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The Same but Different?

Inter-cultural Trade and the Sephardim,
1595-1640

Jessica Vance Roitman

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Brill's Series in Jewish Studies

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VOLUME 42

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Jessica Vance Roitman



BRILL

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2011

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Roitman, J. (Jessica V.).

The same but different? : inter-cultural trade and the Sephardim, 1595–1640 / by Jessica Vance Roitman.

p. cm. — (Brill's series in Jewish studies ; v. 42)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-90-04-20276-4 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Jews—Netherlands—Amsterdam—History—16th century. 2. Jews—Netherlands—Amsterdam—History—17th century. 3. Sephardim—Netherlands—Amsterdam—Economic conditions—16th century. 4. Sephardim—Netherlands—Amsterdam—Economic conditions—17th century. 5. Europe—Commerce—History—16th century. 6. Europe—Commerce—History—17th century. 7. Amsterdam (Netherlands)—Ethnic relations. I. Title.

DS135.N5A598 2011

381.089'9240492352—dc22

2010050339

ISSN 0926-2261

ISBN 978 90 04 20276 4

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My family has supported me in every way, provided encouragement, advice, and unconditional love. They never lost faith in me or in my ability to write this book. My mother, Ileda Craft Tilton, sister, Susanah Lura Roitman, and father, Joel Morton Roitman, have been wonderful cheerleaders. I owe a huge debt to them. I am also grateful to my husband, Maarten Henricus de Kok, for his belief in me and my abilities. I am thankful to him for his willingness to help me in any way, to provide solutions to anything from statistical problems to logistical issues, and for his justifiable belief that tempting me away from seventeenth-century documents with a glass of wine and a hot bath was a good thing. Maarten's knowledge of Excel has proved Darwin right! To all of them, my deepest gratitude.

It was not only support from my family that kept me going, however. My colleagues at the University of Leiden were a source of encouragement and knowledge. The staff at the Central Library at the University of Leiden was always patient, kind, and helpful, and I apologize again for washing four different library cards, necessitating issuance of a new card each and every time. The staff and faculty of the Institute for History at the University of Leiden were endlessly helpful as this book came to fruition. Without the help of José Birker-van Hertten I would have been administratively adrift. Dr. Peter Meel also deserves my thanks for being a source of support and encouragement, even when I was being grouchy. Although I was not officially one of them, the Economic and Social History section adopted me, and made me feel very much at home. Professor Dr. Pieter C. Emmer was always there to answer questions, discuss ideas, and generally keep me on track. Without his knowledge and his belief in me, this book might not have been completed.

Other colleagues at the History Department also provided invaluable help as this manuscript took shape. Professor Dr. Nicolette Mout and Dr. Maurits Ebben asked me tough questions and made me think long and hard about my ideas and conclusions. I especially thank Dr. Raymond Fagel, and Professor Dr. Leo Luccassen for reading various versions of this manuscript with a fine-toothed comb, and giving

me invaluable perspective and advice. They all spent a huge amount of time helping me, and I am truly in their debt. Last, but certainly not least, Dr. Cátia Antunes not only read multiple versions of the manuscript and aided me immensely as the book took shape, but also helped me arrange research trips to her native Portugal. Without her help at every stage of this process, I cannot imagine what would have become of me or the book.

Professor Dr. Jack B. Owens of Idaho State University also spent far too long with earlier versions of this manuscript. While I still do not see pirates or smugglers in every document, I do know that he gave me a tremendous amount of good advice, and deserves my gratitude for all his help. Likewise, I am very thankful to Mrs. Odette Vlessing of the Amsterdam Municipal Archives, who pointed me towards documents of which I was completely unaware. She also saved me from making a few factual errors in this version of the manuscript. I am grateful to her for her interest in my topic and her close reading of my manuscript. Professor Dr. Jonathan Israel of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University took the time to meet with me in The Hague and help me flesh out my ideas midway through my writing of this book. I am thankful to him for his help. Professor Dr. Yosef Kaplan of Hebrew University read the manuscript and gave me food for thought, as well as a much needed boost of confidence in my research. Dr. Kathleen Kulp Hill helped me learn Portuguese one summer before my first trip to Brazil. More than that, she was and is my friend, and treated me like an adult long before I was one, for which I am very grateful. The two anonymous readers of this manuscript provided hard-hitting advice and suggestions for improving the manuscript. I thank them, and hope that, if they are reading this version of the book, they can see improvement in the text. Lastly, lunch, tea, and drinks with Cátia Antunes, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, Damian Pargas, and, most especially, “the boyz”—Chris Nierstrasz, Tijmen Pronk, and Guus Kroonen—were welcome breaks for me. They all deserve my thanks for their constant support and friendship.

I started thinking about working on this book when I was pregnant with my son, Maximiliaan Darius Robert Gustave de Kok. In a sense, he and this book have grown up together. I will never forget his shining eyes when I brought home a first, very rough, draft of this book, which really consisted of a pile of marked-up papers in a binder. He said with great love, pride, and excitement in his voice, “Mama, is that

your big, thick book?!” This love, pride, and excitement have given me immeasurable inspiration. These many years later, I can look at both him, and this book, with satisfaction. But everything comes at a price. And it was my son who paid a high price for this book. So it is my beautiful boy, my *boeffe*, to whom I dedicate this book, for all the lost weekends.

INTRODUCTION

It was a rather daunting prospect to consider writing a book about the Sephardic merchants of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Over the past century or so, there have been hundreds of articles and books written about this community. The plethora of works both scholarly and popular on the Sephardim of Amsterdam is not surprising. This group has fascinated scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries because it seems to offer, as Barbara Tuchman has written in another context, a distant mirror that can be held up to the lives and issues faced by minority groups in general, and Jews specifically, today.¹ The ways in which the Sephardim grappled with the surrounding society, tolerance, the blending of cultures, and the limits of assimilation speak strongly to scholars confronting these issues in the contemporary world. As historian Adam Sutcliffe has noted, “this chapter in Jewish history looks forward rather than backward.... The tolerance, ethnic diversity, and economic dynamism of seventeenth-century Amsterdam readily appear to herald the emergence of the modern urban experience.”²

One part of the modern urban experience is social acceptance, yet the way that Sephardic economic elites of seventeenth-century Amsterdam were socially and culturally accepted was not particularly common in Western Europe during the early modern period.³ The permeability of the borders between the Dutch and Sephardim in Amsterdam during this time was aided by the complex layers of identity and affiliation that the elite Sephardic merchants had adopted. The economic and social opportunities for the Sephardim in the Amsterdam of the seventeenth century presage current discussions about globalization and the formation and maintenance of identity in a multicultural world. Indeed, though the everyday contact between the Sephardim

¹ Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1978). Tuchman draws parallels between the fourteenth and the twentieth centuries.

² Adam Sutcliffe, “Sephardic Amsterdam and the Myths of Jewish Modernity,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, 3 (Summer 2007): 417–437, 418.

³ Philip Curtin makes a strong case for this social acceptance having been the norm in several Indian Ocean cities even before the early modern period. See Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

and the Dutch in Amsterdam may strike contemporary scholars, especially those steeped in the history of pogroms and ghettos, as having been quite notable, such contact was in fact unremarkable.

This everyday contact was not just of a social nature. It also included the establishment of important economic relationships between the Sephardim and the Dutch merchants in whose midst they lived. For example, in 1602, 38 prominent merchants of Amsterdam signed a petition to the States General of the United Provinces in support of the city's "Portuguese Nation"—a "nation" composed almost entirely of Sephardim. The merchants urged that the Portuguese Nation should continue to receive "the privileges and safeguards...from the States General, for the freedom to practice their trade and travel."⁴ Motives other than pure altruism surely played a part in the Dutch merchants' appeal for a ruling that favored Sephardic merchants. Indeed, examination of available notarial documentation from Amsterdam evidences that over half of the signatories had documented business dealings—and often multiple dealings over many years—with Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam.

This petition is one of many discrete pieces of evidence that point to a potent truth ignored by traditional histories of early modern trade and trade networks, namely that trade, and the networks constructed for the pursuit of this trade, were far more fluid and open to merchants of varying backgrounds than has heretofore been admitted. One aim of this study is to show that economic and social networks were not necessarily co-extensive. Economic links between networks comprised of myriad ethnicities, backgrounds, and/or religions were mutually beneficial and often long-lasting. As part of this discussion, I will revisit the importance many historians have placed on shared origin, ethnicity, and religion for the conduct of trade in the early modern period.

The histories of the new Christians in the early modern period emphasize, as do most histories of particular merchant groups of the same period, close networks based on kinship, shared ethnicity, and commonality of religious experience. Yet these histories tend to overlook the fact that economic relationships that bridged religions, ethnicities, and geographical boundaries were invaluable to the conduct

⁴ Nationaal Archief Nederland (henceforth NL-HaNA), Staten General, 1.01.04, Resolutiën der Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/300–301.

of trade in the early modern economy. These networks allowed merchants to access not only regions but also sectors that were dominated by merchants of other backgrounds. This study examines some of these inter-cultural networks in detail, with a focus on the Sephardim of Amsterdam and their largely Dutch business associates between the years 1595 and 1640. It does not investigate these merchants' dealings with "old" Christian Portuguese merchants (that is, those who were not of Jewish descent). Such merchants were relatively scarce in Amsterdam during the time period in question. Moreover, as I argue later in the book, these Portuguese merchants with no known Jewish ancestry were culturally almost indistinguishable from the new Christians. Therefore, it would be problematic to argue for the inter-culturality of interactions between these merchants. This book centers instead on three new Christian merchants—Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio—and explores the often complex and long-lasting enterprises they conducted with the help of Dutch associates.

How did these merchants come into contact with each other? How and why did these inter-cultural networks emerge? The short and simple answer is that it was via movement, travel, and resettlement, all of which stimulated the contacts necessary for merchants to begin trading together. I develop this argument throughout the rest of this work and, employing Patrick Manning's concept of "cross-community migration" as a framework for the discussion, I will show that inter-cultural trade is among the innovations that emerged from cross-community migration.⁵ Essentially, cross-community migration brings social cross-fertilization to communities. Of course, the movement of people and labor from one community to another is the primary short-term result, but in the long term the most important results are the spread of ideas and the development of new ideas and adaptation.⁶ Cross-community migration also brings new resources and new ideas to new communities, and catalyzes further innovation in communities. The interchange of languages, customs, and technology leads to innovations, as different ideas are brought into contact, and the innovations themselves then

⁵ Patrick Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," *Social Evolution & History* 5, 2 (September 2006): 24–54.

⁶ Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," 39.

spread via the process of migration.⁷ One such innovation may well have been the intensity of these inter-cultural relationships.

New Christian identity was multi-layered and incorporated categories of local provenance, nation, language, migratory patterns, ethnicity, and religion. As exemplified by Manoel Carvalho, Manoel Rodrigues Vega, and Bento Osorio, this complex structuring of identity was particularly striking in new Christians from higher socio-economic levels who had generally moved easily from one social and religious milieu to another yet nonetheless retained their self-identification as new Christians as one layer within their multi-faceted identities. This tendency toward fluidity dissipated by around the mid-seventeenth century, by which time the new Christians had generally opted, explicitly or implicitly, for either Judaism or Catholicism.⁸ Thus, the Sephardim of Amsterdam, especially in the period I examine, existed within multiple overlapping circles of affiliation and identification. Their wealth, cosmopolitanism, and pretensions to aristocracy made them accepted by Amsterdam's merchants. Their inter-cultural trade networks incorporated both Jews and non-Jews to varying degrees. These networks were often grounded in shared background and experiences as cross-community migrants outside Amsterdam, as well as in common economic interests. Likewise, the Sephardim of Amsterdam also acknowledged their affiliation with a larger diaspora community.

There is no doubt that isolating the cultural facet of cross-cultural trade and interactions is difficult. Defining "culture" is a slippery proposition, at best, as I will discuss in the next chapter. In fact, post-modern cultural theorists are critical of the very idea that there are cultural boundaries. While I do not go as far in my assertions as these theorists, I acknowledge the contested nature of the term "culture." Difficult, too, is determining if economic interactions that crossed cultural boundaries were indeed any different from those conducted within cultural borders.⁹ Despite these difficulties inherent in defining culture and in determining its boundaries, I will argue that both

⁷ Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," 45–47.

⁸ Though Sephardic identities began to coalesce around this time, there certainly remained ambiguity and fluidity in terms of identity formation. The work of the sociologist Harrison C. White explores these processes of fluidity and identity formation. See, Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁹ Patrick Manning, "The Problem of Interactions in World History," *American Historical Review* 101, 3 (June 1996): 771–782, 777.

the new Christian merchants who are the focal points of this study and their Dutch associates shared a complex and multi-layered set of identities and affiliations that intersected in what could be termed a shared culture.

Many Portuguese merchants, new Christians and non-new Christians alike, had partners and associates from other backgrounds. Antonio Nunez Gramaxo, who was among the chief Portuguese wholesalers in Seville at the time, maintained long-term partnerships with Richard Sweet of England, as well as with Albert Anquelman and Heinrich Selmer, both of whom were from German-speaking principalities, and with an unnamed Flemish merchant.¹⁰ The presence of such non-Portuguese merchants—in this case, merchants of Castilian, English, German, and Flemish origin, respectively—who were firmly entrenched in Portuguese trading networks raises the issue of network limits. As Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert notes, “It seems that the boundaries of these commercial networks were porous and admitted the existence of relations that bridged different trading nations.”¹¹ Francesca Trivellato argues, in this same vein, that cross-cultural cooperation was essential for the success of the Sephardic networks.¹²

These networks may have been established in response to the failure of intra-group networks, or as a means to gain access to new markets, supply sources, credit, and political influence. Whatever the rationale behind their formation, these intra-cultural networks, though their success was by no means certain, helped spread the risks that were inherent in relying on merchants from only one group. What historiography often ignores, however, is that inter-cultural networks not only spread but also reduced risks. These ideas will be further elaborated in the following chapters, using Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio as examples of these sorts of porous networks.

This book is predicated upon the idea that newer social and economic perspectives must be applied to the understanding of the early modern

¹⁰ Archivo Histórico Nacional—Madrid (AHN) Inquisición (Inq.) 1611, exp. 17 quoted in Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, “Interdependence and the Collective Pursuit of Profits: Portuguese Commercial Networks in the Early Modern Atlantic,” in Diogo Ramada Curto and Anthony Molho, eds., *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*. EUI working papers HEC no. 2002/2 (Florence: European University Institute, 2002), 90–120, 92.

¹¹ Studnicki-Gizbert, “Interdependence and the Collective Pursuit of Profits,” 97.

¹² Diogo Ramada Curto and Anthony Molho, “Introduction,” in Diogo Ramada Curto and Anthony Molho, eds., *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, 3–17, 11.

history of new Christians, specifically, and to Jewish History, generally. These perspectives include those I have described previously: the need to reframe the discussion of early modern trade networks, especially what could loosely be termed “diaspora trading networks,” in order to include the phenomenon of inter-cultural networks; and the need to extend the discussion of new Christian movement and resettlement in the early modern period beyond the category of “diaspora” and towards the incorporation of more recent theories of migration, in this case cross-community migration. Undergirding these newer perspectives for the study of early modern new Christian trade networks is the well-known and long-standing theory of networks based on loose ties. This theory asserts that loosely-knit networks that connect individuals in various directions, and that encompass friends and acquaintances in a series of non-intersecting groups, may be more efficient in creating opportunities and promoting the defense of economic interests than are tightly-knit networks, even though the members in the latter networks all know each other, thereby collectively contributing to considerable social communication and to combined pressures to reinforce traditional religious and family values.¹³ Although the theory of loose ties has become so well-established that it no longer requires evidence to bolster its validity, I have incorporated it into the current work because, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, these loose ties are integral to understanding the formation and functioning of inter-cultural networks.

Historiography, Chronology, Sources, and Approach

Chronology

I chose to examine the period between 1595 and 1640 for several reasons. This study starts with the beginning of Sephardic settlement in Amsterdam, at a point when new networks were being formed and pre-existing networks were being reshaped to respond to the challenges and opportunities of this emerging entrepôt. I hoped to draw a clearer

¹³ Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Networks* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964; 1st ed., 1957); Mark Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360–1380; White, *Identity and Control: A Structural Theory of Social Action* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

picture of how such networks emerged and functioned in theory and in practice, and to track changes in how they functioned over time. This chronology encompasses the important formative period during which economic and social relationships between the Sephardim, the Dutch, and multiple other immigrant groups, including Protestants from Antwerp and other port cities in the southern Netherlands, were being built up. Religious and cultural identities remained somewhat fluid, and stabilization in religious practice and cultural identities would not occur until the mid-seventeenth century. These factors made this an interesting period in which to study myriad relations between different groups.

Moreover, this chronology includes times of peace and of war, both of which would have been important considerations for how these networks functioned. Lastly, the end of the period under consideration—namely, the year 1640—was also the end of Habsburg rule of Portugal. Because Iberia and its overseas territories were the principal hubs of the new Christian trading networks, political events in Iberia may well have had an important influence on how these networks functioned. Political events between Iberia and the Dutch Republic not only determined the overall chronology for this study, but also dictated the time period divisions in the quantitative analyses. My analysis of the merchants' economic interactions is subdivided into the following intervals: the beginnings of Sephardic settlement in the Dutch Republic until the beginnings of the Twelve Years' Truce (1595–1608), the period of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621), and from the resumption of war between the Republic and the Hispanic monarchy until the end of Habsburg rule in Portugal.

Sources

I used the notarial archives of Amsterdam as the basis of this study because they are the only place to find adequate documentation on the economic interactions between these Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associates with which to test the hypothesis that loose ties were a catalyst for increased network efficiency. Furthermore, I could find in the notarial archives information about the inter-cultural interactions that was somewhat systematic, chronologically appropriate, and relatively complete. Thus, most of the sources on the merchants in this study are from the Amsterdam Municipal Archives, thereby reflecting the large and important community that resided there. Significant

transactions and prominent merchants had also been located in Rotterdam, of course, including Manoel Rodrigues Vega. To complement the abundant sources in Amsterdam, I also looked at contracts from the Old Notarial Archives of Rotterdam's Municipal Archives that related to the Sephardim

In addition to using these notarial sources, I also consulted the records of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam (Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente te Amsterdam). As a source of information about the Sephardic merchants, they are invaluable. Via these records, I could determine the relative wealth of the merchants by the amount of the obligatory community contribution they made (*finta*), how and if they were involved in the religious community, what conflicts they might have had within the religious community, and if they were involved in the larger Sephardic community outside of Amsterdam, such as through membership in communal charitable organizations. However enlightening these records are, they reveal little or nothing about the interactions that the merchants under consideration may have had with Dutch merchants. Passing references are made to the community as a whole renting property from Dutch merchants and to the utilization of Dutchmen to arbitrate disputes, but nothing that could make a case either for or against inter-cultural trade and economic activities.

In order to assess the role the Sephardic merchants had, along with their Dutch partners, as political players, and to gauge the influence that political entities and their decision-making had on Sephardic merchants, I used the records relating to petitions, requests, and rulings of these governing institutions. However, the vast amounts of documentation available made a complete perusal nearly impossible. Instead, I examined the printed Resolutions of the States General, located in the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague, for the years under consideration in this study.¹⁴ I also used the Resolutions to the States of Holland, a constituent body of the larger States General. These records are also found in The Hague.

¹⁴ N. Japikse and H.H.P. Rijperman, *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal van 1576 tot 1609*, Rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën (henceforth RGP), 14 volumes ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1915–1970) RGP's 26, 33, 41, 43, 47, 51, 55, 57, 62, 71, 85, 92, 101, 131; and A.Th. van Deursen, ed., *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal: Nieuwe reeks, 1610–1670*, 7 volumes ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1971–1994), RGP's 135, 151, 152, 176, 187, 208, 223.

In addition to these Dutch archival sources, I consulted Portuguese archives extensively. Many of the Sephardim in Amsterdam had either come from Portugal or had family members residing there. Although it is an oft-repeated myth that there was a direct relationship between Inquisitorial persecution and the arrival of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, there is nonetheless much information, genealogical and economic, in the Inquisitorial documentation. However, consulting these sources is no easy task. The National Archives at the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon includes over 40,000 manuscript *processos* (investigation and trial records) consisting of around 18,000 from the Inquisition in Lisbon, almost 12,000 from the Inquisition at Évora, approximately 10,500 from the Inquisition at Coimbra, and 35 from the short-lived Inquisition at Porto. There was a branch of the Portuguese Inquisition in the Goa, India, which the Portuguese controlled. This latter Inquisition accumulated more than 15,000 registered processes between 1561 and 1774, almost all of which have been lost. While the Portuguese Inquisition held hearings in Brazil and carried out arrests there, the prisoners were shipped to Portugal and tried by the Lisbon tribunal. The same was true of other Portuguese overseas territories, such as Angola.

In order to make some of this surfeit of information digestible for this study, I consulted the published denunciations from the Inquisition's visitations to Brazil (this visitation had been in response to the large new Christian presence there).¹⁵ I also looked at the original, unpublished records of the visitation to Angola, which had likewise had a substantial new Christian presence.¹⁶ I examined only trial records from the Inquisition of Lisbon, because Lisbon's tribunal was responsible for the overseas territories, with the exception of the tribunal of Goa. It is possible that important new Christian merchants examined in this book, or their families and business associates, were tried by the tribunals of other cities. But a greater likelihood is that they would have fallen under the Lisbon tribunal, because Lisbon had such a large population of new Christians. Moreover, Lisbon's tribunal covered such a wide swath of Portugal's overseas empire, in which many new

¹⁵ *Primeira visitação do Santo Offício às partes do Brasil pelo Licenciado Heitor Furtado de Mendonça. Denúncias da Bahia 1591–1593* (São Paulo: Paulo Prado, 1925); *Primeira visitação do Santo Offício às partes do Brasil. Denúncias e confissões de Pernambuco 1593–1595* (Recife: FUNDARPE, 1984); "Livro de Denúncias do Santo Offício na Bahia—1618," in *Annaes da Bibliotheca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, 1927* 49 (1936): 75–198.

¹⁶ Instituto Arquivos Nacionais, Torre do Tombo (henceforth IAN/TT), Inquisition of Lisbon (henceforth IdL), Book 776.

Christians lived. Lastly, at the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* [Overseas Archive] in Lisbon, I examined the documents relating to the colonies of Brazil, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde, Guinea, and Angola, all of which had new Christian merchants residing in them.

To round out the study, I consulted various commercial letters and account books regarding new Christian merchants from the State Papers of the Public Records Office in London, including an account book of the sugar trader Manuel Dias Santiago. I also looked at published sources of *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers*. In short, although I have consulted myriad sources in multiple countries in the course of writing this book, the hypothesis is largely based upon, and supported by, the notarial archives in Amsterdam.

Of course, notarial sources can certainly be problematic. One problem a researcher must contend with in relying largely on notarial sources is “skewing” or presenting a “false positive” for inter-cultural trade. Basically, it is possible that merchants of differing backgrounds, i.e., not related or of the same ethno-religious group, would have been more likely to rely on the semi-security provided by recourse to legal entities and institutions such as notaries, due to the supposed social controls provided by working within an intra-group network. Such recourse would not have been perceived as necessary for intra-group endeavors, as will be detailed in the next chapter. It may well be that this research has brought to light a greater percentage of overall inter-cultural trade versus intra-group trade because intra-group trade was not recorded in documents of any sort, whereas inter-cultural trade was. Unfortunately, it is not possible to estimate, in terms of percentages, how much this reliance on notarial archives may have “skewed” the conclusions. But what I can say with a strong degree of certainty, however, is that the Sephardim of Amsterdam were highly reliant upon notaries for their own intra-group transactions. Many of these intra-group transactions that were registered via notaries were conflictual, but many were not. The Sephardim went to notaries to record, among other things, freight contracts and partnerships with other Sephardim, so there is a strong enough basis to assert that I have recorded, via the notarial archives, a valid representation of overall trends in trade interactions.

Local and regional setting is important for the study of notarial documents, and they must be viewed, if at all possible, in the context of other documentation, such as personal or religious documentation. Clearly, researchers can only understand certain notarial deeds if such deeds are placed within the context of the merchants’ account

books, letters, religious community documentation (such as charitable institutions, decrees, etc.), and other governmental documentation. Moreover, in the case of recording and proving that merchants of differing backgrounds, such as the Sephardim and their Dutch associates, had very real and often long-lasting economic ties to each other (contrary to the conclusions of most traditional historiography) I would have welcomed such supplemental sources but they were not necessary. The notarial sources offered the best way to record the economic transactions between these actors.

Historiography

Merchants, whether part of a diaspora or a network, had to grapple with the high-risk environment of trade in the early modern period.¹⁷ A merchant and his goods could encounter numerous problems, including cargos that were damaged or delayed, shipwrecks, piracy, and myriad other problems. Communication between markets was slow, and so a merchant's cargo of a product that had been in high demand one year could be next to worthless when it finally arrived in port the next year. Thus, information was paramount to the conduct of trade in the early modern period and it became important for a merchant shipping to a distant locale to have a partner or a trusted correspondent there to monitor market conditions, and to receive and ship goods. Of course, it was essential that this person be trustworthy and credible. Moreover, with war raging in various parts of the European continent and in Europe's overseas territories, the risks to merchants increased.

Besides these very real perils, the institutional framework for contract enforcement was relatively weak. A constantly underlying threat was that another merchant would default on a loan, refuse to honor a bill of exchange, abscond with goods or money, or fail to deliver promised merchandise or services, any of which could severely jeopardize a merchant's economic position or even drive him to bankruptcy. Recourse to institutions for contract enforcement could be uncertain

¹⁷ Much of the following description of the nature of risk in early modern trade is drawn from Peter Mathias, "Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period," in C. Lesger and L. Noordegraaf, eds., *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times. Merchants and Industrialists within the Orbit of the Dutch Staple Market* (The Hague: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995), 5–24.

and costly. In short, a peaceful, well-ordered environment in which to conduct business was lacking.

Due to these sorts of risks, a high premium was placed on trust engendered by personal knowledge of the other merchant, especially familiarity based on kinship or shared religion, ethnicity, and/or nationality. This idea is emphasized recurrently throughout the historiography, regardless of whether the work in question deals with trade in the early modern period, in general, or with specific merchants groups such as Quakers, Jews, Scots, and Armenians, to name only a few.¹⁸ The risk inherent in dealing with unknown individuals helps to explain why traders restricted much of their business dealings to their own kind. This risk was mitigated, historians explain, by the social control and formal and informal sanctions exerted by family members and/or members of the same ethno-religious or national group.¹⁹ The knowledge of personal character and trustworthiness built up over the course of individual commercial transactions was, historians believe, crucial to maintaining a well-run business and this knowledge could

¹⁸ It is not possible to cite everything that has been written about these groups, but for an overview of the historiography relating to them see the following works: Jacob M. Price, "The great Quaker business families of eighteenth-century London: the rise and fall of a sectarian patriciate" and "English Quaker merchants and the war at sea, 1689–1783" in his *Overseas Trade and Traders: Essays on Some Commercial, Financial, and Political Challenges Facing British Atlantic Merchants, 1600–1775* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), Chapters 3 and 4; Daniel M. Swetschinski, "Kinship and Commerce: The Foundations of Portuguese Jewish Life in Seventeenth-Century Holland," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15, 1 (1981): 52–75; Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603–1746* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); in addition to Michel Aghassian and Keram Kevonian, "The Armenian Merchant Network: Overall Autonomy and Local Integration," in *Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era*, Sushil Chaudhury and Michel Morineau, eds. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 74–94, and Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlafits, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglau, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Vahé Baladouni and Margaret Makepeace, eds., *Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: English East India Company Sources* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1998).

¹⁹ Avner Grief discusses the role of social sanctions in what he terms "collectivist" societies. See, in particular, Avner Greif, "Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society: A Historical and Theoretical Reflection on Collectivist and Individualist Societies," *Journal of Political Economy* 102, 5 (1994): 912–950 and "Impersonal Exchange and the Origins of Markets: From the Community Responsibility System to Individual Legal Responsibility in Pre-modern Europe," in Masahiko Aoki and Yujiro Hayami, eds., *Communities and Markets in Economic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–41.

most easily be gained through webs of shared relations.²⁰ A merchant had to behave in a trustworthy and honorable fashion; if he did not, his family and friends would come to know of it and, in addition to facing social, economic, and, possibly, religious sanctions, he would be socially stigmatized. Moreover, objectionable behavior could bring his family and friends into disrepute. If merchant's behavior became too offensive he could be cut off from his support network.

Trade in the early modern period was based upon the principle of reciprocity. A merchant who did a favor or a service for someone could (and usually would) expect his action to be reciprocated, although favors were also sometimes given so as to enhance a merchant's reputation and prestige. Knowledge of a merchant's partners and his trust in these partners, fostered an interdependency among them that was a basic condition for trading. Stable and long-lasting networks based on personal knowledge of a fellow merchant (or of his acquaintances) were viewed as a risk reduction strategy.

A family provided partners, capital, information, and the structure of business ventures. Kinship helped form a bond which held individuals and families in numerous interrelated enterprises. A merchant often preferred trading with relatives, not least because they were the people he knew best. Likewise, a merchant could wield some degree of control over his family associates by sanctions within the family structure by which he could enforce business commitments, should doing so become necessary. As one historian has explained, "Family-based networks built on trust among partners are thought to have supplied the most effective governance structure as a solution to principal/agent problems and curbing agency and transaction costs."²¹

Trade within a family group or within families connected by marriage was thus a risk reduction and networking strategy. A merchant and his family cemented alliances with other families who shared business interests. Indeed, historians generally hold that for trade in the early modern world the most significant factor at play was kinship. Daniel Swetschinski even asserts that, "In sum, kinship constituted the

²⁰ John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, "Introduction," in John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, eds., *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–15, 4.

²¹ Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, "Introduction," in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, xviii–xxii, xx.

foundation of early modern commerce.”²² And, it is true, joining one’s family’s business meant that a merchant already had knowledge of the trade, had already-established clients, customers, and suppliers, and held the confidence and trust from these clients, customers, and suppliers that years, if not generations, of continuity in business would have built up. Moreover, entry into a guild or trading company often depended on family recommendations or relations, and such memberships were generally vital to success in a trade. An extension of these family networks was religious networks.

Price, Bailyn, and other scholars who have looked at the importance of kinship and ethno-religiosity for groups such as the Quakers base their research on careful examinations of available archives. Likewise, scholars such as Swetschinski, Israel, Rèvah, and the many others who have examined Sephardic trade networks have found ample evidence for kinship-based trading networks. As concerns the Portuguese diaspora and its new Christian sub-group, trade relations between kin were of great importance.²³ Moreover, family members often married to the second degree (cousins), according to Jewish custom, even if they were not practicing Jews or crypto-Jews. Thanks to these ties, it was possible to maintain wealth and resources within an extended family group. The Amsterdam Sephardic merchants shared with one another transportation costs, insurance risks, and information about how to circumvent whatever obstacles came their way.²⁴ Thus, the generally accepted view in the historiography of early modern trade that networks based upon family and kinship were vital to the conduct of trade is undoubtedly based in fact. Yet, in the case of the new Christian trade networks that scholars have examined for decades, much of the evidence is in fact rather superficially based on genealogical relationships and family members’ geographic locations. Contrary to what many works on new Christian trade networks implicitly assume, just because an uncle was in Brazil does not mean that his nephew necessarily traded with him most of the time, or even traded with him at all. Moreover, conclusions bolstering the primacy of kinship-based commerce are often based on one or two contracts or letters rather than on any systematic examination of a merchant’s entire trading pattern.

²² Swetschinski, “Kinship and Commerce,” 58–59.

²³ The Portuguese diaspora will be discussed further in Chapter II.

²⁴ Daniel Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000), 159–160.

There has been a tendency for scholars of diaspora groups to be seduced by the seemingly uncomplicated story of trust, social control, and reputation enforcement that kinship and ethno-religiously-based trade networks in diaspora groups so neatly offer. It seems to have been lost that the reality of trading networks and how they functioned was far more nuanced than any simple equation of diaspora group plus trade equals social control and economic success. Historians have expected to find examples that evidence the primacy of kinship and ethno-religiously based trade in the sources, and have thus ignored or relegated to footnotes instances of inter-cultural trade that do not fit their orderly preconceptions of how trade worked in the early modern period. Indeed, the historiography reviewed earlier does not seem to offer an explanation as to why the Sephardic merchants of Amsterdam, specifically Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, also set up efficient trade networks by incorporating Dutch merchants. This point is generally ignored both by historians working on new Christian trade and by historians of early modern trade.

This is not to say that no historians have challenged these traditional historiographical assumptions about the conduct of trade in the early modern period. Newer perspectives have begun to emerge that, even if they do not outright challenge these notions, at least provide greater nuance to how trade is perceived. It is within these emerging challenges to the prevailing historiography that this work is situated.

There were always relations between different groups in the medieval and early modern world. By the late middle ages, at least as far as economic contact was concerned, Talmudic proscriptions (on Jewish-gentile contact) were almost completely ignored by Jewish communities in Western Europe, including Iberia. Jewish communities were no longer self-sufficient, and business dealings of all sorts brought Jews and non-Jews into contact. Jews employed non-Jews as servants and as their agents in transferring money, wares, and commodities. As Jacob Katz writes, "For a Jew to be obliged to stay overnight in the house of a gentile or to eat a meal there was not, perhaps, an everyday occurrence; on the other hand, it was not entirely out of the ordinary. In this way business connections facilitated social contact."²⁵ Furthermore,

²⁵ Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 38–39.

any disruption in contact with non-Jews could have had major economic repercussions.²⁶

As the middle ages yielded to the early modern period, the relationship between Jew and non-Jew which had prevailed in the medieval period began to shift. Contacts between Jews and non-Jews increased in frequency and in kind. The sort of contact common in the middle ages, which had been mostly between merchant and customer or between borrower and lender, began to evolve into a more complex relationship. Jews could now invest their money in various undertakings, and this brought them into contact with growing numbers of non-Jews. Investment of capital also opened doors for Jews to find new service niches.²⁷

It was widely accepted among Jews that trade was ruled by a vaguely defined and understood but commonly accepted set of merchant practices, and could not always be subject to Jewish religious law.²⁸ Benjamin Arbel, in his study of Jews and Venetians in the early modern period, notes that Jews frequently resorted to Venetian courts of law to settle disputes, engaged non-Jews to arbitrate their disputes, used the same financial and commercial instruments as non-Jewish merchants, and were involved in shipping and public finance.²⁹ Such observations would seem to indicate that Venetians and Jews operated in the same way, had a common language of communication, and were in constant contact, both on Venetian soil and abroad. According to Arbel, the Jewish merchants in Venice spent the greater part of their days outside the Ghetto, in their warehouses at Rialto, at the Rialto banks, in the offices of the Venetian state, on Venetian vessels, and, in all likelihood, in the homes of Venetian citizens and patricians.³⁰ Even inside the Ghetto, contacts with non-Jews were not infrequent. Arbel's work centers on the Venetian Jew Hayyim Saruq, who had Venetian, Florentine, Ferrarese, and Dalmatian business associates. Saruq also had business connections with Jewish and non-Jewish partners in Constantinople, Ancona, and Salò, and imported from the Ottoman Empire wool, leather, camlets, and alum. He conducted credit opera-

²⁶ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 29–30.

²⁷ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 156.

²⁸ Aryeh Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 129.

²⁹ Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 190–191.

³⁰ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 190–191.

tions, issued powers of attorney, attended arbitrations, and acquired bonds of the *Grand Parti* of Lyons, the banking organization that provided credit to the French crown.³¹ It is also significant that Saruq employed a Christian bookkeeper in the Ghetto.³²

Arbel believes that the basic nature of trade is contact between different “worlds.”³³ The last seems highly plausible, especially in view of the presence of the new Christians, who blurred to some extent the strong link with Jewish religion, and enabled members of this “modern” cosmopolitan group to feel at home among Jews and Christians alike.³⁴ Seen in this light, the practice of commerce is, essentially, to be in constant contact with others of the same occupation, all of which leads to inter-cultural exchange.

Raymond Fagel, in his study of Spanish merchants, notes the same process. He writes that,

In order to function properly as an international merchant, one needed furthermore a broader network of merchants from all parts of the European market. On the one hand, these could be members of the kind and city group, but this kind of cohesion was never enough to make a commercial network prosper. The merchant needed to take part in other networks as well. This meant not so much including other merchants of the same nation, for they would have been competitors, but it meant looking for merchants further away.³⁵

This view is shared by David Hancock, who concentrates on the production, circulation, and consumption of Madeira wine in the early modern period. Hancock asserts that “important ties that bound people together across imperial boundaries and transformed a collection of independent operatives and operations into a resilient commercial infrastructure.”³⁶ Most importantly, Hancock points to the fact that Madeira’s successful trading houses “had to go beyond the base

³¹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 100.

³² Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 159.

³³ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 190–191.

³⁴ Brian S. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice 1550–1670* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 176–177.

³⁵ Raymond Fagel, “Spanish Merchants in the Low Countries: Stabilitas Loci or Peregrination?” in Peter Stabel, Bruno Blondé, and Anke Greve, eds., *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure* (Garant: Leuven, 2000), 87–104, 103.

³⁶ David Hancock, “The Emergence of an Atlantic Network Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Case of Madeira,” in Diogo Ramada Curto and Anthony Molho, eds., *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, 18–58, 22.

of family, kin, and ethnic relations to more extended personal and business relations.”³⁷

The historian Maria Fusaro has also examined the interactions between different groups in the early modern world. Her research concerns commercial networks in the Venetian Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on the interaction between Greek and English merchants, and she emphasizes the complex identity of early modern merchants. For example, Fusaro writes about Anglo-Greek and Greco-Venetian entrepreneurs, whose activities served to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps between groups of merchants in the islands of the Ionian Sea.³⁸ She describes the ways in which the different networks of trade collaborated as well as competed.

Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, like Fusaro, also looks at the heterogeneous nature of networks. He writes that the Portuguese merchants “knit together their networks on a different basis than that posited by neo-classical economic analysis and utilitarian social theory. Interdependence and mutualism defined and created these networks.”³⁹ Studnicki-Gizbert believes that the religious affiliation of Portuguese merchants, including the new Christians, was heterogeneous and fluid, and he offers the important observation that the Portuguese commercial networks included old Christians and those of mixed new and old Christian ancestry.⁴⁰ Because these traders came from a diverse set of cultural, religious, and regional backgrounds, they were not only a heterogeneous group but also a group that was open to the bridging of geographic and social distance in the formation of their business relationships.⁴¹ Adherence to Judaism, for example, was not widespread enough to completely undergird the webs of sociability that bound merchant to merchant.⁴²

³⁷ Hancock, “The Emergence of an Atlantic Network Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Case of Madeira,” 31.

³⁸ Maria Fusaro, “Commercial Networks of Cooperation in the Venetian Mediterranean: The English and the Greeks, a Case Study,” in Ramada Curto and Molho, eds., *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, 121–147. Interestingly, she notes that these groups do not necessarily follow the same pattern in their organization or behavior.

³⁹ Quoted in Ramada Curto and Molho, “Introduction,” *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, 9.

⁴⁰ Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71, 73.

⁴¹ Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 68.

⁴² Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 70.

Henriette de Bruyn Kops's recent monograph on the wine and brandy trade between France and the Dutch Republic between 1600 and 1650 underscores the importance of the interconnecting personal networks of Dutch, Sephardic Jewish, and new Christian merchants in Europe. She devotes an entire chapter to the Sephardic role in the trade in spirits.⁴³ De Bruyn Kops focuses her study not on Amsterdam, as is the norm for research touching upon the Sephardim, but, rather, on Rotterdam, where "the extensive networks of the Dutch and Sephardim...were so much intertwined that in many case it is unclear if we are dealing with gentile or Jewish merchants."⁴⁴ Moreover, as de Bruyn Kops explains, "[there was] a rational, multinational, and above all symbiotic collaboration between Christian, new Christian, and Sephardic Jewish communities."⁴⁵

Francesca Trivellato goes beyond the analysis of a specific network or diaspora group and instead analyzes cross-cultural merchant networks of three different sets of eighteenth-century merchants—Jews in Livorno, Italians in Lisbon, and Hindus in Goa. She hopes to understand "durable commercial relations," especially among groups who were members of "mercantile communities of different ethnic and religious origins."⁴⁶ Her analysis offers several conclusions about the workings of a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, inter-continental network of private merchants. She concludes that, in order to function, such a cross-cultural network "needed to be tightly connected, vast in its geographical breadth, and long-lived."⁴⁷ Likewise, she posits that, as with the merchants studied by Studnicki-Gizbert, the most important commodity available to merchants within the network was one's reputation, a commodity that circulated within the network thanks to the frequent and regular correspondence exchanged between its members.⁴⁸ Interestingly, she writes that "the adjective 'cross-cultural' is itself problematic, because it presumes that more or less clear boundaries

⁴³ Henriette de Bruyn Kops, *A Spirited Exchange: The Wine and Brandy Trade between France and the Dutch Republic in its Atlantic Framework, 1600–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), Chapter 5, 244–298.

⁴⁴ de Bruyn Kops, *A Spirited Exchange*, 287.

⁴⁵ de Bruyn Kops, *A Spirited Exchange*, 298.

⁴⁶ Francesca Trivellato, "Jews of Leghorn, Italians of Lisbon, and Hindus of Goa: Merchant Networks and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period," in Ramada Curto and Molho, eds., *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, 59–89.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Ramada Curto and Molho, eds., "Introduction," 10.

⁴⁸ Ramada Curto and Molho, eds., "Introduction," 10.

between ‘cultures’ can be traced, thus obliterating internal diversity and conflict and assuming fixity over time”⁴⁹ These ideas are an exciting contribution to the study of how groups interacted with one another and formed durable, trust-based relationships during a time when overarching political and judicial institutions could not enforce contracts.

These scholars are not alone in identifying the important element of inter-group or inter-cultural trade. Even Daniel Swetschinski, the staunch proponent of the primacy of kinship relations in trade, has recognized that no network could operate without including “others.” As Swetschinski notes, “[We cannot] deny the importance of other [non-Sephardic] merchants appearing on the scene, for example the agents and commissioners representing some of the major merchant-banking houses of Lisbon or Antwerp; their relation to their firms was frequently not one of kinship.”⁵⁰ He asserts that the interdependence of the entire new Christian diaspora cannot be taken for granted and lists some of Manoel Rodrigues Vega’s Dutch partners.⁵¹

Historians have often assumed, as this review of the historiography has shown, that a sort of familial and kinship conspiracy became established among Sephardic traders in the early modern period.⁵² Family ties, shared socio-ethnic background, and religion are viewed as the basis for the formation of efficient, successful trade networks during this time.⁵³ Jonathan Israel attributes the commercial success

⁴⁹ Quoted in Ramada Curto and Molho, eds., “Introduction,” 11.

⁵⁰ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 159–160.

⁵¹ Daniel Swetschinski, “The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: A Social Profile,” unpublished dissertation, Brandeis University, 1980, 2 volumes, Volume 2, 736, note 56 for Rodrigues Vega’s contracts with Dutch and other non-new Christian, non-Sephardic merchants. However, Swetschinski underestimates the importance of economic relationships with these partners and collaborators.

⁵² There are numerous books and articles that reinforce this point, including the collection of articles in Jaime Contreras, Bernardo J. García García, and Ignacio Pulido, eds., *Familia, Religión y Negocio: El sefardismo en las relaciones entre el mundo ibérico y los Países Bajos en la Edad Moderna* (Alcalá: Fundación Carlos Amberes, 2002); Gérard Nahon, “The Portuguese Jewish Nation of Saint-Esprit-Lès Bayonne: The American Dimension,” in Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 255–267; and the works of José Gonçalves Salvador, particularly: *Os cristãos-novos e o comércio no Atlântico Meridional: com enfoque nas capitâneas do sul 1530–1680* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1978) and *Os magnatas do tráfico negreiro (Séculos XVI–XVII)* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1981).

⁵³ The historiography on the importance of familial and religious ties for early modern trade networks is enormous. Some of the major works are: Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955); Peter Mathias, “Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in

of the new Christians in early modern Europe to “The confidence, trust in trading partners of the same community, and the systematic reduction...of transaction costs....generated by...a religiously and culturally close-knit, international community.”⁵⁴ In this same vein, Swetschinski has written, concerning the Sephardim of Amsterdam, that “Commerce and kinship appear linked like the chicken and the egg.”⁵⁵ Indeed, new Christian networks based on kinship were essential for the commercial success of these traders, many of whom were scattered along the nodes of the expanding European trading routes.

As the existing literature shows, there is no doubt that the Sephardim in Amsterdam between 1595 and 1640 maintained extensive social networks that extended throughout Europe, West Africa, the Americas, and into Asia. They generally practiced endogamous marriage, and formed social, charitable, and religious organizations based upon their religion and ethnicity. Yet, these social networks formed within the new Christian diaspora were not wholly synonymous with their economic networks, which included non-new Christian, non-Jewish merchants. In other words, unlike what many commentators on trade in the early modern period assert, and as the following chapters will show, the social networks to which the Sephardim in Amsterdam (and the new Christians elsewhere) belonged were not co-extensive with their economic relationships, especially among the wealthiest group of merchants who did not trade exclusively or even primarily with fellow Sephardim in Amsterdam.

Heretofore, it has been taken as a given that the new Christians in the early modern period were successful because they were able to engender from their family members and those who shared their ethno-religious background the trust necessary to work successfully in the unstable trading environment of the early modern economy. However, such an analysis is based upon superficial descriptions of the geographical and genealogical relationships between these new

the Early Modern Period”; Leos Müller, “The Role of the Merchant Network: A Case History of two Swedish Trading Houses, 1650–1800,” in Lesger and Noordegraaf, eds., *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times*, 147–163; Leos Müller, *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm, c. 1640–1800: A Comparative Study of Early Modern Entrepreneurial Behaviour* (Upsala: Upsala University Press, 1998).

⁵⁴ Jonathan I. Israel, “Introduction,” in Jonathan I. Israel, ed., *Diasporas Within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires (1540–1740)* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1–39, 2.

⁵⁵ Swetschinski, “Kinship and Commerce,” 73.

Christians. There has been a lack of quantitative investigation into the extent of the economic and social relationships between the Sephardim in Amsterdam from 1595 to 1640, a lack that I seek to remedy in this research.

Approach

The petition mentioned previously very clearly states that the Amsterdam merchants were petitioning for their fellow merchants of the “Portuguese Nation.” This work will likewise focus specifically on the Portuguese new Christians. After the initial expulsion from Spain, the Spanish and the Portuguese Jews and new Christians followed different paths, literally and figuratively.⁵⁶ They certainly maintained some familial and commercial connections, but were often, though not exclusively, involved in different networks.

The choice of these three merchants as case studies was inspired by Leos Müller’s *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm, c. 1640–1800*, in which Müller chose families that were easily comparable, with his precondition for meaningful comparison being that the cases compared were to some degree similar but at the same time different.⁵⁷ Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio fit this precondition well. They were similar in that they were all active and wealthy merchants with global connections, who were based in Amsterdam between 1595 and 1640. However, there were significant differences between them which illustrate the complexities of entrepreneurial behavior. Moreover, due to the complicated nature of Sephardic and new Christian identity in the early modern period, I chose merchants who represented the varying strands of religious expression. Lastly, because new Christian migration was so varied, I chose these merchants, in part, because they migrated from different places to the Dutch Republic.

I chose Manoel Rodrigues Vega because he was active in the Dutch Republic in the study’s chronology. However, I also selected him because he had migrated to Amsterdam from Antwerp, where his family had been prominent merchants for several generations, as

⁵⁶ I will discuss the background of the expulsion from Spain and the forced conversion in Portugal in more detail in Chapters I and II.

⁵⁷ Müller, *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm*, 16.

part of the Portuguese Factory. These migrants from Antwerp, especially those who maintained economic and social ties to Antwerp, were an important but under-studied group of Sephardic migrants to Amsterdam, and so I sought a merchant who was representative of this migration stream for inclusion in the study. Choosing a merchant strongly tied to the Antwerp networks of Portuguese “old” and “new” Christians would allow for comparison with the behavior of other Sephardic merchants involved in various networks and who behaved and identified in different ways religiously and culturally.

This logic of “same but different” also applied to my choice of Manoel Carvalho, a new Christian merchant who had been active in the Dutch Republic, roughly between 1595 and 1640. Carvalho, however, migrated to Amsterdam from the Portuguese colony of Brazil, itself another under-studied Sephardic migration stream to Amsterdam. I could compare and contrast Carvalho’s colonial networks to the other merchants’ more European-based networks. Thus, I could compare the ways he utilized his network contacts, and the sorts of networks with which he was involved, with Sephardic merchants who had migrated from other places and who were more (or less) involved in open Jewish life.

My selection of Bento Osorio was based, in part, on the criteria of migration in addition to the condition of having been active in Amsterdam as a prominent Sephardic merchant during the chronology of the study. Osorio typifies the much studied stream of Sephardic migration to the Dutch Republic, a stream that originated in Portugal. These migrants, like Osorio, came directly to Amsterdam from cities such as Lisbon and Porto. Due to these similarities and differences, I could compare and contrast Osorio’s networks with those of merchants such as Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho who migrated from places other than Portugal. Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho could have worked with different networks or worked within networks in different ways.

Although I would have preferred to employ a completely random sampling method of the available archival documentation rather than utilizing the somewhat subjective manner by which I chose these merchants, such a sampling was not possible for this study. As Leos Müller discovered in his own work, a vital criterion for choosing either an individual merchant or a group of merchants for a study is the amount of archival material available. So, one criteria for selecting these merchants was that there had to be enough preserved archival material (“enough” being defined as \pm 100 documents relating to

a particular merchant) to look into a merchant's economic interactions with some degree of depth. Randomly choosing a Sephardic merchant for whom there were only twenty or so preserved records would hardly have yielded the amount of information necessary for this sort of in-depth study.

There were other elite global Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam during the chronology under consideration.⁵⁸ These merchants would almost certainly have behaved in similar ways regarding inter-cultural trade as did Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio. Had I studied these other merchants for this book, the precise percentages for the sorts of trade in which they were engaged may have been somewhat different, though the overall picture would have been largely the same. In this sense, the choice of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio was random from within the pool of global and elite merchants for whom there was at least 100 documents available. And it is at this juncture that the more ineffable qualities of migratory origins I described earlier came into play in choosing merchants to study for this book.

Essentially, in seeking to gain insights into the complexity of the lives and strategies of Sephardic merchants and their risk reduction strategies, I have chosen to analyze the specific partnerships of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio and their networks of relatives, business partners, and correspondents in Amsterdam rather than focusing on a single Sephardic community. I chose Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio because they exemplified many characteristics of elite new Christian merchants of the time. Such merchants were migrants, often born in Portugal but who, as cross-community migrants, lived most or all of their lives abroad, often in various lands. Moreover, they were, as will be discussed below, wealthy and successful. These merchants belonged to what historian Cátia Antunes defines as “global players,” namely, merchants who “had enough financial support to pursue their goals and were therefore able to bypass social links and replace or add new economic connections.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Other such merchants included Lopo Ramires, Manuel Dias Henriques, James Lopes da Costa, Diego Dias Querido, Jeronimo Rodrigues de Sousa, Garcia Gomes Vitoria, Diogo Nunes Belmonte, Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homen, Garcia Pimentel, Duarte Fernandes, Francisco Pinto de Brito, Samuel Pallache, and Estevão Cardoso, to name just a few.

⁵⁹ Cátia Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period: The Economic Relationship Between Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640–1705* (Aksant: Amsterdam, 2004), 129.

It was important for me to select merchants who had been successful, and this was a major consideration in choosing Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio as center points for this study. Had successful merchants based their networks upon loose ties with associates from varying groups instead of solely on tightly-knit networks of relatives, friends, and co-religionists, then I could challenge the traditional historiography of early modern trade. However, it is difficult to narrow down what constituted success for an early modern merchant. Certainly, material wealth would have been an important component of success. But wealth could come and go in the early modern period, just as it can today. Moreover, measuring wealth for merchants is difficult at best. Records are spotty and serial data are lacking. Therefore, I needed to incorporate other elements to the definition of success. Those elements were, first, a global geographical reach, because merchants with a wide-ranging area of business interests could be assumed to have more resources at their disposal. Second, the merchants needed to be integrative. Integrating products, regions, and networks set successful merchants apart from other merchants who were less able to integrate, and demonstrated substantial wherewithal. Lastly, a merchant had to be innovative. He had to grab opportunities, seize chances, and take risks. Many merchants may have shown one or more of these characteristics, as well as having had the ability to bypass standing social links. Likewise, most merchants sought to maximize their profits, whether in the short or the long term. However, it is all these characteristics in combination with one another that, for the purposes of this book, define a successful merchant, or, in other words, a global player.

This book will endeavor to see if these merchants—Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio—traded more or less frequently with fellow Sephardim than did the overall group of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. If these successful global merchants traded as much or more with other Sephardic merchants within intra-group networks, then it would seem that traditional historiography is correct and that the theory of loose ties is not applicable to the Sephardim in Amsterdam in the early part of the seventeenth century. If, however, these global merchants traded more frequently outside the Sephardic networks, then the historiography needs to be revisited and loose ties can be shown to have increased the efficiency of trade works.

Unfortunately, the available data does not reveal how much (or if) these relationships and associations between Sephardic and Dutch

merchants transcended the purely mercantile, such as if they went to the theater together, dined together, or gambled together. I have no way of measuring if friendship, at least in the way we view such a concept today, existed between Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio and their Dutch associates. I acknowledge that there is a central tension and contradiction between the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associates' similarities and differences, that is, between ascribed difference and the merchants' own sense of internal solidarity, especially the Sephardim's sense of "nationhood." For instance, both the new Christian merchants and their Dutch associates were the same in their endogamous marriage strategies. Yet this similarity in how they chose marriage partners also reinforced self- and ascriptive identities which cemented differences between these same merchants.

Such tensions and contradictions cannot be resolved in this work. However, I can note the similarities and the differences between the merchants and conjecture about perceptions based on affiliations and identity. Although the available evidence may be scanty, I can propose and suggest explanations for why the trade networks of these merchants were configured in the way the sources show they were. I can also suggest avenues for further research and attempt to prove empirically that economic and socio-ethnic networks were not equivalent, and that intra-group networks were not the only, or even the most important, factor for economic success. It could well be that the tension and contradiction between similarity and difference cannot be resolved because these tensions and contradictions were the experienced historical reality of the merchants.

Methods

The locus of this book is trade relations between individuals, because these trade relations are much easier to measure, especially quantitatively, than are social interactions. Although Chapter VI will discuss the role of a particular group of Sephardim, their Dutch associates, and governmental institutions, the main focus will remain individual interactions and networks. As such, I consciously ignore the debate, ignited by Douglas C. North, about institutional evolution and the performance of economies.⁶⁰ Instead, I examine the trade interactions

⁶⁰ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); "Institutions," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*,

between the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associations both descriptively and statistically. I analyze and describe certain inter-cultural trade networks, and I employ statistical methods to round out the narrative accounts of specific networks. I reviewed a sample of 1317 records of Sephardim in Amsterdam, of which 608 pertained to Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and/or Bento Osorio. The rest of the records—709, to be exact—concerned other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. These records were classified in one of four ways: 1) Sephardic (abbreviated as “S” in charts and graphs in this study), meaning that only one merchant is mentioned in the document or contract and that he is Sephardic; 2) Sephardic-Sephardic (abbreviated as “S/S” in charts and graphs in this study), meaning that two or more merchants were mentioned in the document or contract and that they were all Sephardim (this is also termed an intra-cultural interaction); 3) Sephardic-Dutch (abbreviated as “S/D”), meaning that one Sephardic merchant was named in the document or contract and that he was working with one or more Dutch merchants (this is also termed an inter-cultural interaction or relationship); and 4) Sephardic-Sephardic-Dutch (abbreviated as “S/S/D”), meaning that there were two or more Sephardic merchants named in the document working with one or more Dutch merchants. This is what I have dubbed an integrated network relationship. Although this configuration is also without a doubt inter-cultural, it was important to distinguish these sorts of associations from purely Sephardic-Dutch interactions because they demonstrate the integration of networks and illustrate how loose ties between agents within a network functioned.

5, 1 (1991): 97–112; “Institutions, Transaction Costs, and the Rise of Merchant Empires,” in J.D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and with Robert P. Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); See also, K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); “The English East India Company’s Shipping,” in Jaap R. Bruijn and Femme S. Gaastra, eds., *Ships, Sailors and Spices: East India Companies and Their Shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief, 1993), 49–80; See also the work of Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and *Contract Enforcement and Institutions Among the Maghribi Traders: Refuting Edwards and Ogilvie*. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1153826>.

The vast majority of the records used to create this analysis, as well as for the study as a whole, came from the Card Index of the Notarial Archive at the Amsterdam Municipal Archives. A supplement to these notarial sources were the notarial records (from 1595 through 1627) relating to the Sephardim in Amsterdam that had been translated into English and reprinted in *Studia Rosenthaliana*.⁶¹ In addition to these sources, freight contracts pertaining to the Baltic that had been transcribed from the notaries Jan Franssen Bruyningh and Jacob Meerhout, while not specifically relating to the Sephardim, included contracts involving Sephardic merchants and were employed in this study.⁶²

Terminology

I will not use the term “Jew” or “Jewish” except to refer to a person or group known to be practicing Judaism. For the purposes of this book, I utilize David Graizbord’s definition that, “‘Being Jewish’ and hence ‘becoming Jewish’ means consciously embracing rabbinic Judaism within a social setting, however imperfectly, as a way of life.”⁶³ Readers cannot assume that all, or even most, new Christians were practicing or believing Jews during the chronology covered in this study. Moreover, readers should not take for granted that all those of Jewish descent were “crypto-Jews”—a term used to denote people who secretly observed rituals and beliefs so as to continue practicing Judaism when it was not legally permitted. No doubt some new Christians were crypto-Jews, but by no means all. I will discuss these issues at greater length in Chapter I.

Instead, I will use the term “new Christian” when referring to those of Jewish descent from Portugal (and Spain) when outside the Dutch Republic and not living in an area where they were permitted to openly practice Judaism. For example, I will refer to the new Christians

⁶¹ “Notarial Records relating to the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam before 1639,” (hereafter known as SR) in *Studia Rosenthaliana: tijdschrift voor joodse wetenschap en geschiedenis in Nederland* (University of Amsterdam, University Library, Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, 1967–2001).

⁶² *Amsterdamse bevrachtingscontracten, wisselprotesten en bodemerijen van de notarissen Jan Franssen Bruyningh, Jacob Meerhout*, 4 volumes, Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicaties (RGP) 1593–1625, P.H. Winkelman, ed. (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1977–1983), RGP’s 183–186.

⁶³ David Graizbord, “Becoming Jewish in Early Modern France: Documents on Jewish Community-Building in Seventeenth-Century Bayonne and Peyrehorade,” *Journal of Social History* 40, 1 (Fall 2006): 147–180, 147.

in Bordeaux because, no matter what various merchants there may have believed or practiced in secret, they were not allowed to be openly Jewish during the period covered in this book. In contrast, I will refer to the Sephardim in Venice because Judaism could be practiced there, and the vast majority of merchants of Jewish descent did, in fact, openly practice Judaism in this city. The term “new Christian” was used, mostly in Portugal though also in Spain, to denote those who were “new” to Christianity because of baptism, forced or otherwise. “New Christians” later became a separate legal and ethnic group in Portugal. I chose to employ the term “new Christian” rather than “Jew” to avoid the ambiguity and inaccuracy inherent in speculating on the religious beliefs and expressions of historical personages. I also chose “new Christian” rather than the broader “Sephardim” unless, as noted previously, the community as a whole was allowed the open practice of Judaism.

The term “new Christian” best encompassed the range of backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences of the merchants I examine in this book. However, I refer to the community within Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic as the “Sephardim” or the “Sephardic community” because this community was able to practice Judaism relatively openly soon after the arrival of the first merchants of new Christian descent in the city. These people of new Christian ancestry are commonly known, in the historiography, as the Sephardic community of Amsterdam, regardless of their personal beliefs. To refer to this as the “new Christian” community in Amsterdam, however accurate such reference might be, would be confusing and jarring to readers, especially because the merchants I analyze in this book were at least peripherally or marginally affiliated (even if only by association with others) with the budding Jewish community in the city. Etymologically, the term “Sephardim” comes from *Sephard*, meaning Spain in Medieval Hebrew. Thus, the terms “Sephardim,” “Sephardic Jews,” and “Sephardic Diaspora,” in their broadest sense, denote Jews and Christians of Iberian Jewish descent. Nonetheless, in both scholarly and popular discourse these terms have come to refer only to Jews of Iberian descent. Therefore, as mentioned previously, I use the term Sephardim when referring to communities in which open practice of Judaism was tolerated. Other commonly used terms, in both scholarly and popular discourse, are *converso*, which means “converted” and was used mostly in Spain, and *marrano*, a derogatory term, also used mostly in Spain, that referred to those of Jewish descent.

I use “Spain” and “Spanish” as shorthand terms in order to avoid the unwieldy naming of the territories of Andalusia, Catalonia, Castile-Leon, Aragon, Asturias, Valencia, Galicia, and Navarre which comprise present-day Spain. Granted, it is not altogether accurate to refer to this geographical entity as a unified whole, but during the period I am examine in this book the “Castilianization” of Spain was well underway. As such, it is not entirely inaccurate either. Clearly, there were some differences in these territories’ respective policies toward Jews and new Christians, but, for the purposes of this study, such differences are minor enough to be overlooked.

Similarly, talking about “Dutch” merchants during this period is not entirely accurate. The Dutch Republic was, at the time, a loosely-grouped federation of provinces rebelling against the Habsburg monarchy. Furthermore, many of the merchants I discuss in this book were actually from the southern Netherlands and would, therefore, probably more accurately be described as Flemish. Nevertheless, in order to avoid endlessly tiresome qualifications, I will use the term “Dutch merchants” as shorthand for merchants from the Low Countries (including the southern Low Countries). I will discuss the idea of Dutch culture and what, if anything, differentiated it from the culture of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam later in this study.

Shopkeepers, artisans, and tradesmen were not generally classified as merchants in the seventeenth century. Although the term “merchant” originally meant any trader in goods that he himself did not manufacture or produce, from the sixteenth century onwards the term became restricted to wholesale traders, especially those who dealt with foreign countries. This is the manner in which I use the term “merchant” in this book.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ <http://dictionary.oed.com>

CHAPTER ONE

INTER-CULTURALITY AND THE SEPHARDIM

There has always been an implicit understanding of cross-cultural interactions and connections, especially with reference to long-distance trade.¹ Despite the rather implicit recognition of cross-cultural trading contacts, historians, except for a few notable exceptions, have focused on intra-group contacts, especially for ethnic minorities. Scholars have only sporadically analyzed the dynamics of these cross-cultural interactions, a lacuna that I seek to address in this book. Yet, it is impossible to look at cross-community migration and the innovations it wrought without defining what constituted such a community. Likewise, it is impracticable to discuss trade relations between merchants as having been inter-cultural until we have delineated the boundaries of what constituted those cultures. The same need for definition and delineation of the borders between groups also holds true for any application of the theory of loose ties, because before we can see how these ties were employed we must know which ties were strong and which were weak. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the new Christians as a distinct group.

This chapter will explore ideas of culture and ethnicity as tools for defining who and what the new Christians were. As part and parcel of this discussion, I seek to explain what the borders of new Christian identity were, especially within the context of the phenomena of crypto-Judaism. Lastly, I will problematize the traditional approach to studying minority merchants in general, and the new Christians specifically, by asserting that historians should study the intersection of cultures and communities rather than particular trading communities in isolation.

¹ Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

The New Christians and the Amsterdam Sephardim—From Jews to Ethnic Group

The term “Sephardim” comes from *Sepharad*, meaning “Spain” in medieval Hebrew. It became a blanket term to denote those of Jewish descent, however distant, whose ancestors came from Iberia before the expulsion of 1492. The term also includes crypto-Jews and their descendents who remained after 1492 and later returned to open practice of Judaism elsewhere in the world.² The Jewish community in Iberia was very old (Jews first settled in the Iberian Peninsula during antiquity) and had been part of the larger Greco-Roman Jewish milieu for centuries. The community had become firmly rooted long before large parts of Iberia came under the religious authority of the Roman church, in the sixth century CE.

Hispanists and scholars of Jewish history have long debated the history of the Jews in medieval Iberia. The debate is generally polarized between two opposing views about the place of Jews in Iberia. One view promotes the idea of Iberian society as having been a model of cross-cultural interaction in all spheres and a beacon of (relative) tolerance.³ The opposing perspective characterizes medieval Iberia as having been riven by conflict rather than cooperation.⁴ Newer historiography tends to look beyond the poles of tolerance and persecution and seeks a more nuanced picture of the Iberian peninsula in the medieval period. This historiography tends to study micro-historical data or to examine individual Jews.⁵ Historical interpretations aside, there were documented outbreaks of violence against Jews and

² The term Sephardim has now become a catch-all term for Jews of non-Ashkenazi origin.

³ This is the view taken by Spanish philologist and historian Américo Castro, whose enormously influential *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1948) helped bring the term *convivencia* into the non-Spanish lexicon.

⁴ Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Américo Castro's life-long critic, was the proponent of this view in his works *España: Un enigma histórico*, 2 volumes (Buenos Aires: Hispano Americana, 1973) and in his *El drama de la formación de España y los españoles* (Barcelona: EDHASA, 1973).

⁵ For example, see D. Nirenberg, “Religious and Sexual Boundaries in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,” in M. Meyerson and E. English, eds., *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1999), 141–60 on a specific “region” of medieval Iberia. For an overview of the debate, see Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 6–13 and Jonathan Ray, “Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval *Convivencia*,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, 2 (Winter 2005): 1–18.

Muslims by Christians in Spain, in 1391. Portugal, however, had not been the scene of outbreaks of violence against Jews until 1449, long after the “re-conquest” of the territory by Christian forces, when there was a large-scale attack on Lisbon’s Jewish quarter. Despite this hostility against the Jewish population of Portugal, there is evidence for the growth of Jewish culture during this same period.⁶

After the expulsion, in 1492, of Jews from the areas of Iberia controlled by Isabella and Ferdinand, many Jews fled to neighboring Portugal. A smaller number made their way to Navarre. Five years later, however, in March 1497, following a decree of expulsion that had never been implemented, King Dom Manoel of Portugal ordered that all Jews in his territories, including Spanish “newcomers” and native Portuguese Jews, be forcibly converted and their goods seized.⁷ After this order, the forcible baptism of Jews began. Those Jews who did not flee were, for the most part, subjected to forced baptism, and

⁶ For example, there are at least thirty surviving Hebrew manuscripts, many of them illuminated, all made in Lisbon during the last decades of the fifteenth century, and about a dozen printed in Portugal between 1487 and 1495. For more information about the Jews in Portugal, see: M. Kayserling, *História dos Judeus em Portugal* trans. Gabriele Borchardt Correa da Silva (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1971); Joaquim Mendes do Remédios, *Os Judeus em Portugal*, Volume I (Coimbra: F. França Amado, 1895); Maria José Pimenta Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XIV* (Lisbon: Guimarães & Ca, 1970); Maria José Pimenta Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, 1981); Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, *Bibliografia Geral Portuguesa*, I, Século XV (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1941); Artur Anselmo, *Origens da Imprensa em Portugal* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nac. Casa da Moeda, 1981); Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, *Les manuscrits hébreux de Lisbonne* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1970); Thérèse Metzger, *Les manuscrits hébreux copiés et décorés à Lisbonne dans les dernières décennies du XV^e siècle* (Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Centro cultural português, 1977); Humberto Carlos Baquero Moreno, “O assalto à Judiaria Grande de Lisboa em Dezembro de 1449,” in *Revista de Ciências do Homem da Universidade de Lourenço Marques* 3, Series A (1970): 5–51.

⁷ The kingdom of Navarre expelled its Jews in 1498. The reasoning behind the forced conversion in Portugal is generally believed to have been Manoel’s quest to marry Princess Isabel of Castile, daughter of the Catholic sovereigns, who stipulated that he must first expel all the Jews. Manoel was expected to ascend the Spanish throne were he to marry Isabel, and she did not want the Jews to be free to return to Spain, thereby undoing the expulsion of 1492. Manoel had issued a decree expelling Jews and Moors (the latter had not been expelled from Spain) in December of 1496, for implementation within ten months. This decree was most likely never meant to be carried out, however. Most historians agree that Manoel wanted to keep the Jews in Portugal and had determined their full integration into a “new” society which would be brought about by the Crown. See, Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*, Chapter 1.

thus, *de facto*, virtually all Jews in Portugal became “new Christians.”⁸ This term soon came to denote a separate group, and this separation was sometimes (though not always) reinforced by legal distinctions. An important aspect of these forced conversions, especially in light of the later history of inter-cultural interaction, was Manoel’s policy of forcing “new” and “old” Christians to intermarry, by forbidding marriages between new Christian partners, except through royal dispensation. This policy remained in effect from 1497 to 1507.⁹ Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Jewish quarters (*judiarias*) throughout Portugal

⁸ The citations that follow are drawn from the work of Filipa I. Ribeiro da Silva, *A inquisição em Cabo Verde, Guiné e S. Tomé e Príncipe (1536–1821): contributo para o estudo da política do Santo Ofício nos territórios africanos* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2002). See H.V. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 134 and Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*, “Conclusão.” Unfortunately, there are few baptismal or related ecclesiastical records in Portugal until after the Council of Trent in 1563, and none for the fifteenth century, though early Inquisitorial trials of elderly new Christians sometimes provide information. See IAN/TT, IdL, processes 12551, 7777. One important aspect of the forced conversion for the study of specific individuals was that a convert received a new first name and surname. The former was a standard saint’s name such as João, Afonso, Pedro, Maria, Catarina, etc. The surname, such as Rodrigues, Nunes, Lopes, etc. most likely was derived from the godfathers who accompanied the converts to the baptismal font. However, in a number of documented cases, well-known Portuguese Jewish last names such as Abravanel, Palacano, and Nahmias continued to be used along with the newly-acquired Christian one well into the sixteenth century. For example, one Amrique Fernandes Abarbanell is documented as farming rents in Lisbon in 1509. See: *Documentos do Arquivo Histórico da Camara Municipal de Lisboa: Livros de Reis*, IV (Lisbon: Camara Municipal, 1959), 162. Another example was Manoel Mendes Naamias from Beja, who was named as the Supervisor of Customs (“feitor de Portos Secos”) in 1572. See: IAN/TT, IdL process 7549. In a few instances, though, it was the long established hereditary name belonging to the Portuguese nobility. The fifteenth-century compilation of laws known as the *Ordenações Afonsinas* states that, “However those who newly convert to our Holy Faith may take and bear during their lives and pass on to their children only, the family names of any lineages they wish, without any penalty.” Book 5, title 92, section 9, reprinted as *Ordenações Afonsinas*, Mário Júlio de Almeida Costa and Eduardo Borges Nunes, eds. (Lisbon: Fund. Calouste Gulbenkian, 1984). In Portugal, only the most aristocratic families of the fifteenth century maintained the same last name from one generation to another. Whereas some merchant and artisan families began to adopt this custom at the turn of the century, among others, even into the twentieth century, last names varied and often each child of a given couple was given a different surname. See: Iria Gonçalves, “Onomástica pessoal da Lisboa de Quinhentos,” *Boletim Cultural da Junta Distrital de Lisboa*, Second Series, 79–80 (1973–1974): 2–47. Most likely Jews had shared the aristocratic custom of maintaining and transmitting paternally one surname per family. See Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*, Chapter IV. However, after the forced conversion, many new Christians gave their children different last names from each other. Many names of towns and some nicknames were also apparently distributed.

⁹ Fernando Filipe Portugal, “O problema judaico no reinado de D. Manuel,” *Armas e Troféus*, 3rd Series, no. 4, 1975, 310–328.

were liquidated, and the old and new Christians in these and other quarters were intermixed via forced expropriations and exchange of dwellings.¹⁰ These policies, it should be noted, were not just directed against the Jewish population. For example, the *mourarias* (Moorish quarters) were liquidated, and the edict of expulsion officially included the Muslim population.

Though the Jewish religion was declared abolished, all synagogues closed and expropriated, and ownership of most Hebrew books forbidden, religious conformity was not, initially, strictly imposed. Unfortunately, there has been no serious investigation into the early religious development of the new Christians. Manoel had decreed that the new Christians would not be persecuted on religious grounds, albeit only for a period of twenty years (later increased to thirty-six years). This time span was designed to allow for the generation of actual converts to die out and for their children, born and raised as Catholics and, in some cases, married to old Christians, to become completely assimilated and integrated into the “new” Portuguese society.

The current trend in scholarship maintains that there was very little concerted attempt to transmit or perpetuate Jewish traditions during the thirty odd years of relative liberty of conscience. It is clear from the verifiably authentic documentation available that the great majority of the new Christians, even if only for practical reasons, did not wish to revert, at least openly, to Judaism. For example, for the Vatican to have officially nullified the forced conversions and offered to all new Christians who had undergone forced conversion the option of returning to their past status would have meant the recreation of medieval conditions and withdrawal of the Vatican’s social and political equality, tenuous though it might have been.¹¹

New Christians also retained the option of leaving the country. Manoel’s decree of 1507, which was, in part, a reply to the Lisbon massacre of new Christians (as well as Moors), in April of 1506, is notable for its relative tolerance. This decree granted all Portuguese

¹⁰ This aspect of integration, which included expropriation of Jewish cemeteries (which were then transformed into pastures) and removal of the tombstones, which were used for masonry, began to be implemented in 1497, even before the conversion took place. See, Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*, “Conclusão.”

¹¹ Individual briefs of annulment of the forced baptism were in fact granted by the Vatican. See the letter from Pope Clement VII dated May 20, 1530 to Diogo Pires, in Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (Venice: Stabilimento Visentini av. Federico, 1879–1903), 54, 148.

full permission to leave the country temporarily or permanently, to trade on land or at sea, to sell property, and to freely export money or merchandise to Christian countries. Furthermore, the King promised never to promulgate exceptional legislation for new Christians living Portugal, granted émigrés the right to return without fear of punishment, and made the laws of the realm in their entirety applicable to new Christians.¹² New Christians wishing to revert to Judaism left Portugal—an alternative which was, as noted earlier, given to them, as they were free to adopt or re-adopt Judaism elsewhere—though very few new Christians availed themselves of this alternative between 1507 and the late 1530s.¹³

Early sixteenth-century Portugal offered its new Christian subjects economic and cultural opportunities, without a concomitant Inquisition. As in Spain a century earlier, these opportunities were seized upon by thousands of new Christians who were no longer constrained by legal, cultural, and religious restrictions that had limited them as Jews.¹⁴ As in Spain, new Christians occupied prominent positions in the royal administration, and others penetrated the ranks of the mercantile and land-owning elites, as well as of the clergy. However, unlike late fourteenth-century Spanish *conversos*, they found the upper levels of the Church hierarchy closed to them.¹⁵

In 1536, King João III (1521–1557) obtained Papal consent for the establishment of an Inquisition in his domains. The new Christians of Portugal were apparently well-integrated into the surrounding society, and there is no evidence of any large-scale continued practice of Judaism. Crypto-Judaism was almost certainly practiced, but scholars debate the extent of such practices. João's reasoning for seeking an Inquisition tribunal on Portuguese soil is thus not altogether clear to historians. Be that as it may, the first formal *auto-de-fé* was held in

¹² Decree of March 1, 1507, printed by royal command on May 25, 1773, when it was renewed and all contrary legislation ruled null and void. It was reproduced by Y.H. Yerushalmi in *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Sebet Yehudah* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1976), 87–89.

¹³ Ellis Rivkin, *The Shaping of Jewish History: A Radical New Interpretation* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 140–158.

¹⁴ Ben Zion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: from the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century* (New York, NY: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1966).

¹⁵ Nevertheless, the label, “new Christian” was not applied to converted families of the favored and privileged elite, whose descendants were thus theoretically (and often practically) exempt from Inquisitorial persecution for “judaizing.” See, Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*.

