

A Wider Search for
Crypto-Jews in England
between
1290 and the 1656
Re-Admission

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Introduction

Jews were officially expelled from Britain on November 1, 1290, All Saints Day and prohibited from dwelling in England thereafter. In theory, no Jews lived in England until their readmission, encouraged by Cromwell, in 1656. Some scholars, both Jewish and non-Jewish, believe Britain hosted no Jewish community of any substance for those 366 years.

"From the time of Edward to that of Cromwell no Jew touched English ground."¹

There is an alternative view. Jews lived in England from the 1290 expulsion all the way through to the 1656 readmission. As it was illegal to be Jewish in England, they may not have been openly practicing. However, there is evidence of all manner of Jews living in England during the 366-year ban on their "touching English ground". Indeed, London may have been home to a silent but persistent Jewish community for that entire period.

In assembling a database of 250,000 aliens living in the UK between 1320 and 1656, patterns emerge that support an argument for constant Jewish presence in England during the 366-year ban. This work is entitled "a wider search" because it aims to enumerate the Jews, in their myriad of forms, that lived in England during this time. There were:

- Jews who converted and took up residence in the Domus Conversorum.
- Spanish Crypto-Jews who spent a generation or two living in Italy and then passed themselves off as Italians when they immigrated to London.
- Spanish-Converso Catholic priests who became Protestants in Spain and then migrated to England.
- Spanish Conversos who escaped the Inquisition, made a home in Bordeaux, and once there became French Reform (Huguenot), who then escaped the wrath of Louis XIV and made their way to London.
- Merchants of Jewish descent who acted as the London branch of a Spanish-Jewish trade network which spanned from there to Spain, Portugal, the Ottoman Empire, and as far off as India.

Indeed, many Jews made England home during the 366-year ban on their presence, as did their descendants.

The topic is complicated. Because as there was an official ban on their presence in England, Jews had to operate and live off the radar screen, which means they did their best to avoid detection. They did this, in part, by leaving as few records as possible. Lacking substantial historical documentation, one must take into consideration inferences, in fact, circumstantial evidence, to see their presence.

Then there is a very old debate, “Who is a Jew”, that existed in the period in question and one that persists to this very day. If your mother was Jewish, but you were raised Catholic, are you still a Jew? By Jewish law the answer is yes. If your father was Jewish, and your mother was not, and you were raised as a practicing Jew, does that make you Jewish? According to Jewish law, the answer is no. If you were a half Jew in Germany, with a Jewish mother or father, you were a Jew and were deported to the death camps. Who and what is a Jew is a tricky topic.

In the segregated American south, many neighborhoods banned blacks or Jews from owning homes. Did that mean no black or Jewish family lived in those neighborhoods? No. They did. However, they had to be able to conceal their ancestry. This might have resulted in both the black and the Jewish community disavowing them as not being black or Jewish. However, that did not mean that they were not black or Jewish.

How one defines a Jew determines whether they were in England between 1320 and 1656. If a Jew is someone who attends synagogue and maintains the dietary laws, and is open about their religion, then it may be true there were no Jews in England in this time frame. But, if you use a wider definition of what a Jew is, indeed, Jews did live in England during this time.

There is one key fact which supports the presence of Jews in England during the 366-year ban. England had no Inquisition. This was especially relevant after the 1492 Alhambra Decree in Spain. In England, if Jews or persons of Jewish ancestry maintained a low profile, they could live life in safety. They had to be careful, but it was possible. This was especially true after the 1492 Spanish Alhambra Decree when Jews had the choice to leave or convert. In countries controlled by the Catholic Church, the Holy Office of the Inquisition carefully scrutinized people’s family trees for any signs of Jewish descent. If there was any, the person or family was never safe. England’s lack of Inquisition made it a logical spot for those who had reason to fear the Inquisition.

The 1290 Expulsion

The independent researcher, Donald Yates, PhD, has held the position that after November 1, 1290, Jews remained in England and Scotland. The ban was not followed by a consistently enforced expulsion. In his three books, the “Early Jews and Muslims of England and Wales”, “When Scotland was Jewish”, and “Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America” he reveals that many Jews in England forgot to be expelled. In 1290, there were an estimated 3000 Norman Jews living in England, Yates argues there may have been that many after 1290. The English Expulsion of 1290 should not be confused with the Spanish Expulsion of 1492. The English Expulsion was sloppy. The Spanish Expulsion was surgical. While this is a contentious assertion, there is evidence that supports Yates’ view.²

The Domus Conversorum

In the first instance, there were English-Jewish converts even before the 1290 Expulsion. In 1232, King Henry III created an endowed home for Jews willing to convert to Christianity. This Domus Conversorum or house of converts, operated from 1232 until 1891. It was an interesting concept. If you converted, you gave up your Jewish profession and Jewish business connections, and in return, the crown provided you with a home and a stipend.

“In the year 1232, King Henry III issued an Order to the effect that he desired, “for the health of his own soul and for the souls of his ancestors and heirs, to the honour of God and of the glorious Virgin,” to found a Home for destitute Jews converted to Christianity. This novel idea was, in all probability, suggested to the king by his clergy, who, by means of the substantial bribes of a free Home and maintenance, hoped to effect a conversion en masse of the English Jews. The king fixed the endowment of the establishment at 700 marks a year and gave a site for the buildings in what is now called Chancery Lane. This Domus Conversorum, or Converts Inn’s...”³

In a real twist, between 1232 and 1290, Jewish residents of England were taxed for the purpose of paying for the cost of running the Domus Conversorum and distribution of the stipend offered to converts. In an even stranger twist of history, converted Jews who took up residence in the Domus were in charge of collecting this special tax from the Jewish community from whence they came. The Jewish community was none-too-pleased with this arrangement. In 1290, just before the Expulsion, William le Convers, or William the Convert, was attacked by the Jews of Oxford who refused to pay the tax when he came to collect. Here we see an interesting name appear, Le Convers or Convers. People bearing this name, before and after the Expulsion, were converted Jews.

Although converting and taking up residence in the Domus Conversorum was never popular, some did it. Here is a list, which may or may not be complete, of the Jews who resided in England as converted Jews after the 1290 Expulsion.

**List of Inmates/converts residing in the Domus Conversorum
between 1280 and 1308
Alive in 1280, but since Dead**

Men

Johannes le Bel, Petrus de Merton	Thorn' de Lincoln
Henri de Wynton	Johannes de Santo Salvatore
Ricardus de Merwelle	Robertus de Sutheby
Joh. son of Johannes de Havenaked	Johannes de Bury
Bartholomeus de Wynton (Winchester)	Willelmus his son
Laurencius de Nichole	Johannes de Rossa
Johannes de Lincoln	Ricardus de Cigest' (Chichester)
Reginald de Wynton	Johannes de Stamford.

Women:

Johanna de Bellesham	Alic' der Oxon
Claricia la Convers	Lecia de Northamtone
Alicia de Sancta Elena	Anne de Northt'
Agnes de Walingford	Christina de Gellingham
Juliana de Northampton	Constancia de Reding
Editha la Convers	Agnes de Staunford
Juliana la Bossue	Petronilla de Morwode
(i.e. the Hunchback)	Petronilla de Line'
Emma de Sante Dionisio	Johanna de Norwyc

Converts Living in the Domus Conversorum after 1308

Men

Willelmus de Winton	Johannes de Norht'	Johan de Parys
Johannes le Philiper	Ricardus de Ware	Rogerus Bard
Martinus le Convers	Radulphus de Arcubus	Saverus Convers
Willelmus de Arundel	Nicolaus de Oxon	Reginaldus Becere
Johannes de Havenaked	Ricardus de Oxon	Thomas de Cricklade
Ricardus de Merwelle	Willelmus de Sonnden	Robertus de Cricklade
Hugo de Kendale	Robertus de Cant'	Willelmus de Cricklade
Henry de Oxon		Gregorius de Cant'.

Women

Juliana the wife of Martin	Johanna de Leye' (Leicester)
Matil de Merwelle	Mariota de Rosa
Alicia de Havenaked	Matill' de Cant'
Cristina de Kendal	Matill' de Wynton
Matill' the daughter of Matill' de Merwelle	Ermedruta de Cant'
Isabella de Sancte Paulo	Cristine de Bristoll
Johanne de North'	Johanna de Nottingham
Alienora Convers	Juliana de Kendale
Leticia Convers	Alice de Exon
Mabilla de Arundel	Hawys de Oxon
Juliana de Norwyco	Agnes de Santa Radegund
Alicia de Ponte	Petronilla la Furberesse
Cristine de Warwyk	Elena de Cant'
	Alice de Wynton ⁴

Drama at the Domus in 1315

In 1315 there was a shakeup at the Domus Conversorum. The warden of the house of converts was Adam de Ogodeby. His brother married a Jewish resident of the Domus, Alesia, daughter of Martin the Convert (Le Convers). This marriage upset the dynamics of the house of converts, to the extent that the other converts petitioned the King. Presumably, Alesia married into the management, and this elevated her position.

More than a story of conflict between the converts who lived at the Domus, it tells the story of a Jewish woman marrying a man, who may have been Christian, and the couple would have produced children who were Jewish by Jewish law. The brother of the warden may have been a Jewish convert himself. The groom's name is unknown. His warden brother, Adam de Ogodeby, had a Jewish first name. Ogodeby is a town so the warden's potentially Jewish name would have been Adam from Ogodeby.

As being a Jew was such a liability, marrying a converted Jew is not something many born Christians do. It's not impossible but it's not probable. In addition, there is history that more than one converted Jew became the warden of the Domus.

