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Mirandese crypto-Jews. Crypto-Jewish Life in Mid-Sixteenth Century Miranda do Douro

Samuel Temkin

This study considers the crypto-Jewish community of Miranda do Douro, in Portugal, from the time of the Jewish expulsion from Spain to the end of the sixteenth century. Among the issues considered were the migration of Spanish Jews into the Trás-os-Montes region of Portugal, the activities of the Inquisition in that area and their effect on the lives of the Miranda residents. Examination of the trials shows that the initial period of inquisitorial activity – when many first-generation conversos were arrested – was followed by nearly ten years of inactivity. This long gap took place thanks to a papal bull but was followed by a period of concentrated activity in the mid 1550s, which accounted for more than fifty percent of those tried in the sixteenth century. While this probably had a devastating effect on the crypto-Jews of Miranda, other Inquisition records appear to show that some of their descendants continued to practice Judaism there and elsewhere in Portugal.

Introduction

By 1541, only a few years after the Portuguese Inquisition was installed, its predatory activities had reached Trás-os-Montes in northeast Portugal, where a large number of New Christians lived in or around Miranda do Douro and Mogadouro. Because of their location these two towns had, for centuries, played a significant role in the commercial trade between Spain and Portugal. Consequently, both saw their populations swell after the expulsion of Jews from Spain. It is probably for this reason that the Portuguese Inquisition focused its attention on them. Between 1541 and 1600, sixty-six residents of Miranda were put on trial. During the same period, half as many Mogadouro residents were tried, among them several members of the well-known Carvajal family.¹

The large number of New Christians arrested during that period in Miranda prompted us to examine their Inquisition records in the Portuguese archives. That examination revealed that nearly half of them were arrested within a 13 month-long period beginning in 1557. This concentrated inquisitorial activity is of considerable interest, particularly as it came after a ten-year period of inactivity, which has received little attention. Also considered in the article are the origins of the Jewish population of Miranda, the events that followed their forced conversion, and some of their Inquisition trials. These trials provide a glimpse of Crypto-Jewish life in Miranda and show that despite the threat of execution if they reverted to Judaism, many did, and that some of their descendants were still practicing that religion generations later.

Origins

We begin by considering the origin of the Jews who lived in Miranda during the mid sixteenth century. It is known that there had been a Jewish presence in that town from much earlier times, but here we are interested in a period in the fifteenth century that includes the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Archival records show that by 1450 Miranda had a Jewish quarter. While those records do not mention the number of people living there, it is likely that its Jewish population at that time was not insignificant. Two factors were responsible for this. One was the 1391 persecutions in Spain, which induced many Spanish Jews to go to Portugal; the other was the royal privilege granted to the Jews living in Portugal who were willing to relocate to the sparsely populated Trás-os-Montes region. Nevertheless, the Jewish population of that region before 1492 probably was then only a small fraction of the estimated 30,000 Jews then living in Portugal. On the basis of some
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Portuguese sources, Beinart estimates that the number of Jews entering Portugal in 1492 was “100,000 or more”.\textsuperscript{7} If these numbers are correct, the Jewish population in Portugal quadrupled as a result of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain.

The Jewish population of Miranda before the Jewish expulsion from Spain is unknown but was probably small. However, at the time of the expulsion it must have increased substantially for contemporary records indicate that Miranda was the port of entry for a large number of Castilian Jews, who had congregated in Zamora prior to their expulsion from Spain.\textsuperscript{8} Of course, that substantial increase was only temporary, since the village could not absorb so many people. In fact, the vast majority of those who passed through Miranda settled in the larger Portuguese cities outside Trás-os-Montes, such as Lisbon, Évora, and Lamego. Many of those who remained in Miranda might not have had the means to go elsewhere, or had other reasons for staying there.\textsuperscript{9} For example, some Spanish Jews who had lived nearby, in the old Kingdom of León, probably settled in that region because they thought it would be easier to return to Spain from there, or because they had business or family connections there. For this group the “dry ports” of Miranda, Braganza, and Mogadouro were more desirable.\textsuperscript{10}

The number of newcomers remaining in Miranda cannot be known with any degree of certitude. There is, however, no doubt that its Jewish population increased substantially after 1492. In a more recent work regarding the Jews in central Portugal, Ferro Tavares writes that “the sheer number of foreigners was enough to create social instability within the Portuguese Jewish community and in the relationship between Christians and Jews”.\textsuperscript{11} This probably also occurred in Miranda. However, it appears that its newcomers were rapidly integrated into the existing Jewish community.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{7} Haim Beinart, \textit{The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain}, Oxford 2005, p. 287.
\textsuperscript{8} Andrés Bernáldez, \textit{Historia de los Reyes Católicos D. Fernando and Doña Isabel, 1488-1513}, fol. 200. MS in the Real Academia de la Historia, Sección General. In Chapter 109 of this manuscript Bernáldez states the numbers of Jews entering Portugal through various land ports. Regarding Miranda he says that ‘\textit{Salieron por Zamora treinta mil ánimas a Miranda, que entraron a Portugal’ (Thirty thousand souls left via Zamora toward Miranda, who entered Portugal).
\textsuperscript{10} Isabel Vaz de Freitas, \textit{Mercadores entre Portugal e Castela na Idade Media}, Gijon 2006.
\textsuperscript{12} For a detailed discussion of the issue of space and the identity of Jews in a Christian
It also appears that no major conflicts existed between the newcomers and their Christian neighbors, at least until 1497, when they were forcibly converted to Christianity.\textsuperscript{13} This country-wide event, called the Conversão Geral (General Conversion) in contemporary documents, created a large number of New Christians who not only had not wanted to be converted, but also had no idea about Christian doctrine or practice.\textsuperscript{14} Evidently, many of them continued to observe Jewish law and traditions. It is not known whether those converted in Miranda were subject to the same persecutions that other New Christians experienced elsewhere in Portugal, notably in the 1506 massacre in Lisbon.\textsuperscript{15} However, thirty-five years later they were terrorized by the arrival of the Inquisition.\textsuperscript{16}

**Numbers of Arrests**

Although the Portuguese Inquisition was instituted in 1536, its activities did not reach the Trás-os-Montes region until 1541, when it arrested some individuals there who had been denounced as Judaizers. These arrests and trials continued until 1821, when the Inquisition was abolished in Portugal. The present study refers only to the Mirandese who were arrested during the sixteenth century. Before considering their trials, it is useful to present some comparative data pertaining to the number of arrests in the main municipalities in that region. The information stems from the records of trials, or processos of the Inquisition, which are housed in the Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo in Lisbon. Although the holdings of this town in some Portuguese places see Luísa Trinidad, ‘Jewish Communities in Portuguese Late Medieval Cities: Space and Identity’, Joaquim Carvalho (ed.), Religion, Ritual and Mythology, Pisa 2006, pp. 61-91.

\textsuperscript{13} For a detailed description of the events leading to the forced conversion of Jews that took place in Portugal see Elias Lipiner, Os Baptizados em Pé, Estudos da origem e da luta dos Cristãos-Novos em Portugal, Lisboa 1998, pp. 13-36.

\textsuperscript{14} Of course, some Jews had wanted to be converted, for example Diogo Pires, whose letters have been published by Carlos Ascenso André, ‘Diogo Pires: Antologia Poética’, Textos Humanísticos, Coimbra 1983.


