

Sephardic Jews in the Huguenots Diaspora

If you have Huguenot ancestry, there is a good chance you have Jewish ancestry. You will not likely hear that from your family, nor you are you likely to hear it attending a Huguenot Society meeting, but I will repeat myself, if you have Huguenot ancestry, you may have found the source of your hidden Jewish ancestry.

Some years ago, I read Abraham Lavender's article, "Searching for Crypto-Jews in France: From Spanish Jews to French Huguenots". Lavender suggests that many Spanish Jews and Converted Spanish Jews (Conversos), fleeing Spain, hopped the border and migrated to southern France. It was literally the easiest way to get out of Spain. Once in France, some returned to Judaism, and some opted to remain Catholic. There is increasing evidence that some Sephardic Jews found a comfortable home in the French Reform Church.

Before going any further, it would pay to explore the term Huguenot.

Outside of France, in countries like Germany, England, Ireland, and America one could have the impression that "Huguenots" were a uniform group of French Protestants who were expelled from France by Louis the XVI. But in France, the would-be refugees were not a homogenous group. There were in fact made up of different and unrelated groups of people.

There were aristocratic Huguenots. There were religious Huguenots, people who really believed in reform religious thinking. The northern French Huguenots had direct contact with Calvinistic philosophy and indeed Calvinists and even Calvin. Calvin was from Picardy, a province of northern France. There were business class Huguenots that included merchants, skilled craftsmen, and professionals. This group included international traders, leather makers, saddle makers, shoemakers, glove makers, glass makers, goldsmiths, silver smiths, silk and linen weavers, lawyers, doctors, and accountants. There were southern French Huguenots who were heirs to a long history of non-Catholic Christian sects. Different groups of people joined the French Reform Church for different reasons. What they had in common was this: they were people that had abandoned the Catholic church. Why they abandoned the Catholic church varied from group to group.

Abraham Lavender, in his book "French Huguenots. From Mediterranean Catholics to White Anglo Saxon Protestants", makes a good point. People in France joined the "non-Catholic French church" because the Catholic church did not work for them. And this could have been for a variety of reasons. Lavender says the French Reform Church, "suggested that Protestantism appealed to social groups that felt themselves repressed, threatened, or in some way frustrated". They might have been an aristocrat who was not in favor with the crown, a silversmith whose mercantile class put them at odds with the dominant aristocrat/ peasant social system, or the descendants of Sephardic Jews.

Thus, the French “Huguenot” banner was a wide and behind it was quite a collection of different people. Many of these distinctions were lost when the “Huguenots” fled France. This diverse collection of reform Christians that fled France became known collectively as “Huguenots” only once in exile.

Louis the XVI issued the Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685, demanding Huguenots leave the country or convert to Roman Catholicism. At that time, France was home to 1,000,000 Huguenots. Though the numbers are estimates, approximately 800,000 Huguenots chose to remain in France and become Catholic, and 200,000 chose to flee. At the time of the edict of expulsion, most of the Huguenots lived in southern and southwestern France. So, it would pay to have a look at Huguenots from that southern and southwestern France apart from the other classes of Huguenots.

Huguenots from the South and Southwest of France

The south and southwest of France had been a hot bed of anti-Catholic activity long before the French Reform Church came into existence. It was home to at least two non-Catholic movements prior to the Luther inspired Reformation.

The first would be the Waldensians. The Waldenses were founded by Pierre Vaudois in 1173, a Lyon merchant, who after achieving material success, turned to spirituality. His spiritual quest resulted in him turning away from the Catholic church and all things Catholic. He had the bible translated into French so all could read it. He and his followers notoriously called the Roman Church the “Harlot of the Apocalypse”. This did not endear them to the Roman Catholic church, and they were deemed heretics by the 4th Lateran council in 1215. An inquisition and persecution followed, one that lasted for 400 years. Despite many being burned at the stake, they persisted. They continued to exist in southeastern France and in the Piedmont in Italy well into the 17th century.

The second would be the Kathars. This was a non-Catholic group of Christians that arrived in Languedoc in the 11th century. They or at least their philosophy came to southern France from Bulgaria and specifically from a sect known as the Bogomils. The Kathars flourished between the 12th and the 14th century in southwestern France. They were centered in Albi, and thus are sometimes known as Albigensians. Like the Waldenses, the Kathars were subject to vicious repression and persecution by the Roman Catholic Church. Many were burnt at the stake and even more driven underground by the constant threat of death.

In addition to a collection of pre-existing non-Catholic Christians, the south and southwest of France was home to many refugees from the Spanish expulsion of Jews and later Conversos escaping the Inquisition. Reviewing the lists of Huguenot refugees that made their way to Germany, England, Ireland, and America, something intriguing becomes clear. Many of the refugee Huguenot surnames are in fact Sephardic Jewish surnames (Abaddia, Arranda, Astruc, etc.)

As was previously stated, most Huguenots lived in the south of France. This region shared a border with Spain. When the Spanish monarchs issued the Alhambra Decree on March 31, 1492, Jews were given until July 31, 1492, to leave the country or convert.

They had four months to leave an 800-year residence in Spain. Spanish Jews fled in every direction. To North Africa, to the more accepting Ottoman Empire, to Italy, and north to the other side of the French border. Southern France was perhaps the easiest place to get to if you were a Spanish Jew on the run.

Fleeing to France, in addition to being the shortest distance to safety, was also a place familiar to some Spanish Jews from the north of Spain. Long before the Spanish Edict of Expulsion, Galicia, Asturias, Catalonia, Navarre, and the French Occitanie and Aquitaine had interrelated Jewish communities. Members of the same family resided in Spanish Catalonia(Barcelona) and French Occitanie(Narbonne).