This couple likely went out to live in London and have children, who were either half Jewish or or fully Jewish by Jewish law. Who were those children? What was their fate?⁵

List of Converts at the Domus from 1330-1606

1.	Walter of Nottingham.....	1330-1336
2.	Richard, son of Claricia of Exeter	1337-1350
3.	Katherine, daughter of Claricia of Exeter	1337-?
4.	John, son of Edward St. John	1337
5.	William, son of Edward St. John	1337
6.	Edward of Brussels.?	1339
7.	Janato of Spain	1345
8.	John of St. Paul	1345
9.	William of Leicester	1350
10.	John of Hatfield	1350
11.	John of Castile.....	1356-?
12.	John de Sancte Marie of Spain	1371-1405
13.	Laurentius de Saint Martín	about 1375
14.	John of Kingston	about 1375
15.	Thomas of Acres.....	about 1375
16.	Edmund.....	about 1375
17.	Peter.....	about 1375
18.	William Piers.?	1382
19.	Aseti Briarti of France.....	1386-1393
20.	Perota, Aseti's wife	1386-1393
21.	Thomas Levyn of Spain	1393
22.	Elizabeth, daughter of Rabbi Moses, Episcopus Judae	
23.	William of Leicester	1401-1417
24.	Johanna of Dartmouth	1409-1449
25.	Alice, Johanna's daughter.....	1409-1454
26.	William of St. Jacques	1409-1416
27.	Henry of Woodstock	1413-1416
28.	Martin, his son.....	1413-1468
29.	Peter, his son.....	1413-1416
30.	Henry of Stratford	1416-1441
31.	John Durdraght.....	1425-1455
32.	Alver Oliver	1438-1446
33.	John Seyt	1448-1488
34.	Henry of Eton	1450-1453
35.	Edward of Westminster (absent three years).....	1461-1503
36.	Edward Brandon.....	1468-1472
37.	Edward Beauchamp	1482-1487
38.	John Fernando.....	1487-1503
39.	Henry Vaughan.....	1487-1488
40.	Henry of Windsor.....	1488-1509
41.	Edward Brampton.....	1488
42.	Elizabeth Portingale	1492-1538

43. Edward Scales	1503-1527
44. Elizabeth Baptista.....	1504-1532
45. Katherine Wheteley (formerly Aysa Pudewy)	
46. Mary Cook (formerly Omell Faitt Isy)	
47. Nathaniel Menda (formerly Jehooda Mend)	
48. Fortunati Massa (formerly Cooba Mass)	
49. Philip Ferdinandus.....	1598-1600
50. Elizabeth Furdinando.....	1603-?
51. Arthur Antoe.....	1605-?
52. Jacob Wolfgang ⁶	1606-?"

Claricia of Exeter, daughter of Jacob Copin of Exeter, was said to have entered the Domus in 1280 and may be the Claricia le Convers mentioned previously. She is thought to have left the Domus by 1308, returned to Exeter where she married and had two children, Richard and Catherine. She returned to the Domus in 1330 and lived there until her death in 1356. Apparently, her children needed to convert as they entered the Domus in 1337. House of Converts suggests they were not Christian when they wandered in. Who was Claricia’s husband? Was he Jewish? These children were born well after the 1290 expulsion.

Clarice was born into a vibrant, albeit modest, Jewish community in Exeter. During her life, Jews were “expelled” or at least not allowed to exist publicly as Jews and ultimately died in a world where Jewish living was prohibited. But not before producing two Jewish children who would follow her into conversion and life in the Domus.⁷

Huscroft states in his book, *Expulsion. England’s Jewish Solution*, “As for what happened to the English exiles of 1290, little is known for certain.” He posits many likely went to France, others scattered to other Jewish communities in Europe. But, considering Claricia of Exeter and others, some of the “exiles” exiled more locally.

For Jews to convert and take up residence in the Domus Conversorum between 1290 and 1654, there had to be Jews living in England. While many of the entries indicate a foreign-born person, 28 inmates, with names like Henry of Windsor (1488-1509) suggest there were Jews living in England after the expulsion. Moreover, inmates with English names, who arrived between 1330 and 1488, came from places that once hosted Jewish communities prior to the 1290 Expulsion.

Nottingham	1330
Exeter.....	1337
Leicester	1350, 1404
Hatfield	1350
Kingston	1375
Dartmouth.....	1409

Woodstock	1413
Stratford	1416
Eton	1450
Westminster (London)	1461
Windsor.....	1488

An entry made for the Domus Conversorum, dated 1409, is for two Jewish women from Dartmouth, who came to London to convert and gain admittance in the Domus Conversorum. Were they the only Jews in Dartmouth? Unlikely.

“Royal Order of Admission for Johanna and Alice of Dartmouth (1409). Exchequer Accounts, Q.R., Bundle 251, No. 11. Henri by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland.

To our very dear clerk John Wakeryhg' Garcstein of our house of Converts in the London Suburb greetings. Johanne of our town Dartmouth and Alice, her daughter, previously Jewish disbelievers desire to be of the Christian...With consideration to the reference of God we wish and ask you that the said Joanne and Alice be admitted to the house of converts for the full term of their lives, ministering to them and giving them all the neccessities for sustenance. As other women of their condition were taken into our house by the hands of God...”

A year later, Elizabeth, the daughter of a Rabbi, entered the Domus Conversorum. It is suspected her father was a Rabbi in France. France is one of the spots English (originally Norman Jews) were reported to have moved to after the expulsion.

Elizabeth may not have been the only French Jew at the Domus. Other converts on the list carry French names: Saint Martin, Brauti of France, St. Jacques, and Beauchamp and one presumes they too came from France.

Royal Grant of an Additional Penny per Day to Elizabeth, Daughter of Rabbi Moses (1410). Exchequer Accounts, Q.R., Bundle 251, No. 11.

Confirmation of Grant to Elizabeth, Daughter of Rabbi Moses (1413). Exchequer Accounts, Q.R, Bundle 251, No. 15.

Henri by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland. To our sole cleric, Thomas de Stanley Gardein of the Domus Conversorum in the Suburbe of London greetings. Come from our special grace and out of consideration of gratitude and charity we grant to Elizabeth the daughter of a Rabbi Moyses Levesque of the lands of France and Dalmaigne, convert to our faith.... Your request that the said Elizabeth shall receive in her life as a convert, an

additional penny allowance. And let us hope that by these you have due allowance. Dated the 17th day of December year of his first reign.”

One has to wonder, did the Jews that fled to France, maintain relationships with Jews who remained in England? To travel from France, to England, to enter the Domus Conversorum, is a bit odd. Could she not convert and stay in France?

Shortly after receiving an increased allowance, Elizabeth married David Pole, a tailor, who lived near Chancery Lane. She continued to live at the Domus Conversorum for an additional seven years while being married to David Pole. This marriage in and of itself is rather interesting. David Pole’s name, David, is a Jewish name. Pole suggests he was from Poland. Poland was a place with a growing Jewish population. His occupation, a tailor, was a Jewish occupation. In addition, Chancery Lane was both home to the Domus and foreign merchants. All these facts come together and suggest Elizabeth, daughter of a French Rabbi, may have married a Polish-Jewish merchant. All while being intermittently housed and subsidized by the Domus Conversorum.⁸

Records indicate that during the period between the 1290 Expulsion and the 15th century, some Jews did live in England. As examples, Johanne and her daughter, Alice, Jews from Dartmouth, who converted and moved into the London Domus Conversorum, or Alysia, daughter of Martin the Convert, who married the brother of the warden of the Domus.

Records also indicate the Domus Conversorum was a porous institution. Elizabeth, daughter of a French rabbi, married a tailor named Adam Pole and came and went. Did she have children and what became of them? Did Alysia, daughter of Martin the Convert, have children after she left the Domus? What became of her children? These details are lost to history, or, at least, are lost presently. Research into the descendants of the inmates of the Domus could reveal details of Jewish life in England during the Jewish ban.

Immigrants, 1330-1550: Resident Aliens in the later Middle Ages (EIDB)

The University of York, The National Archives, The Humanities Research Institute and the University of Sheffield collaborated to create a database of immigrants to the UK between 1330-1550. In “Immigrants, 1330-1550: Resident Aliens in the later Middle Ages” (EIDB) we find a window into immigrants to England between the Jewish expulsion (1290) and the early Tudor period. In W. Mark Romrod’s “England’s Immigrants 1330-1550: Aliens in Later Medieval and Early Tudor England”, we find an excellent summary of this exhaustive work. Ormrod indicates that between the years 1140-1487, the origins of aliens were approximately something like this:⁹

French:..... **4500**

Dutch:	4000
Scots:.....	3000
Irish:.....	1250
Italians:	1250
Flemings:.....	900
Icelanders:	250

Ormrod’s research indicates the presence of aliens engaged in traditionally Jewish professions was not insignificant, 18%.

Merchants and staff:	6.7%
Wool and cloth industries:	5.9%
Leather and Shoe industries:.....	5.4%

However, this is a relatively paltry number in comparison with the number of immigrants defined as servants and laborers (65.4%). Although the number of skilled workers was relatively small, these aliens, in this period, requires closer scrutiny.¹⁰

One might see this period as the calm before the storm as it was the time which followed the turbulent Black Plague years. Jewish life on the continent was relatively stable. It would not last.

1492: The Alhambra Decree and Spanish Jews on the Move

In 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella gave Spanish Jews 90 days to leave the country or convert. Historians disagree on the number of Jews that fled Spain. Many state that 100,000 left Spain, as Jews, in the 90 days permitted for their departure, 100,000 converted and continued practicing Judaism in secret, and 100,000 converted and became compliant Catholics. This decree, in relative terms, caused one of the greatest migrations in Jewish history. As seen below, at that time, the largest Jewish community in the world was found living on the Iberian Peninsula.

Region	Estimated Jewish Population	Notes
Spain	100,000–300,000	Prior to the expulsion in 1492
Portugal	60,000–80,000	Many Spanish refugees moved there; expelled in 1497
North Africa (Maghreb)	~100,000	Long-standing communities in Fez, Tlemcen, and Tunis
Ottoman Empire	30,000–70,000 (pre-expulsion)	Including communities in Anatolia, the Balkans, and Palestine
Italy	20,000–30,000	Split among papal states, Venice, Naples, etc.
France	Very few (fewer than 1,000)	Expelled in 1394, small hidden communities may have remained
Germany and Central Europe	15,000–25,000	Mostly Ashkenazi communities; subject to frequent persecution
Eastern Europe (Poland-Lithuania)	15,000–25,000	Jewish life growing under relative tolerance
Yemen and Arabia	~10,000	Ancient Jewish communities in Sana'a and Hadramaut
Persia (Iran)	15,000–20,000	Concentrated in Isfahan, Hamadan, and Shiraz
Iraq (Babylonia)	30,000–40,000	Once a major center of Jewish scholarship, still active
Egypt	10,000–15,000	Major centers in Cairo and Alexandria
Levant (Palestine/Syria)	~10,000–20,000	Small communities in Jerusalem, Safed, Hebron, Damascus

Those that left as Jews within the 90 days they were given to leave the Iberian Peninsula, mostly migrated east. They were welcomed to North Africa by the Sultan of Fez and settled in Fez, Tetouan and Meknes. In Algeria, the Zayyanid rulers welcomed Jews who came with capital and skills, and many settled in Tlemcen. They were welcomed in Tunisia. In Istanbul, Bayezid, the second sultan of the Ottoman empire, welcomed the Jews. In Italy, the Medicis secured a place for them in Livorno.

The Ottomans were especially generous to the highly skilled and well-connected Spanish Jews. After the initial welcome to the Ottoman capital, Spanish Jews were encouraged to migrate further into the growing empire. They were issued special passports and letters of rights that prohibited anyone from molesting them in any way.

The scattering of Sephardic families, east of Spain, inadvertently created a trading network that would change the face of Europe. Members of Jewish families who stayed in Spain and Portugal could trade with relatives who lived in North Africa, Italy, Turkey and beyond. Diamonds were sourced by Conversos in Goa, shipped to Converso relatives in Lisbon for sorting, and then sent to Converso relatives in Antwerp for cutting.