\textsuperscript{16} For detailed discussions of the events that led to the establishment of the Portuguese Inquisition in 1531 see A. Herculano; Historia da Origem e Estabelecimento da Inquisição em Portugal, quarta edição, Lisboa 1885; J. Lucio de Azevedo, Historia dos Cristãos Novos Portugueses, Lisboa 1921; António Borges Coelho, Inquisição de Évora, 1533-1668, Lisboa 2002.
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archive that are related to the Inquisition are extensive, some trials are missing. Thus, the numbers shown in the following tables represent lower limits.

During the whole sixteenth century the Trás-os-Montes region was under the eyes of the Inquisitions of both Lisbon and Évora, but the first arrest did not take place in Miranda until 1542. By 1600 at least 121 individuals living in that region had been tried, sixty-six from Miranda, thirty-two from Mogadouro, and twenty-three from Braganza. The number of arrests in each locality varied over time, and Table 1 shows the breakdown in five-year segments beginning in 1541.

Table 1. Number of Inquisition arrests in three Trás-os-Montes towns during the 16 century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Residence</th>
<th>1541</th>
<th>1542</th>
<th>1543</th>
<th>1544</th>
<th>1545</th>
<th>1546</th>
<th>1547</th>
<th>1548</th>
<th>1549</th>
<th>1550</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogadouro</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braganza</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table also shows that the arrests in Miranda were concentrated in two periods, 1541-1545, and 1556-1565. However, as shown in Table 2 for Miranda and Mogadouro, large fluctuations existed within these five-year periods. The table also shows that Miranda experienced the effects of the Inquisition before Mogadouro, that both villages were closely scrutinized in 1544, and that the number of people arrested in either village between 1546 and 1555 was small. The main reason for this ten-year lull was a papal bull issued in 1547 that pardoned all New Christians in Portugal. Included in the bull was a ten-year grace period that protected the assets of those sentenced by the Inquisition. This grace period is considered later.

Table 2. Yearly numbers of arrests in Miranda and Mogadouro during 1541-1550

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1541</th>
<th>1542</th>
<th>1543</th>
<th>1544</th>
<th>1545</th>
<th>1546</th>
<th>1547</th>
<th>1548</th>
<th>1549</th>
<th>1550</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogadouro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numerical data shown in Tables 1-3 were prepared by the author by examination of the records in the Arquivo National Torre de Tombo in Lisbon (hereafter ANTT), of trials in the Portuguese Inquisition that took place during the sixteenth century.

Finally, Table 3 shows that after 1556, when the grace period expired, the Inquisition renewed its efforts, particularly in Miranda.

Table 3. Yearly numbers of arrests in Miranda and Mogadouro during 1556-1565

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1556</th>
<th>1557</th>
<th>1558</th>
<th>1559</th>
<th>1560</th>
<th>1561</th>
<th>1562</th>
<th>1563</th>
<th>1564</th>
<th>1565</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogadouro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of Mirandese New Christians arrested during 1557 and 1558 is remarkable, particularly seeing that the first of those arrests took place in late October of 1557 and the last on November of 1558. That is, nearly one-half of those arrested in Miranda during the entire sixteenth century were arrested in only one year. Evidently, the Inquisition took a special interest in Miranda.

Early Inquisition Activities in Miranda

In late 1541 or in early 1542, João de Miranda, an old man who resided in Miranda, was arrested in Lisbon together with his sons Diogo, Amador, and Felipe, all surnamed Miranda.\textsuperscript{19} Although the protocol of João’s \textit{processo} has not been found, those of other individuals include \textit{verbatim} copies of some of his statements and show that he had been accused of practicing Judaism and that he was burnt at the stake.\textsuperscript{20} The oldest such statement, dated 11 March 1542, includes the following: “As he has said in his reconciliation, it is true that in the village of Miranda, a Luis Fernandes and other New Christians spoke Hebrew when they saw each other [...] and that they talked about the ceremonies of the Law of Moses such as \textit{Pascoa} (Passover) and \textit{Quipur} (Yom Kippur)”. João also added that “although he could not understand Hebrew, there were others in Miranda who could, among whom was a cobbler named Diogo de Leão, who possessed some religious texts in Hebrew”. This statement seems to have alarmed the Inquisitors

\textsuperscript{19} With some exceptions we retain the Portuguese spelling of the names as they appear in the contemporary documents.

\textsuperscript{20} Among the documents that include statements by João de Miranda are the trials of Diogo de Leão; the reconciliation section of son’s Felipe’s trial (ANTT, \textit{Processo de Felipe de Miranda}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 12112); the second trial of son Diogo (ANTT, \textit{Processo de Diogo de Miranda}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 3266); and the trial of Luis Fernandes (ANTT, \textit{Processo de Luis Fernandes}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 13199).
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for they immediately sent a letter to the authorities in Miranda, ordering them to arrest that man. The events that took place in Miranda indicate that the Inquisitors also had his house searched for documents in Hebrew.

As it turns out, three different cloggers named Diogo de Leão lived in Miranda. One appears in the records as both Diogo de Leão da Rua Direita and Diogo de Leão da Rua Nova.\(^{21}\) The other two were Diogo de Leão da Costanilha\(^ {22}\) and Diogo de Leão da Castro.\(^ {23}\) The following refers to the first of these three. For simplicity, we will refer to him as Diogo de Leão.\(^ {24}\)

On a Sunday morning in early April of 1542, Diogo and his wife, Branca Fernandes, went to church to attend Mass. This was a special occasion for them because their daughter, Ana, aged fourteen, was to be married. However, at some point during the service, local officers of the Crown entered the church and arrested him in the name of the Holy Office. He was then taken to the local jail where he was threatened with torture if he refused to answer certain questions. Of course, Diogo complied. The questioners first extracted some basic information about himself, his wife and his parents. They also asked him whether he was baptized and whether he was a New or an Old Christian. His answers confirmed that they had arrested the right person. He was then asked if “he had, in his house, some books or pápeis (documents) in Hebrew”. Diogo said that he had many such documents, that they had belonged to his father, and that his wife had brought them to his house after his father died and had placed them in the sobrado (second floor). The questioner also wanted to know what the documents said, and whether they were made of parchment. Diogo said that several were made on parchment and that he did not know what they said because he could not read Hebrew. The inquest concluded with Diogo de

\(^{21}\) ANTT, \emph{Processo de Diogo de Leão}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 4532. The headings of different sections of this trial use these two personal names, giving the impression that they refer to two different individuals. However, their signatures, which simply say Di de León, are the same.

\(^{22}\) The record of the trial of Diogo de Leão da Costanilha is missing. It is mentioned in the protocols of other trials including that of his wife, Branca Gonçalves (ANTT, \emph{Processo de Branca Gonçalves de Leão}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 9150).

\(^{23}\) The second surnames, clearly added to distinguish these men from one another, indicate the location where they lived in Miranda. Thus, \emph{Rua da Costanilha} was the main artery connecting the principal entrance to the Miranda central square, now known as \emph{Praça João III}. The location of \emph{Rua Direita} is unknown. It probably connected the center of Miranda to a secondary gate in its surrounding walls. The identification of Diogo de Leão as a resident of both \emph{Rua Direita} and \emph{Rua Nova} implies that the two streets were the same and that the first had been renamed, possibly after the arrival of the Spanish Jews.