After Abraham Lavenders finished his work, "French Huguenots, From Mediterranean Catholics to White Anglo-Saxon Protestants", he turned his attention to the Mediterranean Catholics themselves. His article "Searching for Crypto-Jews in France: From Spanish Jews to French Huguenots" Lavender introduces the idea that many Spanish Jews entered the ranks of the Huguenots. His exploration of the topic is so valuable, I am making the entire article available here.

There is increasing interest concerning where the overt Jews and crypto-Jews of Spain and Portugal settled after being exiled by the Inquisition. Morocco and other parts of North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Holland have been of major interest as Islamic or Protestant areas which did not have a Catholic inquisition. In these areas, exiles generally practiced their Judaism openly. Portugal, and later, Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas have been a major concern as places where the Inquisition was imposed, leading to crypto-Jews secretly practicing Judaism. But, little attention has been given to France, the only country besides Portugal(and Morocco, a short distance by water,) that borders Spain. Mocatta, in the Jews of Spain and Portugal, in 1933, gave some attention to Sephardic exiles in France. But, Malino's The Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: Assimilation and Emancipation in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France(1978) is the only major study of a Sephardic exile community in France. Malino discusses the "Portuguese" community in Bordeaux, about 100 miles from the Spanish border.

France, because of its proximity to Spain, was a natural point of escape for Jews fleeing the border. This was only slightly less likely for Jews fleeing Portugal. Jews has been officially excluded from France since 1394, and the border officially closed to Jews, but a trip through the Pyrenees was a route taken by some exiles. Nahon writes that the geographic imperative "well nigh forced" the New Christians of Spain and Portugal "to take the road to France" even if only as a way station for other places. Roth, writing of persecution of conversos in Barcelona(Catalonia) in 1488 and in the Balearic Islands in 1489, notes that "Flight to foreign countries-particular the southern provinces of France, began to assume panic proportions. (p.56). In addition, to the geographical proximity, before the expulsion of Jews from France in 1394 there had been a close relation between the Jewish communities of Spain and France, with Spain providing many of the leaders of the French Jewish communities.(Sahar, p.198).

France was a Catholic country, and not only expelled its Jews in 1394, but also expelled the Jews from Provence in 1481 when Provence was formally united with France. But, France also had a Catholicism different from that in Spain, basically independent and relatively without an inquisition. Hence, the situation for Jews was different from the situation in Spain. Although Jews had been expelled from France in the twelfth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, "In Bordeaux as elsewhere in southern France, an indeterminate scattering of Conversos remained behind. And after 1481, the Sephardic remnant was quietly enlarged by an uninterrupted infusion of New Christians from Spain and Portugal. Virtually all of them were judaizers—Marranos.(Sachar, p.199)

Meanwhile, although most of Provence's Jews departed in 1481, "a tiny communion underwent baptism and remained on. Nevertheless, through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, augmented by periodic rivulets of Sephardic fugitives, the little enclave of Provencal conversos began to regain something of its former demographic vitality." (p.99)

France did continue to have restrictions against Ashkenazic Jews, mostly in eastern France close to Germany, even while it allowed the settlement of Portuguese Jews in Bordeaux in 1483, mainly for economic reasons. Bayonne and surrounding towns, only fifty miles from the Spanish border, also developed Sephardic communities. Sachar writes that "like the Marrano community of Bordeaux, this trans-Pyrenean cluster of settlements became a major focus of crypto-Judaism in southern France."(p.200) Although there were ups and downs, "crypto-Judaism could be maintained with relative impunity" because no Inquisition court existed in France. (Sachar, p. 336). As exile continued, numerous other communities developed along the Atlantic coast and inland. (Nahon, p.341).

In 1550, France officially opened its borders, and conversos fleeing Spain and Portugal were officially allowed to live in France. As Beinart notes, "the proximity of the territorial border made it possible for conversos fleeing Spain and Portugal to maintain ties with their families who had remained there and to establish business connections supervise from France." (p.118).

Despite some overtness, Malino shows that the "non-French, suspiciously non-Catholic" merchants Portugais did live a tense balancing act. Scarcely fifty years after recognition of New Christians who had been in Bordeaux for less than ten years were asked to leave, and settled mostly in Peyrehorade, Bidache, and Bayonne. In 1615, Louis XIII published an edict demanding that all Jews, disguised or not, leave France in one month, but the parliament of Bordeaux prevented expulsion from taking place. In 1656, Louis XIV issued an edict which in effect confined New Christians to Bordeaux, Bayonne, and surrounding areas. As Malino writes, the nouveaux Chretiens "continued throughout this time to live within the frame of Catholicism. They were baptized, married, and buried according to the Catholic tradition and made no apparent attempts to reveal a Jewish heritage. They were repeating the history of the Marranos of Spain". (P.5)

Slowly, however, crypto-Jews of southwestern France began to be referred to as Jews, and the king and his advisors “gave clear evidence that the future of these newly designated Jews was uncertain”. (Malino, P.5). By 1700 Louis XIV no longer believed in “their Catholic camouflage” and began treating the merchants Portugais as Jews. If viewed as Jews, they would have no status, and would have to “pay exorbitant taxes for rights the nouveaux Chretiens had always freely enjoyed”.(p.7) The worse was over, however, and gradually nouveaux Chretiens returned to practicing Judaism, and disciplined those members of the community who strayed from the community. In addition to the ups and downs in Bordeaux and Bayonne areas, there were problems for crypto-Jews in other parts of France. In 1632, for example, in Rouen, thirty-seven New Christians were arrested for their “Jewish ways”, and an auto-de-fe was possible. They declared their fidelity to Catholicism, paid money, and were released. (Nahon, P.340).

