 319, 319-1.

<sup>32</sup> Studemund-Halévy. *Biographisches Lexikon der Hamburger Sefarden*, 734. Salomon. *Portrait*, 62.

<sup>33</sup> His name appears for the first time in 1608 in the Hamburg *Werkzoll* (customs duties) registers; StAHH, Senat, Cl. VII Eb Nr. 11 Vol. 6. In 1619 he shared a bank account with his brother Duarte. In 1623 Jácome had a bank account of his own at the Bank of Hamburg, but he does not appear in the Admiralty customs books.

<sup>34</sup> ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 6677.

<sup>35</sup> Cassuto. "Neue Funde zur ältesten Geschichte der portugiesischen Juden in Hamburg," 67.

was active in Amsterdam before finally settling in Hamburg, too.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, there are indications that Henrique Dias Milão's children António and Leonor also lived in Hamburg, while another two of his nine children, Gomes Rodrigues and Fernão Lopes de Milão, established themselves in Amsterdam.<sup>37</sup> The Old Christian Manuel Cardoso, who had tried to help part of the family to flee, also reached the city – I will come back to him later.

The whereabouts of Rodrigo de Andrade's children are a little bit more difficult to trace. It is documented, however, that three of his four sons, Francisco, André, and Manuel, paid customs duties in Hamburg in 1632. According to the amount of duties paid, Francisco was even the most successful Portuguese merchant in Hamburg in terms of trade by this time.<sup>38</sup> Rodrigo de Andrade's daughter, Branca, fled first to Antwerp, where she married Diogo Teixeira, who later married Ana de Andrade, her niece and a granddaughter of Rodrigo de Andrade. They, too, finally settled in Hamburg, and Diogo Teixeira became by far the wealthiest and most influential Portuguese businessman in Hamburg in the seventeenth century.

### The adoption of Judaism in Hamburg

When the first Portuguese arrived in Hamburg, most of them joined the Jesuit mission in nearby Altona. This was the place where they could practice the Catholic faith in a majority Lutheran environment. It is not known when exactly they decided to give up Catholicism to become Jews. Hamburg citizens suspected the Portuguese of secretly adhering to Judaism as early as 1603.<sup>39</sup> Yet many of them continued to be members of the Catholic congregation as late as 1609, although not all attended Mass regularly.<sup>40</sup> In 1611, a group of Portuguese acquired land for a Jewish cemetery, which may be viewed as the final step towards the founding of their congregation. A straightforward adoption of Judaism by New Christians in exile would have been consistent with the views of historians such as Israël S. Révah, who held that they transformed their "potential Judaism" to "real Judaism" as soon as they

<sup>36</sup> Kellenbenz. *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe*, 118. Salomon. *Portrait*, 49. Borges Coelho. *Política*, 117-123.

<sup>37</sup> Salomon. *Portrait*, 50. See also Heitor Mendes Bravo's denunciation of Hamburg community members, ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 12493.

<sup>38</sup> StAHH, Admiralitätskollegium, F3 Band 1 und 2; F4 Band 8.

<sup>39</sup> Reils. "Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg," 361-362.

<sup>40</sup> Ehrenberg. *Die Jesuiten-Mission in Altona*, 5.

could.<sup>41</sup> In Révah's thinking, the conversion of New Christians had been predetermined by their heritage. They had yearned to be Jews even while living in the Iberian Peninsula. But in many cases the decision to return to Judaism was not so obvious. None of the mentioned family members of Rodrigo de Andrade and Henrique Dias Milão is known to have played any major role in early community life, apart from Beatriz de Andrade's husband Álvaro Dinis, who was one of the early congregation leaders. Diogo de Lima, a Portuguese who was born in Hamburg in 1612, reported that in his childhood only some of the Portuguese in Hamburg were Jewish, and that many converted only later.<sup>42</sup> The Jewish congregation probably exerted some pressure to win over all of the Portuguese living in the city. In two sermons printed in Hamburg in 1629, Álvaro Dinis mentioned the resistance of some of the Portuguese to become member of the religious community.<sup>43</sup> In the end, however, conversion to Judaism also meant gaining the recognition and support of their countrymen, while refusing to convert would have led to social, political, and economic isolation in a foreign environment once the Catholic congregation had lost its wealthy supporters.

The memoir of the above mentioned Old Christian Manuel Cardoso provides a personal account of the circumstances surrounding the conversion of a Portuguese merchant in Hamburg.<sup>44</sup> Cardoso originally came from Terceira Island in the Azores. He was arrested by the Inquisition in 1608 on the accusation that he had accepted the Reformed confession when in Exeter, where he had been sent at the age of 14 to learn English in order to help his father in the dyer's woad trade. By coincidence, his cellmate happened to be the New Christian Henrique Dias Milão. After his release from prison he joined the Milão family because his own father had reacted with great anger to his religious deviance and had banned him from the family. As we saw, Cardoso was once again arrested by the Inquisition when helping his former cellmate's daughter flee the country. This time he made the acquaintance of Josef bar Jacob in prison, a Jew from Salonika, who taught him the

<sup>41</sup> Révah. "Les marranes," 55-56. See also Salomon. *Portrait*, 35.

<sup>42</sup> Azevedo. "O Bocarro Francês e os Judeus de Cochim e Hamburgo," 194.

<sup>43</sup> Salomon. *Portrait*, 49-50. Pressure was also exerted within families. Gaspar Bocarro, for example, testified before the Inquisition that when he arrived in Hamburg in the early 1630s his brother would take him in only on the condition that he adhere to Judaism. Révah. "Une famille de 'nouveaux-chrétiens'," 79.

<sup>44</sup> Teensma. "De levensgeschiedenis van Abraham Peregrino, alias Manuel Cardoso de Macedo," 1-36. See also ANTT, TSO, Inquisição de Lisboa, procs. 319, 319-1.

foundations of the Jewish religion. After his renewed release Manuel Cardoso left the country and followed the Milão family to Hamburg. According to his account, they received him there with open arms. Just four days after his arrival he underwent circumcision, took the prescribed bath, and assumed the name Abraham Peregrino.

Cardoso's conversion cannot have resulted from reclaiming his "potential Judaism," as Révah put it, because he was an Old Christian. Rather, in his case, it was the Inquisition that led him to adopt the Jewish faith, providing an example of the "Marrano factory" hypothesis (although not producing a Marrano out of a New Christian, but an outright Jew out of an Old Christian). Not only did the Inquisition acquaint him intimately with the inhumane practices carried out in the name of Catholicism, it also destroyed his relations with his family of origin and brought him into close contact with a group of New Christians and a Jew. Though at the time of his circumcision he could hardly have known that much about his new religion, his conversion appears to have been uncomplicated. At this time, no formal instruction and examination about the Jewish faith had been established in Hamburg, nor was a New Christian background absolutely necessary.

The origins of the Hamburg Portuguese-Jewish community do not conform to a simple narrative of crypto-Jews who came to Hamburg in order to live the religion they had always longed for. Quite to the contrary, the Portuguese considered here arrived due to rather pragmatic decisions in a time of intense religious, social and racial persecution, triggered by the negotiation of a general pardon. We will never know the New Christians' exact motives to return to the faith of their ancestors. But once the Portuguese-Jewish congregation was firmly established, it provided a solidarity that most Portuguese would happily share.

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