Lisbon, in 1540. At another Lisbon *auto-de-fé*, in 1544, twenty people were executed, an unprecedented number. By the mid-sixteenth century, the tribunals of Lisbon, Évora, Porto, Coimbra, and Goa were in full operation. According to scholars such as António José Saraiva it was this very Inquisition which solidified a distinctive new Christian identity.¹⁶ According to these historians, Judaism had largely vanished from Portugal, but the new Christians, chiefly because of this very legal designation which differentiated them from “old” Christians, were virtually forced to retain a corporate identity as being Portuguese of new Christian descent. Thus, even if the new Christians had not perceived themselves as being different from the surrounding Portuguese society, and even if they were devout and believing Catholics, they were, as the institution of the Inquisition shows, viewed as belonging to a certain suspect group that was apart from the rest of the society, no matter that they maintained an individual identity that could have ranged from devout Catholicism to crypto-Judaism.

It is clear that by the late sixteenth century, a hundred years after the expulsion of all practicing Jews from most of Spain and the forcible conversion of all Jews in Portugal, the new Christians were no longer a group comprised of Jews, *per se*. Rather, they had become an ethnic group. By ethnic group, I mean a group that views itself as being alike due to its common ancestry (real or imagined) and, equally importantly, is conceived of by others as being alike. As historian Thomas Glick writes, “Ethnicity is a collection of traits, traditions, values, and symbols that situate a group with respect to its ancestors and to other ethnic groups.”¹⁷ Such a group would also share a language, and a common geographical (however distant), cultural, and historical heritage.¹⁸ The new Christians of Portugal shared a perception, accurate or not, of a common Jewish ancestry and familial kinship that distinguished them from other Portuguese. Moreover, the new Christians shared a common language—Portuguese—as well as a common geographic place

¹⁶ António José Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and Its New Christians, 1536–1765*, translated, revised, and augmented by H.P. Salomon and I.S.D. Sassoon (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

¹⁷ Thomas F. Glick, “On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,” in Benjamin Gampel, ed., *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391–1648* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 59–76, 74.

¹⁸ This definition is drawn from Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1965), 40–41 and Graizbord, “Becoming Jewish in Early Modern France,” 162.

of origin—first the land of Israel in antiquity and, later, Iberia. This shared place of origin also fed into a shared understanding of their historical past, real or imagined. These perceptions of shared ethnicity were bolstered by the legal classification of this group—a legal classification that directly impacted the daily lives of the new Christians in Portugal.

This legal classification was predicated upon their shared Jewish ancestry, however distant. In a country that had increasingly begun to focus on “purity of blood,” even a far distant Jewish ancestor was enough to cause suspicion. But scholars are essentially divided into three groups as to whether the new Christians were, by and large, Jews. One group, including Henry Kamen and Zosa Szajkowski (and others discussed at length below), believes that most new Christians lost their memory of, and identification with, Judaism quickly after the expulsions and forced conversions of the fifteenth century. For these scholars, the new Christians were, in fact, Christians and it was only persecution based on ethnic and economic grounds from the surrounding society that drove some new Christians into Jewish practice. Historians Cecil Roth and I.S. Révah (and others, also discussed below) support an alternative view. They believe that Judaism survived in secret among many diaspora new Christians and was widely and commonly practiced by small groups in homes or in other secret settings.

Essentially, supporters of this latter view consider the new Christians to have been actual Jews who maintained hope of eventually living openly as Jews. The third view is more nuanced, and posits that identity and belief were fluid, and that some new Christians were, in fact, devout and believing Christians, but that others were crypto-Jews who hoped to eventually practice Judaism freely. Supporters of this view assert that many new Christians alternated between Jewish and Christian identities and practices depending on the circumstances in which they found themselves. They were, to employ terms used by historians David Graizbord and Thomas Glick, “cultural and territorial commuters.”¹⁹

The school of thought critical of the notion that those of Jewish descent were indeed Jews includes scholars such as Ellis Rivkin,

¹⁹ Graizbord, “Becoming Jewish in Early Modern France,” 149. Graizbord borrows the term from Glick, “On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,” 71.

Ben Zion Netanyahu, António José Saraiva, Martin Cohen, Henry Kamen, and Zosa Szajkowski. They argue that economic and racial rather than religious motivations led to the establishment of the Inquisition, and that it was at a point when the new Christian population had all but lost touch with its Jewish roots, thereby ironically causing something of a resurgence of Jewish religious practice and belief in response to the persecution. In the opinion of many scholars, the ambiguity of the Inquisitorial documentation, combined with the heavy influence of non-religious factors that pushed the tribunals to persecution, casts doubt over whether the majority of new Christians did, in fact, secretly adhere to Judaism.²⁰

Ben Zion Netanyahu sought to refute the notion that new Christians were crypto-Jews because he believed this notion would validate the Inquisition's actions. Netanyahu maintained that "in seeking to identify the whole *Marrano* group with a secret Jewish heresy," the Spanish Inquisition was "operating with a fiction," so much that "it was not a powerful *Marrano* movement that provoked the establishment of the Inquisition, but it was the establishment of the Inquisition that caused the temporary resurgence of the... *Marrano* movement."²¹ He used Jewish sources (mainly rabbinical *responsa*) to prove that the majority of new Christians at the establishment of the Inquisition were indeed Christians and asserted that they were persecuted for political and "racial" reasons rather than for religious considerations.²² Marxist historians, such as António José Saraiva, who denied the existence of crypto-Judaism, and who attributed the repression of the new Christians to the State's attempt to eliminate the "capitalistic class," adopted claims similar to those of Netanyahu.²³

²⁰ Henry Cross, "Commerce and Orthodoxy: A Spanish Response to Portuguese Commercial Penetration in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1580–1640," *The Americas*, 35, 2 (October 1978): 151–167; Jaime Contreras, "Family and Patronage: The Judeo-Christian Minority in Spain," in Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 128.

²¹ Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain*, 3.

²² The *Responsa* are known as *She'elot u-Teshuvot* ("questions and answers") and are a compendium of written decisions and rulings covering a period of 1,700 years. The questions tend to be centered on practical issues for which there is no clear answer in the codes of law. The *Responsa* function as a supplement to the codes of law and often form a sort of legal precedent to be consulted in future rulings.

²³ Antonio José Saraiva, *Inquisição e cristãos-novos* (Porto: Editorial Nova, 1969).

Along these same lines, Ellis Rivkin has argued that crypto-Judaism was not real but had been invented by the Inquisition, which persecuted Jews with trumped up charges of secretly following Jewish rituals.²⁴ Reviewing Inquisition testimony, Jerome Friedman has argued that most “records indicate that new Christians were convicted of being secret Jews because they often abstained from pork, used olive oil rather than lard, changed sheets every Friday, called their children by Old Testament names, prayed standing rather than kneeling, or turned to face a wall when hearing of a death.” Friedman notes that this would be like accusing people today of being Jewish because they have been observed “reading *The New York Times*, eating bagels or supporting the American Civil Liberties Union.”²⁵

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

The family of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, if not Rodrigues Vega himself, seem to match most closely the ideas of Rivkin, Saraiva, and the others outlined previously. One of Rodrigues Vega’s brothers, Gabriel Fernandes (born in Antwerp in 1576),²⁶ was married to Maria Beecx, a daughter of the squire Jan de Beecx, a Catholic.²⁷ This marriage would appear to show that the Rodrigues Vega family were members of the Antwerp mercantile elite, with enough wealth and social status to marry into the Flemish Catholic landed gentry, and that they were perceived as such by the surrounding society. The fact that, in 1618,

²⁴ Ellis Rivkin, “How Jewish Were the New Christians?” in Josep M. Sola-Solé, Samuel G. Armistead, and Joseph H. Silverman, eds., *Hispania Judaica: Studies on the History, Language, and Literature of the Jews in the Hispanic World, I: History* (Barcelona: Puvill, 1980), 105–115.

²⁵ In sum, “the Inquisition took as its test for crypto-Judaism adherence to a variety of ethnic practices common to earlier generations of Spanish Jews rather than actual belief in Judaism.” Jerome Friedman, “Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Anti-Semitism,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, 1 (1987): 3–30, 15.

²⁶ Swetschinski, “Portuguese Jewish Merchants of seventeenth-century Amsterdam,” 153. Gabriel was a merchant in Antwerp except for a short time spent in London from 1604 to 1608. He also visited Holland occasionally. In Antwerp, in addition to his membership in the guilds, described above, he was also a broker. Gabriel probably died in 1639. See, Hans Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648). Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 104, and Edgar R. Samuel, “Portuguese Jews in Jacobean London,” *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 18 (1958): 171–230, 180.

²⁷ Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen*, 91.

Gabriel became a member of the Saint Lucas guild, Antwerp's artists' guild, as an employer of silversmiths and painters, indicates that, as it was more difficult for those suspected of crypto-Judaism to gain admission to the guilds, he may have been a practicing Catholic and been accepted as a Catholic by the guild members.²⁸

It was not uncommon for new Christian families to harbor a variety of religious practice within their ranks, and the Rodrigues Vega family was no exception. Religiously, Manoel Rodrigues Vega does not appear to have practiced the Catholicism that his brother Gabriel seemed to profess. By virtue of his membership in the larger Portuguese nation, Rodrigues Vega had connections with new Christian merchants who became founding members of the synagogues in Amsterdam. One such merchant was Emanuel Rodrigues Espinosa (Spinosa),²⁹ who was an active participant in the Jewish life of Amsterdam.³⁰ Moreover, Rodrigues Vega was named in the 1610 Rotterdam Charter, which allowed for settlement of members of the "Portuguese Nation" in the city. What is particularly notable about the Rotterdam Charter is that it specifically allowed these members of the "Portuguese Nation" "liberty and freedom of conscience...to [celebrate] their Sabbath and three great holidays."³¹ Essentially, they could be

²⁸ Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen*, 121. All of Gabriel's children (Elisabeth, Raphael, Francisca, and Beatrix.) were baptized. However, since all New Christians were baptized, this does not necessarily prove religious affiliation one way or another.

²⁹ Gemeente Archif Amsterdam [Amsterdam Municipal Archives], henceforth GAA, Notarial Archives, henceforth NA 76/3-4. He was also connected, for instance, to Simon de Mercado, who was arrested for practicing Judaism in Antwerp, and who wrote him a letter. See Samuel, "Portuguese Jews in Jacobean London," 229. There is doubt, however, as to whether Mercado's arrest stemmed from Judaism or from the fact that he was fleeing his creditors in Amsterdam. For information about his insolvency, see GAA NA 58/173; NA 114/57v-59; 60-61; 62-62v; 67-68v; NA 265/153-154; NA 144/154-154v; NA 119/49v. Between October 1608 and April 1609, five notaries protested twelve different times that Simão de Mercado's brothers had not paid their bills of exchange. Simão was imprisoned for his debts in Amsterdam. As late as 1614, his debt repayments were being closely supervised by a trustee of the Amsterdam municipal institution known as the Chamber of Insolvent Estates.

³⁰ Wilhelmina Christina Pieterse, ed., *Livro de bet Haim do Kahal Kados de bet Yahacob* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), 25, 34-37, 41, 45, 59, 63, 65, 66, 83, 103, 112, 137, 141, 144, 185.

³¹ For a transcription of this charter, see Hugo de Groot, *Remonstratie Nopende de Ordre dije in de Landen van Hollandt ende Westvrieslandt dijen Gestelt op de Joden*, Dr. J. Meijer, ed. (Amsterdam: Meijer, 1949). I am grateful to Mrs. Odette Vlessing of the Amsterdam Municipal Archives for bringing this document to my attention. Thanks in part to Mrs. Vlessing's comments and advice, I have revised my assertion in, Jessica Vance Roitman, "Us and Them: Inter-cultural Trade and the Sephardim, 1595-1640,"

openly practicing Jews in the city. Of course, most of the charter dealt with trading privileges and rights rather than religion, so it is uncertain how concerned the Portuguese merchants named in the charter were with religious questions. Nevertheless, at least some of them were concerned enough to have had these privileges included.

Luís Vaz Pimentel claimed that he had been circumcised by Rodrigues Vega in Rotterdam in 1612 and that he had attended Jewish services in an attic in Rotterdam along with him. It is difficult to ascertain the veracity of Pimentel's claims, since he changed (several times) his story, which was presented to the Inquisition in Lisbon. He first claimed to have been forcibly circumcised by Rodrigues Vega, but later testified that he had undertaken the procedure voluntarily. Moreover, we must be cautious about all claims made to an Inquisitorial court, because such testimony was often, though not always, tainted by torture or the threat of torture, confiscation of goods, etc. Vaz Pimentel may have been fabricating or exaggerating his claims to the Inquisition in order to increase his own importance. Rodrigues Vega was an extremely prominent and well-known new Christian merchant, and thus an easy target. Furthermore, Vaz Pimentel later worked as a spy for Spanish officials in Brussels after he fell into financial difficulties. From Brussels, he sent to Spain lists of Portuguese merchants who he claimed were Jews, including over 200 names in 1618.³²

An early twentieth-century historian of the Sephardic community of Amsterdam, Jacob Zwarts, asserted that Manoel Rodrigues Vega was in fact the mysterious Jacob Tirado, one of the first "rabbis" in Amsterdam.³³ This hypothesis, however, has been definitively refuted.³⁴ The Rotterdam Charter and Vaz Pimentel's claims nonetheless verify that Rodrigues Vega was at least peripherally affiliated with Judaism in Rotterdam. Interestingly, though, he does not appear in any of

unpublished dissertation, Universiteit Leiden, 2009, that Manoel Rodrigues Vega was not in any way affiliated with Judaism in the the Dutch Republic.

³² Herman P. Salomon, "The Case of Luís Vaz Pimentel: Revelations of Early Jewish Life in Rotterdam from the Portuguese Inquisition Archives," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 31, 1–2 (1997): 7–30. I have changed the interpretation of Vaz Pimentel's claim that I made in "Us and Them: Inter-cultural Trade and the Sephardim."

³³ Jacob Zwarts, "De eerste rabbijnen en synagogen van Amsterdam naar archivalische bronnen," *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het genootschap voor Joodsche wetenschap in Nederland* IV (1928): 147–242, 148–166.

³⁴ For refutation of Zwarts's theory, see A.M. Vaz Diaz, "Een verzoek om de Joden in Amsterdam een bapaalde woonplaats aan te wijzen," *Jaarboek Amstelodamum XXXV* (1938), 187–188.

the religious documentation of the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam, even in passing. Moreover, Rodrigues Vega is not known to have assumed a Jewish name, as was common practice when a new Christian man or woman professed Judaism publicly. Moreover, he moved to Rotterdam relatively early, in 1606, and, despite the 1610 charter, not enough Jews moved to Rotterdam for the charter to take effect and so it was revoked in 1612.³⁵ Nevertheless, the Rodrigues Vega family stayed in Rotterdam, though they could not practice openly as Jews there.³⁶

Thus, it could be that Rodrigues Vega affiliated with Judaism for economic reasons. Other Portuguese merchants may have wanted the Rotterdam charter to include provisions for religious freedom, and Rodrigues Vega could have joined, no matter how he felt about practicing Judaism. On the other hand, he may have been relatively committed to Judaism, but not enough to leave his mercantile endeavors in Rotterdam and return to Amsterdam, where he could live openly as a Jew, once the Rotterdam charter was revoked.³⁷ Whatever Rodrigues Vega's beliefs in fact were, the part of his family that remained in Antwerp were happy to live as Catholics, despite having the opportunity to move to the Dutch Republic and become openly-practicing Jews. Rodrigues Vega seems to have been a cultural commuter: he was a Catholic in Antwerp, but a Jew when others were Jews, though not bothered enough to move again to maintain open Jewish practice.

Manoel Carvalho

Manoel Carvalho, like Rodrigues Vega, also affiliated somewhat peripherally with Judaism, though he does not appear to have been particularly active in the Jewish community. Moreover, he did not affiliate with Judaism for years after his arrival in Amsterdam, even

³⁵ D. Hausdorff, *Jizkor: Platenatlas van drie en een halve eeuw geschiedenis van de joodse gemeente in Rotterdam van 1610 tot +/- 1960* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1978), 11.

³⁶ Gracia Rodrigues Vega had bought a burial place on the Jan van Loonslaan. In 1621, the mayors of Rotterdam performed a marriage ceremony for Caspar (or Gaspar) Fernandes Vega and Philippa Lopes (from Amsterdam). Hausdorff, *Jizkor*, 10–11.

³⁷ The ruling council of Rotterdam was worried that some practicing Jews remained in Rotterdam after the revocation of the 1610 charter. They wrote in 1619 that, "those of the Jewish nation cannot seek to attract or tempt any Christians to their sect or beliefs." Reportedly, there was a small synagogue in Rotterdam located in the attic of David Namias (alias João Veiga). Openly Jewish settlement and practice was allowed again in Rotterdam in 1647. Hausdorff, *Jizkor*, 10–11.

when it was possible to do so. In fact, he stated in a notarial act passed in 1643 that he came to Amsterdam, "...around 40 years ago, but that [he] did not profess the Jewish religion before 1616, though there had been ample opportunity to do so."³⁸ On the surface, he seems to have had a somewhat apathetic commitment to the open practice of Judaism. The fact that he had finally committed to some form of public Judaism did not go unnoticed in Iberia, as in 1617 he was also listed by Hector Mendes Bravo as living in conformity with Jewish law in Amsterdam.³⁹ Whatever the circumstances of his decision to affiliate with Judaism, Carvalho was certainly not an active congregant. Though he lived to be at least 79 years old, if not older (he died sometime after 1643), he appears only twice in the documentation relating to the religious activities of the Portuguese Jewish community.⁴⁰ He is mentioned in the contract for the supply of *kosher* meat,⁴¹ and was a signatory, along with Diogo Nunes Belmonte, Duarte Saraiva, Simão Lopes Rosa, and Francisco Mendes Trancoso, of a letter declaring that they would abide by the payments they had to make to the congregation of *Bet Jacob*.⁴²

As historian Douglas Catterall writes, "From the perspective of the [new Christian] migrants, becoming part of the *Bet Jacob* or, after 1612, the *Neve Shalom* synagogue had to do with personal religious views, on the one hand, and comfort with the way in which these synagogues defined membership on the other."⁴³ In fact, historian David

³⁸ GAA, NA 1068/120.

³⁹ Cecil Roth, "The Strange Case of Hector Mendes Bravo," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 18 (1944): 221–245, 235.

⁴⁰ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 107–108.

⁴¹ SR 436.

⁴² Pieterse, *Livro de Bet Haim*, 14. The only other mention of Carvalho in documentation related to the religious practices of the Amsterdam Jews was when his illegitimate daughter (probably one of two or more illegitimate children), married a Sephardic man in 1648, mostly likely after Carvalho's death. See GAA, DTB [Dooop, Trouw, en Begraafboeken (Baptismal, Marriage, and Burial Books)], henceforth DTB 680–12. The Sephardim of Amsterdam tended to follow Iberian socio-sexual norms rather than rabbinic Jewish norms, meaning that an illegitimate child on the male side, if recognized by the father, could be admitted to the Jewish community. See Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 85–95 and Jessica Vance Roitman, "Marriage, migration, and money: The *Santa Companhia de dotar orphãos e donzelas pobres* in the Portuguese Sephardic Diaspora," *Portuguese Studies Review* 13, 1 (Summer 2005): 347–367.

⁴³ Douglas Catterall, "Settle or Return: Migrant Communities in Northern Europe, ca. 1600–1800," in Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley, eds., *Between the Middle*

Swetschinski asserts that the *Neve Shalom* synagogue had a close-knit membership defined by closely-shared kinship, and that both synagogues represented small groupings of individuals who were very aware of their Judaism. For most early new Christian newcomers, such as Carvalho, these exclusive clubs had little appeal. Indeed, one of the driving forces behind the earliest public dispute among Amsterdam's Sephardi inhabitants (1618–1619) involved divisions in the *Bet Jacob* synagogue that were driven by insider/outsider dynamics. Earlier individual personal networks had defined the Amsterdam Sephardi world.⁴⁴ All this being said, a lack of formal affiliation does not necessarily indicate lack of Jewish identity, and Carvalho's failure to affiliate openly with any synagogue until 1616 may well have had more to do with social conflicts with the synagogue's notoriously divisive congregations than with lack of identity.

Any fervent attachment that Carvalho may have had to Judaism is further called into question by the fact that, as far as can be ascertained, he never adopted a Jewish name. Vaz Dias claims that Carvalho's alias was Moses de Caseres, but gives no source.⁴⁵ None of the notarial acts examined in which Carvalho is mentioned give any alias for Carvalho, which introduces some doubt into Vaz Dias's hypothesis. It is likely that Vaz Dias was referring to the fact that two of Carvalho's siblings, Sara and Jacob, used the last name de Caseres.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, there is no evidence to attribute the documented activities of Moses de Caseres to Manoel Carvalho, especially since Sara and Jacob may have been Carvalho's half-siblings and that, therefore, there was another half-brother named Moses. This hypothesis is bolstered by the fact that Maria de Pas, Carvalho's cousin, left her estate only to Manoel and did not name any of her other siblings as heirs.⁴⁷

Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) 109–130, 115.

⁴⁴ Catterall, "Settle or Return: Migrant Communities in Northern Europe, ca. 1600–1800," 115.

⁴⁵ Mentioned in Daniel Levi de Barrios, "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular," in Wilhelmina Christina Pieterse, ed., *Daniel Levi de Barrios als Geschiedschrijver van de Portugees-Israelietische Gemeente te Amsterdam in zijn "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular,"* (Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema, 1968), 57.

⁴⁶ GAA, DTB 668–39.

⁴⁷ Jacob, whether he was the full or half-brother of Manoel, could be the same man as Jacomo de Caseres, who lived in Holland by 1609 and had previously resided in Venice for sixteen years. See SR 359.

Carvalho had an illegitimate daughter, whom he recognized, with a Dutch woman. His daughter later married a Sephardic Jewish man in Amsterdam in 1648, probably after Carvalho's death.⁴⁸ That Sephardic men had romantic liaisons with Dutch women was not unusual. Though officially prohibited by law, Sephardic men were as likely as any other men of the middle and upper classes in the early modern period to engage in sexual relationships with prostitutes and with their house servants.⁴⁹ Nor was it particularly unusual that such liaisons occasionally resulted in pregnancy. In the vast majority of such cases, though, the Sephardic man paid a set amount upfront for the costs incurred by the pregnancy, along with a certain amount for care of the child. In turn, the Dutch woman generally committed to leave the man alone in exchange for the one-time payment.⁵⁰

However, within the Sephardic community in Amsterdam, illegitimate children could be recognized by their fathers. Moreover, the Sephardim of Amsterdam tended to follow Iberian socio-sexual norms rather than rabbinic Jewish norms. This meant that an illegitimate child on the male side, if recognized by the father, could be admitted to the Jewish community despite his/her mother not being Jewish. Such recognition was relatively infrequent, however, and most Sephardic men who fathered an illegitimate child with a Dutch woman simply paid for the "problem" to go away.

Thus, it seems that Carvalho was content to live as an ostensibly Catholic merchant of new Christian descent for years before deciding, for whatever combination of reasons, to affiliate with Judaism. He chose to wait to practice Judaism openly, even when he had opportunities to do so safely. Carvalho's religious identity, like that of Rodrigues Vega's, therefore seems to have been somewhat fluid and shifting.

⁴⁸ GAA, DTB 680/12.

⁴⁹ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 14, 217. See also Lotte C. van de Pol, "Amsterdam Jews and Amsterdam Prostitution, 1650–1750," in Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan, eds., *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others: Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, 173–185 and several essays in Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁵⁰ See, for example, SR 124 and 844; GAA, NA 376, 595, 618; NA 377, 50, 52; NA 379, 436; NA 62, 490; GAA, DTB 668/7; DTB 942/372 (for the illegitimate children of Sephardic men).

Netanyahu, Saraiva, Rivkin, Cohen, Friedman and the other scholars mentioned previously were responding to post-World War Two historiography which projected the experiences of the twentieth century back onto the early modern period. For Yizhak Baer, *converso* “and Jews were one people, united by bonds of religion, destiny and messianic hope which in Spain took on unique coloration typical of the people and the country.”⁵¹ Baer’s influential disciple Haim Beinart also ignores the distinction between Jew and *converso*, and sees in the Inquisition a paradigm of Jewish survival.

Out of the deeds done to Jews and Conversos alike shines the internal strength of a Jewry rich in spirit and deed, a Jewry that was able to hold its stand against great waves that tried to engulf her. The deeds of those tried by the Inquisition, those who as martyrs sanctified the Name of God, their vicissitudes and sufferings, may serve as beacons of light for Jewry wherever they are.⁵²

I.S. Révah also sought to show how Jewish sources (including rabbinical *responsa* and autobiographies) testify to the existence of crypto-Judaism among new Christians; in so doing, he also reiterated the argument set forth by Cecil Roth, according to which every crypto-Jew was a “potential Jew.”⁵³

Bento Osorio

Bento Osorio most closely fits this prevailing mythology posited by Baer, Beinart, Révah, and Roth of a Portuguese new Christian merchant reclaiming his Jewish heritage. Of all the merchants examined in this work, Osorio was the most firmly entrenched in the emergent

⁵¹ As quoted in Yosef Kaplan, “Haim Beinart and the Historiography of the *Conversos* in Spain,” in A. Grossman, Y. Kaplan, and A. Mirsky, eds., *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1991), 11–16, 14–15. Kaplan writes that even though Beinart “did not ignore the existence of many Conversos who ‘sought to make every effort to assimilate into the Christian public,’ he accepted the theoretical position of Yizhak Baer, that ‘Conversos and Jews were one people.’” 14–15.

⁵² Haim Beinart, “The Converso Community of Fifteenth-Century Spain,” in R.D. Barnett, ed., *The Sephardi Heritage*, Volume 1 (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1971), 425–457 452.

⁵³ Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1932). For Révah’s views, see the debate between him and António José Saraiva, reprinted as three appendices in the English translation of Saraiva’s *Inquisição e cristãos-novos*. Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 235–341.

Jewish community in Amsterdam. He affiliated openly with Judaism and was a prominent member of the *Bet Jacob* synagogue, and was, later, a founder of the synagogue *Bet Israel*, in 1618.⁵⁴ Moreover, of the three merchants profiled here, Osorio was the only one who demonstrably used a Jewish name, namely, Baruch. Daniel Levi de Barrios, a poet and the first historian of the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam (he wrote in the latter part of the seventeenth century), lists Bento Osorio among the sixteen people who began practicing Judaism publicly in Amsterdam in 1597.⁵⁵ However, there is no record of Osorio in Amsterdam before 1610.⁵⁶ It is possible that Osorio arrived in the city sometime before 1610 and does not appear in the notarial archives, though it is doubtful that such a prominent and prolific merchant could have arrived before 1610 and not been mentioned in the notarial documentation. As the historian W.C. Pieterse speculates, it could be that de Barrios, writing more than 50 years after the events in question, may have been confused and meant that Osorio was a founder of the congregation of *Bet Israel*, which was in fact the case.⁵⁷

Osorio was also in the faction that, in 1618, supported the rabbi of the *Bet Jacob* synagogue, *Haham* Joseph Pardo, in a dispute which led to the split in the congregation and the founding of the new synagogue, *Bet Israel*.⁵⁸ Before the *Bet Jacob* congregation split, Osorio had been *parnas* [president or trustee] of the synagogue.⁵⁹ The split was so acrimonious, however, that an appeal had to be made to the rabbis and *Mahamad* [Board of Directors] of the congregation *Talmud Tora*, in Venice.⁶⁰ Osorio was obviously of great importance in the congregation, as he was named in 1615 as one of the *Bet Jacob* representatives tasked

⁵⁴ GAA, 334 [Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam (Portugees-Israëlitische Gemeente te Amsterdam)]/10/13.

⁵⁵ de Barrios, "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular," 53. It is not clear if de Barrios was referring to the total number of Sephardim in the city at the time, or to the number of Sephardim who were professing Judaism openly.

⁵⁶ See GAA, NA, 62/199; NA 62/189; NA 62/194v; NA 120/178v–179v for notarial acts passed in 1610.

⁵⁷ de Barrios, "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular," 56 and GAA, 334/10/13.

⁵⁸ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 173.

⁵⁹ "*Parnas*" comes from the Hebrew for "leader" and was the head of a Jewish community. Often, as was the case in Amsterdam, there was a ruling counsel of *parnasim* (Hebrew plural of *parnas*). The *parnas* was usually elected. The congregation split due to religious tensions between a more orthodox wing under the leadership of Pardo and the more liberal wing of Abraham Farrar. See, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* VI. 2 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1972), 896. It is telling that Osorio chose to support the more orthodox faction.

⁶⁰ GAA, 334/2.

with consolidating the regulations of the two existing congregations, *Bet Jacob* and *Neve Salom*.⁶¹ Osorio also represented the *Bet Israel* community several times (1622, 1625, 1630, 1633, and 1634) before the Impost Board of the collective communities,⁶² and his descendents remained active in the Jewish congregations of Amsterdam until the eighteenth century.

Osorio was known as a Jew by the surrounding Portuguese society, including both new and old Christians. The bailiff in Amsterdam accused Osorio, along with Antonio Mendes Cardoso, a certain Dr. Tenório, and Simão Viegas of "...try[ing] to bring Christians to Judaism..."⁶³ Though Osorio was a prominent member of the Jewish community in Amsterdam, it is doubtful that he ever sought to convert Christians to Judaism. Nevertheless, this accusation highlights the fact that Osorio was perceived as a Jew. This identification as a Jew was not restricted to the Low Countries, however. One Spaniard wrote,

Of all these Jews, only two are in the secret with the Hollanders. One is named Bento de Osorio....the other Lope Ramirez or David Curiel. These give the orders and make the plans for plundering and destroying, thinking by this means to destroy Christianity. It is with this object in

⁶¹ de Barrios, "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular," 96.

⁶² Pieterse, *Livro de bet Haim*, 191; GAA, 334/10/129–130. Bento Osorio's son, David, continued his father's active involvement in the Jewish community of Amsterdam. Both Bento and David Osorio paid 40 (*florins quarenta*) in charity as members of the *parnasim*. (GAA, 334/13/77–88) In 1638, David and Bento Osorio were signatories to the agreement on collective taxation of the three Sephardic synagogues in Amsterdam. (GAA, NA 728/52) David was president of the congregation *Talmud Tora* in 1639. (GAA, 334/19/95) He was also named as one of the representatives given the task of bringing together the three existing congregations. (GAA, 334/19/77) David was chosen from the fifteen *parnasim* of the three congregations as part of this task. (see, de Barrios, "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular," 72) David was either still in this function as *parnasim* or was elected anew in 1648 (GAA, 344/19/229 and 344/19/246). He wrote a letter of support for the installation of Samuel de Caseres as the *sopher* (law writer) in this same year. (GAA, 344/19/245) In 1650 he was a *parnas* for *Talmud Tora* again. (see, J. Meijer, *Encyclopaedia Sefardica Neerlandica* (Amsterdam: Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente, 1948), 103). His son, Jacob Aboab Osorio, was *parnas* of the same congregation in 1671, 1678 (when he was also treasurer), 1692, 1702, and 1713. (See, Meijer, *Encyclopaedia Sefardica*, 104–106. The family continued to be active in the synagogue in the eighteenth century. David Abendana Osorio and David Aboab Osorio were *parnasim* in 1728, 1729, and 1735 (Meijer, *Encyclopaedia Sefardica*, 106–107). After that, the last name Osorio drops out of the records of the synagogue, possibly because the Osorio family moved to the Hague. See, Isaac da Costa, *Noble Families Among the Sephardic Jews* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 95.

⁶³ GAA, 334/915 "...die gastvrijheid slecht gebruik maakten. Zij probeerden christenen tot het jodendom over te halen en zij stoorden zich niet aan het wettig gezag van de baljuw en de schout en zijn dienaren." It is not clear if this passage is referring to the conversion of Dutch Calvinists and Catholics or of Portuguese new Christians.

view that they try to maintain so many spies in so many cities of Castile, Portugal, Biscay, Brazil, & elsewhere.⁶⁴

In this case, it was probably not fear for Christianity but rather for the trade in the Spanish Empire that motivated the complaint against Osorio. Nevertheless, these two complaints show that Osorio was perceived as a Jew, both in the Dutch Republic and in Iberia.

When Osorio first arrived in Amsterdam, in 1610, the Twelve Years Truce had been in effect for a year, and trade between the Iberian Peninsula and the Low Countries was thriving. Thus, an economic rationale would seem to be a straightforward explanation for Osorio's move. Another supposition is that, in addition to the compelling economic reasons for Osorio's move to Amsterdam, there were political and religious motivations. It could be that Osorio was under threat by the Inquisition. He could have been denounced, or a friend or family member could have come under Inquisitorial scrutiny, meaning that it was only a matter of time before Osorio was also called before the Inquisition. While Inquisitorial persecution did not, by any means, mean certain death, it could very well entail loss of property, and so it is possible that Bento Osorio was seeking somewhere to go outside of Portugal. In addition, or as a corollary, to the possibility of Inquisitorial pressure is the possibility that Osorio may have been looking to settle somewhere where he could be an openly practicing Jew. By 1610, there were two Jewish congregations in Amsterdam—*Bet Jacob* and *Neve Shalom*. This was well-known in Iberia, and it is possible that Osorio was seeking an open Jewish life. This theory is bolstered by the fact that Osorio was a notably active congregant, first in *Bet Jacob* and, later, in *Bet Israel*.

As the biographies of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio demonstrate, it was not only, or even primarily, religious practice that defined the Sephardim in Amsterdam. Their background as new Christians—a classification, originating from the forced baptisms of 1497, of Portuguese subjects who shared (distant) Jewish ancestry—meant that they held a strong communal ethnic identity.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Cyrus Adler, "A Contemporary Memorial Relating to Damages to Spanish Interests in America Done by Jews of Holland (1634)," Translation and transcription from the General Archives of Simancas, Council of the Inquisition, Book 49, Folio 45 "Narrative Showing the Damage Done to His Majesty by the Jews of Holland," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 17 (1909): 45–51, 50.

This ethnic identity was not based on religious belief, however. Shared religion, especially in a diaspora group, helps provide a basis for the formation of values, coherence, social organization, and legitimating authority among the members of the community. For the new Christians, it was not the religious tenets of Judaism, *per se*, but rather the shared experiences of being part of what was, *de facto*, a separate ethnic group within Portuguese society that formed the primary component of their group identity. As David Graizbord writes, “For new Christians, Jewish ethnicity did not necessarily imply a ‘Jewish’ religion and ‘Jewish’ religious practice. ‘Religion’ and ‘ethnicity’ address different if overlapping realms of experience.”⁶⁵ In fact, in contrast to Christianity and Islam, Jewish identity has never been determined by belief in theological propositions or by conviction alone.

Issues of religious belief, practice, and identity aside, Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were wealthy and prominent Portuguese merchants of new Christian ethnicity. And the new Christians displayed a marked tendency to conform to local norms of public behavior, whatever that behavior may have been.⁶⁶ These merchants became, at some point in their lives, affiliated with the open practice of Judaism, as I described previously. This open practice of Judaism in Amsterdam has become, for many scholars, the defining component of not only these merchants’ particular identities, but of all the Sephardim in Amsterdam. Moreover, some scholars have conflated all new Christians with Jews in the western new Christian diaspora.⁶⁷ In fact, in the majority of the notarial contracts in the Amsterdam archives, at least until the latter part of the seventeenth century, the Sephardic merchants are tellingly referred to simply as “Portuguese Merchants in Amsterdam.” Their religious affiliation is rarely mentioned.

For European Jews, the late sixteenth century was a time of unprecedented changes in how collective identity was constituted. As Jonathan Israel explains, this was a period in which “Jewish society, indeed Jewish nationhood” as “something distinct from Jewish religion”

⁶⁵ David Graizbord, “Religion and Ethnicity Among ‘Men of the Nation’: Toward a Realistic Interpretation,” *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 15, 1 (Fall 2008): 32–65, 48.

⁶⁶ Graizbord, “Religion and Ethnicity Among ‘Men of the Nation,’” 45.

⁶⁷ The dynamics of the new Christian (also commonly known as the Sephardi) diasporas—one to the Orient and one to the Occident or western Europe—will be discussed at greater length in Chapter II.

was emerging “as much more definite realities than before.”⁶⁸ Israel notes that, “The whole hitherto fixed pattern of restricted interaction between western Christendom and the Jews was transformed.”⁶⁹ This total transformation in the concept of what constituted “nationhood” and religious versus cultural identity were convergent with the massive conversion of Jews to Christianity, mostly in Iberia, from the thirteenth century onward. These conversions, many of which were forced, had not only created a separate legal and ethnic category known as “new Christians” within the larger population; it had also uncovered a problem with the idea of determining religious identity in terms of either assent or descent.⁷⁰

The new Christians were hardly religiously static. They were a subgroup of the larger Portuguese diaspora and, as such, could be found throughout the expanding European world, whether as practicing Jews, crypto-Jews, or as Catholics. Moreover, they were, whether by choice or circumstance, part of the larger reconsideration and reorganization of personal identity as being separate from religious or national identities and loyalties, a process which had begun with the Protestant Reformation. New Christians challenged prevailing notions of religious identity, and often redefined their identity in ethnic rather than religious terms, which, as Francesca Trivellato writes, “meant enlarging its own borders and yet rendering them more porous.”⁷¹

An example of this ethnic identification was the new Christians’ strong sense of solidarity as a trans-national group. For instance, the Sephardic merchants of Amsterdam actively supported charitable institutions for poorer new Christians, who were not always practicing Jews.⁷² One of these charitable organizations, the *Santa Companhia de*

⁶⁸ Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 71.

⁶⁹ Israel, *European Jewry*, 31, 35.

⁷⁰ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 6.

⁷¹ Francesca Trivellato, “Trading Diasporas and Trading Networks in the Early Modern Period: A Sephardic Partnership of Livorno in the Mediterranean, Europe and Portuguese India (ca 1700–1750),” unpublished dissertation, Brown University, 2004, 20.

⁷² Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, “De Financiering van de armenzorg van de Spaans-Portugees joodse gemeenschap in Amsterdam in de Zeventiende en achttiende eeuw,” *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, 23, 4 (1997): 428–458; Yosef Kaplan, “The Self-Definition of the Sephardi Jews of Western Europe and their Relation to the Alien and the Stranger,” in Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 51–77; and Miriam Bodian, “The ‘Portuguese’ Dowry Societies in Venice and Amsterdam: A Case Study in Communal

dotar órfãs e donzelas pobres (generally known as the *Dotar*), gave dowries to girls throughout the new Christian diaspora, despite the fact that not all such girls were living as Jews.⁷³ Within the city of Amsterdam, the Sephardic community also gave far more in charity to their fellow Sephardim than they did to the Ashkenazi poor, who had begun to arrive in Amsterdam by the 1620s.⁷⁴ As scholars such as Yosef Kaplan and David Graizbord have cogently shown, Sephardi congregations denied membership to these Ashkenazi Jews, not to mention Italian, mulatto, and Black Jews. “Old” Christians faced no such barriers if they married into a Sephardi family.⁷⁵ Though they recognized some connection with the Ashkenazi immigrants, they felt far more kinship with their fellow Portuguese, even those who were practicing Catholics. All of which demonstrates a clear sense of ethnic identification that had little or nothing to do with religious belief and practice.

Differentiation within the Marrano Diaspora,” *Italia* 6 (1987): 30–61 and her “The *Santa Companhia de dotar orfãos e donzelas pobres* in Amsterdam, 1615–1639,” unpublished dissertation, Hebrew University, 1988. This same dynamic could be found among other groups. See the work of Tamar Herzog, “Private Organizations as Global Networks in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America,” in Luis Roniger and Tamar Herzog, eds., *The Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order* (Brighton, Sussex: Academic Press, 2000), 117–133 on support networks of those from the Kingdom of Navarre.

⁷³ See the following works by Miriam Bodian: *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 47–48, 137–138; “The ‘Portuguese Dowry Societies in Venice and Amsterdam,’” 30–61; and “The *Santa Companhia de dotar*”; as well as Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 41–80; I.S. Révah, ed., “Le premier règlement imprimé de la ‘Santa Companhia de dotar órfãs e donzelas pobres,’” *Boletim internacional de bibliografia luso-brasileira* 4 (1963): 650–91; and Roitman, “Marriage, Migration, and Money,” 347–367.

⁷⁴ For excellent studies on the poor among the Sephardim in Amsterdam see the following works: Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, “Financing Poor Relief in the Spanish-Portuguese Community in Amsterdam,” in Jonathan Israel and Reinier Salverda, eds., *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 63–102, and her “Caridade Escapa da Morte: Legacies to the Poor in Sephardi Wills from Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” in Jozeph Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands, Jerusalem, November 25–28, 1991*, Volume III (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 179–204; Yosef Kaplan, “Amsterdam and Ashkenazi Migration in the Seventeenth Century,” in Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 78–107; and his “*Gente Política*: The Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam vis-à-vis Dutch Society,” in Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan, eds., *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others: Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 21–40; and Robert Cohen, “Passage to a New World: The Sephardi Poor of Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam,” in Lea Dasberg and Jonathan N. Cohen, eds., *Neveh Ya’akov: Jubilee Volume Presented to Dr. Jaap Meijer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1982): 31–42.

⁷⁵ Yosef Kaplan, “Wayward New Christians and Stubborn New Jews: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity,” *Jewish History* 8, 1–2 (1994): 27–41, 29 and Graizbord, “Becoming Jewish,” 164.

The new Christians were an ethnically distinct group in the early modern world. But this raises the question of whether the new Christians were truly culturally distinct from those with whom they would trade in Amsterdam or if they were culturally distinct from the rest of the Portuguese society from which they had emerged. Sociologists Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan note that “The extent to which a distinctive culture develops among people in a given ethnic category depends upon the degree of their social isolation from others.”⁷⁶ And, as I outlined previously, the new Christians were hardly socially isolated from the rest of Portuguese society. They intermarried with “old” Christians, went to the same churches and schools, and traded with them. Moreover, as Shibutani and Kwan further explain, “People in a given ethnic category are culturally distinct, then, only to the extent that they participate together in exclusive communication channels.”⁷⁷ Although the new Christians in Portugal tended to practice endogamy and to do business with other new Christians, only those few who were actual crypto-Jews would have participated in exclusive channels of communication, and even those crypto-Jews would have only communicated exclusively about this one religious element of their lives.

As the recent work of Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert shows, the Portuguese diaspora was tightly connected by economic and social concerns, but also by a mutual identification as Portuguese.⁷⁸ In addition to Studnicki-Gizbert’s work, much other recent scholarship asserts this same affinity of the new Christians toward Iberian culture, coupled with a strong sense of “Hispanic” ethnicity even when they resided outside the Iberian Peninsula. This identification with Iberian ethnicity was a crucial element in their collective and individual self-perception.⁷⁹ For example, the new Christians were familiar with, and even imitated, the loftily written Spanish of Spain’s literary Golden Age. For the new Christians, Spanish was the language of high culture, whereas Portuguese remained their spoken and written language (through at least the seventeenth century), and Hebrew was relegated to the

⁷⁶ Shibutani and Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification*, 59.

⁷⁷ Shibutani and Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification*, 59.

⁷⁸ Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, especially Chapter II. The Portuguese diaspora will be discussed at greater length in Chapter II.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Yosef Kaplan, “Exclusión y autoidentidad,” in *Judíos nuevos en Amsterdam: estudios sobre la historia social e intelectual del judaísmo sefardí en el siglo XVII* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1996), 56–77. See also Bodian, *Hebrews*.

realms of liturgy.⁸⁰ Richard Popkin has even termed the Sephardim in Amsterdam, “a group of Iberian intellectuals, trained in the Catholic tradition.”⁸¹ Likewise, historian Renée Levine Melammed asserts that “their education and cultural baggage was totally Iberian.”⁸² Indeed, it was not uncommon for Sephardim in Amsterdam to ignore *halakic* [Jewish law and tradition] norms regarding Jewishness being passed matrilineally. Rather, as Miriam Bodian shows, they adopted Iberian socio-sexual norms which privileged male descent.⁸³ Not only were the new Christians Iberians in terms of education and cultural “baggage;” most aspired to be aristocratic Iberians, in keeping with the premium that Iberian culture placed on nobility.⁸⁴ They eagerly accepted titles, and sought to extend their genealogies as far back as possible into a (largely imagined) medieval Iberian or even biblical past.

Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, along with other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, even those who lived or had been born outside of Portugal, shared this identification and “cultural baggage” of being Portuguese. This fed into both their sense of a particular ethnic identity, but also a sense of cultural belonging to the larger Portuguese milieu. New Christian merchants and non-new Christian Portuguese merchants had remarkably similar (often identical) orientations toward their environment, especially the mercantile environment. They behaved in comparable ways, economically and socially. They shared a set of presuppositions as to how the world of commerce should work. The new Christian merchants dressed like non-new Christian Portuguese and their families were likewise structured.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Renée Levine Melammed, *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 78.

⁸¹ Richard H. Popkin, “The Historical Significance of Sephardic Judaism in 17th Century Amsterdam,” *American Sephardi* 5 (1971): 18–27, 26.

⁸² Melammed, *A Question of Identity*, 78.

⁸³ Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 115. Bodian uses the example of the dowry society set up by the Portuguese Sephardic community. The illegitimate daughters of Sephardic men were allowed to enter the lottery to receive a dowry, even if the mother had not been of Sephardic or Jewish descent. However, the illegitimate daughters of Portuguese Sephardic mothers who were Jewish from birth according to *halakic* norms were not permitted to apply for a dowry.

⁸⁴ Daniel Swetschinski details the aristocratic tastes of the Sephardim. See Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 278–314.

⁸⁵ This study looks at three male new Christian merchants and their Dutch associates. However, men were hardly the only bearers of religio-cultural identity. If time and space had permitted, it would have been interesting to include Sephardic women in Amsterdam in the story. Several scholars have noted that crypto-Judaic practice and belief was passed via women in Iberian families. See, for example, the work of:

Culture, according to the anthropologist Robert Redfield, consists of conventional understandings that characterize particular groups. Among the people in each group there are common understandings, and shared values and conceptions of what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable. There are numerous norms of conduct—how various categories of people are to be approached and what may or may not be done with reference to them. Culture consists of the assumptions with which people in a particular group approach their world.⁸⁶ Furthermore, when people live side by side for a long period of time, as did the new Christians in Portugal and, later, in the Dutch Republic, they usually learn to appreciate something of one another's perspectives and become more or more alike.⁸⁷ But defining what constitutes "culture" is an undertaking fraught with pitfalls, so much so that many cultural anthropologists refuse to use the word 'culture' in the noun form and refuse to speak of a culture as an identifiable social unit.⁸⁸ Likewise, they do not believe that boundaries between cultures exist. And, in fact, it is difficult to assert, as I outlined earlier, that there was a cultural boundary in any real sense of the word between the new Christians and the "old" Christian Portuguese.

Though the evidence is admittedly impressionistic, it seems that Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio acted like and were regarded

David M. Gitlitz, "The Barajas Women," *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto Jews* 1 (Spring 2009): 26–32; Janet Liebman Jacobs, "Women, Ritual, and Secrecy: The Creation of Crypto-Jewish Culture," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 35, 2 (June 1996), 97–108; and much of the work of Renée Levine Melammed, including *Heretics or Daughters of Israel?: The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); "The Ultimate Challenge: Safeguarding the Crypto-Judaic Heritage," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 53 (1986): 91–109; "Transmission of Jewish Tradition by Spanish Conversas in the Sixteenth Century," [Hebrew] in A. Haim, ed., *Society and Community Proceedings of the Second International Congress on the Sephardi-Oriental Jewish Heritage* (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, 1992), 161–172; "Crypto-Jewish Women Facing the Spanish Inquisition: Transmitting Religious Practices, Beliefs, and Attitudes," in Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English, eds., *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Social Change* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 197–219. In addition, in many immigrant communities, acculturation is slowest in the domestic sphere but is accelerated among men who "go out" of this sphere to make a living. It is possible that there were pronounced cultural distinctions among Amsterdam's Portuguese Sephardim but were primarily to be found in the wives, daughters, aunts, nieces, and grandmothers.

⁸⁶ Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 132.

⁸⁷ Shibutani and Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification*, 49.

⁸⁸ Manning, "The Problem of Interactions in World History," 779.

as Portuguese business men, especially in Amsterdam. Certainly, Carvalho, Osorio, and Rodrigues Vega (though not his family in Antwerp) were, by the second decade of the sixteenth century, also regarded as Jews by the surrounding society in the Dutch Republic. Nevertheless, they were also viewed as businessmen. For Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, a large part of their identity was rooted in their economic function. In fact, just as today, the choice of identity or affiliation was often the most important economic decision people made.⁸⁹ Along these lines of thought, Rivkin argues that the new Christians chose a Jewish identity when it suited them, such as when it was more convenient to be a Jew in Protestant Amsterdam than a Catholic. Rivkin also asserts that the new Christian merchants were defined by their economic function as entrepreneurs.⁹⁰ And, as Rivkin claims, some new Christian merchants quite likely decided to affiliate with Judaism because of economic incentives, though it is not clear if such economic incentives motivated the decisions of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio's to affiliate with Judaism.⁹¹ Moreover, there is little doubt that the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam had as much, or more, in common with fellow entrepreneurs, regardless of political, religious, and national differences, than with the poor Ashkenazi Jews who flooded into Amsterdam as refugees from the Thirty Years' War.

Thus, the new Christians had moved from being a branch of Jewry based in Iberia to being an ethnic group with a shared language, place of real or imagined origin, and historical experiences. They showed tangible concern for, and affiliation with, other Portuguese of new Christian ancestry, regardless of their form of religious expression. In a sense, the new Christians' permutations of personal religious belief (and these could have been anywhere on a spectrum between devoted Catholicism to fervent crypto-Judaism) did not really affect

⁸⁹ George A. Akerlof and Rachel E. Kranton, "Economics and Identity," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, 3 (August, 2000): 715–753.

⁹⁰ Rivkin, *The Shaping of Jewish History*, 140–158 and his "Uma Historia de Duas Diasporas," in Anita Novinsky and Diane Kuperman, eds., *Iberica Judaica: Roteiros da Memoria* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 1996), 267–275.

⁹¹ For an excellent discussion of the dynamic of "nominal," "ethnic" or "non-religious" Jews affiliating with traditional or "orthodox" Jewish practice due, at least in part, to economic incentives, see Veerle Vanden Daelen's study of the post-World War II Jewish community in Antwerp, *Laten we hun lied verder zingen: de heropbouw van de joodse gemeenschap in Antwerpen na de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1944–1960)* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008).

their perception of their own ethnicity. Moreover, a primary interest was in acquiring capital and in reducing risks to their livelihoods. They acquired capital and reduced risks by behaving as did most other businessmen of the time—namely, developing and maintaining powerful *clientage* networks formed via joint commercial interests and amalgamated through participation in collective institutions.

These networks included “old” Christians, as well as “Dutch” merchants in the Dutch Republic. They were based upon durable and long-lasting associations and relationships, and were hardly homogeneous. But we must reframe the delineation of the inter-culturality of these networks and acknowledge the porous and shifting nature of cultures, especially elite merchant culture, in the early modern period. Thus, I suggest that the borders of the inter-cultural interaction be demarcated as lying between Iberian and Dutch culture, rather than between Jewish and Dutch culture.

But what was Dutch culture? If culture, as I noted previously, consists of conventional understandings, assumptions, shared values, and conceptions of what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, and similar norms of conduct, then what was it that embodied Dutch culture and differentiated it from Iberian culture? Scholars have been discussing the mentality and culture of early modern Dutch society for decades.⁹²

⁹² Some of these works dealing with the social history of the Low Countries, including its culture, in the broadest sense, include A. Th. van Deursen, *Plain lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth Century Holland*, Trans. Maarten Ultee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Anton Schuurman and Lorena Waalsh, eds., *Material Culture: Consumption, Life-Style, Standard of Living, 1500–1900* [Proceedings of the 11th International Economic History Congress, Milan, September 1994] (Milan: Università Bocconi, 1994); Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1987); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988); Jeroen J.H. Dekker and L. Groenendijk, “The Republic of God or the Republic of Children? Childhood and Child-Rearing after the Reformation: An Appraisal of Simon Schama’s Thesis about the Uniqueness of the Dutch Case,” *Oxford Review of Education* 17, 3 (1991): 317–335; Jeroen Dekker, “Message et réalité: L’iconographie de l’éducation des enfants et sa signification morale dans la peinture de genre hollandaise du XVII^e siècle,” in Egle Becchi and Dominique Julia, eds., *Histoire de l’enfance en Occident*, Volume I (*De l’Antiquité au XVII^e siècle*) (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 374–401; Rudolf Dekker, *Childhood, Memory and Autobiography in Holland: From the Golden Age to Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Egle Becchi and Dominique Julia, eds., *Histoire de l’enfance en Occident*, Volume I (*De l’Antiquité au XVII^e siècle*) (Paris: Seuil, 1998); Florike Egmond, *Underworlds: Organized Crime in the Netherlands, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Johan Huizinga, most famously, located Dutch culture in the seventeenth century as a middle-class culture which was fundamentally different from the rest of Europe.⁹³ Coupled with this middle-class culture that Huizinga posited, scholars have pointed to the gradual diffusion of Protestantism. Yet Protestantism in the Dutch Republic was hardly uniform. The Calvinists discriminated against the Lutherans and Anabaptists (not to mention the Catholics!), and a feud between Arminianism and Gomarism brought the country to the brink of civil war. Moreover, Catholics were still “tolerated” and participated in civic society. So Protestantism was hardly a monolithic and wholly unifying component of Dutch culture in the seventeenth century. As Jonathan Israel notes, the culture of the Dutch Republic was “an uneasy blend of Protestant-Catholic confrontation, humanist-confessional antagonism, and Protestant anti-Calvinist dissent, which fragmented thought and education.”⁹⁴

Indeed, the Dutch Republic was deeply divided. There were ideological debates about the form of political representation on the municipal, provincial, and national levels. Social life was full of factions and group interests, and there was constant tension between the need for unity and impulses toward factionalism, provincialism, competing identities, and religious conflict. The result of these internal conflicts and stresses was a highly dynamic but, for our purposes, difficult to define cultural milieu. That being said, Huizinga was at least partially correct. The middle classes were full-fledged participants in the cultural

University Press, 1994); Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff, eds., *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers Rotterdam, 1991); Willem Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002); Jan Bremmer, ed., *From Sappho to De Sade: Moments in the History of Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1989); Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van der Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989); Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg, eds., *A Cultural History of Humour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Rudolf Dekker, *Humour in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, et al., *Illness and Healing Alternatives in Western Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Frank Huisman, “Medicine and Health Care in the Netherlands 1500–1800,” in Klaas van Berkel, Albert van Helden and Lodewijk Palm, eds., *A History of Science in the Netherlands: Survey, Themes and Reference* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 239–278; Hans Binneveld and Rudolf Dekker, eds., *Curing and Ensuring: Essays on Illness in Past Times: The Netherlands, Belgium, England, Italy 16th–20th Centuries* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993).

⁹³ Johan Huizinga, *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century, and Other Essays*, Pieter Geyl and F.W.N. Hugenholtz, eds. (London: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1968).

⁹⁴ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 565.

system. This cultural system, uniquely, included what scholars have dubbed a “discussion culture” which included the broad culture of participation, meetings, and committees, many of which took place in a neutral, typically urban, public space. This neutral public space was the catalyst for the ecumenicity of everyday life, and stimulated high rates of voluntary participation in civic life.⁹⁵

But was this very different from the Iberian milieu from which the Sephardim in Amsterdam came? Any discussion of culture, as we have seen, requires huge generalizations and smoothing over very evident contradictions. Obviously, in the Dutch Republic the use of Portuguese for daily economic and social interactions, Spanish for literary endeavors, and Hebrew for religious purposes differed from the use of Dutch for daily affairs and Latin or French for literary or “court” languages (though many highly educated Sephardim were also familiar with these languages). Nonetheless, the Portugal of the seventeenth century was, in comparison to the Dutch Republic, a hierarchical culture with a comparatively small middle class, many or even most of whom were new Christians. The merchant class, while certainly important, especially in light of Portugal’s overseas expansion, did not have the social status that the landed gentry had. Moreover, Portugal was still a largely rural country, in contrast to the Dutch Republic’s highly urbanized civic culture. Clearly, the respective religious backdrops in the Dutch Republic and in Portugal differed significantly. In comparison to Dutch Republic, religious dissent within Portugal was experienced largely in the Inquisition’s fear of crypto-Judaism, with only very occasional trials relating to Protestantism, crypto-Muslims, and other forms of heresy, such as witchcraft. And, in fact, Protestantism in all its denominational splendor was hardly evident. Civic life generally took place within confraternities or in guilds, in contrast to the Dutch Republic’s voluntary organizations, such as militias. Again, all these sweeping statements are open to debate. Nevertheless, they outline the broad categories separating the Iberian culture from which the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam had come versus that of their Dutch associates.

Historians have paid a great deal of attention to the study of minority groups and their particular cultures, as the surfeit of studies on the

⁹⁵ Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *1650: Hard-Won Unity*, [Dutch Culture in a European Perspective, Volume I] (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2004), 67, 599.

new Christians and the Amsterdam Sephardim exemplifies. However, there cannot be a minority group without a dominant group. Both the minority and the dominant groups are involved in a common social system, and we cannot understand what happens in one group without understanding the involvement of the other group. Moreover, a central finding of social psychology is that activation of group identities requires confrontation between groups.⁹⁶ Essentially, then, the new Christians could not understand themselves as belonging to an ethnic group without reference to Portuguese “old” Christian society. Likewise, they could not identify themselves culturally as Portuguese or Iberians without coming into contact with non-Portuguese. On a given frontier of contact, various ethnic groups, minority groups, and dominant groups are all interlocked in a common system and must, therefore, be studied together.⁹⁷ The next chapter will discuss these frontiers of contact between the Amsterdam Sephardim and their Dutch associates.

⁹⁶ Hillel Rapoport and Avi Weiss, “The Optimal Size for a Minority,” Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Discussion Paper no. 284, April 2001, 3, http://papers.ssrn.com/paper.taf?abstract_id=267221.

⁹⁷ Shibutani and Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification*, 55.

CHAPTER TWO

DIASPORA, MIGRATION, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF INTER-CULTURAL TRADE¹

Jews, in general, and the new Christians, specifically, have traditionally been understood in terms of the concept of diaspora. Yet, if we examine what “diaspora” as a conceptual framework really means, it becomes apparent that diaspora does not work as a structure with which to understand how either new Christian trade networks or new Christian identity were formed. Rather, we must look to theories of trade networks and migration for a better conceptualization of new Christian economic behavior, at least in the so-called Occidental Diaspora of the new Christians.² In this chapter, I will explore the various understandings of “diaspora” and show how they fall short as frameworks for understanding the activities of the Sephardim in Amsterdam between 1595 and 1640. I will utilize instead the important distinction, made by Francesca Trivellato, between “diaspora” and “trade network”. This distinction allows for the study of the ways in which internal diaspora solidarities might function in trade relationships, while also acknowledging that trade relationships occurred frequently outside the confines of the diaspora group—relationships that were incorporated in trade networks.³ I will then explain how Patrick Manning’s idea of “cross-community migration” offers a better framework with which to conceptualize new Christian trade networks and processes of affiliation and identification than does “diaspora.”⁴

¹ Parts of this chapter have appeared previously in Jessica Vance Roitman, “Sephardische Juden im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit,” in K.J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer, Leo Lucassen, and Jochen Öltmer, eds., *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2007), 975–981.

² The “Occidental diaspora” will be discussed later in this chapter.

³ Trivellato, “Trading Diasporas and Trading Networks in the Early Modern Period,” 15. Dr. Trivellato’s book, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009) came out before this book was going to press. Unfortunately, therefore, I have not been able to incorporate the insights of Dr. Trivellato’s newest work into my analysis.

⁴ Manning, “Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern.”

Theories of Diasporas

Jews, in general, and the new Christians, in particular, have traditionally been studied within the context and through the lens of diaspora, particularly of a Jewish diaspora. In fact, the very term “diaspora” had traditionally been reserved for the Jewish diaspora, with the implication of forced exile, specifically the dispersion after the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE.”⁵ However, “diaspora” as a term had expanded to include groups such as the Armenians or the Huguenots who were strongly bound together by religion, a bond that came to be implicit in any discussion of diaspora. Moreover, these groups had been in some way forced into exile or dispersion. This focus on forced exile presupposed a “taboo” on return, or a postponement of return until a distant or even mythical future.⁶ For the new Christians after 1492, this longing for a return, as the cultural anthropologist, James Clifford points out, “could be focused on a city in Spain [or Portugal] at the same time as on the Holy Land.”⁷ Indeed, Jewish experience often entails “multiple experiences of re-diasporization, which do not necessarily succeed each other in historical memory but echo back and forth.”⁸ And, in fact, for merchants such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio there could have been as many as three strands of diaspora experience: the original diaspora from the Holy Land, the post-1492 diaspora from Spain (if the merchant’s family was of Spanish descent), and/or the larger Portuguese diaspora stemming from state-sanctioned expansionist enterprises.

Until the early 1970s, however, the so-called Portuguese diaspora would not have been termed as such. In the past, historians focused on “merchant communities” and “foreign nations” within national entities, such as the Dutch nation in Bordeaux or the English nation in

⁵ McCabe, “Introduction,” xviii.

⁶ James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, 3 (1994): 302–338, 304. William Safran posits a similar definition of diaspora. He focuses on the maintainance of a “memory, vision or myth about their original homeland,” and says that members of a diaspora “see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return, when the time is right.” See, William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” *Diaspora* 1, 1 (1991): 83–99, 83–84.

⁷ Clifford, “Diasporas,” 305.

⁸ Jonathan Boyarin quoted in Clifford, “Diasporas,” 305.

Antwerp, to name but two examples.⁹ This approach was considered a more accurate way to grapple with the topic, particularly for the middle ages and the early modern period. Moreover, the approach reinforced traditional notions of geographical unity in historical research.¹⁰ However, in 1971, Abner Cohen coined the term “trade diaspora” to define “ethnic groups formed by communities living in dispersal and yet highly interdependent, and which defined their membership and spheres of operation in terms of exclusiveness.”¹¹

According to Cohen’s definitions, the term “trade diaspora” could be applicable to many groups, including, as McCabe notes, the East India Company factors, such as the English in India and the Dutch in Southeast Asia.¹² Due in part to Cohen’s expansion of what constitutes a diaspora, there are now over thirty groups categorized as diasporas.¹³ Philip Curtin, in the early 1980s, drew upon Cohen’s work to analyze trading diasporas worldwide, from antiquity to the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁴ Curtin incorporated Cohen’s conception of trade diasporas as “socially interdependent, but spatially dispersed communities.”¹⁵ Curtin asserted that diaspora groups “could serve as cross-cultural brokers, helping and encouraging trade between the host society and people of their own origin who moved along the trade routes.”¹⁶ Curtin viewed trade diasporas as historical agents, and this view of trading diasporas as historical agents has served as a catalyst for new historical perspectives. Since Cohen and Curtin, considerations of diasporas and diaspora trading networks, which were once marginal in academic

⁹ The term “nation” indicated any collective group whose status was legally recognized in the framework of a corporate society and upon which specific rights and limitations were conferred. It also came to be used by the Sephardim to refer to themselves. They often called themselves, and were called, “The Nation” or “The Portuguese Nation” or “Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation” but this is not the use of the term referred in this instance.

¹⁰ For an overview of this topic, see Frédéric Mauro, “Merchant Communities, 1350–1750,” in James Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255–286.

¹¹ Abner Cohen, “Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas,” in Claude Meillassoux, ed., *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa: Studies presented and discussed at the Tenth International African Seminar at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, December 1969* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 266–281, 267 note 1.

¹² McCabe, “Introduction,” xix.

¹³ McCabe, “Introduction,” xviii.

¹⁴ Trivellato, “Trading Diasporas and Trading Networks in the Early Modern Period,” 10.

¹⁵ Cohen, “Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas,” 2, note 2.

¹⁶ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, 2.

debates, have come to the fore. Although the debate on the idea of diaspora began in the early 1970s, the past ten years have seen an explosion in scholarship about the usage, meaning and implications of the concept of diaspora.¹⁷

Historians have recently begun focusing on the interconnected and trans-national nature of some of these merchant communities, such as the new Christians but also the Armenians, Indians, Greeks, and Huguenots, among others.¹⁸ This examination of the role of trans-national and interconnected groups has included reconsideration of the nation-state as the default model for historical investigation. Moreover, there is a new focus among historians on the role “outsiders” within a society played in the politics of the emerging nation-state.¹⁹ As Donna Merwick has shown in her work on colonial New York, the insider/outsider divide does not work as a framework for understanding what separated migrants from their host societies and what helped join

¹⁷ There is far too much literature to be cited here. However, some of the main arguments and debates can be found in the journal *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* and in Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Migration, diasporas, and transnationalism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1999).

¹⁸ See, for example, Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); R.C. Nash, “The Huguenot Diaspora and the Development of the Atlantic Economy: Huguenots and the Growth of the South Carolina Economy, 1680–1775,” in Olaf Uwe Janzen, ed., *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660–1815* (St. John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime History Association), 75–105; Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *The Shah’s Silk for Europe’s Silver: The Eurasian Trade of the Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India (1530–1750)* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999); and Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For a reprint of older essays collected under the rubric of “merchant networks,” see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ed., *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1996). Of course, the very concept of “nation” or “national” is fraught with difficulties during this time. Nevertheless, it is easy to use as a short-hand term for a geographical entity bound together by some sort of common system of governance and often, linguistic and/or ethnic unity.

¹⁹ Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, “Global Ambitions in Diaspora: The Armenians and their Eurasian Silk Trade, 1530–1750,” in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 27–50. Not only is the role of minority groups in the formation of the nation-state debated; so too is the very concept of what constitutes a nation-state and, moreover, if a nation-state truly exists. See, for example, Benedict Anderson and Richard O’Gorman, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986) to name but a few of the works which grapple with this topic.

them these societies.²⁰ This is a point acknowledged by James Clifford, who writes, “Diasporas are caught up with and defined against the norms of nation-states.”²¹

Scholars have typically viewed diasporas as engendering trust among their members, trust which in turn leads to an economic advantage on the part of diaspora group members. Jonathan Israel asserts that the most visible form of this economic advantage is seen in the reduction in transaction costs—costs that non-group members would incur.²² The combined bonds of family and religious community are believed to have not only minimized transaction costs, but also to have facilitated commercial ventures without the necessity of resorting to judicial or institutional entities, all of which were seen as advantageous to diaspora groups. As Aghassian and Kevonian and other specialists in Armenian commercial history have stressed, what was crucial to their success, as for that of other classic diasporas, was a system of trust supplemented by informal methods of enforcing family, religious and business discipline.²³ In short, social ties are vital for the study of trade diasporas. The trust engendered by membership in a diaspora group allowed for exchanges to take place despite the risks inherent in trade in the early modern period.²⁴

In any discussion of diaspora groups during the early modern period, the word “success” appears repeatedly. Most scholars seem to agree that “trade diasporas,” to use Cohen’s terminology, were commercially successful. This naturally leads historians to question why, exactly, it was that trade diasporas were successful. Scholars posit various answers, but there are three prevailing themes: Ability to straddle cultural and geographic divides; trust; and religion. These reasons are not, of course, mutually exclusive, and all could be applicable to the Sephardim of Amsterdam.

Jonathan Israel believes that the new Christians, in general, and the Sephardim, specifically, owed part of their commercial success to their

²⁰ Donna Merwick, *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

²¹ Clifford, “Diasporas,” 307.

²² Jonathan, Israel, “Diasporas Jewish and non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires,” in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 3–26, 9. Unfortunately, Israel offers no concrete examples of this assumed reduction in transactions costs.

²³ Aghassian and Kevonian, “The Armenian Merchant Network,” 74–94.

²⁴ See Mathias, “Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period,” 5–24 for an excellent discussion of the risky nature of early modern trade.

“capacity to span religious and cultural divides as well as continents and oceans, the characteristics which became their chief hallmark during the sixteenth century.”²⁵ The new Christians and the Amsterdam Sephardim were hardly the only groups to span cultural divides, however. Greeks and Armenians, as Christians, bridged the gap between the Christian and Islamic worlds.²⁶ Curtin follows this line of thought in his discussion of cross-cultural brokerage when he examines diaspora groups as having been intermediaries with the necessary skills (language, business, diplomatic, and legal) for handling transactions for a variety of people.²⁷ This inter-cultural brokerage element is certainly important, though in the specific case of the Sephardim in Amsterdam, the Dutch merchants with whom they did business did not particularly need the Sephardim as cross-cultural brokers, in the manner in which Curtin defines them. In fact, the Sephardim sometimes used Dutch merchants as their own cross-cultural brokers. For instance, Sephardic merchants would often grant Powers of Attorney to Dutch merchants in other lands, including lands where there were “members” of the new Christian diaspora, in order for the Dutch merchants to negotiate business dealings for them.

In addition to cross-cultural factors, scholars often look to religion as a reason for the success of trade diasporas. Historians and sociologists have debated whether intrinsic religious values themselves could be a reason for business success. Most famously, Werner Sombart used Jewish scripture in an attempt to explain Jewish economic success and Max Weber looked to Protestant theology to account for the rise of capitalism. The Christianity of the Armenians, according to some scholars, was the reason for their economic achievements in the Muslim world. More recently, scholars have looked to the philosophies of Confucius to analyze Chinese entrepreneurship.

Although these religion-based explanations for economic achievement have been largely discredited by recent scholarship, most historians agree that a shared religion, especially in a diaspora group, helps to provide a basis for the formation of values, coherence, social

²⁵ Israel, “Diasporas Jewish and non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires,” in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 10.

²⁶ V. Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea: The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001); Aghassian and Kevonian, “The Armenian Merchant Network,” 74–94.

²⁷ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, 182, 197–8.

organization, and legitimating authority among the members of the community. For example, a church or synagogue of a merchant's fellow countrymen or group in a foreign land would be a place to meet others who shared his background. Such places of worship could also be somewhere to find business and marriage partners from within the community. As Peter Mathias points out, "Minority groups in trade and banking—whether Quakers, Jews, Scots, and all other nationalities—created their own group identities when operating outside their own countries, and when scattered across the globe."²⁸ Thus, it is most likely that social aspects of religion helped to establish personal trust far more than did any particular values of a religion, *per se*, and which accounted for that religious group's economic success.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were members of the new Christian diaspora, which was both one strand of the larger Jewish diaspora and, more importantly, an ethnically-based sub-group of the so-called Portuguese diaspora in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As new Christian diaspora members, they transacted business frequently with fellow new Christians. As part of the larger Portuguese diaspora, they also worked often with old Christians, as the Portuguese diaspora was religiously heterogeneous. These business endeavors are not particularly surprising, if what has been written about the efficacy of diasporas is to be believed. But how, then, is it possible to explain the frequent and long-lasting relationships that these Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam had with Dutch merchants who were in no way part of the Portuguese diaspora community?

These frequent and long-lasting economic relationships were possible because a diaspora group was not always synonymous with a trade network. A diaspora, drawing on Cohen's definition, is formed by communities living in dispersal who are highly interdependent and who have a shared ethnic, national, and/or religious identity. In the case of the new Christians, they had a shared ethnic identity based on their experience of stigmatized Jewish ancestry, and a national/cultural identity centered in Portugal. Thus, they were "socially interdependent, [though] spatially dispersed." But this social interdependence based on shared ethnicity and national culture did not define their economic relationships. Therefore, as Francesca Trivellato's important

²⁸ Mathias, "Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period," 15.

work has highlighted, it is important to distinguish between diaspora and trading network, as they are not always synonymous.²⁹

I, too, will distinguish between diaspora networks and trading networks.³⁰ I make this distinction, in part, because the term “trading network” lacks the implicit and explicit connotation of cultural cohesion of “diaspora.” As the following chapters will show, the trading networks of the Amsterdam Sephardim were heterogeneous, though there remained an ethnically-based cohesiveness among the new Christian diaspora. The next part of this chapter will discuss the formation of the various strands of the new Christian diaspora. As part of this discussion, I will examine the nodes of the new Christian diaspora and discuss connections that Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio had with these various places. Lastly, this chapter will explore the concept of “cross-community migration” as a conceptual framework with which to discuss the new Christians, in general, as well as the Sephardim in Amsterdam, specifically.

The Disparate Strands of Diaspora

The rest of this chapter will discuss the background of the formation of the initial Jewish and new Christian diaspora from Spain. After the initial expulsion from Spain, described below, the Spanish and the Portuguese new Christians and Jews followed different paths, literally and figuratively. They certainly maintained some familial and commercial connections, but were often, though not exclusively, involved in different networks. The Portuguese new Christians developed a very different cultural and religious identity from that of the Jews who went to the Ottoman Empire. I will examine the dynamics of the Portuguese new Christians’ diaspora to north-western Europe.

These processes of diaspora and identity formation are important for understanding the dynamics of the social and economic relationships of the merchants analyzed in this study. The dispersal—not just of these specific merchants but of the new Christians and Jews as a

²⁹ Trivellato, “Trading Diasporas and Trading Networks in the Early Modern Period,” 15.

³⁰ By network, I mean “a collection of actors that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another.” See, Joel M. Podolny and Karen L. Page, “Network Forms of Organization,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 57–76, 59.

whole—was a means of developing economic contacts and expertise. Often, these economic contacts were with non-new Christians. Thus, their tightly-knit networks of relations with fellow new Christians became, via the diaspora experience, supplemented by loose ties with non-new Christian merchants. Hence, diaspora plays an important role economically, not just in terms of identity formation, though this identity formation is a vital component of the diaspora experience. Therefore, it is important that I discuss the general new Christian diaspora. As part of this general discussion, Osorio's, Carvalho's, and Rodrigues Vega's relations to the different nodes of the new Christian diaspora will be interwoven into the story as a backdrop for the formation of their inter-cultural trading relationships.

As Portuguese new Christian merchants, Bento Osorio, Manoel Carvalho, and Manoel Rodrigues Carvalho belonged to the Portuguese mercantile diaspora of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This Portuguese diaspora was comprised of merchants taking advantage of the expanding European world, in general, and Portugal's expansion, in particular, so as to make money. Once the two Iberian crowns were unified, in 1580, the Portuguese merchants had unprecedented opportunities in the Spanish overseas territories. Portugal's economy had begun to slump by the end of the sixteenth century.³¹ Meanwhile, opportunities based on colonial trade, particularly in commodities such as sugar and spices, continued to be attractive, as they had been for the course of the sixteenth century, in Antwerp. More importantly, however, Amsterdam and Hamburg became colonial entrêpôts, a fact that no doubt played an important role in the new Christian merchants' decisions to settle there. The emigration from Portugal was based not just on economic motives, however. Some new Christians fled due to a combination of Inquisitorial pressure and a desire for greater religious freedom.

³¹ James Lang, *Portuguese Brazil: The King's Plantation* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1979), 31–34.

Expulsion, Conversion and Inquisition

The first large-scale Jewish and new Christian migration occurred during the latter part of the fourteenth century, when persecution of Jews in Spain began to intensify. This Jewish and new Christian migration then increased exponentially after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. That year, Jews were expelled from Castile and Aragon and, relatively soon after, from other Iberian kingdoms such as Navarre in 1498.³² The majority of these initial exiles from Spain migrated along the routes of the Mediterranean, towards North Africa, and especially towards the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire, at the end of the fifteenth century and during the early part of the sixteenth century. Many of the Jews who remained in the Iberian Peninsula after the Spanish expulsion choose to convert to Catholicism and remain in Spain as *conversos*. Most of those who did not convert to Catholicism made the journey on foot to Portugal, where they found refuge upon payment of a tax. A small percentage sailed on small river boats to Portugal, while others walked or sailed via river ways to the Kingdom of Navarre and later left the Peninsula entirely. In Portugal, the Spanish Jews joined anywhere from 50,000–100,000 of their fellow Portuguese Jews.