While there were distinct Sephardic communities (especially Bordeaux) which eventually openly returned to Judaism, most of the Sephardic Jews in France “disappeared. One theory claims that they later showed up in Holland, and another theory claims they they merged into Catholicism in France. (Nahon, p. 342.) While it is clear that some of the family names did show up in Holland, it is not clear that all members of these families moved to Holland, the possibility remains that some members /descendants of the families remained in France. The fact that the community attempted to discipline staying members indicates that some individuals hesitated to return openly to the community. Recognizing individual differences, it also is unreasonable to believe that all exiles and their descendants were able to overcome the pressures of the ups and downs of Christian intimidation. The fact that crypto-Judaism lasted longer in France than in any other western European country of exile(Kaplan, p.243) increases even more the possibility that over time some descendants would have been lost to the open practice of Judaism. If some Sephardic exiles in France did convert to or openly follow Christianity, would they have converted to or followed Catholicism or Protestantism?

The Sephardim (Spanish Jews) that went to France, as either overt or secret Jews, found a religious situation very different from that in Spain and Portugal, particularly because of the rise of Protestantism in France. The rise of Protestantism (French Protestants were called Huguenots) in France was significant for Jews. Protestantism had several factors that would make it more attractive than Catholicism for secret Jews who wanted a Christian outward identity and for Sephardim actually accepting Christianity, over a period of decades.

First, Protestantism, like Judaism, had a mutual enemy in Catholicism because of the Inquisitions attack on both. Mocatta argues that the rise of Protestantism in Western Europe added to the insecurity of Catholicism and was one fact leading to the Inquisition. In Spain, Huguenots were persecuted.

In 1565, for example, in Pamplona, the capital of Spanish Navarre, there was “an intensive round up of active French Huguenots.”(Monter.P.149). While Pamplona was a major center of repression of Protestants, other areas also were similar. In Toledo, for example, in 1565, a tribunal “made short work” of a group of accused individuals, some of whom were Protestants. (Lea, P.450)

Second, Protestantism, like Judaism, had a special appeal to merchants and to the financially well off and well-educated segments of society.

Third, related to the second point, Protestantism had special appeal in seaports and shipping areas of France, especially LaRochelle are of western France, on the Bay of Biscay about two hundred miles from the Spanish border and about eight miles from Bordeaux. The Sephardic and Huguenot areas of settlement overlapped to a noticeable extent.

Fourth, at its height, before their most severe persecutions under Louis XIV, Huguenots comprised one-tenth of Frances population. The largest numbers were in western and southern France, areas closest to Spain.

Fifth, in removing many of the trappings of Catholicism (rituals, liturgy, saints, a church hierarchy, etc.) Protestantism returned to a more original Christianity, which was closer to Judaism. Customs such as naming of children also followed this pattern with Old Testament (Holy Scriptures) names, instead of New Testament Saint names, being used much more frequently by Huguenots than by Catholics.

By the end of the 1500's for example, Rouen, of the ten most frequent Protestant male names, seven(numbers 4 through 10) were Old Testament names(Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, David, Jacob, Salomon, and Samuel.) Among Catholics, there was only one "Old Testament" name(Abraham), and it was in tenth place. (Lavender, 1990, P.186) This pattern of Huguenot naming continued, although weakening with time, in the United States. As late as the 1700 period, for example, Ester and Judith remained among the nine most frequent female Huguenot names in Charleston, South Carolina, while Abraham, Daniel, Isaac, and Jacob were frequent male names(Lavender, 1990, p.194). Even as late as 1790 in the United States, Huguenots, despite rapidly assimilating and generally following non-traditional Christianity, were more likely than most other Protestant groups to have Old Testament names(Lavender, 1990, P.192). There clearly is a connection between naming patterns and ethnic/religious identity.)(Lavender, 1988, 1989; Nasrallah, P.30).

As pressures periodically increased against the "New Christians" in France, it is difficult to believe that some did not overtly convert to Christianity. And, if they did, it is reasonable that some would have chosen Protestantism rather than Catholicism in the period when Protestantism was still strong. Huguenots also had a mixed treatment in France, sometimes being good and sometimes suffering much persecution because they were not Catholic. Thousands were killed, sent to prison, or had their children taken away. Louis the XIV ended Huguenot rights in 1685. and gave the Huguenots a short period of time to convert to Catholicism or go into exile. About 160,000 Huguenots went into exile, and about 850,000 openly converted to Catholicism. Similar to crypto-Jews, some overtly practiced Catholicism but remained crypto-Protestant (Nouveau Convertis). Paul Revere's family is believed to have been crypto-Protestants (Forbes, p. 5). There were times when it was safer to be a crypto-Jew overtly practicing Catholicism than to be a Huguenot, but, in the earlier years, (up to 1572), it was safer to be a crypto-Jew practicing Protestantism than to be an overt Jew.

Throughout Huguenot history, French Protestantism has had a special affinity for Jews. The Huguenots, especially in Languedoc area of southern France, later(beginning about 1700) referred to themselves as living in the Desert which they likened to the Hebrews living in the Desert. The Huguenot shield had a burning bush in the middle, with God's name written in Hebrew. (Lavender, 1993). In the Nazi period French Protestants had an admirable record of defending Jewish refugees.