The Iberian Jews in Spain that converted, sincerely or insincerely, were subject to suspicion and persecution. The problem was race, not religion. Shortly after the expulsion and forced conversions of 1492, anyone of Jewish descent was suspect. From the commencement of the Holy Office of the Inquisition (1478) until its abolition in 1834, people of Jewish descent lived a perilous life on the Iberian Peninsula. At any time, for any reason, they could be accused, tried and executed for reverting to Judaism. Commercial, familial, domestic and political conflict could lead to accusations being levied against any Converso, by old Christians or new Christians. They were presumed guilty before they were even tried.

From 1492 to 1834, people of Jewish descent were not safe in Spain or Portugal. The Inquisition kept the Jewish (Converso) refugee flow from Spain and Portugal going for 200 years.

This second wave of Iberian-Jewish immigrants were different than the first. They were Jews who had lived as nominal Christians or sincere Christians for some period. They had already learned how to downplay their Jewish ancestry. They had survived the post-expulsion period because they adapted as was necessary to survive in an unstable environment. The key adaptation was to appear as Christian as possible. Their survival mechanisms took many forms. They used a series of names, one for family, one for the church, and a third for business. Aliases became a way of life. Thus, the Jews that were getting out of Spain and Portugal at the beginning of Henry VIII's reign knew how to play the game, whatever that game was. If one is looking for a Crypto-Jewish community in Tudor London, one has to bear in mind that it was largely Iberian, and these Spanish and Portuguese Jews (Conversos), had experience going unnoticed.

There were times of greater and lesser prosecution in the Catholic world. The ups and downs of Converso life in Spain and Portugal is reflected in the surviving immigrant records. If the Inquisition was in a highly active mode, "Spanish" families flooded into London. If things were good on the Iberian Peninsula, fewer came. When organizing aliens by date of arrival and country of origin, this persecution-based fluctuation in immigration can be seen. If a Spaniard arrived in London when the Inquisition was heating up on the Iberian Peninsula, one can speculate that this Spaniard was of Jewish descent.

Early Evidence of the Flow of Iberian Jews

Jumping from 1410 to 1533, we find two foreign Jews arriving to London to enter the Domus Conversorum. The two Jewish women, Aysa Pudewya (Katherine Wheteley) and Omell Faytt Isya (Mary Cook) arrived and sought refuge in the Domus. This situation is perplexing because their names indicate North African Jewish origins. On the other hand, for practical reasons they were likely Spanish Jews. When people converted, they had Christian sponsors. These two women must have been Jewish women of standing in Spain, as the

Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and her daughter, the Princess Royal Mary, stood as their sponsors/godmothers. The high-end Jews and royalty of Spain were known to each other, and these two Jewish women must have had royal connections in Spain to be known to Catherine of Aragon and for her to become their godmother.

“It was exactly at this period that King Henry was preparing for a secret marriage with Anne Boleyn, and, a few weeks before this act, Queen Catherine of Aragon and her daughter, afterwards Queen Mary, stood as godmothers to two foreign Jewesses, probably from the Barbary States or South Europe, and gave them the names of Katherine Wheteley and Mary Cook.⁶ This was in the year 1532, and on December 20 of that year, King Henry signed and sealed the following warrant, addressed to Dr. John Taylor, the then Keeper of the House: "By the King, Trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. And where ye be accustomed to pay yearly to all and singular such person and persons which be, from time to time, within this our realm of England, converted to our Christian and most Catholic faith [this was only a year before King Henry renounced his allegiance to the Pope] from any erroneous faith and misbelief, three halfpence by the day during the natural life of every such person and persons, for and towards their relief and finding (ye having from us knowledge of our pleasure by our warrant to you directed in that behalf), we let you wit that forasmuch as Katherine Wheteley, sometime called Aysa Pudewya, refused her erroneous faith and belief, and took and received baptism and our Christian and most Catholic belief within this our realm of England, our will and pleasure is, that ye pay or do cause to be paid yearly unto the said Katherine during her natural life three halfpence every day." A similar Order was issued on behalf of Mary Cook, previously styled Omell Faytt Isya”.¹¹

Though their names are not Iberian Jewish names, their godmothers, two Spanish princesses, suggest not only were they Iberian, but Iberian Jews of high standing.

At the very same time, a notable figure, Thomas Cromwell, appears as a resident in the Domus Conversorum. He was made the Custodian of the Domus Conversorum and opted to live there as well. It was one thing to oversee the house of converts, but it was quite another to live amongst converted Jews. Donald Yates believes Cromwell was, himself, a converted Jew. There are several facts that point to this possibility.

In the first instance, when Jews converted, they often became clerks for the crown or the church. While Jews were noted for being literate, there is a skill that is not often discussed. They were numeric. They knew how to count and more than that, account. More than one converted Jew became a clerk and used their accounting skills for their new masters.

Cromwell's father was a brewer, which was a Jewish profession. In addition, Cromwell's antipathy towards the Catholic church, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, saints, and effigies was consistent with that of Jews and Conversos of that time. The mere fact that he opted to live at the Domus is provocative.

“Two years after the admission of Katherine and Mary, the famous Thomas Cromwell, the suppressor of the monasteries, and successor of Cardinal Wolsey, received from his royal master, among numerous other marks of affection, the Mastership of the Rolls, and took up his residence within the Chancery Lane institution.”¹²

Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I

The “Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I”¹³, published by the London Huguenot Society in 1908, documents the immigrants that were registered as aliens, living in London between 1509-1625. Its four volumes document the period of time when aliens were coming and going from Spain and Portugal in great numbers.

Just like today, refugees go to places where they can be safe and support their families. When the Conversos were running from the Inquisition, they went to places that represented greater safety than they had in Spain or Portugal. London was one such place. Antwerp was another. Amsterdam was third and Bordeaux was fourth.

Spain's decision to expel the Jews and then make life difficult for those that remained had many unintended consequences. The most notable was brain drain that would affect the country from that moment to present. The Jews were artisans, craftsmen, bankers, doctors, cannon makers, weavers, silk makers and sugar makers. The list of skills the Peninsula lost goes on and on. Jews and converted Jews left and went on to make many countries rich with their knowledge and skill.

As has been established, when the expulsion in 1492 occurred, Spanish Jews were dispersed to the east. The Sephardic Jews living to the east of Spain, were able to transact with their relatives in Spain and Portugal. When the Spanish began persecuting the converted Jews, this drove the Conversos to England, Holland and the new world. The eastern Sephardic Jews were then connected to the Conversos in Spain and Portugal and the Sephardic Jews or Conversos living in London, Amsterdam or the nascent colonies. The Spanish Crown inadvertently created a global trading network from which they would ultimately be excluded.

While it was illegal to be Jewish in England, between 1290 and 1654, there was no inquisition. This was significant. There was no one inspecting your family tree for Jewish branches. If you kept your Jewish heritage to yourself, no one was the wiser. The lack of an inquisition in England made it very attractive to people running from an inquisition.

Equally important, Jewish aliens came to London because they were welcomed. In the first instance, their trade connections spanned from India to Turkey to Jamaica. Their ability to bring business into and through England was greatly appreciated. They were welcomed because they played music, made musical instruments and wrote music. They were masterful doctors. They knew how to source and cut diamonds and other precious stones. They knew the art of glassmaking and goldsmithing.

England wanted the services they provided and the exotic things they could import and some not-too-exotic, but popular items like wine, raisins and olive oil. The arrival of Spanish and Portuguese Jews or Conversos meant the arrival of Spanish and Portuguese products and indeed products from around the world. In almost all cases, the English did not ask too many questions of the people providing the goods and services they wanted.

Starting with Henry VIII, the English adopted a “look the other way” policy about the Jews and Conversos arriving on English soil. To such an extent, the Spanish Crown complained to Henry VIII that London was harboring runaway converted Spanish Jews. For the most part, he did not care.

At a particularly delicate time in the relationship between Spain and England, Eustace Chapuys, the Spanish Ambassador, accused a group of Italian (by way of Spain) court musicians of being converted Spanish Jews who had taken up their former religion. Henry had no choice but to toss them in jail to appease the Spanish Ambassador. Not too long thereafter, they were released and immediately went abroad. Shortly after their trip abroad, they returned to their places in the English court, once again making music for the king. This type of scrutiny followed by lack of enforcement was the exception and not the rule.

While it's true that England had no Inquisition and the skills of the Jews and Conversos were desired, and Jewish and Converso aliens were welcomed, discretion was important. Discrete living resulted in few written records. If your Jewish ancestry was noted, you had failed to be discrete. To look for a Jewish community in England when it was illegal means relying on circumstantial evidence.

Moreover, the Spanish Expulsion of Jews in 1492, the conversion of a significant number of Jews who remained in Spain and Portugal and the subsequent persecution of the Conversos, resulted in a diverse population of former Spanish Jews.

Many Spanish Jews were invited to Italy. There, they adopted Italian names. For a while, they were able to live as Jews. Then later, they had to convert or face the wrath of the church. They were welcomed at the court in Venice to play music and make glass - until they were not. At the point that it became difficult to be a Spanish Jew or a Spanish Converso in Italy, they then made their way to London and declared themselves "Italian".

Some Conversos fled the Inquisition and made their way to Bordeaux. Once there some returned to Judaism, some remained Catholic, and some became French Protestants. Later, when the French Reform (Huguenots) were forced out of France by Louis XIV, London became filled with "Huguenots". Some of these Huguenots were Spanish Jews (Spain) turned Spanish Conversos (Spain) turned French Reform (France) turn Huguenots (London).

Conversos who fled Portugal or Spain for Antwerp, often adopted a Dutch name and joined the Walloon or Dutch Church. Thus, they arrived at London as "Dutch aliens". Two immigrants from Antwerp, Louis d'Allemagne and Klees Klostermann, were of 100% Sephardic-Jewish ancestry. But, without investigating either, they would appear on the Alien Returns as Dutch who attended the Dutch Church. Although from a later period, the following aptly describes the situation in London 100 years earlier.

In the article, "Review of The Jewish Colonists in Barbados in the Year 1680", written by Wilfred Samuels (1932-1935), Jewish Historical Society of England, a story of Jewish people taking on different identities appears. The article catalogues the Jews living in Barbados. This particular quote discusses Speightstown, in the St. Peter's Parish.