Little is known about the entry of Spanish exiles into Portugal in 1492. Estimates of the actual numbers of Spanish Jews who migrated to Portugal vary widely, ranging anywhere from 30,000 to 120,000.³³ Portugal and the city-states of the Italian peninsula were the only territories in what would now be called western Europe to harbor a large Jewish population after 1492. Of the two, Portugal almost certainly had the larger population—perhaps between 5% and 8% of the total population. Some historians claim that the native Portuguese Jewish communities were disrupted and overwhelmed by the arrival of their

³² Benjamin R. Gampel, *The Last Jews on Iberian Soil: Navarrese Jewry 1479/1498* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

³³ Abraham Zacuto estimated the total number of Spanish Jewish immigrants to Portugal in 1492 at 120,000. See his *Sefer Yuhasin*, ed. Herschel Filipowski (London: Edinburg, 1857), 222a. The figure of 93,000, the most commonly quoted number, is based on the Spanish chronicle of André Bernaldez, cited by João Lúcio d'Azevedo in *História dos Cristãos-Novos Portugueses* (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1922), 21. The lowest figure, of “somewhat less than 30,000,” is based on evidence provided by Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV*, Chapter 5.

Spanish co-religionists.³⁴ This may or may not have been the case, but, under any circumstances, it is difficult to say what such a large influx of immigrants in such a short period of time meant to a country with a total population of somewhat less than one million people.³⁵

The majority of the initial exiles from Spain and, later, from Portugal migrated along the Mediterranean, towards North Africa, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire, at the end of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century. The Jews of this so-called Oriental diaspora retained their distinct ethnic and religious identity, including their language and culture, until the destruction of their communities in the twentieth century.³⁶ In contrast to the “Oriental” diaspora, there were near constant streams of migrants and migration within the so-called Occidental diaspora from the end of the sixteenth century, throughout the seventeenth, and well into the early eighteenth century.³⁷

In spite of these differences, and in spite of the fact that it is the “Occidental” diaspora—which included Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio—it is important to at least review the background of the “Oriental” diaspora. A general understanding of this strand of the larger new Christian and Jewish diaspora helps to contextualize both the Sephardic settlement in Amsterdam, in general, and the economic and social behaviors of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, specifically. In addition, there were connections between these two diasporas, which can be seen in the economic relationships of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio. However, these economic connections

³⁴ According to M. Kayserling, the Portuguese Jewish communities, consulted by King João II (1481–1495), had opposed admission of the Spanish Jews. See: Kayserling, *História dos Judeus em Portugal*, 97. In several places where the Spanish Jews first settled, separate quarters, synagogues, and cemeteries were created. See Ferro Tavares, *Século XV*, Chapter 5. This separation has led some historians to speculate that the two groups were at least somewhat incompatible.

³⁵ João Lúcio d’Azevedo, *Elementos para a História Económica de Portugal (Séculos XII a XVII)* (Lisbon: INAPA, 1967), 125, 157.

³⁶ Information about the Sephardic Diaspora can be found in the following works: Haim Beinart, “La Diaspora Sefardi en Europa y Especialmente en la Cuencia del Mediterraneo,” *Judíos y Cristianos en la Cuenca Mediterránea: Hispania Sacra*, 40 (1988): 911–931; Avigador Levy, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1992); Jonathan Israel, “Venice, Salonika and the Founding of the Sephardi Diaspora in the North (1574–1621)” in *Diasporas Within a Diaspora*, 67–96.

³⁷ Of course, Sephardic communities remain in western Europe to this day, though they were decimated by the Nazis during World War II. But there were few Sephardic migrants from Portugal after the early-to-mid eighteenth century.

were slight, and this calls into question the idea of an overarching (economic) unity of the new Christian and Sephardic diasporas.

The “Oriental” Diaspora: The Ottoman Domains and North Africa

The immigration of new Christians and Jews to the Ottoman Empire began before 1492, though most of this immigration took place between 1492 and 1512, when Portugal, Navarre, and several Italian States expelled or became increasingly oppressive to their Jewish populations.³⁸ During the initial phase of immigration, most of the new Christians and Jews settled in Istanbul, Edirne, and Salonika, concentrating in the port cities of the southern Balkans and western Anatolia. By the 1520s and 1530s, new Christian and Jewish communities had been founded in towns and cities that had previously had either no Jews or, at best, minor Jewish presences.

Ottoman rule, which was characterized by the institutionalization of administrative and legal systems, aided the material and cultural development of the new Christians and Jews. They were free to travel within the Ottoman domains, which allowed for the emergence of Jewish commercial networks, both within the Empire itself, as well as with Europe, Iran, and India. Because of this freedom, most of the immigrants, even if they had held a complex new Christian identity before moving to the Ottoman domains, gradually joined openly Jewish communities. Therefore, I will refer to them as “Sephardim” or “Sephardic communities.”

Although non-Muslims paid higher taxes, were required to wear distinctive clothing, and were obliged to outwardly accept the superiority of Islam and Muslims, the Ottoman Empire was in fact relatively tolerant of religious minorities, and this allowed Ottoman Jewry to become the hub of the Sephardic diaspora. The Ottoman rulers legally recognized these minorities’ rights to their own religious beliefs and to autonomy in their internal affairs. In addition to the freedom of religion and the autonomy to organize their community,

³⁸ Gampel, ed., *Crisis and creativity in the Sephardic World*; Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora*; Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, and Yosef Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Sephardi Diaspora,” in Haham Gaon, ed., *The Sephardic Journey: 1492–1992* (New York, NY: Yeshiva University, 1992), 136–155; and Avigador Levy, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire*.

the Sephardic Jews could live where they wanted, were permitted to work in almost every profession, and were allowed to travel whenever and wherever they chose.

Although the various religious and ethnic groups existed peaceably side-by-side, and had business dealings with members of other groups, there were tensions between the different communities and sporadic outbreaks of inter-communal violence were not unheard of.³⁹ Nevertheless, recent scholarship on the Ottoman empire has shown that, for the most part, Muslims and non-Muslims interacted and intermingled relatively freely in the neighborhood and marketplace, and utilized the same systems of justice within Ottoman courts.⁴⁰ Though all these religious and ethnic groups, including the Sephardic Jews, contributed to the amalgamation of cultures and religions that comprised the Ottoman cultural milieu, it was difficult to move from membership in one group to affiliation with another, and there is little evidence of inter-marriage between Jews and non-Jews, nor of religious conversion.

The Sephardic Jews became an active and integral part of Ottoman society, both economically and socially. However, Ottoman society, while allowing for peaceful business and social interactions, kept groups segregated. Within Ottoman Jewish society, the Sephardic Jews predominated, and many other Jewish groups within the

³⁹ The potential for aggression against religious minorities was rarely acted upon but did exist. See, Bernard Lewis, *Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 147; Speros Vryonis Jr., "The Experience of Christians under Seljuk and Ottoman Domination, Eleventh to Sixteenth Century," in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikharzi, eds., *Conversion and Continuity: indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands, eighth to eighteenth centuries* (Toronto: Political Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), 185–216, 203; William Montgomery Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 61; John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 13, 23; and Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 19, 83, 89.

⁴⁰ Halil Inalcik, "The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case," in L. Carl Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 17–29, 23–24; Muhammed Adnan Bakhit, "The Christian Population of the Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 volumes (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier, 1982), Volume 1, 19–66, 26; Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 135–137, 398; and Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, vii.

empire adopted their culture.⁴¹ The Sephardic Jews numerically overwhelmed the local Jews, and most of the well-respected rabbis and scholars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were Sephardim. The Sephardic population was bolstered throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by constant immigration. This steady stream of new immigrants helped the Sephardim to attain an influential economic position within the Jewish community. The non-Sephardic Jews adopted Sephardic religious and judicial practices. This adoption of Sephardic custom in the ritual and legal spheres was due, in part, to the higher socio-economic level of the Sephardim. However, it also stemmed from the large number of Sephardic rabbis, who dominated both numerically and in terms of learning and experience.

Connections between the Ottoman Empire and the Sephardim of Amsterdam clearly existed, though Ottoman cities certainly played nowhere near the important role in trade for the Amsterdam Sephardim that the Iberian, Baltic, and colonial trades did. In addition, there is little evidence of strong links with fellow Sephardic merchants in the Ottoman domains. For instance, merchants such as Bento Osorio were listed as importers and exporters for the Levant Company. Of 430 listed importers and exporters, 23 were Amsterdam Sephardim, including Osorio.⁴² This company had been established to regulate commerce and collectively pay for the defense and protection of shipping. The Levant Company was run by Dutch Christian merchants, many of whom did business with Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. These Dutch business associates were major participants, or directors, of the “Directors of the Commerce on the Levant,” which was not a trading company *per se*, but, rather, an institution for the organization of convoys for protection of ships sailing to the Mediterranean. The board of directors was comprised of merchants involved in the Levant

⁴¹ A notable exception to this Sephardi dominance was the situation in Janina (Ioannina). There, Sephardic refugees assimilated into the local Romaniot population and adopted their Greek dialect. See, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 8, 1435. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer who brought this community to my attention.

⁴² Herbert Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Williamsport, PA: Bayard Press, 1937). These merchants were: Raphael Abandana, Ruy Gomes Barbosa, Duarte Palation, Manuel Benevista, Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, Duarto Dias, Manuel Faro, Francisco Feronio, Lopo Hamirus, Manuel Dias de Pas, Daniel Pinto, Manuel Dias Henriques, Menasseh ben Lopo Hamirus, Manuel Dias de Pas, Daniel Pinto, Manuel Dias Henriques, Menasseh ben Israel, Manuel Mendos, Joseph de los Rios, Diego Rodrigos, Jeronimo de Sousa, Symon de Sousa, David de Spinosa, Juda Toro, Salvador Rodrigos, and Francisco Vaes de Castro.

and who had interests in the Mediterranean trade.⁴³ Many of these merchants also had economic relationships with Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. For example, Albert Schuyt, one of the first directors of the Levant Company and a long-time associate of Manoel Carvalho, as I will discuss in the next chapter, insured a ship for Diogo Nunes Belmonte which sailed from the Guinea Coast of West Africa to Livorno, another ship from Constantinople to Venice, and a ship from Lisbon to Bahia.⁴⁴ He also undertook many other transactions with Sephardim, mostly, but not entirely, related to the African and Mediterranean trade.⁴⁵

Indeed, even before the initiation of the “Directors of the Commerce on the Levant,” Volckert Overlander, who occasionally operated with Osorio in the Baltic, was one of the founders of Dutch trade in the Ottoman domains, around 1610.⁴⁶ He may have been influential in introducing other Dutch merchants, who are mentioned along with Overlander in numerous documents regarding the Levant, to trade in this region.⁴⁷ In 1610, several of these men wrote a letter of complaint to the States General of the Dutch Republic about an attack on a ship, thereby showing that they were partners or had formed a sort of rough “company” which later formed the basis of the Directors of the Commerce on the Levant.⁴⁸

Many of the merchants who were important in the Levant trade were also active business partners of Sephardic merchants in the Low Countries. Francois Boudewijn insured shipments for Diogo Nunes Belmonte from Brazil to Portugal and from Constantinople to Venice;⁴⁹ for Mathias Rodrigues concerning shipments to Venice;⁵⁰ for Pascoal

⁴³ M.C. Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs: The ‘Flemish’ Community in Livorno and Genoa (1615–1635)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), 59.

⁴⁴ GAA, NA 258/83; NA 254/301; NA 254/209, respectively.

⁴⁵ These Sephardim were: Pascoal Lopes and Diogo Gomes Duarte; Jaime Lopes da Costa and Francisco Lopes; Belchior and Francisco Mendes; Gaspar Rodrigues Nunes and Francisco da Costa Brandão; Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homem; and Juan Goncales. See, GAA, NA 258/82; GAA, NA 113/6v–7v; GAA, NA 253/35v; GAA, NA 378a/339; GAA, NA 425/182v; GAA, NA 258/84; NA 258/83v.

⁴⁶ Klaas Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, VI. I (’s Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1910), RGP 9, 154, 424, 429.

⁴⁷ RGP 9, 437.

⁴⁸ RGP 9, 32–33. See also, Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen*, 61–62 for a list of the Directors of the Commerce on the Levant.

⁴⁹ GAA, NA 376/180–180v; NA 254/301.

⁵⁰ GAA, NA 378a/293.

Lopes (also with Schuyt);⁵¹ and for Jeronimo da Sousa for figs from Portugal.⁵² Many of the other merchants named with Overlander in the documents regarding the Levant trade (Gaspar van Ceulen,⁵³ Gijsbert Theulincx,⁵⁴ Guglielmo Bartoletti,⁵⁵ Jaspas Quingetti,⁵⁶ Abraham de Linge, Frans Hinlopen⁵⁷ and Salomon Voerknecht,⁵⁸ Overlander's brother-in-law,) follow a similar pattern and had numerous dealings with Sephardic merchants. But the Amsterdam Sephardim do not appear to have participated in the company, or at least not as named shareholders. This could be an indication that the Levant trade was not of great importance for the Amsterdam-based Sephardim, although it could also point to regulation that prevented official Sephardic participation.

In addition to these (rather distant) connections between the Ottoman Empire and the Sephardic settlement in Amsterdam, Manoel Carvalho drew up at least three freight contracts for ships that had the option for putting in at Alexandria, an Ottoman port, but no Sephardic factor was named.⁵⁹ Interestingly, however, there is no surviving documentation attesting to contacts with Sephardic merchants in the Ottoman domains, which calls into question the actual importance of having trading associates from a Sephardic background for the Amsterdam Sephardim, at least in the Ottoman domains.⁶⁰

⁵¹ GAA, NA 258/82.

⁵² GAA, NA 377a/114.

⁵³ GAA, NA 378a/293; NA 114/57v-61; NA 130/147.

⁵⁴ GAA, NA 378a/293.

⁵⁵ GAA, NA 254/108v.

⁵⁶ GAA, NA 86/165-166; NA 97/66-66v; NA 111/167-167v; NA 113/119-120; NA 122/94v-95; NA 120/190-2191; NA 126/83-85; NA 197/171v-172; NA 343/85v-86v; NA 196/282v-283; NA 123/7v; NA 62/223; NA 62/464; NA 94/92-92v; NA 123/87v-88; NA 123/88-88v; NA 123/97v-98.

⁵⁷ GAA, NA 127/195; NA 378a/293; NA 378/317.

⁵⁸ GAA, NA 106/148v-149; NA 209/7v; NA 645/43v-44; NA 258/82-83; NA 611a/127.

⁵⁹ GAA, NA 141/142v; NA 144/151v-153v; NA 149/198-198v.

⁶⁰ Conversely, this could attest to trade via informal means. I would have to find archival sources such as merchants' letters to examine what sort of relationships might have existed.

North Africa

North Africa was more connected to the Sephardic settlement in Amsterdam than were the Sephardic communities in the Ottoman Empire. The importance of North Africa and the Barbary Coast increased for the Amsterdam Portuguese after the end of the Twelve Years' Truce and grew throughout the 1620s and 1630s. Therefore, if it was critical to discuss the Sephardim in the Ottoman domains for contextualization, then it is even more important to review the Sephardim in North Africa.

In North Africa, the Sephardim settled in domains under Portuguese rule, such as Ceuta, as well as in the independent Kingdom of Morocco and in the Corsair Republics. For example, Salé was a pirate republic along the Barbary Coast, which was home to a large number of *moriscos* (those of Muslim descent who had lived in Spain) who had been expelled from Spain after 1609. Salé maintained relations with Amsterdam and other cities in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century. The Sephardim of Amsterdam were especially prominent in the Salé-Netherlands route. For example, Duarte and Gaspar Fernandes, brothers of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, issued a power of attorney to Paulus Isaacqsz and N.N. Court, merchants of Middelburg, and Cornelis Cornelisz., a Dutch merchant in Salé, to arrange payment for a shipment of herring in Salé.⁶¹ There they maintained connections with Spain, Portugal, and the United Provinces.⁶²

The population of Sephardim in the Spanish and Portuguese forts and cities grew during the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (the Jews from Oran, for example, were expelled in 1669). In Mazagán, the Jewish population was a sizeable percentage of the total population of around 2,000 people. In 1621, Manoel Carvalho used his factor in Tunis to conduct trade with Venice.⁶³ However, even before the Twelve Years' Truce, North Africa had played a role in the trade of the Amsterdam Sephardim. From 1616 through 1618, Manoel Carvalho sent ships from Amsterdam along the coast of North

⁶¹ Gemeente Archief Rotterdam, Oud Notarieel Archief Rotterdam, henceforth GAR/ONA, 38, 34/92.

⁶² Jonathan Israel, "The Jews of Spanish North Africa (1580–1669)," in *Diasporas Within a Diaspora*, 151–184 and Jonathan Israel, "Piracy, Trade and Religion: The Jewish Role in the Rise of the Muslim Corsair Republic of Saleh (1624–1666)," in *Diasporas Within a Diaspora*, 291–311.

⁶³ GAA, NA 628/351–353.

Africa, and stops in North African ports seem to have been a standard part of his Mediterranean route.⁶⁴ Bento Osorio also engaged in trade with North African ports, and in 1617 sent a cargo of wheat from Amsterdam to Tangiers and a load of wheat and wood from Norway to Ceuta.⁶⁵ These shipments were only two of many that Osorio made to North Africa during this time, which included not only wheat and wood but also salt.⁶⁶ Moreover, Osorio's shipments to North Africa continued after the end of the Twelve Years Truce.⁶⁷ Interestingly, however, very few of these contracts mention a Sephardic factor or associate in these places. This does not mean that there was not a factor or associate, whether Sephardic or of another background, though the consistent failure to mention Sephardic associates on "the other end" of the trade route raises questions about the extent to which other Sephardim were involved.

Privateers based along the North African coast bought textiles, food, ammunition, and shipbuilding materials. They paid for these goods with the proceeds of their privateering on Atlantic and Mediterranean shipping,⁶⁸ and often enslaved the sailors they captured from these ships. The Sephardim of Amsterdam were active as intermediaries in ransoming Dutch sailors enslaved in North Africa, as it was often more profitable to ransom such sailors back to their families than to sell them into slavery.⁶⁹ The price for a sailor usually ran about 400 guilders per person.⁷⁰ The money could be collected from the family directly and then sent through a Sephardic intermediary. Ransom payments could also be raised from a variety of persons, who would, presumably, be repaid later by the families of the sailors.⁷¹

⁶⁴ GAA, NA 149/198–198v, NA 144/151v–153v, NA 379/628.

⁶⁵ GAA, NA 200/99–99v; NA 109/143–144v.

⁶⁶ GAA, NA 109/143–144v; NA 109/148–149v; NA 109/149v–150; NA 109/152v–153; NA 109/152v; NA 109/201v–202v; NA 109/372v–373; NA 151/209v; NA 151/209v–210; NA 109/221v–223; NA 151/209v; NA 625/75–77; NA 154/129v–130; NA 645/247–248; NA 200/99–99v; NA 625/114–116; NA 645/1047–1049; SR 1582.

⁶⁷ GAA, NA 646a/128.

⁶⁸ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 113–114; H.Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, 2 Volumes (Leiden: Brill, 1974–1981).

⁶⁹ See, for example, GAA, NA 1557a/87, 91, 95, 99, 101, 103, 109, 113, 115, 117, 119, 123, 127, 129, 133, 151; NA 1089/111.

⁷⁰ GAA, NA 646b/1250–1, cited in Jonathan Israel, "Crypto-Judaism in 17th-Century France," in *Diasporas within a Diaspora*, 245–268, 264.

⁷¹ Families were the main source of ransom funds. More research is needed into what role, if any, municipalities, Protestant denominations, the Catholic Church and/or charitable institutions played in the ransoming of sailors.

The “Occidental” Diaspora

The emigration from the Iberian Peninsula, particularly Portugal, was to northern Europe, from the latter part of the sixteenth century, and was comprised of *conversos* or “new Christians.” These new Christians fled due to a combination of Inquisitorial pressure, a desire for greater religious freedom, and economic opportunities. The new Christians and, later, Jews, of the “Occidental” diaspora blended into the cultural milieu of Enlightenment Europe and by the nineteenth century had largely disappeared as a visible ethnic and religious minority in western Europe.⁷²

Until well into the eighteenth century the “push” of persecution and the “pull” of economic opportunity ran side by side as causes of new Christian emigration. New Christians left Portugal and, to a smaller extent, Spain, and went to north-western Europe, especially the cities of Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, and a few smaller French towns on the border with Spain. This diaspora would last from the beginnings of the Portuguese Inquisition, in 1536, until nearly two hundred years later, and reached its height in the seventeenth century. The migration reached its numerical highpoint in the seventeenth century due to increased Inquisitorial pressure in Portugal, as well as the growth of economic opportunities based on the expansion of Europeans to the Americas and the East and West Indies.⁷³ The number of these

⁷² On the assimilation of the Sephardim of the Occidental Diaspora, see, for example, Todd Endelman’s *Radical Assimilation in Anglo-Jewish History, 1656–1945* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), which deals with England. The causes and extent of assimilation within the British context are hotly debated. David Cesarani and William Rubinstein disagree with Endelman’s conclusions. See, respectively, William D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996), and David Cesarani, “British Jews,” in Rainer Liedtke and Stephan Wendehorst, eds., *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 33–55. The dynamics of Sephardic assimilation in other western European countries, especially the Netherlands, Germany, and France resulted from declining populations vis-à-vis the Ashkenazi Jews, assimilation with the Ashkenazi Jews, as well as the pressures to assimilate coming from the surrounding society. See Kaplan, “Wayward New Christians and Stubborn New Jews: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity” and “Amsterdam and Ashkenazi Migration in the Seventeenth Century.” The Ashkenazi had a small presence in Amsterdam earlier in the century, but these numbers began to expand rapidly with the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48) and pogroms in eastern Europe between 1648 and 1660. Although difficult to ascertain, Kaplan believes the Ashkenazi numbered “no less than 500” in Amsterdam in the 1640s.

⁷³ Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Sephardic Diaspora” 136–155.

émigrés varied from decade to decade, but the exodus never entirely ceased. It is nearly impossible, however, to estimate how many new Christians and Jews went to the northern European countries, as the diaspora occurred over nearly 200 years and many new Christians and Jews settled at various times in various locations. Indeed, there were approximately 500 new Christians and Jews in Amsterdam by 1612. In 1620 the number had grown to around 1,000, and by 1672 there were nearly 2,500 Sephardim in Amsterdam.⁷⁴ Recent scholarship has revised the number of Sephardim in Amsterdam at the very end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries upwards to 4,000–5,000 people.⁷⁵

Another factor that further distinguishes the new Christians who went to north-western Europe was that they knew little about their Jewish heritage, as they and their families had lived as Christians for, in some cases, five or more generations.⁷⁶ Thus, they were accustomed to mixing with, and living as, non-Jews, and this is an important fact to keep in mind as this story develops. In fact, the new Christians and Jews of early modern western Europe were in many ways not particularly different from their Christian neighbors, which may have aided in the development of their inter-cultural economic relationships described in the following chapters.

North-Western Europe

“The Low Countries”—Antwerp and Amsterdam

The Low Countries, especially the United Provinces, form the central axis of this story.⁷⁷ The new Christians went to the Habsburg Netherlands in the mid-to-late sixteenth century, particularly to Antwerp, due to its central role in the handling and distribution of Portuguese and Spanish colonial products. By 1570, there were around 400 new

⁷⁴ Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Sephardic Diaspora” 143.

⁷⁵ Hubert P.H. Nusteling, “The Jews in the Republic of the United Provinces: Origin, Numbers and Dispersion,” in Jonathan Israel and Reinier Salverda, eds., *Dutch Jewry*, 43–62, 56.

⁷⁶ Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Sephardic Diaspora.”

⁷⁷ There is a vast amount of literature about the Sephardim in the Low Countries. The seminal work on the Sephardim in Antwerp remains Hans Pohl’s *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648)*. Eddy Stols’ *De Spaanse Brabanders, of de handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische wereld, 1598–1648* (Brussels: Palais der Academiën, 1971) is also highly informative. The literature on the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic will be covered throughout the rest of this work, so will not be footnoted here.

Christians living in Antwerp.⁷⁸ Manoel Rodrigues Vega was most likely born in Antwerp in 1575,⁷⁹ the son of Luis Fernandes (1542–1602)⁸⁰ and Leonora Rodrigues Vega, who had settled in Antwerp around 1572.⁸¹ Rodrigues Vega's father was a sugar and spice importer and served as consul of the Portuguese nation of Antwerp in 1583 and every fourth year thereafter until his death.⁸²

The rebellion of the seven northern provinces of The Netherlands against the Habsburg monarchy made possible openly Jewish settlement in the northern Netherlands, which had been closed to Jews. When Antwerp fell to the Habsburg forces in 1585, immigrants, including new Christians, fled to the northern provinces. Many Protestant immigrants fled for reasons of religious freedom. However, many of these immigrants, both Protestants and the Portuguese new Christians, came to the Dutch Republic, particularly Amsterdam, for the economic opportunities available there.⁸³ The immigration of new Christians into the Dutch Republic began in the mid-1580s and reached its height during the mid-seventeenth century. By 1672, the formative period was over and the Dutch Sephardic Jewish community was close to its height. The community was allowed to organize itself, religiously and socially. The Sephardim and, later, the Ashkenazi Jews could hold their own worship services and build their own synagogues.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Kaplan, "The Formation of Western Sephardi Diaspora," 140.

⁷⁹ Zwarts, "De eerste rabbijnen," 152.

⁸⁰ Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648)*, 91.

⁸¹ V. Vázquez de Prade, *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers*, VI. I: Introduction (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960), 214.

⁸² Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648)*, 91.

⁸³ There is a lively debate in Dutch historiography about the cause and effect of this immigration. Clé Lesger believes that the knowledge and capital the immigrants from Antwerp brought with them contributed substantially to the rise in economic importance of Amsterdam. See, for example, his *Handel in Amsterdam ten tijde van de Opstand: Kooplieden, commerciële expansie en verandering in de ruimtelijke economie van de Nederlanden ca. 1550–ca. 1630* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001). Oscar Gelderblom, in contrast, believes that the majority of immigrants from Antwerp were at the start of their careers and made their fortunes in Amsterdam. See his *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt (1578–1630)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000).

⁸⁴ The historian Pieter van Rooden believes that Jews were allowed to maintain such a public presence in the Dutch Republic because they were not Christians and did not challenge the legitimacy of Calvinism as a state religion. This was in contrast to Catholics and other Protestant sects, who had to worship in *schuilkerken*—churches that were not recognizable as such. See Peter van Rooden, "Jews and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Republic," in R. Po-chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop, eds., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132–147, 141–142.

Several new Christian merchants settled in Amsterdam with their families during the mid-1590s, before the arrival of the first group of immigrants who came directly from Portugal via ships, in 1597. Manoel Rodrigues Vega settled in Amsterdam in approximately 1595.⁸⁵ On March 31, 1597, Rodrigues Vega was the first Portuguese merchant to become a *poorter* (a designation meaning, essentially, a citizen of the city) of Amsterdam.⁸⁶ He most likely came to Amsterdam to exploit new commercial opportunities available there. As the son of a prominent and, most likely, wealthy family, he was, in one sense, hardly commercially marginal. The relative wealth and prominence of his family meant that he had, at the very least, the expertise to enter the commercial elite of the new city. Of course, it was not just Rodrigues Vega who would come to Amsterdam, however.

In 1612, there were nearly 500 new Christians and Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam. Smaller numbers of new Christians lived in other cities such as Rotterdam and Middelburg. Around 1606, Rodrigues Vega appears to have moved to Rotterdam, though most of his business enterprises continued to be conducted out of Amsterdam. A great migration to the city occurred from 1609 to 1620, during the armistice between the Habsburg monarchy in Iberia and the Dutch Republic. The waves of new Christian immigration grew from the end of the 1640s and throughout the 1650s. Eventually, the Sephardic community in Amsterdam declined due to the large increase in the Ashkenazi population in the city, but is the period of initial new Christian and Sephardic Jewish settlement and ascendancy in Amsterdam that forms the backdrop of this work.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ 1595 is the first year that he appears in the notarial archives in Amsterdam. The date of Rodrigues Vega's actual arrival in Amsterdam is a matter of dispute. Izak Prins speculated, based on a remark made by a Dutch agent in London, that Rodrigues Vega may have been in Amsterdam as early as 1591. See Izak Prins, *De Vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland* (Amsterdam: Hertzberger, 1927), 161, note 7. Daniel Swetschinski disagrees that Rodrigues Vega would have been in Amsterdam this early. See Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jewish Merchants," 733, note 28.

⁸⁶ Prins, *De Vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland*, 176.

⁸⁷ There is an enormous amount of literature available about the settlement of the Sephardim in the Northern Netherlands. A good general introduction is found in J.C.H. Blom, R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, and I. Schöffer, eds., *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Balans, 1995). Major works include: Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam" (later revised and published as *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*); Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*; R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *De Sefardim in Amsterdam tot 1795. Aspecten van een joods minderheid in een Hollands stad* (Hilversum: Wilp, 1989); Yosef Kaplan, "The Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam: from

Although many immigrants arrived directly from Portugal, there is evidence that a substantial number came from new Christian communities in the German states, the Italian cities, France, Brazil, and as far afield as Angola. Manoel Carvalho, for instance, came to Amsterdam from Brazil and was actively involved in trade in Amsterdam by 1602.⁸⁸ Bento Osorio was, like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, a migrant and an immigrant to the city. Osorio is mentioned for the first time in Amsterdam in 1610.⁸⁹ At that time he was already about 50 years old, meaning that he would have been born in 1560.⁹⁰ It is likely that he came from Lisbon, like so many of the new Christian immigrants to Amsterdam, because his daughter Ana was born there in 1607.⁹¹ It is not known if he lived in places other than Portugal and Amsterdam, but, as he was a prominent merchant, he likely would have traveled a great deal, even if he had not actually resided in various other locations.⁹²

France

France was important as an “underground railroad” for Jews fleeing Iberia, even though no Jews were legally allowed there after their expulsion in 1394.⁹³ Jews began drifting into the country almost immediately after the Spanish expulsion, but they were forced to live as Catholics and to settle primarily in a few places near the Spanish border, most

forced conversion to a return to Judaism,” *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 15 (1981): 37–51; and Herman P. Salomon, *Os Primeiros Portugueses de Amsterdão. Documentos do Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, 1595–1606* (Braga: Barbosa & Xavier, 1983). Earlier works include: Joaquim Mendes dos Remedios, *Os Judeus Portugueses em Amsterdam* (Coimbra: F. França Amado, 1911); J.S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Joden te Amsterdam, 1593–1925* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1925); Prins, *De vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland*; and Wilhelmina Christina Pieterse, ed., *Daniel Levi de Barrios*.

⁸⁸ Carvalho appears in the Dutch archives in 1602 as one of the owners of a confiscated cargo of sugar belonging to a group of Sephardi and Dutch merchants. See RGP 92, 293, number 285, note 2. 12 November 1602.

⁸⁹ See GAA, NA 62/199; NA 62/189; NA 62/194v; NA 120/178v–179v for notarial acts passed in 1610.

⁹⁰ GAA, NA 646/347 and 963.

⁹¹ GAA, DTB 672/59.

⁹² See Jessica Vance Roitman, “Sephardic Journeys: Travel, Place, and Conceptions of Identity,” *Jewish Culture and History*, 11, 1 & 2 (Summer/Autumn 2009): 211–229.

⁹³ The general outline of the discussion relating to the Sephardic diaspora in north-western Europe, as well as much of the information on the specific Sephardi settlements is drawn from: Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Sephardic Diaspora,” 136–155.

commonly in the border town of St.-Jean-de-Luz, as well as in Bayonne and Bordeaux.

France served as a first place of refuge for new Christians who began fleeing the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition. Those fleeing Iberia had virtually no choice, if they could not procure passage on a ship, other than to escape via land routes to France. From the middle of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century, settlements by Portuguese merchants who continued to live as new Christians expanded in Bordeaux and Bayonne, and were established in Bidache, Peyrehorade, Labastide-Clairence, and elsewhere.⁹⁴

These communities were, as Jonathan Israel notes, a sort of bridge between the Iberian new Christian world and the world of the western Sephardi Jewish and new Christian diaspora.⁹⁵ They bridged not only the *marrano*, crypto-Judaic, and Jewish religiosities and experiences, but also served as important nodes in the network between Amsterdam, northern Europe, and the Iberian peninsula. For example, a principle route for circumventing the Spanish embargo was the inland and overland traffic from France, across the Pyrenees, and into Navarre—a circumnavigation in which new Christians were quite involved. Many of the goods that passed via this route came from Amsterdam to Bayonne, where they were transferred to mules and taken over the mountains. Two of the main participants in this trade, Alvaro and Jacome Luis, lived in Bayonne and were the factors for various Amsterdam merchants, Sephardim and Dutch alike. Moreover, Alvaro was a member of the Amsterdam-based dowry society, the *Dotar*, and was responsible for distributing dowries in southern France.⁹⁶ Thus, it is clear that these communities in southern France, small though they were, were of importance to the Amsterdam Sephardic community.

Soon after the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal, the new Christians, seeking regularization of their settlement and protection from persecution, petitioned the French government for letters of naturalization. These were granted in 1550 and authorized the new

⁹⁴ For further discussion of the importance of these communities, see Israel, "Crypto-Judaism in 17th-Century France," 245–268.

⁹⁵ Israel, "Crypto-Judaism in 17th-Century France," 245.

⁹⁶ Gérard Nahon, *Métropoles et périphéries séfarades d'Occident, Kairouan, Amsterdam, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Jérusalem* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 99.

Table 1: Portuguese new Christian communities in France in 1637

Town	Number of families	Individuals
Bastide-Clairence	80	400?
Bayonne-Saint Esprit	60	300?
Peyrehorade	40	200
Bordeaux	40	200
Dax	10–12	50?
Rouen	22	110?
Paris	10–12	50?
Nantes	6–7	30?

Source: British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Egerton Manuscript 343/259; I.S. Révah, “Les Marranes,” *Revue des Études Juives*, xcvi (1959/60): 30–77, 66; Jonathan Israel, “Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609–1660,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* (1978): 1–61, 21; Daniel Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 79. Printed in: Jonathan Israel, “Crypto-Judaism in 17th-Century France,” 262.

Christians to enter France in order to trade there. The new Christians were given the same rights as other subjects of the King, though only as long as they were not openly practicing Jews.⁹⁷ France became a permanent place of settlement for many new Christians. As such, France was far from being only a way station on the road between Amsterdam, London, or Hamburg, despite the fact that new Christians were not permitted to be openly practicing Jews until the early eighteenth century.

Not only was continental France important for new Christian settlement, however. The French Caribbean colonies were also of importance. Yet Louis XIV’s *Code Noir* (“Black Code”) banned non-Catholics from living in the territories belonging to the King of France. Though the *Code* was not always strictly enforced—there certainly remained new Christians in the French colonies, if only on a temporarily basis—the overall policy was quite clear: in short, there were to be no minorities (including Protestants) in France’s overseas colonies.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, despite the provisions of the *Code*, the new Christians in France began to gain greater recognition and rights.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Kaplan, “The Formation of the Western Diaspora,” 137.

⁹⁸ Mordechai Arbell, “Jewish Settlements in the French Colonies in the Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Cayenne) and the ‘Black Code,’” in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 287–313.

⁹⁹ It is the eighteenth century which is the “Golden Age” for the Sephardim of France. This period falls outside the chronology of this book, and so will not be covered

The new Christian and, later, openly-recognized Sephardic Jewish communities of France were numerically overwhelmed by the Ashkenazim in the eighteenth century, though the Ashkenazim tended to settle in the main cities and on France's border with Germany, whereas the new Christians and Sephardim were largely in the south-western corner of the country. Only a tiny Sephardic Jewish community remained in France by the nineteenth century.

During the seventeenth century, however, France certainly figured in the trade of the Amsterdam Sephardim, though not to the extent that the Iberian and colonial trades did. Along with the previously mentioned places of settlement on the border with Spain, there was a new Christian presence in other French cities. Prins writes that Manoel Rodrigues Vega arrived in Amsterdam from Nantes with his wife and eight children.¹⁰⁰ Daniel Swetschinski believes that Rodrigues Vega might have been apprenticed with a relative in Nantes, in the same way that Manoel's brother Rafael assisted their father in Antwerp.¹⁰¹

It was not only Rodrigues Vega who had connections with France, however. For instance, Manoel Carvalho dealt in sugar that had been brought into La Rochelle, on the Atlantic coast,¹⁰² and had contacts with companies in Paris.¹⁰³ Bento Osorio, meanwhile, received bills of

in the text. It should be mentioned, however, that in the early eighteenth century, the French authorities began to acknowledge these Portuguese as Jews and permitted them to practice Judaism openly. See, Silvia Marzagalli, "Atlantic Trade and Sephardim Merchants in Eighteenth-Century France: The Case of Bordeaux," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 268–287. Bayonne and Bordeaux were especially important cities with large Jewish communities, most of which were engaged in trade with France's colonial possessions. In Bordeaux, for example, the community numbered about 1,000 in the eighteenth century, and in Bayonne, the approximately 2,500 Sephardim comprised around one-fifth of the total population. See, Gérard Nahon, "The Portuguese Jewish Nation," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 255–267.

¹⁰⁰ Izak Prins, *De Vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland*, 177. It seems unlikely that Rodrigues Vega would have had eight children when he first settled in Amsterdam, in 1595. If the date of Rodrigues Vega's birth given by Zwarts in "De Eerste rabbijnen," 152 is correct, then Rodrigues Vega would have been just twenty years old when he arrived in Amsterdam. Even taking into account an early marriage and a phenomenal infant survival rate, eight children in tow by the age of twenty seems unlikely. Perhaps Rodrigues Vega was born earlier than 1575. It could also be that the information about the eight children is erroneous, which seems to me to be more likely, not least based on the number of factual errors in Zwarts' work.

¹⁰¹ Swetschinski, *The Portuguese Jewish Merchants*, 154.

¹⁰² GAA, NA 387/115–117v; NA 405/108–108v; NA 383/511; NA 383/226; NA 381/67.

¹⁰³ GAA, NA 949/247, 261.

exchange that originated in Bordeaux.¹⁰⁴ So, although France did not picture in these merchants' networks of trade in the same way as other territories, it was certainly not off the map entirely.

The German Territories

The history of the new Christians and Sephardim of the German states is really the history of Hamburg at the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵ In 1585 Antwerp was recaptured by Habsburg forces, and a substantial proportion of the city's Portuguese new Christian community migrated to north-western Germany. This migration was due to the blockade of the port by the Dutch rebels which effectively stymied trade, and was due, as well, to persecution of non-Catholics (or suspected non-Catholics) by the Spanish. The new Christians who settled in Hamburg at the end of the sixteenth century were generally wealthy merchants who held trading connections overseas.

Hamburg was at this time the major center in northern Europe for the trade in sugar, spices, and other colonial commodities. The city had long been, along with Lübeck, the premier port of the German states. Lübeck was the main port for the lucrative Baltic trade, whereas Hamburg competed by dealing in colonial commodities. Hamburg's city council pursued a utilitarian policy of (relative) tolerance for merchants that might be of economic use to the city. The new Christians in Hamburg, for instance, were the first to open trade with Spain and Portugal. They imported sugar, tobacco, spices, cottons, and other products from the colonies, and they played a prominent role in founding the Bank of Hamburg. By the late 1580s about a dozen new Christian families had settled in the city, and in 1612 there were 125 adults. A charter granted in 1612 gave the first official approval for Jewish life in Hamburg, although their right to live openly as Jews was limited, as they were forbidden to worship publicly within the city's borders.

¹⁰⁴ GAA, NA 773/36–37.

¹⁰⁵ In addition to Kaplan's "The Formation of the Western Sephardic Diaspora," the information for this section is drawn from: Hermann Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1958) and Klaus Weber, "Were Merchants More Tolerant? 'Godless Patrons of the Jews' and the Decline of the Sephardi Community in Late Seventeenth-Century Hamburg," in David Cesarani and Gemma Romain, eds., *Jews in Port Cities, 1590–1990: Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism* (London: Vallentine-Mitchell, 2005), 77–97.

Permission for residence cost 1,000 Marks for five years. There was also a great deal of migration between Amsterdam and Hamburg. During the Twelve Years' Truce with the Habsburg monarchy in Iberia, many Sephardim from Hamburg moved to Amsterdam, as economic opportunities there were expanding. Likewise, when the truce ended in 1621, many Sephardim left Amsterdam and went to Hamburg, from where they could continue trading with Iberia legally.¹⁰⁶

During the period under consideration in this work, Hamburg was of great importance to the Amsterdam Sephardim. As I mentioned earlier, Manoel Rodrigues Vega and his associates often shipped Brazilwood and sugar to Hamburg.¹⁰⁷ Bento Osorio was also involved in shipping Brazilwood to Hamburg.¹⁰⁸ Besides chartering ships to Hamburg, he dispatched ships from Hamburg to the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁰⁹ Both Rodrigues Vega and Osorio used Hamburg as a place of credit, and bills of exchange were frequently passed through the city.¹¹⁰ Osorio, moreover, also had diamonds, originally from the East Indies, sent to Hamburg.¹¹¹

The Italian City States

While the focus of much of the research regarding trade from the Dutch Republic in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries has focused on the Baltic and Atlantic, the Mediterranean trade has been largely ignored by historians. However, the documents published by Klaas Heeringa revealed that, by the end of the sixteenth century, anywhere between 100 and 200 Dutch ships were involved each year

¹⁰⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century the Sephardic community was in decline. A number of well-respected and influential Sephardim had died. When, in 1697, the Senate and the *Bürgerschaft* demanded sizeable annual payments from the Portuguese Jews to stay in Hamburg and rescinded their right to religious practice, some of the wealthy families emigrated to Altona, Ottensen, and Amsterdam. This emigration, when added to the internal strife within the Sephardic community, led in the eighteenth century to a reduction in the number and influence of the Sephardim in Hamburg.

¹⁰⁷ SR 98.

¹⁰⁸ GAA, NA 109/207–209.

¹⁰⁹ GAA, NA 645b/1583–1584.

¹¹⁰ SR 118; 129 and GAA, NA 645/494–495; NA 645b/1424–1427; NA 1497/106; NA 1050/119v–120; NA 151/169v–170, and NA 86/81–81v.

¹¹¹ GAA, NA 645b/1424–1427.

in trade with the Italian peninsula.¹¹² Although historians have disputed these numbers, and it certainly is true that the much-touted connections, both social and economic, between the Amsterdam Sephardic settlement and those of the Italian peninsula were less important than has been popularly believed, the Italian city-states, particularly Livorno and Venice, were nonetheless of commercial interest to Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam.¹¹³

The Jewish population of Italy in the sixteenth century was small and scattered.¹¹⁴ During the second quarter of the sixteenth century, however, new Christian merchants began to settle in Ancona, Ferrara, Livorno, and Venice. Some of the *conversos* continued to live as Catholic Christians. Others reverted to Judaism. They were joined in their settlement by Jews from the near east, who were subjects of the Ottoman Empire and who had begun to migrate to Italy to exploit links in Mediterranean trade. Ferdinand de Medici invited the new Christians to settle in Pisa-Livorno and allowed them to live openly as Jews. The Sephardic settlement there thrived. After 1589, Venice allowed new Christian immigration. There they joined other Jewish communities,

¹¹² RGP 9; See also, J.H. Kernkamp, "Scheepvaart en handelsbetrekkingen met Italië tijdens de opkomst van de Republiek," in Harm Riel and Hendrik Brugmans, eds., *Economisch-Historische Herdrukken. Zeventien studiën van Nederlanders* verzameld door de Vereniging Het Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief ter gelegenheid van haar vijftigjarig bestaan (1914–1964) (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964), 199–234.

¹¹³ For the debate about the importance, or lack thereof, of trade between the Dutch Republic, see Simon Hart, "De Italiëvaart 1590–1620," *Jaarboek Amstelodamum*, LXX (1978): 42–60; P.C. van Royen, "The First Phase of Dutch Straatvaart (1591–1605). Facts and Fiction," *International Journal of Maritime History*, 2 (1990), 69–100; M. Bogucka, "Amsterdam and the Baltic in the first half of the seventeenth century," *Economic History Review* 26, 3 (1973): 433; and Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Marie-Christine Engels reviews the debate in her *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs*, 12–14.

¹¹⁴ The information in this section is drawn from the following sources: Federica Ruspio, "The Portuguese settlement in Venice in the first half of the seventeenth century," unpublished paper presented at the ESTER Seminar—Port and Maritime History, April 2003; Jonathan I. Israel, "The *Marrani* in Italy, the Greek Lands and the Ottoman Near East (1540–1580)," in Israel, *Diasporas Within a Diaspora*, 41–66 and Jonathan I. Israel, "Venice, Salonika and the Founding of the Sephardi Diaspora," 67–96; Renata Segre, "Sephardic Settlements in Sixteenth-Century Italy: A Historical and Geographical Survey," in Alisa Meyuhass Ginio, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 112–137; Benjamin Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities and their *Raison d'Etat*: Ancona, Venice, Livorno, and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century," in Ginio, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 138–162.

though throughout most of the seventeenth century, the Sephardim were the most numerous and wealthiest Jewish group in the city.

In Italy, therefore, two major centers of Sephardim emerged during the second half of the sixteenth century and flourished during the seventeenth century: Venice and Livorno. In Venice, there were approximately 1,700 Jews in the 1580s, 2,650 in the 1640s, and 4,000 in the 1660s. The city's Jewish community consisted of three separate congregations of Levantine, Iberian, and Ashkenazi Jews. The Sephardim were not the majority, although Venice's Sephardic community was one of the largest populations—along with Antwerp's—of the emerging Portuguese diaspora at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Venice was a mixture of tolerance and intolerance. Jews could live in the city but, from 1516 onwards, their residence was confined to the *Ghetto Nuova*. The Sephardim and all other Jews living in the Ghetto were locked inside at night. Jews were only permitted to work in pawnshops, act as moneylenders, work in the Hebrew printing press, trade in textiles, or practice medicine. Outside the ghetto they had to wear distinguishing clothing, such as a yellow circle or scarf. Jews were also faced with high taxes.

The seventeenth century was the Ghetto's golden age; Jewish commerce and scholarship flourished. By the mid-1600s the Sephardim controlled much of Venice's foreign trade, and they gained influence and wealth in the Venetian economy. The economic conditions for the Sephardim, however, deteriorated at the end of the seventeenth century.¹¹⁵ In contrast to Venice, there was no ghetto in Livorno, nor was distinctive Jewish clothing required. Indeed, Livorno was the only place in Italy where the Catholic counter-reformation reaction against the Jews did not prevail. This was largely due to the fact that, in the sixteenth century, Cosimo I had invited foreigners, including new Christians, to come to the new port.

The Jewish population of Livorno grew from 114, in 1601, to 3,000 by 1689. Jews became the most important foreign nation living in Livorno.¹¹⁶ Spanish and Portuguese became the official language of

¹¹⁵ Anti-Jewish feelings were prevalent in the eighteenth century and limitations were placed on Jewish economic activity. The Jewish population decreased from 4,800 in 1655 to 1,700 in 1766 because many prominent families left for Livorno or other port cities. Taxes were high and Sephardi merchants lost their shops between 1714–1718. In 1737, the Jewish community declared bankruptcy.

¹¹⁶ See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers* for a detailed study of a family of Sephardic merchants in Livorno.

Jewish merchants in Livorno and remained so until the late eighteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century nearly 5,000 Jews lived in Livorno, but by the close of the nineteenth century the Sephardim had virtually disappeared and the entire Jewish population had decreased to 2,500. This was most likely the result of the deteriorating economic situation brought about by the Napoleonic wars, which had forced the Sephardim to flee elsewhere.

Manoel Carvalho was one of the largest shippers from Amsterdam to the Italian Peninsula.¹¹⁷ He mostly shipped sugar, but also transported grain and salt. Bento Osorio, better known for his extensive interests in the Baltic trade, appears in the documents as having been engaged in trade from Amsterdam to Porto and/or Viana in Portugal to load sugar for shipment to Livorno.¹¹⁸ Manuel Rodrigues Vega received bills of exchange coming from Pisa,¹¹⁹ Venice,¹²⁰ Rome,¹²¹ and Florence.¹²²

Spain

Spain and her domestic and foreign policies exerted powerful influence upon the Sephardim in Amsterdam. During the period under consideration in this study, the crowns of Portugal and Spain were united, with Spain *de facto* controlling politically the Spanish Netherlands (Antwerp), Portugal, Brazil, the Spanish Americas, and much of the north African coastal cities where the Sephardim were economically active. Moreover, for Sephardic merchants Spain was a trading destination for clandestine commerce, and even for semi-legitimate commerce conducted through aliases and front-men.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that some Portuguese new Christians returned to Spain, the place from which their ancestors had fled more than a century earlier.¹²³ During the "union" of Iberian territories

¹¹⁷ Hart, "De Italië-vaart, 1590–1620," 56.

¹¹⁸ GAA, NA 121/88v-89v.

¹¹⁹ GAA, NA 139/119v.

¹²⁰ GAA, NA 376/658.

¹²¹ GAA, NA 377/378.

¹²² GAA, NA 133/178–178v.

¹²³ Information for this section is drawn from: Maurits A. Ebben, *Zilver, brood en kogels voor de koning: Kredietverlening door Portugese bankiers aan de Spaanse kroon, 1621–1665* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1996); James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers at the Court of Spain, 1626–1650* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983);

under the Habsburg monarchy (1580–1640), new Christians went to Spain. Some went to escape the Portuguese inquisition, which had become particularly fierce.¹²⁴ Others migrated to Spain for economic reasons. From the 1620s, there were tremendous economic opportunities to be had at the Spanish Court. For a time, the main financiers of the Spanish Crown were Portuguese bankers, many of whom were new Christians. However, with the fall of Count Duke Olivares, official protection for new Christians came to an end and the new Christians either parlayed their *converso* identity into a Catholic identity and blended into the surrounding milieu or else left Spain.

Moreover, it was not only at the Spanish Court that tremendous economic opportunities were to be had. The Spanish colonies were an attractive option for many new Christians. There was a strong new Christian presence in New Spain (present-day Mexico¹²⁵), as well as in Peru, the River Plate region of South America (present day Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay), and New Granada (present day Colombia and Venezuela). In fact, tribunals of the Inquisition were established in Lima, Cartagena de las Indias, and Mexico City, in part, to fight against the suspected Jewish practices of the new Christian, mostly Portuguese, merchants.¹²⁶

Although Spain did not play a particularly important role in the economic and cultural activities of the Amsterdam Sephardim, it was certainly not absent from their dealings. Manoel Rodrigues Vega was involved in shipping pearls to Seville.¹²⁷ Bento Osorio's sister granted

Jonathan I. Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim," in Israel, *Diasporas Within a Diaspora*, 185–244.

¹²⁴ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 288. The Portuguese immigrants were suspected of crypto-Judaism by definition, and were regarded as a separate group of Christians—"the portugueses de la nación hebrea" (Portuguese of the Hebrew Nation) or simply "portugueses de la nación" (Portuguese of the Nation) or "homens da nação." ("Men of the Nation").

¹²⁵ New Spain also included the present-day Phillipines, parts of the United States of America, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Caribbean. The main new Christian presence, however, seems to have been localized in what is now Mexico.

¹²⁶ Much has been written about the Sephardim in present-day Latin America. See, for example, Eva Alexandra Uchmany, "The Participation of New Christians and Crypto-Jews in the Conquest, Colonization, and Trade of Spanish America, 1521–1660," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 186–202; Günter Böhm, "Crypto-Jews and New Christians in Colonial Peru and Chile," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 203–212.

¹²⁷ SR 192.

him power-of-attorney to deal with her business interests in Spain and in the Spanish territory of Guatemala.¹²⁸ Osorio also shipped Baltic wheat to Cadiz and to Malaga.¹²⁹ Sometimes, however, Osorio did not ship the wheat to these Spanish cities but was instead paid for wheat shipments made in North Africa.¹³⁰ In fact, Osorio made a declaration in 1619 regarding the norms for shipping to Spain.¹³¹ Manoel Carvalho's cousin, Maria de Pas, died in Madrid, and Carvalho dealt with the details of her estate, to which he was heir, all of which entailed extensive dealings with Spain.¹³² In addition to this familial connection with Spain, Carvalho sent a ship back to Spain from the Spanish West Indies, where he had shipped slaves.¹³³

England

The Jews had been officially expelled from England in 1290, but a small number of new Christians of Spanish and Portuguese origin had lived in London from the late middle ages onward.¹³⁴ However, between 1595 and 1640, new Christian merchants did travel to and even live in England, though if they lived there they did so outwardly as Catholics. In the early part of the seventeenth century, new Christians were attracted to London due to its growing importance in international commerce. They had to live as Catholics outwardly, however, regardless of their particular religious beliefs. Thus, the motives for members of the new Christian diaspora to migrate to England (though during this period it was in fact the city of London that attracted these immigrants) were almost entirely commercial, especially because connections between London, Amsterdam and Hamburg were becoming increasingly significant as the seventeenth century progressed.

¹²⁸ SR 550.

¹²⁹ GAA, NA 152/65v-66v; NA 155/37v-38; *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Oostzeehandel in de zeventiende eeuw*, 1588–1625, 6 volumes, P. H. Winkelman, ed. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1971–1983), RGP's 133, 161, 178, 184–186; and *Amsterdamse bevrachtingscontracten*, RGP's 184–186, no. 2424 and 2491.

¹³⁰ GAA, NA 154/150v-151; NA 109/149v-150.

¹³¹ GAA, NA 645a/505.

¹³² GAA, NA 611a/364v.

¹³³ GAA, NA 146/199v-200v.

¹³⁴ Albert M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England: A History of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Community, 1492–1951* (London: Methuen & Co., 1951), 1–23.

Estimates vary, but there were possibly as many as 50–100 new Christians in London before the official re-admission of Jews to England, in 1656.¹³⁵ Of course, this re-admission was not really official at all, though it is termed as such in the literature. The Sephardim of continental Europe under the leadership of Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam, and with help from new Christians already resident in London, petitioned Oliver Cromwell for a Jewish place of worship. The granting of this place of worship was tantamount to readmission. The fact that there was no formal invitation for Jews to enter England, nor a revocation of the original order of expulsion, lessened objections to the open presence of Jews in the city.

There were some connections between the Amsterdam Sephardim and London, though connections began to grow apace after the re-admission of Jews to England (this occurred beyond the chronology of this work). For instance, in 1595 Manoel Rodrigues Vega granted power of attorney to Abraham van Herwyer of London to act on his behalf,¹³⁶ and in 1598 Rodrigues Vega dispatched a ship to Dartmouth to pick up a cargo of fish to be sent on to Porto.¹³⁷

The Portuguese Overseas Territories

The Portuguese were the earliest of the European powers to expand overseas, beginning in 1415 with the capture of Ceuta in north Africa. In 1419 Portuguese explorers began exploring the coast of Africa in order to find a sea route to the source of the lucrative spice trade. In short order, Vasco da Gama reached India, and by 1500 Pedro Álvares Cabral had established the colony of Brazil. In the following decades, the Portuguese established forts and trading posts which connected Lisbon to Nagasaki, and the empire became global, bringing great wealth to Portugal.

These colonies and settlements attracted merchants, adventurers, sailors, soldiers, and administrators, as the Portuguese formed a global diaspora. The new Christians were part of this Portuguese diaspora and, as a group that for historical reasons had been particularly

¹³⁵ Samuel, “Portuguese Jews in Jacobean London,” 171–230.

¹³⁶ SR 2.

¹³⁷ SR 39.

involved in commerce, were found in the nodes of the Portuguese overseas empire which were most mercantile-inclined. Of course, some new Christians had been exiled to the colonies or were there because they were fleeing political and religious persecution. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the new Christians overseas were merchants looking to take advantage of opportunities which the expanding Portuguese empire had to offer. Many of these new Christian merchants moved frequently, and it was not uncommon for a merchant to spend some years in, for example, Guinea or Angola, before moving on to Brazil and then back to Portugal.

West Africa

Angola

Many new Christians settled on the islands off the west coast of Africa as well as on the coast of the African and Brazilian Atlantic. Historians have been aware of the new Christian presence in Angola for some time, though little has been uncovered about the details of their settlement in this distant corner of the Portuguese Empire. Despite the privations inherent in settling in such a distant colony, some new Christians chose to go to Angola willingly, due to the economic possibilities the colony offered. It is known that the Spanish new Christian trader Miguel de Horta moved to Luanda in 1584, when it was little more than a group of ramshackle huts. He remained for more than thirty years, working as a trader and merchant.¹³⁸ And de Horta was not the only new Christian in the colony. Duarte Nunes Nogueira, for example, was given a slave trading concession in 1601, though not all holders of these concessions (*asientos*) would have actually lived in the colony,¹³⁹ (they would most likely have, at the very least, made frequent visits).

The new Christian diaspora clearly extended to Angola.¹⁴⁰ With these initial waves of immigration came various settlers such as Aires

¹³⁸ José Gonçalves Salvador, *Os cristãos-novos e o comércio no Atlântico Meridional: com enfoque nas capitanias do sul: 1530–1680* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1978), 309.

¹³⁹ Gonçalves Salvador, *Os cristãos-novos*, 309.

¹⁴⁰ José Augusto Nunes da Silva Horta, “A Inquisição em Angola em Congo: o inquérito de 1596–98 e o papel mediador das justiças locais,” in *Arqueologia do Estado: 1as Jornadas sobre Formas de Organização e exercício dos poderes na Europa do Sul, Séculos XIII–XVIII* (Lisbon: História & Crítica, 1988), 387–418; José Augusto Nunes da Silva Horta, *Africanos e portugueses na documentação inquisitorial, de Luanda a Mbanza Kongo: 1596–1598*

Fernandes. In 1603, Fernandes, who lived in Luanda as a slave dealer,¹⁴¹ sent a letter outlining his destitution.¹⁴² Another new Christian was the wealthy Lisbon merchant Jorge Roiz Solis, whose family ties linked him to the mercantile elite both inside the Iberian Peninsula and outside. Solis lived in Angola, as did his relative Joao Brandão, who went to live there in 1607.¹⁴³ These two, together with Antonio Fernandes d'Elvas, relative of the previously-mentioned Solis, supplied slaves to the Americas in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. These merchants also designated agents to “anchor” their businesses in certain areas, and were large landowners. As such figures demonstrate, the new Christian community was not insignificant in terms of its economic leverage at the beginning of the 1620s. A letter from Commissioner Padre Jeronimo Vogado to the Inquisition of Lisbon confirmed the large new Christian presence in Angola. According to Vogado, “There are in these parts many people of the Hebrew Nation.”¹⁴⁴ These “many people of the Hebrew Nation” were in Angola, just as they were in other Portuguese colonies, to exploit the burgeoning trade in slaves and other colonial goods, though it is possible that religious persecution played a role for some new Christians who went overseas.

Along with these people of the “Hebrew Nation” who resided in Angola, for various durations, were new Christian merchants who had business interests in Angola. For instance, Manoel Rodrigues Vega and his Flemish associate, Cornelis Snellinck, invested in a voyage to Angola in 1604.¹⁴⁵ Manoel Carvalho also had business interests in Angola, and 1612 he asked five Dutch associates to make a declaration concerning the norms surrounding trade between Portugal, Brazil, and Angola.¹⁴⁶ It is interesting that these connections to these

(Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos descobrimentos Portugueses, 1995); IAN/TT, IdL, Book 776.

¹⁴¹ Aires Fernandes died in São Tomé, leaving behind a small fortune, Gonçalves Salvador, *Os cristãos-novos*, 309.

¹⁴² Padre Antonio Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana* (henceforth *MMA*), Volume V, First Series (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952–1971), 58.

¹⁴³ Edgar Prestage and Pedro de Azevedo, eds., *Registros Paroquiais de Lisboa, freguesia da Se (1563 a 1610)* (Coimbra: Imp. da Universidade, 1927), 270, 276, 382.

¹⁴⁴ Brásio, *MMA*, Volume V, First Series, 312.

¹⁴⁵ GAA, NA 98/21v–22.

¹⁴⁶ GAA, NA 197/173–174.

diaspora locations involved Dutch merchants as much, or more, than they did new Christian merchants.

Cabo Verde, São Tomé, and the Guinea Rivers

New Christians chose to settle in Cabo Verde, São Tomé, and in settlements scattered along the Guinea Rivers because they were important links in the Portuguese trading network, especially in the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁷ As gateways to the supply of slaves for the burgeoning trade in slaves, these Portuguese settlements were of particular interest to traders who hoped to supply the growing demand for slaves in the Americas. Moreover, these settlements also provided access to the supply of lucrative trade goods such as ivory and gold. Lastly, sugar cultivation, especially on the islands, was a profitable enterprise. Therefore, these regions were attractive to merchants of all stripes, including new Christian merchants, who were optimizing European and colonial demand for African products.

It was illegal for new Christians to settle in Guinea without a special license from the King.¹⁴⁸ However, no such license was necessary in other Portuguese overseas settlements such as Angola, Brazil, and Goa. Nevertheless, any new Christian who had been convicted of “judaizing” was required to have special permission to leave Portugal. Be that as it may, complaints about the new Christians in the region

¹⁴⁷ The new Christian presence in these regions has only relatively recently come to light in the English-speaking historiography. For example, José da Silva and Peter Mark recently published a work about two Sephardic communities on the West Coast of Africa: “Two early seventeenth-century Sephardic communities on Senegal’s Petite Côte,” *History in Africa: A Journal of Method*, 31 (2004): 231–256. Tobias Green followed up on this article with “Further Considerations on the Sephardim of the Petite Côte,” *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 32 (2005): 165–183, as well as in his dissertation, “Masters of difference: Creolization and the Jewish presence in Cabo Verde, 1497–1672,” unpublished dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2007. These works have illuminated what has been commonly known in the Portuguese literature for some time—namely, that new Christians were not only present as active traders but also as practicing Jews (if the reports and accusations are to be believed) in these African settlements. Some of the non-English literature dealing with this oft-forgotten corner of the Sephardic diaspora is footnoted in the excellent work of Filipa I. Ribeiro da Silva’s *A inquisição em Cabo Verde, Guiné e S. Tomé e Príncipe (1536–1821)*.

¹⁴⁸ Cristiano José de Sena Barcelos, *Subsídios para a história de Cabo Verde e Guiné*, 5 volumes (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1899–1913), Volume I, 83. The King may have wanted to maintain control over the new Christian population by demanding a special license.

began only several years after the founding of the Inquisition in Portugal. In fact, the first accusations made to the Inquisition in Lisbon were leveled against the new Christian community in Cape Verde. These complaints were sent to the Lisbon Inquisition in 1542—just eight years after the Inquisition's establishment.¹⁴⁹ More accusations followed in 1544.¹⁵⁰ In 1546 another accusation was sent to the Inquisition of Évora from the Ruling Council of the settlement of Ribeira Grande. In these documents, the new Christians were accused of occupying administrative, judicial, and fiscal positions that they were officially not allowed to hold. Moreover, they were said to be showing “disrespect to the commercial norms” by evading payment of customs duties, engaging in illicit trade with the Guinea Coast, and facilitating the immigration of other new Christians to various overseas locations, including the Guinea Rivers and the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. In the following year, the Governor of Ribeira Grande wrote to the King to relate the administrative situation in the settlement and detail the threat posed by powerful new Christians in administrative roles. The request by the local authorities for initiation of an Inquisitorial Tribunal on the island was repeated.¹⁵¹

Later, in the first half of the seventeenth century, this new Christian presence was further confirmed, as were these new Christians' connections with the Low Countries.¹⁵² In fact, from the first years of the seventeenth century, the authorities on the Guinea Rivers had been alerted to what was, for them, an important problem: the growing numbers of Jews or new Christians and their active participation in the region's trade, usually via acting as agents of foreigners, in the area extending from the Guinea Coast to Sierra Leone. In 1612 an anonymous author noted this problem, elaborating that fifty Portuguese Jews were in the service of the French, English, and Dutch, and were involved in trade between Recife and Sierra Leone. The author even detailed the quantities of merchandize and the specific actions that these agents had been involved with.¹⁵³ Moreover, multiple complaints

¹⁴⁹ Ribeiro da Silva, *A inquisição em Cabo Verde, Guiné e S. Tomé e Príncipe (1536–1821)*.

¹⁵⁰ Brásio, *MMA*, 2nd series, Volume II, 372.

¹⁵¹ See, Ribeiro da Silva, *A inquisição em Cabo Verde, Guiné e S. Tomé e Príncipe (1536–1821)*.

¹⁵² Sena Barcelos, *Subsídios para a história de Cabo Verde e Guiné*, Volume I, 221, Also, Brásio, *MMA*, 2nd series, Volume IV, 698.

¹⁵³ Anonymous, *Memória e relação do resgate que fazem os fracases, ingleses e flamengos na costa da Guiné, do rio Sanagá à Serra Leoa*,” Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon), Manuscript 51–VI, no. 38, fls. 146–147, quoted in António de Almeida Mendes, “Le Rôle de l’Inquisition

alleged that old and new Christians were actively and mutually engaged in trade in this region.¹⁵⁴ It seems clear that the new Christians and Sephardic Jews were not relying only on their networks of kinsmen and co-religionists for the furtherance of their trading enterprises. In fact, these reports seem to point to a rather well-developed network that incorporated Sephardic Jewish, new Christian, French, English, and Dutch merchants, not to mention the Portuguese old Christians. The fact that these networks were documented on the west Coast of Africa does not mean that they were by any means exclusive to this region. As this book shows, networks incorporating merchants of a multitude of backgrounds were common in many places.

Bento Osorio, for example, worked with another Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam, Diego Vas de Sousa, along with several Dutch merchants to charter a trading voyage to Cape Verde in 1619.¹⁵⁵ Pedro Rodrigues Vega, a brother of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, was also involved in trade with Cape Verde.¹⁵⁶ Pedro traded not only with the Cape Verde islands but with the Guinea Rivers region of west Africa. In 1610 he and another brother, Gaspar Fernandes, sailed to Portudal, in the Guinea Rivers, to trade.¹⁵⁷ Perhaps because of his brothers' connections to the Guinea Rivers, Manoel Rodrigues Vega acted as an interpreter and witness for other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam interested in trading with this region. In 1611 Manoel helped several Sephardic merchants arrange a trading voyage on the ship "The Hope," which was destined for Portudal and Joalá.¹⁵⁸ Bento Osorio was also involved in trade with the west coast of Africa. In 1623 he took out insurance from several Dutch merchants for a ship sailing from near the Guinea Rivers region to Genoa, on the Italian Peninsula.¹⁵⁹

en Guinée: vicissitudes de presences juives sur la Petite Côte (XV^e-XVII^e siècles)," *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, Ano III, 5/6: (2004):137-155, 148.

¹⁵⁴ IAN/TT, IdL, Book 205/117-121, 571-589v and IdL, Book 210/453-459. Thanks to Filipa I. Ribeiro da Silva for help with these references.

¹⁵⁵ SR 1869.

¹⁵⁶ SR 431, see also numbers 363, 423, 428, 439, 444, 445.

¹⁵⁷ SR 448.

¹⁵⁸ SR 473.

¹⁵⁹ GAA, NA 697/3-4; NA 691/175-176.

Brazil

Though Brazil had been “discovered” by the Portuguese in 1500, there was little interest in this vast mass of land until the French began to show an interest in the Brazilian coastline. In order to counter this French threat, the Portuguese crown began to found settlements and introduced sugarcane cultivation, cattle raising, and an administrative presence in the colony around 1530. Within two decades, the sugarcane that the colonists had brought from the Portuguese islands off the coast of west Africa had spread in the rich soils of the countryside around Salvador in the north-east of the colony. Sugar became a major colonial trade good, and Europe craved this luxury product. Brazil, as the center for cultivation of sugar at the time, became an attractive location for both new Christian and non-new Christian settlement alike.

New Christian settlement in Brazil dates from the first voyages of exploration and settlement. Fernão Noronha, one of the first “captains” of Brazilian territory, was a new Christian.¹⁶⁰ Many historians believe that new Christians transplanted sugarcane from Madeira to Brazil in the early sixteenth century and, indeed, Madeira had a large new Christian population that was actively involved in sugar cultivation.¹⁶¹ New Christian foremen and workers are said to have been brought from Madeira and São Tomé when the first sugar plantations and mills were established in Brazil around 1542. One of the first five *engenhos* (sugar plantation and mill) was owned in 1550 by a new Christian, Diego Dias Fernandes.¹⁶² A large number of the 120 *engenhos* that existed in Brazil in 1600 belonged to new Christians, many of whom were also administrators.¹⁶³

The Inquisition was never formally introduced in Brazil. From 1580 on the bishop of Bahia received investigative powers from Lisbon, and after 1591 the Holy Office in Portugal sent Inquisitional Commissaries to Brazil at intervals. The first commission worked from 1591 to 1593

¹⁶⁰ Arnold Wiznitzer, *Os Judeus no Brasil Colonial* (São Paulo: Pioneira, 1960), 4–7.

¹⁶¹ Wiznitzer, *Os Judeus*, 7–9 and Anita Novinsky, “Inquisição e Heresias na Ilha da Madeira” in *Actas do I Colóquio Internacional de História da Madeira*, Volume II (Funchal: Governo Regional da Madeira, 1990).

¹⁶² Wiznitzer, *Os Judeus*, 8.

¹⁶³ José Antonio Gonsalves de Mello, *Gente da Nação: Cristãos-novos e judeus em Pernambuco, 1542–1654* (Recife: Editora Massangana, 1996), 5–34.

in Bahia and, afterward until 1595 in Pernambuco.¹⁶⁴ In 1618 a commission again visited Bahia.¹⁶⁵ The investigators of the Inquisition held hearings based on denunciations, and suspects were arrested and sent to Lisbon for trial. It is important to understand the Iberian political context of these Inquisitorial visits. Patricia Aufderheide suggests that the visits from 1591 to 1593 stemmed from the Habsburg monarchy's concern for political and social control over its newly acquired territory.¹⁶⁶ Likewise, Eduardo d'Oliveira França and Sonia Siquiera speculate that the visitation in 1618 was provoked by the threat of Dutch naval power and the Jewish presence in the Dutch Republic. The Crown, it is speculated, wished to assert its social and political control through the arm of the Inquisition.¹⁶⁷

Brazil was also a place of exile for those convicted of crimes in Portugal. However, the claim that the majority of new Christians in Brazil were exiled there by the Inquisition is a pervasive misunderstanding of patterns of new Christian immigration. In fact, according to statistics compiled by Geraldo Pieroni, over the span of three centuries 311 people were exiled from Portugal to Brazil for the crime of Judaism.¹⁶⁸ This is just over 100 people per century or, more specifically, one person each year. These statistics would seem to show that new Christians were coming to the Portuguese colony not as punishment but in pursuit of economic opportunity. The same would seem to hold true for the other Portuguese colonies, such as those on the west coast of Africa.

New Christians, as noted, owned *engenhos*, but were also merchants and middlemen in the sugar and slave trades.¹⁶⁹ However, they were not in the majority in either function in the colony. As David Grant

¹⁶⁴ *Primeira visitação do Santo Offício, Denúncias da Bahia 1591–1593, and Primeira visitação Denúncias e confissões de Pernambuco.*

¹⁶⁵ "Livro de Denúncias do Santo Offício na Bahia—1618."

¹⁶⁶ Patricia Aufderheide, "True Confessions: The Inquisition and Social Attitudes in Brazil at the turn of the Seventeenth Century," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 10 (Winter 1973): 208–240, 212. Spain had acquired the colony when Spain and Portugal were united between 1580 and 1640.

¹⁶⁷ Eduardo d'Oliveira França and Sonia Siquiera, eds. "Segunda visitação do Santo Offício às partes do Brasil: Livro das confissões e ratificações da Bahia, 1618–1620," *Anais do Museu Paulista* 17 (1963): 121–547, 123–129.

¹⁶⁸ Geraldo Pieroni, "Outcasts from the Kingdom: the Inquisition and the Banishment of New Christians to Brazil," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 242–251.

¹⁶⁹ David Grant Smith, "The Mercantile Class of Portugal and Brazil in the Seventeenth Century: A Socioeconomic Study of the Merchants of Lisbon and Bahia," unpublished dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1975.

Table 2: Exile to Brazil by century (sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth)

	16th			17th			18th			Total		
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
Judaism	1	3	4	180	88	268	20	19	39	201	110	311
Bigamy	7	7	14	43	16	59	10	5	15	60	28	88
Deceit	16	4	20	9	22	31	3	1	4	28	27	55
Witchcraft	1	1	2	21	12	33	4	4	8	26	17	43
Sodomy	0	1	1	1	23	24	0	0	0	1	24	25
Revelation of secrets	0	7	7	3	7	10	1	0	1	4	14	18
Visions	1	0	1	10	1	11	2	0	2	13	1	14
Blasphemy	0	0	0	1	8	9	0	1	1	1	9	10
Solicitation	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	7	7
Other	0	1	1	3	12	15	0	3	3	3	16	19
Total	26	24	50	271	194	465	40	35	75	337	253	590

Notes: Number of cases analyzed: 590; W= Women, M=Men, T=Total.

Source: INT/TT, Inquisition of Coimbra (IdC) 433, Inquisition of Évora (IdE) 434, IdL 435 (Lisbon), printed in, Geraldo Pieroni, “Outcasts from the Kingdom: The Inquisition and the Banishment of New Christians to Brazil,” 246.

Smith points out, around 45% of merchants were new Christians while 55% were of old Christian background.¹⁷⁰ Stuart Schwartz notes that, of the 41 *engenho* owners whose origins could be uncovered for the period 1587–92, twelve were new Christians.¹⁷¹ The apex of new Christian settlement in the colony, however, came when the colony was under Dutch rule, beginning in 1630, when the Dutch West India Company captured Recife (Pernambuco) in north-east Brazil (a key sugar producing region), and lasted until 1654. The first synagogue in the Americas was founded in Recife in 1636, and the Sephardic Jewish population of Dutch Brazil continued to grow.¹⁷² After Dutch Brazil fell, however, the open practice of Judaism ceased in the colony.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, “The Mercantile Class of Portugal and Brazil,” 280.

¹⁷¹ Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 265.

¹⁷² Scholars have commonly asserted that there were around 1,450 Jews in Dutch Brazil. See, Wiznitzer, *Os Judeus*, 120–38; Arnold Wiznitzer, “The Number of Jews in Dutch Brazil (1630–1654),” *Jewish Social Studies*, xvi (1954): 107–114; I.S. Emmanuel, “Seventeenth-century Brazilian Jewry: a critical review,” *American Jewish Archives*, xiv (1962): 32–68; Günter Böhm, *Los sefardíes en los dominios holandeses de América del Sur y del Caribe, 1630–1750* (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1992). This number is almost certainly inaccurate, however. As Wim Klooster points out, the Jews of Brazil never outnumbered

New Christians certainly remained in Brazil, and crypto-Judaic rituals may have remained part of family traditions, but it would not be until the nineteenth century, with Ashkenazi migration to Brazil, that Jews would form a significant part of Brazil's population.

An example of the new Christian presence in the Portuguese colony of Brazil and of their connections with the Amsterdam Sephardic settlement would be Manoel Carvalho, the son of Pero Fernandes and Guiomar Henriques. Carvalho was born in 1565, in Porto, Portugal, but spent much of his early years in Brazil. The family had a long-running connection to Brazil. Carvalho was the grandson of Pedro Alvarres Madeiro, the owner of two-thirds of a plantation in Pernambuco, with two sugar mills along the river Camaragibi. Carvalho inherited part of this estate, thereby becoming part of the planter class in Brazil.¹⁷³ New Christians, like old Christians, sought to acquire *engenhos* as soon as their wealth permitted.¹⁷⁴ This was not just an economic decision. In fact, ownership of an *engenho* was not always a wise move economically. However, within Brazilian (and Iberian) society, land ownership conferred social prestige and political influence.¹⁷⁵ New Christians in Brazil, however, despite owning land, "regardless of their economic assets, [had] their social development arrested at the upper level of the mercantile sector."¹⁷⁶ Whether because of a desire for social advancement or for more straightforward economic reasons (or a combination of the two), Manoel Carvalho moved to Amsterdam, and appears in the archival documentation of the Dutch Republic by 1602. In Amsterdam, Carvalho became known as an expert in the Brazil trade.¹⁷⁷

Carvalho was not the only Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam who was heavily involved in the Brazil trade, mostly in sugar, but also in other products, however. Much of the sugar came via Lisbon, such as

those in the Dutch Republic. See, Wim Klooster, *The Dutch in the Americas, 1600–1800* (Providence, RI: John Carter Brown Library, 1997), 28.