\(^{24}\) Although Diogo signed his surname in Spanish, he was born in Duas Igrejas, a Portuguese village near Miranda.
Leão giving the names of other relatives, including that of Diogo de Leão da Costanilha, his first cousin.\textsuperscript{25}

Having learned about the documents in Hebrew, the Miranda officers searched for them in Diogo de Leão’s house. The search was not difficult, since Diogo had told them where they were. After seizing them, the officer in charge of the search reported to his superior that there were two documents on parchment, one large and one small. The large one consisted of four chapters tied together, each including two signatures at the end. Of course, he was unable to decipher the documents, but knew that the inquisitors would want to see them. He therefore sent them to Lisbon together with his prisoner.

We do not know when Diogo de Leão was brought to Lisbon. His arraignment before Inquisitor João de Mello took place on 7 July 1542. The heading of the Perguntas (questions) section of his trial says: “Questions to Diogo de Leão, cobbler who knows how to read” (emphasis added). However, he had told them that “he knows how to read, but poorly, and that about writing he knew so little that if he had something to write he would ask somebody else who could”.\textsuperscript{26}

The early parts of the arraignment mirrored the inquest that took place in Miranda, but this time Diogo's knowledge of Christian doctrine and practice were closely examined. He was asked if he went to confession, if he took communion, and if he attended Mass on Sundays. He was also told to recite several prayers, the ten commandments, and the articles of faith. Except for the latter, which he did not know, Diogo appeared to have been doing what was required of a sincere Christian. Nevertheless, the Inquisitors told him they had information from reliable sources about his Jewish practices. To this he responded saying that the information referred to somebody else because “in said village [of Miranda] there were three men named Diogo de Leão”.\textsuperscript{27}

Weighing heavily against Diogo were the documents found in his house. Although written in Hebrew letters, their language is a combination of Hebrew, Portuguese, and Spanish.\textsuperscript{28} Of course, the inquisitors were intrigued by the documents but could not understand them. However, another prisoner of the

\textsuperscript{25} The duplication of names seems to have confused both the scribes and the inquisitors. For example, on top of fol. 37v of Diogo de Leão's processo (ANTT, Processo de Diogo de Leão, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 4532) we read: ‘Esta culpa he de Diogo de Liam da Costanilha e não deste’ (This blame belongs to Diogo de Leão da Costanilha and not to this one).

\textsuperscript{26} ANTT, Processo de Diogo de Leão, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 4532, fol. 20.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., fol. 15.

\textsuperscript{28} Lipiner, Baptizados em Pé, p. 201. The documents are included as fols. 23 to 30 of Diogo de Leão’s processo. They are reproduced on pages 203-222 of Lipiner’s book. A digitized copy of the entire processo is available online at www.digitarq.arquivos.pt.
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Inquisition could. His name was Pedro de Santa María. Evidently, Santa María could speak Portuguese, but as his signature shows, he could not write in that language. After examining the documents he told the inquisitors that one of the two parchment documents was a testament, that the other was a marriage contract, and that the documents were written in Miranda, 58 and 52 years earlier, that is before 1492. This explains why the Inquisitors referred to Diogo as "antico morador" (old resident) of Miranda.

Fig. 1. Enlarged copy of Pedro de Santa María’s signature.

Although the Hebrew documents were an important component in the case against Diogo de Leão, more so were the accusations that he practiced Judaism: that he celebrated the Jewish holidays, fasted on Yom Kippur, prayed as a Jew, and kept the Sabbath. To support those charges the Inquisitors asked Diogo whether he was a relative of João de Miranda, if he talked to him, and, if he did, what they talked about. Obviously, the inquisitors wanted to confirm what João had said about him. Diogo’s replied that he was only distantly related to João de Miranda and that he rarely spoke with him, except when met each other on the streets of Miranda, where the conversation was limited to saying “Deus os salve (God save you)”. However, he acknowledged that he had gone to João’s house to get certain forms related to his occupation. Although it is difficult to imagine what legal forms a cobbler would require, the answer made sense to the Inquisitors because João de Miranda had been an officer of the Crown.

Diogo’s trial included a textual element found in many Portuguese Inquisition trials. That element, called the "contradictas", or contradictions, contained arguments to disprove the charges made by the prosecutor. Through those arguments and the

29 Santa María’s signature appears several times in Diogo de Leão’s processo and in his own (ANIT, Processo de Pedro de Santa María, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 3294).
30 The wedding was between a son of a Mose Liam and a daughter of Raby Isac de Liam. It is possible that either Mose or Isac were Diogo de Leão’s ancestors, for Liam was one of the ways Leão was written at the time. This might explain why the documents were found in his house. Pages 201-204 of Lipiner’s Baptizados em Pe contain a transcription of Santa María’s statements.
31 Processo de Diogo de Leão, fol. 35.
32 Ibid., fol. 20v.
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testimonies of the witnesses he named, the accused defended himself. Whether the *contradictas* would be accepted depended on the main Inquisitor. Although they could be appealed, negative decisions were the norm.

In the case of Diogo de Leão (as well as in several other trials consulted in this study) the named witnesses lived in Miranda, which meant that their testimony would have to be taken there. For this purpose, the Inquisitors ordered the vicar of Miranda to take sworn affidavits from the twenty-one individuals named by Diogo. Among them were the vicar himself and two clergymen. The remaining witnesses were residents of Miranda who knew him. With no exception, they all testified that he seemed to be a good Christian, that he went to church on Sundays, and that he worked on Saturdays.

Nevertheless, the inquisitors ruled Diogo’s *contradictas* inadmissible. More credible to them was João de Miranda’s statement that Diogo de Leão “judaizaba largamente” (Judaized in a big way). Later on, other accusers were found who confirmed that testimony. Diogo was probably tortured, or threatened with torture, for on 6 April of 1544, two years after his arrest in Miranda, he confessed his errors and crimes against the church and named several other Miranda residents who practiced Judaism, including João de Miranda and Diogo de Leão da Costanilha, who were both burnt at the stake on 13 October 1544.

The final disposition of Diogo’s case is unclear. His verdict included both a light sentence and a death sentence. The latter has the standard wording for those that were to be burnt at the stake: “We the Inquisitors of the Holy office of the Inquisition [...] condemn the accused [...] to excommunication in the highest degree and to confiscation of his assets [...] and we release him to the secular justices, to whom we ask not to cause death or bleeding”. Apparently, the death

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33 The *contradictas* seems to have originated in Manoel I’s decree giving those Jews who had converted some privileges. The decree was issued on 13 May 1497 (J. Mendes dos Remédios, *Os Judeus em Portugal, edição facsimile*, Lisboa and Alcalá 2004, vol. 1, p. 433).

34 The order was issued by Antonio de Liam, an important Crown officer in Lisbon. It was dated 14 January 1543. The testimonies were obtained between 5 and 10 February.

35 Letter of Inquisitor João de Mello to João III, informing him that the only Auto-da-Fé celebrated in 1544 was held on 13 October. According to Mello, 53 heretics were reconciled with the church, most of whom were sentenced to life imprisonment, and 19 others were released to the secular justice. Azevedo, *Historia dos Cristãos Novos* (n.16 above), p. 450.