*"A very interesting character, too, was Mijnheer Paul Jansen de Vreda who had moved from St. Michaels Parish at the commencement of 1680. In that very year, 1678, which saw the godly Christaen de Breda appointed Deacon of the Dutch Church in Austin Friars, London, this other scion of that well known Flemish family was to be found living in Barbados amongst the Jews and as a Jew! In the congregation he was naturally known as Abraham DeVreda. It is not difficult to picture the angry mutterings and the looks of shocked surprise with which Mijnheer Francis Vanderwarfe and the other Hollanders of St. Peter's must have greeted "Mr. Paul Dawrade's" daily passages through the streets of Speights. On the 27th September, 1662, he had become an English subject-jointly with David Namias and one of the Gideon-Abudientes, and doubtless Gideon Dovrede who flourished on the island of Nevis about 1753 was his son."*¹⁴

Let's unpack this quote. In 1678, one member of the Flemish Converso De Vreda family, Christaen, moved from Antwerp to London and became Deacon of the Dutch Church.

Another member of the De Vreda family, Paul, moved from Antwerp to Barbados where he became a practicing Jew. Within the same family, two members end up living in different places with different religious identities. Christaen's trajectory was Spanish-Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Antwerp Walloon Reform (3), London Dutch Reform (4). Abraham's trajectory was Spanish-Jewish (1), Spanish Catholic (2), Antwerp Walloon Reform (3), Caribbean Jew (4).

The Alhambra decree did more than force Jews out of the Iberian Peninsula. It inadvertently created a vast array of Jewish identities, from committed Jew to committed Protestant, to committed Catholic, to persons with a flexible identity that shifted based on survival or convenience.

This reality is reflected in the Alien Returns. One can find related persons of Spanish-Jewish descent living as Catholics, members of the Church of England, French Huguenots, members of the London-Italian Church, or with no religious affiliation. But that London became home to Spanish-Jewish Refugees of whatever description is not in debate. Cecil Roth, in his "The Middle Period of Anglo-Jewish History (1290-1655) Reconsidered", makes this point plain.

*"The Jewish connection with England began again on a massive scale only after the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492-1497 and the emergence in the latter country in particular of the vast body of Marranos, outwardly Christian though devotedly Jewish in sentiment. The Marrano settlement in England seems to have begun far earlier than was hitherto imagined. Thomas Fernandes, of Viana, who was arrested in the low countries in 1540 as a Judaiser, informed the authorities there that he was the son of the late Master Fernandes, a physician, born in Ireland. This count not have been much, if at all, after the 1492, when therefore there was already at least one family of Crypto-Jews established in the British Isles. Moreover, they seem to have been retained their connection, for Master Fernandes was presumably identical with the physician Pedro Fernandes, who practiced medicine with great success in London and subsequently lived first in Antwerp and then in Venice."*¹⁵

For this and many other reasons, looking for persons of Jewish descent among the 35,000 aliens listed in "Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I" may reveal more Crypto Jews living in England than many have suggested. This project seeks to identify "possible" Jews from the registered aliens living in London in this time period.

The first step of this project was to identify possible Jews from the 35,000 registered aliens who are recorded in the Alien Returns. Using nationality (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian), professions traditionally occupied by Jews (, goldsmith, physician, apothecary, diamond cutters), known Jewish surnames or forenames, and other suggestive criteria, the number of aliens of likely Jewish origins worth investigating, was brought down from 35,000 aliens to 9951 aliens.

In the following sections, records extracted from the alien records, enriched with auxiliary sources, will be reviewed to see if a detectable community of Jewish (loosely defined) descent can be found in London. This will reveal that the statement, "From the time of Edward to that of Cromwell no Jew touched English ground " is quite inaccurate.

The Alien Returns provide place of birth, occupation, where they lived in London, where they worshipped and more. Looking at where they worshipped is revealing.

Church Membership

In the years discussed here, belonging to a church, and in some cases the right church, was important. Most of the aliens, even with obvious Jewish ancestry, belonged to a church. Analyzing church membership suggests quite a few Crypto Jews were, in fact, tucked away in London.

In an astonishing act of bravery, many London Aliens were recorded as belonging to "No Church". Of the 35,000 aliens living in London between the reign of Henry VIII and James I, 6413 people, or 18% of all registered aliens, belonged to no church. Considering the times and the importance of belonging to a church, this is a staggering figure. Nearly 20% of the London aliens had no church affiliation.

Suffice it to say, belonging to "No Church" is a telling clue regarding some aliens. Anyone reporting themselves to the taxing authorities as being of "No Church" was taking a risk in being asked, "Why don't you belong to a church?" This would not have been possible in Spain or Portugal. But in England, where the Holy Office of the Inquisition had no power, an alien could could blithely be "of no church".

Why did they not belong to any church? There are many possibilities, one being that they were Jewish or of Jewish descent and, at long last, were not compelled to do so.

Of the 9951 aliens whose tax records indicate possible Jewish ancestry, we find some interesting statistics. In the period we are examining, the Inquisition was active in Spanish-controlled lands, and Spain and Portugal provided a steady stream of Jewish and Converso immigrants to London. Of the 741 registered Spanish and Portuguese aliens living in London,

312 were registered in the tax rolls as belonging to no church, 42% of Iberian immigrants belonged to no church.

The Duke of Alba's inquisition in the Spanish Netherlands (The Counsel of Troubles) caused a major influx of Antwerp Conversos into London. Of the 2835 registered aliens from Antwerp and other parts of the Spanish Netherlands, 1492, or 53% were registered as belonging to no church.

Examining Aliens, who worked in traditionally Jewish professions, a similar pattern arises.

- **54%** of diamond and precious gem cutters belonged to no church. **47/87**
- **81%** of merchants belonged to no church..... **1076/1327**
- **53.5%** of metal workers belonged to no church
(Goldsmiths, silversmiths, etc.) **268/501**
- **65.8%** of musicians belonged to no church. **50/76**
- **59.3%** of physicians/apothecaries belonged to no church **57/96**
- **63.8%** of servants who worked for suspected Jews
belonged to no church **589/922**

Of the 9951 registered aliens whose tax records indicate they might have been of Jewish origin, church membership or non-membership looked like this.

- **64%** of these aliens belonged to no church. **6413/9951**
- **26.6%** of these aliens belonged to Protestant Churches
(French Church, Dutch Church, Italian Church, etc.) **2642/9951**
- **4.8%** of these aliens belonged to English Church. **477/9951**

The aliens who avoided church membership offer a clear-cut indication of ambiguous religious identity. It might indicate that their affinities fell somewhere other than a church. But what of the Protestant churches that aliens did join? Examining the membership of the so-called London Strangers Churches, Protestant churches not affiliated with the English church, reveals they too were home to persons of Jewish descent.

Churches

In the 1550s, as refugees began flooding into London, the "strangers' churches" began to appear. Most notably the French Church (Huguenots), the Dutch Church (Refugees from the Spanish Netherlands), the Walloon Church (also from the Spanish Netherlands), and the Italian Church. It would pay to know something about the reform Churches of Europe's relationship with Jews and vice versa.

As an example, when Spanish Conversos were running from the Inquisition in Spain, they were welcomed into Bordeaux, France. Once in Bordeaux, some remained Catholic, some returned to Judaism, and some became French Reform (Huguenot). This phenomenon, Conversos opting to join Protestant denominations outside of Spain and Portugal, can be found in the Walloon Church, the Dutch Church, and the French Church. For Jews who had lived as Catholics for 100 years, returning to Judaism was not always appealing. On the other hand, the reform European churches, which had no saints and offered a moderated form of Christianity, were of some appeal. It was perhaps equally appealing that the reform churches despised the Roman Church as much as the Conversos.

At least 100 years removed from Jewish practice, many of the Conversos were estranged from Judaism. Three or more generations away from Jewish practice is quite a lot. At the point that they got out of Spain and Portugal, many were as uncomfortable with Judaism as they were with Catholicism. Judaism was strange to them. They did not know Hebrew nor were they accustomed to the restrictive ways of Jewish life. They hated the Catholic Church and were indeed running from the torture and execution it offered them. Simply put, the various reform churches provided something in-between the two.

First and foremost, the Protestant denominations and the countries they existed in, had no Inquisition. This, combined with the fact they had done away with saints (idol worship), their liturgy and practice skewed more towards the Old Testament teachings and their sermons were preached in local languages made them appealing. The reform churches were accessible. From a practical standpoint, they allowed the Converso the opportunity to maintain an outwardly Christian appearance. Considering they lived in the shadows of their relatives' ongoing grisly deaths at the hands of the Inquisition, this outward appearance of Christianity would have been safe. Thus, in France, in the Spanish and Dutch Netherlands, and in England, the reform churches were attractive to Conversos.

The London-Italian Church

The London-Italian Church can be used as an example of one London strangers' churches that was the spiritual home to a substantial Jewish/Converso population. As the church was called the London-Italian Church, it would pay to start by looking at the Italian Aliens living in London at that time it existed.

Between the reign of Henry VIII and James I, there were 844 persons registered as being Italian born. Their names indicate not all were "Italian", just Italian born. The largest influx of Italians happened in two waves, 1568 when 332 Italians arrived (39.3% of all Italians living in London), and 1571 when 264 Italians arrived (31.3% of all Italians living in London).

Why did the Italians come to London in 1568 and 1571? Some would say for financial betterment and that would be true. But there may be another reason. The Italian Inquisition, or the Italian Holy Office, was established in 1542 in response to the “very successful” Spanish Inquisition. Italian historian Andrea Del Col states that of the 51,000–75,000 cases judged by Inquisition in Italy after 1542, around 1,250 resulted in a death sentence. If you were of Jewish descent, you were not safe when the Italian Inquisition went into action.

Pope Pius V (1504-1572), as a young man, showed great zeal for the prosecution of converted Jews. Under Pius IV, he rose to the position of Grand Inquisitor. Once Pius V became Pope (1566-1572), he aggressively pursued “Jewish converts and infidels” in Italy. The fact that a majority of “Italians” came to London during Pope Pius V’s reign of terror against converted Jews tells you something. It is possible the “Italians” who came to London between 1568 and 1571 were evading the Inquisition.

Pope Pius V’s successor, Gregory XIII (1572-1585) pursued an equally brutal approach to Jews and Conversos. These two Popes saw to the creation of Jewish Ghettos, reduction in the rights and privileges of Jews, loss of professions, etc. The Ghettos they created were subject to wave after wave of infectious disease like Malaria and Diphtheria. There were many reasons practicing Jewish or those of Jewish origin would choose to immigrate to London. Right in the middle Gregory XIII’s own campaign of terror -1582 - was another big year for Italian immigration to London. Italian persons (271) appeared on the Alien Returns.¹⁶

Of those Aliens registered as Italian born, 365 were also listed as being of no church (43.2%). Many Italians merchants lived in London for a long time and never had a religious affiliation. This is striking.

However, 57% of Italian Aliens did join a church, and some joined the London-Italian Church. The London-Italian Church, like the other ‘strangers’ churches” was, in principle, created for the “Protestant strangers” having made their way to London - in this case, Italian Protestant strangers. The church’s very foundation reveals much about this “church”. It was founded by a converted Italian Jew.