¹⁷³ GAA, NA 672/5–6.

¹⁷⁴ Oliveira França, "Engenhos, Colonização, e Cristãos-Novos," in *Colonização e migração : Anais do IV Simpósio Nacional dos Professores universitários de História* (São Paulo: Universidad de São Paulo, 1969), 181–241; See also, Anita Novinsky, *Cristãos Novos na Bahia* (São Paulo: Universidad de São Paulo, 1972).

¹⁷⁵ David Grant Smith and Rae Flory, "Bahian Merchants and Planters in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, 4 (November 1978): 571–594, 586.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, "The Mercantile Class of Portugal and Brazil in the Seventeenth Century," 327–336.

¹⁷⁷ GAA, NA 672/5–6v; NA 671/198–201.

the sugar shipment from Pernambuco belonging to Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Cornelis Snellinck that had first gone to Lisbon before being shipped to Amsterdam.¹⁷⁸ Cargoes of sugar and other products, such as Brazilwood, were sent directly to the Dutch Republic, despite the fact that Portugal was their declared destination.¹⁷⁹ Manoel Rodrigues Vega also dealt in this trade in Brazilwood along with a consortium of Dutch and Sephardic entrepreneurs such as Cornelis Snellinck and the van Uffelen family. The Brazilwood was sent to Amsterdam and to Hamburg.¹⁸⁰ Rodrigues Vega was hardly alone in being actively involved in the Brazil trade, however. Salomon Voerknecht, a prominent Amsterdam merchant, asked him to make a declaration concerning the norms for the trade to and from Brazil in 1617.¹⁸¹ Bento Osorio, who was most active in the Baltic trade, was also involved in the lucrative Brazil trade. He sent a ship to Portugal and then to Pernambuco in Brazil to pick up a cargo of sugar,¹⁸² and owned parts of other sugar shipments.¹⁸³

Goa

The Portuguese claimed Goa in 1510. By 1515, the city had a Luso-Indian population and a Portuguese administrative structure, while also being a center of the Portuguese spice trade. Portuguese merchants, including new Christians, settled in Goa and in other Portuguese-controlled cities such as Cochin, which had had a “native” Jewish population since ancient times. As early as 1519 King Manoel issued legislation prohibiting appointing new Christians as judges, town councilors, or municipal registrars in Goa. However, he stipulated that those who had already been appointed were not to be dismissed. Therefore, it seems clear that even during the very first years of Portuguese rule, Goa saw considerable influx of recently baptized Spanish

¹⁷⁸ SR 72.

¹⁷⁹ SR 87.

¹⁸⁰ Other participants were: Anthoni Kuvelier; Reynier Reyniersz. Merckelback; David Nuyts; Pieter Beltgens; Diogo Dias Querido; Jan Engelsen; Gommer Sprangers, Hendrick Roelant; Hendrick Broen; Hans van Uffeln (Uffele); Nicolas du Gardin; see SR 91; 98; 123; 134; 135; 138; 210; 639.

¹⁸¹ GAA, NA 645/43v–44.

¹⁸² GAA, NA 121/88v–89v.

¹⁸³ GAA, NA 384/89–89v.

and Portuguese new Christians.¹⁸⁴ Around 1600, there were approximately 3,000–5,000 Portuguese and their dependents in Goa, though it is not known what percentage were of new Christian descent.¹⁸⁵

In 1560, a branch of the Portuguese Inquisition—the only one outside of continental Portugal—was established in Goa.¹⁸⁶ Most of the 16,000 trial records have been lost, but other extant documents allow for partial reconstruction of how the Inquisition functioned in Goa.¹⁸⁷ It was set up to counter not only suspected new Christian adherence to their ancestral Judaism, but also Hinduism and Islam. Despite the particularly fearsome reputation of this branch of the Inquisition, new Christians were actively involved in the trade with the *carreira da Índias*. For example, Bento Osorio invested in the Portuguese Asian trade, especially in diamonds and other precious stones.¹⁸⁸ It was not just Osorio who invested in the East Indies trade, most of which was centered in Goa. Manoel Rodrigues Vega owned shares in various trading voyages to the East Indies.¹⁸⁹ New Christian and Sephardic Jewish merchants also imported cotton cloth from India to trade for west African slaves, which were then sent on to Brazil in exchange for sugar.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 347.

¹⁸⁵ James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 32.

¹⁸⁶ For information about the Inquisition in Goa, the firsthand account of a young Frenchman imprisoned by the Goan Inquisition remains a classic. See, *L'Inquisition de Goa. La Relation de Charles Dellon (1687). Étude, édition & notes de Charles Amiel & Anne Lima* (Paris: Editions Chandeigne-Librairie Portugais, 1997–1998). Other works include: Livermore, *A New History of Portugal*; António Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa, Tentativa de História da sua Origem, Estabelecimento, Evolução e Extinção*, Volume I (Lisbon: Academia das Ciências, 1945) and Baião, *O ultimo Regimento e o Regimento da Economia da Inquisição de Goa*, Raul Rego, ed. (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 1983); Anna Cannas da Cunha, *A Inquisição no Estado da Índia, Origens (1539–1560)* (Lisbon: Arquivos Nacionais-Torre do Tombo, 1995); James C. Boyajian, “Goa Inquisition, A New Light on the First 100 Years (1561–1660),” *Purabhilek-Puratatva* 4 (1986): 1–40; José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim, “Os Judeus e a expansão portuguesa na Índia durante o século XVI: o exemplo de Isaac do Cairo: Espião e ‘língua’ e ‘Judeu de Cochim de Cima,’” *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian* 33 (1994): 137–260; and Alisa Meyuhah Ginio, “The Inquisition and the New Christians: The Case of the Portuguese Inquisition of Goa,” *The Medieval History Journal* 2, 1 (1999): 1–18.

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, the “Reportório geral de tres mil oito centos processos, que sam todos os despachos neste Sancto Officio de Goa, & mais partes da India do anno de Mil & quinhentos & secenta & hum, que começou o dito Sancto Officio ate o anno de Mil & seis centos & vinte e tres,” written by the Goan Inquisitor João Delgado Figueira., *Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal* (henceforth BN), Codice 203.

¹⁸⁸ SR 2440.

¹⁸⁹ SR 105; 132.

¹⁹⁰ Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs*, 141, 163–164.

As many of the examples for Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio I have presented in this chapter show, a great deal of inter-cultural trade occurred at the nodes of the new Christian diaspora. Even when fellow new Christian and/or Sephardic Jewish merchants were available in places like Venice, La Rochelle, or Salé, these merchants often chose to use traders or representatives from non-new Christian backgrounds to further their mercantile endeavors. These merchants not only used representatives from other backgrounds, however. As in the case of Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, they actually lived outside of Portugal and almost certainly formed relationships with non-new Christian merchants in Antwerp and Brazil, respectively. It also spurred on their inter-cultural relationships.

It thus becomes clear that the concept of diaspora as an analytical category is insufficient to explain the new Christian and Sephardic merchants' economic behavior. Hence, Francesca Trivellato's differentiation between diaspora and trade networks, in which diasporas are not synonymous with trade networks (although they can complement each other), is particularly valid for the Sephardim in this study. The next chapter will discuss the business enterprises of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, many of which, as has been touched upon in this chapter, dealt with places where the new Christians had settled in diaspora.

In western Europe, the early modern period was bustling with movement, both temporary and more permanent.¹⁹¹ Early modern mobility was made up of local and regional movement, as well as seasonal migration, and the development of an international labor market, especially for soldiers and sailors.¹⁹² In short, people were migrating to new places. Yet the new Christians and Sephardic Jews have rarely

¹⁹¹ Jan Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe 1600–1900: The Drift to the North Seas* (London: Croom Helm, 1987); Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992); Nicholas Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second millennium* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Klaus J. Bade, *Migration in European History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

¹⁹² Paul-André Rosental, *Les Sentiers invisibles: espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19^e siècle* (Paris: ESSHS, 1999); Jan Lucassen, "A Multinational and its labor force: the Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 66 (Fall 2004): 12–39; Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, "The mobility transition revisited, 1500–1900: what the case of Europe can offer to global history," *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 347–377, 364–369.

been studied as a migratory group. Rather, as I have shown in this chapter, they have been studied as a diaspora group, with the implicit understanding of cohesiveness traditionally associated with the term.

As I showed in Chapter I, the new Christians functioned as an ethnic group in which religion must be bracketed as having been a determining factor for membership, yet in which Iberian (mainly Portuguese) cultural identity was determinant. This important fact should not overshadow the equally salient fact that, while merchants bracketed religion in considering “membership” in their networks, clusters of synagogue membership and, to some extent, residential patterns, also considered religion. Likewise, in places like Curaçao or Suriname, religion almost certainly played a far stronger and more all-encompassing role in community formation than it did in unbounded locales such as Amsterdam and other port cities. Moreover, these differing kinds of communities overlapped and were not mutually exclusive. All of which shows that diaspora does not work as the only or even the most significant analytical category for understanding how new Christian trade networks functioned. Therefore, I propose foregrounding new Christian cross-community migration as a framework for analyzing new Christian and Sephardic Jewish trade networks.

At its core, cross-community migration, as theorized by Patrick Manning, is a sort of human migratory pattern in which “individuals and groups move to join an existing community, learning its language and customs. The function of such migration is to share the experience and labor of various communities.”¹⁹³ This was clearly the case for the Sephardim and new Christians, in general, as they fanned out of Iberia in various migratory waves. Rodrigues Vega moved from Antwerp to Nantes and then to Amsterdam and later to Rotterdam. Carvalho moved from Portugal to Brazil and then to Amsterdam, and Osorio migrated from Portugal to Amsterdam. At each stop in their migratory journeys, these merchants crossed communities, learned new languages and customs, and conducted their business enterprises.

Manning argues that migrants moving over a cultural, often linguistic, border tend to gain new insights, and that this type of migration is therefore likely to speed up the spread of innovation. This is less likely with “home community” migration, where migrants remain within their community. According to Manning, cross-community migrations

¹⁹³ Manning, “Cross-Community Migration,” 28.

are an engine of human development.¹⁹⁴ Goods and services are spread among communities by migration, and such a spread cannot occur without inter-cultural trading interactions. The exchanges of customs and technology via these inter-cultural economic contacts leads to innovations, as different ideas are brought into contact with each other.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, this kind of migration leads to greater similarity among communities.

The following chapters will discuss the Sephardim in Amsterdam as a sort of laboratory for Manning's theories in cross-community migration. I will discuss how the cross-community migration of the new Christians and Sephardic Jews spread innovations in terms of trade between the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associates. First and foremost among these innovations would be the very fact of inter-cultural trade. This sort of trade has, until recently, largely been ignored in the historiography of trade in the early modern period. Within the context of this inter-cultural trade there was the contribution of migration to the creation of new trading networks, new products, and new technologies and techniques. In addition, there was clear transfer of resources and ideas from one community to another.

¹⁹⁴ Patrick Manning, *Migration in World History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 6–14.

¹⁹⁵ Manning, *Migration in World History*, 12.

CHAPTER THREE

MERCHANTS AT WORK: OPPORTUNITY, INTEGRATION, AND INNOVATION

As I mentioned in the Introduction, I chose Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio to study in-depth because they exemplified many characteristics of elite new Christian merchants of the time. Such merchants, as described in Chapter II, were cross-community migrants who, though (in many cases) born in Portugal, lived most or all of their lives abroad, often in various lands. Moreover, these merchants were wealthy enough or had adequate wherewithal to bypass traditional social linkages and networks and to add new ones.¹ They were also global, innovative, and integrative.² Moreover, these merchants were wealthy and successful.

One of the goals of this book is to add an important nuance to the traditional historiographical assumption that trade in the early modern period was conducted mostly between family and those of the same ethnic and/or religious group. I argue, using a case study of the Sephardim in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, that there were very real and quite important trade relationships between merchants of different groups and that social and economic networks were thus not co-extensive. An important element of this goal is to challenge the idea that trading between family and those of the same ethnic and religious group was the most efficient way to organize trade in the early modern period. To demonstrate this, I employ the theory of loose ties. This theory posits that multiple connections in a variety of directions which encompass friends and acquaintances in a series of non-intersecting groups may be more efficient in creating opportunities and promoting the defense of economic interests than are

¹ Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period*, 129.

² Some of these terms are drawn from David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

tightly knit networks, each of whose members knows the rest. Put more succinctly, it made good economic sense for merchants to trade outside their familial, ethnic, and religious group because doing so reduced risk and created opportunities. Moreover, I have chosen to use this case study of the Sephardim in Amsterdam to show that cross-community migrants brought important innovations into their trading relationships.

Essentially, cross-community migration brings social cross-fertilization to communities. Of course, the movement of people and labor from one community to another is the primary short-term result, but in the long term the most important results are the spread of ideas and the development of new ideas and adaptation.³ Cross-community migration also brings new resources and new ideas to new communities, and is the catalyst for further innovation in communities. The interchange of language, customs, and technology leads to innovations, as different ideas are brought into contact with each other. The innovations themselves are then spread through the process of migration.⁴ One such innovation could have been the intensity of these inter-cultural relationships.

The description of the enterprises that defined these merchants as innovative will not only tie into the overarching idea of loose ties, and the innovations wrought by cross-community migration, but will also serve to provide important background information on these merchants' lives and endeavors. This information is particularly important in light of these merchants' economic relationships with Dutch merchants, as I will discuss in the chapters following this one. The chapter will then discuss the particular environment in Amsterdam that attracted and fostered these merchants.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were merchants who were innovative. They actively adapted their decisions and actions to the commercial expediency of the moment. They were experimental in seeking opportunities to invest, and were flexible in their responses to change. They often dealt in more than one activity, product, or route at once, and they engaged in new enterprises. Of course, this definition could apply to any number of merchants. How-

³ Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," 39.

⁴ Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," 45-47.

ever, the innovative nature of Rodrigues Vega's, Carvalho's, and Osorio's endeavors stands in contrast to their peers, especially in regard to incorporating or integrating new associates into their commercial networks, and in employing new technologies and strategies for trade.

Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio integrated associates from other groups into their own networks, yet also integrated themselves into other networks. As former new Christians they were culturally nimble and able to integrate themselves into the Iberian networks, including that of the Portuguese diaspora merchants abroad, many of whom were old Christians. They were also cross-community migrants—men on the move, who had lived in multiple places in the courses of their careers—and thus came into contact with merchants from many places and of various backgrounds. These contacts led, in some cases, to integration into new networks. Moreover, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio integrated geographies, trade routes, and products. For instance, they coordinated people, materials, and capital across market sectors and among geographically dispersed areas. Lastly, they diversified and combined the so-called rich trades with the commerce in “bulk” goods, as discussed below.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were not alone in being innovative cross-community merchants and migrants. I chose them because they illustrate the concept well, but many merchants, new Christians, Sephardic Jews, and merchants of all stripes behaved in similar fashion. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio typified this innovative, opportunistic, and integrative behavior. They also exemplify the different ways in which a global merchant might have behaved economically. Rodrigues Vega, for instance, integrated to a high degree the products in which he dealt. Carvalho, though dealing in both the “rich” and the “bulk” trades (discussed further below), dealt far more in the former, whereas Osorio traded predominately in “bulk” goods. Nevertheless, they all had some level of diversification in their respective product assortments.

Merchants and Their Milieu

In the expanding early modern world, it is difficult to delineate a specific geographic space. Networks expanded and were not limited to one region or specific product. Routes incorporated multiple regions.

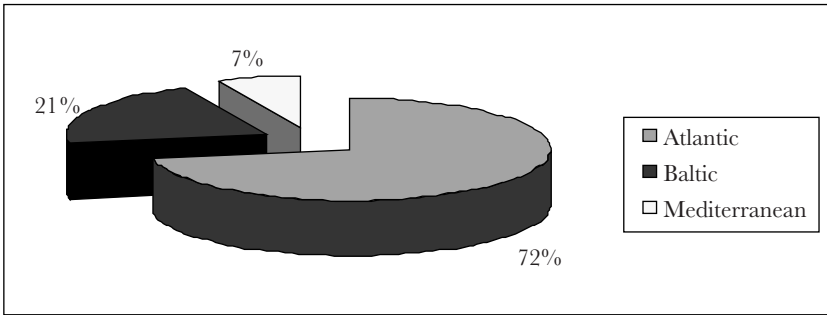
For example, to talk of Baltic trade in this period without incorporating the Atlantic trade is to ignore the important interchange of products originating in one region and being transported to another. The Atlantic, Baltic, and Mediterranean were inter-connected by the exchange of goods and the movement of people and capital. To speak of networks and limit the discussion to only one region is to disregard how networks functioned, namely, by linking peoples, products, and ideas across geographical boundaries.

Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were at the forefront of these linkages of products and ideas across geographical boundaries. There had always been merchants who maintained contacts in distant places and transported products across vast distances. The hallmark of merchants such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio was the intensification of these linkages. These merchants' operations were not primarily local or national and incorporated intra and extra-European routes. Although global does not imply that any one merchant was active everywhere in the early modern world, within the context of this book it means that he had at least some presence in all three of the traditional trade regions connected to Europe—the Baltic, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean.⁵

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

As Graph 1 shows, Rodrigues Vega was most heavily involved in the Atlantic trade, though he had significant dealings in other regions. Although I will discuss the products that were integral to this global trade at greater length, I should note that Rodrigues Vega was active in shipping Baltic grain to and from Portugal, sugar and Brazilwood from Brazil, either to Portugal or directly to the Dutch Republic and farther afield to the Baltic, as well as sending grain to the Mediter-

⁵ Atlantic History is trendy, and there is ongoing discussion as to what constitutes what has been dubbed “the Atlantic world.” Within the context of this work, Atlantic will simply be a geographical term for the western portion of Europe which borders the Atlantic Ocean. In this work, it will comprise the western part of Iberia, north and western France, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and the Low Countries. For an excellent overview of current trends in Atlantic History, see Alison Games, “AHR Forum: Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *The American Historical Review* 111, 3 (June 2006) <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/111.3/games.html>>



Source: Amsterdam Municipal Archives [Gemeente Archief Amsterdam] (hereafter GAA), Notarial Archives (hereafter NA), n=68.

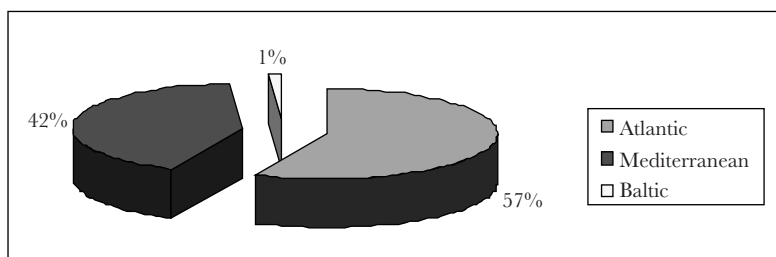
Graph 1: Rodrigues Vega's global reach.

anean and receiving precious stones from the East Indies, usually for sale in Antwerp.

One example might suffice to show the global nature of Rodrigues Vega's commercial dealings. In 1609, a decision was reached by arbitration regarding commissions on various shipments and money due for an inheritance. This document reveals that Rodrigues Vega was acting as the factor for a merchant in Antwerp, that he had shares in journeys to the East Indies, that glass beads, linen, and pearls of his were being held by a friend in Pernambuco in Brazil, and that he had made accounts in Venice regarding the over-charged commissions.⁶ Thus, in one document, we see Rodrigues Vega's connections with the East Indies, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. Of course, there are numerous other examples of the extensive geographical nature of Rodrigues Vega's commercial enterprises. A case in point might be when, in 1602, Rodrigues Vega granted a power of attorney for the receipt of Brazilwood and sugar coming from both Brazil and Porto in Portugal which was taken to Hamburg and then to other Baltic ports.⁷ Such examples make clear that, though Rodrigues Vega was more prominent in some geographies than in others, his business dealings were not primarily local or national, and that his commerce was global in nature.

⁶ SR 341.

⁷ SR 98.



Source: GAA, NA, n=72.

Graph 2: Carvalho's global reach (1602–1636).

Manoel Carvalho

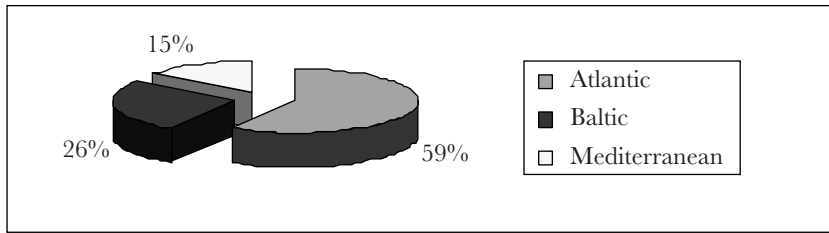
Manoel Carvalho was most active, as Graph 2 illustrates, in the Atlantic, and was highly involved in the Mediterranean trade. The archivist Simon Hart lists the most frequent shippers to the Italian peninsula from the Dutch Republic in the period between 1590 and 1630 (See Appendix 1). The list includes many associates of the Amsterdam Sephardic merchants. Among these 39 largest merchant shippers to the Italian peninsula was Manoel Carvalho.⁸ The low percentage of Carvalho's Baltic interactions is somewhat misleading. He owned shares in ships sailing from as far afield as Russia to the Mediterranean, though he was by no means as heavily engaged in chartering ships to sail directly to and from the Baltic as were other merchants.⁹ Nevertheless, the vast majority of his Mediterranean shipments were for Baltic grain.¹⁰

Manoel Carvalho was born on the Atlantic coast of Portugal, lived in Brazil, then moved to the port of Amsterdam, and transported both Baltic and Atlantic products to the Mediterranean. He also testified about the process of shipping to Angola on the west coast of Africa, and how to avoid paying taxes and tolls to the Habsburg monarchy's agents for shipping from its overseas territories in Africa and Brazil, as

⁸ Hart, "De Italië-vaart, 1590–1620," 56.

⁹ GAA, NA 625/376–377.

¹⁰ GAA, NA 106/6v–7; NA 105/44v–45; NA 106/173v–174v; NA 106/205v–206v; NA 108/20–21; NA 107/134–135; NA 113/116–116v, to list just a few.



Source: GAA, NA, n=227.

Graph 3: Osorio's global reach (1610–1640).

well as from Portugal itself.¹¹ Carvalho was also known to have business dealings linking England and Portugal,¹² and Antwerp, Amsterdam, and the Italian peninsula.¹³ Carvalho not only focused in his business enterprises on the local or national markets but was global in his outlook.

Bento Osorio

Bento Osorio was known internationally as a large-scale merchant trading with Spain, Portugal, north Africa, the Baltic and the Levant. As Graph 3 shows, Osorio was highly active as a merchant in the Atlantic, the Baltic and the Mediterranean. He was also active in the sugar trades between Portugal, the Dutch Republic, and the Italian peninsula. In addition, he shipped wheat, wood, and ammunition from Norway and the Baltic to Tangier and Ceuta.

Bento Osorio clearly had a global reach. For example, in 1618 he became embroiled in a long-running court case connecting Amsterdam, where Osorio lived, to Tangiers in Algiers, north Africa, where some of the litigants were, and to Cadiz, in Spain, where other litigants lived. The case in question concerned a ship that had left Danzig and which had been partially financed via money from Antwerp.¹⁴ These

¹¹ GAA, NA 197/173–174. Avoiding paying taxes to a foreign monarch with whom the Dutch Republic had so recently been at war was considered something close to virtuous, so it is not particularly surprising that Carvalho would testify to a Dutch notary about his tax evasion techniques.

¹² GAA, NA 102/201v–202.

¹³ GAA, NA 620/596.

¹⁴ GAA, NA 645/247–248.

kinds of cases emerged when trade connected multiple regions. It was not uncommon for Osorio to dispatch ships from Amsterdam to the Baltic to pick up timber and grain, send them to the Atlantic coast of Portugal, then on to north Africa or the Italian peninsula in the Mediterranean, and back to Portugal before their return to Amsterdam.¹⁵ Thus, these few documents offer a glimpse of Osorio's connections with the Baltic, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. Of course, there are numerous other examples of the extensive geographical nature of Osorio's commercial enterprises. The main point, however, is that Osorio was a large-scale, globally-oriented merchant, who dealt in multiple regions, geographies, and products.

One of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio's defining characteristics was not only their presence in multiple regions, but their integration of these regions, and of products and networks. Their operations were not primarily local or national and incorporated both intra- and extra-European routes, including the East and West Indies, the Americas, and the west coast of Africa. These merchants were not necessarily active in all places at all times, of course, but they had at least some presence at some time in the three traditional trade regions connected to Europe—the Baltic, the Atlantic (at this time expanding to include Africa and the Americas instead of only the Atlantic coast of Europe), and the Mediterranean. Another defining characteristic was their cross-community migrations. They were mobile. As Chapter II showed, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were migrants to the Low Countries. They or their families had come from other places, and the merchants traveled frequently in pursuit of their economic interests.

Integrative Merchants

Integration, in general, means to put or bring together parts or elements to form one whole, and this is what merchants such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio did. In short, they brought together varying parts of products, geographies, capital, and varying networks to form a whole. The ability to integrate socially and economically

¹⁵ GAA, NA 144/118–119v; NA 109/143–144v; NA 147/86–87v; NA 109/148–149v; NA 109/149v–150; NA 109/152v–153; NA 109/152v; NA 109/221v–223.

(in terms of trade goods and capital) was key for global merchants. A merchant needed to integrate by bringing associates from other groups into his own networks, and integrating himself into other networks, yet he also had to integrate geographies, trade routes, and products. Some merchants dealt in only one trade route or one region, or worked only with one network, and thus can not be termed integrative merchants. Integrative merchants, in contrast, coordinated people, materials, and capital across markets and among geographically dispersed areas. They also diversified and combined the so-called rich trades with commerce in “bulk” goods, which I will discuss below. It is the integration of the composition of their networks, coupled with their diversified commerce, which forms the most important element of the integrative process.

This section has shown how Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio participated in many regions of the world in their business dealings, making them truly global merchants from a purely geographical perspective. They operated in the Baltic, in the financial centers of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, and even London, as well as in the Atlantic, the Americas, Africa, and the East Indies. Thus, it is clear that these merchants participated in enterprises globally. But geography is not the only measure of integration. These merchants also integrated capital, products, and people.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

Traditionally, there has been a dichotomy drawn between the so called “bulk” trades and what has been dubbed the “rich trades.”¹⁶ There has also been a lively debate in the historiography as to what brought

¹⁶ Jonathan Israel argues that it was the ability to combine the trade in bulk and rich trades which led to the Netherlands' wealth. However, he believes that the rich trades brought in the most wealth. See his *The Dutch Republic*. A heated discussion has ensued. See, for example, the articles in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 106 (1991), by J.L. van Zanden, “De ‘nieuwe visie’ van Israel,” 451–457; L. Noordegraaf, “Vooruit en achteruit in de handelsgeschiedenis van de Republiek,” 458–468; and Jonathan Israel, “The ‘New History’ versus ‘traditional history’ in interpreting Dutch World trade primacy,” *Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 106 (1991): 469–479. See also the special edition of *Leidschrift* devoted to this discussion. (1992), number 9. Odette Vlessing discusses the importance of the rich trades for the Sephardim in Amsterdam. Odette Vlessing, “The Portuguese-Jewish Merchant Community in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” in Lesger and Noordegraaf, eds., *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times*, 223–243.

Table 3: Rich vs. bulk trades—Rodrigues Vega, 1595–1613

	Number	Percentage
<i>Rich trades</i>		
Silk textiles	5	7%
Sugar and spices	13	19%
Weapons and munitions	1	1%
Jewels	1	1%
Slaves	2	3%
Brazilwood	8	11%
Other (civet, coral, ivory, lacquer, specie, etc.)	10	14%
Subtotal	40	58%
<i>Bulk trades</i>		
Grain, beans, other food	21	30%
Wood	0	0%
Hides	1	1%
Unworked metal and iron goods	3	3%
Salt	4	6%
Other Baltic goods (cordage, etc.)	1	1%
	30	43%
Total	70	

Source: GAA, NA.

the most wealth to Amsterdam, with the Sephardic Jews singled out as having focused on the rich trades and, it is implicitly assumed, becoming wealthy on such trades. Whatever the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam did from a group perspective, these merchants integrated their product assortments and did not focus on any one trade, just as they would have strived to integrate routes and regions. This tendency toward integration of product assortment is certainly the case for Manoel Rodrigues Vega, as Table 3 shows.

Although the majority of the products—nearly 60%—in which Manoel Rodrigues Vega dealt were drawn from the rich trades, more than 40% were not. It is clear, then, that Rodrigues Vega was not a specialist in one particular product or in one particular category of trade. Rather, he integrated the trade in products coming from the expanding European trade to the Americas and the East Indies, with the traditional European trade in bulk products.

Rodrigues Vega does not seem to have relied particularly heavily upon Sephardic associates, and when he did they were almost always part of a larger interaction that included Dutch associates. Graph 4

shows how Rodrigues Vega depended on Dutch merchants and worked with integrated networks of Amsterdam-based Sephardic and Dutch merchants. It is evident that Rodrigues Vega dealt with Dutch associates for the furtherance of his business endeavors. Although the number of interactions varies depending on the chronology, it is clear that integrated networks, whether of only Rodrigues Vega himself with Dutch merchants or of Rodrigues Vega and one or more Sephardic merchants with Dutch associates, were vital to him. For example, Manoel Rodrigues Vega granted a power of attorney to, had bills of exchange drawn on him by, or had goods shipped by Elias van Geel of La Rochelle,¹⁷ Abraham Herwijer¹⁸ and Daniel van Harinckhoeck of London,¹⁹ Laurens Baeckx²⁰ and Adriaen and Gaspar van Nispen of Middelburg,²¹ Cornelis Snellinck of Amsterdam,²² and Hendrick Hondbeeck, to name just a few of his Dutch associates.²³

However, Sephardic and Dutch merchants also worked together in integrated networks. For instance, the shipment of woad (a plant that produces indigo-colored dye) from Pedro Lopes Peixoto in São Miguel which was co-owned by Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Hans de Schot, as well as by Laurens Joosten Baeckx and Steven Groelaet, who were acting on behalf of another Sephardic merchant, Bartholome Sanches, who lived in Lisbon.²⁴ De Schot and Baeckx were originally from Antwerp, which may indicate the integration of networks of newcomers to Amsterdam. Another example would be Rodrigues Vega's giving to Cornelis Snellinck, a merchant from Antwerp, three-fourths of his share in a cargo that Snellinck was sending via Madeira to Antonio Nunes, a Sephardic merchant in Bahia, Brazil.²⁵

As these examples show, Rodrigues Vega brought together parts or elements from varying regions, from diverse product groups, and from different groups so as to form an integrated trade network. He coordinated capital in the form of bills of exchange from assorted

¹⁷ GAA, NA 48/33v–134.

¹⁸ GAA, NA 48/117v–118.

¹⁹ GAA, NA 119/22v2–223.

²⁰ GAA, NA 48/41v–42; NA 76/144v–146; NA 53/101.

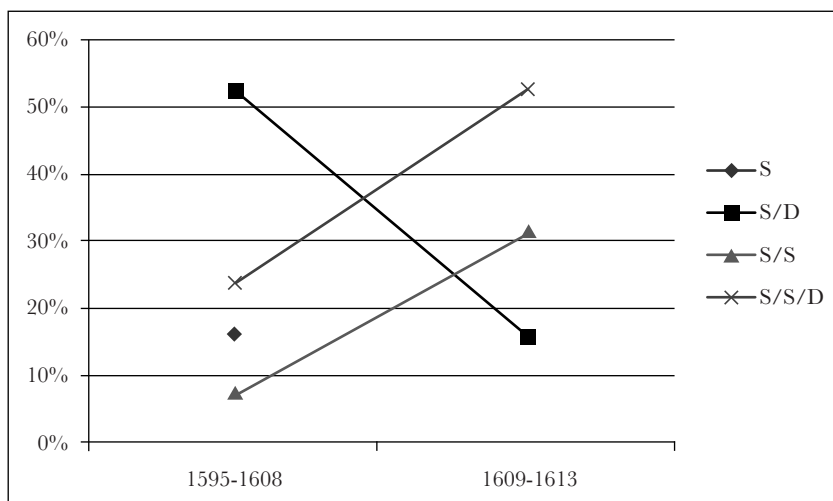
²¹ GAA, NA 53/34v–35; NA 53/78v–79.

²² GAA, NA 98/27–28.

²³ GAA, NA 86/44–44v; NA 54/142v–143.

²⁴ SR 6.

²⁵ SR 137.



Source: GAA, NA, n=125.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 4: Manoel Rodrigues Vega’s economic endeavors by interaction type, 1595–1613.

sources and locations.²⁶ These bills of exchange also give a first glimpse of the integration of networks of exchange between the Amsterdam Sephardic merchants and Dutch associates in varying configurations. Moreover, Rodrigues Vega was hardly limited by the “rich trade” in mostly colonial products. Rather, he integrated the products in which he dealt in order to incorporate both types of trade into his enterprise.

²⁶ For instance, in 1604, a bill of exchange came due for Rodrigues Vega that was first drawn in Pernambuco in Brazil for a sugar payment. This bill was payable to two Dutch merchants—Assuerus van Blocklandt and Hendrick Gijsbertsz. Delft. It was accepted by a Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam, João Castelli, before being addressed to Rodrigues Vega, who was in Emden at the time. (SR 144) Thus, in one bill of exchange, we see not only the geographic spread of Rodrigues Vega’s activities (illustrated previously) but also the connections between Dutch and Sephardic merchants. In the same year, a bill of exchange was drawn in Porto, in Portugal, payable to Gillis Dodeur, a Dutch merchant. This value was received from Jeronimus Goosseens, another Dutch merchant, who then addressed it to João Castelli in Amsterdam, who passed it on to Rodrigues Vega in Hamburg. (SR 129) Once again, the connections between Portugal, Amsterdam, and Hamburg, as well as of merchants from diverse backgrounds, are evident in one relatively straightforward bill.

Unfortunately, it would require a great deal of further research to gauge which trade group—bulk or rich—was more profitable. However, the fact that Rodrigues Vega utilized both kinds of trade groups relatively equally implies that they were of similar profitability, at least for him. Thus, Rodrigues Vega not only clearly had important contacts with Dutch merchants but was an outstanding example of an integrative merchant.

Manoel Carvalho

Carvalho was heavily focused on the rich trades, as the table below shows. However, one-fifth of his products concerned the trade in bulk goods. Since Carvalho was known as an Atlantic merchant and as a merchant heavily involved in the sugar trade, 20% is actually a surprisingly high percentage of trade in bulk products. This indicates that even merchants that were deeply involved in one sort of trade felt the need, if they were globally-oriented enough, to diversify and integrate their product assortment, as Carvalho did.

Table 4: Rich vs. bulk trades—Manoel Carvalho

	Number	Percentage
<i>Rich trades</i>		
Silks	1	1%
Sugar and spices	50	72%
Weapons and munitions		
Jewels		
Slaves	1	1%
Brazilwood	1	1%
Other (civet, coral, ivory, lacquer, specie)	2	3%
Subtotal	55	80%
<i>Bulk trades</i>		
Grain, beans, other food	11	16%
Wood	1	1%
Hides		
Unworked metal	2	3%
		20%

Source: GAA, NA.

It is clear that although Carvalho tended to specialize in the rich trades, he was able to integrate and diversify trade categories. Moreover, he integrated the trade in products coming from the expanding European trade with the traditional European trade in bulk products.

As mentioned, Carvalho did not rely particularly heavily upon Amsterdam Sephardic associates alone. When he did, the associates often took part in larger interactions that included Dutch merchants. Graph 5 shows that integrated networks, either with non-Sephardic merchants or comprised of a combination of fellow Amsterdam-based Sephardim and Dutch associates, were vital to Carvalho. He depended on Dutch merchants and utilized these associations as part of his integrated networks. For example, Carvalho granted a power of attorney to Anthony Villequier. Villequier co-owned multiple shipments of sugar with Albert Schuyt, and also co-owned sugar with, and was insured by, Henri Thibault. He also had multiple dealings with Samuel van Peenen and Pieter Gilles, among other Dutch associates.²⁷

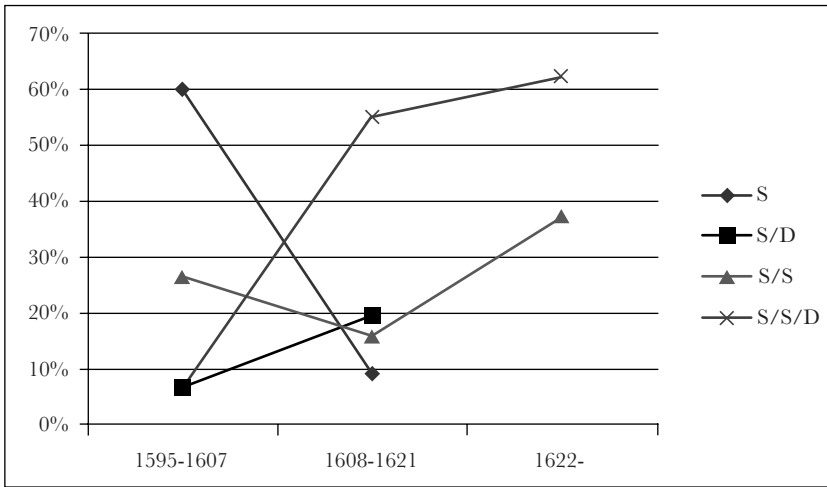
The examples mentioned previously are for Carvalho himself and Dutch merchants. However, Amsterdam Sephardi and Dutch merchants also worked together in integrated networks. One example for this was a convoluted and protracted legal case involving multiple merchants, Amsterdam-based Sephardim and Dutch alike, concerning a sugar shipment taken by pirates to La Rochelle, in France. The sugar was owned by a several merchants, Sephardi and Dutch, and was insured by still other merchants. The case wandered through the court system for years and eventually necessitated national government intervention.²⁸ Another example would be the co-ownership of a plantation in Brazil by Carvalho, his son Isaac, and two new Christian merchants, Pedro Alvares Madeiro and Diego Fernandes, with the merchants Symon van der Does, Jan le Gouche, Bartolomeus Hopffer, and Christoffel Ayerschettel.²⁹

As these examples show, Carvalho integrated regions and products, and formed networks with a variety of merchants. He also coordinated capital in the form of bills of exchange from assorted sources and

²⁷ GAA, NA 387/115–117v; NA 384a/435–436; NA 383/511; NA 383/226; NA 381/196; NA 380/502; NA 380/501.

²⁸ GAA, NA 387/115–117v.

²⁹ GAA, NA 672/5–6. It is unclear if these merchants are from the Dutch Republic or from the Spanish Netherlands.



Source: GAA, NA, n=110.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 5: Manoel Carvalho’s economic endeavors by interaction type, 1602–1636.

locations.³⁰ He was also part of the integration of networks of exchange between Amsterdam’s Sephardic and Dutch merchants in varying configurations. Moreover, though Carvalho was clearly focused in the rich trades, he was not limited by the trade in colonial products, and also did business in bulk goods. Carvalho integrated the products in which he dealt in order to incorporate both types of trade into his enterprise.

³⁰ For instance, in 1614 a bill of exchange came due for Carvalho that was first drawn in Porto in Portugal. This bill was passed through Rome, Italy and Antwerp, before coming due in Amsterdam. (GAA, NA 377/378).

A few years earlier, in 1610, Carvalho was the final link in a chain of credit for the purchase of a share in a ship that linked Lisbon, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam. This bill of exchange was first drawn by Joost Benninck in Lisbon, who passed it on to Jaspas Moermans in Rotterdam, who signed it over to Jan van Dashorts in Amsterdam, where it ended up in the hands of Carvalho. (GAA, NA 118/72–72v).

Table 5: Rich vs. bulk trades—Bento Osorio, 1610–1640

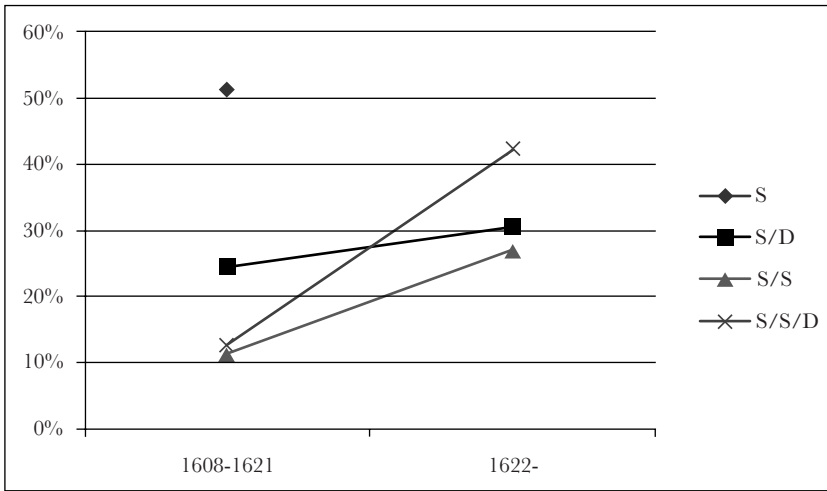
	Number	Percentage
<i>Rich trades</i>		
Silks	2	1%
Sugar and spices	25	9%
Weapons and munitions	2	1%
Jewels	6	2%
Slaves	1	0%
Brazilwood	5	2%
Other (civet, coral, ivory, lacquer, specie, woad, indigo, tobacco)	7	3%
Subtotal	48	17%
<i>Bulk trades</i>		
Grain, beans, other food	24	9%
Wood	11	4%
Hides	2	1%
Unworked metal	2	1%
Salt	189	68%
Other Baltic goods (cordage, etc.)	4	1%
	232	83%

Source: GAA, NA.

Bento Osorio

The vast majority of the products in which Bento Osorio dealt—83%—were drawn from the bulk trades. Thus, it is clear that he was a specialist in the trade in bulk products. Yet he also did business in various products categorized as belonging to the rich trades. Though he seems to have specialized, he integrated the trade in products coming from the expanding European trade with the traditional European trade in bulk products.

Osorio, like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, does not seem to have relied particularly heavily upon Sephardic associates in Amsterdam, and when he did such associates were almost always part of larger interactions that included Dutch merchants. Graph 6 evidences Osorio’s reliance on Dutch associates and integrated networks of Amsterdam Sephardic and Dutch associates. Although the number of interactions varies depending on the chronology, what is clear is that integrated networks were vital to Osorio, regardless of whether such networks included only Osorio with Dutch merchants or Osorio and one or



Source: GAA, NA, n=373.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 6: Bento Osorio’s economic endeavors by interaction type, 1610–1640.

more Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants with Dutch associates. For example, Guillaume Bartolotti was a co-freighter of a ship, Hillibrant den Otter made declarations on Osorio’s behalf, and Jacques Nicquet insured cargoes for him.³¹

Amsterdam Sephardi and Dutch merchants also worked together in integrated networks, such as the one involving salt shipments (from Setubal in Portugal to the Dutch Republic, Flanders, and the Baltic) made by Osorio and Andrea Lopes Pinto and consigned to Marcus, Pieter, and Abraham Pels.³² Another example was Osorio and fellow Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants, along with Dutch merchants such as Gaspar Quinget and Daniel de Raedt, issuing a power of attorney to recover money owed to them by Alexander van den Berge.³³

³¹ GAA, NA 350/81v–82v; NA 645a/505–606; and NA 645b/1582–1584, respectively.

³² SR 1590, 1572, 1571, and 1570.

³³ GAA, NA 611a/114–114v.

As these examples show, Osorio was in integrative merchant. Though he concentrated heavily in the trade in bulk goods, he dealt with the “rich trades” in mostly colonial products, though to a lesser extent. Like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, Osorio coordinated capital in the form of bills of exchange from various merchants in different locations.³⁴

The ability to integrate was key for global merchants, as they not only needed to integrate associates from other groups into their own personal networks and integrate themselves into other networks; they also had to integrate geographies, trade routes, capital, and products. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio coordinated people, materials, and capital across market sectors and among geographically dispersed areas. They also diversified and combined the “rich trades” with commerce in “bulk” goods. They integrated capital, people, products, and geographies in innovative ways that pushed them into the category of global merchants.

Rodrigues Vega, for example, integrated to a high degree the products in which he dealt. He was hardly limited by the “rich trade” in mostly colonial products. He integrated products in order to incorporate both types of trade into his enterprise, and thus offers an outstanding example of an integrative merchant. This integration was a key component of his mercantile activities. Carvalho also dealt in both the “rich” and the “bulk” trades, though in contrast to Rodrigues Vega he was far more involved in the former. Like Rodrigues Vega, he was not limited by the trade in colonial products, as he dealt in bulk goods, though not to the same extent as Rodrigues Vega. But, like Rodrigues Vega, he was part of the integration (in varying configurations) of networks of exchange between Sephardic and Dutch merchants. Osorio, however, traded predominately in “bulk” goods. He was a sort of mirror to Carvalho. Whereas about 20% of Carvalho’s

³⁴ For instance, in 1638, a bill of exchange came due for Osorio that was first drawn in Venice in Italy, was passed through an Italian merchant in Seville, before being passed to Osorio in Amsterdam. (GAA, NA 1498/60). Another bill of exchange, this one from 1618, was also first issued in Venice and wound up with Osorio in Amsterdam after winding its way through the Sephardic merchant Francisco Gomes Henriques, and the Dutch merchants Pieter Coerten, Andries Hendricxs. de Beyser, the van Casteren brothers, the van Baerle brothers, and one Herman Hesters. The integration of the Italian peninsula with the Low Countries, as well as of merchants from diverse backgrounds can be seen in one bill.

trade was in bulk goods versus 80% in rich goods, Osorio's numbers were the opposite: about 20% of his trade was in rich goods and 80% in bulk goods. Despite this focus on one trade or another, Carvalho and Osorio both integrated their product assortment to some extent. This integration speaks to their standing as merchants who were using loose ties with Dutch merchants to bolster their trade enterprises, an innovation bolstered by cross-community migration.

Innovative Merchants

Integrating people, materials, products, capital, and routes meant seizing opportunities available at the time and exploiting circumstances to gain advantages. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were innovative and actively adapted their decisions and actions to the commercial expediencies of the moment. They were experimental in seeking investment opportunities and were flexible in their responses to change. They often dealt in more than one activity, product, or route at once, often while engaging in new enterprises. Many merchants could be said to have behaved in similar ways. However, the innovation of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio stands in particular contrast to their peers due to the sheer extent and intensity of their engagement in integrating routes, diversifying their product assortments (including experimenting with new products), and employing new technologies, not to mention in regard to incorporating and integrating new associates into their commercial networks.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

An innovation of the time was the joint-stock company, and the merchants examined in this study seized upon opportunities presented by this new form of commercial organization. Within the joint-stock company structure, investors could contribute variable sums of money to fund a venture or series of ventures. In doing so, they become joint holders of the company's trading stock, with a right to share in any profits in proportion to the size of their holding. Although Vaz Diaz asserts that Rodrigues Vega was an initial shareholder in the Dutch East India Company (VOC), this was not the case. Rodrigues Vega actually owned stock in a *voorcompagnie* [early or precursor company] of the VOC called the *Verenigde Amsterdamse Compagnie* (United Amsterdam

Company).³⁵ He invested a substantial amount of money in Dutch East India voyages.³⁶ In all, his participation in the East India adventure appears to have totaled at least 60,000 florins.³⁷

Besides subscribing to the Amsterdam Company, Rodrigues Vega also owned shares in various independent voyages. Buying shares in independent trips was a technique for financing specific voyages, rather than a company structure, in which multiple ventures were financed. Rodrigues Vega invested 12,000 Flemish pounds in 1601 for a voyage to the East Indies, and did so again the following year for the sum of 1600 Flemish pounds. These were just a few of the multiple voyages to the East Indies in which Rodrigues Vega invested.³⁸ He also traded shares in these voyages in order to repay debts and used these shares as a guarantee for money he owed.³⁹ Within two years of the VOC's founding in 1602, Rodrigues Vega was receiving shares in the new company as payment from Dutch associates such as Dirk van Os, Laurens Baeck, Cornelis Snellinck, and Jan Gerritsz. Parijs.⁴⁰ Despite van Dillen's assertion that "by 1609, when speculation in the shares in the VOC began, the Sephardim do not seem to appear,"⁴¹ it is clear that Rodrigues Vega was active in purchasing shares. He saw opportunities not only in the trade in the East Indies but in the new manner of trading and investing, namely share-holding and the joint-stock company.

Rodrigues Vega not only took the opportunity to trade in company stock but was also active in insuring his cargoes. This form of risk reduction had existed in various forms since antiquity. Bottomry, or loaning a captain money which was to be paid on the safe arrival of the ship, had been common since the middle ages, if not before. There

³⁵ J.G. van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister van de Kamer Amsterdam der Oost-Indische Compagnie* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), 57–58 and J.G. van Dillen, "Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de Eerste Helft der Zeventiende Eeuw, I. De Portugeesche Joden," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 50 (1935): 4–35, 10. There were only two Portuguese subscribers to the VOC when it was set up in 1602, and in 1604 that number had only grown to seven. See also, A.M. Vaz Dias, "De deelname der marranen in het oprichtingskapitaal der Oost-Indische Compagnie," *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amsterlodamum*, 33 (1936): 43–58.

³⁶ SR 111, 132, 170.

³⁷ Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe*, 453.

³⁸ SR 105.

³⁹ SR 105.

⁴⁰ SR 132.

⁴¹ van Dillen, "Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de Eerste Helft der Zeventiende Eeuw," 10.

is debate, however, as to when insurance as it is commonly understood today—payment against a premium if the cargo was lost—began to be widely utilized in Amsterdam. The historian O. van Rees asserted that insurance had been regarded with suspicion in Amsterdam as late as 1564.⁴² According to Violet Barbour, even as late as the early seventeenth century, no more than 1% of Dutch shipping and 10% of merchandise was insured.⁴³ J.A. van Houtte and Jacob M. Price argue that the picture was not very different in Antwerp or London, respectively.⁴⁴ Henry de Groote presents a different view on maritime assurance and shows that it was relatively common in Antwerp by the 1560s.⁴⁵ De Groote's view is shared by Hilario Casado Alonso, based on his research on Brugge, which shows that maritime insurance was utilized there by the 1560s.⁴⁶ Thus, maritime insurance might have been an innovation already used by these merchants, all of whom had connections to the southern Low Countries. Be that as it may, the oldest surviving insurance policy drawn in Holland—probably, though not certainly, in Amsterdam—is from 1592.⁴⁷ Regardless of the debate surrounding how and when early maritime insurance became common in the Low Countries, the merchants I consider in this study, as well as the Sephardim, in general, seem to have insured their cargoes as a matter of course. And even if Barbour's numbers are inaccurate by a relatively wide margin, the fact that the Sephardim so frequently insured their cargoes is noteworthy. Perhaps they had grown accustomed to using maritime insurance and carried that innovation

⁴² O. van Rees, *Geschiedenis der Staathuishoudkunde in Nederland tot het einde der achttiende eeuw*, 2 volumes (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1865–1868), Volume I, 118.

⁴³ Violet Barbour, "Marine Risks and Insurance in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Economic and Business History* 1 (1928–1929): 561–596.

⁴⁴ See J.A. van Houtte, *An Economic History of the Low Countries, 800–1800* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1977) for Antwerp, and Jacob M. Price, "Transaction costs: a note on merchant credit and the organization of private trade," in J.D. Tracy, *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 276–297, 283–288 for London.

⁴⁵ Henry de Groote, *De zeeassurantie te Antwerpen en te Brugge in de zestiende eeuw* (Antwerp: De Branding, 1975). My thanks to Dr. Raymond Fagel of the University of Leiden for bringing de Groote's work to my attention.

⁴⁶ Hilario Casado Alonso, "Los seguros marítimos de Burgos. Observatorio del comercio internacional portugués en el siglo XVI," *Revista da Faculdade de Letras História*, Porto, III Series, 4 (2003): 231–242. I am grateful to Dr. Raymond Fagel of the University of Leiden for letting me know of Casado Alonso's work on maritime insurance.

⁴⁷ J. IJzerman and E.L.G. den Dooren de Jong, "De Oudste Bekende Hollandsche Zee-assurantie polis (1592)," *Economisch-historisch Jaarboek XVI* (1930): 222.

with them when they migrated to Amsterdam. In fact, by 1611, Sephardic merchants were mentioning in their deeds to one another that they were regularly taking out insurance from Dutch merchants, and viewed the premium payments for this insurance as a conventional cost of doing business.⁴⁸

The Sephardim, especially in the early years of their settlement in Amsterdam, dealt largely in agricultural products from Iberia, North Africa, and the Iberian Atlantic Islands such as Malaga and the Azores; merchandise to and from the pirate-infested Mediterranean; and, most importantly, sugar, textiles, and other high value products between Brazil, Portugal, the Dutch Republic, the Italian States, and the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ All these routes and products were risky due to ever present threats from shipwreck, piracy and privateering, war, and possible damage to costly fabrics and relatively easily spoilable foodstuffs. The resumption of the war with the Habsburg monarchy, in 1621, and the depredations of Dunkirk privateers on Dutch shipping, furnished convincing arguments in favor of insurance, especially for merchants such as the Sephardim who were so intimately involved in Iberian-related trade.

Rodrigues Vega, for example, took the opportunity to reduce his risk presented by this relatively new form of insurance. In 1599, he settled a claim from 1597 for insured goods in two ships, the “Nostra Senora de la Victoria” and “Nostra Senora de Lux,” with Melchior van Dortmont.⁵⁰ In 1598, Rodrigues Vega and his Dutch associate Pieter Symonsz. claimed that the goods aboard the ship “Sinte Pieter” had been lost and asked Rodrigues Vega’s Dutch insurers (Gaspar and Baltazar Coymans, Hans van Gheel, Baltazar Jacot, and Thibaut de Pickere) for the sum insured.⁵¹ Coymans, de Pickere and Jacot, as well as merchants Dirck van Os, Mathijs Jansz. van Straeten, Dirck Alewijn, Gubrecht Wachmans, Jan le Brun, and Conrard Bossereel insured wheat for Rodrigues Vega on the ship *De Rooden Muelen* in 1598.⁵² Rodrigues Vega, clearly, saw the opportunity provided by insuring cargoes to reduce the risky nature of shipping. Moreover,

⁴⁸ GAA NA 62/218v; GAA NA 125/27v–28v; GAA 376/416–417.

⁴⁹ Swetschinski, “The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” 619–620, note 31.

⁵⁰ SR 53; Van Dortmont was most likely from either the Dutch Republic or from the Spanish Netherlands.

⁵¹ SR 18.

⁵² SR 28.

insuring his cargoes gave him the chance to work closely with prominent Dutch merchants, many of whom would work with him through the years on multiple ventures.

One of these ventures was the Baltic grain trade. Rodrigues Vega (and other Sephardic merchants) seized the opportunity presented by the bad grain harvests in the 1590s in Portugal and the Azores which made the country permanently dependent on imported cereals.⁵³ This dependence, when coupled with the grain needed by the city-states of the Italian peninsula, occasioned the rise of the Amsterdam-Portugal route for trading in Baltic grain warehoused in Amsterdam, as well as in other goods. In fact, the *Oost* and *Westvaart*, connecting Iberia and the Baltic, absorbed the bulk of Dutch shipping capacity.⁵⁴ Despite the traditional historiographical assertion that the Sephardim in Amsterdam participated little or not at all in the Baltic trade, Manoel Rodrigues Vega and other global merchants maximized opportunities offered by the Baltic grain trade.⁵⁵

As Graph 1 showed, 21% of Rodrigues Vega's contracts related to the Baltic, whereas, as seen in Table 3, a striking 40% of the goods in which he dealt were bulk Baltic goods, 30% of which was Baltic grain. In fact, as early as 1596, one year after his arrival in Amsterdam,

⁵³ Frédéric Mauro, *Le Portugal le Brésil et l'Atlantique au XVII^e siècle (1570–1670): étude économique* (Paris: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Centre Culturel Portugais, 1983), 294–306, 308–317.

⁵⁴ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 373.

⁵⁵ Daniel Swetschinski, in his otherwise detailed study of the Sephardic merchants of Amsterdam, asserts that, “Although direct commercial relations with Norway, Sweden, and the Baltic region were among the most important of Amsterdam generally, Portuguese Jews only sporadically ventured into these areas. Portuguese Jewish inroads in the grain, wood, and iron trade with northern Europe were largely out of the question. Dutch merchants controlled these most important routes upon which the city's success was founded.” See, Swetschinski, “The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” 174. Odette Vlessing, another undisputed expert on the Sephardim of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, stresses that, while the trade in salt and corn were important to Amsterdam as a whole because of the quantities involved, in terms of profits, the trade in sugar and other “rich” trades were more important overall. Interestingly, she does not discuss the role of Sephardic merchants in the salt and corn trades, instead concentrating on the traditional view that Sephardic merchants were largely or primarily involved in the sugar (and other colonial products) trade—implicitly, arguing, therefore, that the Sephardic trade (the “rich” trade) was ultimately more important than the rather more prosaic Baltic trade. See, Vlessing, “The Portuguese-Jewish Merchant Community in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” 223–243.

Rodrigues Vega had clearly developed business contacts in the Baltic region with Dutch merchants. He granted two powers of attorney to Nicolaes and Jeronimo Grisons, merchants in Danzig, to act on his behalf in two separate business matters.⁵⁶ Through the latter part of the 1590s and into the early 1600s, Rodrigues Vega was active in shipping grain (rye, wheat) to Portugal⁵⁷ as well as, in at least one case, to France (La Rochelle), where his non-Sephardi agent, Elias van Geel, took receipt of the grain.⁵⁸

Manuel Rodrigues Vega also saw the opportunity offered by trading colonial goods in the Baltic. He was among the founding members of a consortium for the trade in Brazilwood; the other members included numerous Sephardi and Dutch merchants. The Brazilwood was shipped not just to Amsterdam but also directly to Hamburg, the gateway to the Baltic. Rodrigues Vega's correspondent in Hamburg was one Dominicus van Uffele, who received the wood for Rodrigues Vega.⁵⁹ Van Uffele was born in Antwerp in 1545. By 1585 he was active as a merchant in Hamburg, where he conducted business with Portugal, as well as other locales, on a large scale. Other members of his family traded with Amsterdam.⁶⁰ Manoel Rodrigues Vega effectively exploited opportunities presented by the Baltic trade in grain and other goods, yet also parlayed these Baltic opportunities into building inter-cultural contacts.

While it is clear that Rodrigues Vega was involved in the trade in Baltic goods and in the colonial products of sugar and Brazilwood, he

⁵⁶ GAA NA 75/45–46v; See also SR 8 and 9. Although Jews were not officially permitted to dwell in Danzig, its complicated residence system meant that there were hundreds of Jews staying there more or less permanently, even before the close of the sixteenth century. See Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe*, 78 and Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 27–28. These were mostly Polish Jews who were active in international trade. There were roughly 400–500 of them. Because Danzig was on the border and played a decisive role in Poland's international trade, this city had favorable conditions for Jewish immigration. See, Moses A. Shulvass, *From East to West: The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1971), 20. Despite these co-religionists' presence in Danzig, however, there is absolutely no evidence that Rodrigues Vega, Carvahlo, or Osorio traded with any of them. Instead, they used Dutch factors there.

⁵⁷ GAA NA 53/12; 51v–52; 100; 103v.

⁵⁸ GAA NA 83/105–105v; See also SR 60.

⁵⁹ GAA NA 55/537v–538, 571–571v; NA 98/28–28v.

⁶⁰ GAA NA 55/537v–538; See also Hermann Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel, 1590–1625* (Hamburg: Verlag der Hamburgischen Bücherei, 1954), 226.

also seized the opportunity to trade in the premier colonial product—namely, slaves. In 1601, long before most Dutch slaving had begun, he was party to a lawsuit regarding a “faulty” consignment of slaves.⁶¹ The shipment of slaves had been made with his long-time Flemish associate, Cornelis Snellinck.⁶² In 1610, Rodrigues Vega and Snellinck bought slaves again, this time along with Dutch associate Leonard de Beer.⁶³ The slave trade had been growing throughout the sixteenth century, but had been controlled mostly by the Iberian *asentistas*.⁶⁴ Rodrigues Vega took advantage of opportunities afforded by the expanding plantation system, as well as of the financing and contacts offered by his Iberian associates in Africa and his Dutch associates in Amsterdam, to dabble in this new, risky, but potentially highly profitable commodity.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega was opportunistic and innovative, and actively adapted his decisions and commercial activities to meet challenges and grasp available opportunities. He was experimental in seeking innovative opportunities to invest, by owning shares in individual voyages as well as stock in new companies such as the Amsterdam and Dutch East India companies. Moreover, Rodrigues Vega also ventured into industry. He received the lease on a house, free of charge, to

⁶¹ For information on the early Dutch slave trade, as well as the role of the Sephardim in this trade, see: Jonathan Israel and Daniel Swetschinski, in J.C.H. Blom, et al., eds., in *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 77–79, 85–112, 399–408; Wim Klooster, “Sephardic Migration and the Growth of European Long-Distance Trade,” *Studia Rosenthalia* 35, 2 (2001): 121–32; J. Postma and V. Enthoven, eds., *Riches from Atlantic Commerce* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 65–67, 205, 368–369; Jelmer Vos, David Eltis, and David Richardson, “The Dutch in the Atlantic World: New Perspectives from the Slave Trade with Particular Reference to the African Origins of the Traffic,” unpublished paper presented at the workshop *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: New Data and New Interpretations*, Emory University, 10–11 December 2004, note 14; Ernst van den Boogaart and Pieter Emmer, “The Dutch Participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1596–1650,” in Henry Gemery and Jan S. Hogendoorn, eds., *The Uncommon Market. Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 1979), 353–375, 354; and V. Enthoven, “Early Dutch Expansion in the Atlantic Region” in J. Postma and V. Enthoven, eds. *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585–1817* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17–47, 43.

⁶² SR 91.

⁶³ SR 449.

⁶⁴ An *asentista* is the holder of a contract known as an *asiento* granted by the Crown of Spain and/or Portugal to supply goods and services on behalf of the Crown. The terms are most commonly associated with the slave trade, but there were, for example, *asientos* for the collection of taxes, the supply of wheat to forts, or the supply of salt to the army.

set up a silk factory and show the Dutch how to make silk,⁶⁵ although little seems to have come of this endeavor. He was also flexible in his responses to change. As sailing became riskier, he ventured into insurance, a relatively new form of risk reduction, to protect his cargoes. He also saw opportunities to be had by trading in Baltic grain and integrating his bulk and colonial or “rich” trades. Rodrigues Vega also took advantage of the chances offered by trading in slaves. Lastly, he integrated his network to include both Sephardic and Dutch associates so as to make full use of opportunities presented in having multiple partners from various backgrounds.

Manoel Carvalho

Manoel Carvalho, like Manoel Rodrigues Vega, was a merchant on the lookout for new opportunities and innovations in the growing markets of Amsterdam. One such opportunity was the joint-stock company, and, like Rodrigues Vega and the other merchants examined in this study, Carvalho grabbed the opportunities presented by this new and innovative form of commercial organization. In 1618, for example, he sold two shares in the Dutch East India Company. He had bought one share, for 2,400 guilders, from the Enkhuizen Chamber of the Company, and another, for 1,900 guilders, from the Amsterdam Chamber. Carvalho then traded these shares to a Dutch associate, Abraham de Schilder, via a Dutch intermediary, one Ghenet de Jonge.⁶⁶ This example makes clear that Carvalho saw opportunities in the ownership and trade in joint-stock company shares. He must have believed that the East Indies offered interesting opportunities for trade and investment. Moreover, he used his share of ownership to promote his connections with Dutch associates.

Carvalho was also active in insuring his cargoes. For example, he insured for 2,500 pounds Fleming the ship *Croon*, which sailed from Venice to Tunis carrying various products including planks, red lead, tartar, silks, lacquer, and wax.⁶⁷ Carvalho was clearly availing himself of opportunities offered on the Amsterdam insurance market to cover ships that were not sailing directly to or from Amsterdam. This

⁶⁵ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam*, 33–35.

⁶⁶ GAA, NA 611b/509v.

⁶⁷ SR 841. Red lead is used as a dyestuff. Tartar was used as a preservative.

particular ship was insured for Carvalho by a large number of his Dutch associates, with whom he did business in multiple ventures.⁶⁸ Carvalho also regularly insured his cargoes of sugar from Brazil. This was done to reduce risks inherent in any transatlantic crossing, but especially against piracy. For instance, in one case, 160 cases of sugar were taken by pirates to La Rochelle in France, which Carvalho's insurers had to pay for the shipment's recovery.⁶⁹

Carvalho insured more than just sugar, however, and was actively involved in exploiting opportunities offered by the emerging slave trade. In 1617, Carvalho chartered the *St. Michael*, a ship sailing to the West Indies with a load of slaves. He saw the opportunities to be had in the emergent triangular trade and ordered that the proceeds from the slaves be invested in unspecified "goods." These goods (presumably sugar, though this is not specified in the sources) were to be shipped to Spain in the ship "Captain Francisco Ferrera." It is likely that the money earned on the sale of these goods in Spain would either be returned to Carvalho in Amsterdam, by taking advantage of bills of exchange, or else used for the purchase of still more goods in Spain to be sold on the Amsterdam market.⁷⁰

Manoel Carvalho also excelled in maximizing the opportunities presented by the Italian peninsula's dependence of Baltic grain. As the information from Simon Hart in Appendix I shows, Carvalho was one of the major shippers of grain to the Italian peninsula. Only one correspondent (Isaac Israel, in Venice) for Carvalho is mentioned in Italy, and it is not known if there was a familial relationship. Israel and a Dutch merchant in Venice, Pieter Bauwer, were each granted a power of attorney by Carvalho and his insurers to sell merchandise salvaged from a ship that had wrecked off the coast of Venice.⁷¹ Except for working with these insurers, though, Carvalho seems to

⁶⁸ GAA, NA 254/184v–185v. These insurers were: Albert Schuyt; Hendrick Beeckman; Daniel van den Eijnde; Hillebrant den Otter; Francois Boudewijns; Adriaen Andriess., Nicolaes Claesse Everswijn; Barent Sweerts, Jan Jansee Smith, Jacob Jacobse Bontenos, Pieter Beijens, Pauwels Jansse van Helmont, Dirck Vlack, Jan Battista Bertelotti, Godert Kerckrinck, Willem Pauw; Daniel van Geel; Louis Saulman; Hendrick Beeckman; Jan Jansse van Helmond; Jan van der Straten; Jacob Sijmonsse Louw; Nicolaes Claesse Everswijn; Wijbrant Warwijck; and Gillis Dodeur.

⁶⁹ GAA, NA 622/60v–61v, 67–67v.

⁷⁰ GAA, NA 146/199v–200v.

⁷¹ The insurers were: Jan Jansz. Karel de Jonghe; Jan Jansz. Karel; Bartholomeus Bisschop, Pauwels Bisschop; Pieter Jan Mieusz., Lourens Joosten Baeck (Bax), Jan Coenensz.; Symon Loo; Leonard Pelgroms; Francois Pelgroms, Paulus and Steffano

have otherwise worked alone in taking advantage of these opportunities to sell Baltic grain in Italy, as he had no partners in these voyages. Carvalho also saw opportunities from transporting grain further afield to the Levant, and three contracts concerning shipments from him have the option of putting in at the port of Alexandria.⁷²

Manoel Carvalho was opportunistic and innovative, and actively adapted his decisions and commercial activities to meet challenges and grasp opportunities. He was experimental in seeking investment opportunities, as seen by his owning shares in the new Dutch East India Company. He was also flexible in responding to change. With new risks facing maritime shipping, he ventured into insurance, a relatively new form of risk reduction, to protect his cargoes. He also saw opportunities to be had by trading in Baltic grain in Italy and even farther into the Levant and integrated, to some extent, his bulk and colonial or “rich” trades. Moreover, Carvalho took advantage of the possibilities offered by the slave trade. Lastly, he integrated his network to include both Amsterdam-based Sephardic and Dutch associates so as to make full use of the opportunities presented by multiple partners from a variety of backgrounds.

Bento Osorio

Like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, Osorio took part in the joint-stock companies when they were in their infancy. He was active in purchasing pepper from the Dutch East India Company,⁷³ and was involved in the transfer and trade in East India Company shares.⁷⁴ It was Osorio, however, who saw the opportunities in the West rather than just in the East Indies. Indeed, he contributed 6,000 guilders to the initial capital of the West India Company.⁷⁵ This contribution made Osorio the largest shareholder among the Amsterdam or Dutch

Pelgroms; Jacques Merchijns; Jacob Lucasz. Rotgans. GAA, NA 113/5v–6. These names appear frequently as insurers of the cargoes of Sephardic merchants.

⁷² GAA, NA 141/142v; NA 144/151v–153v; NA 149/198–198v.

⁷³ GAA, NA 420a/176–184v; NA 418a/162–165v.

⁷⁴ GAA, NA 1052/63–63v, 71v.

⁷⁵ van Dillen, “Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de Eerste Helft der Zeventiende Eeuw,” 16. There were eighteen total Portuguese subscribers to the Dutch West India Company (WIC). Besides Osorio, there were four other Sephardic subscribers who contributed more than f 2000: Francisco Coutinho, f 4000; Duarte Nunes da Costa, f 4000; Francisco Vaz de Leon, f 2400; and Diego Fernandes Dias, f 2400.

Republic-based Sephardic subscribers in the enterprise, which was considered a riskier investment than the Dutch East India Company.⁷⁶ The sizable subscription also meant that Osorio became a *hoofdparticipanten* (chief shareholder) of the company.⁷⁷ Osorio also arranged for his business interests to be represented in the new colonies by Sephardic and Dutch associates.⁷⁸

Osorio used these Dutch associates—who included Albert Schuyt, Godert Kerckringh, Adriaen Andriesz., Claes Andriesz., Jan Smit, Barent Swerts, and Luca Claesz.—to insure his cargoes. These men, along with associate Jan Stassart, insured wheat for Osorio,⁷⁹ though they were hardly the only Dutch merchants who insured cargoes for Osorio. Isaac Coymans, for example, insured various Mediterranean cargoes for Osorio in the 1630s.⁸⁰ While insuring cargoes offered the opportunity both to reduce risk and to build connections with Dutch associates, such a practice was not without risk itself. Osorio was involved in a contentious case involving the failure to pay on an insurance claim, which took years to resolve.⁸¹ Nevertheless, he seems to have seen the opportunities inherent in this form of business transaction, as he continued insuring cargoes throughout his life.

Osorio clearly felt that innovative, emerging business techniques such as joint-stock companies and insurance were opportunities to take advantage of. He also pursued opportunities for trade in new kinds of products. Indeed, he was at the forefront in supplying tobacco, a new luxury item, to the Amsterdam market. (Tobacco had been introduced to Europe in the mid-sixteenth century, but remained nothing more than a novelty until the seventeenth century). In 1629, Osorio was accused, essentially, of smuggling. The Sheriff of Amsterdam accused

⁷⁶ H. Watjen, *Das Judentum und die Anfänge der modernen Kolonisation: kritische Bemerkungen zu Werner Sombarts "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben"* (Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1914), 31–35. Other participants were: Francisco Coutinho, Antônio Nunes Torres, Duarte de Palácios, Francisco Mendes de Medeiros, Francisco Vaz de Leão, Jerônimo Rodrigues Mendes, Francisco Mendes, Miguel de Crasto, Estevão Cardoso, Diogo Fernandes Dias, Duarte Nunes Costa, Jerônimo Rodrigues de Sousa, Simão Rodrigues de Sousa, the widow of Eiomar Henriques, Fernandes Aires Mesurado, Branca de Pina, and Duarte Rodrigues Mendes.

⁷⁷ To be a *hoofdparticipant* (chief shareholder or subscriber), the shareholder had to invest at least 6,000 florins. In exchange, he received a say in the naming of the directors (*bewindhebbers*), and also a chance to be named a director himself.

⁷⁸ NL-HaNA, Oude West-Indische Compagnie, 1.05.01.01/14.

⁷⁹ SR 3633.

⁸⁰ GAA, NA 726/103.

⁸¹ GAA, NA 628/447–449.

him of non-payment of taxes on tobacco that had been discovered in cases in the cellar of Osorio's house on the Breestraat.⁸² Seemingly unfazed by these legal difficulties, Osorio continued building a network of Sephardic and Dutch associates interested in exploiting opportunities offered by the tobacco craze sweeping Amsterdam. In 1631, Osorio entered into an agreement to sell tobacco to the Dutch merchants Gilles Silvester, Pieter de Sterck, Willem Watson and Barent Calder, as well as the Sephardic merchant Diogo Fernandes Dias.⁸³

Osorio also saw opportunities in technological advances. He was a proponent of the *fluit* ship, a new model of Dutch ship that was first built in the town of Hoorn in 1595, and is credited with the rise of the Dutch over the Iberian empires in the seventeenth century.⁸⁴ Osorio, his Sephardic partner, Gil Lopes Pinto, and their Dutch associates, Dirck Thomasz Glimmer, Pieter Reusen, Claes Adriaensz and Dirck Ysbrantsz. declared to a notary in 1619 that they had been using the *fluit* ships for twenty years to transport grain to Spain, Portugal, and Italy and that these ships were as good as the older *spiegel* ships.⁸⁵ There may have been uncertainty about these ships in the larger merchant community of Amsterdam because, in the same year, Osorio and Pinto, along with Guillame Bartolotti, Hillebrant den Otter, Charles de Lasseur, Jacques Nicquet, Albert Schuyt, Philip Calandrini, Paulo de Willem, and Andries Hendricsz, most of whom were prominent merchants, declared that they had been using these ships to carry rye and wheat from the Baltic to Portugal and Italy and that, "they are good ships... and that they have used them often and there is no need to make any special exception for them or treat them any differently than *spiegel* ships in insurance policies."⁸⁶ The *fluit* ships were particularly effective because they carried a maximum amount of cargo at minimum cost.⁸⁷ Thus, it would seem that Osorio had seen quite early on the opportunities to be had from using the newer model of ship,

⁸² GAA, NA 723/10; NA 847/502–504.

⁸³ GAA, NA 701/68–69.

⁸⁴ Robert F. Voertman, "The Sailing Ship Complex and the Decline of Iberian Maritime Enterprise. Some Neglected Factors in the Analysis of Cultural Change," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 14, 1 (October 1954): 77–88.

⁸⁵ GAA, NA 645a/474.

⁸⁶ GAA, NA 645/505–506 "dat deze fluiten geode schepen zijn. Voorts verklaren zij vaak zulke fluiten bevracht hebben en dat men geen andere bewoordingen gebruikt in de verzekeringspolis van deze fluiten dan in de polis van b.v. een spiegelschip."

⁸⁷ P.W. Klein, "De zeventiende eeuw," in J.H. Stuijvenberg, ed., *De economische Geschiedenis van Nederland* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977), 79–118, 103.

when other merchants were unwilling to take a risk on new forms of technology.

