

From the Atlantic to the Mediterranean: the voyage of Rui Teixeira to the Italian Peninsula from Portugal

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Abstract

The article deals with the interest that mercantile and diasporic communities had in securing safe havens for themselves in early modern Italy through the example of the Portuguese New Christian merchant Rui Teixeira, who in 1593 managed to be invited by both Rome and Tuscany. In his condition as a long-time resident of Portugal and Brazil, he cultivated interest about himself to secure his invitation to leave Portugal along with his family. This suggests that belonging to a mobile minority with commercial links that criss-crossed the Atlantic fed into an existing interest in the Atlantic world, especially in Tuscany, at the end of the sixteenth century.

Keywords: intermediaries, diaspora, America, networks, Tuscany, Rome.

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De l'Atlàntic al Mediterrani: el viatge de Rui Teixeira a la península italiana des de Portugal

Resum

L'article considera l'interès que tenien les comunitats mercantils i a la diàspora a l'hora de cercar refugi segur a la Itàlia moderna a partir de l'exemple del mercader Rui Teixeira, que l'any 1593 va ser convidat tant per Roma com pel Gran Ducat de la Toscana a establir-se a Itàlia amb la seva família. Atesa la seva condició de resident a Portugal i al Brasil durant molts anys, va aprofitar l'experiència americana per obtenir la invitació per sortir de Portugal juntament amb la seva família. Aquest fet suggereix que pertànyer a una minoria mòbil amb vincles comercials que travessaven l'Atlàntic despertava un interès pel món atlàntic que ja hi havia, especialment a la Toscana de finals del segle XVI.

Paraules clau: intermediaris, diàspora, Amèrica, xarxes, Toscana, Roma.

Del Atlántico al Mediterráneo: el viaje de Rui Teixeira a la península italiana desde Portugal

Resumen

El artículo considera el interés que tenían las comunidades mercantiles y diaspóricas a la hora de asegurarse refugio seguro en la Italia moderna a través del ejemplo del mercader Rui Teixeira quien, en 1593, fue invitado tanto por Roma como por el Gran Ducado de la Toscana para afincarse en Italia junto a su familia. Dada su condición de residente en Portugal y Brasil durante largos años, aprovechó la experiencia americana para asegurarse la invitación para salir de Portugal junto con su familia. Esto sugiere que el hecho de pertenecer a una minoría móvil con vínculos comerciales que surcaban el Atlántico alimentaba un interés ya existente por el mundo atlántico, especialmente en la Toscana de finales del siglo XVI.

Palabras clave: intermediarios, diáspora, América, redes, Toscana, Roma.

1. *The nação in Tuscany, 1549–1593*

Upon the heels of the 1496 expulsion of Portugal's Jews under King Manuel I (1495-1521) and the forced conversion the following year of those of them who remained in the Atlantic kingdom, the country found itself with two groups of Portuguese: Old Christians, who purportedly had no "Jewish blood"; and New Christians, who were Jews converted to Christianity and their descendants, with "tainted blood", a distinction which would only disappear in 1773.¹ The dichotomy between both kinds of Portuguese was akin to the situation that existed in Spain from the first half of the fifteenth century onwards in which a surge in *conversos*, who embraced Christianity under duress, were submitted to onerous exclusions in all ranks of society based on the criteria of blood purity. The introduction of a Spanish-style Portuguese Inquisition in 1536 along with similar measures of exclusion from Portuguese society throughout the sixteenth century led to a steady stream of *converso* exiles.²

Thanks to ties of kinship and due to their involvement in international commerce, Portugal's New Christians had important merchants among their ranks, constituting what has even been called a dispersed nation upon the sea.³ In the first decades of the sixteenth century they were known to have established themselves in the Low Countries, the Adriatic coast, the Levant, the Indian Ocean and Africa.⁴ Eager to tap

1. On the forced conversion and its consequences see François SOYER, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal*, Brill, Leiden, 2007.

2. On the Portuguese Old/New Christian divide in Portuguese society and the diaspora see José Pedro PAIVA, «The New Christian Divide in the Portuguese-Speaking World (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)», in F. Bethencourt and A. Pearce, eds., *Racism and Ethnic Relations in Portuguese-Speaking World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, pp. 269-280, Proceedings of the British Academy, 179.

3. Daviken STUDNICKI-GIZBERT, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea. Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2007.