“In this climate an Italian preacher, Michelangelo Florio, arrived in London in November 1550. He was born into a family of converted Jews in Tuscany and had been a member of the Franciscan Conventuals. In 1548 he was imprisoned and tortured under suspicion of heresy in Rome. Two years later he managed to escape and went to London by way of Venice, Lyons and Paris. In England he was awarded a royal stipend of £20. In the lent season of 1552, he was preaching in Italian in the Mercers' Chapel, albeit without consent of the Mercers' Company¹⁷.

The first pastor of the London-Italian Church was one of the Italian Jews who left Italy to escape the Italian Inquisition. However, his tenure was short lived. With the death of King Edward in 1553, his sister, Queen Mary, restored Roman Catholicism as the state church. As such, all the Protestant “strangers” churches lost their financing from the crown and were indeed very unwelcome in London. Michael Angelo Florio, his wife, and his son, John, escaped to the continent to avoid being burned by “Bloody Mary”.

Florio never returned to England, instead becoming an influential theologian on the continent. He accepted a position as pastor in Graubingen, Switzerland, where he worked until his death in 1566. Being the child of converted Jews, he always came under attack for his Jewish heritage.

“The richest biographical information of Michael Angelo Florio’s books is his Apologia, which he published in 1557 to defend himself from an attack which had been made on him by one Bernardino Spada, a Franciscan friar. The greater part of this rare book is taken up with rather angry theology, but as Spada’s attack had been a personal attack, Florio is obliged to speak sometimes of himself in his defense and some interesting points emerge.

Spada had evidently accused him of being a Jew and in his rambling reply to this charge he admits that he (Florio) is Hebrew in blood though not in faith...

“I was never a Jew nor son of a Jew but from of a father and mother baptized as Papists like yourself; and if you should say that my ancestors were Hebrews before baptism, this I will not deny”¹⁸

Thus, the first pastor of the London-Italian Church was born to converted Jewish parents.

In 1558, when Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne, and returned England a protestant state, the “strangers’ churches” were once again welcome in London and were in back in business.

In 1565, Hieronymus Ferlitus, a Sicilian Protestant, arrived in London with his wife, Laura Canale. His wife was a religious refugee from Venice. Her surname suggests she was of Spanish-Jewish descent. Ferlitus re-launched the London-Italian Church at the Chapel of the Mercers in Cheapside. His leadership and tenure were quickly interrupted by the arrival of a troublesome Protestant from Spain, Antonio del Corro (1527-1591) alias Corrano, de Corran, Corranus.

In the book “Unity in Multiformity: The Minutes of the Coetus of London, 1575 and the Consistory Minutes of the Italian Church of London, 1570-1591, written by Owe Boersma and J Jelsma¹⁹, Antonio Del Corro’s arrival in London and his tenure as member and Pastor are

recorded. He was a bit of a problem from time he arrived, annoying the leadership of the other Strangers' Churches as well as the leadership of the Italian London Church. What has not been made clear until recently is an important fact. Antonio Del Corro was part of a vast underground network of Converso Protestants that spanned from Seville to Antwerp, Bordeaux, and London.

In the PhD thesis of Arturo Eduardo Terrazas Calderon, "Casiodora de Reina, a 16th-century Hebrew scholar, the network of converts, and the translation of the Bible", one reads of this complex network of European Conversos Protestants. His work details the route Conversos in Spain took to become Protestants, the wealthy benefactors of Converso Protestant Theologians, and the remarkable work produced by these Converso theologians. Del Corro was part of this underground. While many works recorded Del Corro as a former Hieronymite monk who became a Protestant. There is much more to the story.

Antonio de Corro

Converted Jews in Spain often ended up in the service of the church. The Jesuits were founded by converted Jews and the Hieronymite order was equally populated with Conversos. Ruth Pike, in "Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century", makes this clear.

*"Although their exact numbers can never be determined, converso ecclesiastics made up a substantial part of the Sevillian church throughout the sixteenth century. They could be found in all the religious orders and at every level of the secular clergy from parish priests to Cathedral dignitaries. They were especially numerous in such religious orders as the Jesuits and Hieronymites and among the ranks of the Cathedral clergy."*²⁰

Del Corro began his theological career at the Hieronymite monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, in Sevilla. The Prior of that monastery, García Arias was of Jewish origin from a Baena-Jewish family. Born Albino, he was called the White Master. A revolutionary, he diminished the role of graven images, fasting, and abstinence. Most impressive, he preached Lutheran doctrine and promoted Protestant teaching at the monastery. It is here that Del Corro made his acquaintance with reform Christianity.

With reason for concern, namely the looming Holy Office of the Inquisition, in 1557, Antonio del Corro and 11 other Converso monks from San Isidoro del Campo, fled Seville for Geneva. The Converso monks who made it to Geneva included Francisco Farías, Pedro Pablo, Antonio del Corro, Pelegrino de Paz, Casiodoro de Reina, Juan de Molina, Miguel Carpintero, Alonso Bautista, Lope Cortés, Cipriano de Valera, Juan de León, Fray Benito, Francisco de la

Puerta, and Hernando de Castilblanco.²¹ These escaped priests became wanted men in any land controlled by the Spanish crown.

They were welcomed to Switzerland by the Converso Juan Pérez de Pineda. In Switzerland, Del Corro received education from Theodore Beza in Greek, Hebrew, rhetoric, arithmetic, and classical authors such as Cicero and Aristotle. He then began a rather illustrious career as preacher of Protestant Christianity.

1559: He went to Navarre to be the Chaplain to Queen Joanna Albert and tutor to the next King of France.

1561: He went to Bordeaux where he was supported by a number of families of Jewish origin including the Lopez de Villeneuve and Bernuy.

1562: He went to Toulouse to minister to Spanish Conversos living there.

1562-1566: .. He became the chaplain to Renata of Ferrara, Castle of Montegrís. Here he collaborated with his friend Casiodora de Reina on a translation of the Bible into Spanish.

1566: He moved to Antwerp to preach to Conversos including the Marcos Perez family and the Martin Lopez family. Unfortunately, his past with the San Isidoro Monastery caught up with him and he was prohibited from preaching.

1567: While prohibited from preaching, he took to writing. Financed by the Converso Marco Perez, he wrote a book urging Lutheran pastors to raise up against the Spanish crown. Marco Perez, incidentally, was also financing William of Orange's fight against the Spanish crown.

1568: Antonio del Corro moved to London and began preaching at the Italian Church in London.

Antonio del Corro's mission in life was to preach Protestant theology to Conversos. So, arriving at the London-Italian Church tells us what the Italian Church of London was and who worshipped there. As he specifically preached to Conversos, the London-Italian Church had to be populated with them.

His tenure was not long. In the first instance, he created conflicts between the "Italian" members and the "Spanish" members of the London-Italian Church. In the second instance, he ran afoul of the other Strangers Churches. He began drawing congregants from the other strangers' churches, quite probably Conversos who had found refuge in the other Protestant churches. The other pastors were none too pleased with him stealing their congregants.

He was confronted by the other Pastors, and in his defense, he announced that he preached at 3 pm, a time when none of the other Strangers Churches held services. Therefore, to his mind, he was not directly competing with the other churches. This did not abate his competitors' fury.

At a point, the French Church's consistory with the pastor, Jean Cousin, at the helm, covertly intercepted a parcel of letters between Del Corro and one of Del Corro's dear friends: Casiodora de Reina. They read them. It would pay to know that Casiodora de Reina was a persona non grata in London for reasons to follow. Suffice it to say, the letters revealed Del Corro freely discussing "theological statements and theologians" with his friend. Based on his character depiction, the letters may have contained content that was critical of the other London pastors. Whatever the content, the French Church demanded his removal from the London-Italian Church. The parishioners of the London-Italian Church, already displeased with the conflict he generated between members, were pleased to have a reason to dismiss him.

Thus, 1570 was a big year for Antonio del Corro. He lost his job at the London-Italian Church, and he was classed by the Holy Office of the Inquisition as a "first class heretic". This was the top rating for a heretic. In effect, the Roman Church had a warrant for his arrest and immediate execution.

While the truth is that he did not play well with others, he had a reputation for this for many reasons, and the pastors of the London Strangers' Churches were looking for a way to get him gone. But they used his friendship with Casiodora de Reina as grounds for his removal from the London Strangers' Church scene. This raises the question, what was the problem with Casiodora de Reina?

Casiodora de Reina

Casiodora de Reina was another Converso San Isidoro monk who accepted Protestantism in the Protestant-friendly Monastery. As a result, he fell under the watchful eye of the Inquisition. In 1557, he fled to Geneva. Back in Spain, he was declared a "heresiarch" (leader of heretics) and was burned in effigy by the Inquisition. He had issues with John Calvin, a leader in the Protestant Reformation in France, and declared Geneva "the New Rome". As a guest of the Swiss, who revered Calvin, this was not a smart move. Moreover, declaring his hosts as creating a religious environment no better than Rome's was one step too far.

In 1559, he moved to London where he served as a pastor to Spanish Protestant refugees. However, King Philip II of Spain exerted pressure on the English government for him to be extradited to Spain to be tried and executed by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. To avoid this fate, he moved to Antwerp, ministering there. In January of 1564, he moved to Frankfurt Am Main where he spent the duration of his life. He likely made the move from Antwerp to Germany due to the pending arrival of the Duke Alba (1567). Alba was coming with the specific intent of eradicating Conversos, Converso Protestants, and Conversos who had returned to Judaism. Casiodora, the heresiarch, would have been in big trouble had he waited around for the Duke of Alba to arrive.

Casiodora de Reina (1520-1594) is an important figure in the Protestant movement in that he translated the Bible from Latin into Spanish. This was crucial for the movement of the Protestant faith into Spain. It made the bible accessible to Spanish speakers in France, England, and Germany. He then helped create a polyglot bible with Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, and Greek, with side-by-side translations. De Reina was fully conversant in Hebrew and, according to him, was so from an early age.

While England had no Inquisition, it did have a relationship with Spain. The Spanish were none-too-thrilled with their Conversos making their way to London. They had the Conversos spied upon and any sign of reversion to Judaism or participating in Protestant churches could have had lethal repercussions for their relatives still living in Spain. The Strangers' Churches in London, like the London-Italian Church, were filled with Conversos. And they were beneficiaries of English Royal largess. Discretion was important. Individuals like Antonio de Corro and Casiodora de Reina, who were specifically wanted by the Spanish authorities, threatened not only the English Crown's relationship with Spain, but also the relationship between the English Crown and the Strangers' Churches.

Julián Hernández

The Converso Protestant network extended from Spain to the far reaches of Europe. Its members moved secretly in Spain and Portugal, and more overtly in countries of a Protestant persuasion. France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and England were hubs of this network. One major hub for Spanish Jews turned Catholic turned Protestant, was the Antwerp bookstore of Julian Hernandez. Julian sold Protestant books, in Spanish, to other Conversos. Converso Priests from Spain, secretly Protestant, would make annual pilgrimages to his store to buy books to bring back to Spain.