Did crypto-Jews or former Sephardim come to the United States as part of the Huguenot migration(the decade after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 being the most active decade)? One prominent Huguenot family in the southern United States has maintained a traditional family belief(not accepted by all members of the family, of course) that they are descended from a prominent Sephardic family exiled during the Inquisition.

Part of the reason is the similarity of their surname to that of this prominent Sephardic family of Spain. My research so far has found two members of this family who think there is some truth to the family folklore. Others, of course, are hesitant to believe in or acknowledge Jewish ancestry because of their strong and prominent membership in the Christian culture.

Other Huguenot family names also suggest possible connection with Jewish origins. Mauze, for example, according to one source, comes from the small town of Mauze near LaRoche. This source, which spells the name as Mauze or Moze, says the name is believed to have been derived from the Arabic word mauz meaning plantain tree.(Mauzy, p.112). Another source lists one spelling as Mose(Liddel, p. 394), which some researchers would say suggests a possible Jewish origin. Simons, DeSpain, and Pardieu(Pardo) are other surname examples which raise questions about possible Jewish or Spanish origins. Pardo usually is a Sephardic name(Moya, p.13). Simons(Simoes) is a fairly common Portuguese name, and could be either old or new Christian. Novinsky refers to Francisco Simoes Tinoco as an Old Christian (p.113), but Filgueira refers to Francisco Simoes Tinoco as a new Christian(p.26). Simao(Simon) common as a Jewish given name and surname, is also a Portuguese surname., although much less common than Simons. Simons is rare as either a Spanish or a French surname, although Simon is fairly common in both languages. DeSpain means "from Spain" . Of course, these names also have non-Jewish origins, requiring detailed research to determine whether the origins are Jewish or non-Jewish.

In the United States, and more so in some specific areas of Charleston, South Carolina, the Huguenots intermarried with prominent other Protestant families and became full members of the Christian(mostly Protestant) aristocracy. As in other areas of crypto-Judaic studies, research in this area is hindered because of reluctance of some descendants to acknowledge either overt or covert Jewish ancestry. In the 1920's, after becoming active with the crypto-Jewish community of Belmonte, Portugal, Lucien Wolfe helped organize a "Pro-Marrano" Committee in London, with branches in the United States and France. This was not continued, and more questions than answers remain on crypto-Jews in France and on French Huguenot descendants in the United States.

From a historical sociology perspective, however, the historical situations are too suggestive to overlook the possibility of a Spanish-French connection leading to crypto-Jews in France. As interest increases in Sephardim in general(Lavender, 1975), interest should increase in specific areas in order to give a better understanding of the tremendous diversity within the Jewish community.

Since Abraham Lavender wrote this paper, more resources have become available, and we now have the ability to explore his hypothesis in greater detail and with greater ease. We can examine the possibility that there were Sephardic Jews amongst the Huguenots, in a manner that was not possible previously. Using the tools now available, I sought to explore Lavenders' hypothesis.

In the first, instance, contemporary DNA research indicates a Sephardic Jewish presence amongst the Huguenot refugees to America. Elizabeth Hirschman, in her paper, "Investigating the Sephardic-Jewish Ancestry of colonial French Canadians through genetic and historical evidence", found some of the Huguenots that immigrated to America were genetically of Sephardic-Jewish origin. Hirschman compared DNA from the Huguenots refugees' descendants in America to men of known Sephardic-Jewish ancestry. Her research revealed DNA matches between the two groups. She thus proved that some Sephardic Jews did in fact hop the French border, joined the ranks of the Huguenots, and then migrated through the Huguenot diaspora.

I will now refine my prior statement. If you have Huguenot ancestry, and your family came from Southern France, there is a better than average chance you have Sephardic Jewish ancestry. Lavender suggested it, Hirschman proved it, and using tools now available to researchers, I can confirm this theory.

To explore Lavender's theory, I began by collecting the available lists of the surnames of Huguenot refugees that made their way to France to England, Ireland, Germany, and North America. Huguenot societies in all these host countries do a great job of keeping records of Huguenot refugees that made their way to their respective countries. Some better than others. The German Huguenot Society, led by Dierk Loyal, has done an astonishing job. Using available refugee lists of names, I was able to create a database of 77,381 Huguenot refugee surnames.

My next task was to compare the list of Huguenot refugees' surnames to a list of known Sephardic Jewish surnames. I am in regular contact with pre-eminent Sephardic ancestry researcher, Genie Milgrom. To my knowledge, Genie Milgrom maintains the largest database of Jews that left Spain. She was kind of enough to share her database of Sephardic Jews that either left Spain as Jews or fled the Inquisition as Conversos. When I merged the list of Huguenot refugees (77,381), with Genie Milgrom's list of known Sephardic Jews (48,174), the number of direct matches was astonishing. The sheer number of identical and close matches made analyzing all the data impossible. For the purpose of this paper, I only analyzed the letter A and B. Amongst the Huguenot refugees whose last name began with the letter A and B, 40% of Huguenots refugees carried Spanish Jewish surnames.

I have made the Excel spread sheets, containing all 125,555 surnames, Huguenot and Sephardic Jewish combined, organized by letter, available on my website,

www.hiddenjewishancestry.com. If you believe you have Sephardic ancestry, and you are of Huguenot descent, it would pay to review the list of names to see if you can locate your name.