Osorio was innovative and opportunistic, and actively adapted his decisions and commercial activities to meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities available. He was experimental in seeking opportunities to invest, such as by owning shares in the new Dutch East India company, and, more importantly, by becoming a very important investor in the Dutch West India Company. He was also flexible in his responses to change. As sailing became riskier, he ventured into the relatively new form of risk reduction—insurance—to protect his cargoes. Moreover, Osorio saw new ways of carrying his cargoes and did not hesitate to employ the newer *fluit* ship. He saw opportunities to be had by trading in Baltic grain to Iberia and Italy and was, in fact, one of the largest shippers of Baltic goods to the Iberian peninsula, chartering close to 200 ships during a three year period.⁸⁸ He integrated, to some extent, his bulk and colonial or “rich” trades. Moreover, Osorio took advantage of the chances offered by trading in the new product, tobacco. Lastly, he integrated his network to include both Sephardic and Dutch associates to make full use of the opportunities presented by multiple partners from a variety of backgrounds.

Conclusion

Integrating people, materials, products, capital, and routes meant seizing available opportunities, innovating, and exploiting circumstances to gain advantages. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were innovative, adaptable, and flexible. They sought new investment opportunities, and so, for example, invested in the Dutch East India Company by owning shares in it. Osorio was likewise an initial subscriber to, and a chief shareholder in, the Dutch West India Company. His participation in the Dutch West India Company may call into question the assumption that Sephardic Jews were unwilling to invest in the West India Company because they had their own trading connections in the Atlantic. However, it could also be that Osorio, as an individual merchant, saw the benefits to be gained from such participation in this chartered company but that

⁸⁸ GAA, NA 200/63–64.

other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic made different choices. Be that as it may, Osorio, Carvalho, and Rodrigues Vega were flexible in their responses to change. They each utilized insurance at a time when it was still relatively uncommon. They often dealt in more than one activity, product, or route at once, while also engaging in new enterprises. Indeed, each merchant took hold of opportunities presented by Iberian and Mediterranean dependence on Baltic grain and stepped into this profitable trade. Osorio, especially, used to his advantage new maritime innovations to maximize his profits. Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Manoel Carvalho, in turn, saw opportunities to be had in the emerging slave trade and profited from this. Bento Osorio grabbed his chance with tobacco. But each of these merchants knew there were opportunities to be had with the trade in new products.

Many merchants of the time could be said to have behaved in similar ways, and certain Dutch associates of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio also took advantage of such opportunities. Of course, these merchants did not invent these innovations. They did not devise new products or services such as maritime insurance, nor were they the creators of new technologies such as the *fluit* ship. Nevertheless, they were early adaptors of, and traders in, new technologies, products, and routes, and were, as a group, far more likely to use these innovations than were most other merchants. Moreover, as cross-community migrants, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio likely brought these innovations with them to Amsterdam and, by extension, to their Dutch associates.

What these men had in common is that they were willing to risk dealing in new products, use new shipping technologies, and take advantage of new commercial instruments such as stock and insurance. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were what David Hancock terms “state-of-the-art” entrepreneurs.” Hancock notes, in his discussion of London merchants of the eighteenth century, that these “state-of-the-art” entrepreneurs were “commercial practitioners who adopted new practices and products whenever they seemed profitable. Such men were always looking for new techniques to adopt and implement... they were opportunistic in adopting new

and useful practices, and in imitating procedures and operations that seemed appropriate.”⁸⁹

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, and their Dutch associates, were working in an environment of great economic and political changes. They were also operating during a time of uncertainty, innovation, and opportunity. There was a burgeoning demand for new products as well as more traditional trade stuffs. People were on the move, not only out of Europe but within Europe. The merchants I consider in this study were all newcomers to Amsterdam, having moved there from somewhere else. At this same time, religion and identity, both in Amsterdam and elsewhere, were often fluid and shifting.

These merchants were, above all else, successful. However, as far as I could ascertain from the archival documentation, they were not merely wealthy. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were global in outlook and connections. They delved into multiple products and regions, and were well connected within both the Sephardic community in Amsterdam and beyond it. They lived in a state of flux which offered unprecedented opportunities for merchants with the where-withal, connections, and vision to venture beyond traditional family and religious networks to take advantage of new trade possibilities. In Amsterdam, they connected to merchants of myriad backgrounds, and maximized these loose ties to their economic advantage. Throughout the course of their careers and of their joint business ventures, these merchants consolidated their positions as, or grew into, global merchants by innovating. It is these new economic connections and the way in which these social links worked that I will discuss in the following chapter.

⁸⁹ Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 14.

CHAPTER FOUR

NETWORKS IN ACTION

I have based this study on the idea that networks incorporating merchants from various groups were important for the conduct of trade in the early modern period. The premise of this work is that these networks which incorporated merchants from different ethnic and religious groups were efficient in promoting joint commercial interests. Moreover, these merchants were cross-community migrants who, in the course of their migrations, helped to generate valuable commercial innovations. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were merchants who were global (in terms of geographic participation), integrative, and innovative. To paraphrase historian David Hancock, their ventures were not unified organizations, but, rather, loosely bound sets of plans, projects, and ventures that combined their linked networks of partners, relations, dependents, agents, and contacts, many of whom were Dutch. This approach made the system flexible, and enabled this group to control risks and earn profits.¹

This chapter will begin to explore how these loosely knit networks functioned in practice, by looking at the innovative ways Manoel Rodrigues Carvalho, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio conducted commercial interactions with their primary Dutch associates. I will discuss the definition of “network” and then examine Amsterdam as the locus for their interactions. Lastly, I will delve into the connections and links between individuals, and the opportunities and innovations these connections created. The following chapter will explore more of these inter-cultural network relationships with a larger group of merchants.

Network Terminology

I have used the term “network” and “networks” throughout this work, but what, exactly, is a network? I noted in Chapter II that the concept

¹ Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 14.

of “diaspora” is not completely adequate as an analytical tool for the new Christians and the Sephardim in Amsterdam. The notion of “network” therefore seems more useful for understanding long-distance trade in the early modern period. This is especially the case when we consider the techniques and organization of this trade, particularly inter-cultural trade relationships, whether these were among the Sephardim in Amsterdam, new Christians in various locations, or involved other groups. Such a network was defined in Chapter I as being “a collection of actors that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another.”² This definition is broader and more encompassing than that used by, for instance, Ferdinand Braudel, who instead focused on geographical dispersion, noting that a commercial network comprised a certain number of individuals or agents located at different points in a circuit or group of circuits. The co-operations, connections and communications among them ensured trade continuity and prosperity.³ For Markovits, however, it was the circulatory flows within a given network that reflected its dynamism. He writes:

[Network is] a structure through which goods, credit, capital and men circulate regularly across a given space which can vary enormously in terms of both size and accessibility... Goods, but also men (and sometimes women), credit and information circulate. While goods may also circulate widely outside the network (otherwise there would not be any exchange), men, credit and information circulate almost exclusively within it. Most crucial is probably the circulation of information.⁴

Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert does not disagree with Markovits, though he believes that the Portuguese were exceptions to what Markovits describes. Studnicki-Gizbert writes:

Portuguese merchants did not center their activities in a particular nation-state, region, or city. In this respect they distinguished themselves from most other mercantile communities of the period. Seventeenth-century European merchants generally developed trading structures that formed a hub with a series of spokes branching out to secondary markets... If other merchant communities were defined by hub-and-spokes organizational structure, the Portuguese connected many hubs and many spokes.⁵

² Podolny and Page, “Network Forms of Organization,” 59.

³ Ferdinand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th–18th Century, Volume 2: The Wheels of Commerce* (London: Fontana Press, 1982).

⁴ Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947*, 25.

⁵ Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 95.

Although Studnicki-Gizbert makes an interesting point, though one difficult to prove empirically, about the de-centered nature of Portuguese networks, the inter-cultural networks of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were very much centered in the city of Amsterdam. This “collection of actors”—Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, Bento Osorio and their Dutch partners—pursued “repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another” mostly based in Amsterdam, though their interests extended far beyond the Amstel. Since these enduring exchange relations occurred mostly in Amsterdam, the following section will focus on providing the necessary background for understanding how trade was conducted in this city. I will then explore specific inter-cultural interactions between merchants in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam

An English visitor to Amsterdam, Fynes Moryson, described how business was done there in 1592. “The marchants in summer meet upon the Bridge, and in winter they meet in the New Church, in very great number, where they walke in two rankes by couples, one ranke going up, and another going downe, and there is no way to get out of the Church, except they slip out of the doores, when in one of those rankes they passe by them.”⁶ In short, businessmen of all sorts mingled at these sites in order to gather the ever important information about the supply and demand of goods, the prices of these goods, and the expected arrival of ships carrying more merchandize and more news. As they walked about, talking first to one merchant, then to others, they also exchanged information about newly discovered lands and heard and discussed news about political events, both near and far.⁷ As Moryson describes, in the sixteenth century, the merchants held their “market” on the East side of the Nieuwebrug that crossed the

⁶ J.N. Jacobsen Jensen, “Moryson’s reis door en zijn karakteristiek van de Nederlanden, 1592–1595,” *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 39 (1918): 214–305, 223, quoted in Clé Lesger, “De Wereld als horizon: de economie tussen 1578 en 1650,” in Willem Frijhoff and Maarten Prak, eds., *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam: Centrum van de Wereld, 1578–1650* (Amsterdam: SUN, 2004), 103–187, 159–160.

⁷ Lesger, *Handel in Amsterdam*, Chapter 6 and C.A. Davids, “Amsterdam as a centre of learning in the Dutch golden age, c. 1580–1700,” in P. O’Brien, M. Keene, and M. ‘t Hart, eds., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe. Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 305–325.

Damrak. In inclement weather they went to the North side of the Warmoesstraat, where they did business under the house porches. Later, around 1600, they went to the Saint Olof's Chapel, the Old Church (*Oude Kerk*), and the New Church (*Nieuwe Kerk*) at such times. In 1608, an actual exchange building was built.

Among the merchants strolling through the center of Amsterdam—talking with one merchant, chatting to a potential insurer of a voyage, exchanging rumors with a friend of a friend about a ship lost in an Atlantic storm—would have been Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Bento Osorio, and Manoel Carvalho. They would have no doubt been walking with other Sephardic immigrants to this emerging entrepôt in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, swapping information about possibilities for business enterprises and news about family and friends in Antwerp, Portugal, Brazil and Venice. But it was not only other Sephardic immigrants with whom they ambled along, sharing news and striking up deals. They strolled the streets of Amsterdam's informal market, and, later, the corridors of the exchange, with Dutch merchants, most of whom were also recent immigrants from Antwerp or the Southern Netherlands. These men talked about friends and family from Antwerp, chatted about the latest products from the Americas, and made agreements.

The New Church and the newly built exchange offered a good environment in which to conduct trade. The legal system for contract enforcements was relatively effective, especially as compared with those of other cities. Aspiring merchants could learn vital skills such as bookkeeping, and Amsterdam had become a hub for nautical and cartographical knowledge. However, it was the exchange that was the nerve center of Amsterdam trade. Except for grain (which had its own exchange), nearly everything that concerned trade was dealt with at the exchange, including the chartering of ships, insuring the contents of ships, extending and acquiring credit, arranging payments, renting warehouse space, and hiring employees. There were even specific places for certain transactions, although the precise locations are no longer known.

Amsterdam was attractive not only for its trade infrastructure, such as the exchange. Access to the staple market aided cooperation between merchants. Large- and small-scale merchants could, from 1578 onwards, freely move and trade in the staple market. *Prijscouranten* (price sheets) insured that necessary information was freely distributed. These sheets were already being published in the late sixteenth

century, and a periodical press had emerged by the early seventeenth century.⁸ Equally important was business correspondence between merchants and the information exchange on the Stock Exchange. Amsterdam-based merchants and agents were usually the first to know about the latest developments in all the markets, which gave them a competitive edge over their colleagues elsewhere. With the expansion of the commodity and cargo trade came the need for services such as brokerage and insurance. The Exchange Bank was instituted in 1609 to try to establish some degree of order in currency rates, but it soon became a deposit bank through which merchants could safely settle their accounts. This, along with use of bills of exchange and rapidly declining interest rates, greatly facilitated financial transactions and thereby helped the expansion of shipping and trade.

Another innovation in Amsterdam was that trade was conducted year-round, which had not been the case in Bruges or Antwerp.⁹ This allowed brokers to bring buyers and sellers together more often. Moreover, partnerships, freight contracts and other forms of associations and share holding schemes meant that even the smallest scale merchants could invest in large-scale trade. Germans, English, and the Portuguese, to name just a few, were welcome in Amsterdam, and had free entry to the city. New and old Amsterdamers lived next to each other, and there seems to have been little open protest against immigration into the city. Moreover, for a merchant to build a career in the city, *poorterschap* or citizenship, was not always necessary. Of course, citizenship was a significant advantage, as a citizen of a city enjoyed judicial, political, social and economic rights that a non-citizen did not. For example, important city functions were only open to citizens of the city, and citizens were eligible for social welfare, such as it was. Perhaps most importantly, citizens could join the guilds that were so important in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ These were the reasons that immigrants such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, who received citizenship in 1597, the first Portuguese new Christian to do so, sought to become citizens of Amsterdam. However, it was not citizenship *per se*, but success in business endeavors that offered aspiring merchant the

⁸ Lesger, *Handel in Amsterdam*, 77.

⁹ Lesger, *Handel in Amsterdam*, 77.

¹⁰ Erika Kuijpers and Maarten Prak, "Gevestigden en buitenstaanders," in Frijhoff and Prak, eds., *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam: Centrum van de Wereld, 1578–1650* (Amsterdam: SUN, 2004), 189–239, 200.

possibility of social prominence and prestige, as well as political influence, in a way that was virtually unheard of in most other early modern cities.

Due to these factors, immigrants from Brabant, Zeeland, and German cities, along with Portuguese new Christians and immigrants from Antwerp (after its fall to the Habsburg forces), poured into Amsterdam. For Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio the decision to move there was, despite the importance of networks for the conduct of trade in Amsterdam, probably not based, at least not entirely, on personal networks. Their migration to this city was not deeply rooted in personal networks of friends, family, and those of the same (ethno-religious) background.¹¹ They were certainly not chain migrants, and came from very different places. Because they were among the first new Christians in the city, there were, quite simply, no other links in any chain to pull them toward Amsterdam. In fact, they came to Amsterdam for the attractive economic opportunities, not because of the other new Christians they might have found there.

Of the various newcomers pouring into the city seeking to maximize the opportunities to be had, the Portuguese new Christians and the immigrants from Antwerp and the Southern Netherlands have traditionally received a great deal of attention in the historiography of Amsterdam in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A merchant elite on par with that of Antwerp or Venice only emerged in Amsterdam after the Revolt against Habsburg rule. Until then, the regents were the wealthiest group. Some regents engaged in trade, though relatively modestly in comparison with the aforementioned cities.¹² Scholars have thus pointed to immigration, especially of wealthy merchants from Antwerp and of the Portuguese new Christians, as the reason for the rise of the merchant elite in Amsterdam.¹³ In opposition to this view, Jonathan Israel asserts that this rise was due not to a

¹¹ For another example of non-network migrants, see the work of Clé Lesger, Leo Lucassen, and Marlou Schrover, "Is there life outside the migrant network? German immigrants in XIXth century Netherlands and the need for a more balanced migration typology," *Annales de Démographie Historique* 2 (2002): 29–50.

¹² Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 344.

¹³ See, for example, van Dillen, "Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de Eerste Helft der Zeventiende Eeuw"; and Clé Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age;" in Patrick O'Brien, ed., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 63–80; and his *Handel in Amsterdam ten tijde van de Opstand*.

particular group of immigrants, as has often been argued, but to a restructured economy.¹⁴ Oscar Gelderblom believes that the majority of the immigrants from Antwerp to Amsterdam after the fall of Antwerp were in fact young entrepreneurs beginning careers in international trade. Many of them became wealthy, but such wealth, according to Gelderblom, was acquired in Amsterdam, not Antwerp.¹⁵

Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio as Amsterdam Merchants

I argue, however, that the relative wealth that a merchant brought with him to Amsterdam was less important than the trade networks he was already a part of, because participation in networks provided opportunities for continued accumulation of wealth. In the case of the three merchants I analyze in this study, they probably did bring lesser to greater degrees of wealth with them when they immigrated to the city. But they also brought connections for the furtherance of their trade. All were migrants and newcomers to Amsterdam, as detailed in Chapter II, but of the three Manoel Rodrigues Vega best fits Gelderblom's profile of a merchant on the make who acquired his wealth in Amsterdam. Rodrigues Vega came to Amsterdam as a young man of twenty. He was originally from Antwerp, like the merchants Gelderblom studied, and, like so many of these merchants, spent time elsewhere (in this case, Nantes) before coming to Amsterdam. He was at the beginning of his career, which seems to have blossomed in Amsterdam, due, in large part, to his connections with fellow merchants from Antwerp. However, his family was prominent and likely included wealthy members of the Portuguese factory in Antwerp. Therefore, his was hardly a "rags to riches" story of a fortune made from nothing in Amsterdam. Rodrigues Vega also brought with him his connections to Antwerp networks that were comprised of both Iberians and merchants from the southern Netherlands, most of whom were involved in the colonial trade.

Carvalho shares Rodrigues Vega's profile, although he was somewhat older (around thirty) when he came to Amsterdam. However, he came from Brazil. I could not precisely ascertain his family's relative

¹⁴ Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade*, 46–71.

¹⁵ Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*.

wealth and prominence, but their ownership of an *engenho* in Brazil would seem to point to a relatively high degree of social status. Thus, while Carvalho certainly built his fortune in Amsterdam, he, like Rodrigues Vega, brought with him connections to networks (based largely in Brazil), as well as expertise in the Brazilian trade, and, most likely, some amount of wealth from his family.

Osorio, unlike Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, and in contrast to Gelderblom's depiction of the immigrants to Amsterdam, was an older man and already established as a merchant. He was integrated into the networks of new and old Christians in Iberia, as well as those of the Antwerp-based new Christian networks concerned with the colonial trade. In fact, Osorio fits more closely into Lesger's vision of immigrant merchants bringing wealth and expertise to enrich and help build the fortunes of the emerging *entrepôt*.

This wealth could be acquired relatively readily in Amsterdam due to shifts in the city's economy. Amsterdam had been dominated in the sixteenth century by the relatively uncomplicated northern European and Baltic trade. The merchants engaged in this trade were not generally among the city's elites, politically or socially. The city, as noted previously, was in fact dominated by the regent class, who were only peripherally involved in trade. By the time Bento Osorio, Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho and their Dutch associates arrived in Amsterdam, the entire landscape of trade and political influence had begun to shift.

The three merchants were well-situated to take advantage of these shifts. One such change, for instance, was that Amsterdam had outmaneuvered Antwerp and Middelburg in the sixteenth century for the expanding trade in Baltic grains, because the magistrates in Amsterdam offered fiscal advantages.¹⁶ Later in the century, Amsterdam evolved from a transit port for grain into a true intermediary between northern and southern Europe.¹⁷ Clé Lesger describes the "external" factors that made Amsterdam an attractive and vital place, including the location and properties of the harbor, and especially because the Baltic grain from one year's harvest could reach the city before the onset of

¹⁶ Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age," 68. Milja van Tielhof provides some nuance to this view in her *The 'Mother of all Trades': The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Brill: Leiden, 2002), 67–115.

¹⁷ Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age," 68.

winter and could be exchanged for colonial products from Lisbon, which arrived around the same time.¹⁸ Amsterdam had a large, cheap merchant fleet and few restrictions on trade.

According to Lesger, when the resources of local merchants, of migrants from Antwerp, and of the Portuguese new Christians came together in a city that had already developed a lively goods and carrier trade, a virtuous cycle began. Amsterdam's market attracted more and more merchants because supply and demand there were varied and plentiful. Not only could parties negotiate favorable deals, they could buy and sell a wide range of wares. This large and varied market also provided the shipping capacity to carry the goods throughout Europe and beyond, thus enabling merchants to trade on a truly international scale. Moreover, freightage was relatively cheap, because the market was sizeable enough to dispose of cargoes quickly and to find profitable return cargoes.¹⁹

Thus, it seems that religion, background, or wealth (or lack thereof) were not overly obstructive to participation in Amsterdam's international trade. Rodrigues Vega was a "typical" merchant from the southern Netherlands—young, but from a wealthy and prominent family. Carvalho was a colonial trader and was most likely looking to expand his sugar trade and other enterprises in this growing city. Osorio, in contrast, was an established trader and expanded his operations. Whatever their differences and similarities, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio each became active in Amsterdam's international trade. They did this not only by taking advantage of their family and ethno-religious connections in the nodes of the expanding European trade routes; they drew upon their connections with Dutch merchants, most of which were built via their links to Antwerp, so as to combine the commerce in the d "rich" trades with that of the bulk trades, and engaged in innovative enterprises such as exploiting new technologies and taking advantage of new ways of doing business.

As Chapter III showed, Osorio, Rodrigues Vega, and Carvalho dealt in the Baltic, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. They traded in "rich" products, including silks, spices, sugar, and precious stones. However, they were also actively involved in the bulk trades such as woods, hides, and grains. To survive economically, the Sephardim had

¹⁸ Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age," 73.

¹⁹ Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age," 76.

to maximize the opportunities provided by the structures for trade in Amsterdam, and they did so by integrating different product groups, maximizing the resources they had brought with them as cross-community migrants, and by incorporating disparate groups of people into their networks. Moreover, they also had to expand into lucrative areas of trade (such as the Baltic), even if it meant building on and integrating their existing networks by developing relationships with Dutch merchants.

The Composition of Networks

The Sephardim, in general, and Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, in particular, expanded their networks to include Dutch merchants. These networks had been brought with them to Amsterdam, yet what would such a network have looked like? How can we define such connections between Sephardi and Dutch merchants in Amsterdam? As I noted previously, even defining what constitutes a network can be problematic. Frédéric Mauro wrote that, “the boundaries of merchant communities are to be found not so much in space as in the definition itself.”²⁰ However, finding the boundaries of that definition for an inter-cultural network is difficult. The problem becomes particularly thorny because there were few partnerships in the legal sense of the word between any merchants at this time. While some few merchants did form official partnerships, usually for a limited amount of time, the vast majority of merchants, whether Sephardi or Dutch, simply joined together for a venture or two, all while working with other individuals or groups on other ventures.

There were any number of possibilities for trading ventures available to Sephardi and Dutch merchants alike, as I described in Chapter III and which I will discuss in more detail here. There were, for instance, investments in specific journeys for trade, or in trading consortia such as the *voorcompagnie* and the WIC and VOC. These involved (part) ownership of ships or shares in voyages, whether through partnerships involving two or more merchants, or joint-stock companies. However, the concept of a “firm” was virtually unknown in the seventeenth century. Most merchants operated alone or in two- or three-person

²⁰ Mauro, “Merchant Communities, 1350–1750,” 255.

partnerships; they also participated in larger, looser, more informal consortia. Furthermore, partnerships in the seventeenth century could be open-ended, which added to the fluid nature of business ventures.

Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio acted together with merchants, Amsterdam Sephardi or Dutch, only some of the time. Many of their endeavors were conducted independently, albeit along parallel lines. The intermittent nature of these merchants' ventures serves to highlight the problems inherent in seeking to understand the components of an inter-cultural network. Loose ties between merchants created opportunities and efficiencies in their networks, but these same loose ties are often difficult to trace and define. David Hancock, in his study of eighteenth-century merchants in London, encountered the same problem in defining interactions. He chose to use the term "associates" and "association" to denote the interactions between these merchants.²¹ For the merchants that Hancock studied, as was the case for Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, Osorio and the Dutch merchants with whom they dealt, the term "associate" is appropriate because it captures the loose and flexible nature of the business ties better than do terms such as "partners." The latter term implies, especially to the modern reader, an official, legally-sanctioned union.²² Thus, borrowing from Hancock's work, I use "associate" and "association" to denote contacts between the Sephardi and Dutch traders.

The cadre of merchants I write about in this work lived in Amsterdam between 1595 and 1640 and worked at various times and in various ways with one another, trading on a large scale throughout the world. The business connections among the associates were flexible and innovative. Due to the favorable economic and political situation in Amsterdam during these years, these merchants could expand their businesses. They were not limited to their standard products, but also sought new markets and products. They were, as Chapter II demonstrated, cross-community migrants and members of the Portuguese diaspora. They were also innovative entrepreneurs, who integrated various routes and a plethora of products.

²¹ Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 9–18.

²² Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 9–18.

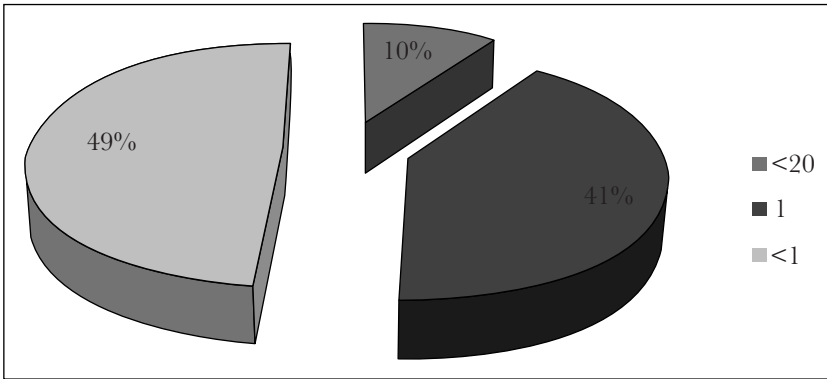
Networks in Action

The focus of this work is three men—Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio—who were prominent in their social and economic circles of Amsterdam's mercantile community. Their networks, of course, included family members, fellow Sephardim in Amsterdam, new Christians, other Portuguese, as well as Dutch merchants, though the networks I examine were the ones based in Amsterdam. These inter-cultural networks, as Graphs 7, 8, and 9 show, the vast majority of merchants simply joined together for a venture or two, while working with other individuals or groups on other ventures. These infrequent associations are a good example of loose ties, as these occasional ventures brought merchants together and helped them connect with networks in a variety of directions, thereby laying the groundwork for more intensive cooperation should it be efficacious.

The statistics would most likely not be markedly different if they were computed for wholly intra-cultural trade on the part of either the Sephardim or the Dutch merchants. However, as the charts illustrate, there were one or two Dutch merchants with whom Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio had many interactions, often over a relatively long period of time. This is what sets these global merchants apart from other merchants at the time. They tended to have longer-lasting associations with one or more merchants from outside their ethno-religious group. Of course, there were also multiple less frequent associations for between three-to-five ventures of some sort or another. But it is the longer-lasting and more durable associations that best illustrate how loose ties between merchants functioned, and how the innovations wrought by cross-cultural migrations were utilized.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Cornelis Snellinck

Graph 7 illustrates the percentages of inter-cultural interactions Manoel Rodrigues Vega had with other merchants. The highest number that Rodrigues Vega had with another merchant (namely, Cornelis Snellinck) was 24, or 10% of the total. In contrast, Rodrigues Vega had quite frequent one-off interactions with numerous Dutch merchants, for whom there is no record of Rodrigues Vega again associating with them. He had 101 such interactions, or 41% of the total interactions, while another 125, or 49% of interactions, fell somewhere between one and 20 interactions, usually on the lower end of that spectrum.



Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 245 interactions with 137 Dutch merchants (all associates are listed in Appendix II).

Graph 7: Manoel Rodrigues Vega's frequency of interactions with Dutch merchants.

I will discuss these at greater length in the next chapter. Nearly half of Rodrigues Vega's inter-cultural interactions were with merchants with whom he did business two to eight times. Thus, the majority of Rodrigues Vega's Dutch associates dealt with him only once or twice. This is an interesting illustration of how loose ties worked in networks. Most networks seemed to have been composed of associates who dealt with each other only occasionally and loosely, thus spreading risk and expanding capabilities within the network. With his main associate, Cornelis Snellinck, however, Rodrigues Vega had a long-running collaboration over eleven years, from 1601 until 1612, which spanned a wide geography and a diverse range of products and sorts of interactions. There are a total of 24 recorded interactions between the two merchants, though there may have been many others that were either unrecorded or not found among the extant archival documentation.

Snellinck came from Antwerp, and it is likely that his association with Rodrigues Vega, or at least their knowledge of one another, was born there, as Rodrigues Vega and his family were prominent merchants in the city. Furthermore, Snellinck was married to a Portuguese woman, Leonora da Rodrigues Vega (though she was not a known relation of Rodrigues Vega and it is not clear if she was a new Christian), so the ties between the two merchants were further bolstered by Snellinck's knowledge of Portuguese and his entry into Portuguese

networks. Snellinck is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1598,²³ two years after Rodrigues Vega arrived in Amsterdam and a year after Rodrigues Vega received official status as a citizen. Though Rodrigues Vega moved to Rotterdam around 1606, Snellinck remained in Amsterdam. Snellinck lived on the Singel in 1631.²⁴ He died before Jan. 17, 1657.²⁵

Snellinck occurs several times as co-outfitter of ships bound for Brazil and, on 30 April 1600, he and eight other merchants from the northern and southern Netherlands, England, and Portugal set up a partnership for trading with All Souls Bay in Brazil.²⁶ Thus it is clear that Snellinck was heavily involved in the Brazil trade, mostly in sugar, and that he conducted this trade with inter-cultural groups of merchants from various regions and from various backgrounds. This can be seen by the fact that, about 1606, he corresponded with many Portuguese in Lisbon.²⁷ Moreover, he was given a power of attorney to settle a dispute concerning Brazilwood by the prominent *asentista* João Nunes Correia.²⁸

Snellinck was also involved in endeavors with the Sephardic merchants Manoel Carvalho and Bento Osorio. In 1614, for example, Snellinck was part of an agreement concerning a pirated shipload of sugar that also involved Bento Osorio,²⁹ and he owed Osorio 100,000 guilders at one point in 1624.³⁰ Manoel Carvalho and Snellinck declared together twice, once in 1617 and again in 1618, on behalf of Duarte and Gonçalo Ximenes and the well-known Amsterdam merchant Salomon Voerknecht, regarding the customs surrounding the shipment of Brazilwood and sugar.³¹ It seems, however, that Rodrigues Vega was one of Snellinck's most important Portuguese associates. Their dealings together fall under the following general categories: acting on each other's behalf, shared ownership, credit, and joint actions as prominent merchants.

²³ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>

²⁴ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>

²⁵ SR 91.

²⁶ SR 91.

²⁷ SR 91.

²⁸ SR 18.

²⁹ GAA, NA 198/166–167.

³⁰ GAA, NA 646b/963.

³¹ GAA, NA 645/43v–44; NA 645/344–346.

Granting a power of attorney or a right of proxy to someone enabled that person to act on a merchant's behalf. The actions taken on a merchant's behalf by the designated person would then be legally binding. Therefore, the right of proxy or the issuance of a power of attorney gave the receiver of such an entitlement freedom, as well as of authority, for and from the merchant who granted it to him. Thus, there was a great deal of trust implied by the issuance of such permission. In 1604, Rodrigues Vega granted Cornelis Snellinck a general right of proxy to transact business on his behalf, in Amsterdam and elsewhere.³² A similar right of proxy was granted again this same year by Rodrigues Vega to Snellinck to secure Rodrigues Vega's discharge from a debt.³³ Later in 1604, Snellinck accepted four bills of exchange drawn on Rodrigues Vega in London, which Rodrigues Vega was unable to cover. To save Rodrigues Vega from financial and legal problems, Snellinck accepted the bills for Rodrigues Vega, presumably with the knowledge that Rodrigues Vega would repay him at a later date.³⁴ And this was not the only time. In 1606, Snellinck stated that he was "satisfied with Rodrigues Vega's word," despite having no written confirmation of a debt that was owed to him.³⁵ In fact, Snellinck seemed little bothered by debts that Rodrigues Vega had incurred to him. Snellinck also acted on Rodrigues Vega's behalf regarding Rodrigues Vega's debts to others. In 1605, Snellinck made a declaration in Rodrigues Vega's name to a notary regarding money that Rodrigues Vega owed.³⁶ However, it was not just Snellinck who acted on Rodrigues Vega's account. In 1612, Rodrigues Vega granted a power of attorney to another Sephardic merchant, Alfonso Dias Henriques, and "acting on the orders of Snellinck," authorized collection of a sum of money.³⁷ Thus, it seems that Snellinck and Rodrigues Vega had enough mutual trust to grant each other control over their respective legal affairs.

Many of these authorizations to act on each other's behalf in legal and financial matters concerned debts. These debts were sometimes to other people, but were often between themselves. Snellinck and

³² SR 136.

³³ SR 139.

³⁴ SR 160.

³⁵ SR 204.

³⁶ SR 181.

³⁷ SR 554.

Rodrigues Vega were, in fact, important sources of relatively short-term credit for each other. For instance, Rodrigues Vega conveyed directly to Snellinck 2,000 pounds Fleming that were due to him from the payment of an insurance policy, since “this sum offsets the money still outstanding between them.”³⁸ Rodrigues Vega conveyed 262 pounds Fleming, which he had invested in a voyage to Brazil and Angola, to Snellinck, also as payment owed.³⁹ Rodrigues Vega stated in this same deed that Snellinck had paid fully for what Snellinck owed him.⁴⁰ Rodrigues Vega also extended credit to Snellinck to buy 115 chests of sugar in 1604.⁴¹

These two merchants of differing backgrounds did more than act on each other’s behalf and extend one another credit. They co-owned trade goods and property, including a cargo of sugar and Brazilwood that was transported between Brazil and Lisbon in 1601.⁴² This was hardly the only time Snellinck and Rodrigues Vega co-owned shipments of these products. Rodrigues Vega and Snellinck were part of an inter-cultural group which jointly owned a shipment of sugar in 1603; the group included João Nunes Correia, the Dutch merchants Jan Claesz. Colijn, Jan van Baerle, Jan Lourensz, and the Sephardic merchants Miguel Lopes Homem, Francisco Pinto de Brito, Francisco Mendes, Duarte Saraiva, and Alberto Rodrigues.⁴³ A similar sort of inter-cultural consortium was brought together in 1604 by Snellinck and Rodrigues Vega for the shipment of Brazilwood to Hamburg. This venture involved, in addition to Snellinck and Rodrigues Vega, the Flemish merchant Dominicus van Uffele, in Hamburg, and João Castelli. In the same year, Rodrigues Vega and Snellinck also co-owned a three-fourths share in a cargo of unnamed products shipped via Madeira to Bahia in Brazil.⁴⁴

Thus far, Snellinck and Rodrigues Vega had mostly gone in together to buy sugar and Brazilwood. However, during the course of their association they were also joint owners of slaves. In 1601, they were involved in litigation against the captain of a “faulty consignment of

³⁸ SR 134.

³⁹ SR 133.

⁴⁰ SR 133.

⁴¹ SR 142.

⁴² SR 91.

⁴³ SR 109.

⁴⁴ SR 137.

slaves.”⁴⁵ They co-owned 62 slaves on their *engenho* (sugar mill) “Santo Cosmas” in Bahia,⁴⁶ a mill which they bought in 1610.⁴⁷ They appear to have jointly owned it until 1612,, when a brother of Manoel, Pedro Rodrigues Vega, bought out Snellinck’s share in the plantation.⁴⁸

Perhaps because both were regarded as being among the foremost merchants working in the Brazil trade, Rodrigues Vega and Snellinck came together on behalf of a fellow merchant. They were asked by one Jan van Baerle to depose to a notary regarding customs surrounding payments of tolls to the King of Spain for merchandize from Brazil. Both declared in this document that, despite the fact that it was against the law, they had, on several occasions, had ships laden with sugar and Brazilwood sail directly from Brazil to the United Provinces, despite having declared Portugal to be the ships’ destination. They went on to state that they had done this with the tacit approval and knowledge of the States General.⁴⁹

The association between Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Cornelis Snellinck was centered on the Brazil trade—sugar, Brazilwood, and slaves. However, there were also ventures into the East Indies via the new trade in shares in voyages going to this region. These two merchants also traded together in exotic products such as pearls, rubies, and musk.⁵⁰ Thus, they were concerned with the European “rich” trades. They were from Antwerp and had many of the same associates, including Carvalho and Osorio. They worked together as representatives of the Amsterdam merchant community concerned with the colonial trade. Moreover, as cross-community migrants, they engaged in the trade in new products, and traded in new ways—via shares and with integrated networks.

⁴⁵ SR 91.

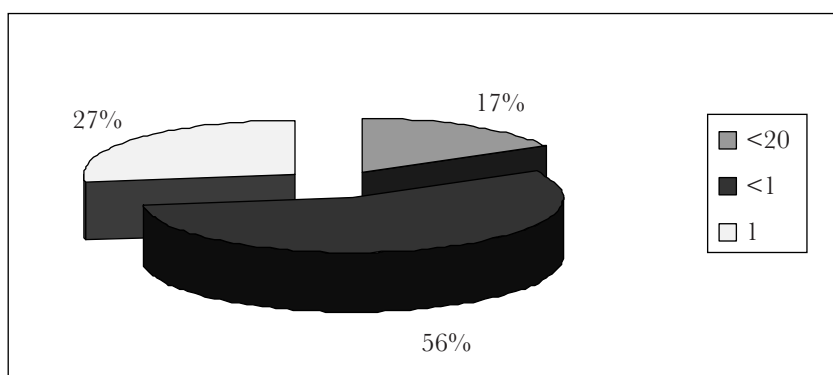
⁴⁶ SR 449.

⁴⁷ SR 553.

⁴⁸ GAA, NA 62/343–348v.

⁴⁹ SR 87. This is not as surprising as it may seem. It was common knowledge that Dutch shippers tried their utmost to circumvent any and all tolls and taxes levied by the Habsburg monarchs, even during the ‘Twelve Years’ Truce. The States General was not overly concerned with stopping this circumvention of tolls.

⁵⁰ SR 192.



Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 338 interactions with 145 Dutch associates (all associates are listed in Appendix III).

Graph 8: Manoel Carvalho's frequency of interactions with Dutch merchants.

Manoel Carvalho and Albert Schuyt

As with Manoel Rodrigues Vega, and as Graph 8 shows, the vast majority of Carvalho's Dutch associates dealt with him only a few times on a given endeavor. Fifty-six percent of his Dutch associates dealt with him between two and fifteen times, whereas 27% were one-time associates. Seventeen percent of Carvalho's interactions with Dutch merchants, however, occurred more than twenty times. With his main associate, Albert Schuyt, Manoel Carvalho had a long-running collaboration that spanned eighteen years, from 1614 until 1632. This collaboration centered on insuring cargoes and co-owning sugar. There were a total of 29 recorded interactions, though there could be far more that were either unrecorded or were not found among the extant archival documentation.

Albert Schuyt was one of the few partners of the Sephardim in Amsterdam highlighted in this work who was born in the northern Netherlands, though he had strong ties to Antwerp through his second marriage. Carvalho also had connections with Antwerp via his cousin Maria de Pas. Schuyt was born in Naarden, in 1576. He lived on the Herengracht in Amsterdam until his death, in 1632.⁵¹ He had moved to Amsterdam in 1603, after his first marriage, to Anna Bernard. He sec-

⁵¹ Johan E. Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578–1795*, vl. II (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1963), 1017.

ond marriage was to Constantia de Haze, from Antwerp, the widow of Jan Nicquet (see below) and the daughter of Hendrick and Clara Coymans.⁵² Schuyt's daughter, Anna, from his first marriage, married Gerrit Reynst; another daughter, Helena, from his second marriage, married her cousin Isaac Coymans. He also had a son, Gijsberto, who was born in 1620.⁵³ Schuyt was a merchant who dealt in the Italian and Levant trade and worked as an insurer. He is known to have done business with Laurens Joosten van Baeck, among others who were in business with the Sephardim in Amsterdam.⁵⁴ One such deal with Sephardic merchants is mentioned in P.W. Klein's study of the Tripp family. Schuyt had rented a ship from Elias Tripp which he then sub-rented to "Jews in Constantinople" who were shipping merchandize to Venice.⁵⁵

It was not just the Jews of Constantinople, however, with whom Schuyt did business. He was well known as an insurer for Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants. Between 1608 and 1627, he insured at least fifteen cargoes for Sephardic merchants (other than Manoel Carvalho) in Amsterdam,⁵⁶ including Bento Osorio. Osorio took out insurance with Albert Schuyt, Jan Stassart, Godert Kerckringh, and Adriaen and Claes Andriesz. for a shipment of wheat.⁵⁷ Schuyt was also among a group of Dutch merchants—along with Guillome Bartolotti, Hildebrandt den Otter, Charles de Lasseur, Jacques Nicquet, Philipp Calandrini, Paulo de Willem, and Andries Hendricz. de Beyser—who twice declared on Osorio's behalf about customs regarding wheat shipments from the Baltic region to Portugal and Italy.⁵⁸

It was Manoel Carvalho, though, with whom Schuyt had the most business dealings. Just as Schuyt had insured cargoes for other

⁵² van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 141, 209.

⁵³ Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578–1795*, vl. I, 260.

⁵⁴ GAA, NA 374/92, cited in Johannes Gerard van Dillen, ed., *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven en het gildewezen van Amsterdam, 1612–1632* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1929), Volume I, 713.

⁵⁵ P.W. Klein, *De Trippen in de 17^e Eeuw: Een studie over het ondernemersgedrag op de Hollandse stapelmarkt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965), 311.

⁵⁶ These merchants were: James Lopes da Costa and Francisco Lopes, SR 280; Gaspar and Manoel Lopes Homem, SR 124; Belchior and Francisco Mendes, SR 630; Juan Gonçales, SR 677, 678; Diogo Nunes Belmonte, SR 684, 689, 695, 870, GAA, NA 646a/227; Pascoal Lopes, SR 708, 709, 716; Diogo Gomes Duarte, SR 708, 709; Gaspar Rodrigues Nunes and Francisco da Costa Brandão, SR 854; Diogo Martins and Sebastiaen Mendes Pimentel, SR 3637; and Guiomar Henriques, SR 3581.

⁵⁷ SR 3633.

⁵⁸ GAA, NA 645/505–506; NA 645a/505.

Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, he also insured cargoes for Manoel Carvalho. In fact, their documented association begins with the insurance of a cargo that sailed from Venice to Tunis and La Goulette in north Africa in 1614. This cargo was carried in the ship *Sta. Anna Bonaventura*, and the shipment was co-insured by Schuyt and a multitude of other Dutch insurers.⁵⁹ This large number of co-insurers was not unusual. For instance, the Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants included in the database for this study listed an average of five insurers per deed. However, this number is deceptively low and there were probably many more insurers per cargo and/or ship. Many deeds mention just one insurer, though he is sometimes mentioned as being the “representative for” the other insurers. Likewise, the records often mention one insurer and his “company,” comprised of an unknown number of other merchants. One example was the ship known as the *Sinte Pieter* (*Saint Peter*), which had at least five insurers mentioned in one deed and five others named in another, meaning that the ship had at least ten separate insurers.⁶⁰

Perhaps stemming from their association for the insurance of the vessel in 1614, Carvalho and Schuyt came together again in 1616 for the co-ownership of a cargo of sugar.⁶¹ This same year, they jointly issued a power of attorney to a new Christian merchant living in Bordeaux, Antonio Mendes, to follow-up on the whereabouts of this cargo of sugar.⁶² The cargo had originated in Bahia and was taken by privateers to La Rochelle.⁶³ In total, Schuyt and Carvalho co-owned 58 chests of sugar from this voyage.⁶⁴ The total value of another cargo of sugar co-owned by Carvalho and Schuyt, comprised of 102 chests, was 20,000 guilders.⁶⁵ The following year, they went in together on 300 chests of sugar.⁶⁶ In 1618, they co-owned yet another 160 chests

⁵⁹ NA 254/184v; see also SR 796. The other Dutch insurers were: Hendrick Beeckman; Daniel van den Eijnde; Hillibrant den Otter; François Boudewijns; Adriaen Andriess.; Nicolaes Claesse Everswijn; Barent Sweerts; Jan Jansee Smith; Jacob Jacobse Bontenos; Pieter Beltens; Pauwels Jansse van Helmont; Dirck Vlack; Jan Battista Bartolott; Godert Kerckrinck; Jan Jansz. Smith; David de l’Hommel; Pieter van Gheel; Jacques van Hanswijck.

⁶⁰ GAA, NA 53/36v.

⁶¹ GAA, NA 387/119.

⁶² GAA, NA 379/602.

⁶³ GAA, NA 379/614.

⁶⁴ GAA, NA 379/618.

⁶⁵ GAA, NA 622/61v–62.

⁶⁶ GAA, NA 380/108.

of sugar.⁶⁷ Indeed, their joint ownership of cargoes of sugar originating in Bahia in Brazil seems to have been so mutually beneficial that the two merchants continued working together for another fourteen years, always for shipment and sale of sugar.⁶⁸

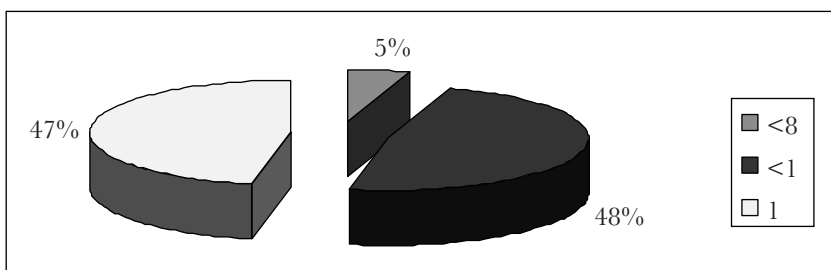
Because Manoel Carvalho and Albert Schuyt's association was based on the trade in sugar, either transport of sugar or insurance of this valuable product, they were thus concerned with the European "rich" trades. Their shared background in the city of Amsterdam and their mutual circles of associates such as Osorio and other prominent merchants, along with their ties to the city of Antwerp, no doubt knitted together their joint enterprises, which, as has been seen, were high value and spanned eighteen years. Moreover, Manoel Carvalho, as a cross-community migrant, brought from Brazil his expertise in the sugar trade as a resource to enrich his cross-cultural association with Schuyt, who, on his side, contributed his knowledge of the local market in this product.

Bento Osorio, Claes Cornelisz Jut, and Dirck Thomasz. Glimmer

As Graph 9 shows, the majority of Osorio's Dutch associates dealt with him only a few times on a given endeavor. Forty-eight percent worked with Osorio between two and eight times. A nearly equal percentage dealt with Osorio only once. Five percent of Osorio's recorded interactions with Dutch merchants were with such merchants whom he interacted with more than eight times. Unlike Rodrigues Vega or Carvalho, however, Osorio did not have any Dutch merchants with whom he collaborated frequently. Instead, he had two Dutch associates with whom he dealt somewhat regularly, and several who appeared less often. With Osorio's two main Dutch associates, Claes Cornelisz Jut and Dirck Thomasz Glimmer, he had collaborations that, in both cases, spanned a few years—from 1618 until 1621, in the case of Glimmer, and from 1617–1619 for Jut. These associations were, in the case of Jut, centered on the sale of salt. The interactions with Thomsz Glimmer were more varied, and included permissions to act

⁶⁷ GAA, NA 381/428.

⁶⁸ See, GAA/NA 381/67; NA 383/226, 511; NA 384a/435–436; NA 387/115–117v; NA 405/108–108v.



Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 398 interactions with 257 Dutch associates (all associates are listed in Appendix IV).

Graph 9: Bento Osorio's frequency of interactions with Dutch merchants, 1610–1640.

on each other's behalf and declarations concerning shipments which they co-owned.

Unfortunately, nothing is known of Claes Cornelisz. Jut, other than that he came from Zaandam in North Holland⁶⁹ and was apparently a major trader in salt. He bought entire shiploads of the product from Osorio, and in 1617 purchased “as much Setúbal salt, as much as could be loaded in the 100 last ship.”⁷⁰ This Dutch merchant bought a similar quantity of salt from Osorio the following year.⁷¹ In fact, in 1618, Jut bought at least four more cargoes of Setúbal salt from Osorio—in total something close to 500 lasts of salt in this year alone.⁷² Perhaps because of these large purchase of salt, there was enough trust between the two merchants for Osorio to sell Jut two shiploads of salt on credit.⁷³

As with Jut, next to nothing is known of Dirck Thomasz Glimmer, other than that he was a registered broker in Amsterdam.⁷⁴ It could be that, in his capacity as a broker, Glimmer came into contact with various merchants, including Sephardic merchants, as Osorio was not the only Sephardic merchant with whom Glimmer had business associations. For instance, in 1621, Glimmer and another Dutch merchant, Willem Cornelisz Ameland, reached an agreement with the Sephardic

⁶⁹ SR 1353.

⁷⁰ GAA, NA 109/142–142v.

⁷¹ GAA, NA 623/81–82.

⁷² GAA, NA 623/81–82v, 119v; 240–241.

⁷³ GAA, NA 109/93v–94v.

⁷⁴ GAA 645a/474.

merchants Miguel Esteves de Pina and Thomas Fereira concerning co-ownership of the ship the *Witte Leeuw* (*White Lion*) and its cargo.⁷⁵

Glimmer made multiple declarations on behalf of Osorio over the years. He was one of the experts who declared in 1619 that the *fluit* ship was reliable for transporting grain to Spain, Portugal, or Italy.⁷⁶ He was apparently chosen by Osorio to make this statement due to his expertise in the shipment of grain to the Mediterranean. Assumedly, Osorio knew him well enough to believe he would be a reliable witness. The year before, in 1618, Glimmer had, at the request of Osorio, made a declaration about what he had heard regarding the fate of 115 lasts of wheat that had been destined for Tangiers in north Africa. Apparently, this cargo had been taken by pirates off the coast of north Africa.⁷⁷ Glimmer had enough knowledge of trade, in general, and Osorio's activities specifically, to have heard about this ship's fate. In fact, Glimmer urged Osorio several times to pay the ransom for the ship, a request that it seems Osorio refused.⁷⁸ Moreover, Glimmer declared again on Osorio's behalf, this time regarding the fact that "freights and prices could vary a great deal, and depended a great deal on the time and place."⁷⁹ Perhaps due to these intensive interactions, Osorio, in 1621, granted a power of attorney to Glimmer to act in his place regarding a shipment of Brazilwood that had been taken to Hamburg.⁸⁰

The association between Bento Osorio, Claes Cornelisz Jut, and Dirck Thomasz Glimmer was based on the trade in salt and grain, as well as in their shared knowledge of the mercantile environment of Amsterdam, with the exception of one shipment of Brazilwood. Thus, they were concerned with the traditional Baltic bulk trades. Interestingly, Osorio does not seem to have developed the sort of close-knit and long-lasting associations with Dutch merchants that Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho did. His interactions with Cornelisz Jut and Thomasz Glimmer were certainly important for his mercantile activities, but had nowhere near the frequency and durability that Rodrigues Vega's relationship with Snellinck or Carvalho's association with Schuyt did.

⁷⁵ SR 2358.

⁷⁶ GAA, NA 645a/474.

⁷⁷ GAA, NA 109/372v–373.

⁷⁸ GAA, NA 645/247–248.

⁷⁹ GAA, NA 645/448–449.

⁸⁰ GAA, NA 645b/1424–1427.

This could have had any number of reasons. Perhaps Osorio had little need to expand his network to include other merchants, as it is also notable that Osorio is recorded with very few associates of any background (Sephardi, new Christian, Portuguese old Christian, or Dutch) whatsoever. It could also be because Osorio most likely had come to Amsterdam directly from Portugal, in contrast to Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, who before coming to Amsterdam had spent time in various places and thereby had already developed contacts with merchants from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, it is possible that Osorio had not yet developed the contacts that allowed for long-term and more intensive inter-cultural interactions.

Conclusion

The previous charts highlight the fact that inter-cultural networks had a propensity to be loose and shifting. Amsterdam's economic, political, and social structure, which included immigration, relatively easy acquisition of citizenship, and a designated place for trade to occur, facilitated the exchange of information and the ability of merchants to connect easily with one another. This meant that merchants of varying backgrounds could come into contact with one another, and that merchants with shared connections beyond Amsterdam—for example to Antwerp or other places in the southern Netherlands, not to mention Brazil or Iberia—could become acquainted or renew old ties. Thus, although inter-cultural trade certainly was evident in many or most locales, there was likely a full blossoming in certain cities and spheres—such as in Amsterdam.⁸¹

Although the environment was conducive to the expansion of inter-cultural trade, the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam that I analyze in this study tended to have one or two main Dutch associates with whom they had multiple endeavors or associations. The interactions between Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento

⁸¹ For more on this important idea, see the work of Mark-Anthony Falzon, "A Passage from India: Trajectories of Economic Integration in London and Mediterranean Europe," in Leo Lucassen, David Feldman, and Jochen Oltmer, eds., *Paths of Integration: Migrants in Western Europe (1880–2004)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 158–176.

Osorio, and their primary Dutch associates show that their interactions could vary. Their loosely knit networks with Dutch associates appear to demonstrate that there was a primary group of Dutch merchants with whom these men associated. These primary associates connected the Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants to networks outside their own ethno-religious group.

Snellinck, Schuyt, Glimmer, and Jut worked with their Sephardic associates in Amsterdam to further their mutual interests, and helped to supply credit, judicial help, expertise, and access to other networks. Thus, connecting to networks outside the Amsterdam Sephardic community was important for creating and opportunities and furthering interests. As cross-community migrants, the Amsterdam-based Sephardim could bring valuable resources into their inter-cultural associations. Of course, these resources could be monetary, but were just as likely to have been valuable knowledge regarding routes, products, techniques for trade, and technology. This shows that networks were far more encompassing, at least among the global merchants, than the theories of “friends and family” might lead scholars to believe.

However, in addition to these primary Dutch merchants with whom they interacted, Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio also had many interactions with Dutch associates that were occasional or never repeated. This demonstrates how loose such networks were for these global merchants, and the many directions in which the networks operated. And these were only the interactions with Dutch merchants. The same sort of irregularity applied to their endeavors with Sephardic, new Christian, and other merchants. Thus, it seems that they were connecting themselves with many merchants of various backgrounds, for a range of durations and purposes.

Beyond this primary group of Dutch associates, there were also Dutch merchants with whom Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio each had several interactions, although the majority were men with whom they dealt only once or twice. These types of inter-cultural networks were also integrative, as shown in Chapter III. Many of the measured interactions were between Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, or Osorio and one or more Dutch merchants, yet their networks also tended to incorporate two or more Amsterdam Sephardic merchants, working together with one or more Dutch merchants. Moreover, the important nature of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio’s less frequent dealings with Dutch associates should not be dismissed. Lack of

frequency did not mean a lack of trust. As described earlier, the vast majority of merchants, regardless of background, in fact only dealt with one another sporadically. I will examine and detail some of the other interactions and associations that Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio had with their Dutch associates at greater length in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OCCASIONAL

Established merchants in Amsterdam, recent immigrants from Antwerp and the southern Netherlands, and Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam ran into one another quite easily. They lived relatively close by one another, as Amsterdam was not particularly large at the time, met each other at the stock exchange or the harbor, and bought each other's products. Working only with family members or those of the same ethno-religious group was impossible for merchants who wanted to profit from the expansion of the Dutch staple market I described in the previous chapter. As diversified merchants, the Amsterdam-based Sephardim simply could not use family members or fellow new Christians in every locale where they were active, even if they preferred to do so. Sometimes, as seen in the previous chapter, associations between merchants from different groups were intense and long-lasting.

The majority of commercial associations during this time were, as David Hancock has described, loose, shifting, and of a relatively short duration. The research of Oscar Gelderblom confirms Hancock's assertion. Gelderblom has shown that, in three-fourths of the freight contracts he analyzed, merchants from the northern and southern Netherlands worked together only once or twice.¹ This was also the case, as Graphs 7, 8, and 9 show, for the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam under consideration in this study. Thus, it would seem that occasional associations between merchants during this time period were very much the norm across geographical, ethnic, and religious lines.

However, as Francesca Trivellato points out, transactions between two strangers have occurred since time immemorial and are not indicative of an instance of inter-cultural trade.² Yet these "occasional" relationships did involve credit and risk, and were often, though not always, more involved than merely inspecting merchandize and buying it. They were likely to be stepping stones to more intensive and long-lasting

¹ Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse Kooplieden*, 179.

² Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 1.

business associations. Therefore, in this chapter I will analyze the ways in which Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio and their minor Dutch associates acted on each other's behalf, shared ownership of goods, insured cargoes, and extended credit to one another in greater depth. Though these occasional associations were perhaps less important for the merchants than were the long-lasting, intensive relationships detailed in the last chapter, these occasional associations do seem to illustrate that merchants were utilizing loose or weak ties with other merchants so as to spread the risks inherent in relying too heavily upon a few tightly-knit collaborators, and that, in the forging and utilization of these loose or weak ties, familiarity could easily trump shared ethnicity.

Acting on Each Other's Behalf

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

In addition to the powers of attorney and right of proxy that Rodrigues Vega had given to his main associate, Cornelis Snellinck, and which Snellinck, in return, had issued to Rodrigues Vega, he granted such authorizations to Dutch associates at least thirteen times between the beginning of his settlement in Amsterdam, in 1595, and 1610, though there could certainly be more of such documents that have not emerged from the archival documentation. What is striking about these powers of attorney is their geographical reach. Rodrigues Vega granted these authorizations to merchants as far afield as London, La Rochelle, Danzig, Emden, and Hamburg. This shows not only the scope of his business enterprises but also the diversity of his non-Iberian, non-new Christian contacts who were integrated into his network.

For instance, in 1595, not long after Rodrigues Vega's arrival in Amsterdam, he granted a power of attorney to the Dutch merchant Abraham van Herwyer, who was living in London, to reclaim goods of Rodrigues Vega's which had been seized and taken to England.³ Fifteen years later, in 1610, Rodrigues Vega still had interests and contacts among Dutch merchants in London. He granted a power of attorney to Daniel van Harinckhoek, another Dutch merchant in London, to demand payment on a bill of exchange from Alexander

³ SR 2.

Bouwens.⁴ Rodrigues Vega also had contacts in France. In 1595, he issued a power of attorney to the well-known Flemish merchant Elias van Geel, then residing in La Rochelle, to reclaim twenty pieces of “leyden” cloth from the estate of a deceased associate.⁵ Two years later, Rodrigues Vega authorized Nicolaes and Jernomio Grisons, in Danzig, to recover two glass bottles of civet (a kind of musk).⁶ In 1599, Hendrick Hondebeeck, a Dutch merchant in Emden, was granted a power of attorney by Rodrigues Vega to unload sugar consigned to Rodrigues Vega that was to arrive in this city, and to pay the skipper and to “deal with any other affairs for Rodrigues Vega.”⁷ Hondebeeck and Rodrigues Vega must have worked well together, because Hondebeeck was granted another power of attorney three years later to deal with another legal matter in Emden.⁸

These actions were not just granted to merchants outside of Amsterdam. For instance, in 1599, Lodewijk Jansz de Pottere was granted a power of attorney by Rodrigues Vega to receive goods and to “take legal action, if necessary.”⁹ This same year, Rodrigues Vega granted a general power of attorney (as opposed to a specific power of attorney or right of proxy which was valid for a specific action or case) to the Dutch merchant Hans de Laet Aertsz “to attend to his affairs...and, in particular, to receive all bills of exchange coming from Antwerp,

⁴ SR 121.

⁵ SR 3. Elias van Geel was the brother of Peter and Maximiliaan van Geel, and the son of Hans van Geel and Maria Coymans, both born in Antwerp. Therefore, he was connected via his mother to the wealthy and prominent Coymans family. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the van Geel firm was one of the biggest business houses in Amsterdam. His brother Peter van Geel lived in Cologne from 1585–1592, and is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1598. Peter van Geel invested 19,200 guilders in the VOC, as did Maximiliaan and Elias. In 1612, their investment in the VOC was 24,000 guilders while Maximiliaan van Geel’s stood at 33,700 guilders. The account of the Peter and Elias van Geel firm in the Exchange Bank in 1612 was four pages. As was the case with the VOC investments, the other brother, Maximiliaan, had his own account. In 1615, the brothers’ account was three pages long. In the same year, Maximiliaan’s account was also three pages. Pieter and Elias van Geel belonged to the signatories of the “adres tot opheffing van het verbod van het kassiersbedrijf.” In 1631, Pieter van Geel lived on the North side of the Lauriergracht. See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 153 and <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>. Pieter van Geel was an associate of Manoel Carvalho.

⁶ SR 9.

⁷ SR 67.

⁸ SR 80.

⁹ SR 64.

Lisbon, Frankfurt, and other places.”¹⁰ Both Rodrigues Vega and de Laet were from Antwerp and were relatively recent immigrants to Amsterdam, as de Laet first appears in the archives in 1588.¹¹ This further bolsters the notion that valuable connections and relationships built on trust had been formed in Antwerp.

Manoel Carvalho

Manoel Carvalho and Isaac Israel granted a power of attorney to a Dutch resident in Venice, Pieter Bauwer, along with their Dutch insurers (Jan Jansz. Karel de Jonghe; Jan Jansz. Karel; Bartholomeus Bisschop, Pauwels Bisschop; Pieter Jan Mieusz.; Lourens Joosten Baeck (Bax), Jan Coenensz.; Symon Loo; Leonard Pelgroms; Francois Pelgroms, Paulus and Steffano Pelgroms; Jacques Merchij; Jacob Lucasz. Rotgans; and George de Piran) to reclaim goods taken to Venice from a wrecked ship.¹² What is particularly interesting is not only the constellation of Sephardi and Dutch partners in voyages, but also the preference, in both cases, for using a Dutch merchant to act on their behalf to reclaim goods. There were certainly new Christians and, in the case of Venice, Jews available in La Rochelle and in Venice.¹³ However, if the traditional historiography is to be believed, the Sephardim in Amsterdam would surely have chosen to rely on their networks of co-religionists and kin rather than turn to those of a different background, religion, and language, especially when granting legal power to act on their behalf. However, the Amsterdam-based Sephardim opted to grant such authority to Dutch merchants. An

¹⁰ SR 62. Hans de Laet appears in the notarial acts in Amsterdam in the latter part of the sixteenth century as a merchant. He dealt in English cloth. See van Dillen, ed, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven*, note 813. His father was Aert de Laet, “merchant of linens” from Antwerp. See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 196.

¹¹ See also, <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹² GAA, NA 113/5v-6.

¹³ For La Rochelle, see, for example, Zosa Szajkowski, “Population Problems of Marranos and Sephardim in France, from the 16th to the 20th Centuries,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* Volume 27 (1958): 83–105, and Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 98, note 91. There is copious literature available about Jews in Venice. To name just one comprehensive volume, see: *Bli Ebrei e Venezia, secoli XIV–XVIII: Atti del Convegno internazionale organizzato dall’Istituto di storia della società e dello stato veneziano della Fondazione Giorgio Cini*, Venice, 5–10 August, 1983 (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1987).

additional interesting point is how many of the merchants were from Antwerp or the southern Netherlands.

Jan Jansz Karel (also spelled Carel, Caerel and Kaerel), for example, was from Brugge and is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1578.¹⁴ Like Rodrigues Vega, he was involved in the “Compagnie van Verre,” and was a Director of the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company.¹⁵ Likewise, the Pelgroms family was from Antwerp and came to Amsterdam between 1595 and 1600.¹⁶ Jacques Merchijs (or Mercijs) was another relatively recent immigrant to Amsterdam from the southern Netherlands. He first appears in the Amsterdam records in 1602.¹⁷ He was a sugar refiner, which would explain his connection with a major supplier of sugar such as Carvalho. Merchijs was also a merchant, and was a subscriber to the Dutch East India Company for the sum of 40,000 guilders.¹⁸

It is Laurens Joosten Baeck, however, who is the most important of these insurers who hailed originally from the southern Netherlands.¹⁹ Baeck became one of the most prominent merchants who had

¹⁴ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹⁵ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 107.

¹⁶ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>; van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 214.

¹⁷ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹⁸ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 82.

¹⁹ Baeck was born in 1570 in Stekenen, to the west of Antwerp, and died in Amsterdam in November of 1642. He married the sister of Claes Jacobsz. Harencarspel in 1596. Harencarspel was picked to be a member of the *Vroedschap* in 1618. Elias, *De Vroedschap*, 316–317. Along with Adriaen ten Haef and Balthasar de Moucheron, he chartered trade expeditions to Asia in the latter part of the sixteenth century. V. Enthoven, “Een Symbiose Tussen Koopman en Regent: De Tweetrapsraket van de opkomst van de Republiek en Zeeland,” in C. Lesger and L. Noordegraaf, eds, *Ondernemers & Bestuurders: Economie en Politiek in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de Late Middeleeuwen en Vroegmoderne Tijd* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1999), 203–236, 210. In 1602, Baeck invested 1,200 guilders as a shareholder in the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company. However, he invested far more—in total 18,000 guilders—in the Zeeland Chamber of the VOC, and was a Director (*bewindhebber*) of this Chamber. Dr. W.S. Unger, “Het Inschrijvingsregister van de Kamer Zeeland der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Medegedeeld door Dr. W.S. Unger,” *Economisch-Historisch Jaarboek* 24 (1950): 1–33, 12, 24–25, and note 7. He worked in the Lastage on the Keizerstraat. van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven en het gederfwezen*, Volume II, 463. This may have been where Baeck’s sugar refining company with Reijnier Scholier was in 1612, though this enterprise was dissolved relatively quickly and possibly went bankrupt some time thereafter. GAA, NA 127/174–176, 185v–186, cited in Adrianus Hubertus Poelwijk, “In dienste vant suyckerbacken” *De Amsterdamse suikernijverheid en haar ondernemers, 1580–1630* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003), 100, 159–161. Later, in 1618, Baeck and the Spaniard Francisco Montado joined forces for the refining of sugar.

come to Amsterdam via Middelburg. Baeck most likely drew on their shared Antwerp connections in order to ensure that he had a steady supply of sugar, which his Amsterdam-based Sephardic associates could provide. He was an associate not only of Carvalho, but also of Rodrigues Vega and Osorio (see Tables II and III in the Appendices), as well as of many other Sephardim in Amsterdam. He repeatedly appears as an underwriter in the deeds relating to these Sephardim in Amsterdam. Due to his economic contacts with various Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants, Baeck had a good reputation with them, which may explain why he was often chosen as an arbiter in their disputes.²⁰ It was not just with the Sephardim in Amsterdam that Baeck was in good standing. The States General asked the advice of Baeck and several merchants, including Salvador de la Palma, Jacques van Geel, Jan Janssen Coymans, and Hans Bernaerts about the trade situation in 1602.²¹

Carvalho not only granted powers of attorney to men such as Baeck, but was given such an authorization by his Dutch associates. For example, in 1616, Carvalho, along with Albert Schuyt (discussed in the previous chapter), Henri Thibault, and the Portuguese merchant Duarte Esteves de Pina, were given a power of attorney by a large number of Dutch merchants who had insured a cargo of sugar co-owned by Carvalho, Schuyt, Thibault, and Esteves de Pina.²² Pieter, Daniel, and Jan van Geel, David de l'Hommel,²³ François

van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven en het gideewezen*, II, 463. In 1620, his account with the Amsterdam Exchange Bank comprised three folio pages. On the occasion of the taxation of the 200th penny in 1631, he was taxed for 500 guilders, and, thus, estimated to possess a capital of 100,000 guilders. (In 1631 a tax of one half of 1% was assessed on all inhabitants of Amsterdam with an annual income of 100 guilders or more.) At this time, Baeck lived in the house known as "De Kaij Van 't Dolhuijs Tot De Doelen." <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden/>. His wealth helped him to buy an additional residence—a country home called "Schey-beeck" near Beverwijk, where the well-known writer Joost van Vondel was a frequent guest. Baeck's son, Joost, was a good friend of another famous Golden Age writer, Pieter Cornelisz. Hoof. van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 206.

²⁰ Poelwijk, "In dienste vant suysterbacken," 219.

²¹ V. Enthoven, "Een Symbiose Tussen Koopman en Regent," 210.

²² GAA, NA 387/119.

²³ A family tree of the de l'Hommel family can be found in Poelwijk, "In dienste vant suysterbacken," 278. David de l'Hommel was a relatively regular associate of Manoel Carvalho. He was originally from Antwerp and was born in 1584. His mother was from the van Uffelen family, who were prominent merchants in Hamburg and who had many contacts with Sephardic merchants. After the fall of Antwerp, his family moved to Hamburg. On July 30, 1608, he married Catalijn van Geel, when he was 24. GAA, DTB 413/20v. He became the son-in-law of Pieter van Geel, an associate of Manoel Carvalho (see below for more information). David de l'Hommel's sister,

Wouters,²⁴ Jan Baptista Bartolotti,²⁵ Francisco Mendes, Adriaen Andriesz, Daniel van den Eijnde, as well as a whole host of other merchants, gave Carvalho and the others the power to deal with legalities surrounding a pirated cargo of sugar. This case would drag on for at least another three years.²⁶ At one point, Carvalho and Schuyt, passed on their power of attorney to the Dutch merchant Adriaen Cocx, in Paris, to continue pursuing the return of the sugar for them.²⁷

Bento Osorio

Osorio was, like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, both a granter and a receiver of powers of attorney to and from Dutch associates. In 1614, he was one of a large group of Dutch and Sephardic merchants who granted a power of attorney to Allert and Jan van Eccx, in Rouen.²⁸ France was also the location of the power of attorney Osorio granted to the prominent Flemish merchant Philip van Geel, who was in Paris at the time. Van Geel was authorized to retrieve sixteen cases of sugar that had been sent from Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, to Porto, in Portugal.²⁹ However, it was not just France that featured in the

Anna, married Johannes ten Grotenhuys, also from a prominent merchant family. The l'Hommel family was involved in the sugar industry, which, along with their Antwerp connections, no doubt explains their interest in the Sephardic merchants. David l'Hommel lived, at least for a time, on the Warmoesstraat, in a house called "in de gulden Cop." Interestingly, Elias mentions that Nicolaas Cocqu asked that de l'Hommel's parents' house be checked after they died so that an inventory could be made of their goods, assumedly because they owed him money. This is the same Cocqu who was a co-creditor with Bento Osorio for the debts of Peter Martsz. Coij, the former Consul of the States General in Morocco. GAA, NA 1225/99v-100; NA 1261a/421. Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578-1795*, 276; van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 68. Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel*, 97, 221, and 276.

²⁴ François Wouters was a somewhat regular associate of Manoel Carvalho. He was born in Antwerp and had at least one sister, Clara. Wouters is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1591. In Amsterdam, he lived in the Warmoesstraat. In 1601, he married Ida Adams, who was also born in Antwerp. Wouters was connected to the sale of VOC shares in 1610. His account at the Exchange Bank was two pages in 1620. Wouters also invested in the WIC to the sum of 4000 guilders in 1621. See, van Dillen, *Het oudste andeelregister*, 189 and <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

²⁵ The Bartholotti family was actually connected quite strongly with Antwerp. See, van Dillen, *Het oudste andeelregister*, 64 and Elias, *Vroedschap van Amsterdam*, 762.

²⁶ GAA, NA 379/602, 614, 633; NA 380/401; NA 382/35.

²⁷ GAA, NA 381/428.

²⁸ GAA, NA 198/166-167.

²⁹ GAA, NA 384/89-89v.

activities of Bento Osorio. In 1626, Jan Geurtsz of Amsterdam was authorized to administer the legal affairs of Osorio for an indefinite period of time.³⁰

Osorio also received powers of attorney from Dutch associates to help them manage their affairs. Guillaume Grevenraet and Bartolomeus Roosendaël gave a power of attorney to Osorio in 1635 to help in the recovery of goods and money owed to them by the estate of the deceased Pieter Martsz Coij.³¹ A year later, Olivier van Houten extended a power of attorney to Osorio pursuant to this same case.³²

Conclusion

As the cases I describe above illustrate, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio had a plethora of associates to whom they granted powers of attorney or from whom they were given such power. Some, like Laurens Joosten Baeck, were associates of all three merchants, as well as of other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. Others appear only once in the archives relating to the Sephardic merchants of Amsterdam. What I wish to emphasize, though, is that granting a power of attorney or a right of proxy to someone enabled that person to act on a merchant's behalf. The actions taken on a merchant's behalf by the other persons would then be legally binding, even though, depending on the location, they were difficult to enforce. Therefore, the right of proxy or the issuance of a power of attorney gave the receiver of such an entitlement the freedom, as well as the authority, for and from the merchant who granted it to him. Thus, there was a great deal of trust implied by the issuance of such permission, especially if it were a full power of attorney instead of a task-specific one. That these important authorizations were exchanged so freely between merchants of differing backgrounds is an important indication of the level of trust between Sephardi and Dutch merchants.

³⁰ SR 3388.

³¹ GAA, NA 1225/99v-100.

³² GAA, NA 1261a/421.

Shared Ownership and Trade

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that there were so many intercultural interactions in the realm of trade, though the historiography, as seen in Chapter I, tends to ignore this fact. One scholar who has not overlooked this fact, Renate Fuks-Mansfeld, believes that the Sephardi knowledge of the Iberian trade, combined with the “developed” trade techniques of the established Amsterdam merchants, led to an important synergy between these merchants from differing backgrounds.³³ Of course, this statement presumes that the Sephardim in Amsterdam did not know of or utilize “developed” trading techniques, which was clearly not the case. The Amsterdam-based Sephardim often used “developed” techniques of trade, such as joint-stock companies, bills of exchange, and insurance. In fact, as Jonathan Israel writes, “The techniques of Jewish trade, finance, and industry differed not a jot from other trade, finance and industry except in that an oppressive system of state, municipal, and guild restrictions cut the Jews out of much, or most, retail trade and most crafts.”³⁴

Moreover, informal, transnational exchanges were, in fact, a highly developed way of conducting trade. And the Sephardim in Amsterdam depended for these exchanges, as has been described, on that most developed and important of trading techniques: the trading network. As Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert writes, “They [the Portuguese networks] were geographically extensive, multilateral, and highly interconnected. Seen from this aspect, the networks of the Nation were also opened in that they easily spliced into the networks of other trading nations to assure the supply or distribution of commodities.”³⁵ So the Sephardi networks joined the Dutch networks to form associations for the conduct of trade. But Fuks-Mansfeld makes an important point: Sephardi and Dutch merchants needed one another and traded extensively with one another. Moreover, many of their dealings involved the Iberian trade, about which the Sephardim in Amsterdam had a great deal of knowledge.

In fact, long-distance trade was at the core of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio’s and their associates’

³³ Fuks-Mansfeld, *De Sefardim in Amsterdam tot 1795*, 83.

³⁴ Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 256.

³⁵ Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 94.

business enterprises. Their ships (or the ships they chartered) called at Baltic ports (Danzig, Königsberg, Heyligerhaven, Wangerau, Riga, Trondheim, Romsdal, Allerheiligen, Hohwachter, and Hamburg), French ports (La Rochelle Rouen, Le Havre), Portuguese ports (Cascais, Lisbon, Madeira, Porto, Aveiro, Sétubal, Viana, and Faro), Spanish ports (Malaga, Galicia [specific ports were not mentioned], Cadiz, Seville), ports on or near the Italian peninsula (Livorno, Venice, Sicily, Genoa, Via Reggio, La Spezia, Civitavetia), Levantine ports (Constantinople, Alexandria), north African ports (Tunis, Tangiers, Ceuta), and Bahia and Pernambuco in Brazil. Their cargoes included: textiles, sugar and spices, weapons and munitions, iron goods, jewels and precious stones, Brazilwood, civet, coral, ivory, dyes, lacquer, wax, specie, fruit, woad, wine, grains, beans, other food sorts, wood, hides, un-worked metals, salt, cordage, and slaves.

The freight contracts indicate that the Sephardim in Amsterdam were active in trade routes, such as the Baltic trade, that had been dominated by Dutch merchants from the northern Netherlands.³⁶ The same can be said of merchants from the southern Netherlands.³⁷ Many of these merchants from the southern Netherlands worked with Amsterdam-based Sephardi merchants, with whom they probably had contacts predating their arrivals in Amsterdam. Both these groups of newcomers to Amsterdam seem to have taken advantage of the geographic expansion of Europe's trade. The ever-increasing demand for goods, combined with the inability of these regions to provide enough supplies on their own, led to an integration of Europe due to dependency of each other's produce.³⁸

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

Manuel Rodrigues Vega's name dominates the very early period of Sephardic settlement in the northern Netherlands. It can be difficult to ascertain the full extent of Rodrigues Vega's trade relationships, how-

³⁶ Because so much of the following information presented is based upon the available freight contracts in the archives, a quick word of caution is in order. Freight contracts cannot serve as an indication of the total volume of (Sephardic) trade, because far from all traffic was organized by contract. For example, a comparison of freight contracts issued with the total figure of shipping through the Sound shows that only about 10% of all ship masters passed a contract before a notary before sailing. See, A.E. Christenen, *Dutch trade to the Baltic about 1600* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1941).