Julián Hernández became acquainted with Protestant theology in Spain. His Converso family feared the Inquisition in Toledo and moved to Germany in 1520. Julián Hernández left for Paris in 1549, then travelled to Scotland, and ultimately Germany in 1551. From there he moved to Antwerp where he became a book seller, in particular, works of Luther translated into Spanish by the Converso Francisco Enzinas. Protestant Conversos would travel to Antwerp twice a year to purchase books from Hernández and bring them back to Spain. He acted as an intermediary between the Conversos living in the north and those still in Spain.

He then moved to Geneva where became involved in editing Protestant texts, intended for Spanish Conversos in Spain. He devised a scheme to carry these books to Spain, specifically to the San Isidoro Monastery in Sevilla.

Once back in Spain, he delivered a book the wrong person. This mistake had a disastrous result: he and the Converso monks at San Isidoro, Garci-Arias (the White Master), Cristóbal

de Arellano, Juan Crisóstomo, Juan de León, Diego López, Bernardino Valdés, Domingo Churruca, Gaspar de Porres (Sevilla), Bernardo de San Jerónimo (Burgos), Diego López (Tendilla), Bernardino Valdés (Guadalajara), Domingo Churruca (Azcoitia), were all put to death by the Inquisition (1560).

The London-Italian Church was part of this network of Converso Protestants. Founded by a Converso, often pastored by a Converso, and attended by Conversos. And the Conversos in London clearly fared better than those that remained on the Iberian Peninsula.

The London-Italian Church 1568-1590

“The London-Italian Church as early as 1568 operated as a formally instituted church or eglise dressee, to use Calvin’s terminology. This church by now (1) held communion services, (2) tried to enforce Christian discipline on its members, which implies the presence of (3) a consistory of minister, elders and deacons.”

Thus, in 1568, the London-Italian Church was a fully functioning church. Looking at its membership, some very interesting facts come to the fore. Most notably, most of the members were not Italian. Of the 396 aliens listed as being members of the London-Italian Church, 79.5% were from Spain, Portugal, the Spanish Netherlands, or of unknown origin. Only 29.5% of the membership were Italian. However, even some of the “Italian” members had ties to Sephardic-Jewish ancestry like its founder, Pastor Florio.

Italian members.....	87
Dutch members (Spanish Netherlands)	61
Spanish/Portuguese members	34
Flanders (Spanish Netherlands)	31
Unknown Origin	20

The London-Italian Church became home to Spanish Jews of all stripes and colors. Spanish Conversos coming to London directly from Spain, Spanish Jews who had migrated to Italy and adopted an Italian identity and then immigrated to London as Italians, and Spanish Jews who had migrated to the Spanish Netherlands (Antwerp) and adopted a Flemish or Dutch identity. Some of these people secretly maintained some semblance of the Jewish religious practice and Jewish culture and others were simply of Jewish ancestry. Boesma and Jelsma have this to say on the subject:

“A interesting group of members of the London-Italian Church formed the Marranos. It should be noted that the first minister of the London-Italian Church, Michelangelo Florio, belonged to a family of baptized Jews. Several other members of this church did have Jewish roots, either in Italy or in Spain

*or Portugal, where they or their ancestors were forced to leave by the Royal Edict of 1492. The Bassano family, for instance, which moved to London in 1539 to serve as musicians at Henry VIII's Court, was probably Jewish. Agostino and Ludovico, are recorded as members of the London-Italian Church in 1582. At some time the Venetian violin-players Ambrosio, Joseph and Peter Lupo belonged also to this congregation, as did Innocent Commy (de Coimbra) of Cremona and Francis 'Kennythe' (Kellim) of Venice. Perhaps Giuglio Borgarucci, physician of Leicester and Queen Elizabeth, also had a Jewish background. In 1567 he lived in the same house as Ambrosio and Joseph Lupo in Cripplegate Ward.*²²

Apart from these court musicians associated with the London-Italian Church, a few other names of Italian and Dutch members suggest a Jewish background. For instance the Venetians Elizander Skrivane and Zacharias Moundy, the Genoese Agostino Boasio (Boaz) as well as Benedetto (Baruch) de Napoli, who are recorded as Italian Church members in 1568, might well be of Jewish-Italian descent. The grandfather of Salvador and Marcus de la Palma de San Fuentes, merchants in Middelburg and Antwerp, had left Spain early in the 15th century for Arnemuiden in Zeeland. Perhaps their Jewish background gave them greater reason than most to join the emerging Protestant movement in the Netherlands. In Salvador's house, the Middelburg Calvinists held their first communion service in 1566. His brother, Marcus, was a prominent Protestant in Antwerp and housed Antonio del Corro in 1566. The name of Jehan Fariseo, a tailor from Brussels, is suspiciously Jewish, although we do not have additional proof.”²³

In the Alien Returns, we find a longer list of Spaniards who were members of London-Italian Church. Here is a sample of aliens who said they were “of the Italian Church”. Some of the names indicate Iberian origin. Others, have no apparent Spanish connection.

Doctor Comelio Spirinck, one of the Elders
 Jaecomo de Migrode, another of the Elders
 Leonardo Casenbrodio, another also of the Elders
 Matheo de Quester, notary, one of the Deacons
 Levino Hendricx, another of the Deacons
 Marco de la Palma
 John Radermaker, borne in Acon
 Gyles Hostmans factor.
 John Hendricx, phisition
 Jacomo Cabillau
 Anthonio vanden Ryne
 Levino de Brune

Denys van Landen of Maastricht
 Cornelio van Dinghen de Breda Martino van den Zande
 Peter van den Walle,
 factour for the Lowbells
 Anthony Van Hanswyke
 Doctor Andrea, medico Romano
 John de Petaine
 John Bawhuysen
 Dominico Buisaiere
 Battista Oyens, of Andwerpe
 Gaspare Vosbergen of Berga apon Zoma
 Paul Typoetes, of Dist
 Godfrey Dionisio, of Lubeckner

Lovaine Beneditto de Napoli
 Gommaro van Ooesterwicke, of Andwerpe
 Cornelia Vrancx, of Andwerpe
 Nicolas Eueraertes, of Andwarpe
 Andreas Gosman, of Andwerpe '
 Peter de Hemele
 Henry van Zenerdonck
 Henry Bekemans
 Cornelio van Dinghen. de Breda
 Martino van den Zande
 John de Hane
 Gerardo Bekemans
 Nicolas Sarazin
 Pasquino Fleurkin
 Peter Amia, borne in Aeon in Allmayne
 Jodoco de Schepper
 John Golms
 Francys de Farias
 Hernando de Almara

Philipp de Bailleul, of Aras
 Mathias Selens
 Guilhelmo de Ammanno, of the land of Luke
 Guilhelmo Migon
 Nicolas Goossens
 Giovanne de Canteres
 Cornelio de Vischer, painter
 Salvador Delapalma
 Henry de Camengys, of Gaunt
 Jehan Fariseo de Bruxelles
 Adrian de Portere
 Jacob Wittewrongel
 Guilhelme Vermeyden
 Giles le Jour
 John de Hane
 Gerardo Bekemans
 Nicolas Sarazin
 Peter Amia borne in Aeon in Allmayne
 Jodoco de Schepper John Colms^{24 25}

The Spanish Netherlands was a haven for Conversos. Antwerp, Brussels and Bruges all hosted Spanish-Jewish refugees, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant. The region was under the control of Margaret of Parma (1522-1586), the illegitimate daughter of King Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor.

At some point, it seems the refugees became a little overly confident in their position. In Antwerp's 1566 Beeldenstorm (Iconoclastic Fury), Protestant crowds smashed church images and fittings and ransacked priests' houses. The Antwerp Cathedral and many churches were damaged. Unlike in France, there does not seem to have been any priest murder. King Philip II of Spain (1527-1598) would not tolerate this insurrection, and sent Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, 3rd Duke of Alba (1507-1582) to suppress the rebellion.

On September 5, 1567, the Duke of Alba instituted the Counsel of Troubles, an Inquisition of sorts, established to eliminate the heretics inhabiting the Spanish Netherlands. He personally oversaw 5000 executions between 1567 and 1573. Returned Jews, Catholic Conversos, and Protestant Conversos turned Protestant ran for safety. As a result, the London-Italian Church became the spiritual home of Conversos who had for a time lived in the Spanish Netherlands.

Members of the London-Italian Church of Especial Interest

Marcus de la Palma de San Fuentes (1525-1587) and his brother Salvador de la Palma de San Fuentes (1530-1599), known Conversos, were born in the Spanish Netherlands. (Middleburg). Their parents Pedro (Pietro) de Palma (1500-1596) and Beatrix de Hinojosa

(1510), born of Spanish Converso parents, in Antwerp, had five other children in addition to Marcus and Salvador: Pedro, Juan, Gaspar, Eleanor, and Catherina. Marcus and Salvador were banished from the Spanish Netherlands by the Counsel of Troubles in 1567. They appear on the Alien Returns in 1568 as members of the London-Italian Church.

Marcus was listed as a brewer, soap maker, and London and Antwerp Merchant. He was married to a woman named Clara and had one daughter. From 1568, he lived in the Aldgate Ward (east London)

Salvador was a Middleburg merchant and Portuguese agent. The first communion of the Calvinists in Middleburg took place in his home. They escaped the Duke of Alba's reign of terror by making their way to London. In England, Salvador belonged to the London-Italian Church. He lived in the Aldgate Ward (east London) with his wife, Emerentia van Goirle, with four of their surviving children (Peter, Markes, Aught, and Agnis). They came to London with "Spanish maids" which included Jacomyn, Agada, and Minca. All the maids had Spanish-Jewish names and may or may not have been "maids". Sometimes relatives were listed as servants in the Alien Returns. Salvador probably left England and returned to Antwerp in 1573, after the Duke of Alba was recalled to Spain.

Agostino Boasio (Boaz) is another Converso who made his way to the Italian Church from Italy. Boaz, Boas are recorded as being Spanish Converso names, found especially in Bordeaux. This "Italian" broker worked in Spain, Bordeaux, and Antwerp before coming to England. He arrived in England in 1568 (per the alien roll) with his Spanish-born wife, Girolama (Gieronima). She was born in Seville and her children, John, Davye, Elizabeth and Angell, may have been born in Spain. Considering the number of Protestant Conversos Sevilla harbored, Girolama was likely a Converso.

In 1571, Girolama was a widow, although she and her four children maintained their membership in the London-Italian Church and are recorded as members in 1571 and 1574. The family appears to have remained in Aldgate Ward, St. Katherine Coleman East London. Records accounting for these Boaz children, David, Elizabeth, John, and Angel require further investigation.