Sephardic Jewish Families that Became Huguenot Families

Abbadie

The Abbadie family, with its many spellings, was firmly entrenched in Spain long before the Edict of Expulsion. When given 3 months to leave Spain, family members evacuated to North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Italy as Jews. Some stayed in Spain and converted. However, conversion did not solve the Abbadia families trouble in Spain. They may have been Catholic, but their Jewish ancestry was never forgotten. When they could not be persecuted for being Jews, they were persecuted for being bad Christians. Inquisition records from El Libro Verde indicate a Maria de la Abbadia and Juan de la Abbadia were put to death for Judaizing (1486-1487). Other members convicted and murdered by the Inquisitors were the brothers Pedro and Juan Abadia.

One Abbadia family member appears in a rather unsavory bit of Spanish history that precedes the Edict of Expulsion. In the book, "Between Christian and Jew. Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon 1250-1391" we read of a Jewish peddler by the name of Abadia, who converted to Christianity along with his sister and his brother-in-law at La Almunia de Dona Godina. Abadia survives obscurity because he testified against other conversos in Inquisitional proceedings in Barcelona. Life for many Conversos in Spain was one of poverty. The aristocracy actually issued licenses to beg to Conversos. This poverty led to many unfortunate circumstances. One would be this. Conversos who turned in other Conversos to the Inquisition could earn money doing so. It appears this Abbadia was one such informant. Proceedings that reveal his sin survive until today.

Without any doubt, Abaddia, in its many spellings, was a Spanish Jewish surname. The Abbadia's that went to North Africa, Italy, the Ottoman Empire, and south America are well known. In the Genie Milgrom Crypto-Jewish collection on JewishGen, there are 1,116 listings for members of this Spanish Jewish family. They spread far and wide after their life in Spain. They can be found throughout the Arab world, former Ottoman empire, and throughout the new world. Indeed, Israel Abbady was the minister to the Jewish congregation in Saint Thomas, Kahal Kadosh Nidhe Israel, from 1772-1794. He was appointed to the post by the London Spanish and Jewish congregation of London.

Lesser known are the family members that escaped to France, after the edict of Expulsion or during the Inquisition. From the list below, you will see many Abbadia's joined the Reform Church in France, and became "Huguenots". As Lavender said, it was a more comfortable transition for some Jews that had become Catholic in Spain to become French Reform in France.

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| | Abaddy | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abade | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abade | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadee | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadey | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadey | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadi | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De La | Abadia | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadias | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadias | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadias | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadias | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Abadias | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | ABADIE | German Huguenot Society |
| | Abadie | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| D' | Abadie | Master Huguenot File |
| D' | Abadie | Master Huguenot File |
| de l' | Abadie | German Huguenot Society |
| | Abady | Original research by GenieMilgrom |

Members of the Abbadia family appear in the Huguenot church books in Germany, England, Ireland, and the United States. One famous such family member would be Jacques Abbadie. He was born in Nay, Bearn, in 1654 to a Huguenot family. Nay is in France, just north of Spain. It's easy to see how his branch of Abbadia family ended up there.

Jacques Abbadie distinguished himself as a scholar at an early age, having acquired the degree doctor of theology before the age of 17. At the age of 21 he wrote the treatise "The Truth of the Christian Religion". This treatise was so well received, the Elector of Brandenburg invited him to Berlin to be the minister of the French Church. In 1688, Abbadie moved to England and became the minister of the French Church in Savoy, London. A year later, he went to Ireland to preach at the French Church there. He gained the favor of the English king William III. He was appointed the Dean of Killaloe in Ireland. He wrote and published numerous religious books and treatises, lived between Ireland, England, and Holland, and ultimately passing his last years in Marylebone, London. He died in 1727 having had a distinguished career as a "Huguenot minister".

There are many less famous members of the Abbadie family that became "Huguenot" and spread around the world as part of the Huguenot diaspora.

The Aranda Family

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, for an unknown world.

A classic example of this would be Solomon Ha-Levi(1351-1435), the wealthiest man in Burgos and the rabbi of Burgos. There was a vicious attack on the Jewish community in Burgos and Solomon he decided to convert in 1391. He had his four sons and his daughter converted. His Christian name became Pablo de Santa Maria. After conversion, he immediately became the Archbishop of Burgos and the Lord Chancellor of Burgos. Rabbi one day, Archbishop the next day. One of his sons succeed him as Archbishop of Burgos. This 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, the Arranda family comes up.

"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 AlexanderIV(Borja; A Spanish Pope) were tired 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 Aranda's, who were victims of the Inquisition, make their appearance in El Libro Verde de Aragon, As Jews with conversion dates.

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.

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| | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De | Aranda | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| De | AranDa | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Aranda de | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Aranda(*) | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| D' | Aranda, or D'Arande | Master Huguenot File |
| De | Arande | Original research by GenieMilgrom |

Then the Aranda's appear in the Huguenot world with Reverend Elie D'Arande(1619-1683) as a minister in the Walloon Church in Flanders. He was married to Elizabeth Bonhomme. The surnames indicate both were of Sephardic Jewish origin. The couple fled to London when persecution of "French Reform" became a problem there. 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.

Spanish Jewish families, that escaped Spain for France, lived as Jews, as Catholics, and as French Reformists. Within one family, one could find a combination of all three in the same generation. One generation might live as Catholics, and the next generation might return to Judaism. It appears that amongst the Spanish Jews living in Exile, identity was fluid.