³⁷ Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, 153.

³⁸ Lesger, "Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age," 70.

ever, since most shipments were smaller than that which would take up a ship's entire cargo. It can also be difficult to determine when and to what extent Rodrigues Vega traded on his own account and when on behalf of others.³⁹ During Rodrigues Vega's stay in Amsterdam he was mainly concerned with shipping to and from Portugal. Though he worked with fellow Sephardim in Amsterdam, both relatives and those apparently unrelated, he formed an early partnership not only with Cornelis Snellinck (as detailed in Chapter III) but also with one Hans de Schot, with whom he had a business relationship spanning at least ten years. De Schot also had dealings with other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam.⁴⁰

De Schot was originally from Antwerp.⁴¹ After he left that city, he operated from Hamburg. In 1593 or 1594 he appeared in the records as a merchant of Amsterdam,⁴² and was the agent for Martin Alonço d'Acala. With d'Acala and Ancelmo, de Schot traded mainly with Spain and Portugal, as well as, through contractors, with North and West Africa.⁴³ In the freight contracts published as part of the *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Oostzeehandel in de zeventiende eeuw* series (Sources for the History of the Dutch Baltic Trade in the Seventeenth Century series) he is mentioned 21 times between 1595 and 1602.⁴⁴ He traded with the Baltic region and with Spain, Portugal,

³⁹ Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam," 156.

⁴⁰ These merchants were: Manuel Nunes and Henrique Bernaldes (GAA, NA 53/243v–244) Bartholomeo Sanches (GAA, NA 33/225v–227); Garcia Pimentel (GAA, NA 61/352–353); Gabriel Fernandes (GAA, NA 56/680–682); Manoel Carvalho (NA 645/43v–44); and Duarte en Gonçalo Ximenes (GAA, NA 645/344–346).

⁴¹ De Schot lived on the Barndesteeg in Amsterdam and was listed as a sugar refiner in Amsterdam in 1594. NA 46/41v cited in van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van Bedrijfsleven*, Volume 1, 510. Hans de Schot had a younger brother by the name of François de Schot. François was listed as a "lakenkoper" [textile merchant] in Antwerp. He had been apprenticed in the house of Jean Calandrini, of the well-known merchant family in Staden, and later lived in Middelburg. Hans de Schot Hans married Catharina Ancelmo, and thus, became the brother-in-law of Antonio Ancelmo. Antonio Ancelmo came from Antwerp, but moved to Hamburg, Stade, and Bremen, before settling in Haarlem, outside of Amsterdam. Ancelmo was a Protestant. Hans de Schot was also the brother-in-law of Ferdinando Salvator. After de Schot's death, his sons, Anthony and Leonard, were briefly successful in Hamburg before going bankrupt in 1627. de Schot also had a daughter, Catharina, who married Lenard Raye of Limburg. Their daughter, Maria (de Schot's granddaughter), married Jeronimus Coymans of the well-known merchant family. Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578–1795*, VI, II, 764.

⁴² GAA, NA 47/6.

⁴³ GAA, NA 53/243v–244.

⁴⁴ Winkelman, ed., *Amsterdamse bevrachtingscontracten*.

Africa, Barbary, Madeira and Brazil. Later, he moved to either Staden or Hamburg, where he died in 1620.⁴⁵

Rodrigues Vega and De Schot most likely knew one another from Antwerp, or at least knew of each other from their connections in this city. They seem to have worked together on the trade in woad, a dye wood similar to indigo. In 1596, de Schot notified Rodrigues Vega that his half of the cargo of woad, which had been sent to them from the island of São Miguel in the Azores by Pero Lopes Peixoto, had arrived.⁴⁶ This woad was also partially owned by Laurens Baeck, Steven Groelaet and Bartolomeo Sanches of Lisbon⁴⁷ This shipment is a prime example of integrated trade networks, as Pero Lopes Peixoto, a new Christian merchant in the Azores, shipped the woad to Laurens Joosten Baeck, Hans de Schot, Steven Groelaet, and Manoel Rodrigues Vega, merchants originally from Antwerp (one of whom was Sephardi), living in Amsterdam, and because a share of this same woad belonged to the new Christian merchant Bartolomeo Sanches.⁴⁸

The majority of Rodrigues Vega's economic interactions were with Dutch merchants. However, a significant proportion were integrated interactions which involved one or more Sephardic merchants dealing with one or more Dutch associates, such as the previously mentioned shipment of woad. Another example would be when João Castelli, formerly of Pernambuco in Brazil, deposited at the request of Rodrigues Vega, that part of the Brazilwood that had arrived in Hamburg belonged to Rodrigues Vega. This wood was consigned to Dominicus van Uffele, a prominent merchant from the southern Netherlands, who lived in Hamburg.⁴⁹

These integrated interactions were more evident in the trade in some goods than in others. For instance, as Graph 10 shows, the intersection of Rodrigues Vega and one or more other Sephardi and one or more Dutch merchants was quite evident in the sugar trade, though

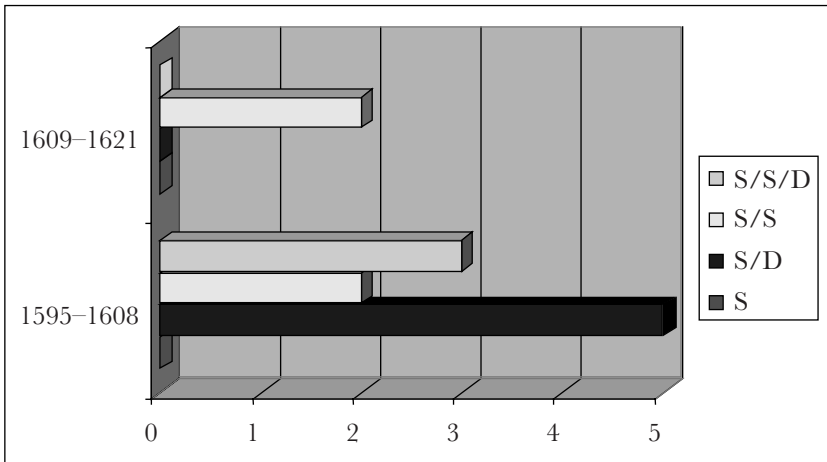
⁴⁵ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 218 and Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel*, 222.

⁴⁶ GAA, NA 49/64v–65.

⁴⁷ GAA, NA 49/130–130v.

⁴⁸ The relations between the Fernandes/Rodrigues Vega family and the Sanches were close. Aside from the fact that Gaspar Sanches married Gracia Rodrigues Vega, Bartolomeo Sanches in Lisbon figures as Manoel's correspondent. GAA, NA 49/130–130v; NA 76/3–4. Lopo and Antonio Sanches are mentioned in connection with Pedro Rodrigues Vega's plantation in Bahia. GAA, NA 62/210v–211.

⁴⁹ GAA NA 55/537v–538.



Source: GAA, NA, n=12.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 10: Manoel Rodrigues Vega’s trade in sugar by interaction type, 1595–1613.

the majority of Rodrigues Vega’s interactions in the sugar trade were, as can be seen, with Dutch associates.

Because Rodrigues Vega drops out of the records just four years after the Twelve Years’ Truce began in 1609, I could not gather much information from the chronological spread of his trading activities. As the Graph 10 shows, inter-cultural and integrated networks were very important for Rodrigues Vega, which is somewhat surprising since sugar was considered a product in which the Sephardim and new Christians had a long history of cultivation and trade. Although Rodrigues Vega did not in any way specialize in sugar, it is clear that inter-cultural relationships were important for his trade in this product. He may have needed an entrée into these networks, or he may have been looking to expand his networks in this product. Likewise, for Rodrigues Vega’s dealings in wood, as Graph 11 illustrates, he clearly needed Dutch contacts. He may not have had any previously established Sephardic or new Christian contacts in this highly Baltic-based trade, in which Sephardic and new Christian merchants had little experience. Therefore, he may have sought out Dutch merchants to work with as he attempted to diversify the products in which he dealt. There may not have been very many other Sephardim or new Christians who

were interested in dealing with this product; hence the low number of integrated and intra-cultural networks. Or Rodrigues Vega may have wanted to monopolize as much of this trade as he could. Lastly, his networks may have simply been sufficient for his needs, such that he had no need to integrate other merchants into them.

The same pattern holds for Rodrigues Vega's participation in the trade in wood. Most of his associates were Dutch, but he was also involved in integrated networks. However, he was engaged only peripherally with other Amsterdam-based Sephardi merchants in the wood trade. In contrast to the sugar and wood trades, however, Rodrigues Vega's endeavors in the grain trade appear to be mostly on his own behalf. (See Graph 12.) There is a slight preference for Dutch partners in this trade over other Sephardim in Amsterdam. And integrated networks hardly figure at all.

Laurens Joosten Baeck, as described previously, was a prominent merchant from the southern Netherlands and was involved in the sugar trade and various other enterprises. He and Rodrigues Vega co-owned a shipment of sixty bales of ginger in 1598.⁵⁰ They also dealt with each other in the East Indies trade. In 1605, Rodrigues Vega conveyed to Baeck his share of 550 pounds Fleming in a voyage which had departed to the East Indies in 1601. This voyage returned with a captured Spanish carrack, the *Santiago*. In exchange, Baeck paid Rodrigues Vega 160% in cash plus a capital augmented with one-third of the capital in pepper that was brought back from this expedition.

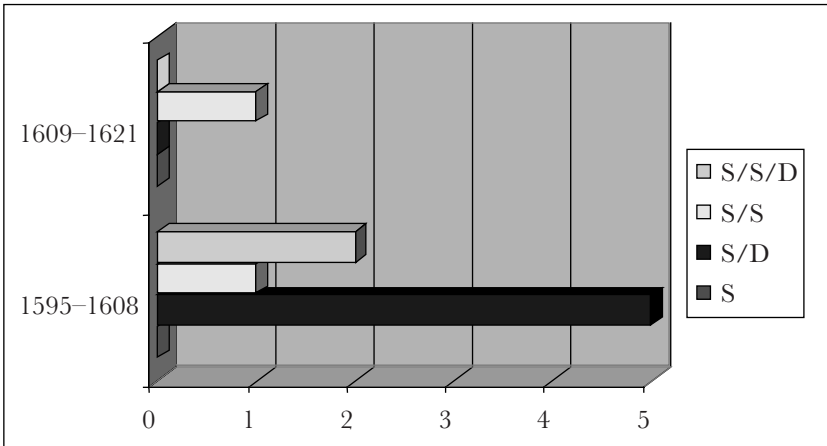
Some early shipments of spices other than pepper, as well as metal and cordage, demonstrate more of these inter-cultural trade relationships. For instance, Manuel Rodrigues Vega, himself born in Antwerp and with numerous family members there, received spices, cord, iron, and chests for sugar from David de Weert, a Flemish merchant in Morocco.⁵¹ The goods had been consigned to Gaspar van Nispen, another Flemish merchant.⁵² Several months later, Rodrigues Vega made a deposition on behalf of van Nispen regarding this shipment.⁵³

⁵⁰ GAA, NA 53/101.

⁵¹ Not much is known about David de Weert. The de Weert family came from Antwerp and married into a family from Emden. See, van Dillen, *He oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 175; and <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

⁵² GAA, NA 53/78v–79. Gaspar van Nispen's brother, Adrian dealt with the Sephardic merchants Duarte and Emanuel Ximenes in Antwerp. For information on the van Nispen family, see Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567–1648)*, 270.

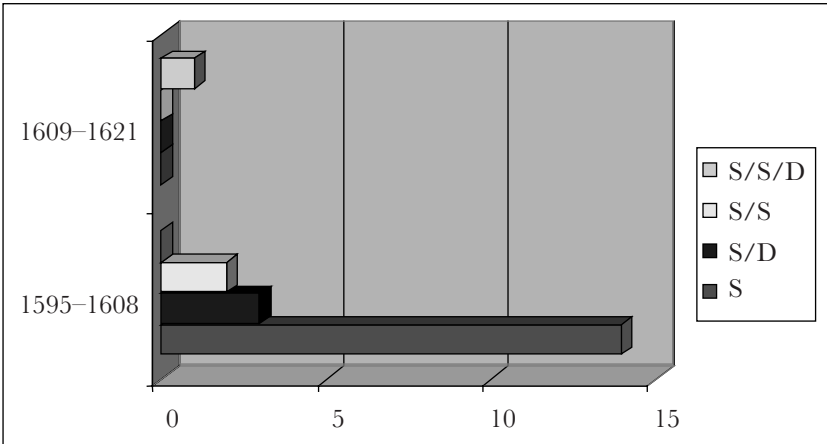
⁵³ GAA, NA 53/153v.



Source: GAA, NA, n=9.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 11: Manoel Rodrigues Vega’s trade in wood by interaction type, 1595–1613.



Source: GAA, NA, n=21.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 12: Manoel Rodrigues Vega’s trade in grain by interaction type, 1595–1613.

Thus far, the examples for Rodrigues Vega's trade associations have focused on the Atlantic and Mediterranean routes. However, despite assertions that the Sephardim in Amsterdam were only sporadically involved in Baltic trade and that they did not have the contacts with Dutch merchants necessary to enter the region, Rodrigues Vega was involved in the trade in Baltic products. In fact, fully 40% of the products in which he traded were traditional bulk goods related to the Baltic trade. Rodrigues Vega was most active in the Baltic trade between 1596 and 1604.⁵⁴ In addition to the powers of attorney granted to merchants in Danzig mentioned previously, Rodrigues Vega also sold woad to Hans de Verne and Hans Staes, who were in Danzig.⁵⁵

Whether it was in Danzig, Morocco, the East Indies, or Amsterdam, Manoel Rodrigues Vega depended on his connections with Dutch associates to take advantage of the opportunities which the expanding Dutch trade offered. He often integrated these Dutch merchants into the networks he had with Sephardi merchants in Amsterdam. This was markedly the case with his trade in sugar, perhaps because he also had many Amsterdam-based Sephardic and new Christian contacts in the sugar trade. It is a trend that is discernible in his dealing with wood, but is barely evident for his involvement in the grain trade, possibly because there were relatively few Sephardim in Amsterdam involved in the grain trade at the time. Thus, it would appear that Rodrigues Vega was flexible and innovative when responding to the commercial realities of the day. He was integrative in terms of product assortment and, clearly, in terms of his networks.

Rodrigues Vega not only had large-scale, frequent, and long-running partnerships with Dutch associates such as Cornelis Snellinck; he also depended on merchants such as Hans de Schot, Laurens Joosten Baeck, David de Weert, Gaspar van Nispen, and others not mentioned in this chapter to conduct his far-reaching enterprises. Hence, Rodrigues Vega's networks seem to have been not only inter-cultural but also based on loose ties with a variety of merchants from a multitude of backgrounds who worked together to maximize their commer-

⁵⁴ GAA NA 55/537v-538, 571-571v; NA 98/28-28v; NA 81; NA 54/142v-143; NA 93/6-7; NA 95/63-63v; NA 86/44-44v; NA 83/105-105v; NA 88; NA 80; NA 81; NA 53/12, 51v-52, 100-101, 103v; NA 75/45-46v.

⁵⁵ SR 8. When de Verne did not pay, the Grisons, in Danzig, who had previously been granted powers of attorney by Rodrigues Vega, were given authorization to pursue the matter on Rodrigues Vega's behalf.

cial interests. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that de Schot, Baeck, de Weert, and van Nispen were all from Antwerp, as was Rodrigues Vega, which could point to a connection based on place of origin which was as important, or more so, than ethno-religious background.

Manoel Carvalho

Manoel Carvalho, was, as Hart has demonstrated (Appendix I), one of the major shippers to the Italian Peninsula until 1620. Traditionally, Italian merchants had been the intermediaries in the trade between north-western Europe on one hand, and the Mediterranean, the Middle and Far East on the other. A new trading pattern began to emerge, however, by the early seventeenth century. The Dutch utilized surplus cargo space and competed with the Genoese and Venetians in the intra-Mediterranean carrying trade.⁵⁶ In the Mediterranean, Dutch vessels enjoyed low operating costs, thereby permitting penetration of the regional carrying trade.⁵⁷ Once Dutch ships had exchanged northern goods such as manufactured items and/or grain for Iberian silver, salt, or wool for sale on the Italian peninsula and with Mediterranean grain (from Sicily, Greece, and Egypt) for sale in Constantinople and the Spanish and Italian cities, the money acquired in Iberia could then be used in the Levant for purchases destined for the Amsterdam market.⁵⁸ This new trading pattern, combined with the onset of the Thirty Years' War, ended the Italian and French commercial hegemony in the Mediterranean.⁵⁹ Carvalho and his Dutch associates were posed to take advantage of the situation.

Carvalho shipped goods from Amsterdam to the Mediterranean, with stopovers in Tunis, Sousa, Alexandria and Venice and/or Livorno,⁶⁰ as well as ships that stopped in Viana in Portugal, and then sailed onwards to Venice.⁶¹ For example, in 1609, Manoel Carvalho freighted a ship from Viana, in Portugal, with sugar and other (unnamed) goods (assumedly salt and, possibly, wool) to Venice.⁶² Chapter III detailed

⁵⁶ De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 380.

⁵⁷ De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 380.

⁵⁸ De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 380.

⁵⁹ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, 97–101.

⁶⁰ GAA, NA 144/151v–153; NA 141/142v; NA 140/234–235.

⁶¹ GAA, NA 116/44v–45v.

⁶² GAA, NA 116/44v–45v; See also NA 116/44vA.

Carvalho's long-lasting and frequent dealings with Albert Schuyt. Although Carvalho did not have other Dutch associates who were equal to Schuyt in importance to him, he utilized Dutch merchants to further his business enterprises. For instance, in 1609, Carvalho and the Dutch merchants Nicolaes Claessen Evenswijn and Gillis Hoffman had come together to charter a ship to sail to Venice. They later changed course and sent the ship to Viana.⁶³

Moreover, he and the Flemish merchant François Wouters (mentioned previously, for the power of attorney he granted to Carvalho) co-owned multiple cargoes of sugar. Most of these cargoes were also co-owned by Albert Schuyt and several other merchants, including Amsterdam-based Sephardim and Dutch merchants. Carvalho and Wouters first came together in 1616 and bought 33 chests of sugar.⁶⁴ The following year, they co-owned 102 chests.⁶⁵

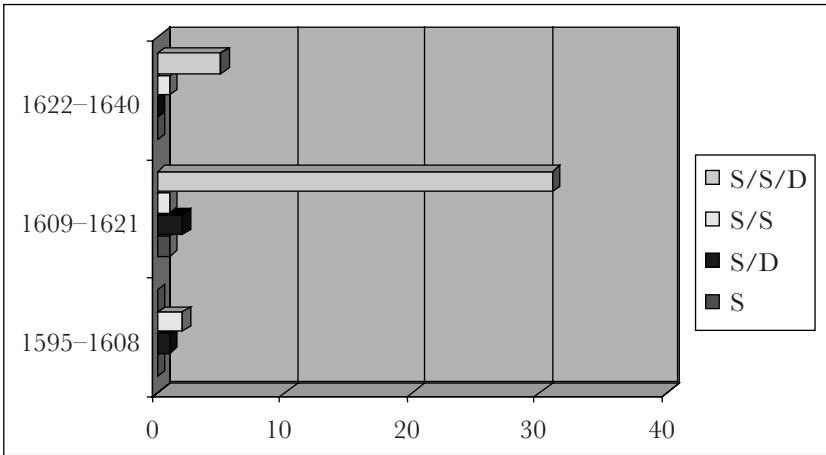
Duarte Esteves de Pina, a Sephardic merchant living in Amsterdam, also participated in these purchases of sugar, along with Albert Schuyt, Henri Thibaut, François Wouters, and Manoel Carvalho. This demonstrates that integrated networks of both Sephardi and Dutch merchants were of great importance to the conduct of Carvalho's trade. As Graph 13 shows, Carvalho had far more interactions involving these integrated networks than he did with purely intra-group trade or dealing with only Dutch associates. For instance, Carvalho, Cornelis Claessen, and Juda Chamis, a Sephardic Jewish merchant in Venice, co-owned the cargo of a ship that sailed from Venice to Tunis in 1621.⁶⁶ This preponderance of integrated interactions could have something to do with the fact that Carvalho was a major trader in sugar. The sugar trade already had a strong Sephardic and new Christian presence. And this same pattern of integrated networks in the sugar trade held true for Manoel Rodrigues Vega. In fact, as Graph 13 shows, the overwhelming majority of Carvalho's interactions which had sugar explicitly named in the contract were done with an integrated network of associates. Carvalho's use of integrated networks may also have resulted from his efforts to expand his networks in the sugar trade.

⁶³ GAA, NA 116/44v; for information on Hoffman, see, <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

⁶⁴ GAA, NA 379/618; NA 387/119.

⁶⁵ GAA, NA 624/15v–16v; NA 380/4.

⁶⁶ GAA, NA 628/351–353.



Source: GAA, NA, n=47.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 13: Manoel Carvalho’s trade in sugar.

A desire to expand his networks via integration was clearly not the case for grain, however, as Graph 14 shows. In fact, it appears that Carvalho traded in grain mostly on his own behalf. This conclusion is borne out by Hart’s analysis of the available documentation (see Appendix I), which found only one listed associate in the examined documentation for any of Carvalho’s Italian shipments. Manoel Rodrigues Vega likewise traded grain almost entirely on his own account. Interestingly, Carvalho’s grain shipments plummeted during the Twelve Years’ Truce. This is possibly due to the fact that, during the Truce years, he could legally focus on the trade in sugar from Brazil—a trade which was difficult to conduct when this Iberian territory and the Dutch Republic were officially at war. Before the Truce, Carvalho might have been working more on the trade in Baltic products—products from lands which were not in conflict with the Dutch Republic—or at least registering the trade in these products. There may have also been a change in the pricing or availability of grain, which could explain this drop in Carvalho’s registered trade in the product.

Though the Mediterranean was Carvalho’s specialty, he also dabbled in the Atlantic trade, especially after the end of the Twelve Years

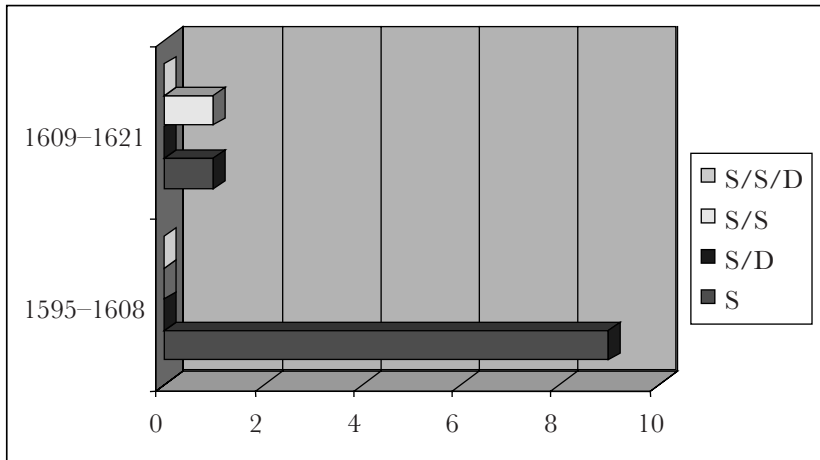
Truce, including part-ownership, with both Amsterdam Sephardic and Dutch partners in 1635, of sugar plantations in Brazil, which, by this time, had fallen under Dutch control.⁶⁷ There is at least one case in which Carvalho participated in the Baltic trade. In 1619 he sold fellow Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants Manuel Alvares de Campos and Duarte Rodrigues Preto shares in a ship insured by Hendrick Thibaut, a Dutch merchant sailing from Moscow to an unnamed point on the Italian Peninsula.⁶⁸

Carvalho often integrated these Dutch merchants into the networks he had with Amsterdam-based Sephardi merchants. This integration was markedly the case with his trade in sugar, perhaps because he also had many Sephardic and new Christian contacts in the sugar trade, and because he may have wanted to expand and strengthen these networks. However, integrated networks did not play a role in his involvement with the grain trade, possibly because there were relatively few Sephardim in Amsterdam involved in the trade at the time, or because he had no need for help. Nevertheless, whether it was in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, or the Baltic trades, not to mention Amsterdam, Manoel Carvalho depended on his connections with Dutch associates to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding Dutch trade. Carvalho was flexible and innovative when responding to the commercial realities of the day. He was integrative in terms of product assortment and, clearly, in terms of his networks.

Carvalho was a merchant with large-scale, frequent, and long-running partnerships with Dutch associates such as Albert Schuyt. He also depended on merchants such Nicolaes Claessen Evenswijn, Gillis Hoffman, Henri Thibaut, François Wouters, and others to conduct his far-reaching enterprises. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Hoffman and Wouters were both from Antwerp. Carvalho had connections to this city via his cousin Maria de Pas, which could point to a connection based on Antwerp, as well as of a coming together of relative newcomers to Amsterdam, which was as important, or more so, than ethno-religious background. Hence, Carvalho's networks seem

⁶⁷ NA 671/198–201. The part owners were: Symon van der Does; Bartholomeo Hoppfer; Christoffel Ayerschettel; Diego Fernandes; Isaack Carvalho; Pedro Alvares; see also GAA NA 672/6–6v and NA 672/5–6.

⁶⁸ GAA, NA 625/376–377.



Source: GAA, NA, n=11.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 14: Manoel Carvalho’s trade in grain by interaction type, 1602–1621.

to have been not only inter-cultural but also based on loose ties with various merchants from disparate backgrounds working together to maximize their commercial interests.

Bento Osorio

Bento Osorio’s settlement in Amsterdam in 1610 signals the promotion of the city’s port into the circuit of major Portuguese merchant bankers.⁶⁹ Osorio, who very rapidly grew to be the wealthiest member of the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam, was the factor of the new Christian de Pinto family in Lisbon. He remained the family’s Amsterdam correspondent until at least the 1640s, when the Pintos, who had meanwhile settled in Antwerp, moved to Holland.⁷⁰ Lopes Pinto was the contractor (*asentista*) for salt, Brazilwood and the supplies of the forts of Tangier and Ceuta, two Portuguese garrison towns

⁶⁹ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 109.

⁷⁰ Swetschinski, “The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” 151.

in north Africa. According to a deed made on November 20, 1618, Osorio had chartered for Lopes Pinto about 200 vessels to ship salt to Holland and the Baltic during the preceding three years.⁷¹

Bento Osorio became the leading merchant among the Portuguese Jews. In the three years from 1616 through 1618, he freighted around 200 ships hauling salt from Setúbal to Flanders, Holland, and the Baltic ports of Riga, Königsberg, and Danzig, shipping in return rye, wheat, wood, and ammunition either directly from the Baltic region (grain) or Norway (wood), or from Amsterdam to Tangier and Ceuta.⁷² Bento Osorio's capital was estimated at 50,000 guilders, making him one of the wealthiest members of the community.⁷³ In 1641, there were only three accounts in the exchange bank covering more than four pages, one of which was Bento Osorio's.⁷⁴

As early as 1610, the year he first arrived in Amsterdam, Osorio was freighting grain to Viana and other locations in Portugal and having ships return with sugar.⁷⁵ These ships sailed to and from Amsterdam. In 1611 and 1612, Osorio shipped goods, most likely grain, to Portugal in exchange for sugar.⁷⁶ He also shipped lead and copper.⁷⁷ Osorio seems to have sold his cargoes of salt and sugar in advance to their arrival. For example, he sold at least three cargoes of salt to the Englishman John Webster, before the ship even left port.⁷⁸ Although, as Graph 15 shows, Osorio appeared to ship salt primarily on his own behalf, interactions such as the ones he had with Webster were not particularly unusual. Indeed, close to 30% of Osorio's dealings in the salt trade involved at least one Dutch associate.

Of the Amsterdam-based Sephardim involved in the Baltic trade, Bento Osorio was the most prolific, and, as his sale of large quantities of salt to the English merchant John Webster shows, this trade relied upon Dutch and other non-Iberian associates. In addition to Dirck Thomassen Glimmer and Cornelis Jut (who were profiled in Chapter III), Osorio had important contacts with Dutch merchants

⁷¹ GAA, NA 109/93; NA 145/137–137v; NA 198/766v–767v.

⁷² GAA, NA 200/63–64.

⁷³ van Dillen, "Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de eerste helft der Zeventiende Eeuw," 16.

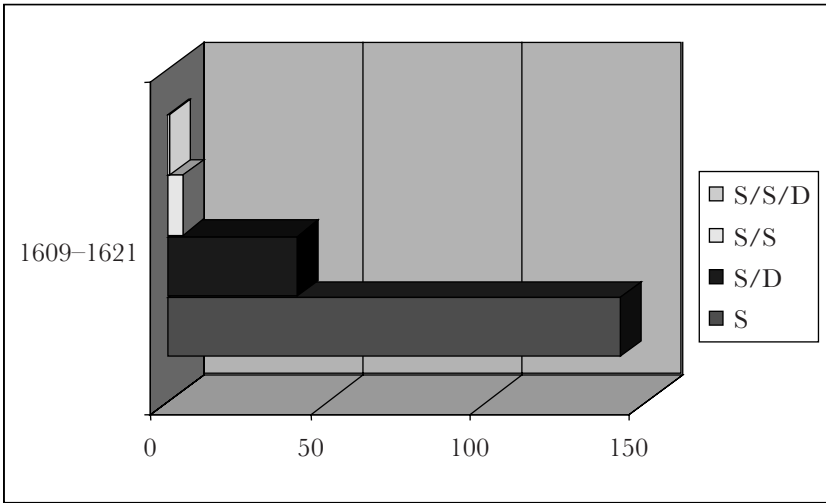
⁷⁴ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam*, 175.

⁷⁵ GAA NA 120/178v–179v.

⁷⁶ GAA NA 124/35–36v; 202–202v.

⁷⁷ GAA NA 127/109v–110; NA 129/21.

⁷⁸ GAA NA 109/93; NA 143/25v–26v.



Source: GAA, NA, n=189.

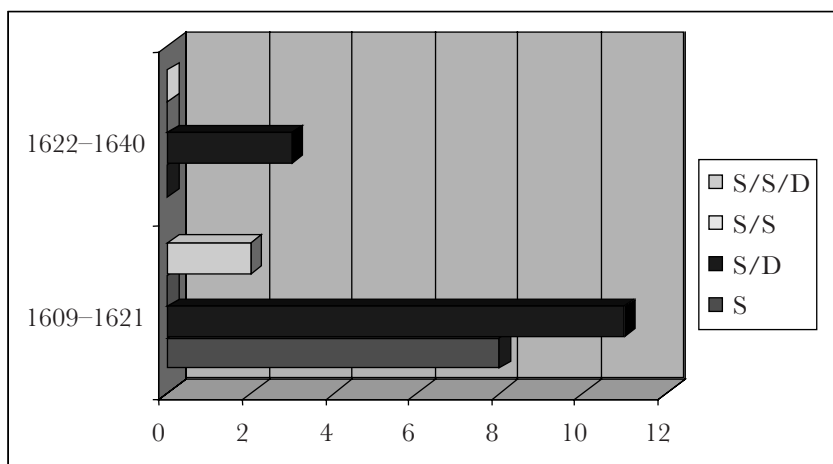
S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch ("integrated") trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi ("intra-cultural") trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch ("inter-cultural") trade; S=Sephardi trade ("trading on his own behalf").

Graph 15: Bento Osorio's trade in salt.

such as Hillebrant Schellinghen, councilor and *ex-echevin* (local official) of Amsterdam, who made an agreement to charter the ship the *Vergulden Aecker* in 1618. This ship was to sail from Heiligenhafen, to load 50 lasts of wheat, and then proceed to Hohwacht or Fehmarn to load another fifty lasts of wheat which were to be unloaded in Tangier of Ceuta.⁷⁹ Graph 16 indicates that this cargo was no exception to the rule that Osorio worked extensively with Dutch associates. In fact, in the grain trade, he worked more with Dutch associates than he is documented as having shipped on his own behalf.

In the grain trade, Osorio utilized inter-cultural and integrated networks. Perhaps he had a greater need for these networks. It could be that he had fewer connections in the grain trade than in the salt trade and, therefore, needed to expand his networks. At any rate, though Osorio was predominately involved in the Baltic trade, he was also engaged in the Atlantic and Mediterranean trades. For instance, in 1623, Bento Osorio, Guillaume Bartolotti, Jan Baptista de Wael, Jan Geurtsz, Thomas and Vincentio Sauli (from Genoa), and François

⁷⁹ GAA, NA 152/65v-66v.



Source: GAA, NA, n=24.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 16: Osorio’s trade in grain.

Boudewijns each owned a part of the ship “St. Pieter,” which sailed from Genoa to Marseille in France.⁸⁰ Interestingly, Bartolotti had strong connections to the city of Antwerp,⁸¹ as did de Wael⁸² and Boudewijns.⁸³ Osorio was married to a member of the Teixeira family, who were prominent new Christian merchants in Antwerp.

Many of Osorio’s Atlantic and Mediterranean shipments that were not directly related to the Baltic salt and grain trades involved sugar. Although Osorio was by no means the sugar merchant that Carvalho was, he did trade in this product. For example, in 1627, Osorio, the Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants Denis Jenes and Manuel Baruch, the Dutch merchants Martin Hurean and Aluise du Bois, and a Venetian merchant known only by his last name, Lucanelli, co-owned 44 cases of sugar and nineteen bags of pepper. These were loaded in the ship *De Eenhoorn*, which was destined for Venice.⁸⁴ Graph 17 illustrates that this shipment was the norm for Osorio. The vast majority

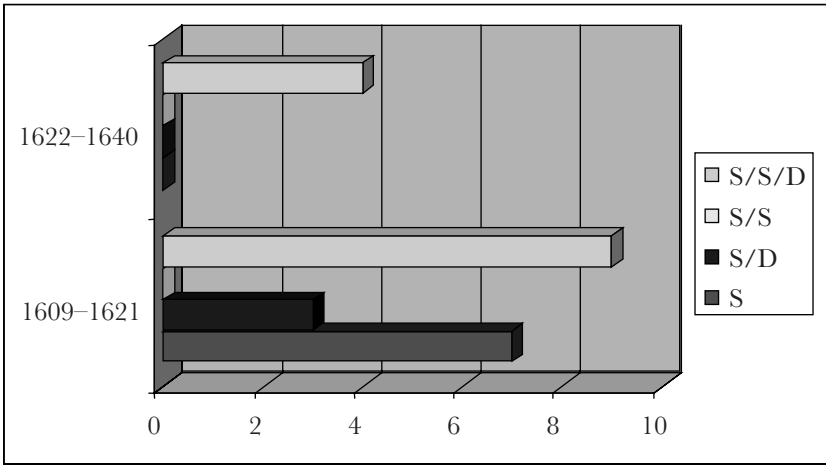
⁸⁰ GAA, NA 350/81v–82v.

⁸¹ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 64.

⁸² <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

⁸³ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 141.

⁸⁴ GAA, NA 634/143v–144.



Source: GAA, NA, n=24.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 17: Osorio’s trade in sugar.

of his sugar shipments involved an integrated network of Amsterdam Sephardi and Dutch merchants. A tendency to integrate networks in the sugar trade was also the case for Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Manoel Carvalho, and this further bolsters the idea that, in the sugar trade, the Sephardim in Amsterdam could use their intra-group networks yet also found it efficacious to integrate Dutch merchants into these networks.

Interestingly, in the wood trade, as Graph 18 shows, these integrated networks were marginal to Osorio’s trade in this product. In fact, there was only one documented case of Osorio using an integrated network when trading in wood. This was also the case for intra-group networks. But there were far more incidences of Osorio working with Dutch associates to deal in wood. For example, in 1619, Osorio and Nicolaes du Gardijn worked together to bring a large shipload of wood to Venice.⁸⁵ Du Gardijn, like so many of Osorio’s non-Sephardic, non-new Christian associates, was from Antwerp.⁸⁶ Perhaps Osorio had

⁸⁵ GAA, NA 156/195–195v.

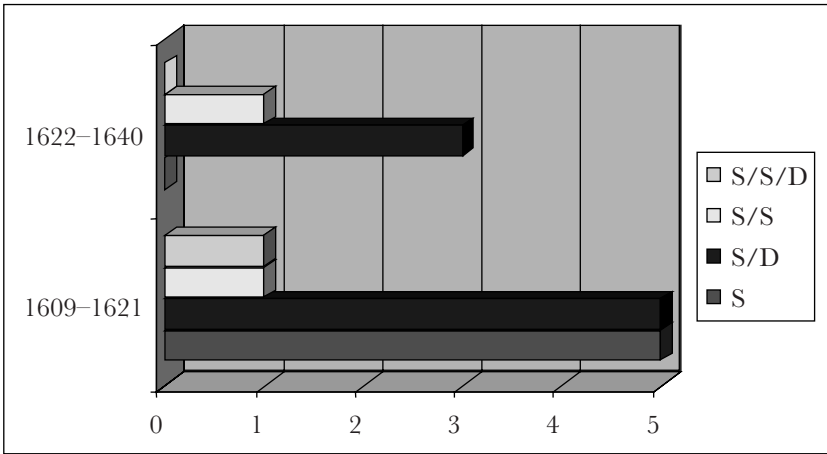
⁸⁶ Gardijn is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1593. He is listed as leaving Amsterdam in 1626. See, <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden> and van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 197.

no need to integrate his networks for the trade in wood with other Sephardim in Amsterdam, as trading on his own or with the help of Dutch and Flemish merchants served his needs. It could also be that there was little interest among Sephardi traders in Amsterdam in the wood trade. Moreover, it is possible that Osorio hoped to keep as much of the wood trade to himself as possible.

Overall, it seems that integrated networks, outside the trade in sugar, were of less importance for Osorio than for either Manoel Rodrigues Vega or Manoel Carvalho. Instead, Osorio depended more on wholly inter-group networks, when he was not listed as the only merchant on the deed. Lagging behind are intra-group networks composed only of other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam.

Bento Osorio utilized his connections with Dutch associates to take advantage of opportunities in the expanding Dutch trade. Osorio was heavily involved in the Baltic trade, and relied on Dutch suppliers and co-shippers. He integrated these Dutch merchants into his networks with Amsterdam Sephardi merchants in the sugar trade, perhaps because he also had many Sephardic and new Christian contacts in that trade. However, this is not the case for the grain, wood, and salt trades, possibly because there were relatively few Sephardim in Amsterdam or elsewhere involved in these Baltic-based bulk trades at the time. It could also be because his networks were already effective.

Osorio depended on merchants such as John Webster, Hillebrant Schellengen, Guillaume Bartolotti, Jan Baptista de Wael, Jan Geurtsz, Thomas and Vincentio Sauli, François Boudewijns, Martin Hurean, Aluise du Bois, Nicolaes du Gardijn, and others not mentioned in this chapter, to conduct his far-reaching enterprises. Hence, Osorio's networks seem to have been not only inter-cultural, but also based on loose ties with various merchants from numerous backgrounds working together to maximize their commercial interests. It is interesting that Bartolotti, de Wael, Boudewijns, and du Gardijn were either from Antwerp or strongly connected to the city. Bento Osorio had very strong connections to Antwerp via his wife, Ester Teixeira, who was a member of one of the most prominent new Christian families in the southern Low Countries. Osorio's in-laws in Antwerp are examples of his connections in Antwerp, and point toward a coming together of relative newcomers to the city of Amsterdam, a coming together which was as important, or more so, than ethno-religious background.



Source: GAA, NA, n=16.

S/S/D=Sephardi, Sephardi, Dutch (“integrated”) trade; S/S=Sephardi, Sephardi (“intra-cultural”) trade; S/D=Sephardi, Dutch (“inter-cultural”) trade; S=Sephardi trade (“trading on his own behalf”).

Graph 18: Osorio’s trade in wood.

Conclusion

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio drew on their experiences as cross-community migrants—in Antwerp, Portugal, France, and Brazil. They took advantage of openings in the market, and utilized contacts they had cultivated from their places of origin, as well as from places they had lived prior to settling in Amsterdam and in Amsterdam itself, all of which helped them establish themselves in Amsterdam’s mercantile community. In some cases, they shipped and traded as factors and agents for others. Bento Osorio acted as the factor for Andrea Lopes Pinto, and Rodrigues Vega occasionally acted as a factor for Gaspar Sanches. And, as shown, they often represented on a temporary or semi-temporary basis, the interests of other merchants, regardless of whether they were Sephardim or new Christians. These connections may have helped give them a start and paved the way for far more lucrative businesses as principals acting on their own account—in shipping and trading, in some cases land or plantation ownership, brokerage, and government contracting. All of this required a great deal of coordination.

Furthermore, the merchants were not necessarily specialists in a particular product; however, as Chapter III outlined, they did tend to

concentrate in either the bulk or the rich trades. Nor were they exclusively involved in a particular route, though they certainly may have been more present in one route over another. Carvalho, for example, was mostly present in the Mediterranean trade, and Osorio was a Baltic trader. However, they heavily supplemented their primary route or product class with other routes and products. Interestingly, the importance of sugar and spices—the products that are traditionally ascribed to the Sephardim and new Christians—is evident, but is less significant than other sources suggest. This is also the case for the merchants from the southern Netherlands.⁸⁷

It seems that merchants went outside their group for shared ownership for trade for three reasons. First, when they were unfamiliar and/or not integrated in/with the market in which they wanted to enter, and in which they might not have any trusted associates. The Baltic trade in grain and wood would be an example of this. Second, when they had sufficient contacts within their group but saw the efficacy of augmenting their networks with new members who could help expand their base of clients, suppliers, and creditors. The sugar trade offers such an example. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were, as Chapter III showed, globally-oriented merchants who dealt with other merchants of the same orientation. There is the very real possibility that, when they looked to each other, they saw another rich merchant in addition to, or even rather than, a Protestant or a Catholic. As described in the work of Harrison C. White, individuals constitute their lives within multiple social networks that intersect irregularly at different nodes, and they present their social identity with some fluidity, in multiple ways, depending on the network in which they are trying to interact with others.⁸⁸ Thus, these merchants may have seen someone from Antwerp rather than just a Sephardi Jew or a Protestant. They may not have perceived ethnic and/or religious difference as definitive, and certainly not as definitive in the economic sphere.

⁸⁷ Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, 148.

⁸⁸ White, *Identity and Control: A Structural Theory of Social Action*; Harrison C. White, "Social Networks Can Resolve Actor Paradoxes in Economics and in Psychology," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 151 (1995): 58–74; and *Markets from Networks: Socioeconomic Models of Production* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Insurance

As the analysis of the trade relationships between Amsterdam-based Sephardic and Dutch merchants partially shows, many Sephardim, especially in the early years of their settlement in Amsterdam, dealt in agricultural products from Iberia, north Africa, the Iberian Atlantic Islands (such as Malaga and the Azores); merchandise to and from the pirate-infested Mediterranean; and sugar, textiles, and other high value products between Brazil, Portugal, the United Provinces, the Italian States, and the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ These routes and products were risky due to ongoing threats from shipwreck, piracy and privateering, war, and possible damage to costly fabrics and relatively easily spoilable foodstuffs. Resumption of war with Spain in 1621, coupled with the depredations of Dunkirk privateers on Dutch shipping, furnished convincing arguments in favor of insurance, especially for merchants such as the Sephardim in Amsterdam who were so intimately involved in Iberian-related trade.

Therefore, it is perhaps not a great surprise that the Sephardim in Amsterdam were very likely to take out insurance on their voyages. When analyzing the “cross-cultural” economic exchanges of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam with Dutch associates in the period between 1595 and 1640, the sheer number of maritime insurance-related contacts found in the notarial records of the Amsterdam Municipal Archives would, at least in part, seem to offer a glimpse into the beginnings of inter-cultural economic interaction in the early modern period. It also shows that they were willing to use what was for Amsterdam an innovative and relatively new commercial product. The historians Henry de Groote and Casado Alonso make convincing arguments that maritime insurance was relatively common in the southern Low Countries, particularly Antwerp and Brugge, by the mid-sixteenth century.⁹⁰ Therefore, it may have been an innovation brought to Amsterdam by cross-community migration. De Groote shows that it was relatively common in Antwerp by the 1560s. In any case, the records concerning maritime insurance show the extent to

⁸⁹ Swetschinski, “The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” note 31, 619–620.

⁹⁰ de Groote, *De zeeassurantie te Antwerpen en te Brugge in de zestiende eeuw*.

which Amsterdam Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associates dealt with each other in a high-risk business environment. More than 100 separate Dutch merchants insured cargoes for close to thirty different Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam as well as for Sephardic and new Christian merchants further afield.

Amsterdam promulgated an ordinance on insurance on January 31, 1598, by which a chamber of assurance (insurance) was established for the registration of policies and for determining any controversies which should arise in regard to them.⁹¹ The Chamber earned the confidence of the business community, and successive revisions of the original ordinance attest to the increasing volume of insurance registered and the greater precision of the chamber's procedure. For example, wrangling over the insurance payment for the ship the *Drie Coningen* became so contentious that the matter was ultimately taken to the Chamber of Assurance in Amsterdam, in 1608, the first known record of this occurring in relation to a Sephardic merchant or merchants.⁹² The case involved a Sephardic merchant, Felipe Dias Vitoria, who had abandoned his 25% share in the ship to the four (possibly more) Dutch insurers "insofar as this . . . exceeds the sum insured."⁹³ Two years later, in 1610, Melchior Mendes took a similar case to the Chamber of Assurance, claiming that an unnamed number of insurers would not pay the 2,950 pounds Fleming that they had insured for the ship *Patientia*.⁹⁴ This same case is found winding its way through the courts two years later, when 22 separate insurers are mentioned by name.⁹⁵

In fact, when examining the records relating to maritime insurance during this time, one gets the impression that fear of fraud was rampant. The insurers seemed to have distrusted the merchants and, indeed, insurance was plagued by all sorts of problems, as detailed above. Such problems included moral hazards: insurance encouraged captains to take risks—for example, to take a more hazardous route or to break away from a convoy to arrive at a market first. To contain moral hazard, insurance was generally obtainable for only a fraction of

⁹¹ Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), 33.

⁹² GAA NA 112/177v–178.

⁹³ GAA NA 112/177–177v.

⁹⁴ GAA NA 122/94v–95; GAA NA 120/190v–191; GAA NA 123/7v.

⁹⁵ GAA NA 126/72–73v.

the value of insured goods.⁹⁶ Outright fraud on the part of the insured was not uncommon either. Examples include deliberate shipwrecking, taking out insurance after receiving secret news of loss, and insuring a ship in multiple places with multiple groups of insurers.⁹⁷ One of the other owners of the *Drie Coningen*, mentioned above, the Sephardic merchant Garcia Gomes, had two insurance policies for his 25% share with Dutch merchants.⁹⁸ Twenty years later, in 1628, there were at least three separate insurance policies on the ship *de Eenhoorn* (*the Unicorn*), sailing to the Azores from Amsterdam.⁹⁹

However, the insurers were hardly free of guilt. Underwriters frequently defaulted. A merchant in financial difficulties could raise large sums by accepting premiums on insurance contracts, which he would then be unable to honor. Perhaps this is why one Dutch insurer, seeking a loophole in his contract, claimed that he was not liable for the losses incurred on a ship apparently lost at sea, because, he argued, according to the policy he had signed, the name of the skipper was Syvert Symonsz., not Symon Syvertsz.¹⁰⁰ Insurance often served as a form of gambling: it was common for parties with no specific interest in a particular ship to take out insurance on it, as a sort of wager. This behavior harmed the reputation of the market, although it could be argued that such behavior in fact performed an economically useful function by facilitating price discovery—the determination of the price for a specific commodity or security at any given time through basic supply and demand factors related to the market. Presumably, such gambling would have been unprofitable unless the premiums quoted were too low. Exact information about losses of ships and cargoes was spotty at best, with hard evidence difficult to come by, thereby making fraud relatively easy to perpetrate.

Insurance was, in general, cobbled together by either the merchant himself, who brought together various insurers, or by potential insurers who sought other merchants with financial wherewithal to underwrite

⁹⁶ Meir Kohn, "Risk Instruments in the Medieval and Early Modern Economy," 12. (February 1999). Dartmouth College, Department of Economics Working Paper No. 99-07.

Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=151871> or DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.10.2139/ssrn.151871.

⁹⁷ Barbour, "Marine risks and insurance in the seventeenth century."

⁹⁸ GAA NA 112/177v-178v.

⁹⁹ GAA NA 397/99.

¹⁰⁰ GAA NA 42/146v.

a cargo. The insurance business took place at the bourse, alongside other financial transactions, and sometimes, as I will detail, on the streets. The party seeking insurance made out the insurance contract and circulated it among potential underwriters until a sufficient number had signed. Often this process was acted out in reverse, especially earlier on in the chronology. Because individual underwriters would commit only to a relatively small amount—usually no more than 200 florins—a dozen or more were often required. In underwriting itself there was no specialization: merchants, ship owners, merchant bankers, deposit bankers, and others underwrote insurance as a sideline to their principal businesses.¹⁰¹ Finally, in 1614, two Amsterdamers formed a partnership for the insurance of ships.¹⁰²

In answer to the question of how a Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam or, most likely, how any merchant in Amsterdam in the early part of the seventeenth century obtained insurance, a deed from 1610 reveals a great deal. A Dutch merchant by the name of Jan Jansz. Smith declared to the notary that, “Manuel Fernandes, Portuguese, came over to him on the *Nieuwe Brug* and asked him whether he would insure goods for a journey to the Canary Islands.”¹⁰³ It seems, then, that merchants approached other merchants, literally, on the streets and tried to create a consortium of insurers for their cargoes. As the example shows, insurance seems to have been a somewhat imprecise proposition during the period defined in this study. Nevertheless, it is an important one, because it the primary way in which Sephardi merchants in Amsterdam and Dutch merchants interacted economically.

If for no other reason than the sheer numbers of participants in the nascent maritime insurance industry who were actively interacting with each other, exchanges between Sephardi and Dutch merchants surrounding maritime insurance should be viewed as having been fertile ground for the blooming of fruitful inter-cultural economic relationships. And, in fact, some Dutch merchants insured cargoes for the same Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam multiple times over the years, thereby demonstrating a degree of familiarity and continuity in their relationships with one another.

¹⁰¹ This paragraph paraphrased from Kohn, “Risk Instruments in the Medieval and Early Modern Economy.”

¹⁰² GAA, NA 611/128.

¹⁰³ GAA NA 196/540–541.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

An example of how vague insurance was, especially in the early days, is the claim made by Manoel Rodrigues Vega for the loss of two ships, *Nossa Senhora de Victoria* and *Nossa Senhora da Luz*, which came from Cochin in India to Lisbon in 1597. The ships were insured by a group of twelve insurers, including Balthazar van Nispen, a prominent Flemish merchant. A Dutch insurer by the name of Melchior van Dortmont responded to Rodrigues Vega in 1597 regarding the loss of the ships that “*to the best of his knowledge* [italics added], he insured them *if* the ships were in the fleet that is due to put into port and that, if this refers to the previous fleet, he does not consider himself obliged to pay.”¹⁰⁴

The year before, in 1596, two Dutch merchants, Beerendt Rotgers and Pieter Gerrits Delff, had insured just one package of baize, a kind of cloth, for Rodrigues Vega. Rodrigues Vega declared to a notary that this package, which had been carried on the ship the *Sinte Pieter* had been lost off the coast of Portugal. As such, Rodrigues Vega requested payment for it.¹⁰⁵ While this seems like a relatively straightforward claim, the situation was slightly more complicated. It seems that Rotgers and Gerrits Delff insured just the package of baize. Five other insurers—Ghijselbrecht Bruyninx, Jan Veen, Jan Cornelisz. Visser, Mathijs Jansz, and Cornelis van Bogaerde—had insured unspecified “goods” for Rodrigues Vega on the same ship.¹⁰⁶ This would seem to confirm the fact that there were not only multiple insurers for voyages, but also insurers for various parts of the cargo.

This was the second time that Jan Veen had insured goods for Rodrigues Vega. (He had also insured the previous voyage.)¹⁰⁷ Cornelis van Bogaede (or Bogaert) insured cargoes not only for Rodrigues Vega, but also for the Sephardic merchant Diogo Nunes Belmonte,

¹⁰⁴ SR 17. In addition to van Nispen and van Dortmont, the other insurers were: Jan Stevensz; Jacques van Hanswijck; Jan Veen; Guillaume Buys; Pieter Gerritsz Delff; Reynier de Loker; Willem van Campen; Dirck Alewijn; Balthazar Jacot; and Daniel Cambier.

¹⁰⁵ SR 4.

¹⁰⁶ SR 21.

¹⁰⁷ Van Veen was, like Rodrigues Vega, a relative newcomer to Amsterdam. He came from Gouda, and became a citizen of Amsterdam in 1594. See, van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 174 and Elias, *de Vroedschap*, 138.

the son-in-law of Bento Osorio.¹⁰⁸ Visser was also a prominent merchant, and had subscribed for 1,000 florins to the Dutch East India Company.¹⁰⁹ In fact, it seems that many prominent merchants were involved in the insurance of ships, at least as a sideline to their main business endeavors. For instance, in 1598, a consortium of nine prominent Dutch and Flemish merchants insured wheat for Rodrigues Vega on the ship *de Rooden Meulen* (*the Red Mill*), which was lost at sea.¹¹⁰

Gaspar Coymans was one of these insurers. The Coymans family were extremely prominent merchants involved in the sugar trade. Members of the family appear sixteen times¹¹¹ in the documentation relating the Sephardim in Amsterdam, including with Carvalho¹¹² and Osorio.¹¹³ They, like Rodrigues Vega, originally came from Antwerp.¹¹⁴ Rodrigues Vega and Gaspar Coymans had built upon their knowledge of each other from Antwerp and from Coymans's insurance of Rodrigues Vega's cargo; they eventually co-owned a cargo of sugar in 1601.¹¹⁵ This cargo was also co-owned by Thibaut de Pickere, another insurer of the 1598 East Indian voyage, and, like Rodrigues Vega and Coymans, originally from Antwerp.¹¹⁶ De Pickere also insured a cargo for the Sephardic merchant Alfonso Dias, who lived in Amsterdam.¹¹⁷ In addition to Coymans and de Pickere, Dirck van Os, yet another recent immigrant from the southern Netherlands, was an insurer for this voyage, and also worked with Carvalho.¹¹⁸ In addition to Carvalho and Rodrigues Vega, van Os dealt with Diego Dias Querido

¹⁰⁸ SR 689. Bogaert was also a subscriber to the Amsterdam chamber of the Dutch East India Company for 600 florins. See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 249.

¹⁰⁹ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 143.

¹¹⁰ SR 28. These insurers were Gaspar Coymans, Thibaut de Pickere, Dirck van Os, Mathijs Jansz van Straeten, Balthazar Jacot, Dirck Alweijn, Gubrecht Wachmans, Jan le Brun, and Contrad Bossereel.

¹¹¹ NA 55/679–679v; NA 52/146v; NA 376/416–417; NA 196/282v–283; NA 62/223; NA 126/72–73v; NA 126/84; NA 126/84–85; NA 197/171v–172; NA 258/82; NA 643/119–119v.

¹¹² SR 168.

¹¹³ GAA, NA 138/72–73; NA 726/103.

¹¹⁴ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>. See also van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 79, 205.

¹¹⁵ SR 91 and GAA, NA 387/115–117v.

¹¹⁶ Thibaut van Pickere is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1584. <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹¹⁷ SR 18. This cargo was also insured with Gaspar and Baltazar Coymans, Hans van Gheel, and Baltazar Jacot, all émigrés from Antwerp.

¹¹⁸ SR 168.

and Antonio Dias Tinoco,¹¹⁹ as well as a plethora of other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam.¹²⁰

Balthazar Jacot joined this group of recent Antwerp immigrants in insuring Rodrigues Vega's voyage. Jacot arrived in Amsterdam in 1584 and became a citizen of the city in 1591.¹²¹ He had also been one of Rodrigues Vega's insurers of the *Nossa Senhora de Victoria* and *Nossa Senhor da Luz* as well as for the *Sinte Pieter*. His issuance of an insurance policy for Rodrigues Vega was not the first time he had worked with Sephardic and new Christian merchants. In 1593, he had belonged to large group of Flemish merchants—including a large number who worked with Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio—who had insured cargoes for the new Christian Ximenes family in Antwerp.¹²² Jacot was the brother-in-law of Dirck Alewijn, another of the insurers on this voyage.¹²³ Gubrecht Wachmans and Jan le Brun, the other insurers of the 1598 voyage, were also newcomers to Amsterdam. Wachmans was born in Antwerp; le Brun was from Cologne.¹²⁴

There are several important points to be garnered from these examples. The first is that Rodrigues Vega clearly believed it was beneficial to insure his cargoes. The records regarding insurance are almost always of policies that had to be claimed due to the loss of a ship and/or its cargo. However, far more policies were most likely issued than survive in the archives. The second important point is that, at least in the case of Rodrigues Vega, insurance seemed to serve as a first stepping-stone or loose tie to more joint business ventures. Casualty risk such as insurance was largely independent of the specific merchant purchasing the insurance. It depended mainly on the route chosen, the time of year, and the political situation. Since an underwriter had no

¹¹⁹ GAA, NA 116/2–2v.

¹²⁰ Duarte Fernandes; Francisco Lopes Homem; Ruy Lopes Homem; Belchior Mendes; Tomas Nunes Pina; Francisco Pinto de Brito; Estevão Cardoso (SR 168); James Lopes da Costa and Francisco Lopes (SR 280); Simão de Mercado (SR 335); Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homem (SR 420); and Pascoal Lopes (SR 708, 716).

¹²¹ See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 196–197 and <http://amsterdam-merchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹²² GAA, NA 45/23. These insurers were: Isaac le Maire; Pieter Lingtens; Arnout Hoffman; Heyndrick de Hase; Jan Poppen; Jan Sijmons. de Jongh; Ghiselbrecht Adriaensz.; Francois van Hove; Hillebrandt den Otter; Hans de Laet Aerts.; Jacques de Velare; Balthazar Jacot; Hans van Ghell; Hans van Vaerle; Jan Basseliers; Hans van Uffe; Roemer Visscher; Antonio Veluti.

¹²³ See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 196–197.

¹²⁴ van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 114, 247.

need for specific information about the insured, this increased the pool of potential underwriters and made it easier to spread risk.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the merchants were able to come into contact with each other loosely and build knowledge and trust of (and in) each other to build foundations for further associations. Lastly, the vast majority of the insurers were recent arrivals to Amsterdam, mostly from Antwerp. It could be that these recent arrivals were more likely to diversify their business enterprises to include insurance than were more established merchants, either because the former were willing to take risks by insuring cargoes that more established merchants were not willing to take, in order to establish themselves commercially in their new environment; or because they had experience in the routes and cargoes to be insured and so had the knowledge to take measured risks. It could also be, in addition to these factors, that Rodrigues Vega and these insurers knew each other already (or knew of each other) via their home city of Antwerp. According to de Groote and Casado, maritime insurance was commonly used in the southern Low Countries by the mid-sixteenth century, and so it could be that it was an innovation brought to Amsterdam by these cross-community migrants.

Manoel Carvalho

In 1615, Manoel Carvalho was ordered to pay the underwriters of a cargo that he claimed had been lost at sea, after evidence came to light that someone known to him, Giovanni Baptista Sigalla, in Venice, had actually sold the same sugar and remitted part of the profits of the sale back to Carvalho in Amsterdam.¹²⁶ Carvalho had claimed the money for goods insured in the ship *de Croon* that had supposedly been captured by French privateers while sailing from Venice to Tunis.¹²⁷ This ship was insured by sixteen merchants, most of whom were Flemish.¹²⁸ One of these insurers, Albert Schuyt, was already well-known to Carvalho.

¹²⁵ Kohn, "Risk Instruments in the Medieval and Early Modern Economy."

¹²⁶ GAA 139/109v–110.

¹²⁷ GAA 254/184v.

¹²⁸ Hendrick Beeckman; Daniel van den Eijnde; Hillebrant den Otter; Francois Boudewijns; Adriaen Andriess., Nicolaes Claesse Everswijn; Barent Sweerts, Jan Jansee Smith, Jacob Jacobsse Bontenos, Pieter Beijens, Pauwels Jansse van Helmont, Dirck Vlack, Jan Battista Bartalotti, Godert Kerckrinck, Willem Pauw; Daniel van Geel.

Although it is not necessary to list the background and connections of every insurer for this voyage—the majority were newcomers and of rising prominence in the mercantile community—two of these insurers should be noted. Daniel van den Eijnde began with insuring cargoes of sugar for Carvalho in 1614, and was a co-owner of several cargoes of this valuable product from 1616–1620.¹²⁹ Van den Eijnde, like so many of the other insurers, was from the southern Netherlands—Mechelen, outside of Antwerp—and had also lived in La Rochelle in France in 1594. He is first mentioned in Amsterdam in 1608, around the same time that Carvalho arrived in the city (1610).¹³⁰ Another prominent insurer was Hildebrand den Otter, who worked extensively with Bento Osorio and with Carvalho. In fact, den Otter had bought from Carvalho one half of a share in the ship the *Engel Gabriel* for a price of 525 pounds Fleming in 1610. Den Otter paid one half in cash and the rest six months later.¹³¹ There is, unfortunately, little else known about den Otter. He is listed as a merchant of Amsterdam, and was the son of Floris den Otter.¹³² He often acted as insurer for other Sephardim in Amsterdam, and was also repeatedly chosen to act as arbiter in their disputes.

What is interesting in the aforementioned insurance policy is that Carvalho essentially cheated his insurers, who then brought him to court over the incident. Yet, despite Carvalho defrauding his insurers on this voyage, they continued to do business together.¹³³ Carvalho and Schuyt's association began in 1614, the year before news of Carvalho's deception came to light. Nevertheless, these two merchants continued trading together until 1632. Thus, such cheating was so much the norm that it not only did not deter further associations but was expected, or else Schuyt was in on the fraud or the merchants had further reasons to continue trading together. This was also the case for several other insurers of the ill-fated voyage in 1614, such as

¹²⁹ NA 387/119; NA 383/511; NA 254/184v.

¹³⁰ <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹³¹ GAA, NA 374/116.

¹³² Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam*, 119.

¹³³ I have not found archival evidence that Carvalho paid any sort of compensation to the defrauded insurers. That does not mean, however, that there was no compensation made. In fact, that Carvalho and the insurers continued to do business together would seem to suggest that Carvalho made some sort of reparations.

Bartolotti, who insured another voyage for Carvalho in 1616¹³⁴ and again in 1621.¹³⁵

What can we conclude from Carvalho's associations with his insurers? First, that Manoel Carvalho, like Manoel Rodrigues Vega, clearly believed it to be beneficial to insure his cargoes. Second, that insurance could serve as a sort of business entrée for Carvalho and Dutch merchants to loosely come into contact with one another. Perhaps a bit like the case of Rodrigues Vega, for Carvalho, insurance seemed to serve as a loose tie and a first stepping-stone to more joint business ventures. Moreover, the fact that these first contacts did not go exceptionally well—indeed, Carvalho defrauded his insurers—did not bar further associations in the realm of insurance, co-ownership of cargoes, and other sorts of interactions. It could be that fraud was expected or because these merchants were willing to take the risk of continuing to work with one another. Since, like Carvalho, the vast majority of the insurers were recent arrivals to Amsterdam, mostly from Antwerp, it could be that these recent arrivals were more likely to diversify their business enterprises to include insurance than were more established merchants. Similarly, it may have been that Rodrigues Vega and these insurers knew each other already (or knew of each other) via their home city of Antwerp and were thus willing to risk continued interactions. Whatever the case, Carvalho's shady dealings illustrate the point that business associates of all stripes used each other as much as they trusted each other. The feelings were likely not always mutually exclusive.

Bento Osorio

Bento Osorio had multiple dealings with the Insurance Chamber, which, as mentioned previously, had been established for the registration of policies and for determining any controversies which might arise in regard to them. For instance, in 1622, Osorio reached an agreement with Jasper van Diemen and Jan Arentsz van Naerden, merchants in Amsterdam, to whom he owed money. This money was to come from an insurance policy issued by one Jan Jansz Smit, if the Insurance Chamber ruled that Smit did, in fact, owe the money

¹³⁴ GAA, NA 387/119.

¹³⁵ GAA, NA 165/203–204.

to Osorio.¹³⁶ If the Insurance Chamber ruled against Osorio, then van Diemen and Arentsz van Naerden would have arranged another payment scheme.

Five years later, in 1627, another case involving Osorio came before the Insurance Chamber. A group of prominent merchants, including Jan Stassart, Albert Schuyt, Godert Kerckringh, Adriaen Andriesz, Claes Andriesz, Jan Smit, Barent Sweerts, and Luca Claesz, demanded that Osorio comply with the ruling of the Chamber.¹³⁷ These insurers had been ordered to pay a surety on the insurance policy they had offered to Osorio for a shipment of wheat. The interest was 12% annually on the amount of the surety. However, the judicial authorities eventually decided that Osorio should return the surety. The Chamber took up another case involving Osorio in 1632. In this case, Osorio and a Dutch merchant from Amsterdam, Joost Henrix Jansz, claimed that Isack Coymans, of the prominent family of Antwerp émigrés, owed them money on three insurance policies that had been issued for a voyage from Alicante to Venice on the galleon "*Oblistro*."¹³⁸

These cases show how important the Chamber of Insurance had become by the 1620s. It seems to have begun to routinely handle disputes between merchants and their insurers. As the seventeenth century progressed, the Chamber of Assurance gradually began to set premium rates in Amsterdam. Precise information about premiums is difficult to come by, but it is evident from these cases involving Osorio that insurance policies had begun to be used as a sort of currency for payment of other debts. The example above is from 1622, but Osorio had been involved in this sort of transaction as early as 1618. In that year, a fellow Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam, Duarte Fernandes, conveyed to Osorio an unnamed number of insurance policies, assumedly in payment for money owed to Osorio.¹³⁹

Conveying insurance policies to another merchant was not the only way to use insurance as a form of payment and credit. Osorio also used an older type of insurance called "bottomry". Bottomry bonds were loans to skippers or ship owners on the security of a vessel and

¹³⁶ GAA, NA 628/447–449.

¹³⁷ Stassart (also spelled Stassaert) came from Antwerp and first appears in the records of Amsterdam in 1605. <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden>.

¹³⁸ GAA, NA 726/103.

¹³⁹ GAA, NA 611/421.

its cargo at relatively high interest rates, but at the risk that, if the ship was lost, the bond holder lost all his money. As historian Milja van Tielhof writes, “Bottomry was a combination of a short-term loan and insurance of the ship alone or the goods alone, or a combination of the two, on which the loan was secured. The ship-owner(s) borrowed a sum of money for the duration of the voyage, a sum which they had only to pay back were the ship and/or goods to arrive undamaged.”¹⁴⁰ If the ship did not arrive safely, the creditors lost their money. However, if the ship did arrive safely, the ship owners had to pay back not only the sum they had borrowed, but also the accrued interests. Usually, these sums had to be repaid shortly after the arrival of the ship. If the loans remained unpaid, the ship could be seized. This form of insurance was common in shipping in the Baltic, though its popularity seems to have declined after the sixteenth century.¹⁴¹

Despite this declining popularity, Osorio frequently offered bottomry loans to Dutch captains. For instance, Osorio lent Gerrit Jansen, captain of the *Nachtegaal* 500 guilders “on bottomry conditions.” This bottomry loan was somewhat more complicated than the standard bottomry loan, as it was to be used “to equip his 3/8th shares in the said ship.” The sum with a premium of 16% was to be deducted from the rate for shipping freight on the ship that Osorio would have to pay.¹⁴² Osorio also offered a bottomry loan to Captain Jelle Poppes for a journey from Trondheim in Norway to Lisbon, Tangiers or Ceuta in North Africa, back to Portugal for a stop in Sétubal, with a return to Amsterdam.¹⁴³

As these examples show, Osorio, like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, clearly felt it beneficial to insure his cargoes. In contrast to Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, though, Osorio seems to have used insurance policies as a sort of currency that could be exchanged in payment for other debts. This could be a reflection of the fact that the insurance market had developed in Amsterdam by the time Osorio became active as a merchant. This idea is bolstered by the prominence

¹⁴⁰ van Tielhof, *The ‘Mother of all Trades,’* 224.

¹⁴¹ Many of the “bodemerij” contracts found in the Amsterdam notarial archives for the period 1601–1625 are listed in an appendix in Winkelman, ed., *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Oostzeehandel*.

¹⁴² SR 1577.

¹⁴³ GAA, NA 109/152v–153; NA 151/209v; NA 625/114–116.

of the Amsterdam Insurance Chamber in the deeds relating to Osorio. It seems that this institution had begun to play an important role for merchants in Amsterdam in legislating rates and in settling disputes.

Another important difference between Osorio and the other two merchants is that Osorio was a lender for bottomry loans to Dutch captains. This was not a function that either Rodrigues Vega or Carvalho are documented as having fulfilled. It could be that Osorio was wealthy enough—and he was wealthier than either Rodrigues Vega or Carvalho—to sustain this kind of risk. It could also be that Osorio had the connections in the Baltic trade—the region where bottomry was still a popular form of insurance. Though Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho certainly dealt in Baltic products and had a presence in the Baltic trade, they may not have been as integrated into this trade as was Osorio. Therefore, they most likely did not have adequate personal knowledge about either the captains or the routes to risk lending on bottomry conditions.

Conclusion

Though maritime insurance was still relatively uncommon among the general population of merchants in Amsterdam, it was used frequently by Sephardic merchants in the city. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were actively engaged in using maritime insurance. The practice was more common in the southern Low Countries, and, therefore, may have been an innovation brought by these cross-community migrants to Amsterdam. For Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, maritime insurance served as an important loose economic tie and, thereby, as a stepping stone for the development of inter-cultural trade relations. Merchants could first become acquainted with one another through the relatively low risk venture of issuing/taking out insurance. If the enterprise went well, or even if, as happened occasionally, it did not, the merchants could continue working together on other sorts of ventures in the future. Moreover, the majority of the insurers were, like the Sephardim, recent immigrants to Amsterdam. Therefore, it is likely that they knew each other or had connections with one another from other places, particularly Antwerp, to help propel their associations. In addition, it could be that these newcomers were willing to take greater risks, such as insuring cargoes on long-distance and often dangerous voyages. These were risks that

the more established Amsterdam merchants were perhaps not willing to take, especially for newcomers such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio.

As time went on, insurance policies began to be used as a sort of currency among merchants. Merchants also began to take recourse to the Amsterdam Insurance Chamber to settle difficulties and disputes that arose from the more frequent use of insurance. Lastly, Osorio maximized his connections in the Baltic trade to offer highly profitable bottomry loans to captains. Overall, the maritime insurance “industry” in Amsterdam offers an important insight into how these merchants worked. Cargoes were insured to a multitude of locations in the expanding world of commerce and trade. Insurance itself, while not new, was being used on a scale heretofore unheard of. Merchants seized the opportunity presented by the acquisition of maritime insurance to reduce their risks. Furthermore, they used the purchase of maritime insurance as a way to connect to merchants from differing backgrounds in a relatively loose way. Not only were these associations mostly inter-cultural; they also show how having multiple associates from various backgrounds for different endeavors, all connected loosely via the issuance of insurance policies, could create efficiencies and innovations in business practices.

Credit

Commercial credit was of vital importance during the early modern period. Transferring funds, usually via a bill of exchange, and granting and receiving short and long-term credit were necessary for the conduct of trade. As the economy became more complex, credit standing and creditworthiness became increasingly important for the establishment and continuance of commercial ties, especially when such complexity developed in a relatively short time, as was the case in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century.¹⁴⁴ But granting and receiving credit had an importance for merchants that extended far beyond its economic necessity. As historian Craig Muldrew writes, “to be a creditor in an economic sense in the seventeenth century still had a strong social and ethical meaning. Most credit was extended between individual

¹⁴⁴ McCusker and Morgan, “Introduction.”

emotional agents, and it meant that you were willing to trust someone to pay you in the future. Similarly, to have credit in a community meant that you could be trusted to pay back your debts.”¹⁴⁵ In short, extending credit to someone communicated a public judgment about that person to other members of the community. As Muldrew notes, “The early modern economy was a system of cultural, as well as material, exchanges in which the central mediating factor was credit or trust.”¹⁴⁶ As merchants well knew, if an associate defaulted on his debt it could force an entire network into bankruptcy. Thus, the extension of credit, usually in the forms of bills of exchange but also as direct loans, between Sephardic and Dutch merchants is an important factor in analyzing these inter-cultural relationships.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega

In 1595, most likely just after Rodrigues Vega had arrived in Amsterdam, he asked a notary to go to the house of the Dutch merchant Hans de Vriese to ask him to honor a bill of exchange. This bill of exchange had been first drawn in Middelburg about two months before. It went through Herman Claesz, who passed it on to Baeck, who signed it over to Rodrigues Vega.¹⁴⁷ The fact that Baeck signed it over to Rodrigues Vega means that Baeck owed Rodrigues Vega some amount of money, either for goods or services. This interaction is, then, evidence of their early economic interactions.

Two years later, in 1597, Baeck was among a group of merchants from Antwerp, along with Gaspar van Nispen and his brothers Baltazar and Adriaen, who passed bills of exchange to Rodrigues Vega in 1597.¹⁴⁸ These bills of exchange also came through Middelburg. Adriaen van Nispen had dealt with Rodrigues Vega through bills of exchange issued in Antwerp, as an example from 1598 demonstrates.¹⁴⁹ Rodrigues Vega was not the only Sephardic merchant with whom Gaspar van Nispen dealt during this time. Antonio Rodrigues de Melo also received a bill of exchange drawn by him in 1600.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 3.

¹⁴⁶ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ SR 1.

¹⁴⁸ GAA, NA 76/144v–146.

¹⁴⁹ GAA, NA 53/34v–35.

¹⁵⁰ GAA, NA 87/43–44.

Nor were these Dutch merchants Rodrigues Vega's only source of credit in the form of bills of exchange. Hans de Baets appears at least five times as an associate of Manoel Rodrigues Vega in payment of debts and the extension of credit via bills of exchange.¹⁵¹ These interactions begin in 1604 and involved a series of bills of exchange drawn in London.¹⁵² Unlike the bills of exchange involving van Os, Baeck, and the van Nispens, the bills of exchange involving de Baets concerned other Sephardic merchants, and did not mention Dutch merchants.¹⁵³ De Baets was, incidentally, involved with other Sephardic merchants besides Rodrigues Vega via bills of exchange. In 1608, he passed several such bills to Antonio Rodrigues and Fernão Duarte de Moura,¹⁵⁴ as well as to De Mouras, Gaspar Nunes, and Henrique Alvares.¹⁵⁵

Another important creditor of Rodrigues Vega's was Jan Gerritsz Parijs.¹⁵⁶ They were involved in an elaborate deal in 1600, in which Parijs bought bonds for Rodrigues Vega on credit.¹⁵⁷ Parijs was, like van Os and Baeck, involved in Rodrigues Vega's dealings with the Admiral of Aragon. As part of this complicated financing scheme, Parijs invested some of Rodrigues Vega's money in his name for voyages to the East Indies.¹⁵⁸ After this venture, Parijs was part of a chain of merchants including Rodrigues Vega, João Castelli, and the Dutch merchants Gillis Dodeur and Jeronimus Goossens.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ According to van Dillen, the family was of South Netherlands origin. van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 150. de Baets began to appear in the Amsterdam records between 1594 and 1613. He was married in 1599 to Cathelina Courtens. Hans de Baets had an account of three pages in 1609 at the Exchange Bank, an account of five pages in 1611, which shrunk to four pages in 1612, before doubling to ten pages in 1615, which would seem to indicate that de Baets was doing well as a merchant. In the "Grootboek" of 1620, the account is eight pages long. His widow and children were taxed the sum of 100 guilders in 1631 and, therefore, had a fortune of f 20,000.