36 *Processo de Diogo de Leão*, fol. 81r. Those sentenced to death were said to be *relaxados* (released). By using that label and by insisting that the secular officers should not harm or kill those sentenced, the Inquisitors were telling them to make sure that the sentenced should be alive and in visibly good condition when brought to the Auto-da-Fe. The wording also gives the impression that the decision to burn an individual was made by the secular officers, when in fact it was predetermined by the Inquisitors.
sentence was not carried out. In fact, one week after the 13 October 1544 Auto-da-Fe, where Diogo was supposed to hear his sentence, he appeared before Inquisitor Mello to confess additional errors. Nearly four years later, on 24 June 1548, he was reconciled with the church.\textsuperscript{37} Perhaps Diogo was released soon afterward, thanks to the pope’s pardon bull issued the year before.

That papal bull was of considerable importance in subsequent trials by the Portuguese Inquisition. Not only did it result in the release of many New Christians from the Inquisition jails, but it also decreed that the assets of those sentenced to death \textit{should not} be confiscated for the first ten years after the bull was issued. Instead, they should pass to their Catholic descendants. Although signed by the pope, the order originated in the “privilege to the Jews” decree issued by Manoel I and cited in an earlier note.\textsuperscript{38} The idea behind the order was that the accused, seeing that their assets would not be lost, would be more willing to confess their sins. In fact, the decree resulted in far fewer arrests because the inquisitors lost, at least temporarily, the strong financial incentive they had to prosecute New Christians, whether or not they were Judaizers.

The ten-year grace period allowed the Portuguese New Christians to breathe more easily. However, the countdown that began in 1547 was set to expire in 1556, with grave implications for all the New Christians in Portugal, including those in Miranda.

The mid-1550s was an important period for Miranda and for its New Christians. Not only did Miranda receive a royal charter naming it a city, but its status within the church had also been raised with the appointment of a bishop. As discussed later, this appointment also had an important impact on Miranda’s New Christians. Making things worse for them was the rumor that the Messiah was due to arrive between 1550 and 1560, which made them feel it was important to observe the Sabbath and the Jewish holidays.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{The Inquisition Returns to Miranda}

As the expiration date of the grace period approached, the Portuguese Inquisition renewed its activities throughout Portugal, knowing it would not be difficult to find some individuals who had continued to practice Judaism. One of the first

\textsuperscript{37} Recomcylyação de Diogo de Leão, de Miranda. This document follows fol. 81of the \textit{Processo} of Diogo de Leão.

\textsuperscript{38} The part of the decree that relates to this privilege says: ‘In the same manner it pleases us that if any [convert] could, because of some error, lose their assets, from now on we order that those assets should pass to their Christian heirs’.

\textsuperscript{39} The source of the rumor is unknown. However, during their trials several crypto-Jews stated that it had come from a Castilian who had recently arrived in Portugal.
places they looked was Miranda. The inquisitors’ incursion into that town fifteen years earlier had found several individuals who were “dogmatic” followers of the Law of Moses, three of whom were burnt at the stake in the *Auto-da-Fe* of 1544. Among them was Diogo de Leão da Costanilha, the Miranda cobbler in whose shop New Christians used to congregate to celebrate the Sabbath and other Jewish Holidays.\(^{40}\)

Leão da Costanilha’s wife, Branca Gonçalves, was not arrested at the same time as her husband because she had just given birth to the last of her six children. Nevertheless, her freedom ended in June of 1544 when the Inquisition of Évora arrested her. Her youngest children — two girls and one boy, were left in Miranda, in charge of one of her three sisters. The three oldest children, all males, went to live with her father, André Gonçalves, who was then living in Castile. André was one of several Mirandese New Christians who had gone to Spain to escape the Portuguese Inquisition.

Little is known about the lives of Branca’s six children during the following ten years. However, it appears that the family was reunited in Miranda after Branca was released from the Inquisition prison in 1549. What is certain is that by the time she died, in 1556, her six children were living in Miranda, and that all four males, ages 21 to 28, were cobblers. Although practicing a limited form of Judaism under cover, they probably lived a peaceful life. However, this was about to change because the ten-year grace period granted by the pope expired that year.

In fact, the Lisbon inquisitors knew that the man whom they had sentenced to be burnt at the stake had six children and suspected that at least some of them continued to practice Judaism. Hence, in early 1556, they sent a letter to the bishop of Miranda, ordering him to monitor the activities of the sons and daughters of Diogo de Leão [da Costanilha]. The order was transmitted to Francisco Pires, the jailer of the church, by Gil de Prado, general vicar of Miranda. Pires acknowledged the order saying that “Having been appointed as an officer and because of the suspicion that existed about them [...] he was ordered to inform [the Bishop] about [...] Lopo de Leão and his brothers, New Christians, sons of Diogo de Leão who was burnt in Lisbon, all living together in a house in this city” \(^{41}\).

Pires was told to see if the brothers worked, or wore clean clothes, on Saturdays. However, the time of the year when the order was issued offered an easier way to determine if they were good Christians: Lent had begun which meant that eating meat was forbidden. Of course, the same rule applied all year long on Fridays. And so, on the first Friday of Lent of 1556, Pires went to the house where Lopo

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41 ANTT, *Processo de Lopo de Leão*, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 2181, fol. 29v.
and his siblings lived and worked. Their shop was on the ground floor; the living quarters were on the floor above. There, Pires found Lopo, his sisters Isabel Gonçalves and Florença Gonçalves, and his brothers Álvaro and Antonio the Leão. Brother Afonso Gonçalves was out. According to Pires’s report, the siblings acted suspiciously “like people who had committed a delicto (crime)”. In fact, he said, they tried to hide what they were eating, which turned out to be cabrito (kid). He also said that in another room he found a panela (pot) with chicken meat. Thus, Lopo and four of his siblings were arrested and taken to the jail. The remaining brother, Afonso, was arrested later the same day, 21 February 1556.

Soon after the six siblings were imprisoned, the bishop of Miranda ordered that affidavits be obtained from those who witnessed the arrest of the six sons and daughters of Diogo de Leão da Costanilha. Four months later, obviously wishing to appear as a strong defender of the Catholic faith, the bishop accused the six of practicing Judaism and ordered that each be subject to a formal trial.\(^\text{42}\) Probably because he was the oldest, Lopo de Leão received the most attention. At his trial several witnesses were presented by both the prosecution and the defense whose testimony was contradictory. To clarify the legal issues, an external expert, Dr. Duarte de Chaves, a jurist, was called in to assess the case against Lopo. His opinion was that Lopo was a good Christian and that the accusations were not credible. Nevertheless, the judge stated that he had to condemn Lopo, which he did. The sentence was endorsed by a representative of the Holy Office, which explains why it repeated, verbatim, the sentences that the Inquisition reserved for the most serious cases. In fact, the sentence reads as though Lopo was to be burnt at the stake, which could not be because there were no burnings in Miranda. It appears, however, that the sentence induced Lopo and his brothers to escape from jail. Some details of the escape appear in separate letters to the Lisbon Inquisitor from various lay and ecclesiastical officers in Miranda. The bishop’s letter is more succinct and says:\(^\text{43}\)

> After they confessed and asked mercy, they broke out of jail and escaped it by making a hole through which all four brothers escaped, after cutting the irons that they had, and went to Castile. And in a place there called Castro they were caught, and one of them, I don’t remember who, tried to kill himself with a handful of rosalgar\(^\text{44}\) that he had and put it in his mouth [...] and those who followed them impeded his swallowing it by keeping his mandibles open [...]. And another brother also tried to kill himself with a dagger he had on him. And with it he knifed the jailer when he tried to

\(^{42}\) ANTT, *Processo de Isabel Gonçalves*, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 3113, fol. 1.