4. Aron di LEONE LEONI, *The Hebrew Portuguese Nations in Antwerp and London at the time of Charles V and Henry VIII. New Documents and Interpretations*, KTAV,

into their networks, several Italian states made out invitations to them as a group, under the presumption that they would live as Christians; among them Ferrara in 1538, the Papal States in its port city of Ancona in 1547, and Tuscany in 1549.⁵

In the case of the latter invitation it was Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence (1537-1569) and then Grand Duke of Tuscany (1569-1574), who formally assured that they would be accorded the same rights as other Tuscan subjects of the dukedom if they settled in Pisa. This also granted them protection from the Inquisition, something which was important in the Italian context after the creation of the Roman Inquisition in 1542.⁶ The timing of the document was not coincidental, following as it did the renewed activity of the Portuguese Inquisition in 1548 after a period of suspensions and paralysis of almost a decade due to tensions with Rome.⁷ An important group of individuals assembled in Pisa upon the heels of the 1549 invitation: merchants, lawyers and doctors. They ensconced themselves in Pisan society, settling in some of the most prominent parishes and neighbourhoods of the city. At the same time that they occupied positions of prestige and fre-

Jersey City, 2005; Jonathan Irvine ISRAEL, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991; Avigdor LEVY, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire*, The Darwin Press, Princeton, 1992; Peter MARK and José da SILVA HORTA, *The Forgotten Diaspora. Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011.

5. Aron di LEONE LEONI, *La nazione ebraica spagnola e portoghese di Ferrara*, Olschki, Florence, 2011; Bernard Dov COOPERMAN, «Portuguese conversos in Ancona: Jewish Political Activity in Early Modern Italy», in B. D. Cooperman, ed., *Iberia and Beyond. Hispanic Jews Between Cultures*, University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1998, pp. 297-352.

6. On Cosimo's 1549 invitation see Lucia FRATTARELLI FISCHER, *Vivere fuori dal Ghetto. Ebrei a Pisa e Livorno: secoli XVI-XVIII*, Silvio Zamorani, Turin, 2008, pp. 15-30.

7. For this foundational period of the Portuguese Inquisition see Giuseppe MARCOCCI, «A fundação da Inquisição em Portugal: um novo olhar», *Lusitania Sacra*, 23 (2011), pp. 17-40, and *Idem*, *I custodi dell'ortodossia. Inquisizione e chiesa nel Portogallo del Cinquecento*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Rome, 2004. The classic study is Alexandre HERCULANO, *History of the Origin and Establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal*, KTAV, New York, 1968.

quented some of the most important circles of power, they seem to have remained a relatively closed community, marrying among themselves and maintaining constant commercial dealings with relatives in Portugal and abroad.⁸

A subsequent invitation from 1556, which remained secret, was extended to Levantine Jews, inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire who had already been accepted in Venice in 1541 but many of whom were in fact originally Iberian *conversos*, and Pontentine Jews, members of the Iberian diaspora who had embraced Judaism.⁹ The measure was undertaken to court those fleeing Ancona after the 1555-1556 persecution of Jews who had previously been New Christians under Paul IV (1555-1559).¹⁰ Like many of the early Italian invitations, those of Cosimo I were clearly eyeing their economic links to the Levant and the Adriatic. At the same time, the commercial activities of these early Portuguese arrivals in Pisa evince their continued links to the territories of the Portuguese Empire. The result was a situation which brought together professing Jews, crypto-Jews, and at least outwardly-professing Catholics in the same place, united by ties of ethnicity and even of kinship.¹¹

It was his son Grand Duke Ferdinando I (1587-1609), who inherited the duchy after the death of his brother Francesco (1574-1587), however, who took an even more daring step. He sought to develop the small port city of Livorno into the major port of the Grand duchy.¹² To this end, he made the decision to open the doors in Pisa and Livorno to merchants of all nations in 1591 and 1593 under a series of edicts known as the *Livornine*. Among other things they offered some important concessions to Iberian New Christians, namely the possibility to openly live as Jews even if they had previously been baptized. The fact that this was sanctioned in a printed invitation which was

8. FRATTARELLI FISCHER, *Vivere fuori dal Ghetto*, pp. 69-77.

9. *Ibidem*, pp. 30-35.

10. *Ibidem*, pp. 30-32.

11. *Ibidem*, p. 33.