As occurred with many Converso aliens, members of the English Italian-Sephardic Jewish Boaz family made their way to the Virginia colony. One way to lose your alien status was to move to the colonies.

In 1700, a John Boaz was born in East London and married Elizabeth Jeffreys on March 10, 1719, at St. Dunstan Church, in Stepney. His son, Thomas Archibald Boaz, born in London, married Elinor Archdeacon Cody (1718-1787) in 1743 in Goochland, Virginia, and died in 1750 in Appomattox, Virginia. Thomas provided the colony with 13 Boaz children; James,

Thomas, Archibald, Meshach, Polly, Shadrach, Agnes, Nellie, Elanor, Gemima, Edward, Daniel, and Abenego.

John Florio (1552-1625) son of the first Spanish Converso pastor of the London-Italian Church, eventually found his way back to London. His father, mother, and he fled London to escape Queen Mary's reign of terror. After his father's death in Switzerland, John was back in England and a member of the Italian Church. (1571)

In the 1571 Alien Returns, we read more about him, "Michaell Baynarde, Frenchmen, borne in Rone, a silkdier, who have been here 12 years, having two servants, Baptist Clarencey and John Floren, Italions, of the Italian church." John Floren was a lot of things; Italian was not one of them.

It seems upon returning to England, John worked as a silk dyer, and then as a merchant under the Converso Venetian merchant, Gaspare Gatti. He married an "Italian" woman, Anna Soresollo, and they had five children: Anabelle, Joanne, Edward, Aurelia, and Elizabeth.

John Florio went on to become a famous linguist, poet, writer, translator, lexicographer, and royal tutor to the court of James I. Like many of the Conversos, he was a polyglot. Under James I his role came to include Groom of the Privy Chamber, and he lived at court. From 1604, His role in the royal household grew with the ascent of Queen Anne, a high position he maintained until her death in 1619. His role in the court of Anne included diplomat, translator, and significantly, procurer of musicians. It was his job to find and hire musicians to play at court, and these were often "Italian" or Italian-Jewish musicians. Although promised a yearly income, due to economic problems at court, he did not receive the expected annuity and died in poverty.

His daughter, Aurelia Florio (1582-1641) became a very successful midwife and married the successful surgeon James Mullins (1580-1638). Born in Tuscany, James' real last name was Mollino, a known Sephardic surname (Mollina/Mollino). His father, John Mollino (1560-1603) was a surgeon. His grandfather, Giovanni Molina (1520) lived and died in Italy. Here we see the daughter of a Converso (Aurelia Florio) marrying the son of a Converso (James Mollino).

The couple had seven children, Lucy Mullins (1612), John Mollins (1615), William Mollins (1616-1641), Mary Mollins (1617), Aurelia Mulins (1619), Margret Mullins (1620), and Mathias Mollins (1622). The children were all baptized at the Church of St. Andrew, Holborn, London. And James Mullins was buried there. Looking casually, one would never know that the English Anglican, "Lucy or John Mullins" were entirely of Sephardic-Jewish heritage.

Another Jewish member of the London-Italian Church was Peter Rycout (1578-1653). He was the son of Andrew Richaut of Brabant, and Emerentia Gonzalez (daughter of Converso Garcia Gonzalez). It would appear he was the son of two Conversos. His father's last name, or

names, Ricaud, Richant, Richard, Richards, Richaut, Rycant, Rychant, and Rychaut were aliases for Ricardes. His mother's last name, Gonzalez, is a more straightforward Converso name.

Born in the Spanish Netherlands, in classic Converso style, he used many different versions of names including Peeter, Pierre, Pyerre. He fled Antwerp for London when the Duke of Alba arrived to clean out the "nest of Converso heretics". Though he arrived as a refugee, he ultimately became one of the richest merchants in London.

His business was built on the wide web of Conversos/Sephardic-Jewish businesses that spanned from London to Istanbul. He used his family connections in Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Ottoman Empire to create a vast trading network from London to the far reaches of the Mediterranean. He worked in conjunction with his Converso Antwerp relatives, the Annonny family (Anauna/Anoni/Anani) and Converso Spinola relatives in Genoa.

Peter married Mary Van der Colge, an Antwerp Huguenot with family ties to Amsterdam, and in so doing, made connections with the Dutch trading community. He and his wife were active in the London-Italian Church, the Dutch Church, French Church, and the Anglican Church. They had 13 children between 1611 and 1634, ten of whom survived into adulthood.

The man had many names, many church affiliations, and connections everywhere. He was the ultimate operator. He owned ships, became a merchant banker. He accumulated such a fortune that he lent money to the Spanish Ambassador. The Spanish Ambassador did not repay the loan, which in turn led to a dispute that lasted 40 years and contributed to Cromwell's breach with the Spanish in 1655.

"Henceforth Rycauts money and contracts were increasingly employed in the governments service. As an agent for asentistas he helped to arrange that Spanish silver for Flanders, formerly routed via Genoa, was instead brought to Dover, where two thirds was unladen and reminted in London against bills of exchange redeemable in the Low Countries. This resulted in a regular flow of silver into the kingdom from 1631-1647. In 1635 he headed the group of merchants granted a monopoly to import and refine gold and silver used in the manufacture of wire thread. He invested substantially in the governments West Indies venture of 1636. He was the treasurer of the royal fishing association, at considerable loss, while both in his own name and indirectly he lent heavily to the crown in 1639-1640. In return he received letters of denization on 27 July 1637".²⁶

Eventually, his operation resulted in him falling on the wrong side of the crown, and he was forced to flee to his family's continental residence. In time, Peter and his family were able to return to England. His children squandered his fortune but not before using it to raise their station in English society. Forty years after the Spanish ambassador incurred a debt to Peter Richaut, his sons were still suing the Spanish government to have the money returned.²⁷

Peter's son, Paul (1629-1700), 10th born of 11 children, came to speak nine languages, worked as a diplomat and was a famous author. The following quote is worth reviewing.

“After his father's death Rycaut was involved, along with his brothers, in further attempts to retrieve the Spanish debt through diplomatic channels or by letters of marque. In 1655 he joined Robert Blake's fleet in Italy for a punitive expedition against the privateers of Tunis, who had seized a shipload of currants belonging to his brother Philip, and he was present on 4 April when Blake burned the Tunisian war galleys in their winter harbour at Porto Farina. On 18 December he attended the public conference in Whitehall on the resettlement of the Jews in England and left the principal surviving account of Oliver Cromwell's speech in favour, which he always thought the best he ever heard. This did not prevent him from becoming actively involved in royalist intrigues, which in 1658 took him to his father's native city, Antwerp, where he still had cousins. Although the family estate at Aylesford in Kent had to be sold, the Rycauts were by then well connected in the county, and on the recommendation of Sir Edward Dering, second baronet, Paul was hired as a private secretary in the summer of 1660 by the new lord lieutenant, Heneage Finch, third earl of Winchilsea, who had just been appointed ambassador to the Porte.”

In the first instance, Paul Florio attended the public conference in which Cromwell spoke in favor of re-admitting Jews into the English realm. One has to ask the question, why would he attend such a conference? It also reveals he was still in contact with his Converso “cousins” in Antwerp. Though his brothers had squandered the family fortune, he used his contacts in and outside of England to secure diplomatic posts. The hidden Jews, found on the Alien Registry, continued to live and work amongst their own kind for generations.

The Demise of the London-Italian Church

The London-Italian Church eventually ceased to exist, but not before it was helmed by two additional persons of Converso ancestry: Alexander Torriano (1619-1635) and Jehan de Luna (1627). Both Converso pastors were considered of questionable motivation.

The London-Italian Church was certainly an odd one and was absolutely home to many persons of Jewish ancestry. The members stories are complex, often intertwined, and quite often indicate their Jewish background.

Stefano Vilano, the pre-eminent expert in the London-Italian Church, describes one character, Alexander Amidei, who was associated with it. Amidei arrived in England and aimed to earn his living teaching Hebrew. However, he offered up several stories about his personal history which has never been unraveled completely. Was he Jewish? Did he pretend to come from a Jewish background? We see this in a quote from Stefano Vilano's book, "Making Italy Anglican. Why the Book of Common Prayer Was Translated into Italian."

"An issue of Mercurius Politicus published in October that year carried an advertisement announcing that the Florentine "Alexander Amidei" would hold a Hebrew language course at the college starting on 27 October 1662. However, rather than mentioning the fact that he was a former Catholic (perhaps even a priest), the advert presented him as a Jew who had converted to Christianity and taught at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge for seven years. As well as providing the lesson times (Monday and Thursday at nine o'clock in the morning), it specified that in addition to his post at Sion College he also offered private lessons in Hebrew, the Chaldaic, Rabbinic, and Talmudic languages, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese at his place of residence, Mr. Thomas Warren's house opposite the church of St Martin Outwich at the eastern end of Threadneedle Street. He was therefore no longer presented as a Catholic who had learned Hebrew through his mercantile work in the Holy Land, which is how he seems to have introduced himself to the Coetus, but a Jew who had converted to Christianity. It would be useful to know more in this instance too. Was Amidei lying in 1656 when he introduced himself as a former Catholic or in 1662 when he said he was a converted Jew? Or might his spiritual path have been even more troubled than the account he initially gave to the members of the foreign churches in London? Was he a clever imposter or a Jew who had first become Catholic and then converted to Protestantism?²⁸ And if the latter hypothesis were true, was he a Jew of Italian or Iberian origin, as his self-professed knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese suggests? A list of Jews who converted at the House of Catechumens in Florence features a certain Abramo "of Tunis in Berberia," but originally from Jerusalem, who asked to be baptized on 22 December 1633. We know nothing more about this individual, and his baptism does not appear to be recorded in the Florentine baptism records. Could it have been Amidei? We lack sufficient evidence to answer this question."

Not a Conclusion an introduction

Looking at one church attended by the Aliens of London reveals that Jews did live in England during the 366-year ban on their residing there. Would these people have described themselves as Jews? Would synagogue-compliant Jews consider them Jews? Probably not. But that does not mean they were not Jews, either in the Jewish sense (born of a Jewish mother) or in the Christian sense (anyone of Jewish ancestry is a Jew.)

The other Strangers' Churches, the Huguenot, Dutch, and Walloon appear equally attended by persons of Jewish descent. A closer scrutiny of these churches and their members would be a worthwhile pursuit.

Moreover, members of certain professions, musicians, doctors, merchants, and diamond cutters, included, found in the alien registry, who belonged to a church or did belong to no church, are worth reviewing for Jewish ancestry as well. Here are two examples of trades, merchants and musicians, which indicate a Jewish presence in London commerce at a time when their presence was prohibited.