¹⁵² SR 156, 163, 164, 179, 180.

¹⁵³ These merchants were: João Castelli, Rodrigues Vega's brother, Gabriel Fernandes, and Simão de Mercado.

¹⁵⁴ SR 298.

¹⁵⁵ SR 302.

¹⁵⁶ Little is known of Parijs. He was not from Amsterdam, but had lived in Amsterdam since 1582. In Amsterdam, he lived on the OZ Achterburgwal. He was a wine dealer and inscribed himself in the VOC for f 3,600. It is possible that he was the father of Jan Gerritz., another associate of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. See van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 159.

¹⁵⁷ SR 70.

¹⁵⁸ SR 132.

¹⁵⁹ SR 129.

Thus, for Rodrigues Vega it would seem that these loose ties with merchants with whom he had interactions once or only occasionally for the supply of credit were a necessary addition to his network. The credit these merchants provided helped Rodrigues Vega meet his obligations. The bills of exchange that went back and forth between merchants were a critical link in the business chain, and illustrate the importance of loose or weak ties to global merchants.

Manoel Carvalho

Manoel Carvalho was also involved in the extension of credit via bills of exchange. In 1610, he received a bill of exchange from a Dutch merchant, Jan van Dashorst, drawn in Rotterdam.¹⁶⁰ He was also a creditor for the Dutch merchant Hans van den Berg, who owed Carvalho over 100 pounds Fleming in 1604.¹⁶¹ Van den Berg was not the only Dutch merchant who used Carvalho as a source of credit. Carvalho was among a group of Dutch merchants including Jasper Grevenraet, Franck Jansz, Pauwels Sterlincx and Adam Nijs, who had lent money to Jacques van Gaelen in 1608.¹⁶²

Bento Osorio

Osorio also provided credit to Dutch merchants. He was, along with merchants such as Antonio van Surck Jasperszoon and François Wouters, owed money by Reijnier Scholier.¹⁶³ When the complicated case involving this money was resolved, part of the money Scholier owed was given to Osorio's old associate Hillebrand den Otter. In addition to this sort of credit, Osorio appears frequently in bills of exchange passing through Amsterdam.

For instance, 2,500 Venetian ducats were passed via a bill of exchange from Venice to Osorio through the Dutch merchant Andries Hendricxsz de Beyser. This money was sent by Jacomo and Thomas van Casteren, Dutch merchants in Venice.¹⁶⁴ Venice seems to have been an important source of credit for Osorio, and in 1623 he received

¹⁶⁰ SR 114.

¹⁶¹ SR 168.

¹⁶² SR 203.

¹⁶³ GAA, NA 138/72-73.

¹⁶⁴ GAA, NA 156/59v-60.

more bills of exchange from this city. This time, the bills passed through an integrated network of merchants which included the Dutch merchants Isaac Piollie as well as Pieter, Hendrick, and Guillaume van de Putte, and the Sephardic merchants (known by their last names) Gomes and Ramires.¹⁶⁵

Integrated credit networks were important for Osorio. Such a bill of exchange came from Antwerp and included a Sephardic merchant, Martin Sanches, in Amsterdam and a Dutch (or possibly French) merchant, Pierre de Point, in 1616.¹⁶⁶ The following year, Antwerp was again the origin of such a bill of exchange which included the Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants, Manoel and Diogo Fernandes and Francisco and Alvaro Carillo, as well as the Dutch merchant Jan van der Sterren.¹⁶⁷ The same sort of network was in play in 1621, when Osorio, Francisco Godines, and Jan de la Faille were part of a credit network that included the Dutch merchants Willem van Gele, Reijnier de Fijneman, and Henry Herlele, who came from Antwerp.¹⁶⁸

As these examples drawn from the economic lives of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio show, merchants were perpetually involved in webs of credit that denoted economic and social dependency. These interactions linked merchants and their associates into integrated networks connected by reciprocal bonds of trust and obligation. As networks grew, and as transactions began to occur at an intensified rate over ever longer distances, it became much less likely that other merchants would have personal knowledge of another merchant's reliability. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, however, could draw upon their knowledge of Sephardi and Dutch merchants, and upon their loose ties with multiple merchants, many of whom they knew via various connections in Antwerp. The trust involved in the extension of credit became, as Muldrew writes, "a sort of knowledge which could be communicated through chains of friends and business associates, and became the basis of deciding who could then be added to structural chains of obligation."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ GAA, NA 170/61.

¹⁶⁶ GAA, NA 145/92v-93.

¹⁶⁷ GAA, NA 150/168-168v.

¹⁶⁸ GAA, NA 628/302-304.

¹⁶⁹ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 152.

Conclusion

Every merchants had to choose between protecting his interests and reducing his risks, on one hand, and expanding his business (which can also be regarded as a sort of risk reduction). The merchants who wanted to expand their business had to make new contacts and deal with the impact of political events on their business enterprises. Cooperation tended to be most intensive when it concerned trade to far-flung places. Nevertheless, cooperation of all sorts was of great importance to Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio. They cooperated with each other and with other Amsterdam Sephardim, but also with Dutch and Flemish merchants. Chapter III highlighted some of the more intensive associations. However, even the less frequent associations between Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were imperative to their success as merchants.

The majority of merchants, Amsterdam Sephardim and Dutch alike, were not, of course, global merchants. However, those who were large-scale, globally oriented merchants often found each other, as fellow newcomers to Amsterdam, and exploited the opportunities available to them. They granted each other rights of proxy and issued powers of attorney that allowed an associate to act on another's behalf in a legally binding way. The issuance of such permission implied a great deal trust. That these important authorizations were exchanged so freely between merchants of differing backgrounds is an important indication of the high level of confidence between Sephardi merchants in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio also drew on the experiences they had gained as cross-community migrants while living outside the Dutch Republic, in Antwerp, Portugal, France, and Brazil. They took advantage of openings in the market, and utilized contacts they had cultivated from their places of origin, from other places they had lived prior to settling in Amsterdam, and from Amsterdam itself, all of which helped them make a place for themselves in Amsterdam's mercantile community. We should not necessarily conclude that those who entered into the "newer" or colonial trades or who integrated their trade routes/markets and products did so more readily than did the established elite merely because they had fewer alternatives. They were, perhaps, better prepared than the old elite to properly develop the existing possibilities due to their prior knowledge of, and experience, in these routes.

One such possibility was maritime insurance. It was used frequently by the Sephardic merchants Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, which stands to reason given their propensity for long-distance trade, as well as the fact that maritime insurance was commonly used in the southern Low Countries. In some cases, maritime insurance served as an important stepping stone for the development of inter-cultural trade relations. Moreover, the majority of insurers were recent immigrants to Amsterdam, as were the Sephardim in this city. Therefore, it is likely that, as recent immigrants, they already had loose ties to one another, and knew each other or had connections with one another from other places, particularly Antwerp. These loose ties helped to propel the beginnings of their associations. In addition, it could be that these newcomers were willing to take greater risks, such as insuring cargoes on long-distance and often dangerous voyages, and that they were generally more innovative. Especially for newcomers such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, these were risks that more established Amsterdam merchants may not have been willing to take.

These merchants would extend credit, conduct trade, and have their cargoes insured with merchants they only dealt with once or twice. It seems that these occasional associations were important additions to their primary inter-cultural consortiums, as well as to their intra-group trade. They used these associations to gain access to new markets and to supplement their networks, by attaching themselves to, and integrating themselves into, new networks. This also served as a risk reduction strategy. This would seem to show that loose ties were an effective tool for the conduct of trade.

There were practical reasons for doing business with a given merchant regardless of his religion or background. One of these reasons is that familiarity based on having lived in another city and working with shared acquaintances could and often did trump shared ethnicity as a determining factor for choosing a business associate. Nevertheless, Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam did not marry their children, by and large, to their Dutch associates or their children. Nor, as far as I can tell from the archival documentation, did they make Dutch merchants their heirs. Unfortunately, I have not yet found a way to gauge if the Amsterdam Sephardim and their Dutch associates socialized together or became friends. Thus, there appears to have been an ever-present tension between purely social networks and economic networks.

As this chapter has shown, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio had multiple interactions with numerous merchants from myriad backgrounds, and these interactions spanned all sorts of mercantile behavior. These ties with a number of different merchants helped them to work in regions where they might not have otherwise been able to effectively operate. Such ties also aided in spreading risks, such as by co-owning ships and cargoes, and by representing each other when issues needed to be resolved in distant places. Thus, loose ties appear to have helped these merchants succeed.

CHAPTER SIX

THE 1602 SUGAR CONFISCATION—A CASE STUDY IN INTER-CULTURAL LOBBYING AND INFLUENCE

Thus far, I have discussed the Sephardim in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates as though they existed in a vacuum that only included their trade relations. However, this is hardly a complete picture. The Portuguese monarchs had promulgated numerous resolutions regarding the new Christians and their freedom (or lack thereof) to travel outside of Portugal.¹ Furthermore, there had been a great deal of tension between the Habsburg monarchy and the Dutch Republic regarding the Sephardim in Amsterdam. For example, Habsburg concerns with the Sephardim in Amsterdam began as early as 1605 when the so-called general pardon was issued. This edict eased travel restrictions on new Christians traveling outside Iberia. This Habsburg concern only intensified during the 'Twelve Years' Truce, and the Amsterdam Sephardim became a point of contention between the Spanish Crown and the Dutch Republic.

The Habsburgs viewed the Sephardim in Amsterdam as a key factor in the Dutch intra-European carrying trade, as well as contributing to Dutch prosperity and colonial expansion.² As these examples show, much of this international wrangling regarded trade, and the Habsburgs tried to intervene in Dutch domestic politics in order to stymie the growth of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam (and in other cities) and their role in trade in the Dutch Republic. For instance, the King considered trying to "inflame the resentment and ill-feeling ordinary Christians felt against the Jews in the Netherlands" in order to have them expelled.³ Even more direct was Philip III's minister in

¹ There were at least six promulgations preventing New Christians from leaving Portugal, with subsequent revocations. These were in 1532, 1535, 1547, 1567, 1573, 1580 and 1610. See J. Lúcio de Azevedo, *História dos Cristãos-Novos Portugueses* (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1989), 3rd edition, 497–499.

² Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609–1660," *Studia Rosenthaliana* (1978): 1–61, 1–2.

³ Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609–1660," in *Diasporas within a Diaspora*, 185–244, 193.

Brussels, the Marqués del Guadaleste, who tried “by secret means” to intervene in the debate in Amsterdam about the privileges and status of the Jews, and worked to strengthen the opposition of Calvinist clergy to the construction of a synagogue.⁴

For the Sephardim in Amsterdam, trade was always affected by political events. In fact, some scholars have argued that various political events converged to produce the economic rise of the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic.⁵ However, the Sephardim in Amsterdam were hardly passive victims of prevailing political winds, either in Iberia or in the Dutch Republic. Existing scholarship often minimizes the significant political role of trade networks composed of differing religious and ethnic groups such as the Amsterdam-based Sephardim and their Dutch associates. Historiographies based on narratives of national achievement reluctantly acknowledge non-national influences such as trade networks composed of various groups, in their political processes.⁶ An exception to this prevailing historiography is the work of historians Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Gita Sharampal-Frick and Jos Gommans, who point out that the Chinese and Iranian diasporas demonstrate how foreign merchants become intensively engaged in indigenous public administration. These historians also assert that the “cross-cultural brokers’” detachment from their “host” societies should not be exaggerated.⁷ Along these same lines, the historian Ina Baghdiantz McCabe points out that such merchants “were not merely cross-cultural brokers, they were building considerable political and economic spheres of influence for their own interests.”⁸

⁴ Israel, “Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609–1660,” in *Diasporas within a Diaspora*, 196.

⁵ Jonathan I. Israel, “The Economic Contribution of Dutch Sephardi Jewry to Holland’s Golden Age, 1595–1713,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 96 (1983): 505–535.

⁶ Israel, “Diasporas Jewish and non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires,” 8.

⁷ Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Gita Dharampal-Frick, and Jos Gommans, “Spatial and Temporal Continuities of Merchant Networks in South Asia and the Indian Ocean (1500–2000),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50, 2–3 (2007): 91–105, 94; See also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Iranians Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51, 2 (1992): 340–363 and his *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World*; and K. Pomeranz and S. Topik, *The World that Trade Created* (New York, London: ME Sharpe, 1999).

⁸ McCabe, “Introduction,” xix. See also, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, “Trading Diaspora, State Building and the Idea of National Interest,” in *Views from the Edge: Essays in Honor of Richard W. Bulliet* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 18–37.

McCabe's formulation certainly held true for the Sephardim in Amsterdam. They actively sought to influence political decision-making in their favor. The political influence of certain Sephardim in the Dutch Republic was well-known, both during and beyond the time-frame of this book. For instance, Jeronimo Nunes da Costa was the Agent of the Portuguese King in The Hague.⁹ His father, Duarte Nunes da Costa, had been Agent for the Crown of Portugal in Hamburg from 1641 until he died in 1664.¹⁰ Manoel Rodrigues Vega provided the surety for the release of the Admiral of Aragon and was thus well-known as a political player in the Republic and in Iberia. The provision of the ransom for the Habsburg King's captured Admiral, Don Francisco de Mendoza, who had been taken prisoner during the battle of Nieuwpoort in 1600, meant that all Dutch prisoners of war in the Habsburg lands were released, as was the Admiral himself. Rodrigues Vega was the intermediary in these delicate negotiations between the Habsburg Crown and the Dutch Republic and he earned political clout by playing this role of negotiator and financier.¹¹

One of the most well-known cases, though it falls outside the period examined in this book, was when Sephardic merchants in the Dutch Republic lobbied successfully in 1654 and 1655 against the anti-Jewish measures taken by Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Netherland.¹² This book focuses on inter-cultural interactions, so this chapter will

⁹ See Jonathan I. Israel, "An Amsterdam Jewish Merchant of the Golden Age: Jeronimo Nunes da Costa (1620–1697), Agent of Portugal in the Dutch Republic," *Studia Rosenthaliana* (1984): 21–41; Jonathan I. Israel, "The Diplomatic Career of Jeronimo Nunes da Costa: an Episode in Dutch-Portuguese Relations of the Seventeenth Century," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 98 (1983): 167–190; and Daniel Swetschinski, "An Amsterdam Jewish merchant-Diplomat: Jeronimo Nunes da Costa (1620–1697), Agent of the King of Portugal," in Lea Dabberg and Jonathan N. Cohen, eds., *Neveh Ya'akov. Jubilee Volume Presented to Dr. Jaap Meijer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1982), 3–30.

¹⁰ Jonathan Israel I., "Duarte Nunes da Costa (Jacob Curiel), of Hamburg, Sephardi Nobleman and Communal Leader (1585–1664)," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 21, 1 (1987): 14–35.

¹¹ SR 1001, 101, 105, 111, 132, 139, 181, and 212. See also RGP 92 (1602), no. 32, 29, note 5, 82; (1603), no. 6.

¹² About the Jews in New Amsterdam and their relationship with Peter Stuyvesant, see: Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Morris U. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews of the United States, 1654–1875*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Schocken, 1971); and Jacob Radar Marcus, *The American Jew, 1585–1990: A History* (New York, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995).

examine another circumstance in which lobbying as a method of political influence was used. In the case under consideration in this chapter, Sephardi merchants, most of whom were based in Amsterdam, and their Dutch associates joined together to form an interest group to lobby for their mutual interests.¹³ They lobbied local authorities and governing institutions, in order to have a shipment of sugar returned to them. Dutch ships had seized this sugar as a prize of war from three Portuguese ships sailing off the coast of Portugal. This chapter will discuss the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates as an interest group who engaged in lobbying for their interests.

Lobbying and Interest Groups in the Seventeenth Century

Seventeenth-century contemporaries did not use the term “interest group.” It is only in retrospect that historians have given such actions a categorical label. James Madison, writing in the early nineteenth century, made an early categorization of what constituted such a group when he cautioned in the *Federalist Papers* against what he termed “factions.” He wrote, “By faction I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest...”¹⁴ Though Madison used the term “faction,” it seems clear that he was referring to something similar to what might now be termed an interest group. Since Madison, however, scholars have not reached any agreement as to the precise meaning of “interest group.”

An interest group is, according to political scientists in the twentieth century, “an organized body of individuals who share some goals and who try to influence public policy.”¹⁵ The historian Alison Gilbert Olson proposes a similar definition for groups in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Olson defines an interest group as “A group of

¹³ The case to be analyzed involved numerous prominent Sephardic and non-Sephardic merchants, including Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Manoel Carvalho. It did not involve Bento Osorio, though some of his relatives by marriage in Antwerp were involved. Osorio was still in Lisbon when this case was being played out in the Dutch Republic, and he has no recorded involvement in the matter.

¹⁴ James Madison, “Federalist 10,” *The Federalist Papers* (New York, NY: The New American Library of World Literature, 1961), 78.

¹⁵ Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 5.

individuals, conscious of sharing a common concern, cooperating on the borders of power, and seeking to increase their own benefits through bargaining with a political system they accept and influence but do not attempt to control... They sought from government not a monopoly of particular political authority, trade, or souls, but, rather, a guarantee that they might safely participate in a competitive environment."¹⁶

Interest groups, however, were not generally institutionalized, though certain institutions such as guilds could be said to have functioned as an institutionalized interest group. The majority of these individuals, who shared common concern and cooperated on the borders of power to bargain with a political system, came together based on a particular interest, and then dispersed when their attempts at influencing decisions and events succeeded or failed. Thus, they were not generally long-lasting or officially organized groups. Instead, they tended to be loose consortiums of people, often, but not always, of merchants, who joined together to work in the defense of their interests in a particular matter.

Any attempt by an interest group to influence the outcome of political events could be said to be lobbying.¹⁷ Lobbying could be aimed at any institution of government, from the lowest to the highest bodies. Various tactics could fall under the rubric of "lobbying," but in the seventeenth century it was petitioning that was the main form of lobbying. In fact, submitting petitions was "the most widespread and approved form of political activity in early modern Europe."¹⁸ Petitions could be submitted by or on behalf of like-minded individuals in pursuit of some common goal. As the historian Christopher Friedrichs writes, "A group petition was by definition political, for the authorities always had to weigh the possible disadvantages of approving the request against the potential dangers of rejecting it."¹⁹ The historian Ian Archer's study of London lobbies in the later sixteenth century

¹⁶ Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690–1790* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2–3.

¹⁷ Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, 6.

¹⁸ Christopher R. Friedrichs, *Urban Politics in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 38.

¹⁹ Friedrichs, *Urban Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 38. Holly Snyder has discussed the effectiveness of petitioning by Jews in Early Modern North America. See her "English Markets, Jewish Merchants, and Atlantic Endeavors: Jews and the Making of British Transatlantic Commercial Culture, 1650–1800," in Richard Kagan and Philip Morgan, eds., *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–180* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 50–74.

emphasizes how responsive those in authority were to pressure from below.²⁰

To summarize, an interest group, as this chapter utilizes the term, is an association of people who share a common interest.²¹ Such a group cooperated and sought to increase their own benefits through bargaining with a political system. Such a group may or may not be formalized or institutionalized. In the case I discuss, concerning an interest group comprised of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates, there was no institutionalization of the group, unless, of course, a network can be considered an institution. An interest group, in general, could employ various mechanisms to promote its common interests. The interest group which formed for the negotiation over a cargo of sugar used lobbying (bargaining with a political system) by the use of petitions as the main mechanism to promote its interests. It seems that the authorities in Amsterdam were also quite responsive to this pressure from below, as I will discuss further.

The Governmental Context

Before exploring how Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and their Dutch associates worked as an interest group to lobby for their collective interests, I will give a brief outline of the governmental context in which this interest group lobbied.²² The United Provinces of the Netherlands was a confederation of seven provinces—Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Groningen, and Friesland—in which each province operated its own independent government. Each province was governed by the Provincial States and the main executive official was a stadholder (*stadhouder*). The primary administrative body of the Provincial States was the Commissioned Councilors (*Gecommitteerde Raden*).

Within each of the provinces, the towns were largely self-governing. At the city level, local, provincial, and federal questions were discussed

²⁰ Ian Archer, "The London Lobbies in the Later Sixteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 31, 1 (March, 1988): 17–44.

²¹ For the purposes of this chapter, interest group and lobbying group are interchangeable terms.

²² Henk van Nierop, "Politics and the People of Amsterdam," in Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte, eds., *Rome and Amsterdam: Two Growing cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 156–167, 158–161.

within the elite-dominated council (*vroedschap*), which sent instructions to their representative in the Provincial States (*Staten*). Amsterdam had four mayors (*burgermeesters*), who exerted considerable influence. They took responsibility for the city's day-to-day affairs, and served as liaisons with the authorities of the province of Holland. The mayors presided over the council and the militia companies. They served for a year, but could be re-elected after a year out of office. This meant, in practice, that powerful men could serve as a mayor multiple times.

The mayor and the ruling council were keenly aware of the huge importance of trade for Amsterdam's economy. They were, therefore, sensitive to the needs of merchants such as the Sephardim and their Dutch associates. Wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs, individually or collectively, addressed petitions to the magistrates, arguing for their interests. Because Amsterdam brought in around half of the tax revenue for the province of Holland, and a quarter of the Dutch Republic's tax revenue as a whole, the city played a vital role provincially and in the States General on a national level. The mayors of Amsterdam, therefore, could and did try to influence issues (such as foreign policy) that fell under the purview of the States General.²³ A cause which gained the support of Amsterdam's mayors had a good chance of being dealt with favorably on a provincial or national level.

At the provincial level, representatives of the city elites and the nobility met in assemblies to make decisions. Administration and decision-making between sessions were left to standing committees (*Gocommitteerde Raden*) elected by the provinces. The federal government was called the States General. Under the States General were a variety of administrative bodies, such as the Council of States (*Raad van State*) and, importantly for this chapter, the Admiralty Colleges. The Admiralty Colleges were one of the principal administrative arms of the States General and were responsible for administering the navy, collecting customs, maintaining guard boats on rivers and estuaries, building warships, recruiting naval seamen, enforcing (and advising on) the States General's regulation of shipping and fisheries, and adjudicating matters concerning captured ships, crews, and cargoes.²⁴ The colleges were located in Amsterdam, Rotterdam (South Holland), Hoorn and Enkhuizen

²³ Maarten Hell, "De oude Geuzen en de Opstand: Politiek en lokaal bestuur in tijd van oorlog en expansie, 1578–1650" in *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam, Centrum van de Wereld*, Volume II, I, 241–298, 247.

²⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 295.

(the North Quarter), Middelburg (Zeeland), and Dokkum (Friesland). Although each Admiralty College acted independently in appointments of officers and recruitment of seamen, the Lieutenant-Admiral and Vice-Admirals of Holland and Zeeland were selected by the Provincial States. Stadholders were admirals of Holland and Zeeland, and the Commander-in-Chief was appointed by the States General.

The Sugar Confiscation of 1602

The facts of the case of the confiscation of a large amount of sugar owned by Sephardi and new Christian merchants in Antwerp and Amsterdam are relatively straightforward. The Dutch and English had joined together in 1602 to try to disrupt shipping to and from the Iberian Peninsula. This same year, Jacob van Wassenaer (later Count of Wassenaer), Lord of Obdam and later Lieutenant Admiral of Holland, sailed to the Iberian coast with five Dutch ships in support of the English.²⁵ On the July 9, 1602, Obdam captured three Portuguese ships laden with sugar at the mouth of the Tagus River outside Lisbon. It soon became clear to the Admiralties in the Dutch Republic that much of the sugar belonged to Sephardic merchants living in the Dutch Republic, and a legal controversy ensued—a controversy which ended up pitting the Sephardic merchants, their Dutch business associates, and the mayors of Amsterdam against the Admiralty College of Rotterdam and the States General.

The approximately 2,500 chests of sugar from the unfortunate ships *São Pedro*, *Santo Antonio*, and *Nossa Senhora da Piedade* were loaded onto Dutch ships. Olivier van Noort, one of the naval officers, sailed to the Dutch Republic with the sugar, which was to be sent to Rotterdam, though two warships initially escorted the vessels to Middelburg.²⁶ The expedition which captured the sugar had been part of a privateering voyage. Their commissioning governments legally obligated privateers to follow established prize court procedure. They were required to bring all seized goods before an established prize court in their home port. It is unclear, in this case, if the home port was Middelburg or Rotterdam, because of confusion surrounding the first port of call.

²⁵ N. Japikse and H.H.P. Rijperman, eds., *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal van 1576 tot 1609*, Volume 12, 1602–1603, RGP 92, nrs. 96–100.

²⁶ NL-HaNA, Staten General, 1.01.04/9.277.

Based on established privateering law, the ships should have returned first to their home port. This would seem to have been Middelburg, as the ships went there first. However, because the Admiralty of Rotterdam, rather than the Admiralty of Middelburg, was apparently accepted by all parties involved as exerting legitimate authority over the ships and their cargoes, there may have been (unknown) logistical reasons for the ships to stop first at Middelburg.

Within the Dutch Republic, the Admiralty colleges adjudicated privateer prizes on behalf of the States General and the Prince of Orange. A captured prize first underwent intense scrutiny by the Admiralty authorities, so as to ensure that the prize had been a valid target and that it had been legally apprehended and conveyed.²⁷ If this was the case, the Admiralty officials declared it a “good prize.” The Admiralty’s auctioneer then set a date for a public auction, which was advertised by means of posters and announcements in local newspapers. To generate more interest, a day was even put aside for the public to come and look over the goods. The States General had determined in an act dating from 1602 (so it could have been in effect while the case under consideration was being decided) that the division of profits raised from privateer booty was as follows: 12% each to the Province and the sponsoring Admiralty, 6% to the Admiral General (also known as the Stadholder), and the rest to the individual or business concerns that had sponsored the privateering venture.²⁸ Despite these seemingly clear-cut rules, prize adjudication was a time-consuming and intricate business.²⁹ Moreover, relations with the city governments and the Admiralties could be touchy and their respective interests could and, as shall be seen in this case, often did conflict.³⁰

Per privateering custom, one of the captains of the Dutch vessels, officer van Noort, received 20 guilders and 100 *rijksdaalders* to put towards a golden necklace as a reward.³¹ The States General ordered that an inventory made to ensure that the bounty was shared between

²⁷ E.W. van der Oest, “De Praktijk van de Nederlandse Kaapvaart en Piraterij 1500–1800,” in R.B. Prudhomme van Reine and E.W. van der Oest, eds., *Kapers op de Kust: Nederlandse Kaapvaart en Piraterij 1500–1800* (Vlissingen: Uitgeverij ADZ, 1991), 25–26.

²⁸ Virginia West Lunsford, *Piracy and Privateering in the Golden Age Netherlands* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 17.

²⁹ Jaap R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 9.

³⁰ Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy*, 31.

³¹ RGP 92, nr. 209, note 1.

the Admiralty of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Holland's "Noorderkwartier" (the cities of Hoorn and Enkhuizen). Amsterdam was to receive half and Rotterdam and Holland's Noorderkwartier would each get a quarter of the booty.³² This decision was at odds with the previously noted distribution rules, because Rotterdam was the presiding Admiralty. It could be that those rules had not yet come into effect when this case was being decided, as it is unclear when in 1602 they were promulgated. It could also be that there was an unknown reason or reasons to ignore these rules. Such reasons could be the wealth of the cargo or anticipating that Amsterdam would argue the case on behalf of its wealthy Sephardic merchants, so an attempt was made by the Admiralties of Middleburg and Rotterdam to sweeten the deal for the city by giving its Admiralty a greater than customary percentage of the proceeds of the auction of the prize.

Be that as it may, these plans were soon scuppered. On August 31, Portuguese merchants from Amsterdam and Antwerp petitioned the States General for the release of a large number of cases of sugar carried in these ships. They claimed that both the sugar and the ships belonged to them and to their partners and relatives in the Dutch Republic and other countries.³³ A legal controversy ensued concerning part of the shipment. This controversy was, at first glance, little different than that which tended to occur in any prize case.³⁴ In fact, there were multiple protests made by the Sephardic merchants of Amsterdam to

³² RGP 92, nr. 211.

³³ RGP 92, nr. 213.

³⁴ There is a large body of scholarship regarding the adjudication of prize cases. See, for example, A. Wijffels, "Recht v. Handelsbelangen: Kaapvaartprocessen voor het Londens Admiraliteitshof Onmiddellijk na het Spaans-Engels Vredesverdrag van 1604," in S. Dauchy, ed., *Ter Overwinning van een Historische Drempelvrees: De Historicus en Juridische Bronnen. Handelingen van het Colloquium* (20 Maart 1992) (Brussels: Wetenschappelijk Comité voor Rechtsgeschiedenis and Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1994), 83–93 (With thanks to Dr. Louis Sicking of the University of Leiden for this citation); R.G. Marsden, "The 'Mashona' Case and Prize Jurisdiction," *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation* New Series, 3, 1 (1901): 38–40; Henry J. Bourguignon, *William Scott, Lord Stowell, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, 1798–1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); George F. Steckley, "Collisions, Prohibitions, and the Admiralty Court in Seventeenth-Century London," *Law and History Review* 21 (Spring 2003): 41–67. <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lhr/21.1/steckley.html>> Carl J. Kulsrud, *Maritime Neutrality to 1780: A History of the Main Principles Governing Neutrality and Belligerency to 1780* (Union, NJ: The Law Book Exchange, Ltd., 2000); and Sean T. Perrone, "John Stoughton and the Divina Pastora Prize Case, 1816–1819," *Journal of the Early Republic* 28 (2008): 215–241.

the States General about the privateering of ships in which they held shares or in which their goods were shipped. For instance, there had been a similar case involving the Sephardim several years earlier, in 1600, concerning ships taken to England.

In this 1600 case, the Sephardim in Amsterdam had received a great deal of help from the Dutch Republic's representatives in England after their ships and cargoes were seized by the English. They had argued that, as residents and *burghers* of the Dutch Republic, they were neutral parties and not the enemy, despite the fact that their goods were on enemy (Portuguese) ships. Adjudicating cases involving enemy vessels carrying enemy goods was fairly simple: an enemy ship was almost always condemned by the court as a "good prize."³⁵ Enemy vessels carrying cargoes owned by neutrals and not destined for an enemy port were a more difficult problem; generally, if the neutrality of the cargo could be proven (and assuming that it was not composed of contraband), it would be returned to its rightful owner.

The States General had strongly protested the seizure of the Sephardic merchants' property, arguing that the cargo was indeed neutral and not composed of contraband.³⁶ In 1602, the same year the Sephardic merchants' sugar was seized off Portugal, the English case was finally resolved. The Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam received letters of recommendation from the States General to the Dutch ambassador in England enabling them to redeem the twelve ships which had been seized by the English on their way back from Brazil two years before.³⁷ However, it was now Dutch ships which had seized expensive goods from Sephardic merchants in the Dutch Republic, and decision-makers within the Dutch Republic had a straightforward financial interest in the case if the cargo were to be ruled a "good prize." Further complicating the issue was that some, but not all, of the merchants whose goods were seized were *burghers* in Amsterdam.³⁸ Therefore, the 1602 prize case was trickier than the 1600 seizure had been.

³⁵ Philip C. Jessup and Francis Deak, *Neutrality Its History, Economics and Law*, Four Volumes (New York, Columbia University Press, 1935–36), Volume I, 124, 217.

³⁶ See Samuel, "Portuguese Jews in Jacobean London."

³⁷ Vlessing, "The Portuguese-Jewish Merchant Community in Seventeenth-century Amsterdam," 232.

³⁸ It is not clear if the status of *burgher* superseded that of a member of the Portuguese nation in Amsterdam, or if these merchants could have been considered both *burghers* of Amsterdam and members of the Portuguese nation. In some cities, such as Brugge, the rights and privileges of *burghers* and of members of foreign nations

The formal protest to the States General in August of 1602 was made only by an interest group composed of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and new Christians in Antwerp. These merchants, however, were some of the best known and wealthiest in the Low Countries. Nicolas Rodrigues d'Evora, Duarte Ximenes, and Antonio Faillero, along with Duarte Fernandes, Francisco Pinto de Britto, Hendrick Garcia, Manoel Rodrigues Vega, and Fernando Mercado, "all merchants of the Portuguese nation, for themselves as well as being authorized by other merchants of this Nation, their correspondents in Portugal and in other places," wrote a long and earnest representation of their case to the States General, and asked that their goods be returned to them, or, at the very least, protected until a final resolution of the case was reached.³⁹ I should note that the term "nation" is deceptive. As I mentioned in Chapter I, "nation" had generally been used since the middle ages as a term for any group of foreign merchants who settled in another place to conduct trade. In the case of the Sephardim and new Christians, "nation," as Chapter I detailed, acquired an additional meaning, implying a certain transnational commonality and solidarity based on shared background and descent. The Sephardim in Amsterdam and other cities were called "merchants of the Portuguese nation" in legal documents in the Dutch Republic for close to a century, despite the fact that many of them were *burghers* of Amsterdam or, later, other Dutch cities.

Interestingly, Manoel Carvalho and other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam such as Manoel Frances were not named in the initial protest, nor were the Dutch and Flemish owners of some of the sugar such as Cornelis Snellinck and Johan and Pauwels Bisshop.⁴⁰ I could not identify any explicit reason for the omissions. It is likely, though, that the merchants chose only the wealthiest and most well-connected merchants for their initial protest, assuming that they would have more influence with the decision makers. Though Carvalho would later become a prominent and wealthy Sephardic merchant in Amsterdam, at this time he was just beginning his career.

The Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants based their arguments to the States General on the *sauvegarres* (safeguards) that had been

were incompatable, though whether this was the case for Amsterdam requires further research.

³⁹ RGP 92, no. 280; translation by author.

⁴⁰ RGP 92, no. 285 note 2.

provided to the Portuguese Nation by the States General itself in the past. The position of the Portuguese Nation in the Republic was controlled by these safeguards given by the States General. The States General had drawn up these safeguards for the Portuguese Nation in order to attract its trade. The first safeguard was given in 1577 after the Pacification of Gent and Brussels. In 1581, after Phillip II came to power in Portugal, which made the new Christians officially Spanish subjects of Portuguese descent (at least in the eyes of the Habsburg monarchs), this initial safeguard was strengthened. The States General gave a safeguard to all Portuguese who, with their wives, children, and household servants, lived in the Dutch Republic or did business there or who were en route to do so. This included their furniture and trade goods. They were free to live and conduct trade in the Republic, and were free along with their households and their goods to come and go however and whenever they wanted. What is not acknowledged in this safeguard, however, is that the individual cities within the Dutch Republic retained the right to determine who settled within their boundaries, and not all Dutch cities were willing to accept openly practicing Jews, or even new Christians.⁴¹ Be that as it may, their trade with Spain, Portugal, or other places, was governed by the laws of those lands. In essence, these initial documents allowed Portuguese merchants living in the Dutch Republic and elsewhere the right to trade freely by way of the United Provinces. In this respect they were treated by the States General the same as other foreign merchants, such as the English, French, and Germans.⁴² In fact, the 1581 safeguard contains the following passage:

Yet meaning that as far as shipping on Spain as well as Portugal and other places is concerned, those of the aforesaid Nation will be obliged to behave according to the ordinances and placards which will be drafted by the government of the aforesaid United Provinces.⁴³

In 1588, after the fall of Antwerp, the safeguard was expanded to those Portuguese who lived in a neutral country or elsewhere outside the Republic. This meant, effectively, that the Portuguese and others

⁴¹ Nusteling, "The Jews in the Republic of the United Provinces: Origin, Numbers and Dispersion," 43–62.

⁴² Prins, *De Vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 129–132 and 155–159.

⁴³ Quoted in Vlessing, "The Portuguese-Jewish Merchant Community in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam," 223.

could freely trade with the Dutch without fear that their goods or ships would be seized. A further strengthening of the safeguards was made in 1592 to include the Portuguese in Antwerp and others in “enemy” territory.⁴⁴ In a Resolution passed on October 20, 1600, after the general trade embargo of 1599, the States General decided that the Portuguese could trade via Portugal to Brazil.⁴⁵ Thus, the Sephardim and new Christians were allowed to reclaim cargoes taken by Dutch privateers that belonged to family members in Lisbon and elsewhere. This was a unique aspect of Dutch privateering law. Most countries’ privateering laws (which gradually grew to be an accepted international body of law in the seventeenth century) allowed for the return of neutral ships and cargoes, but not for the return of cargoes belonging to relatives of neutral participants who were living in enemy territory. It was this Resolution upon which the Sephardim and new Christians were depending for the redemption of their sugar.

A major jurisdictional battle was set in motion within two weeks of the initial protest filed by the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam (as well as by the new Christians in Antwerp), which was based on these safeguards and resolutions, particularly the one passed in 1600 which had allowed the Portuguese to trade via Portugal and Brazil. Meanwhile, the Admiralty of Rotterdam asked the States General for jurisdiction over the case, which the States General was inclined to grant.⁴⁶ Eleven days later, on September 18, 1602, the Admiralty of Rotterdam requested permission to auction the seized goods, per the regulations regarding privateered goods. The Admiralty argued for a basic reinterpretation of the safeguard of 1592 and the Resolution of 1600. They based their argument on a decree made by the States General on April 2, 1599, which stated that all trade and transport to Spain and Portugal was forbidden.

⁴⁴ See E.M. Koen, “Duarte Fernandes, Koopman van de Portugese Natie te Amsterdam,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 2 (1968): 178–192, 182–183. Copies of the safeguards can be found in NL-HaNA, Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/308–321.

⁴⁵ RGP 85, VI. 12, 1600–1601, no. 333.

⁴⁶ RGP 92, no. 212. The existing documentation is unclear as to where the ships had originated. Though Rotterdam seems to be acknowledged as the home port, which would have given its Admiralty jurisdiction over the captured ships and cargoes, the fact that they had to petition the States General for jurisdiction over the case, coupled with the fact that the ships were first taken to Middelburg after their seizure, could cast some doubt on this.

The Admiralty suggested that a differentiation be made between, on one hand, the Portuguese in Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Antwerp, or other “enemy” locations and, on the other hand, merchants, captains, ship owners and crew from the Republic, in addition to the Portuguese and other merchants who lived in the Dutch Republic. The goods of the first group should be auctioned and the proceeds given to those consigned by them. The merchants from the second group should receive their goods, though only after they had appealed for them and offered a guarantee or surety valid until a judge had ascertained that no “enemy” owned part of them.⁴⁷

The Admiralty’s suggestion was a tacit acknowledgement that the Sephardic merchants living in the Dutch Republic were under the protection of its laws as legal residents or *burghers*. The Admiralty’s suggestion for a differentiation between the Portuguese in “enemy” locations versus those merchants, Sephardim and Dutch, in the Dutch Republic also made sense in terms of legal precedents. After all, few merchants in the Dutch Republic would support or buy shares in privateering voyages if their own goods could be confiscated and sold at auction. Furthermore, the Admiralty could have been gambling that most of the sugar would be proven to be owned by relatives of the Sephardic and new Christian merchants living in enemy territory and would, therefore, be forfeited and auctioned to the benefit of the Admiralty.

The Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam and their new Christian associates in Antwerp resisted this suggestion. In their opinion, the 1599 decree had been superseded by the Resolution of 1600. On October 2, the Admiralty of Rotterdam went further and proposed that a surety had to be offered for the sugar owned by merchants in Hamburg or other neutral places.⁴⁸ In response, the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic turned to a sort of independent commission of experts in Dutch law, probably having concluded that the Admiralty of Rotterdam and the States General had a great deal to gain financially by confiscating the sugar and paying little or no restitution on it. In this same month of October 1602, the commission gave the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic written advice regarding this case.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ RGP 92, no. 213.

⁴⁸ RGP 92, no. 214.

⁴⁹ RGP 92, no. 281; These advisors were: R. van Amstelredeam, H. du Weerdt, A. Snoek, E. Dimmer, G. Hamel, A. Goes, I. Verweeren, C. van Buyck, I. van Dijk,

Their opinion was that people or goods that were covered by the safeguards were not subject to confiscation. The Sephardim and their goods had repeatedly been given protection in the Republic. Furthermore, the safeguards had actually been expanded to include not only the Sephardim and new Christians who lived in neutral lands, but also those who lived in “enemy” lands. It is not clear why, precisely, the safeguards had been expanded, though it seems likely that it was to encourage trade. Therefore, their rights were inviolable, though now an expiration date had been placed on the safeguards. These jurists denied unanimously that the proclamation of April 2, 1599, had annulled these safeguards. According to the advisory committee, general declarations had no connection with or influence on the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic, because they were already “specially” privileged by the safeguards they had already been given. The last resolution, from the year 1600, which had been made at the request of the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic and their correspondents to their benefit during the prize case with England, had not been challenged since. Therefore, according to the committee, based on the evidence offered, as well as on precedents of Roman Law, for the well being of the state of law in the United Provinces, the government of the Republic “in so broad and extensive an interpretation” must, even if it would be contrary to the interests (fiscal and otherwise) of the government itself, end the case as quickly as possible.⁵⁰ Essentially, they argued that the law, as it stood, was in favor of the Sephardic merchants in the Dutch Republic receiving all their sugar back from the Admiralty of Rotterdam because it could not be considered a “good prize”—a prize subject to legitimate confiscation by privateering vessels.

The States General may have been moved as much by the appeals to Roman Law as they were by their own fiscal interests. Though the initial offer of the States General does not seem to be preserved, the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic must have made an offer for redemption of the sugar. It is known that the States General made

P. van Veen, Baccart and Sibrant Oillarts. As with so much in this case, it is not clear if these men formed a sort of standing, independent board of appeals or adjudication, what their precise positions were, why they were considered neutral, and what their interests were (and were not) in this case. More research is certainly warranted to answer these questions.

⁵⁰ Prins, *De Vestiging der Marranen in Noord-Nederland in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 129–132 and 155–159. They do not cite the specific precedents to which they are referring.

such an offer because the Sephardim responded on October 31, 1602, that they did not want to accept this offer to pay a ransom of 250,000 guilders to redeem all their sugar. They countered with an offer to pay 200,000 guilders or “otherwise proceed with justice in court.” The fact that they countered the States General’s offer with a lower offer is interesting. 200,000 guilders was a great deal of money, especially for an interest group which seemed to have the law on its side. It could be that the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic were by no means certain that the committee’s advice would be followed, and that they hoped to ransom the sugar at a more affordable rate. It could also be that the Sephardim in Amsterdam were concerned about a possible appeal. Moreover, the Sephardim may have hoped to settle the case quickly because they were wary of a justice system situated in a recently declared republic.

It was at this point, perhaps fearing a loss in court or wanting to avoid a protracted legal process, that the Sephardim in the Dutch Republic began to involve the other interested parties in their case. This sugar was not only owned by the aforementioned Sephardi merchants (as well as a few Dutch and Flemish merchants such as Cornelis Snellinck, who also represented other merchants involved in the case), but was insured by a number of Dutch merchants in Amsterdam and Middelburg. Together they shared a common concern—the loss of a great deal of money should the sugar be taken from them—and began to cooperate intensively. Their first step in advocating for their common interest was to turn to the most common form of lobbying in the seventeenth century—petitioning. The insurers petitioned the mayors of Amsterdam for the return of their sugar. The majority of the Sephardic owners, as well as their Dutch insurers, were *burghers* and/or residents of Amsterdam. As wealthy merchants, they held some power over the election of mayors in Amsterdam and were, therefore, a sort of constituency. As constituents, they expected the mayors to exert themselves on behalf of the city’s merchants. Moreover, as was described previously, Amsterdam held a great deal of power in the provincial and national assemblies by virtue of the high percentage of taxes the city paid into the provincial and national coffers. Thus, if Amsterdam supported the merchants’ cause, their case would have a much greater chance of a favorable outcome in the provincial and national assemblies.

Thirty-seven insurers addressed a petition to the mayors of Amsterdam in support of the Sephardic merchants.⁵¹ The vast majority of these insurers were relatively recent immigrants from Antwerp and its environs; others included Nicolas Rodrigues d'Evora, Duarte Ximenes, and Antonio Faillero, who still lived as new Christians in Antwerp. Because neither the Sephardim nor the recent immigrants were eligible to hold public office, an important technique for exerting influence over the local political authorities was joining together for joint protests and cooperative petitions. These protests and petition tended to include implied threats that the Sephardim would feel compelled to leave the United Provinces, taking with them their trade and trade connections to the profitable Iberian and colonial trades should the city officials not decide in their favor. The Dutch and Flemish merchants had generally, in the past, joined together with non-immigrant merchants who were native to Amsterdam,⁵² However, in this case, these merchants, mainly newer immigrants to Amsterdam, cooperated with the Sephardim to exert their influence on the local magistracy by signing a petition with the implied threat of the loss of the Sephardim's wealth and trade connections should the sugar not be returned.

In the petition, these merchants declared that they had "insured the goods that had been confiscated for substantial sums of money."⁵³ They had insured these goods, they declared, "based on their trust in the privileges and safeguards that the merchants of the Portuguese nation had received from the Gentlemen of the States General to trade and travel freely." If the Admiralty allowed the bounty of the ships to be divided as a prize, then they, the petitioners who had insured these goods, would have to pay. The petition continues that it would not just be they, the insurers, who would suffer the material consequences should the confiscation proceed. Rather, the whole Dutch Republic would be negatively affected should the Sephardim feel that their business enterprises were unsafe in the Dutch Republic and leave. In sum, the insurers began by appealing to the mayors based on their own material well-being which, they implied, would affect Amsterdam's

⁵¹ These 37 merchants were to become important associates of the Sephardim in Amsterdam in subsequent years. 57% would do further business with Sephardic merchants. See Appendix V for a list of the signatories of the petition and the Sephardic merchants with whom they did business.

⁵² Gelderblom, *Zuid Nederlandse Koopheden*, 241.

⁵³ The petition, from which excerpts are taken in the following pages, can be found in, NL-HaNA, Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/300–301. Translation by author.

trade as a whole. They then referenced the legal basis upon which they had insured the goods, namely the resolution of 1600 allowing the Sephardim to trade with Portugal and her colonies. Lastly, they emphasized the importance of this case for the Republic as a whole, perhaps hoping to undermine what might have been considered a legitimate claim on behalf of the Admiralty of Rotterdam.

This emphasis on the good of the Republic as a whole may seem exaggerated, and perhaps it was. However, the merchants petitioning the mayors of Amsterdam noted that, should the confiscation proceed, the Sephardim would no longer feel safe to trade in the Republic. The trade of the Portuguese Nation, “in these lands, of which there is much, is well-known [for its importance] by your honors.” This important trade, the petitioners insinuated, would move to other countries if this case went amiss for the Sephardim. Hamburg and Emden, not Amsterdam, would receive the benefits of their trade. Thus, with the importance of Sephardic trade firmly stated, and the possibility of losing the Sephardim to competing cities emphasized, the merchants went on to their ultimate request. This request was quite simple. They asked that “your honors, based on the aforementioned reasons....advocate for the [Sephardic merchants] with the Gentlemen of the States General so that the merchants of the Portuguese Nation and others of these lands can trade freely with Brazil, and that in the above-mentioned case [of the confiscation of the sugar] no [monetary] damage will be done to anyone involved.”

The mayors of Amsterdam took the arguments and warnings of the insurers to heart. They may have been swayed by a fear of lost revenue and trading opportunities should the implied threat be carried out and the Sephardic merchants left the Dutch Republic. They may also have been moved by the influence the insurers had within the city and the connections they may have had for both trade and the election of the city's mayors. Lastly, they may have been hoping to undermine the power of either the Admiralty of Rotterdam or the States General itself in an effort to gain greater power and influence for themselves. Whatever the reasons or combination thereof, the mayors sent a long and detailed request to the provincial assembly, the States of Holland, in which they exhaustively detailed the 200-year history of the Portuguese Nation in “these lands.”⁵⁴ The mayors of Amsterdam clearly

⁵⁴ NL-HaNA, Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/302–304. The Portuguese nation had their own chapel in Brugge by 1410, so they had indeed been long established

wanted to emphasize the importance of the Portuguese Nation. The mayors wrote that the Portuguese Nation had conducted “her business and trade to the great contentment, benefit, and profit of these Netherlands.” They then detailed all the safeguards that had been granted to the Portuguese Nation to place their judicial position on firm footing. They closed by urging that the provincial authorities support the mayors of Amsterdam and, by extension, the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch associates, in exhorting the States General to uphold the explicit promises made to the Portuguese Nation by the promulgation of multiple safeguards in the sixteenth century. They also requested that the sugar be released.

The surviving archival material did not yield the exact response of the provincial authorities to this request, though it seems to have been favorable. The provincial authorities of Holland appear to have sent on a copy of the resolution of 1600, which stated that “for the wealth of the land” the Sephardim must be allowed to continue trading freely.⁵⁵ The mayors of Amsterdam likewise sent a copy of their request made to the States of Holland to the States General so as to lobby more effectively for the cause of the Sephardic merchants and their insurers.

While all this lobbying was going on in Amsterdam, the States General continued to deal with the matter. On November 9, another offer was made by the States General for a price to be paid for redemption of the sugar.⁵⁶ For the first time, however, mention was made of the cargo’s insurers. It was suggested that they be allowed to redeem the sugar for 100 daalders per chest.⁵⁷ This mention of the insurers may have been a result of the first official protest from the insurers reach-

in the Low Countries, though certainly not as openly practicing Jews. Thanks to Dr. Raymond Fagel of the University of Leiden for providing this information.

⁵⁵ NL-HaNA, Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/305.

⁵⁶ RGP 92, nr. 284.

⁵⁷ It is not clear how many chests of sugar of the total the insurers had an interest in. The price of 100 daalders per chest was not a good one. Assuming that the document is discussing rijksdaalders, which were worth approximately 2.4 gulden at the time, the price for the redemption would have been 240 gulden per chest. There were approximately 2,500 chests of sugar aboard, meaning that the total redemption costs for the insurers, were they to attempt to redeem all the chests, would have been 600,000 gulden—far more than the 250,000 gulden redemption price offered to the Sephardim. For the value of daalders and gulden in the Seventeenth Century, see Stephen Quinn and William Roberds, “Domestic Coinage and the Bank of Amsterdam,” <http://www.econ.tcu.edu/quinn/finhist/readings/Domestic%20Coinage.pdf>.

ing the States General. In addition to the Amsterdam-based insurers, various merchants from Middelburg had also insured part of the cargo for Duarte and Gonalo Ximenes.⁵⁸ They made a direct protest to the States General. Lieven de Moelenaer, who was the representative for Reynout Reynoutsz., Jacques van Necke, Steven and Jan Groullart, and Mattheus de la Palma declared that they had insured part of the cargo “for a great sum.” They gave the mark found on the chests that belonged to the Ximenes and requested that the matter be resolved within ten or twelve days.⁵⁹

Soon thereafter, the petitions from the Amsterdam insurers, with the support of the mayors of Amsterdam and the tacit support of the provincial authorities (in the form of a pointed reminder as to the resolution of 1600), must have been received by the States General. On the November 12, the States General released 562 chests of sugar that could be claimed by merchants and insurers definitively living in Amsterdam or Antwerp.⁶⁰ This sugar was declared by the States General not to have been a “good prize” and, therefore, had to be returned to its owners. This sudden about-face on the part of the States General, especially given the chronology of events, could be interpreted as a concession to mounting pressure from the interest group of the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch insurers, who had lobbied successfully for local and provincial support for their cause. However, it could also be viewed as a strategy of “divide and conquer,” as less than a quarter of the total sugar was released, and the States General may have hoped that those who received their sugar would stop agitating for those still awaiting verdict on their goods.

In less than a month, more pressure came to bear on the States General for the release of more chests of sugar. On December 6, several more Dutch merchants—Pieter Eeuwoutsz. and Isaac d’Ablijn of Rotterdam and Dirck Reysiender of Amsterdam—urged the States General to resolve the matter of the remaining approximately 2,000 cases as quickly as possible.⁶¹ Pieter Eeuwoutsz wrote on behalf of Manoel Fernandes de Leon, and Isaac d’Ablijn was representing the

⁵⁸ The Ximenes family was connected to the Andalucian nation in Middelburg. See, Raymond Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders 1496–1555* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 1996).

⁵⁹ RGP 92, nr. 282, note 3.

⁶⁰ RGP 92, nr. 285.

⁶¹ RGP 92, nr. 286. It is unclear exactly how many cases of sugar there were. Some of the documentation seems to indicate more than 2,500 cases.

interests of Gaspar Fernandes. These merchants were living in “enemy” territory—Antwerp and Portugal—and sought to have a Dutch merchant represent their claims, hoping that this would afford them better chance of a favorable outcome. Dirck Reysiender wrote on behalf of Gillis Dodeur, his nephew. It is not clear if Dodeur owned some of the sugar or if he was an insurer. The States General declared that it wanted to “end this business quickly and, therefore, save the Republic money and themselves from further concern in the matter.”

The case was not yet resolved on January 17, when Cornelis Snellinck and Hendrik Ulens, as factors for Nicolas and Simon d’Evora, wrote and requested a resolution to the matter.⁶² Nor was the controversy resolved the following week, on January 23, when Duarte Fernandes, Francisco Pinto de Britto, and Duarte Ximenes strongly requested that a decision be reached.⁶³ Perhaps a resolution had already been agreed upon, or perhaps these latest volleys from the interest group were the final incentive to force the States General into reaching a decision. In any case, on January 25, the cases of sugar were released by the States General. However, the Sephardim still had to pay a ransom for redemption of their sugar. The precise amount that they paid is unclear, though it was most likely between the 200,000 guilders they had offered and the 250,000 guilders the States General had initially demanded.

Conclusion

There is a great deal that is unclear about this case. However, it seems that the Sephardim were allowed to redeem at least 2,500 cases of sugar. Some documents indicate that more than 2,500 cases were redeemed, but exact data are not available. What is clear about the case is that the Sephardim and their Dutch associates shared a common concern: money. Should the sugar be auctioned by the Admiralty of Rotterdam, the Sephardim would lose the profits they could make on the sale of this expensive luxury good. The insurers would have to pay the agreed-upon rate for the sugar, and, thereby, lose great sums

⁶² RGP 92, 610.

⁶³ RGP 92, 610.

on money in the process. Thus, they cooperated with one another to further their collective goals.

Olsen defined an interest group as “a group of individuals conscious of sharing a common concern, cooperating on the borders of power, and seeking to increase their own benefits through bargaining with a political system they accept and influence but do not attempt to control.” In this sense, the Sephardim and their Dutch associates acted as an interest group. They shared a common concern—the restitution of the sugar and, ultimately, their own profits. They cooperated for the furtherance of these goals by coordinating their lobbying efforts with local authorities in Amsterdam, provincial authorities and, ultimately, national government institutions. They bargained, by going back and forth on the price they found acceptable to pay, once it began to become clear that their arguments based purely on judicial and legal grounds were not going to succeed, or at least were not going to succeed quickly enough. Moreover, they exerted pressure on the political decision makers by reminding them again and again of the benefits the Portuguese Nation brought to the Dutch Republic. They quite explicitly threatened that the Sephardim would leave the Dutch Republic and go to a competing land should they not feel safe to trade. Together they worked as an inter-cultural interest group to lobby for restitution.

This case makes clear that the Sephardim and their Dutch associates formed an interest group within Dutch society, though one that was only partially able to fulfill its goals of influencing decision making in its favor. (Their efforts were not fully successful, as ransom still had to be paid for the return of the sugar.) The general topic of the Sephardim, their Dutch associates, and their relationship to politics and power is far too broad and encompassing to discuss in one chapter. Relations as individuals and as a group are often too complex to reduce to a clear set of formulations about how the Sephardim related to power and influenced politics in Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic, much less internationally. Yet it is clear that the Sephardic merchants joined with their Dutch associates and attempted to influence political decision-making in their favor.

In fact, they seemed able to influence local power quite well in Amsterdam. Due to Amsterdam's predominance in provincial and national politics, this local influence carried over into all levels of policy-making in the Dutch Republic. As the historian Jan Glete writes, “The Dutch political system was to an unusually high degree based on

the ability of local societies to use the central state in their interest and coordinate their own activities through the state.”⁶⁴ As Glete notes, the socio-economic elite ran the state, and they were willing to use their social capital to make the state work. It was a self-evident precondition that the state should act in their interests.⁶⁵ In the case of the sugar confiscation, the state, in this case defined as the institutions of the Admiralties, the municipal government, the provincial government, and the central States General, worked only partially in their interest. However, it could be that the Sephardim felt that they had enough influence to make it worthwhile to stay in the Dutch Republic. On the other hand, it could be that they felt that remaining in the Dutch Republic was the best option for them economically and socially. As such, they sought to influence policy-making in their favor.

⁶⁴ Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500–1660* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 172.

⁶⁵ Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*, 172.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

In an attempt to gain insights into the complexity of the lives and strategies of Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants, I have examined the networks of relatives, business associates, and correspondents of Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Bento Osorio, and Manoel Carvalho. In Chapters IV and V, I detailed some of their specific networks with Dutch associates. Several of these, as I described in Chapter IV, were long-lasting associations based on relatively frequent interactions. Others, such as those I discussed in Chapter V, were less intensive but still important for the overall conduct of the merchants' trade enterprises. These interactions are compelling evidence that, in contrast to the prevailing theories of early modern trade, merchants did, in fact, work closely with associates from outside their own Sephardic and new Christian group. The previous chapters showed that these Sephardic merchants formed economic associations of various sorts and of varying durations with non-Sephardic, non-Jewish Dutch merchants. They extended credit to one another, insured each other's cargoes, chartered ships together, and participated in the emerging chartered companies with merchants from varying backgrounds.

Even when we consider all these interactions, however, there remains the question of whether the very real inter-cultural associations detailed throughout this work were indeed the norm for the merchants or if they were anomalous. The basic theory in traditional historiography, as outlined in the Introduction to this study, was that one of the most important components, if not the most important element, of the relative success of the Sephardim—in fact, of any group or individual merchant—in trade was their utilization of networks based on family and shared ethno-religious background.¹ One idea underlying this work was to provide nuance to this traditional view by illustrating

¹ Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*; Mathias, "Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period"; Muller, "The Role of the Merchant Network: A Case History of two Swedish Trading Houses, 1650–1800" and his *The Merchant Houses of Stockholm*; and Israel, "Introduction," 2.

certain inter-cultural associations between Sephardic and Dutch merchants based in Amsterdam. As part of this provision of nuance, a goal of this book was to test the hypothesis that loose ties were more effective in creating opportunities and promoting the defense of economic interests than were tightly knit networks, whose members all knew each other. Another goal of this book was to examine ways in which cross-community migration may have stimulated innovation, which would have then furthered stimulate economic success.

Defining terms such as efficiency, creation of opportunities, and promotion of common interests, along with isolating the spread of innovation, is problematic. Therefore, I chose to examine successful merchants such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio so as to see what sorts of networks they employed, with the assumption that successful merchants would not only have been efficient and created opportunities but would have spread, or, at the very least, have utilized innovations, and promoted their common interests. But herein lay another problem, namely, the definition of success. Hence, I studied merchants who were global in geographic reach, innovative, and integrative, and I utilized these criteria as having defined success. It then remained to be seen if these merchants—Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio—traded less frequently with fellow Sephardim than did the overall group of Sephardic merchants. I examined a sample of 1317 records of Sephardim in Amsterdam, of which 608 pertained to Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and/or Osorio. The other 709 records concerned other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. The details of the data analysis are presented in Appendix 6. The rest of the chapter will discuss the conclusions garnered from the data analysis.

Essentially, the data analysis supports the broad assertion that the successful merchants Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio did not trade significantly more within the Sephardic group—in fact, quite the opposite. However, there were divergences among these three merchants within the overall statistics that are illustrative of how networks function. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were highly individual merchants with their own unique motivations, behaviors, and networks. In order to better understand these merchants and how and why they chose to interact with Dutch merchants in various situations, as well as how and why they did (and did not) conform to the overall trends, I will analyze each merchant in greater detail.

Table 6: Total number of trades, rendered in percentages

Type of trade	Random sample	Vega	Osorio	Carvalho	Total
Sephardic—Sephardic	27%	12%	14%	19%	21%
Sephardic (solitary)	6%	14%	43%	15%	18%
Sephardic— Sephardic—Dutch	33%	28%	25%	49%	32%
Sephardic—Dutch	35%	46%	17%	16%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Source: GAA, NA.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega: A Case Study in Inter-cultural Trade and Identity

Manoel Rodrigues Vega traded far more frequently with Dutch associates than with intra-Sephardic networks or with integrated networks of Sephardic and Dutch merchants. Indeed, he stands out from among the other successful merchants, Manoel Carvalho and Bento Osorio, for the amount of his Sephardic-Dutch trade. Forty-six percent of Rodrigues Vega's contracts were with Dutch merchants. In contrast only 12% were intra-cultural, and 14% were for interactions without another named associate. Moreover, his purely Sephardic-Dutch contracts were significantly more frequent than his contracts which display an integrated network of associates (Sephardic-Sephardic-Dutch contracts), which account for 28% of his recorded interactions. These purely Sephardic-Dutch contracts were not only more frequent, they were highly important. As Chapter IV detailed, these interactions included merchants acting on each other's behalf, extending one another credit, and co-owning trade goods and property. Interestingly, Rodrigues Vega did not trade significantly on his own, without an associate, regardless of background.

But why would Rodrigues Vega engage so frequently in direct Sephardic-Dutch trade, especially in contrast with the other successful merchants? He did not need to fall back on the assumed safety of intra-Sephardi networks, and he was well-integrated into networks with non-Sephardic, Flemish and Dutch merchants via Antwerp and with other cross-community migrants, such as these newcomers from Antwerp. He was firmly entrenched within the Antwerp networks through persons such as his main associate, Cornelis Snellinck. (The latter was married to a Portuguese woman, though it is not known if

she was a new Christian.) The Rodrigues Vega family were prominent members of that city's Portuguese community. For example, Rodrigues Vega's father, Luis Fernandes, had been a sugar and spice importer and had served as consul of the Portuguese nation of Antwerp in 1583 and every fourth year thereafter until his death. As mentioned, one of Rodrigues Vega's brothers, Gabriel Fernandes, was married to Maria Beecx, a daughter of the squire Jan de Beecx, a Catholic. This marriage would seem to show that the Rodrigues Vega family belonged to the Antwerp mercantile elite and held enough wealth and social status to marry into the Flemish Catholic landed gentry.

As a son of a prominent and wealthy family, Manoel Rodrigues Vegas connections with merchants in Antwerp were already in place before he came to Amsterdam. These connections were surely strengthened by his having spent time in Nantes, most likely working for the family business. Rodrigues Vega almost certainly came to Amsterdam to exploit the new commercial opportunities available there, perhaps on behalf of his family. However, as Rodrigues Vega was at the absolute forefront of Sephardic settlement in Amsterdam, even had he sought to work within Sephardic networks in the city, doing this would have been difficult. Quite simply, there were very few Sephardim with whom he could integrate his networks, even had he felt the need to. But it does not seem that Rodrigues Vega was much inclined to favor Sephardic networks, not least as he was already well-integrated into the networks of the Portuguese diaspora, as well as of the Protestants in Antwerp.

Rodrigues Vega not only did little business with other Sephardim but had few if any connections among the established Amsterdam merchants. In the first five years of his residence in Amsterdam (until 1600), fully a third of his recorded contracts make no mention of other merchants. Forty-two percent were contracts dealing with Dutch merchants, all of whom were cross-community migrants, and none of whom were originally from Amsterdam. In fact, the vast majority of Rodrigues Vega's commercial associates, as far I can ascertain, were recent immigrants from Antwerp, such as the van Geel, de Laet, Quinget, Beecx, de Schot, Coymans, van Os, Jacot, and van Dortmont families. Clearly, the other recent immigrants with whom Rodrigues Vega did business during his first five years in Amsterdam were most emphatically not other Sephardim.

In fact, during these initial five years only four contracts were made exclusively with other Sephardic merchants, and nine other contracts

were between Rodrigues Vega, another Sephardic merchant, and a Dutch merchant. Granted, there were relatively few Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam until and including 1600 with whom one could have done business. Moreover, some business dealings between Sephardic merchants, especially between family members, may have been conducted informally, without formal legal contracts. Nevertheless, it is striking how little Rodrigues Vega's fellow Sephardim, and merchants from the northern Netherlands, figured into his enterprises.

These figures are for the initial five years of Rodrigues Vega's residence in Amsterdam. However, if the entirety of Rodrigues Vega's commercial career, as far as it has come to light via the available archival material, is examined, the picture does not change dramatically. He does not seem to have relied particularly heavily upon Sephardic associates, and, when he did, such associates were almost always part of a larger interaction that included Dutch merchants. This lack of intra-Sephardic trade is thus not limited to the early years of Rodrigues Vega's settlement in Amsterdam, when there were few other Sephardic merchants with whom to do business. Rather, an absence of notable levels of intra-Sephardic trade is evident throughout the entirety of his recorded career, even during times when Sephardic merchants were flooding into the city of Amsterdam. Thus, it was clearly not just a scarcity of Sephardic merchants that kept Rodrigues Vega away from engaging his fellow Sephardim as business associates. Rather, he was already firmly integrated into the Flemish and Dutch networks of Antwerp-based merchants (or those who had emigrated from Antwerp) and had little or no need for intra-Sephardi networks.

This explication is further bolstered by the fact that Rodrigues Vega was also involved in numerous trade routes and products. As Chapter III showed, Rodrigues Vega was equally involved in the "rich" trade in products such as sugar, slaves, and other colonial goods and the "bulk" trades of grains, salt, etc. He had no real specialization in terms of trade goods. This lack of specialization would seem to indicate that he had little or no need to expand his networks so as to enter trade in a new sort of product or to focus more heavily upon such a product. Rodrigues Vega's existing networks were more than sufficient to accommodate his trade in products such as sugar and other spices and various grains.

Rodrigues Vega's existing networks were adequate not only in terms of the supply, distribution, and sale of the products in which he dealt. His networks already supplied sufficient geographical coverage for his needs. His established networks were based in Antwerp or utilized

emigrants from Antwerp. Though only 5% of Rodrigues Vega's contracts specifically named Antwerp, it is hardly surprising that almost half of his contracts pertained to the Atlantic, as Antwerp was the distribution point for colonial goods entering via the expanding Atlantic world.

For instance, Antwerp was the intersection for three routes in the development of the city's contacts in the Atlantic region. The first two routes were the "Escalda Occidental" and the Dunkirk route, along with Dover, which was a free/neutral port that provided transport to mercenaries in Dunkirk. The third route extended from Antwerp to the northern French ports. Antwerp was also a hub between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and during the sixteenth century the city was an important link in the chain of traffic between the Atlantic and the North of Europe.²

Moreover, the *asientos* for the Atlantic region were paid in Antwerp, and Antwerp formed an important nexus in the flow of international payments between Venice, Lyon, Amsterdam, and Hamburg.³ Indeed, one reason that Antwerp had flourished in the first place was because a Portuguese factory had been established there. This Portuguese "colony" in Antwerp (which included Rodrigues Vega's family) dealt in the burgeoning trade from Asia and West Africa. Antwerp preserved, until the mid-seventeenth century, its importance as a capital market for London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg, all of which utilized Antwerp's services and the city's commercial networks with the Iberian Peninsula. Antwerp enjoyed, as a *dispositionsplatz*, a flourishing money market, and was the most important exchange place in the southern Low Countries.⁴

Antwerp was able to maintain what was essentially a quadruple function during the sixteenth century. First, the city was a *dispositionsplatz*, meaning that transactions occurred there, without the products being actually physically present (with the notable exception of English cloth).⁵ Second, it was a distribution center for luxury goods, many of which were arriving from the East and West Indies. Third,

² Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London, 1972), 203.

³ Roland Bactens, *De nazomer van Antwerpens welvaart: De diaspora en het handelshuis De Groote tijdens de eerste helft der 17de eeuw* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1976), 258.

⁴ Bactens, *De nazomer*, 100, 243–244, 249 and Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*, 326–327.

⁵ Victor Enthoven, "From Sea-Beggars to Admiralty: The Dutch Navy after Lepanto," <http://www.assostoria.it/Armisovrano/Enthoven.pdf>.

it was the largest port in the southern Low Countries (for distribution and transit). Fourth, the city functioned as a capital market. All this was possible thanks to the maintenance of an exit market, principally with southern Europe and to the existence of a group of (surprisingly numerous) companies with ample funds, almost all linked by family ties or friendships with the Flemish diaspora.⁶

Many of these members of the Flemish diaspora were in Amsterdam. Indeed, Rodrigues Vega belonged to this Flemish diaspora, as did his Flemish associates, and this added another layer to his multifaceted identity. The Flemish merchants were already firmly engaged in maximizing Antwerp's possibilities as a money market, as well as its role as a distribution center for Atlantic goods. The entrepôt function for Atlantic goods began to slowly shift to Amsterdam, possibly helped by northern European acquisitions in the Atlantic. This shift may explain Rodrigues Vega's move to Amsterdam. Whatever the case, Rodrigues Vega remained active in the Atlantic trade—a trade in which he could continue to make the most of his networks from Antwerp (networks that were already rooted in the trade) and to integrate his regions and product assortment to include the Baltic (and Baltic goods) and the Mediterranean.

Rodrigues Vega's networks from Antwerp, most of which were engaged in the Atlantic trade, were largely Dutch and Flemish. He did not need networks of fellow Sephardim for the supply, distribution, or sale of products in which he was interested, nor did he need to incorporate other Sephardim into his networks to expand his geographical focus. As Rodrigues Vega already had access to Antwerp and the Atlantic via his connections with Dutch and Flemish merchants, there was no necessity for him to incorporate intra-Sephardi networks.

Manoel Carvalho: An Example of Integration

Manoel Carvalho traded much more frequently within a network that included fellow Sephardim in Amsterdam and Dutch associates than he did within other network configurations. He utilized such networks far more regularly than he did either intra-Sephardic networks or a network of only Dutch merchants. Carvalho stands out from the

⁶ Bactens, *De nazomer*, 99–100, 268–269.

successful global merchants Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Bento Osorio owing to the amount of his integrated Sephardi-Sephardi-Dutch trade. Forty-nine percent of his contracts were within networks of both one or more other Sephardic merchants and one or more Dutch merchant(s). Clearly, he must have felt that integrated networks were efficacious for the conduct of his trade. In contrast to these integrated networks, only 19% of Carvalho's contracts were intra-cultural, 16% were purely inter-cultural, and 15% were for interactions without another named associate. It would thus seem that intra-cultural networks were not particularly useful or necessary for him. Likewise, purely inter-cultural networks, with one or more Dutch merchants, were of little value to him. Carvalho, on his own, did not trade at significant rates without an associate, of whatever sort. Nor did he trade a great deal solely within the Sephardic group. Lastly, he did not trade considerably with Dutch merchants without other Sephardim involved.

Why, though, would Manoel Carvalho engage so frequently in integrated Sephardic-Sephardic-Dutch trade, especially in such stark contrast with the other global merchants? Carvalho was much more active in integrated trade networks than in other sorts of networks. He tended to maximize his contacts with Sephardim in Amsterdam, while also bringing in Dutch associates to his networks. This could be due to the fact that he already had a firm basis in Amsterdam's Sephardic networks. However, because of the routes in which he was involved, mostly the Atlantic, as well as his trade in sugar, Carvalho most likely needed to expand his business reach beyond his basis in Sephardic networks and bring in Dutch associates. This would allow him to continue expanding his trade in this region (and in sugar) once he moved to Amsterdam. Unlike Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho was not securely integrated into the Antwerp-based networks. These networks, as described previously, were important for the sale and distribution of colonial products such as sugar. Moreover, Antwerp had been the gateway for financing and conducting numerous types of Atlantic trade. Thus, Carvalho, if he was to continue to flourish commercially, needed to integrate himself into these networks but also retain his own previously established Sephardic networks.

Although Carvalho's cousin Maria de Pas had been married to Andre Dias, an Antwerp new Christian, she left Antwerp for Venice when Dias, her first husband, died.⁷ Carvalho could have maintained

⁷ GAA, NA 620/596.

some of the Antwerp connections via his cousin Maria, even after she had departed the city, but most likely he needed to continue expanding his connections elsewhere. Carvalho specialized in sugar, and 72% of contracts relating to Carvalho concern trade in this product. The sugar trade was an enterprise in which the Sephardim and new Christians were already highly visible in the sixteenth century.⁸ Though Carvalho had been born in Porto, Portugal, he spent much of his early years in Brazil before moving to the Low Countries. Brazil was the center of sugar production and trade. As a new Christian in Portugal and Brazil Carvalho would have already been connected to, and integrated in, the new Christian social and economic networks.⁹ He was the grandson of Pedro Alvares Madeiro, who had owned two-thirds of a plantation, with two sugar mills, in Pernambuco, Brazil, along the river Camaragibi. Carvalho inherited part of this estate, thereby making him part of the planter class in Brazil. This afforded him connections with the substantial new Christian networks that were focused on the sugar trade in Brazil, as well as experience in interacting with old Christians in the colony, many of whom were also landowners.

These networks for the Atlantic trade (mostly in Brazilian sugar) would serve Carvalho in good stead when he moved to Amsterdam. Swetschinski states that Carvalho settled in Amsterdam in 1604, but he was already listed as a merchant of Amsterdam in 1602, in the case of sugar confiscated the same year, as described in Chapter VI.¹⁰ In his first three years of residence in Amsterdam, Carvalho, like Rodrigues Vega, seemed to have been finding his way in regard to his commercial networks. He traded mostly on his own account, a pattern which did

⁸ See, for example, Ernst Pijning, "New Christians as Sugar Cultivators and Traders in the Portuguese Atlantic, 1450–1800," in Bernardini and Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 485–500. In this same volume, see also, J.C. Boyajian, "New Christians and Jews in the Sugar Trade," 471–484 and Pieter C. Emmer, "The Jewish Moment and the Two Expansion Systems in the Atlantic, 1580–1650," 501–516. See also, Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia, 1550–1835*.

⁹ There is a vast literature about the New Christians in Brazil. See, for example, Novinsky, *Cristãos Novos na Bahia*; Gonsalves de Mello, *Gente da nação*; Hersch W. Asbaum, *A saga do judeu brasileiro: a presença judaica em Terras de Santa Cruz* (São Paulo: Edições Inteligentes, 2000); Wiznitzer, *Os judeus no Brasil Colonial*; and the numerous works of José Gonçalves Salvador, such as *Cristãos-novos, jesuítas e Inquisição* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira/Edusp, 1969); *Cristãos-Novos e o Comércio no Atlântico Meridional: Cristãos-Novos em Minas Gerais Durante o Ciclo do Ouro* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1992); *Os Cristãos-Novos: Povoamento e Conquista do Solo Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Liv. Pioneira, 1976); and *Os magnatas do tráfico negreiro: séculos XVI e XVII*.

¹⁰ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 108 and RGP 92, 293.

not continue later, though he also worked with Sephardic and Dutch associates. This may have been because he was not yet integrated into any Amsterdam-based networks or because he was trading on behalf of merchants who, as they were outside Amsterdam (most likely in Brazil or Portugal), do not appear in the documentation.

Whatever the case, Carvalho had few connections among the established merchants native to Amsterdam. Sixty-five percent of his contracts list Dutch and Flemish merchants.¹¹ Only one of these Dutch merchants, Albert Schuyt, was originally from the northern Netherlands, albeit not from Amsterdam. The vast majority of Carvalho's commercial associates, as far as I could ascertain, were relatively recent immigrants from Antwerp. Schuyt himself was strongly connected to merchants from Antwerp through his second marriage, to Constantia de Haze, whose family was heavily involved in the sugar trade.¹²

This focus on merchants from Antwerp as new associates to integrate into his network seems to indicate several things, especially the importance of Antwerp. Carvalho's seeking to expand his networks with important sugar-trading families who had originated in Antwerp shows that these merchants were known to have connections and expertise in the Atlantic sugar trade. Likewise, as was the case with Rodrigues Vega, it may have been that Carvalho began to expand and supplement his networks with Dutch and Flemish merchants because there were relatively few Sephardim in Amsterdam with whom to do business. Lastly, this may indicate a sort of "new-comers solidarity" of cross-community migrants in Amsterdam. Both the Sephardim, such as Carvalho, and the Antwerp émigrés were newcomers to Amsterdam, and neither group had connections with established merchants in Amsterdam. Thus, they may have naturally turned towards one another, especially as many Sephardim, as well as many Antwerp immigrants, were active in the Atlantic sugar trade.