\(^{43}\) ANTT, *Processo de Afonso Gonçalves*, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 11747, fol. 9.

\(^{44}\) Rosalgar was the lay name of arsenic dioxide, a poison.
prevent their escape. And later, while in prison in the castle of Alcañices, they attempted to escape by digging a tunnel.

Most likely several months passed between their sentencing and their return to prison in Miranda. In any event, the Inquisitors in Lisbon decided that the six sons and daughters of Branca Gonçalves and Diogo de Leão da Costanilha should be tried in Lisbon. And so, on 21 October of 1557, a year-and-a-half after their arrest in Miranda, Lopo de Leão, his three brothers, and his two sisters were delivered to the Inquisition prison in Lisbon.\(^{45}\)

The precise reason for the transfer to Lisbon is unknown. The Inquisitors might have thought that their crimes against the church required full-length trials. More likely, they thought the siblings were just a small part of a much larger and dogmatic group of crypto-Jews in Miranda and could therefore be instrumental in exposing it.

On 29 October 1557, one week after his incarceration in Lisbon, Lopo appeared before the inquisitors and confessed practicing Judaism. However, the inquisitors wanted to know who else practiced Judaism in Miranda. Probably under torture, he denounced many Miranda residents who, according to him, were Jews. It was his denunciation that opened the way for the Inquisition to terrorize Miranda’s New Christians during the following year.

Since Lopo and his siblings had already been found guilty in Miranda, not surprisingly they were quickly found guilty and were sentenced to life imprisonment in the *Auto-da-Fe* of 25 May 1558. However, after serving their sentences for about a year, Cardinal D. Henrique, the General Inquisitor of Portugal, ordered that all six be freed.\(^{46}\) Although the statements by Lopo and his siblings would have been sufficient to sentence those they denounced, the accused testified against one another, making the prosecutor’s cases against them very convincing. As described below, only two of those accused by Lopo or by his siblings were absolved. Most of the others appeared in the *Auto-da-Fe* held in Lisbon on 24 September 1559.\(^{47}\) The total number of those sentenced on this

\(^{45}\) The trials of Lopo de Leão, Isabel Gonçalves, and Afonso Gonçalves have already been cited. The remaining three are those of Álvaro Gonçalves, Antonio de Leão, and Florença Gonçalves. Their complete *processos* exist in the ANTT and are numbered 1926, 571, and 7569, respectively.

\(^{46}\) The same order appears in many other trials. It is not known why Cardinal Henrique ordered the release of so many crypto-Jews. Some money might have been paid to the Crown in order to obtain it. The documents indicate that some of those who were freed were required to cover certain clerical expenses.

\(^{47}\) Two of the accused missed the *Auto-da-Fe* of 24 September 1559. They were Diogo Gonçalves, one of the brothers of Lopo de Leão, and a merchant named Diogo Henriques. The reading of their sentences was delayed until 1561 because the inquisitors wanted to ensure that their confessions were sincere.

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occasion was slightly over one hundred, most of them Judaizers. There were, of course, some penitents from other regions of Portugal. Thus, twenty-five were from Lisbon, a city considerably larger than Miranda, which contributed nineteen. Many other individuals who deserve some attention were also tried between 1557 and 1558, but because of space limitations we summarize the trials of only a few of them. Taken together they give an idea about crypto-Jewish life in Miranda during the mid-sixteenth century. Later we make some observations about the Miranda’s crypto-Jewish community as a whole.

Catarina de Carvajal

Although born in Mogadouro, Catarina de Carvajal lived in Miranda at the time of her arrest in 1558. She was married to Antonio Lopes, a silversmith. Catarina was a member of the well-known Carvajal family. Her father was apparently the first of several members of that family named Luis de Carvajal. Her mother was Margarida Nunes (or Nuñez), one of three Nunes sisters who lived in Mogadouro. Catarina was arrested a year after her husband accused her of being a Jew. At her arraignment she said that she was forty years old and that she had had a son who had died young. Being informed of what her husband had said against her,
she said that he had lied, adding that:“her husband [...] always treated her badly, as an enemy. And that for many years he lived with other women that he knew [...]. And on many occasions he hurt her badly [...]. And that she would go to her father’s house to heal”.

Catarina’s statements were confirmed by several persons, among whom was Diogo de Miranda, a neighbor. In his testimony he said that she used to say that Antonio was to be blamed for the death of their son because he refused to tend to her when she was ill. Catarina’s trial also included a lengthy *contradictas* section, in which several witnesses appeared on her behalf. One of them was Antonio Álvares, a chaplain in Miranda who said that: “According to what she showed, the accused was of very poor understanding, and [...] was raised and married in this region of Trás-os-Montes, where she never conversed with persons of quality or importance”.

This may have been an exaggeration. Nevertheless, the statement shows how isolated were the places where these crypto-Jews lived. This isolation could be relevant for the community as a whole, as discussed later.

In the end, Catarina de Carvajal was sentenced to life imprisonment but released a few months later, after being instructed in the Catholic faith.

*Duarte de Chaves*

We encountered this man earlier, in the trial of Lopo de Leão. Although only thirty-three years old at the time of his arrest, Duarte was then one of the most distinguished members of the crypto-Jewish community in Miranda. He was born and raised in Chaves but had moved to Miranda at the time of his marriage to Catarina Álvares. He was a doctor in law, the highest degree granted by Spanish and Portuguese universities. In Miranda he occupied several important positions, including that of *visitador*, or examiner of Crown officers, a position, which, he said, had gained him some enemies. Because of his expertise he was sometimes asked to examine complicated cases, as in the Miranda trial of Lopo de Leão.

Duarte’s arrest was a triumph for the Inquisition. He had been a leader of the crypto-Jewish community in Miranda, could read and understand Hebrew, had a good knowledge of the Jewish religion, and was eager to transmit it to others. The inquisitors had suspected that Duarte was a Jew but had chosen not to do anything about it because there was no credible evidence against him. That suspicion

55 Ibid., fol. 14.
56 Ibid., fol. 17.
Mirandese crypto-Jews arose when Isabel Álvares, Duarte’s mother-in-law, was arrested as a result of a denunciation against her from Antonio Cepeda, a man who had been the merinho (a kind of governor) of the area around Miranda.\footnote{ANTT, \textit{Processo de Isabel Álvares}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 3115, fol. 43.}

Apparently, the denunciation was made in revenge because Duarte had brought charges against Cepeda. As a result, Cepeda’s wife and Isabel had become enemies, insulting one another with “ugly and scandalous words” from “window to window”.\footnote{This shows that some crypto-Jews lived among old-Christians.} Realizing that the accusation was false, the inquisitors declared Isabel innocent.\footnote{The 1555-1556 trial of Isabel Álvares was her second. As such she might have been sentenced to death. Instead, she was absolved.} This also lifted the suspicion against Duarte, albeit only temporarily.

Duarte’s trial included Lope de Leão’s denunciations, the prosecutor’s charges against him, a defense by his lawyer, and the affidavits of many witnesses, both in favor of and against him. The formal charges included the following:\footnote{Processo de Duarte de Chaves, fol. 30.}

After the last general pardon, Dr. Duarte de Chaves left our Holy Faith, following Jewish rites and ceremonies. In particular he and other New Christians would get together in many and diverse places in Miranda [...]. And in his house they would lock themselves in his study and he would read the Bible and other books to the others, and would discuss parts of the Old Law. And there they talked about many parts of the Law of Moses, such as that the Messiah [...] would come soon, between the years of 1550 and 1560 [...]. And he would tell others [...] that they should not believe in the Mass because the Host was only a little quantity of dough [...].