12. COREY TAZZARA, *The Free Porto of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World 1574-1790*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.

circulated for all to see marked a major departure from previous Tuscan policy, breaking new ground with respect to his father's policies. Those edicts and the mercantile communities enabled a Mediterranean port city which was similar in kind to other such centres that were meeting places and contact zones for merchants and diasporas in the early modern period.¹³

The novelty had a recent precedent in Venice, where in 1589 the *ponentini* were allowed to settle thanks to the efforts of a Portuguese New Christian merchant turned Jew named Daniel Rodriga, active in commerce between the republics of Ragusa and Venice, who made the case for the advantage of having them there.¹⁴ The concessions to allow for Judaism to be practiced without hinderance in Pisa and Livorno were largely obtained through the efforts of the Venetian Jew Maggino di Gabriele, who was to bring silk production to Tuscany, and the wording of the edicts of 1591 and 1593 are clearly addressed first and foremost to merchants in the Levant, many of whom were Jews who had previously been, at least outwardly, Catholic New Christians.¹⁵ Although these Levantine interests on the part of the Medici had undoubtedly existed

13. These diasporic and mercantile communities have, of late, been a major source of study. See Peter SAHLINS, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After*, Cornell University Press, 2004; Simona CERUTTI, *Étrangers. Étude d'une condition d'incertitude dans une Société d'Ancien Régime*, Bayard, Paris, 2012; Mathieu GRENET, *La fabrique communautaire. Les Grecs à Venise, Livourne et Marseille, 1770-1840*, École Française de Rome, Rome, 2016.

14. Benjamin RAVID, «The First Charter of the Jewish Merchants of Venice of 1589», *AJS Review*, 1 (1976), pp. 187-222; *Idem*, «Daniel Rodriga and the first decade of the Jewish merchants of Venice», in *Exile and Diaspora. Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart*, Ben-Zvi Institute of Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Jerusalem, 1991, pp. 203-223; *Idem*, «Venice, Rome and the Reversion of New Christians to Judaism: a Study in *ragione di stato*», in P. C. Ioly Zorattini, ed., *L'identità dissimulata. Giudaizzanti iberici nell'europa dell'età moderna*, Olschki, Florence, 2000, pp. 151-193. On the New Christian community there see Federica RUSPIO, *La nazione portoghese. Ebrei ponentini e nuovi cristiani a Venezia*, Silvio Zamorani, Turin, 2007.

15. FRATTARELLI FISCHER, *Vivere fuori dal Ghetto*, pp. 36-51.

for some time before, the potential Atlantic projection of the Grand Duchy could also not have been far from Ferdinando's calculations.¹⁶

The long-term result was the creation of one of Europe's most important Jewish communities, a veritable reference for Iberian Jewish life in the Mediterranean for centuries with important international links of learning and trade. It was Iberian from its inception, which coloured its cultural and linguistic practices, and was autonomous from the community of Pisa, making it easy deciding who could join it.¹⁷ The two Jewish communities would exist alongside a sizeable community of Iberian merchants, predominantly Portuguese, who it was known were mainly New Christians, a situation which would last well into the seventeenth century.¹⁸ The now open and complex reality of this diasporic group, which was interconnected and intertwined by ties of kinship in spite of the divisions of public faith profession, was a reflection of the reality of this diaspora worldwide in the early modern period.¹⁹

2. Portuguese New Christians in Hispanic America during the Iberian Union of Crowns

The Iberian Union of 1580-1640 brought together Portugal and Spain under the same crown yet nonetheless both remained distinct realms.²⁰

16. On the Medici and the Levant see M. Carosio and M. Arfaioli, eds., *The Grand Ducal Medici and the Levant*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2016.

17. Francesca TRIVELLATO, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009, and Renzo TOAFF, *La nazione ebrea a Livorno e a Pisa 1591-1700*, Olschki, Florence, 1990.

18. FRANCISCO ZAMORA RODRÍGUEZ, *La pupilla dell'occhio della Toscana y la posición hispánica en el Mediterráneo occidental (1677-1717)*, Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, Madrid, 2013.