As a newcomer to Amsterdam not only seeking to continue expanding his trade in sugar but also branching into the trade in grains and other Baltic goods which he shipped to the Mediterranean, it was

¹¹ Combined Sephardic-Sephardic-Dutch (S/S/D) and Sephardic-Dutch (S/D).

¹² For instance, Carvalho dealt with members of the following families from the Southern Netherlands: Laurens Joosten Baeck, David de l'Hommel, Pieter Gillis, François Wouters, and Pieter van Geel. See: <http://amsterdammerchants.niwi.knaw.nl:8080/kooplieden> and van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*. Constantia de Haze was from Antwerp and was the widow of Jan Nicquet (and the daughter of Hendrick and Clara Coymans). See, van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 141, 209.

necessary for Carvalho to integrate his networks by including Dutch associates. Such associates would include his main associate, Albert Schuyt, who had strong connections, via his wife, to prominent sugar-trading families in Antwerp. Schuyt was likely interested in working with Carvalho in order to expand and integrate his own networks, especially in Brazil, from where Carvalho had migrated. At any rate, Carvalho used his integrated networks mainly for financing his trading enterprises, via bills of exchange, and for insuring his shipments. Importantly, the integrated networks also helped him access goods, such as grain, in which he had not dealt in previously.

Thus, it seems clear that Carvalho depended on integrated Sephardi-Sephardi-Dutch networks, at least partially, out of necessity. As a newcomer to Amsterdam who was trading in Atlantic sugar, he may have found that his purely intra-Sephardic networks were not adequate to trade from his new home. Rather, he likely realized that he needed to draw upon the Antwerpers' expertise in the sugar trade to in the financing and distribution of this product. Carvalho also recognized the advantages to be had in the transport of Baltic grain to the Italian peninsula, suggesting that, owing to the large and established Sephardic communities in the Italian city-states, he had enough Sephardic associates on the Italian end of the enterprise. However, it is unlikely he held any entry into the supply markets for Baltic grain, and so Carvalho began to supplement his networks with Dutch merchants who could help in these vital areas.

Osorio: A Loner?

Bento Osorio traded much more frequently on his own, without another recorded associate of any sort, than he did with intra-Sephardi networks, inter-cultural groups, or integrated Sephardi-Dutch networks. He stands out markedly from among the other successful global merchants, Manoel Rodrigues Vega and Manoel Carvalho, for the amount of "single merchant" trade. Forty-three percent of Osorio's contracts have no other listed merchant associate, whereas only 14% were intra-cultural and 25% included both other Sephardic merchants and Dutch associates. Seventeen percent of Osorio's contracts were for purely inter-cultural trade. Osorio, in short, was a merchant who, though he utilized merchants of various backgrounds to conduct his trade, did not generally rely on other merchants.

But why would Osorio so frequently trade on his own, or at least without another named merchant, especially in such stark contrast with the other successful global merchants? Osorio was already 50 years old and an established merchant when he came to Amsterdam, and his father had belonged to the Order of Santiago in Portugal. Membership in such an order illustrated something about the member's financial, political, and social wherewithal. The military orders, such as the Order of Santiago, were officially off-limits to new Christians. A *habilitacão*, an investigation of the purity of an applicant's blood (undertaken to ensure that an applicant was not tainted by Jewish ancestry), was required for admission. However, in many of the military orders, enough social and economic power could ensure a clean *habilitacão* despite new Christian ancestry.

The Order of Santiago had begun as an early medieval chivalric order. By the mid-fourteenth century, however, the administration of the Order was in the hands of members of the Royal Family, where it remained until 1551, when the Crown became the Grand Master of the Order. Thereafter, a Royal Council was established with judicial power to administer the Order's affairs. Entrance into the Order as a knight, and concession of a command (which often carried large revenues) became an important aim for those seeking to obtain social status within Portuguese society. For the Crown, having grand-mastership of the Order offered an important means by which to reward services without resorting to taxation or otherwise utilizing scarce Crown resources.¹³ Moreover, when the Spanish Habsburgs ascended the Portuguese throne, in 1580, they began to use membership in the Order so as to obtain or confirm their Portuguese subjects' loyalty. Essentially, membership in the Order was a way for social climbers to "arrive." That Osorio's father was a member of the Order is a strong indication that the Osorio family included wealthy and prominent merchants who were looking for social advancement in Iberia. Moreover, it suggests that the Crown had hoped to procure the family's loyalty.

¹³ Eutímio Sastre Santos, *La Orden de Santiago y su Regla* (Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense, 1981); Francis A. Dutra, "Evolution of the Portuguese Order of Santiago, 1492–1600," *Mediterranean Studies* IV (1994): 63–72 and his *The Order of Santiago and the Estado da Índia, 1498–1750*, in Francis A. Dutra and João Camilo dos Santos, eds., *The Portuguese in the Pacific: International Colloquium on the Portuguese in the Pacific, Santa Barbara, 1993* (Santa Barbara, California: Center for Portuguese Studies, University of California, 1995), 287–304.

As a wealthy and prominent new Christian in Portugal, Osorio would have forged strong economic and social links within the existing new Christian networks and most likely within the old Christian Portuguese mercantile networks. Indeed, the Osorio family was linked to important and wealthy new Christians in Portugal, including the de Pintos (who later moved to Antwerp, and then to Amsterdam, in the 1640s). Osorio was the factor for the de Pinto family in Amsterdam, while the latter lived in Portugal, and, afterwards, when they settled in Antwerp. The preponderance of “solitary” trade on Osorio’s part is most likely misleading and it probable that many of the contracts in which he appears as the only merchant listed were in fact interactions with the de Pinto family.

Bento Osorio was, like Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, a cross-community migrant and immigrant to the city of Amsterdam. It is likely that he came directly from Lisbon, because one of his daughters, Ana, was born there, in 1607.¹⁴ Rodrigues Vega, in contrast, came to Amsterdam only after having left Antwerp to live in Nantes, and Carvalho, born in Portugal, had spent years in Brazil before moving to Amsterdam. That Osorio, unlike the other global merchants, had not lived elsewhere before coming to Amsterdam may indicate that he had not previously needed to leave Portugal. Carvalho and Rodrigues Vega may have been on the move because they were seeking opportunities to expand their business enterprises and to make their fortunes. Osorio may have moved to Amsterdam for the same reason, albeit having waited until the risks diminished. Once peace was ensured, with the Truce in 1609, trade between the Dutch Republic and Iberia could boom as never before, and would likely leave Osorio poised to take advantage of the political development for his economic gain.

Osorio first arrived in Amsterdam in 1610.¹⁵ The ‘Twelve Years’ Truce had been in effect for a year, and trade between the Iberian Peninsula and the Low Countries was thriving. Therefore, an economic rationale seems to be a straightforward explanation for Osorio’s move. Another supposition is that, besides the compelling economic reasons for Osorio’s move to Amsterdam, there were political and religious motivations. Osorio was known internationally as a merchant

¹⁴ GAA, DTB 672/59.

¹⁵ See GAA, NA 62/199; NA 62/189; NA 62/194v; NA 120/178v–179v for notarial acts passed in 1610.

who traded with Spain, Portugal, north Africa, the Baltic, and the Levant. He was so well-known in Spain for the extent of his trading enterprises that he was denounced in public pamphlets for supposedly injuring Spanish interests.¹⁶ As the graphs in Chapter III show, Osorio was very active as a trader in the Atlantic, the Baltic and the Mediterranean, as well as locally in Amsterdam. He was also involved in the sugar trades between Portugal, the Dutch Republic, and the Italian peninsula, and shipped wheat, wood, and ammunition from Norway and the Baltic to Tangier and Ceuta. Thus, when Osorio arrived in Amsterdam, he was well-connected and wealthy, and had chosen a felicitous time to move to this city. He was a merchant with the financial wherewithal to pursue trading ventures on his own and did not need the financing or contacts that other merchants found necessary. Nevertheless, pursuing trade on one's own was highly unusual among merchants in the early modern period. Though some of these contracts were no doubt for Osorio alone, a large number were likely to have been trading ventures done in association with the de Pinto family, despite de Pinto not appearing in the particular contracts.

Osorio, as he was already firmly entrenched in his network with the de Pinto family, had no need to affiliate with Judaism in order to integrate himself into the emerging Sephardic Jewish networks based in Amsterdam. When Osorio did trade with others, he traded less with purely intra-Sephardic networks (with the exception of the contracts categorized as "solitary" but which can be assumed to have been in association with de Pinto) than he did with Dutch merchants. This intra-Sephardic trade with the de Pinto family does not diminish the importance of Osorio's inter-cultural trade, however. Other than the estimated (but non-assessable) intra-Sephardic trade as a factor of the de Pinto family, Osorio hardly used intra-Sephardic networks, despite his being, of all the merchants highlighted in this work, the one most firmly entrenched in Amsterdam's emergent Sephardic Jewish community. This entrenchment is illustrated by the fact that Osorio, unlike Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, used a Jewish name: Baruch.

¹⁶ Adler, "A Contemporary Memorial Relating to Damages to Spanish Interests in America Done by Jews of Holland (1634)," 50.

Inter-cultural associations were not anomalous for these merchants. The traditional historiography, outlined in Chapter I, held that one of the most important components, if not the most important element, of the relative success of the Sephardim in Amsterdam (or, in fact, of any group or any individual merchant) in trade was their utilization of networks based on family and shared ethno-religious background. However, the merchants Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio did not trade more within their networks than did the overall group of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam (with the possible exception of Osorio, who worked as a factor for the de Pinto family). Even in the case of Osorio, however, it cannot be determined how much of his trade was truly on his own behalf and how much was intra-Sephardic. Furthermore, other than the possibility that a portion of Osorio's recorded "solitary" trading pattern was, in fact, intra-cultural, few other Sephardic associates in Amsterdam regularly appear in his contracts. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were among the most prominent and wealthy Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam but did not make particular use of intra-Sephardi networks. In fact, they traded significantly less within their own Sephardic group than did other Sephardic merchants. Therefore, intra-cultural or intra-group trade could not have accounted for their relative successes as merchants.

And Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were indeed highly successful merchants. Not only were they wealthy, insofar as their wealth is measurable, but they were global merchants who had extensive geographic reach and who were innovative and integrative. They stood out from among the other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam at the time. They appear so frequently in the documents because they conducted a great deal of trade and left behind many contracts. These qualities, coupled with their being cross-community migrants who had contacts and knowledge acquired from various places, meant that each was in a good position to encounter merchants from outside their own ethno-religious group and to maximize business opportunities that these contacts afforded. In general, these merchants went outside their own intra-group networks for when they were unfamiliar and/or not integrated in/with the market in which they wanted to enter, and in which they might not have any trusted associates, and when they had contacts enough within their group but saw the efficacy of augmenting their networks with new members who could help them expand their base of clients, suppliers, and creditors.

Inter-culturality and Convergence

William Temple, an English diplomat, wrote that, in the Amsterdam of the seventeenth century,

... the force of Commerce, Alliances and Acquaintance . . . may contribute much to make conversation, and all the offices of common life, so easy, among so different Opinions. Of which so many several persons are often in every man's eye; . . . no man checks or takes offence at Faces, or Customs, or Ceremonies, he sees every day. . .¹⁷

According to Temple, familiarity bred by the normal day-to-day contact of a bustling port city, coupled with commercial acquaintances and alliances, made differences such as appearance and distinctive customs more or less irrelevant. Of course, this is an idealized picture of a complex reality, but Temple's observations help illustrate the fact that the intense economic interactions, especially when facilitated by a port city such as Amsterdam, gave rise to a not insignificant amount of cultural and social exchange between people of different religions, ethnicities, and backgrounds. These groups intersected and interacted with each other in complex ways, both as collaborators and as rivals. Their networks and their social lives overlapped, yet were also clearly separated.

Although there was a Jewish neighborhood in Amsterdam, the *Vlooienburg*, by the mid-seventeenth century, there was no *ghetto*, unlike in Venice, and Dutch men and women (including Rembrandt van Rijn and his family) lived alongside Sephardim and, later, Ashkenazi neighbors.¹⁸ Rembrandt, well known for his paintings based on Jewish scripture, and fellow artists such as Govaert Flinck and Romeyn de Hooghe also accepted commissions from Sephardic clients, whom they rendered no differently from the wealthy Dutch regents they painted. The manner in which they painted the Sephardim, the depiction of their dress, and the architecture and interiors of their houses are perfectly ordinary.¹⁹ The Sephardic men are painted in

¹⁷ Sir William Temple, *Observations Upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1971 [1673]), 183–184, quoted in Adam Sutcliffe, "Identity, Space and Intercultural Contact in the Urban Entrepôt: The Sephardic Bounding of Community in Early Modern Amsterdam and London," in David Cesarani and Gemma Romain, eds., *Jews and Port Cities*, 93–108, 99.

¹⁸ Steve Nadler's *Rembrandt's Jews* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003) is an immensely readable exploration of Rembrandt's relationship to his Jewish neighbors.

¹⁹ Nadler, *Rembrandt's Jews*, 63.

velvet capes and breeches, and wearing silk stockings and leather shoes, as was the norm for wealthy men in Amsterdam at the time. Their hair is fashionably cut and their beards are like those of other men that Rembrandt painted, such as Arnout Tholinx, Herman Doomer, and Jacob Trip.²⁰ Likewise, the Sephardic women are dressed like any other stylish women of the day.

For the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam who commissioned these paintings, it was important that they be depicted in the same style as were the regents, burghers, and other successful members of Amsterdam's mercantile and social elite. Merchants such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were thrown together with Dutch merchants in Amsterdam; this generated social familiarity that increasingly transcended cultural difference, thereby hastening a process that had begun in Iberia, where they had lived as Christians, albeit socially-stigmatized "new" ones. This shared familiarity among the Sephardic merchants and their Dutch counterparts led to the adaptation of some of each other's customs, such as dress, and to the forging of a sort of common culture and identity.²¹ It also engendered a kind of standardization of the groups' respective cultures and identities.

The degree of social contact between the Sephardim and their Dutch neighbors and business associates is almost impossible to determine. Nevertheless, that the *mahamad* of the Sephardic congregations found it necessary, throughout the seventeenth century, to continually promulgate rulings that discouraged inter-cultural contact anywhere other than in the business realm would seem to point to the ordinary nature of such interactions, not to mention the perceived threat of these interactions to the Sephardic community.²²

As Yosef Kaplan has pointed out, the ruling councils of the Sephardic congregations were deeply concerned with the public image of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam.²³ The councils were worried that any misbehavior on the part of their congregants, whether as extreme as contributing to conversions of Christians to Judaism (an abiding fear of the Protestant clergy) or as seemingly minor as drunken rowdiness, would endanger the goodwill and toleration which allowed

²⁰ Nadler, *Rembrandt's Jews*, 119–120.

²¹ Sutcliffe, "Identity, Space and Intercultural Contact in the Urban Entrepôt: The Sephardic Bounding of Community in Early Modern Amsterdam and London," 93.

²² GAA, 334/19–22, 27, 77.

²³ Kaplan, "*Gente Politica*."



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Ephraim Bueno* Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

their residence in the city and in the Dutch Republic itself. But beyond fears of scandal which might damage the community's security was the anxiety that the integrity of the cultural boundaries demarcating the Sephardim from their Dutch neighbors was eroding. The erosion of these boundaries threatened to undermine an already tenuous cultural separateness.



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Dr. Ephraim Bueno Descending a Staircase*, 1647
Louvre, Paris.

The Sephardim in Amsterdam were, after generations of having lived ostensibly as Christians in Portugal or Spain, strongly influenced by the main currents of Christian European religion and thought. They were accustomed to mixing with old Christians, commercially and socially. The Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam were, five generations or so after the forced conversions, generally culturally indistinguishable from their Portuguese counterparts. This meant that wealthy merchants such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and

Bento Osorio were culturally not especially different culturally from their Dutch associates. Whatever differences remained began to wear away even further under the inexorable process of social and mercantile contact.

Granted, this cultural porousness is impossible to prove empirically; the evidence is impressionistic rather than concrete. And this is not to claim that inter-cultural trade obliterated social barriers between groups, in general, and between the Sephardim and their Dutch associates in Amsterdam, specifically. Social and legal barriers did not disappear, despite the cosmopolitan nature of life in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. Christian merchants, both Protestant and Catholic, could easily do business with non-Christian merchants even as they espoused anti-Semitic views.²⁴ And, as the anthropologist Fredrik Barth has shown, ethnic boundaries do not necessarily dissolve as a result of stable economic exchange.²⁵ Jews were still denied access to most guilds, could not hold public office, and were not permitted to live in cities and towns throughout the Dutch Republic. Intermarriage was almost unheard of.²⁶ Moreover, the Sephardim in Amsterdam remained highly conscious of their Iberian identity (versus any sort of Dutch identity) well into the eighteenth century.²⁷ Though there were assimilationist tendencies among the Sephardim of Amsterdam, the economic decline of the eighteenth century, coupled with the structure of the urban and rural space, meant that there was less of a tendency toward assimilation in the Dutch Republic than there was among the Sephardic elite in England during the same period.²⁸

²⁴ Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 20.

²⁵ Fredrik Barth, "Ecological Relationship of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan," *American Anthropologist* 58, 6 (1956): 1079–1089 and his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Differences* (Bergen, Oslo and London: Universitets Forlaget and George Allen & Unwin, 1969).

²⁶ There are a few instances of (possible) intermarriage before 1660. See, for instance: DTB 669-101, DTB 671-217, DTB 680-180. It can be difficult to determine from the names and places of origin alone if a particular marriage was "inter-cultural."

²⁷ See Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 76–95; Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 254–257; and Chimen Abramsky, "The Crisis of Authority Within European Jewry in the Eighteenth Century," in Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe, eds., *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1979), 13–28.

²⁸ Sutcliffe, "Identity, Space and Intercultural Contact in the Urban Entrepôt: The Sephardic Bounding of Community in Early Modern Amsterdam and London," 104–106.

Nevertheless, during the period that I examine for this study, individuals such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio constituted their lives within multiple networks. These networks intersected irregularly at different nodes, though it is difficult to determine how or if their trade networks intersected with their social networks. We do not know, for instance, if these merchants dined together in each other's houses or engaged in other activities that would be indicative of friendships. We do know that, despite their aristocratic pretensions, they spent their leisure time in ways that were characteristic of the mercantile classes of the Dutch Republic at the time. For example, they attended theaters and coffee houses and they gambled.²⁹ We also know that the coalescence of religious identities that had become evident by the mid-to-late seventeenth century was not yet characteristic of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam. These merchants still presented their social identity with some degree of fluidity, in multiple ways, depending on the network in which they were trying to interact. Thus, there is greater likelihood that had there been an intersection between the social and economic networks of Dutch and Sephardic merchants, it would have occurred during the period I have considered in this study.

It is clear that, as cross-community migrants, these merchants helped generate changes and innovations, especially in the realm of trade networks, routes, and products. These innovations, not to mention the presence of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, helped generate differentiation. Paradoxically, this same cross-community migration led to a greater similarity among the Sephardic and the Dutch mercantile communities.³⁰ Thus, there was a gradual shift from differentiation to convergence between the communities. This convergence was especially evident in the realm of commerce, but was also visible in the social sphere. Wealthy Sephardic merchants not only conducted business in the same way that their Dutch associates did; they also dressed alike, generally appeared virtually indistinguishable from one another, had the same sorts of houses, and shared similar social and economic aspirations.

²⁹ Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 278–314.

³⁰ Manning, “Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern,” 47.

Conclusion

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were merchants who behaved differently depending on their particular individual circumstances. They all appear to have eschewed intra-Sephardi networks at a far greater rate than did the sampling of other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam at the time (due note is given to the difficulty in interpreting how much of a role Osorio's duties as factor for the de Pinto family played in his overall trading patterns). But beyond this basic and very important similarity, however, they exhibited markedly dissimilar behaviors. Rodrigues Vega traded much more frequently directly with Dutch merchants than did Carvalho or Osorio. This dissimilarity was likely due to the products and routes in which Rodrigues Vega was active and to his family connections in Antwerp. Manoel Carvalho, on the other hand, traded much more actively within a constellation of fellow Sephardim and Dutch associates. Carvalho's trading patterns also likely resulted from the products and routes in which he was interested. Lastly, Bento Osorio traded mostly on his own behalf, assuming the documentation is reliable. Of course, it is likely that many of Osorio's contracts were actually manifestations of intra-cultural trade, as he was a factor for the new Christian de Pinto family. Osorio was an established and wealthy merchant before he came to Amsterdam, and, moreover, he arrived in the city during a time of peace and economic prosperity. As such, he had little need to trade with other merchants of any background, except for the de Pintos. Although Osorio was the only demonstrably unequivocal Jew among these global merchants, even he did not rely extensively on intra-Sephardi networks, other than what can be guessed to have been the de Pintos' share in his overall trade percentages. In short, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, as global merchants, were not dependent for their respective successes on intra-Sephardi networks.

These merchants' trading patterns would seem to illustrate that loose ties, in which merchants are connected to each other in various directions, such as Rodrigues Vega's associations with Cornelis Snelinck, or Manoel Carvalho's many one-off or occasional associations with Dutch merchants, may have been more efficient than were tightly-knit networks, such as by expanding networks in new trade regions and products, and by utilizing new technologies such as the *fluit* ship. These tightly-knit networks, such as intra-Sephardi networks, in which each member knew the rest, contributed to pressures to reinforce traditional religious and family values. This reinforcement may have, in turn, stymied the efficiency of networks. For example, it could have

led merchants to trust family members and fellow Sephardim and new Christians unwisely. A brother-in-law who absconded with the family's money or passed bills of exchange that a merchant was unable to honor could bring down the entire network. Thus, loose-ties and intercultural networks served not only to increase efficiencies in networks but also, perhaps, to reduce risks for merchants.³¹

This divergent trading pattern on the part of these merchants may have been due to a cycle of success. If a merchant were successful, he had the wherewithal to move beyond his traditional ethno-religious networks and form loose ties with merchants from other groups. These loose ties with a variety of merchants from divergent backgrounds helped to lower risk and expand opportunities which, in turn, increased the merchants' successes. Another theory is that some merchants chose to take the perceived risk of moving beyond their ethno-religious group so as to search for network associates. This supposedly risky move may then have borne fruit in the form of successful trading networks. Essentially, it could be either that a merchant, already being successful, moved beyond his ethno-religious group for trading associates and thereby spurred his existing success to greater heights. Likewise, merchants who were not yet wealthy, or who were only somewhat successful, may have opted to connect loosely with merchants outside their group, and thereby—if the decision turned out to be a good one—increased the efficiency of their networks.

³¹ There are frequent examples of these sorts of problems within intra-cultural trading networks. For example, in 1608, the brothers Lopo and Antonio de Moura, Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, went bankrupt, leading Antonio to abscond on his debts. The de Moura brothers were brought to bankruptcy by two Sephardic merchants in Antwerp, Gaspar Nunes and Henrique Alvares. The Nunes and Alvares insolvency set off a chain reaction among the members of their Sephardic trading network. To take just one example, João, Rodrigo, Fernando and Simão de Mercado, brothers and Sephardic merchants in Antwerp, were destroyed by their associates' economic collapse. GAA, NA 58/160–161; NA113/119–130; GAA, NA 113/119v–120; NA 58/173; NA 114/57v–59; 60–61; 62–62v; 67–68v; NA 265/153–154; NA 144/154–154v; NA 119/49v. On this case, see Jessica Vance Roitman, "When Family and Friends Fail: Dysfunction and Disintegration in Sephardic Networks, 1595–1640," unpublished paper presented at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Fellows' Seminar, 4 February 2009. See also, Jessica Vance Roitman, "'A Flock of Wolves Instead of Sheep': The Dutch West India Company and Conflict Resolution in Curacao in the 18th Century," Cornelia Aust, "Going to Court: Conflict Resolution among Jewish Merchants in 18th Century Central Europe," and Evelyn Oliel-Grausz, "The Economic Impact of the *Kehillah* Considered in Different Local Legal Contexts and Cultures," unpublished papers presented as part of the Association for Jewish Studies 2009 Conference [Los Angeles, California, 19–22 December]; Green, "Further Considerations on the Sephardim of the Petite Côte"; and Swetschinski, "Kinship and Commerce," 70–73.

CONCLUSION

Concluding Remarks and Avenues for Further Research

At the beginning of this book, I described the intense interest in the Sephardim of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. This group, overwhelmingly composed of merchants, has fascinated scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, at least in part because they seem to hold up a distant mirror to the lives and issues faced by minority groups today. The ways in which the Sephardim grappled with the surrounding society, tolerance, the blending of cultures, and the limits and lure of assimilation speak strongly to scholars seeking to understand these same issues in the contemporary world.¹ Moreover, and further fascinating to scholars, Amsterdam in the seventeenth century seemed to act as a sort of multi-cultural beacon of tolerance and co-existence that presages the modern urban experience.

The Sephardic economic elites of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century such as Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were socially and culturally accepted in a way that was unique in the early modern world, though this acceptance would later be mimicked, to a greater or lesser degree, in cities such as Bayonne, Bordeaux, Hamburg, and London. Everyday contact between the Sephardim and the Dutch in Amsterdam was unremarkable. This contact meant that important economic relationships were built up between the Sephardim and the Dutch merchants in the midst of whom they lived, or that relationships that had existed in other parts of the world were renewed in Amsterdam. Essentially, the borders between the Dutch and Sephardim in Amsterdam during this time was permeable. This permeability was aided by the complex identity of the elite Sephardic merchants, many of whom were as much Iberian, trans-national, and mercantile-oriented than Jewish, and were not noticeably different in

¹ This contemporary interest in the Sephardic community in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century may also stem, at least partially, from internal Jewish politics around the perceived Ashkenazi monopolization of historical and scholarly understandings of Judaism and Jewishness, and from Dutch scholars grappling with the tragic culmination of Dutch-Jewish relations in the mid-twentieth century.

appearance or behavior from non-Sephardic Iberian merchants in the Dutch Republic. It would be interesting to test my findings against a later chronology; for instance the second half of the seventeenth century. Would my findings regarding the extent of inter-cultural trade be the same or similar for the latter half of the century, when economic crisis had begun to set in? Moreover, during that time religious identity among the Sephardim in Amsterdam has largely coalesced into Judaism. Would either the economic situation or the sense of religious affiliation and identity (or both) have an impact on the ways in which these merchants interacted with each other and on the choices they made regarding who they brought into their economic networks?

These complex identities on the part of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam came about for a variety of reasons. The late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were times of great changes for the Portuguese new Christians and Sephardim. Cross-community migration became a widely experienced reality. The new Christians and Sephardim viewed themselves as members of the “nation” (*membros da nação*) or “members of the Spanish-Portuguese Nation.” The term *nación* or *nação* referred not only to the Sephardic Jews, but also to the new Christians who remained in other countries, especially Spain or Portugal, whether or not they affiliated with Judaism. The Portuguese Sephardic and new Christian “nation” was, therefore, somewhat different from other alien nations. The Sephardic and new Christian communities were, in many respects, merchant colonies much like others in northern Europe, but their collective sense of ethnic identity transcending religious and geographical boundaries differentiates them from the other alien trading nations.

While the experience of cross-community migration certainly helped to bolster their identity, the foundation of this ethnic identity (as Portuguese new Christian merchants) had been laid in the sixteenth century in Portugal. As many of the examples I have given for Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio show, a great deal of inter-cultural trade occurred at the nodes of the Portuguese new Christian diaspora. Even when fellow Sephardic and new Christian merchants were available in places like Venice, La Rochelle, and Salé, these merchants often chose to use traders or representatives from non-Sephardic or non-new Christian background to help them in their mercantile endeavors. Not only did these merchants use representatives from other backgrounds, however; in the case of Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho, they were cross-community migrants

who actually lived outside of Portugal and almost certainly formed relationships with non-Sephardic, non-new Christian merchants in Antwerp and Brazil, respectively. Thus, while the experience of cross-community migration may have solidified their identities as Portuguese new Christian merchants or members of “the nation,” it also spurred their loose ties in inter-cultural relationships. This makes clear that the concept of diaspora as an analytical category is not enough to explain the Sephardic merchants’ economic behavior. Hence, Francesca Trivellato’s differentiation between diaspora and trade networks—in which diasporas are not synonymous with trade networks, though each may complement the other—was particularly valid for the Sephardim in Amsterdam examined in this study.

As this book has shown, the communal identity of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam varied widely from merchant to merchant and was not always primarily religious. Shared religion, especially in a diaspora group, helps to provide a basis for the formation of values, coherence, social organization, and legitimating authority among the members of the community. For the Sephardim in Amsterdam, as well as for their Sephardic Jewish and new Christian brethren, it was not the religious beliefs of Judaism *per se* but, rather, the shared experiences of being part of what became *de facto* a separate ethnic group within Portuguese society that formed a component of their group identity. Later, in some parts of western Europe such as Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London, and in various colonial settlements, some new Christian merchants added Judaism to their layers of identity. Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were wealthy and prominent Portuguese merchants from a new Christian background. As such, a large part of their identity was rooted in their economic function, and thus they had as much in common with fellow entrepreneurs, regardless of political, religious, or national differences, than they did with poor Ashkenazi Jews. Nevertheless, these merchants became, at some point in their lives, affiliated (even if only peripherally) with the open practice of Judaism. This open practice of Judaism in Amsterdam has become, for many scholars, the defining component not only of these merchants’ identities, but of all the Sephardim in Amsterdam. Further, scholars and commentators have conflated all new Christians in western Europe as a whole, though this conflation is not based in fact.

It was not as Jews but, rather, as entrepreneurs with broad and integrated networks for the trade in sought-after goods, that the Sephardic

merchants in Amsterdam, in general, and Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio, specifically, sought to optimize their trading potential. They pursued such optimization via increasing their efficiency and reducing their risks, using their previously acquired experience in certain branches of the intra-European and intercontinental trades and by employing loose-ties with other merchants, such as those they had made while migrating across communities and living or traveling in other places. These loose ties and migratory experiences helped form networks that connected individuals in various directions. These networks were more efficient than were tightly-knit networks.

The existing historiography of trade in the early modern period tends to ignore these loose ties and the inter-cultural interactions they helped bring about. Certainly, the histories of the Sephardim and new Christians in the early modern period emphasize the close networks based on kinship, shared ethnicity, and commonality of religious experience, as do most histories of any group of merchants in the early modern period. Yet these histories tend to overlook the fact that loose ties embodied in economic relationships that bridged cultures, religions, ethnicities, and the boundaries of the emerging nation-state were invaluable to the conduct of trade in the early modern economy. These networks allowed merchants to access not only regions but also sectors that were dominated by merchants of other backgrounds.

This same historiography tends to assume that family ties, shared socio-ethnic background, and religion were the basis of the formation of efficient, successful trade networks during this time. The Sephardim did, by and large, practice endogamous marriage, and formed social, charitable, and religious organizations based upon their religion and ethnicity. Yet these very real social networks formed within the Sephardic and new Christian diaspora were not synonymous with their economic networks, which included non-Sephardic, non-Jewish merchants, as this book demonstrates. In other words, this study has substantiated that, in contrast to what many commentators on trade in the early modern period have asserted, the social networks to which the Sephardim in Amsterdam belonged were not co-extensive with their economic relationships, especially among the most successful group, namely the globally-oriented merchants, who did not trade only, or even mainly, with fellow Sephardim.

Heretofore, it has been taken as a given that the Sephardim and new Christians in the early modern period were successful because they were able to engender, from family members and those who

shared their ethno-religious background, the trust necessary to work successfully in the unstable trading environment of the early modern economy. However, such analysis was based on superficial descriptions of the geographical and genealogical relationships between Sephardic and new Christian traders. As this book has shown, there were in fact very real and important inter-cultural associations between merchants from a variety of backgrounds, all working together to optimize their networks' efficiencies. A worthwhile avenue for future research would be to examine if such preference for inter-cultural trade existed among other successful diaspora groups and cross-community migrants such as the Huguenots or Armenians. Like the new Christians and Sephardim, these groups have traditionally been studied through the lens of diaspora. Historians have tended to presuppose the primacy of kin and ethno-religiously based trading patterns. If the Huguenots or Armenians were examined in the same way I have studied the Sephardim of Amsterdam, it would be intriguing to see what the differences and similarities in their trading patterns might be.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were all, as has been shown, part of the Portuguese new Christian diaspora, as well as cross-community migrants who came from outside of Amsterdam. This put them outside the already established social and economic networks within the city. Thus, their commercial ventures were, at least initially, often undertaken on their own or with other recent immigrants rather than with members of the already existing mercantile elite. Interestingly, it seemed to make little or no difference if the recent immigrants were fellow Sephardic merchants. Moreover, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio straddled several social groups and cultures.

This straddling of groups and cultures seems to have helped rather than hindered their economic enterprises. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio were either wealthy when they arrived in Amsterdam, or became wealthy there. They were members of the Iberian elite, either on the Iberian peninsula, in her colonies, or as part of the trading "nations" abroad. Thus, they were well-connected and poised to take advantage of the economic possibilities offered by Iberian trade. In addition, they were members of the new Christian sub-group of the larger Portuguese diaspora. There is no doubt that this was, depending on the prevailing political and religious winds, a marginalized sub-group but one that still managed to maximize its marginalization economically and socially. Lastly, though they were not fully integrated into

the culture of Amsterdam merchants, they parlayed their newcomer and outsider status into an advantage by optimizing their connections with other recent newcomers to the city, regardless of whether these other newcomers were fellow Sephardim or not (as was more often the case), and they formed new networks of global merchants.

But as members of a sort of informal brotherhood of elite, global, cross-community merchants, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio and their Dutch associates were exceptional. As such, it would be interesting to consider how much light they and other mercantile elites, in general, can shed on the behavior and trading patterns of non-elite merchants, whether Sephardim or not. I chose merchants for whom there were at least 100 extant records of their trading activities so that I would have some chance of saying something at least somewhat statistically meaningful about their behavior. However, this choice meant that I automatically excluded less wealthy, less well-known, non-elite merchants from consideration. It could very well be that what we might call “middling” merchants, regardless of background, may have needed to rely more on intra-group networks than would have elite merchants, who would have had the wherewithal to take risks and to come into contact with merchants from different backgrounds. Moreover, it could be that the Sephardim in Amsterdam, as a group, were more likely than other merchants of whatever stripe to trade inter-culturally. The familiar tropes about the Sephardim—their “aristocratic” outlook, their background as Christians in Iberia, their status as cultural commuters, and their so-called cosmopolitanism may have made them more likely to trade outside their group than would have other merchants. If the behavior of Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio was generally uncommon among Sephardim as a group, but common among cross-community migrants and global merchants, it bears considering whether we should no longer study elite Sephardi merchants in isolation. Perhaps we should study these merchants only in comparison with other cross-community migrant merchants?

What this book has shown is that inter-cultural associations were not anomalous for successful, elite, cross-community merchants. The traditional historiography, as outlined in Chapter I, held that one of the most important components, if not the most important element, of the relative success of the Sephardim (or, in fact, of any group or individual merchant) in trade was their utilization of networks based on family and shared ethno-religious background. Yet Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio did not trade more within their intra-Sephardic

networks than with the overall group of Sephardic merchants, with the possible exception of Osorio, who worked as a factor for the Sephardic de Pinto family. Even in the case of Osorio, however, it is impossible to tell how much of his trade was truly on his own behalf, and how much was intra-Sephardic. Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, who were among the most prominent and wealthy of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam at the time, did not make particular use of intra-Sephardi networks. In fact, these merchants traded significantly less within their own Sephardi group than did other Sephardi merchants. Therefore, intra-cultural or intra-group trade could not have been, and was not, the reason for their relative success as merchants.

Each merchant behaved differently depending on his particular individual circumstances. They all seemed to have eschewed intra-Sephardi networks at a far greater rate than did the sampling of other Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam at the time, with due note given to the difficulty in interpreting how much of a role Osorio's duties as factor for the de Pinto family played in his overall trading patterns. Beyond this basic and very important similarity, though, the three merchants showed markedly dissimilar behaviors. Rodrigues Vega traded much more frequently directly with Dutch associates than did Carvalho or Osorio. This was likely due to the products and routes in which he was active, and his family connections in Antwerp. Carvalho, on the other hand, traded much more actively in a constellation of fellow Sephardim and Dutch associates. This trading pattern was also likely due to the products and routes in which he was interested. In addition, it could have been due to an openness to Dutch partners and a fluid perception of his own identity. Lastly, Osorio traded mostly on his own behalf, if the documentation is to be believed, though it is likely that many of these contracts are actually manifestations of intra-cultural trade, as he was a factor for the new Christian de Pinto family. He had been an established and wealthy merchant before coming to Amsterdam, and moreover, had arrived there during a time of peace and economic prosperity. Thus, he had little need to trade with other merchants of any background except for the de Pintos. Despite the fact that Osorio was the only really committed Jew of any of these global merchants, even he did not rely extensively on intra-Sephardi networks, other than what can be guessed to have been the share of the de Pintos in his overall trade percentages. In short, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, being global merchants, were not dependent on intra-Sephardi networks for their success.

In general, these merchants went outside their own Sephardic networks when they were unfamiliar and/or not integrated in/with the market in which they wanted to enter, and in which they might not have any trusted associates and when they had contacts enough within their group but saw the efficacy of augmenting their networks with new members who could help them expand their base of clients, suppliers, and creditors.

Manoel Rodrigues Vega, Manoel Carvalho, and Bento Osorio were cross-community migrants who, as such, helped generate changes and innovations, especially in the realm of trade networks, routes, and products as they migrated. These innovations, not to mention the presence of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam, helped generate differentiation. They were a new and exotic presence in the city. They not only brought a new religion into the mix, but also helped further innovations, such as new maritime technologies, and new practices within trade, such as maritime insurance and the joint stock company. Paradoxically, however, this same cross-community migration led to greater similarity among the Sephardi and the Dutch mercantile communities. This convergence was especially evident in the realm of commerce, but was also visible in the social sphere. Sephardi and Dutch merchants, particularly at the wealthier end of the spectrum, began to dress alike, live similarly, and conduct their business enterprises in the same way. Thus, there was a gradual shift from differentiation towards convergence between the communities.

APPENDIX ONE

LARGEST SHIPPERS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1590–1620

Shippers	Total shipments	Alone	With a partner
Jasper Quinget	201	197	4
Jan en Philippo Calandrini	91	25	66
Guillelmo Bartolotti	66	42	24
Caspar van Ceulen	63	35	28
Isaac la Maire	56	42	14
Willem Willemss	49	48	1
Salomon Voorknecht	45	13	32
Charles (de) Latfeur	42	—	42
Andries van der Meulen	42	1	41
Andries Hendricxss de Beijser	39	39	—
Jan Munter	36	19	17
Jan Benojt	34	—	34
Daniel Colpijn	34	—	34
Jan Gerritsen Hoof	34	16	18
Jan Janss Corver	33	25	8
Gijsbert Tholincx	32	4	28
Jonas Witsen	31	31	—
Wessel Schenck	30	25	5
Pieter Lintgens	29	27	2
Alexander van den Berge	28	6	22
Volckert Overlander	28	24	4
Jacques Velaer de Jonge	25	25	—
Jacques Carbeel	23	1	22
Isaac Poullie	22	—	22
Guilliaume van de Putte	22	—	22
Sijon Lus	21	17	4
Abraham van Lemens	19	15	4
Jacques Nicquet	19	10	9
Marcus de Vogelaer	19	17	2
Paulo de Wilhelm	19	5	14
Francois Boudewijns	18	12	6
Abraham de Ligne	18	4	14
Hans van Uffele	17	15	2
Anthoni de Cuijper	16	8	8

Table (cont.)

Shippers	Total shipments	Alone	With a partner
Dirck van Os	16	8	8
Jacques Bernardt	15	11	4
Jan le Bruijn	13	11	2
Gerard Rijnst	13	5	8
Manoel Carvalho	12	11	1
Total	1370	794	576

Source: Simon Hart, “De Italië-vaart, 1590–1620,” *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 70 (1978): 42–60, 56.

APPENDIX TWO

ASSOCIATES OF MANOEL RODRIGUES VEGA, 1597–1613

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Cornelis Snellinck	24	10%
Dirck van Os	8	3%
Laurens Becx	7	3%
Hans de Baets	5	2%
Jan Colijn	4	2%
Hans de Schot	4	2%
Hans de Verne	4	2%
Jan Gerritsz. Parijs	4	2%
Hans de Laet Aertsz.	3	1%
Lodewijk Jansz. de Pottere	3	1%
Marten Papenbroeck	3	1%
Pieter Gerritsz. Delff	3	1%
Nicolaes Caret	3	1%
Hillibrandt den Otter	3	1%
Hans Staes	3	1%
Jaspar van Nispen	3	1%
Balthasar van Nispen	3	1%
Ghijselbrecht Bruynincx	3	1%
Hendrick Jansz. Swol	3	1%
Jan van Baerle	3	1%
Dominicus van Uffele	2	1%
Elias van Geel	2	1%
Hendrick Hondebeeck	2	1%
Jaspar Quinget	2	1%
Maerten Bitter	2	1%
Hendrick Gijsbetsz. Delff	2	1%
Jacques de Keyser van Bollant	2	1%
Nicolaes Grisons	2	1%
Jeronimo Grisons	2	1%
Pieter Symonsz.	2	1%
Jan Veen	2	1%
Melchior van Dortmund	2	1%
Dirck Alewijn	2	1%
Balthazar Jacot	2	1%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Mathijs Jansz. (van Straeten)	2	1%
David de Weert	2	1%
Hans Volt	2	1%
Cornelis Hermisz.	2	1%
Leonard de Beer	2	1%
Simon Jansz. Fortuyn	2	1%
Thibaut de Pickere	2	1%
Peter Lintgens	2	1%
Jan Claesz. Cloeck	2	1%
Elbert Lucasz.	2	1%
Jacob Schaep	1	0.5%
Joost van Peenen	1	0.5%
François de Witte	1	0.5%
Joachim Dircsz.	1	0.5%
Assuerus van Blocklandt	1	0.5%
Lucas Michielsz.	1	0.5%
Hans de Vries	1	0.5%
Tenneken de Briesse	1	0.5%
Herman Claesz.	1	0.5%
Dominicus Douure	1	0.5%
Abraham van Herwyer	1	0.5%
Lancelot de Vogel	1	0.5%
Steven Groelaet	1	0.5%
Matheo de Renzi	1	0.5%
Hans van Solt	1	0.5%
Harmen Heesters	1	0.5%
Guillaume Key	1	0.5%
Guillaume Courten	1	0.5%
Jacques Arnout van Rijsssele	1	0.5%
Jan van Dale	1	0.5%
Samuel Desbouvrie	1	0.5%
Huybrecht de Vynckere	1	0.5%
Jan le Febure	1	0.5%
Christiaen Wickesberg	1	0.5%
Jacques de Candele	1	0.5%
Jan de Bot	1	0.5%
François van der Willigen	1	0.5%
Guillaume Annuyaulx	1	0.5%
Hans Pieters	1	0.5%
Hans Unger	1	0.5%
Matheus Lange	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Hans van Strepen	1	0.5%
Adriaen van Nispen	1	0.5%
Pieter Bornon (Bournon)	1	0.5%
Jan Symonsz.	1	0.5%
Jan Stevensz.	1	0.5%
Jacques van Hanswijck	1	0.5%
Guillaume Buys	1	0.5%
Reynier de Loker	1	0.5%
Willem van Campen	1	0.5%
Daniel Cambier	1	0.5%
Daniel de Mares	1	0.5%
Steven van den Castele	1	0.5%
Jan Cornelisz. Visser	1	0.5%
Cornelis van Bogaerde	1	0.5%
Hans de Weert	1	0.5%
Roelandt de Weert	1	0.5%
Peter Coymans	1	0.5%
Gaspar Coymans	1	0.5%
Gubrecht Wachmans	1	0.5%
Jan le Brun	1	0.5%
Conrad Bosserel	1	0.5%
Jeronimus Wonderaer	1	0.5%
Daniel van Harinckhoeck	1	0.5%
Alexander Bouwens	1	0.5%
Pieter Claesz. Baer	1	0.5%
Jan van Baerle	1	0.5%
Hendrick de Hase	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Gruel	1	0.5%
Antonio de Cuyper	1	0.5%
Jan Schodder	1	0.5%
Boudewijn Crijnsz.	1	0.5%
Jan Joachimsz.	1	0.5%
Adriaen Eeuwoutsz.	1	0.5%
Louis del Becque	1	0.5%
Jan Poppen	1	0.5%
Screvel Adriaensz.	1	0.5%
Lammoraël, Count of Egmont	1	0.5%
Hans Gras	1	0.5%
Beerendt Rotgers	1	0.5%
Joost Brest	1	0.5%
Jan Evertsen	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Albert Fransen	1	0.5%
Jacob van Scharlaecken	1	0.5%
Claes Statius	1	0.5%
Heinrich Beeckmann	1	0.5%
Jan Beyaert	1	0.5%
Artus van der Voorde	1	0.5%
Robert Chatvelt	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Sijs	1	0.5%
Jan Bisschop	1	0.5%
Samuel Bisschop	1	0.5%
Gregory Niederhoffer	1	0.5%
Diego Niederhoffer	1	0.5%
Dirck Rodenburch	1	0.5%
Harmen Rodenburch	1	0.5%
Gillis Dodeur	1	0.5%
Jeronimus Goossens	1	0.5%
Pieter Belten	1	0.5%
Jan Lourensz.	1	0.5%
Pieter Bodaert	1	0.5%
Gillis du Pluys	1	0.5%
Claes Claesz.	1	0.5%

Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 245 interactions with 137 Dutch merchants.

APPENDIX THREE

ASSOCIATES OF MANOEL CARVALHO, 1602–1636

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Albert Schuyt	29	9%
Henri Thibault	29	9%
Samuel van Peenen	15	4%
Nicolas le Forestier	10	3%
David de l'Hommel	9	3%
Anthonij Villequier	8	2%
Pieter Gilles	7	2%
François Wouters	6	2%
Johan l'Hermite	5	1%
Symon van der Does	5	1%
Bartolomeus Hopffer	5	1%
Christoffel Ayerschettel	5	1%
Hans Jorisz. Hontom	5	1%
Ibel Henricx	5	1%
Laurens Joosten Baeck (Bax)	4	1%
Pieter van Geel	4	1%
Daniel van den Eijnde	4	1%
Jan Janse Smith	4	1%
Jan le Gouche	4	1%
Roelant van de Perre	4	1%
Jan van Erpecum	4	1%
Nicolaes Claessen Evenswijn	3	1%
Lucas van de Venne	3	1%
Vincen Fransz. Bayert	3	1%
Daniel van Geel	3	1%
Adriaen Andriess.	3	1%
Jan Battista Bartollotti	3	1%
Salomon Voerknecht	3	1%
Pieter van Beeck	3	1%
Anthoni Slichers	3	1%
Leonard Ranst	3	1%
Jean Stassaert	3	1%
Pauwels Sterlincx	2	0.5%
Adam Nijs	2	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Giovanni Baptista Sigalla	2	0.5%
Hillebrandt den Otter	2	0.5%
Pieter Beltgens	2	0.5%
Johan van Geel	2	0.5%
Hendrick Beeckman	2	0.5%
Pieter Beijens	2	0.5%
Jan Jansse van Helmondt	2	0.5%
Godert Kerckrinck	2	0.5%
Gillis Dodeur	2	0.5%
Alexander van den Berge	2	0.5%
Joost van Peenen	2	0.5%
Jan Fransen de Vries	2	0.5%
Jehan Rajje	2	0.5%
Jan Pickout	2	0.5%
Anthoni Schot	2	0.5%
Pieter Brant	2	0.5%
Pieter Fransz.	2	0.5%
Cornelis Snellinck	2	0.5%
Jacques van Gaelen	1	0.5%
Jasper Grevenraet	1	0.5%
Franck Jansz.	1	0.5%
Jan Jansz. Karel de Jonghe	1	0.5%
Jan Jansz. Karel	1	0.5%
Bartholomeus Bisschop	1	0.5%
Pauwels Bisschop	1	0.5%
Samuel Bisschop	1	0.5%
Pieter Jan Mieusz.	1	0.5%
Jan Coenensz.	1	0.5%
Symon Loo	1	0.5%
Leonard Pelgroms	1	0.5%
François Pelgroms	1	0.5%
Paulus Pelgroms	1	0.5%
Steffano Pelgroms	1	0.5%
Jacques Merchijis	1	0.5%
Jacob Lucasz. Rotgans	1	0.5%
George de Piran	1	0.5%
Pieter Bauwer	1	0.5%
Jan van Dashorst	1	0.5%
Pieter Claesz. Roockersz.	1	0.5%
Jaspar Moermans	1	0.5%
Joost Benninck	1	0.5%
Herman Heesters	1	0.5%
Jacomo van Casteren	1	0.5%
Thomas van Casteren	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Gillis Hoofman	1	0.5%
Joris Adiaensz.	1	0.5%
Pieter du Molijn	1	0.5%
Pieter Backelerot	1	0.5%
Claes Dircksz.	1	0.5%
Philip van Geel	1	0.5%
François Boudewijns	1	0.5%
Barent Sweerts	1	0.5%
Jacob Jacobsse Bontenos	1	0.5%
Pauwels Jansse van Helmont	1	0.5%
Dirck Vlack	1	0.5%
Willem Pauw	1	0.5%
Jeuriaen Timmerman	1	0.5%
Louis Saulman	1	0.5%
Jan van der Straten	1	0.5%
Jacob Sijnonse Louw	1	0.5%
Wijbrant Warwijck	1	0.5%
Arnoult van Liebergen	1	0.5%
David Lalouel	1	0.5%
Pieter Coymans	1	0.5%
Leonard Rans	1	0.5%
Anthony van Leeuw	1	0.5%
Cornelis Willemsz. Wiltschut	1	0.5%
Cornelis Claessen	1	0.5%
Hendrik van Ghenet de Jonge	1	0.5%
Abraham de Schilder	1	0.5%
Adriaen Cocx	1	0.5%
Harmen Albertsz. Kistemaker	1	0.5%
Elias Trip	1	0.5%
Jacob de Gijselaer	1	0.5%
Lucas van Peenen	1	0.5%
Carel van Peenen	1	0.5%
Hendrick Hendricksen	1	0.5%
Bartholomeus Classendeen	1	0.5%
Margriet le Vasseur	1	0.5%
Daniel Gillis	1	0.5%
Willem Cornelisz.	1	0.5%
Jacques van Hanswijck	1	0.5%
Jan Bicker	1	0.5%
Lambert van Erp	1	0.5%
N.D.W. Rogiers	1	0.5%

Table (cont.)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Marte van den Heuvel	1	0.5%
Sameul Trezel	1	0.5%
Aert Spieringh	1	0.5%
Adriaen Spieringh	1	0.5%
Jaspar van Eyndhoven	1	0.5%
Adriaen van der Tock	1	0.5%
Adriaen Molenijser	1	0.5%
Gelijm Aleman	1	0.5%
Elijas Ouvre	1	0.5%
Jaspar Anthonio	1	0.5%
Arent van der Burch	1	0.5%
Reyer Cornelisz.	1	0.5%
Hans van den Berg	1	0.5%
Pieter van Leyden	1	0.5%
Balthasar Coymans	1	0.5%
Dirck van Os	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Seys	1	0.5%
Pieter de la Palma	1	0.5%
Marcus de la Palma	1	0.5%
Matheus de la Palma	1	0.5%
Balthasar van de Voorde	1	0.5%
Louis de le Beque	1	0.5%
Hendrick Voet	1	0.5%

Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 338 interactions with 145 Dutch associates.

APPENDIX FOUR

ASSOCIATES OF BENTO OSORIO, 1610–1640

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Dirck Thomassen Glimmer	9	2%
Thijs Jansz. Bol	9	2%
Claes Cornelisz. Jut	8	2%
Hillebrant den Otter	7	2%
Jelle Poppes	6	2%
Hendrick Woutersz. (van Veen)	5	1%
Thijs Syvertsz.	5	1%
Marcus Pels	4	1%
Pieter Pels	4	1%
Jacques Niquet	4	1%
Albert Schuyt	4	1%
Cornelis Cornelisz. Jonge Fortuyn	4	1%
Anna Rieuwerts	4	1%
Pieter Belten	4	1%
Laurens Joosten Baeck (Bax or Bax)	4	1%
Abraham Pels	3	1%
Guillaume Bartolotti	3	1%
Andries Hendricxsz. de Bijser	3	1%
Antonio van Surck Jaspersz.	3	1%
Jan Webster	3	1%
Jan IJsbrantsz. Dommer	3	1%
Hendrick Jansz. Dommer	3	1%
Aert Spieringh	3	1%
Jan de Nocquere	3	1%
Merten van de Moere	3	1%
Claes Pietersz. Nooms	3	1%
Jacob Poppen	3	1%
Peter Martsz. Coij	3	1%
Samuel van Peenen	3	1%
Pieter Cornelisz. (van Marcken)	2	0.5%
Hillebrant Schellingen	2	0.5%
Roeland van Haeren	2	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Cornelis Jansz.	2	0.5%
Charles de Latseur	2	0.5%
Phillipo Calandrini	2	0.5%
Paulo de Willem	2	0.5%
Godert Kerckringh	2	0.5%
Adriaen Andriesz.	2	0.5%
Jan Smit	2	0.5%
Barent Sweerts	2	0.5%
Jan Geurtsz.	2	0.5%
Cornelis Snellinck	2	0.5%
Pieter van Geel	2	0.5%
Henrik Thibaut	2	0.5%
Nicolaes du Gardijn	2	0.5%
Jelmer Sijvertsz.	2	0.5%
Jacob Jansz.	2	0.5%
Olfert Pietersen Pet	2	0.5%
Hans Nielsen	2	0.5%
Andries Oudewagen	2	0.5%
Michiel Lucasz.	2	0.5%
Volckert Fongersz.	2	0.5%
Jan de la Faille	2	0.5%
Willem van Gele	2	0.5%
Reijnier de Fijneman	2	0.5%
Henry Herlele	2	0.5%
Pieter Andriesz. Valaen	2	0.5%
Jan Arentz. Van Naerden	2	0.5%
Jan Janz. Smit	2	0.5%
Pieter Jansz. Moutmaecker	2	0.5%
Philip Colijns Jochemsz.	2	0.5%
Harman van der Teeklen	2	0.5%
Jan Ras	2	0.5%
Guillaume Grevenraet	2	0.5%
Bartolomeus Roosendael	2	0.5%
Olivier van Houten	2	0.5%
Francisco van IJperseel	2	0.5%
Arent Dircksz. Bosch	2	0.5%
Pieter Gillis	2	0.5%
Martin Hurean	1	0.5%
Aluise du Bois	1	0.5%
Andreas Lucanelli	1	0.5%
Jacob Marcusz.	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Elias Pels	1	0.5%
Pieter Pauwelsen	1	0.5%
Jacob Martsz. Botman	1	0.5%
Paulus van der Laan	1	0.5%
Thomas Compar	1	0.5%
Ruys Class	1	0.5%
Jan de Bruyn	1	0.5%
Jan Stassart	1	0.5%
Claes Andriesz.	1	0.5%
Luca Claesz.	1	0.5%
Frans van Poppendam	1	0.5%
Albert van Eccx	1	0.5%
Jan van Eccx	1	0.5%
Volckert Vlaming	1	0.5%
Salomon Voerknecht	1	0.5%
Eduardo van Surck	1	0.5%
Dirck van Offenberch	1	0.5%
Philip van Gheel	1	0.5%
David de l'Hommel	1	0.5%
Peter Beyens	1	0.5%
Jan Jansz. Frohart	1	0.5%
Jacob Jansz. Vrije	1	0.5%
Peter Hustard	1	0.5%
Jaspar Rubin	1	0.5%
Sipriano Estrelini	1	0.5%
Vokert Nanningsh	1	0.5%
Pieter Mathijsz.	1	0.5%
Lucas Jacobsz.	1	0.5%
Arent Hem	1	0.5%
Jan Gerritsz. Hooft	1	0.5%
Pauwels Buys	1	0.5%
Cornelis Pietersz. Can	1	0.5%
Jan Holsher	1	0.5%
Jan van der Mille	1	0.5%
Cornelis Maiaonaert	1	0.5%
Hendrick van Erp	1	0.5%
Christoffel Rindflees	1	0.5%
Antonio Gerritsz.	1	0.5%
Jaspar Coyman	1	0.5%
Isack Coymans	1	0.5%
Franchoijs Wouters	1	0.5%

Table (cont.)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Jan Andriaensz. Cant	1	0.5%
Jan Martin de Oude	1	0.5%
Cornelis van Davelaer	1	0.5%
Alexander van den Berge	1	0.5%
Jaspar Quinget	1	0.5%
Daniel de Raedt	1	0.5%
Claes Jansz. Bruijningh	1	0.5%
Pieter Claesz. Cod	1	0.5%
Aeryaen Berman	1	0.5%
Hendrick Philipsz. van Maseijck	1	0.5%
Pierre de Point	1	0.5%
Philip Castel	1	0.5%
Daniel van Haemckhoeck	1	0.5%
Jan Sijmensens Gijsen	1	0.5%
Douwe Cornelisz.	1	0.5%
Jan Martsen	1	0.5%
Sijbrant Gijsbertsen Appelman	1	0.5%
Jan van den Einde de Jonge	1	0.5%
Jan Jansen van Avenhorn	1	0.5%
Pieter Cornelissen Schepper	1	0.5%
Claes Rechtersen	1	0.5%
Cornelis Jansz. Buijsman	1	0.5%
Cornelis Jansen Goutsblom	1	0.5%
Lambert Pietersz.	1	0.5%
Hidde Pietersz. van Hem	1	0.5%
Claes Mertsen	1	0.5%
Jan Jacobsz. Hopper	1	0.5%
Gerrit Hertoch	1	0.5%
Jan Reijmersen	1	0.5%
Jan Gerritsz. Bogaert	1	0.5%
Herman Tholinx	1	0.5%
Claes Maertsen Mammer	1	0.5%
Jons Nons	1	0.5%
Cornelis van Vijven	1	0.5%
Albert Remmetsen	1	0.5%
Cornelis Minnesen	1	0.5%
Cornelis Albertsen	1	0.5%
Dirck Claesz.	1	0.5%
Outger Luytsen	1	0.5%
Ime Hiddes	1	0.5%
Govert Cornelissen	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Jan Jansz. Theyes	1	0.5%
Jacob Thijsen	1	0.5%
Jan Gilles	1	0.5%
Charles Remi	1	0.5%
Pieter Coerten	1	0.5%
Jacomo van Casteren	1	0.5%
Thomaso van Casteren	1	0.5%
Jan van Baerle	1	0.5%
David van Baerle	1	0.5%
Herman Hesters	1	0.5%
Pieter Reusen	1	0.5%
Claes Adriaensz.	1	0.5%
Willem van Trier	1	0.5%
Thomas Marinus	1	0.5%
Mathijs van Erpenbeek	1	0.5%
Pieter Sonnemans	1	0.5%
Mathijs Coenen	1	0.5%
Gaspar van Wickevoort	1	0.5%
Martin Debet	1	0.5%
Jacob Sybrantsz.	1	0.5%
Dirck Hermansz.	1	0.5%
Abraham van Beeck	1	0.5%
Joos van Beeck	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Ruts	1	0.5%
Tonis Valerius	1	0.5%
Adriaan de Outheusden	1	0.5%
Jasper van Diemen	1	0.5%
Cors IJsbrantsz.	1	0.5%
Cornelis Huijbrechtsz. Paets	1	0.5%
Marten Paets	1	0.5%
Willem Janssen	1	0.5%
Hans Franx	1	0.5%
Emanuel van Basseroode	1	0.5%
Jan Baptista de Wael	1	0.5%
Thomas Sauli	1	0.5%
Vincentio Sauli	1	0.5%
François Boudewijns	1	0.5%
Guillaume van de Putte	1	0.5%
Pieter van de Putte	1	0.5%
Hendrick van de Putte	1	0.5%
Isaac Poillie	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Joannes de Renialme	1	0.5%
Jacob van Halewijn	1	0.5%
Maarten van Halewijn	1	0.5%
Michiel Faes	1	0.5%
Jeremias Noiret	1	0.5%
Renier Schaep	1	0.5%
Isack van Dale	1	0.5%
Jacob Verwou	1	0.5%
Johan Tengnagel	1	0.5%
Balthasar Hendricksz. Kerhem	1	0.5%
Johan ten Grotenhuijs	1	0.5%
Arnoult van Liebergen	1	0.5%
Wouter de Hertog	1	0.5%
Gerrit Verstegen	1	0.5%
Dirck Corver	1	0.5%
Gilles Silvester	1	0.5%
Pieter de Sterck	1	0.5%
Willem Watson	1	0.5%
Barent Calder	1	0.5%
Reijnier Pauw de Jonge	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Pauw	1	0.5%
Ridder Heer van Bennenbroek	1	0.5%
Joost Henrix Jansz.	1	0.5%
Hendrick Brouwer	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Pelsser	1	0.5%
Philip Philipsz. Van Goch	1	0.5%
Nicolaes Cocqu	1	0.5%
Cornelis Claasz. d'Arckel	1	0.5%
Hendrick Bolleman	1	0.5%
Sebastiaen Bolleman	1	0.5%
Cornelis Michielsz. Blauw	1	0.5%
Josias Marischal	1	0.5%
Nicolas Coccus	1	0.5%
Laurens d'Anglo	1	0.5%
Maurits Komme de Jonge	1	0.5%
Gerrit Kock	1	0.5%
Jeuriaen Hanners	1	0.5%
Peter Lus	1	0.5%
Martin van Hoorenbeecq	1	0.5%
Heijndrick van Zutphen	1	0.5%
Arent Meurs	1	0.5%

Table (*cont.*)

Name of merchant	Number of interactions	Relative importance to the overall total (%)
Jan Kuijsten	1	0.5%
Adriaen Jacobsz. van Noort	1	0.5%
Jan Jansz. van Delft	1	0.5%
Gerrit Jansen	1	0.5%
Denis Jansz.	1	0.5%
Harman Bockman	1	0.5%
Jan Symensz. Rijp	1	0.5%
Adriaen Rijser	1	0.5%
Gerrit de Beer	1	0.5%
Leonart de Beer	1	0.5%
Jacques du Bary	1	0.5%
Jan Pickout	1	0.5%
Jochem Jochemsz.	1	0.5%
Jan Thinart	1	0.5%
Laurens Bondius van Groenewegen	1	0.5%
Willem Smit	1	0.5%
Robert Sainthill	1	0.5%
Willem Muijlman	1	0.5%
Jan Pietersz.	1	0.5%

Source: GAA, NA.

Based on 398 interactions with 257 Dutch associates.

APPENDIX FIVE

DUTCH SIGNATORIES OF THE 1602 PETITION TO THE BURGOMASTERS OF AMSTERDAM AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH SEPHARDIC MERCHANTS

Signed by

Dutch signatory	# of transactions with Sephardi merchants	Name of Sephardic merchants
Klaas Andriesz.	12	Bento Osorio; James Lopes da Costa; Francisco Lopes; Diego Dias Querido; Antonio Dias Tinoco; Belchior Mendes; Francisco Mendes; Duarte Esteves de Pina; Diogo da Silva (x2); Francisco Ribeiro; Jeronimo Rodrigues de Sousa; Manoel Thomas; Daniel de Olanda; David de Palestrino; Duarte Fernandes; Manuel Lopes Nunes
Alexander van den Berge	8	Manoel Carvalho; Diego Dias Querido; James Lopes da Costa; Francisco Lopes; Simão de Mercado; Garcia Gomes Vitoria; Guiomar Henriques; Belchior Mendes
Barthelomeus Bisschop	5	Manoel Carvalho; Isaac Israel; Simão de Mercado; Mathias Rodrigues; Diogo Nunes Belmonte; Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homen

Table (*cont.*)

Dutch signatory	# of transactions with Sephardi merchants	Name of Sephardic merchants
Cornelis van der Bogaerde	4	Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Belchior Mendes; Diogo Nunes Belmonte; Pascoal Lopes
Jan le Brun	1	Manoel Rodrigues Vega
Gijsbrecht Brunninghs	1	Manoel Rodrigues Vega
Christoffel Dircksz. Pruys	2	Guiomar Henriques; Garcia Gomes
Jan Cornelisz. (Visser)	3	Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Belchior Mendes; Diogo da Silva
S. Coymans	0	
Melchior van Dortmont	1	Manoel Rodrigues Vega
Jan Foppen	0	
Klaas Gerbrandtsz.	1	Garcia Pimentel
Jacques van Hanswijck	10	Manuel Rodrigues Vega; Manoel Carvalho; Duarte Fernandes; Francisco Nunes Homem; Simão de Mercado; Diogo Nunes Belmonte (x2); Belchior Mendes; Garcia Gomes Vitoria; Juan Goncales; Daniel de Olanda; David de Palestrino
Idas Horst	0	
Thymen Jacobsz. (Hinlopen)	3	Mathias Rodrigues; Jeronimo Rodrigues de Sousa; Guilhelmo de Salinas
Alewijn Jacot	0	
Balthazar Jacot	4	Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Alfonso Dias; Ximenes & Co.
Jan Jansz. Karel (de Jonghe)	9	Francisco Pinto de Brito; Simão de Mercado; Belchior Mendes; Manuel Carvalho; Isaac Israel; James Lopes da Costa; Francisco Lopes; Garcia Gomes; Andreas Ximenes; Samuel Pallache; Diego Dias Querido; Garcia Gomes Vitoria

Table (*cont.*)

Dutch signatory	# of transactions with Sephardi merchants	Name of Sephardic merchants
Jacq. Kerkeel	0	
Egbert Klaesz.	0	
Salomon le Maire	0 (but 7 for Isaac le Maire)	
Koningh Schellinger	0	
Pieter Jansz. Montmalier	0	
Isaac Omerop	0	
Jan "oom" Klaesz.	0	
Dirck van Os	6	Manoel Carvalho; Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Duarte Fernandes; Francisco Lopes Homem; Ruy Lopes Homem; Belchior Mendes; Tomas Nunes Pina; Francisco Pinto de Brito; Estevão Cardoso; James Lopes da Costa; Francisco Lopes; Diego Dias Querido; Antonio Dias Tinoco; Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homem
Joost van Peenen	2	Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Duarte and Gonsalo Ximenes
Francois Pelgroms	1	Manoel Carvalho; Isaac Israel
Herman Pelgroms	0	
Leonard Pelgroms	1	Manoel Carvalho; Isaac Israel
Frederiksz. Rob	0	
Gerrit Romans	0	
Dirck Strijcker	0	
Willem Thibaut de Piequene	2	Manoel Rodrigues Vega; Alfonso Dias
Jacore Thymonshove	0	

Table (*cont.*)

Dutch signatory	# of transactions with Sephardi merchants	Name of Sephardic merchants
Jorgen Timmerman	7	Belchior Mendes (x2); Francisco Mendes; Duarte Esteves de Pina; Gaspar and Manuel Lopes Homem; Diogo da Silva; Diogo Nunes Belmonte (x2)
Pieter Wildbraedt	0	
Francois Woutersz.	8	Manoel Carvalho; Jeronimo Rodrigues de Sousa; Pascoal Lopes

Source: NL-HaNA, Staten van Holland, 3.01.04.01/36/300–301 and GAA, Card Index.

APPENDIX SIX

DATA ANALYSIS—METHODS AND CONCLUSIONS

The idea behind part of this book was that, were the theory that Sephardic merchants became successful in trade due to their utilization of intra-cultural networks true, then merchants such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, who were among the most prominent and wealthy of the Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam at the time, would have made particular use of intra-Sephardi networks. Yet they absolutely did not. Across the board, these merchants made less use of intra-Sephardi networks than did the other Sephardic traders in Amsterdam at the time, as Table 7 shows. The average for the other traders was 27% intra-Sephardi trade. However, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio diverged from this tendency, with only 12%, 19% and 14% intra-cultural trade, respectively. The data was systematically analyzed by placing it into relative perspective. This analysis enabled important but otherwise small absolute differences to be seen in their proper context. The goal was to understand the relative difference of a sort of trade, such as inter-cultural Sephardi-Sephardi trade versus other sorts of trade, such as intra-Sephardic trade.

The data in Table 7 is the raw data used in this analysis. It shows the total number of trades by type of trade (intra-cultural (S/S); integrative (S/S/D); inter-cultural (S/D) or “solitary,” meaning only one merchant is named (“S”), and by the trader involved—either one of the global merchants or one of the sample of other Sephardic merchants).

Table 7: Total number of trades according to type of trade and trader

Type of trade/trader	Random sample	Vega	Osorio	Carvalho	Total
Sephardic—Sephardic	192	15	52	21	280
Sephardic (solitary)	40	17	161	17	235
Sephardic—Sephardic—Dutch	231	35	95	54	415
Sephardic—Dutch	246	58	65	18	387
Total	709	125	373	110	1317

Source: GAA, NA.

Table 6 (also shown in Chapter VII): Total number of trades, in percentage form

Type of trade/trader	Random sample	Vega	Osorio	Carvalho	Total
Sephardic—Sephardic	27%	12%	14%	19%	21%
Sephardic (solitary)	6%	14%	43%	15%	18%
Sephardic—Sephardic—Dutch	33%	28%	25%	49%	32%
Sephardic—Dutch	35%	46%	17%	16%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Source: GAA, NA.

Table 8: Average and standard deviation of the percentage from Table 6

Type of trade	Average	St. dev.
Sephardic—Sephardic	18%	7%
Sephardic (solitary)	19%	16%
Sephardic—Sephardic—Dutch	34%	11%
Sephardic—Dutch	29%	14%

Source: GAA, NA.

The sample of Sephardic merchants in Amsterdam is taken as the norm to which the other data is compared. With this data at hand, the assertion that constellations of intra-Sephardic trade were the norm, and were a key component for the success of this group in the early modern period, was examined.

In order to make the comparison easier, all data from Table 7 was depicted in percentage form in Table 6. When the numbers from the sample of Sephardic merchants as a whole are examined, it is clear that a significant number of interactions were inter-cultural. In 33% of the contracts, a consortium of Sephardic traders did business with Dutch merchants. Moreover, in 35% of the interactions from the sampled group, a Sephardic trader dealt exclusively with a Dutch trader, exposing him to the “dangers” of trading outside the confines of family, friends, and members of the same ethno-religious group. This sizeable amount of trading outside the Sephardic community is a finding that the prevailing theories of early modern trade would not have predicted, and serves to cast doubt on the idea that Sephardic merchants depended on each other for the conduct of their trade.

The data in Table 6 can be further analyzed by a z-score analysis. The analysis basically allows for statements to be made about the structure of the trading pattern of various merchants. A z-score shows how many standard deviations above or below the mean a score is. This is different from the information depicted in Table 8, which shows the standard deviation. A standard deviation itself describes how dispersed (spread out) all the scores in a group are around the mean. For example, the combined average of intra-cultural interactions is 18% of total interactions. As all the categories of merchants are close to this 18%, the measure of dispersion is relatively small, only 7%. The average of the one merchant on his own (solitary) trades is 19%, but this number is skewed because of Osorio’s high percentage of trades on his own—43%. The other merchants did not trade as much on their own, and thus the standard deviation is relatively high, at 16%.

Through a z-score analysis, however, it is possible to see how far Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio “stray” from the norm of the sample of other Sephardic merchants, as well as how far they stray from the overall “average.” The z-score is derived by calculating the average percentage of the four categories: the sample, Rodrigues Vega, Bento Osorio and Manoel Carvalho, and its standard deviation. For example, Osorio’s 1.4 divergence is calculated as follows: $1.4 = (43\% [\text{Osorio’s Sephardic solitary trade}] - 19\% [\text{average of all Sephardic solitary trade}]) / 16$ [the percentage of standard deviation for Sephardic solitary trade]. This is a very large z-score, and it indicates Osorio’s trading pattern did not match the average in any way. This same pattern of divergence applies, in varying degrees, to Rodrigues Vega and Carvalho. Interestingly, each of the four “types” of traders had a single z-score that was particularly divergent. The method assumes a normal distribution, which is statistically acceptable, since the total size of the database is large, and contains 1317 data points. In addition, the sample included large, medium, and smaller traders.

Table 9: Z-scores of the total number of trades in percentage form

Type of trade/trader	Random sample	Vega	Osorio	Carvalho
Sephardic—Sephardic	1.3	−0.9	−0.6	0.2
Sephardic (solitary)	−0.8	−0.4	1.4	−0.2
Sephardic—Sephardic—Dutch	−0.1	−0.5	−0.8	1.4
Sephardic—Dutch	0.4	1.2	−0.8	−0.9

Source: GAA, NA.

The preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from the statistical analysis are that Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio had a markedly different trading pattern from the merchants in the sample group. Despite the very real differences between these merchants, they all had one important aspect in common: they traded intra-culturally, but this form of trading was not their preferred type of interaction. This is the case in spite of how attractive intra-cultural trade is depicted to be in the historiography outlined in the introduction.

The data shown casts serious doubt on the original claim that the distinguishing element of the success of Sephardic merchants was due to their intra-cultural trade. In fact, the data drawn from the sample group indicates that the majority of the economic interactions were done together with Dutch merchants ($33\% + 35\% = 68\%$). The data further indicates that Sephardic merchants should not be seen as one homogeneous group. Instead, the very real differences between Sephardic merchants should be considered. From this perspective, the statistical analysis indicates that while the most successful Sephardic merchants, such as Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio, traded inter-culturally, each had his own particular trading pattern, which distinguished him from both the sampled group and from the other global merchants.

Rodrigues Vega's main distinguishing element, for example, was that he predominantly traded with Dutch merchants on his own; that is, without other Sephardic merchants involved (z-score 1.2). Carvalho's main trading pattern, in contrast, was characterized by the use of an integrated network of both Sephardic and Dutch traders (z-score 1.4). In that sense, Carvalho was a sort of bridge between Rodrigues Vega and the sample group. Like Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho interacted with Dutch traders, but also more with intra-cultural trade than did the other global merchants (z-score 0.2). Osorio's trading pattern, meanwhile, was unique because he mainly interacted on his own, as far as the documentation reveals. This sets him apart from the sample group and from the other two global merchants, as all other types of trading takes place in groups.

A brief analysis of the other z-scores paints a picture of marked differences in trading patterns of the global merchants versus the sample group. The -0.9 of Rodrigues Vega and -0.6 of Osorio indicate they did not trade as much exclusively within their own social group as did the sample group. Interestingly, the "solitary" interactions, in which only one merchant is mentioned, appear very rarely in the sample

group, as its z-score is -0.8 . Osorio, on the other hand, hardly interacted with other merchants, as indicated by the -0.6 , -0.8 , and -0.8 z-scores for the respective “non-solitary” types of trade. Finally, the integrated merchant, Carvalho, preferred to interact with Dutch merchants along with fellow Sephardic merchants as part of the interaction, as is indicated by the z-score of -0.9 .

To sum things up, as Table 9 shows, Rodrigues Vega, Carvalho, and Osorio traded more outside the Sephardic group than the norm or sample group. If the traditional wisdom were correct, then these merchants would have had z-scores close, or at least closer, to zero. They would have traded around the average, and, hence, would have generated a low z-score. This was not the case. Rather, these merchants had a significantly different trading pattern than did the sample group of merchants. Essentially, once a merchant strayed 1.4 and 1.2 standard deviations away from the average, it was a very strong indication that successful merchants did not interact mostly within their ethno-religious group. This contradicts the traditional historiographic view and underscores the necessity of revisiting such views of early modern trade.

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