This is particular true with this branch of the Arande family. Elie and Elizabeth Bonhomme-Arande lived in Flanders, a place filled with Spanish Jews. They became adopted a French Reform identity. Their son, Elie Paul, became a French Reform minister. However, their 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. However, in practicality, the company could only operate with the aid of Spanish Jewish agents in London, Amsterdam, and Istanbul. Thus, the Arrande grandson and great-grandson would have only been able to conduct trade as a result of having Sephardic Jewish relatives or contacts in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Istanbul. Though both are recorded as having lived in London, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam amongst Spanish Jewish brethren, their religious affiliation is unknown.

The Astruc family

The Jewish Astruc family pops up all over Spain long before the Edict of Expulsion(1492). Throughout Spanish Jewish history, Astruc appears both as a first and a last name. This has to do with Jewish naming practices. Sometimes it appears as Astruc ben Abraham, Astruc the son of Abraham, or Abraham ibn Astruc, Abraham the son of Astruc. Sometimes it appears as a surname, as in the case of Abraham Astruc. In Spain, Astruc was a common Jewish name.

One famous member of the Spanish Astruc family would be Astruc Ha-Levi of Daroca, a Spanish Talmudic scholar. He was a delegate to the famous disputation of Tortosa, in 1413. The Pope invited notable Jewish scholars to defend themselves and their religious positions. Notably, on this occasion, Astruc Ha-Levi disagreed with the Pope. On yet another occasion, he left the Pope with some words to ponder. At that time(15th century) some Jews believed that the messiah was born on the day the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. The Pope took issue with this idea and called it a Jewish fantasy. Astruc responded to the Pope by saying the following: "Lord and Pope, you believe so many improbabilities about your Messiah, let us believe this single one regarding ours."(1,2) Bold man.

In the very excellent paper, "A Brief Detailed Listing of the Jews of Tarrega, Spain Before and After the Black Death Pogrom of 1348", written by Maria Jose Surribas

Camps, and published by Avotaynu.com, we find further mentions the Astruc family. In this case, the Astruc were unremarkable community members of Tarrega, a small town in southern Catalonia.

“In 1344, Abraham Astruc guaranteed Issac Tael, of Leida, who took his oath as a public broker in Tarrega.

In 1342 One Abraham Astruc resided in Balaguer. He was married to Drueda and was the son of Vidal Abraham, and uncle of Mestre Abraham Boniac.

In May 1354, Mosse Bon Astruc and his wife Bonafila, resided in Tarrega.”

You can read the entire article written by Maria Jose Camps, which I highly recommend. Here will see, conclusively, Astruc was a Jewish name in Spain.

<https://avotaynuonline.com/2015/04/a-detailed-listing-of-the-jews-of-tarrega-spain-before-and-after-the-black-death-and-pogrom-of-1348/>

Astruc was a Spanish Jewish name. Some Astruc’s were notable, some were villagers. But it was a name born by Jews living in Spain prior to The Edict of Expulsion.

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| | ASTOURQUES | German Huguenot Society |
| | ASTRAGNE | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astrik | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | ASTRIN | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astrologo | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Astrougo | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Astrougo | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Astrougo | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | ASTRUC | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astruc | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
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| | Astruc | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Astruc | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | Astruc | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | ASTRUC (5) | French Pastors |
| | Astruc (Istruc) | Original research by GenieMilgrom |
| | ASTRUCH | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astruch | Original research by GenieMilgrom |

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| | Astruch | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| Ben | Astruch | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch Adret | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch Avdali | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch Cavaller.- 1427-1453 | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch Rimoch | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astruch Satorra | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | ASTRUE | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astruel | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astrug | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astrug | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astrug | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | Astrug de Barcelona | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| d' | ASTRUGE de SAVARDAN | German Huguenot Society |
| | Astruget | Original research by GenieMilgro |
| | ASTRUGUE | German Huguenot Society |
| d' | ASTRUGUE de SAVARDAN | German Huguenot Society |

It appears Astruc's began migrating from Spain to southern France when anti-Jewish violence erupted in Spain in the 1350's, after the edict of Expulsion(1492), and later as Conversos fleeing the Inquisition.(1592). As a result of all these waves of Jewish refugees, the south of France was filled with Jewish Astruc's. In fact, GenAmi.org, which keeps great databases for the Spanish Jews who migrated to Bordeaux indicate this. The Bordeaux book of circumcisions before 1728 lists 10 Astruc boys circumcised. The Cimitiere Israelite de Bordeaux lists over 75 Astruc headstones dating to the same time. There were so many Spanish Jewish Astrucs living in the south of France Wikipedia lists notable French Astruc's.

Abba Mari, (13th century), French rabbi who took the name Astruc

Astruc de Noves(14th century), French philosopher and physicist

Astruc Remoch (14th century), Spanish medieval doctor

Gabriel Astruc (1864–1938), French theatrical impresario

Jean Astruc(1684–1766), French medical professor

Zacharie Astruc(1835–1907), French sculptor, painter and author

Alexander Astruc(1923–2016), French film critic and director

Dider Astruc, French chemist(1946)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astruc_family

Thus, the Astruc families' presence in France is well documented. The Jews that fled to the south of France after the 1492 Edict of Expulsion continued to live their lives as Jews. 100 years later, the Conversos began fleeing the Inquisition and made their home in the south of France. Once in France, they Conversos either returned to the practice of Judaism, remained Catholics, joined the French Reform Church.

However, my intention of digging around the Astruc family history was to find Sephardic Jews that joined the French Reform Church and ended up in the Huguenot diaspora. This was not hard to do. One instance comes from the life story of Jean Astruc. (1684-1766)

Jean Astruc was born 19 March 1684, in Sauve, France. He and his entire family descends from Spanish Jews that fled Spain during and after the Spanish Edict of Expulsion (1492). Even general histories report this family descends from the famous Medieval Jewish Astruc family. His father was a Huguenot Pastor. You heard that right, Jean was not just raised in a Huguenot family, his father ran a Huguenot church! The family was super Huguenot.