The charge that Duarte Chaves read the Bible and other books to other crypto-Jews implies that he was the only one among them who could read Hebrew.

Asked who could have denounced him, Duarte stated that he had many enemies who might have falsely accused him. Among them Antonio Fernandes, with whom he said he had a long-standing dispute, and Antonio Lopes who “was brother-in-law” of Fernandes because their wives were “cousins, daughters of sisters” (emphasis added).\footnote{Ibid., fol. 58. The wives of Antonio Fernandes and of Diogo Lopes were, respectively, Bernardina de Carvajal and Catarina de Carvajal.}

Although most of Duarte’s trial deals with religious matters, it also offers other information, some of which is of historical interest. For example, the trial reveals the use of spies to obtain incriminating evidence against those already in prison. Thus, in a list of complaints about the manner in which he was treated, he stated that: “being alone in his cell in March, without asking for company, there
entered a man not known to him, who was a clergyman named Gouveia, but who pretended to be a New Christian by the name of Francisco Lopes, from Viseu”.

In fact, Gouveia often appeared before the inquisitors to present evidence against Duarte and many other prisoners. Chaves also complained about the abuses he and his wife had suffered in the Inquisition jail. In a long letter to the inquisitors he said that: “Diogo de Texeira, who had been a guard in this jail, and Lopo Godinho forced themselves on D. Catarina Álvares and slept with her in this jail and dishonored her, when she was always very honored, about which she complained many times but was not heard”.

Duarte’s knowledge of Catholic religion was superb; not only was he able to recite all prayers in Latin, he also knew all the important points of Christian doctrine. Of course, none of this helped because the inquisitors were convinced that he was a Jew. Furthermore, despite his knowledge of law, he was outmaneuvered by the inquisitor, who refused to allow him to present the standard defense through the use of contradictas. Under torture Duarte admitted that he practiced Judaism. A few days later he tried to withdraw his testimony, saying that it was not true, and that if he admitted guilt, it was because “he was maliciously lied to, in great pain, out of his senses and normal judgment and tortured and forced in many ways”.

Finally, and despite his long arguments, many of which were in Latin, Duarte de Chaves was relaxado to the secular justice. After being garroted, his body was burnt during the Auto-da-Fe held in Lisbon on 24 September 1559.

Antonio Fernandes

Born in the village of Almendra, near Lamego, a town just south of Trás-os-Montes, the physician Antonio Fernandes was forty years old in March of 1558 when he first appeared before the Inquisitor. At his arraignment he said he was letrado em física (university-educated physician), particularly in medicine and zoology, having studied in Alcalá and in Salamanca. Antonio also said that he had moved to Miranda some ten years earlier, and that he was married to Bernardina

63 Processo de Duarte Chaves, fol. 45.
64 Duarte de Chaves’s wife was named Catarina Álvares. She was arrested on 29 May of 1559 and subject to a separate trial. (ANTT, Processo de Catarina Álvares, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 13175.) At that time she was twenty-three years old and had three sons and one daughter. She was sentenced to life imprisonment, but her sentence was suspended a year later by order of Cardinal D. Henrique.
65 Processo de Duarte Chaves, fol. 47.
66 Ibid., fol. 46.
67 ANTT, Processo de Antonio Fernandes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 7641, fol. 22.
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de Carvajal, a Castilian from Fermoselle in the area of Zamora. By 1558 they had four meninhos (small children).

The trial of Antonio Fernandes followed the usual pattern. Initially he claimed to be a good Christian and later confessed that he practiced Judaism. This at the end of May, 1558. However, believing that the confession was incomplete, a year later the Inquisitors had him tortured because “he did not want to confess or say anything of substance and because he knows many persons who had erred in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in said city of Miranda got together many times in different houses, where they talked and discussed many things and errors against our Holy Catholic Faith”. Although warned that he could die or be dismembered, Antonio refused to talk, probably thinking that he could tolerate the pain. However, as soon as the ropes tied to his arms began to be pulled, he broke down saying:

It was true that he, Duarte de Chaves, Francisco Fernandes and Diogo Mendes, among others who lived in Miranda, all New Christians, would get together from 1550 until 1555 to talk about things from the Bible and about the Messiah, who had not arrived, asking among themselves what was the cause, [...] and would say that our Lord Jesus Christ was not the Messiah [...]. And about this, they talked many times and in many places, among which was the house of Dr. Duarte de Chaves where they met two or three times, or more.\textsuperscript{68}

These statements would have been sufficient to condemn him. However, the inquisitors believed he knew more crypto-Jews in Miranda and wanted to know their names and the relationships among them. In the lengthy confession obtained that day and in the following two months, they got what they wanted. One name absent from his confession was that of his wife Bernardina de Carvajal. In fact, contrary to many others who blamed their wives for their own religious transgressions, he said that “he never informed his wife of the sins he had committed”.\textsuperscript{69} Apparently the Inquisitors believed him, as they pressed Antonio about other matters.

In the end Antonio’s life was spared, although, like most of those he accused, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Perhaps his willingness to cooperate saved him from death. In any event, his sentence was suspended – one and a half years after the Auto-da-fe where he appeared as a penitent – by order of Cardinal D. Henrique on 19 December 1560.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., fol. 75.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., fol. 79.
Diogo Mendes

Diogo Mendes was 64 years old when he was arrested by the Inquisition in 1558. He was born in Miranda soon after his parents settled there after being expelled from Spain. For many years Diogo had served Miranda as the most senior official scribe, being elected at an unknown date as escrivão da camara, a post he held until he was arrested. His 1558-1559 trial in Lisbon is of interest because it was his second. The first had taken place in Évora, starting in 1544 and ending in 1548 when he was released thanks to the pope’s general pardon. The primary reason for arrest this time was Lopo de Leão’s denunciation against him. Although Diogo insisted he had been a good Christian since 1548, the Inquisitors had much testimony claiming that he had been practicing Judaism since then. This meant he was a relapso, to be punished by death. Diogo was sentenced in the 1559 Auto-da-Fe to be relaxado to the secular justice. He left behind a wife, two daughters and five sons, two of whom were living in Spain.

Diogo de Miranda

Among the 19 crypto-Jewish men and women from Miranda who were sentenced in the 1559 Auto-da-fe, there were six cobblers, five of whom belonged to a single family. That family was headed by Diogo de Miranda, one of those five. The other four included two of his sons and two sons-in-law. Another son-in-law, named Antonio de Leão, had also been a cobbler, but had died some years earlier.

Diogo’s arraignment in Lisbon took place in May of 1558. This was the second time he was tried by the Inquisition. The first was in 1544, in Évora. Had it not been for the pope’s general pardon, Diogo would have received a significant sentence at that time. At his arraignment in 1558, he stated that he was seventy-two years old and that he was married to Leonor Fernandes, who was in jail at the same time. Although born in Portugal before the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Diogo came from a Jewish family that converted to Catholicism, probably around the time of the General Conversion (1497). Apparently, this conversion meant little; the family continued to practice Judaism, more or less openly until 1541 when Diogo’s father, João de Miranda, was apprehended in Lisbon. As stated earlier, João was burnt at the stake in 1544. As for Diogo, his

70 ANTT, Processo de Diogo Mendes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 64, fol. 95.
71 The sentence follows the usual template for those destined to be burnt at the stake. On 22 July 1559, days before it was issued, the ordinary and alternate Inquisitors who had heard the case against Diogo Mendes unanimously declared that he should be held as a relapso in the crimes of heresy and apostasy.
72 ANTT, Processo de Leonor Fernandes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 1456.