Merchants

Crypto-Jews, with their trade network spanning from England to India, were welcomed to conduct business in England. Kirk and Kirk record over 3000 merchants on the Alien Returns, most of whom had Spanish origins. More than half of them belonged to no church, whilst the others belonged to one or many different churches. Here are two examples of Merchant families.

The Anes Family

The Alien Merchant families were not surprisingly overwhelmingly of Iberian Jewish stock. Anis family, London Aliens, who were Jewish at home but made the appearance of being Church of England in public. Edgar Samuel had this to say of this clan.

“Anes, Dunstan [formerly Gonsalvo Anes; alias Gonzalo Jorge] (c. 1520–1594), merchant, was born in Portugal as Gonsalvo, the second son of a merchant, Jorge Anes (d. in or before 1540), and his wife, Elizabeth Rodrigues (b. 1481, d. after 1568). He had an elder brother, Francisco, and two sisters. His father was born a Jew in Valladolid and brought to Portugal as a child, where the family was baptized by force in 1497. Jorge Anes died in Portugal. When the Portuguese inquisition started to persecute the New Christians, his widow and four children left Portugal late in 1540 and took refuge in London. She settled in the parish of St Nicholas Acon, south of Lombard Street.

In England Gonsalvo Anes changed his name to Dunstan Anes, almost certainly by confirmation of Edmund Bonner, bishop of London. On 2 December 1548 he married Constance (b. c.1530, d. in or after 1594), daughter of Simon Ruiz, surgeon at St Nicholas Acon. He acquired a house in Crutched Friars and they had fourteen children. They conformed to the established church, while practising Judaism in the privacy of their home, because Judaizing was then a capital crime in England. On 22 June 1557 Dunstan was admitted to the freedom of the city of London on the recommendation of Philip and Mary I, and also to the Grocers' Company. On 6 June 1568 Dunstan registered his coat of arms and genealogy at the College of Arms. He described himself as 'Purveyor and Marchant for the Queen's Matis Groseroy for the Howseholde' (Visitation of London, 74–5).²⁹ On 22 November 1573 a passport was issued to Dunstan Anes and Robert Chatterton 'to pass into France for provision of wines for her Majesty, with their four geldings and one hundred marks in money' (APC, 1571–5, 142–3)."³⁰

Dunstan's sisters married Spanish-Jewish merchants in London. Joane married John Deloney, and Avis married Lowis Billiard. Dunstan's daughter, Sarah, married the famous and ultimately executed Converso physician Rodrigo Lopez. They had six children: Elinor, Ambrose, Douglas, William, Ann, and Anthony. Dr. Roderigo López's brother, Louis D'alleman (D'Almayne) lived with his wife, Beatrix, in Southwark, East London and worked as a merchant between London and Antwerp. The Anes family was known to be doing business in London for at least 90 years, both in the Tudor and Jacobean periods. However, the family is poorly studied and what became of the descendants of all these Sephardic-Crypto Jews is unknown.

The Aranda Family

The Aranda family story is representative of the Aliens in London. While some family members worked in the religious world; others worked as merchants. These displaced Iberian Jews, whatever their primary occupation, had a hand in commerce.

Between the 12th and 14th century, prior to the Edict of Expulsion, many Spanish Jews rose to high positions within Spanish society. And, when given the choice to leave the country or convert, they converted. To leave meant to abandon position, power, and wealth, as Jews who left could take nothing, heading for an unknown world.

The famous Solomon Ha-Levi (1351-1435), the wealthiest man in Burgos and the rabbi of Burgos converted to Catholicism and the next day was made Archbishop of Burgos and the Lord Chancellor of Burgos. Rabbi one day, Archbishop the next day. One of his sons

succeeded him as Archbishop of Burgos. His Christian name became Pablo de Santa Maria. His story is exemplary of well positioned Spanish Jews that converted and then assumed positions of esteem in Spanish society.

The Aranda family appears to have been a similar family. In Cecil Roth's books, "A History of the Marranos, and Conversos, the Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews of Spain",³¹ the Aranda is mentioned.

"After the Expulsion, Torquemada also presented charges against another converso Bishop, Pedro D'Aranda. Bishop of Catalonia and head of the Concejo of Castille. He and his bastard son, the protonotary Apostolic of Alexander IV (Borja; A Spanish Pope) were tried by that pope and sentences do life in prison in Rome."

Much like the Archbishop of Burgos, Pedro D'Aranda must have been a Jew of some standing to land a Bishopric, and the fact his bastard son also got a prime job in the church confirms his position. But, as was often the case, if a person, of high or low standing carried Jewish blood, they were not safe from accusation and trial by the Inquisition.

Other Arandas, victims of the Inquisition, make their appearance in El Libro Verde de Aragon.³² Here we read of where they lived and when they converted.

- Gonzalo de Aranda, from Calatayud, converted in 1414.
- Pedro de Aranda (Alias Juce Arrepol), from Teruel, converted in 1414.
- Esperandeu de Aranda (Alias Samuel Albala), from Montalban, converted in 1415.

And then we find a very interesting entry in the Libro Verde Juan de Aranda (alias Juan de Linares) was given over to the secular arm of the inquisition to be put to death. His charge was worse than practicing Judaism secretly, it was for being a member of the French Reform Church. So here we have a Spanish Jew who became a member of the French Reform church while still living in Spain.

Later the Arandas appear in the Converso Protestant world with Reverend Elie D'Arande (1619- 1683) as a minister in the Walloon Church Southampton. He was married to Elizabeth Bonhomme. The surnames indicate both were of Sephardic-Jewish origin. It is presumed his parents the Converso fled to London when the Duke of Alba arrived in the Spanish Netherlands to clear out heretics. Their son, Reverend Elie Paul D'Arande (1625-1669), was born in London and would attend Oxford and become a minister in the French Reform church.

Most historical documents indicate his grandson, Paul Arande (1652-1712) and their great-grandson Paul Arande (1686-1732) became "Turkey merchants" in the city of London.

The Turkey merchants were members of the Levantine company or Turkey company, an English-chartered company formed in 1581, to conduct trade with Turkey and the Levant. In theory, the company excluded Jews despite the fact their business depended on Jewish trade networks from London to Istanbul.

It appears there were Turkey Merchants, i.e. members of the company, and people who facilitated on behalf of the Turkey Merchants. The Arandas were probably facilitators rather than members as their Jewish ancestry would have precluded actual membership.

Elie Aranda's grandson and great-grandson would have been able to conduct trade with the aide of their Sephardic-Jewish relatives or contacts in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Istanbul. They are both recorded as having lived in London, Amsterdam and Rotterdam amongst Spanish-Jewish brethren, of various types, their particular religious affiliation is at this time unknown. Historian Edmond Calamy mentions meeting with Paul when he was a merchant in Amsterdam.

“While I was at this time at Amsterdam, I was very civilly treated by Mr. Paul D'Aranda, then a merchant in that city, who afterwards returning into England, bought an estate in the county of Kent, and was brother to my particular friend. Mr. Benjamin D'Aranda, one of my fellow-students at Utrecht...”³³.

The fact that Paul, readily moved between England and Holland is typical for Crypto-Jews having left Spain to avoid the Inquisition.

Musicians

Thomas Cromwell was charged with recruiting the best musicians in Europe to come and entertain the court of Henry VIII. This represents another interesting profession that may have been dominated by Conversos. The Alien Returns document over 300 musicians registered as Aliens during the time the data was collected. More than half of these people belonged to no church. And like with the merchants, sometimes they belonged to many churches or one church. Here are two examples of musicians with an undeniable Jewish ancestry.

Frances of Vicenza

Frances of Vicenza came to London in 1543 to replace Romano of Milan. Romano of Milan was a Crypto-Jewish violinist who was jailed in the Tower of London for being a Jew and perished either in jail or under strange circumstances after he got out of jail. One way or the other, Frances of Vincenza was the Crypto-Jewish violinist imported to take the place of a now dead Crypto-Jewish violinist.

Frances of Vicenza changed his name from census to census. His aliases included Frances Kellim, Fraunces Kellem, Frances Kener, Francis Kennyt, Francis Kenneth, Francis Francisco, and finally Francis Hithcoke. Kinnor is the Hebrew word for stringed instrument. Kellem is the Hebrew word for instruments in general. Frances of Vicenza not only played the viol, but he also made them and sold them. The name Hithcoke seems completely random, but it may not be. Hithcoke was the English version of Yitzchaq or Isaac. ³⁴

Ambrose Lupo

Ambrose Lupo, another viol-playing London Crypto-Jew had quite a list of aliases. He began as Ambrose of Milan but by 1559 he became Ambrose Lupo. As the executor of the Crypto-Jewish court musician Anthony Moyses' will, the clerk recorded him as Ambrosius Deomaleyex, or de Almaliach. Almaliach is a version of Elmaleh, a well-known Spanish-Jewish family found around the Mediterranean after the 1492 Expulsion (2) (Elmaliah, Elmalih, Elmalech, Almaliach). (3) Add Ambrose Almaliach to his list of aliases! Between 1567 and 1576, he went by Ambrose Luck, Lucki, Lux, and Lucksor. ³⁵

Summary

It would appear many of the Aliens living in England, during the 366-year ban on Jews living in England, were at a minimum of Jewish descent. This paper has merely scratched the surface. A closer scrutiny of the 35,000 registered aliens, made known by Kirk and Kirk, could be very revealing. This paper has merely established a few Jews who lived in England during this time period. It would be worthwhile to look at each church, each profession, systematically, to learn more about the undocumented Jewish presence in England.

One concept has come to the fore through this cursory examination of the topic. Converso ministers, weavers, musicians, teachers, and, of course, merchants, were usually involved in trade. At that moment, the spheres of the Converso-Protestant groups, the merchants, the musicians, etc. seem to have occupied their own worlds with no relationship to each other. They may have been interrelated to each other, or they may have been as separate and distinct as they currently appear. Only additional study will determine this.

And what became of all these Crypto-Jews and their descendants? Did they all just disappear into local populations? Did any of them come out of hiding when it was permissible to be Jewish and live in England as Jews.

Looking at denization records for "Jews" and Synagogue records may conceal Conversos who came out of hiding and became active in the Jewish community. This is especially

possible as most conversos had multiple aliases. Lucy Mullins may have become Lucia Florio Mollino and may be found in historical documents as being an active Jew.

By looking at the various members of churches, the members of professions, and their aliases, in combination with early records of Jews after the re-admission may show that some did return to Judaism. Or it may show they did not. Most likely, like in all places they lived, some did return, and some did not. The Jews who came to England when one could be a Jew, and the Jews who lived in England when one could not be a Jew, may or may not have interacted.

In all cases, by discarding the false narrative, “No Jews lived in England during the 366-year ban,” and embracing the notion that many persons of Jewish ancestry may have lived in England during this time period opens the door to examine the topic in its full complexity.

Endnotes

¹ J.R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1884), p.199

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