When the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685 by the with the Edict of Fontainebleau, Huguenots were forced to become Catholic, or leave the country. The historical record indicates of the 1,000,000 French Reform inhabitants, 800,000 accepted baptisms into the Catholic Church. Jean Astruc and his immediate family became Catholic rather than flee France. Jean Astruc was notable because he was both a gifted biblical scholar and physician. In both cases, he was highly regarded in France. Being the son of a Huguenot Pastor, in a definitively anti-Huguenot environment, he had to raise above great prejudice to achieve the positions he held. Interestingly, he was strong enough in character to take issue with the Catholic Church. Jean Astruc defended the Mosaic authorship of Genesis. I guess the church had other ideas.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Astruc

Here we have an example of a Spanish Jewish family, migrating to the south of France and becoming Huguenots, and then becoming Catholic to remain in France. While this particular branch of the Astruc family chose to remain in France, others did not. Many French Reform Astrucs did flee France in 1585 and became part of the Huguenot Diaspora. They migrated to Germany, England, Ireland, and America. As they moved around the world, the name morphed into Astruck, Astrug, Astrugge, and many other variations. If you have Astruc in your family tree, you most assuredly are of Sephardic Jewish descent.

Belloc Family

The Belloc family decidedly a Spanish Jewish family. This name is unusual and not easily confused with other names. The family appear in Spain in Mallorca when Daniel Belloc, a converted Jew, was tried by the inquisition, in 1488 and in 1491. In both cases he was granted a reconciliation or Edict of Grace. He somehow managed to avoid being put to death. The name Belloc is listed in Pere Bonnin's who is who of Spanish Jews, Sangre Judia. The name appears in Dictionario Sefardi de Sobrenomes two times. Some family members left at the time of the Edict of Expulsion for Tunisia, Algeria, and Italy under the name Belhaiche. Others left Spain as Conversos for the New World under the name Belicha, Bellicha, Belich.

As has been stated, many Spanish Jews and Conversos ended up in Bordeaux. While there was an 1615 edict from the French king banning all Jews from residing in France, this did not was not enforced in the south of France. As an example, the aristocrats of Bordeaux petitioned the French king to allow the Spanish Jews who lived in Bordeaux to stay, and to allow more to settle there. They early arrivals set up successful business and the aristocrats wanted the continued income stream. And they kept coming. For a long time, Bordeaux was a center of Sephardic life. The Belloc family made a home there. This is evidenced by the name appearing in the civil marriage documents of the Sephardic Jewish bride, Marie Bellocq(b 1839) to Benjamin Leon(1841-1881) on August 3, 1880. Benjamin's parents were Abraham Leon and Lea Peryre. Abraham Leon's parents were Jacob Leon and Rachel Lopes Dias. Practicing Spanish Jewish Belloc's lived in France at least through the 19th century.

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| | BELLOC | German Huguenot Society |
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| De | BELLOC | German Huguenot Society |
| | Belloch | Original research by GenieMilgrom.c |
| | Bellocs | Original research by GenieMilgrom.c |
| | Bellocs | Original research by GenieMilgrom.c |
| | BELLOMÉ | German Huguenot Society |

At the same time there were Belloc's living as Jews in the south of France, we find Belloc's living as Huguenots.

One such family lived in Nantes and their genealogy reveals a list of Sephardic Jewish names. The first recorded member of this family is Moise Belloc (1650-1719). Moise was Procurator Protestant de la Chambre et Edit or the Protestant Prosecutor of the Chamber. Henry the IV established courts in the 16th century that were made up of Reformed Christians. These "chambers" were responsible for trying cases involving Reformed Christians. Moise Belloc was a very important Huguenot in Bordeaux. He, and his wife, Jeanne SeRe were both from families of Marchands de Bordeaux, Bordeaux merchants. It must be said that Moise is almost always a Jewish name. Be that such that it may, this Moise was not only a wealthy merchant Huguenot, he was in charge of judging the Huguenot community in Nantes. That would make him, in a sense, a leader within the Huguenot community. These courts were dissolved by Louis the XIV but in Moises lifetime, they were quite active, and he was a major player in the Bordeaux Huguenot community.

This particular Huguenot family was made famous by Moise's great great great grandson, the painter Jeanne Hillaire Belloc(1786-1866). Jeanne's son, Hillaire Belloc (1870-1953) would become a famous writer. Hillaire Belloc's writing was rather peculiar. He wrote children's books where bad children were eaten by wild animals and suffered other equally horrific ends if they misbehaved in any way. He himself, strayed from religion and ultimately became a staunch Catholic. He also was an essayist who wrote on religion and medieval history. In his 1922 book, "The Jews", he wrote the following,

"the continued presence of the Jewish nation intermixed with other nations alien to it presents a permanent problem of the gravest character," and that the "Catholic Church is the conservator of an age-long European tradition, and that tradition will never compromise with the fiction that a Jew can be other than a Jew. Wherever the Catholic Church has power, and in proportion to its power, the Jewish problem will be recognized to the full."

As a result of many such opinions expressed in this book, he is considered to be an anti-Semite by some. Others say that he forewarned the future catastrophe that would be the holocaust. The history of Hillaire Belloc is perhaps telling of some Huguenot families. Originally Spanish Jews, they converted in Spain, and fled the Inquisition. They became a leading Huguenot family in France. Members of the family fled France when Huguenots were forced to leave. Once living safely in host countries, in this case England, one descendent became an anti-Semitic Catholic.