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1547 *reconciliation* and his release from jail the following year, imposed some conditions on him, such as going to hear Mass every Sunday and confessing three times a year. However, his recitation of the basic prayers and his poor knowledge of Christian religion in 1558, showed that he had not fulfilled his obligations.

It did not take long for the Inquisitors to extract a confession from Diogo. On 2 June 1558 he said that “until now, he was, in his heart, always a Jew, believing that the Jewish law was the good one, that our Lord Jesus Christ was not god nor the Messiah […] and that our lord was sending the Messiah between 1550 and 1560”. Of course, what the Inquisitors wanted were the names of other Jews living in Miranda. Diogo complied easily, naming every member of his family, including his sons and daughters, his half brothers Amador de Miranda and Felipe de Miranda, and his half sister Francisca de Miranda, who lived in Alcañices. Although initially sentenced to life imprisonment, he was freed on 10 December 1561 by order of Cardinal D. Henrique.

Having been accused by their own father – as well as by Lopo de Leão and his siblings – the sons and daughters of Diogo de Miranda and most of their spouses were also arrested and tried by the Inquisition in Lisbon.73 As previously mentioned, all the men in this group were cobblers. Their trials offer little new, although it is interesting to read some of their statements. For example, to prove that they did not wear clean shirts on Saturdays, one of his sons said that it was not true that he wore clean shirts on the Sabbath because his work took him away from home, “two or three weeks at a time”.

Crypto-Jewish Life in Miranda

Although the Inquisition documents upon which this study is based describes at great length the religious activities of those tried, little else is said about them beyond what they said at their arraignments. However, buried in the records of the Inquisition trials of the crypto-Jews discussed in this study are statements that give an idea about certain elements, discussed below, which apply to the community as a whole. To put these comments in context, in the next note we provide some demographic information about this group of crypto-Jews.74

73 The numbers of their trials are as follows: João Fernandes, no. 880; Francisco Fernandes, no. 1685; Francisco García, no. 12021; Gonçalves, no. 2012; Isabel de Miranda, no. 3122; Ana Fernandes, no. 11941; Catarina de Miranda, no. 12931.

74 From the arraignments of the sixty-six Mirandese crypto-Jews tried in the sixteenth century we have extracted the following information about them: Nearly two thirds were males, mostly single. Most were born in Portugal, some before 1492, others one or two generations later. A few, especially among those arrested in 1542, were born in Spain. All were converted to Christianity in 1497-1498, during the *Conversão Geral*. [181]
The first point of interest relates to the response of the Miranda crypto-Jews to the arrival of the Inquisition. That response is, of course, not recorded in their *processos*. However, the Judaizing New Christians knew that the arrest of any one of them would put all in danger, as happened in 1541, after João de Miranda was arrested. The initial shock of terror they must have experienced was probably followed by a strong desire to hide or flee. Hiding in Miranda or in another Portuguese village nearby was unsafe. The only places that could offer some protection were neighboring towns in Spain, particularly Alcañices, Carvajales, and Fermoselle. Not only were those places close, but, also, the Spanish Inquisition was not then active in them. Of course, not everybody could travel. For example, entire families that included elderly members or many small children could not rapidly undertake the trip. Most of those families stayed in Miranda and, as we have seen, many of their members were arrested. On the other hand, younger adults could easily go to any of those towns, and the records show that many did.

Most of those who escaped to Spain were born in Portugal, spoke Portuguese, and regarded Portugal as their home. It was therefore natural for them to wish to return to their country of origin. Some did thanks to another papal pardon. Among them were Diogo Lopes and his wife Catarina Lopes who returned to Miranda from Carvajales, where they had lived a few years.

Let us now consider those who stayed and were arrested by the Inquisition. The high percentage of cobblers among them is, at first sight, surprising. However, the reasons are evident: most of them were poor and ignorant, and shoemaking did not require many skills. As a group they were also illiterate. This is why, as stated earlier, a scribe was surprised to find “a cobbler who knew how to read”, evidently referring to the Portuguese language. Some of them might have known Hebrew but the records do not tell us that they did. Although they did not know how to read or to write, some managed to scribble their names on their recorded depositions. It is also evident that their ancestors were poor Spanish Jews who had...
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managed to enter Portugal but, having no means to go to more desirable locations, had to settle in Miranda. It is also significant that some cobblerers regarded their occupation as a lowly one and wished they could do something else. Some did. Thus, one told the inquisitors that “he had been a cobbler but was now a citizen”, meaning that he owned property. Another claimed that he had become a farmer.

Judging from the records of the Inquisition, it would appear the educational level of most of the Miranda crypto-Jews who were arrested after 1556 was generally low. We have already seen that the cobblerers were illiterate. The records also show that the same was true of many others including most women in the group who did not sign their depositions and had to ask their procurador (defense lawyer), or the scribe, to sign for them.  

Of course, a few of the Miranda crypto-Jews were highly educated men who in addition to Portuguese were also fluent in Spanish, Latin, and Hebrew. However, they were born elsewhere. For example, Duarte Chaves, a jurist, and Antonio Fernandes, a physician, both of whom were born outside the Miranda area. Evidently some families in Miranda had the means to import educated husbands for their daughters.

Wealthy families also imported wives for their sons. An example was the family of Álvaro Lopes, a merchant and judge in Miranda. Two of his five sons, Diogo Lopes and Antonio Lopes were married to women born in Mogadouro. Although neither one was educated, both belonged to a rich crypto-Jewish family. This is in contrast to the sons and daughters of poorer families who married local residents, often relatives.

Although the assets of many of those tried before 1547 were confiscated, we cannot assess the wealth of the crypto-Jewish community in Miranda because the records of their trials do not list those assets. It is evident that as the years passed the economic conditions of the group improved. However, many remained poor. Among them were two widows. One, Branca Lopes, made a living by cooking polhos (pullets) and selling them at her door. The other was named Isabel Fernandes but was known as a ceboleira. As her nickname indicates she grew and sold onions. On the other hand, Isabel Álvares, mother-in-law of Duarte Chaves and widow of successful merchant Diogo Álvares, owned property in Miranda. She was evidently a wealthy woman, since she had more than six servants.

76 Of course, it could be that women were not allowed to sign their names, but other trials show that some women signed their testimonies.
77 ANTT, Processo de Branca Lopes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 6904. The processo states that ‘Esta es presa por o tormento de Chaves’ (This one is in prison because of the torture of Chaves).
78 ANTT, Processo de Isabel Fernandes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 3095.
The educated and the wealthy probably led lives apart from the poor and the uneducated. However, the village was small. More importantly, the religion that both poor and wealthy practiced clandestinely provided a close bond between them. In other words, true separation, if it existed, was limited to public events.