19. Jonathan Irvine ISRAEL, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires, 1540-1740*, Brill, Leiden, 2002.

20. For this period in Portugal the bibliography is copious. See Fernando BOUZA ÁLVAREZ, «Portugal en la monarquía hispánica (1580-1640). Felipe II, las Cortes de

This was reflected in the situation of the Portuguese in the domains of the monarchy. Not all subjects of the crown were the same. Technically only *naturales* of Castile were allowed to settle in the *Indias*.²¹ On several occasions the specific exclusion of Portuguese from settling in Hispanic America and being involved with commerce there was declared even though many settled there especially in Peru, lured by trade in precious metals and slaves.²² If they were New Christians, immigration was especially more complicated. Edicts against people with Jewish or Moorish blood or those who had been investigated by the Inquisition settling in the territories were made throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and *conversos* wishing to immigrate had to craftily find ways to circumvent the measures, and New Christians were present since the beginning of the European presence in Hispanic America.²³ In spite of the official prohibitions at the end of the sixteenth

Tomar y la génesis del Portugal católico», Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1986, and the essay in P. Cardim, L. Freire Costa, and M. Soares da Cunha, eds., *Portugal na monarquia hispânica. Dinâmicas de integração e de conflito*, Centro de História de Além Mar, Lisbon, 2013, pp. 147-161.

21. On the theme of Castilian nationality in the Americas and the movement of people there see Tamar HERZOG, *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2003, and her «Naming, Identifying and Authorizing Movement in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America», in K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter, eds., *Naming, Registration and Recognition. Documenting the Person in World History*, British Academy, London, 2012, pp. 191-209.

22. On the Portuguese in Hispanic America see Fernando SERRANO MANGAS, «La presencia portuguesa en la América española en la época de los Habsburgos (siglos XVI-XVII)», in *A União Ibérica e o Mundo Atlântico*, Colibri, Lisbon, 1997, pp. 73-70; Maria da Graça MATEUS VENTURA, *Portugueses no Peru ao tempo da união ibérica. Mobilidade, cumplicidades e vivências*, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, Lisbon, 2005, and Gleydi Elisa SULLÓN BARRETO, *Extranjeros integrados. Portugueses en la Lima virreinal 1570-1680*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 2016.

23. Eva Alexandra UCHMANY, «The Participation of New Christians and Crypto-Jews in the Conquest, Colonization, and Trade of Spanish America, 1521-1660», in P. Bernardini and N. Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, Berghahn, New York, 2001, pp. 186-202, and Ricardo ESCOBAR QUEVE-

century and throughout the seventeenth, both the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru were known to harbour important Portuguese New Christian hubs, as is borne out by the activity of the tribunals of the Inquisition active on the continent since their foundation in Mexico and Lima (1570) and in Cartagena de Indias (1610).²⁴

The period was crucial for the configuration of Brazil within the imperial system of the Hispanic composite monarchy and the Habsburgs made it a point, as sovereigns of Portugal, to develop and extend territorial expansion in the *Estado do Brasil* and reform its administration.²⁵ The political and social organisation of Brazil was vastly different than that of Hispanic America, as it was divided into hereditary donatary captaincies which attracted a varied cohort of people involved with the exploitation of the land and its resources.²⁶ From the outset of the estab-

DO, *Inquisición y judaizantes en América española: siglos XVI-XVII*, Editorial Universidad del Rosario, Bogota, 2008. On immigration to the New World from Spain see Isabel TESTÓN NÚÑEZ and Rocío SÁNCHEZ RUBIO, «Identités feintes – Anthroponymie et migrations atlantiques, XVIème-XVIIIème», *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, 2015, <https://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/68422>.

24. Solange ALBERRO, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571-1700*, FCE, Mexico, 1996; Alfredo MORENO CEBRIÁN and Gleydi Elisa SULLÓN BARRETO, «Somos cristianos no judíos: Portugueses en la “gran complicidad” y el auto de fe limeño de 1639», *Boletín del Instituto Riva-Agüero*, 37 (2014), pp. 1-29; Aliza MORENO-GOLDSCHMIDT, *Conversos de origen judío en la Cartagena colonial: Vida social, cultural y económica en el siglo XVII*, Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, 2018, and Ana SCHAPOSCHNIK, *The Lima Inquisition: The Plight of Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Peru*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2015.

25. Guida MARQUES, «O Estado do Brasil na união ibérica. Dinâmicas políticas no Brasil no tempo de Filipe II de Portugal», *Penélope*, 27 (2002), pp. 7-35; Stuart B. SCHWARTZ, «Luso-Spanish Relations in Hapsburg Brazil, 1580-1640», *The Americas*, 25/1 (1968), pp. 33-48, and the recent collection of essays in J. M. Santos Pérez, A. P. Megiana and J. L. Ruiz-Peinado Alonso, eds., *Redes y circulación en Brasil durante la monarquía hispánica (1580-1640)*, Sílex, Madrid, 2020.

