

I. **Italy**

A. **An understanding of the Sephardic Trade Network: Excerpt From:** Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 35.

“Marriage alliances (**a major component of the Sephardic trade network were marriage alliances such as this one and consanguineous marriages.**) helped Moses Ergas shape the direction of his business. More than liquid capital, David and Elijah Silvera brought him expertise in trading in precious stones and the opportunity to establish a firm footing in Aleppo [Syria-Ottoman territory]. The Levantine trade was Ergas and Silvera’s principal activity. Their other specialty was exporting coral beads manufactured in Livorno [Italian/Tuscan port known in English as Leghorn] to India via Lisbon [Portugal] or London. Finally, Ergas and Silvera played an essential role in connecting Mediterranean and colonial markets: through their contacts in Lisbon, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Amsterdam, and London, they imported colonial staples and exported both manufactured goods and raw material from the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire to Western Europe.”

B. **Timeline outlining the rising significance of the Sephardic trade network on the Italian peninsula with a focus on the Venetian Charters.**

Timeline is based on Benjamin Ravid and Robert Davis, “Jews in International Trade: The Emergence of the Levantines and Ponentines” in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* 73-97:

- **1492:** Spanish Monarchy expels all Jews and Muslims prompting a mass wave of emigration to Portugal, Italy and the Ottoman Empire
- **1497-1536:** King Manuel II of Portugal issues an edict of expulsion followed by mass riots and the institution of an Inquisition prompting a new wave of emigration to Italy, the Netherlands and the Ottoman Empire. Italy and the eastern Mediterranean become important havens for these Jews due to their economic significance. Look ahead at Ferrara and similarly Ancona and Livorno all of whom issue invitations/charters to these Jews to come settle. Begins a new trend where rival Italian city/states compete to attract rich Jews—often allowing them to retain their ambiguous “new-Christian” status or return openly to Judaism.
- **1537-1540** Venetian- Ottoman wars result in Venice’s loss of some of its overseas colonies: Senate decree of June 1541 “**After having been diverted to other places (see Ferrara as an example)...the trade of our city has deteriorated to such an extent, that it is nearly certain to be lost completely, to the great damage of the state and of its individual inhabitants. As “trade is one of the main foundations of this city” the Senate deemed “swift and vigorous measures” necessary to persuade merchants to operate through Venice.**

- **1538** Ferrara offers liberal commercial privileges to all “Spaniards, Portuguese, Levantines, Slavs, Dalmatians, Greeks, Turks and [men] of every other nation, whether Christian or infidel to settle and exercise trade” in Ferrarese territories.
- **1541:** Venice invites “Levantines” (Jews from the Ottoman Empire) to come settle in the Ghetto Vecchio (old Ghetto) set exclusively for them. As incentive, they are offered exemption for 2 years (with possibility of renewal) from customs duties on certain wares imported from upper and lower Romania as well as certain textiles reaching Venice from the West for the purpose of being re-exported East-ward (high demand in the Ottoman Empire). The senate observed that “**since most of the merchandise coming from upper and lower Romania was brought by visiting Levantine Jewish merchants**” their request for “**special quarters of residence in Venice should be treated favorably.**”
- **1547** Pope Paul III extends invitations to Spanish and Portuguese [new-Christian] merchants to settle in the Papal State of Ancona. He offers significant economic privileges and the right to re-assume their Judaism openly.
- **1549**-Tuscany [ruled by the Medici] extends similar invitations-encouraging Spanish and Portuguese Jews to settle in the new port of Livorno
- **1550**-Urbino extends invitations
- **1553** The Venetian *Bailo* (Governor of the Venetian colony in Constantinople) writes: “**Those Jews have totally destroyed this route, because, among other things, they concentrate in their hands all the wool and sell it as they please; they have also monopolized the trade in fine camlets, all of which they either order or acquire, thus gaining the profit previously enjoyed by the [Venetian] merchants who used to be active on that route.**”
- **1555-1570** Venetian privileges to Levantine Jews are renewed without issue. This particular charter demonstrates the Ottoman-Venetian symbiosis at its best. When peace reigned both sides enjoyed significant benefit.
- **1572**-Savoy extends invitations

C. The Sephardic network at its Best:

Timeline recording the events surrounding the War of Cyprus (Cypriot War)

1570-1573.

Based on Benjamin Arbel: “The Jews in Venice and the Ottoman Menace” in *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean*. 55-77.

- **March 4, 1570:** When the Cypriot War (war between Ottoman Turks and Venetian Republic over control of Cyprus) becomes inevitable, Jewish and Muslim (but not Christian) “Levantines” along with their families are detained in the public granaries of Terranova and their property, money and credits confiscated.