In addition to class differences within the crypto-Jewish community, there must have been some differences between them and two other groups in Miranda: Old Christians—the most numerous group in Miranda—and New Christians who were not Judaizers. Most likely, some individuals in both groups knew residents in Miranda who were crypto-Jews. However, the denunciations that appear in the records we have examined were in a large measure made by other crypto-Jews who had already been arrested. On the other hand, the charges made by the prosecutors include, as might be expected, accusations by Old Christians. Of course, the witnesses who gave testimony on behalf of the accused did not express any doubts about the sincere Christianity of those arrested, although some knew otherwise, for they were crypto-Jews themselves.

This brings us to the religious practices of those arrested in Miranda. Without exception they all claimed to be good Christians, and some were able to recite Catholic prayers with various degrees of correctness. A few seem to have known the basic tenets of Catholic doctrine. However, most had a very limited knowledge of Judaism. Of course, many of them kept the Sabbath and knew the names of the major Jewish Holidays but did not know when they would take place. Among those arrested in the mid 1550s, only one or two individuals possessed that information. On the other hand, most of them believed that the messiah had not yet arrived and maintained the hope that it would arrive in the near future. Some believed the rumors, spread in Portugal by an unnamed Castilian man, that the arrival would take place in a few years, and that the messiah would give many good things to the people, “especially to the poor”.

This limited knowledge of Judaism among the Mirandese crypto-Jews considered in this study stands in contrast to that of crypto-Jews who then lived elsewhere in Portugal, even in towns not far from Miranda. For example, just outside the Trás-os-Montes region, there was the bishopric of Lamego, where many Jews lived. One of them was Branca Nunes. At her arraignment, she first refused to take the customary oath in the name of the Holy Gospels, saying that “Adonay prohibited her”. Later on, probably under

79 The population of Miranda in the mid-sixteenth century was around 8,000 (Luis Augusto Rebollada Silva, Memorias sobre a população e agricultura de Portugal desde a fundação da monarquia até 1865, Parte I, Lisboa 1888. That number includes both Old and New Christians. If the percentage of Jews in Miranda quadrupled in the same proportion as Portugal as a whole, from 3% before 1492 to 12% in 1550, its New Christian population could have then been around 1000.
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torture, she revealed that she taught Hebrew and basic Jewish concepts to many children, whose names and the names of their parents she divulged.\(^8^0\)

It should be added that by the mid 1550s sixty years had passed since the Castilian Jews had first settled in Miranda. Their children belonged to the first generation of Jews who were converted in Portugal. Some of them were arrested and tried by the Inquisition during the early 1540s. Among them were Diogo de Leão da Costanilha, Diogo Mendes and João de Miranda, all of whom were burnt at the stake as being recalcitrant and dogmatic Jews, that is, as individuals who not only followed closely the “Law of Moses”, but also had a deep knowledge of Judaism. In the 1550s, the following generation was persecuted. Ten years had passed since most of those who belonged to the first generation had died, taking with them knowledge of Judaism. Furthermore, Miranda was then fairly isolated from other Portuguese towns which means that in general it had few contacts with crypto-Jews living elsewhere. It would therefore appear that the children of the second generation grew up largely ignorant about Judaism, an ignorance that the few learned crypto-Jews who came from other places, such as Duarte de Chaves, could not dispel.\(^8^1\)

Nor could the Inquisition eliminate Judaism in Miranda (or elsewhere, of course). The Inquisition records show that the descendants of some of the Mirandese crypto-Jews who were tried in the mid 1550s had returned to the religion of their ancestors. Among them was the family of Antonio Fernandes, the Spanish-educated physician who was another Miranda “import”. Antonio was apprehended by the Inquisition in 1558 and released at the end of 1560. He was married to Bernardina de Carvajal, a niece of the matriarch of the well-known Carvajal family. After his release from prison, Antonio returned to Miranda but for unknown reasons he, Bernardina, and their four children moved first to Tomar, where Bernardina died, and then to Lisbon. There they apparently lived a quiet life until 1600, when the Inquisition apprehended several members of their family. From their trials we learn the names of the children of Antonio and Bernardina.

\(^8^0\) ANTT, \textit{Processo de Branca Nunes}, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 12779. Among other things Branca told the inquisitors was (fols. 27-32) ‘que gardava interamente toda a Ley de Moyses [...] e que ella sabya ler e scrivir hebraico’ (that she kept the Law of Moses in its entirety [...] and that she knew how to read and write in Hebrew). Accused of burning certain Christian images, she admitted doing so because (f. 50) ‘aquellas images erão contra o senhor Adonay’ (those images were against the Lord Adonay). This sealed the case against her. Branca was burnt at the stake at the end of 1551.

\(^8^1\) The records of most of the Mirandese crypto-Jews tried in the mid 1550s seem to show that they were sentenced not because they followed the Law of Moses, but because their knowledge of Christian doctrine was poor. In fact, their sentences were commuted shortly after they had completed their indoctrination in the Christian faith.
They were Ana Fernandes, Jorge Fernandes, Gaspar Fernandes, and Francisca de Carvajal. This Francisca de Carvajal died around 1597 in Lisbon. Apparently she was never tried by the Inquisition. But her sister Ana was, as were Francisca’s three daughters. The oldest one was Guíomar Nunes. The remaining two were Leonor Lopes, and Bernardina de Carvajal, the youngest. Bernardina was 15 years old in October of 1600, when she was brought before the inquisitors. The charges against the three sisters were identical to those that had been leveled against their ancestors. Three years later, all three were sentenced in an Auto-da-Fé. But unlike their distant cousins in Mexico City, most of whom were burnt at the stake in 1596, they were freed a few months later.

Conclusions

This study has considered the crypto-Jewish community of Miranda do Douro, in Portugal, from the time of the Jewish expulsion from Spain to the end of the sixteenth century. Among the events considered here were the migration of Spanish Jews into the Trás-os-Montes region of Portugal and the initial activities of the Portuguese Inquisition in that area, followed by a previously unknown ten-year gap in those activities. Special attention was given to the exceptional circumstances that arose in Miranda during the 1550s when the Inquisition carefully sought out New Christians who practiced Judaism, and, in a brief five year period, arrested fifty percent of the total number of those arrested there during the whole sixteenth century. While the Inquisition’s stated purpose was to eliminate Judaism from Portugal, the real reason for its increased activity was probably that the 1547 papal bull once more allowed it to confiscate the assets of those they convicted, particularly those sentenced to death. Few of the individuals considered here were burnt at the stake. The vast majority, initially sentenced to life imprisonment, were released within a year or two from their sentencing, after they had been indoctrinated into the Catholic faith and had promised to live in it. These promises, however, were much easier to make than to fulfill. Evidence

82 ANT T, Processo de Ana Fernandes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 11612.
83 This Francisca de Carvajal is one of several women by that name who belonged to the Carvajal family. She was born in Miranda around 1553 and should not be confused with the mother of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo, the well-known mystic who was burnt at the stake in Mexico City in 1596.
84 ANT T, Processo de Guíomar Nunes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 2505. As with Francisca de Carvajal, the name Guíomar Nunes appears several times in the records of the Nuñez and Carvajal families.
85 ANT T, Processo de Leonor Lopes, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 8976.
86 ANT T, Processo de Bernardina de Carvajal, Inquisição de Lisboa, no. 9428.
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shows that years after the release of some of them, they, or their descendants, continued to practice Judaism. The Inquisition documents also show that the number of Miranda crypto-Jews was not negligible, that their knowledge of Judaism was very limited, that they knew each other relatively well, that some occupied prominent Crown positions in Miranda, and that most made their living working as cobblers.

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