The Massa Family

Though the Massa family were Spanish Jews, records of their existence come from their life as Refugees. Of their life in Spain, nothing could be found. Outside of Spain, the name varies from Masa, Massa, Masse, and Meza. The variations are used interchangeably. JewishGen has 46 records for Massa's living as Jews outside of Spain. The Book of Jewish marriages in Amsterdam lists 69 Meza-Massa marriages. The Massa brides and grooms came from Bordeaux(1671,1683,1712), Curacao(1775), Faro(1772,1775), Genoa(1668), Lisbon(1629), Pisa(1678), Smyrna(1663)

Valencia(1648), and Venice(1660). Some of the Massa's left Spain as Jews, some of them left Spain and Portugal as Conversos.

In the first instance, some left Spain as Jews and made their way to the tolerant communities in Italy. The Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Italy, France, and the Portuguese Communities lists the name in its various spellings. Massa's were found living in Emilia-Romagna, Florence, Livorno, Lombardy, and Tuscany. Mazza is considered to be a variant of the same name, and families using that surname were found in Anacona, Livorno, Rome, and Venice.

In the second instance, it appears they also left Spain as Conversos. In the Curacao synagogue cemetery, Beth Hahaim, there are four Meza-Massa headstones to be found.

Many of the Sephardim that made their way to the Ottoman Empire, specifically Istanbul, eventually spread within the realm of the Ottoman empire. That would include much of Yugoslavia which was under Ottoman control until 1912. One example of a Spanish Masa family having made their way further into the Ottoman empire would be this. Samuel Masa(1863) was born in Skopje, Yugoslavia. He lived there as a professional until he was murdered in the Holocaust.

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| | MASSA de CHAUVET | German Huguenot Society | |
| De | MASSA de CHAUVET | German Huguenot Society | |
| De | MASSA de CHAUVET | German Huguenot Society | |
| De | MASSA DESANIERE | German Huguenot Society | |
| | MASSE | German Huguenot Society | |
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| De | MASSÉ | German Huguenot Society | |

| | MASSE (2) | French Pastors |
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| De | MASSE de CHAUVET | German Huguenot Society |
| De | MASSE de CHAVET | German Huguenot Society |
| De | MASSE de CHAVET | German Huguenot Society |
| De | MASSÉ du BOUCHET | German Huguenot Society |
| | Meza | Original Research by GenieMilgrom.com |
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| De | Meza Silva | Original Research by GenieMilgrom.com | J |
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| | Mezas Lemos | Original Research by GenieMilgrom.com | ' |
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| | Mezas Marques | Original Research by GenieMilgrom.com | E |
| | Mezas Soares | Original Research by GenieMilgrom.com | S |

While other Massa family members were moving around the world, some crossed the Spanish border and began life anew in the south of France. Once there, some took on a joined the French Reform church and became Huguenots. In the list of French Huguenot pastors, 4 Massa's can be found. One record indicates a Huguenot Massa family made their home in Pyrenee Atlantique, Bayone.

And this brings us to one of the more interesting Sephardic Jewish-Huguenot stories. In this case, it involves a Sephardic Jew, converting, and becoming a member of the French Reform church..... outside of France! My 5th great grandfather, Lorent Massa(1647-1687) native of the Netherlands, moved to Otterberg Germany, where on the 30th of May, 1669, he disavowed any allegiance to the Catholic church, and converted and joined the French Reform Church. He married the Huguenot Esther Baugeo(1651-1687) in February 1673.

Conclusion

It appears Lavender was quite right. Some Huguenot families descend from Sephardic Jews. When comparing 77,381 Huguenot surnames found living outside of France, with Genie Milgrom's master list of 48,174 Sephardic Jews, there were at least 20,000 direct or close matches.

Looking at 5 specific families with direct matches, the Abbadias, the Arandes, the Astrucs, the Bellocs, and the Massa's, several points can be made.

The first is Abraham Lavenders hypothesis that many Huguenots descended from Sephardic Jews is grounded in fact. Spanish Jews, having hopped the border into France, did become members of the French Reform Church and later joined the Huguenot diaspora. I looked at 5 of the 20,000 family names that have Sephardic Jews and Huguenots using the same last name. The other 19,995 matched up families warrant further investigation.

Looking at these five families sharing a last name, several observations can be made. The first is this. The Spanish Jews, forced to live as Catholics for 100 years in Spain, left Spain with a fluid identity. Members of the same family might live in the same town, some as Catholics, some as Jews, and some as members of the French Reform Church. So fluid was their identity, Hillaire Belloc would go onto to become an English Catholic anti-Semite.

Another would be this. Once Sephardic Jews joined the French Reform Church, and became part of the Huguenot diaspora, any connection with their Spanish Jewish past was lost. They truly disappeared into the Christian communities in which they landed, be that England, Ireland, Germany, or the United States.

A final thought has no answer. What was it like for the related Astrucs living in Bordeaux, some Portuguese merchants, some French Huguenot Bordeaux merchants, some Catholic, some Jewish, some French Reform? What was it like to live in close proximity to people, known to be family, who live in such different orbits? Did they speak to each other? Did they know each other? Did they marry across sectarian lines? Did a Spanish Jewish woman marry a French Reforme Jew of Sephardic heritage? The places where these people lived were not big. They had to know each other. Once can only wonder how they dealt with each other.

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