- **March 8, 1570:** Venetian Senate issues a decree stating that any debtors of the “Turks and Jews who were Turkish subjects” had to transfer this capital to the office of the government appointed for that purpose. The office was instructed to sell these properties at public auction and deposit the income in the Mint. (According to one source, confiscated property amounted to 400,000 ducats and sold for half its value)
- The incarceration and confiscated goods were accompanied by violent anti-Jewish measures throughout the republic. For example, ships holding Jews were targeted for attack, and the men on board were sold as slaves or set to row in the galleys (women and children were not enslaved).
- **June 27, 1570:** Ottomans invade Cyprus. The War of Cyprus begins.
- **August 10, 1570:** Jews in the Ottoman Empire hear of the situation in Venice and lobby the Sultan. The Venetian *Bailo* (governor of the Venetian colony in Constantinople) reports: “this Hebrew nation has made public a letter signed by many Jews, according to which all subjects of this Seigneur [referring to the Sultan], Turks, and Jews alike, who are in Venice, have been harshly confined, their goods confiscated and sold in favor of the public treasury.
- **December 1570:** *Bailo* becomes aware that the Sultan has been petitioned by the Jews to arrest all the Venetians in Ottoman territories in reprisal. Sultan noted in the margin in his own hand “If our subjects are suffering in this manner, while these [Venetians] live here with all their goods, it is not right.”
- **January 1571:** Grand Vizier Sokollu, interested in hastening the conclusion of the war [for economic reasons], intervenes with the Sultan on behalf of the Venetian traders. He argues that “those men who come to the Empire in good faith should not be made to suffer, and that if Venice has unjustly arrested the sultan’s subjects, Muslims must not imitate such evil actions.” **At the same time, Sokollu pressures the *Bailo* to secure the release of the Ottoman merchants.**
- *Bailo* sends a messenger to negotiate the terms of the release of the Jewish subjects with their merchandise (curiously, Muslims are not mentioned in this report) **in return for the goods belonging to Christians in Ottoman territories.**
- **June 1571:** Levantine Jews are released amidst rising anti-Jewish sentiments resulting in
- **December 18, 1571:** Expulsion of all Jews from Venetian territories.
- **March 1573:** War of Cyprus ends. Ottomans are victorious achieving dominion over Cyprus
- **May 1573:** Venice extends an invitation and a Charter to both Levantine and Pontine Jews to settle and trade in the republic.

II. The New World:

A. September 22, 1654: Extract from a letter from Director [Governor of New Amsterdam] Peter Stuyvesant to the Amsterdam Chamber [of Directors for the Dutch West India Company]:

“The Jews who have arrived [likely from Dutch Brazil which had just been recaptured by the Portuguese, thus subjecting them to the Portuguese Inquisition] would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they, with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians were very repugnant to the inferior magistrates, as also to the people having the most affection for you; the Deaconry [which takes care of the poor] also fearing that owing to their present indigence [due to the fact that they had been captured on their way up North and robbed by Pirates] they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race—hateful enemies and of the name of Christ—be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony, to the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships’ most affectionate subjects.”

B. January 1655: Petition of the Jewish Nation:

To the Honorable Lords, Directors of the Chartered West India Company, Chamber of the City of Amsterdam,

The merchants of the [Jewish] Portuguese nation residing in this city [Amsterdam] respectfully remonstrate to your Honors that it has come to their knowledge that you Honors raise obstacles to the giving of permits or passports to the Portuguese Jews to travel and to go to reside in New Netherland, which if persisted in will result to the great disadvantage of the Jewish nation. It can also be of no advantage to the general Company but rather damaging...

...Your honors should also please consider that many of the Jewish nation are principal shareholders in the [West India Company]...

...therefore the petitioners request, for the reasons given above, that your Honors be pleased not to exclude but to grant the Jewish nation passage to and residence in that country; **otherwise this would result in a great prejudice to their reputation. Also that by an Apostille [marginal notation] and Act the Jewish Nation be permitted...to travel, live, and traffic there...**

C. April 26, 1655: Response of the Dutch West India Company to Peter Stuyvesant:

Honorable, Prudent, Pious, Dear, Faithful [Stuyvesant]....

“We would have liked to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation, for we foresee there-from the same difficulties which you fear. But after having further

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Spanish Diaspora II: Source Material
7/12/2021

weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation, with others, in the taking of Brazil, **as also because of the large amount of capital which they still have invested in the shares of this company.** Therefore after much deliberations we have finally decided and resolved to apostille upon a certain petition presented by said Portuguese Jews [January 1655] that those people may travel and trade to and in New Netherland and live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation. You will now govern yourself accordingly..."