26. Mickael AUGERON and Laurent VIDAL, «Creating Colonial Brazil: The First Donatary Captaincies, or the System of Private Exclusivity (1534-1549)», in H. Roper and B. van Ruymbeke, eds., *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic*, Brill, Boston, 2007, pp. 22-50.

lishment of the Portuguese presence in Brazil the two most important commodities for export to Europe were Brazilwood, used as a reddish dye and, progressively, sugar. The second half of the sixteenth century saw a surge of interest in the latter commodity, going from a spice with purported medical properties to a sought after luxury item when it was elaborated for consumption at Europe's prosperous tables and banquets. The preparation of export of these products engaged the myriad of individuals who arrived at these captaincies which, into the beginning of the seventeenth century, were largely concentrated in the north-east of Brazil.²⁷

A tribunal of the Portuguese Inquisition was never created in Brazil as it was overseen by that in Lisbon, and it undertook occasional visitations of which there were two during the Iberian Union, in 1591-1593 and 1618-1620. Research has shown that from the outset there were important clusters of New Christians throughout the *Estado do Brasil*.²⁸ Towards the end of the sixteenth century important *conversos* were involved with the intricate world of sugar production, and in the early part of the seventeenth they were known to play an important role in the commercial networks which brought together Brazil, Portugal, and the most important centre for the distribution and refining of sugar in Europe, Amsterdam, which became home to one of the most prominent Portuguese Jewish communities in Europe.²⁹

27. Stuart B. SCHWARTZ, «A Commonwealth Within Itself. The Early Brazilian Sugar Industry, 1550-1670», in S. Schwartz, ed., *Tropical Babels. Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World 1450-1680*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2004, pp. 158-200.

28. Bruno FEITLER, *Inquisition, juifs et nouveaux-chrétiens au Brésil*, Leuven University Press, Leuven, 2003; José Antônio GONSALVES DE MELLO, *Gente da Nação. Cristãos-novos e judeus em Pernambuco 1542-1654*, Editora Massangana, Recife, 1989, and Daniel STRUM, *The Sugar Trade, Brazil, Portugal and the Netherlands (1595-1630)*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2013.

29. Daniel STRUM, «Institutional Choice in the Governance of the Early Atlantic Sugar Trade: Diasporas, Markets and Courts», *Economic History Review*, 72/4 (2019), pp. 1202-1228.

3. *The Medici and the New World*

It is known that Cosimo I de' Medici took a keen interest in the American world and its flora and fauna, and that at his initiative the *orto botanico* – the first such university botanical garden in Europe – was founded in 1544. The *guardaroba* assembled by him featured American objects, including painted maps of the territories.³⁰ His successors, Francesco and Ferdinando I, continued with this interest even further, assembling one of Europe's most important collections of American objects. Grand Duke Francesco was an avid collector of American *curiosità* with an extensive network of agents throughout the Iberian world who regularly brought him artifacts, manuscripts, animals and plants from the New World.³¹ During his years in Rome (1569-1587), Ferdinando amassed a formidable collection of American objects and displayed a decided interest in the continent, its inhabitants, geography and products, aided no doubt by his role as cardinal protector of Spain (1581-1587).³²

Upon assuming the Grand Duchy in 1587, he made an approximation to the New World part of his policies, taking an active interest in the activities of Florentine merchants in the New World, notably. Upon return to the Tuscan court after his extensive travels in 1606, the Florentine merchant Francesco Carletti (1573-1636) provided him with first-hand and recent information on the lands, and it was to him that he dedicated his *Raggionamenti*, which, however, were only published posthumously. Undoubtedly, the most important expression of this interest was the 1608-1609 exploratory expedition to the Amazon under Captain Robert Thorton to look for precious metals and

30. Lia MARKEY, «The Riches of the Indies: Francesco and Ferdinando de' Medici and the Americas», in A. Assonitis and B. Sandberg, eds., *The Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive (1537-1743)*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2016, p. 123.

31. *Ibidem*, pp. 123-124.

32. See the entry on him, Elena FASANO GUARINI, s.v. «Ferdinando dei Medici», in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 46, 1996, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Rome, pp. 258-278.

with a view to establishing a Tuscan settlement there, though it never reached Brazil, arriving only in Guyana.³³

The Medici could rely on a vast array of diplomatic and mercantile contacts to gather information and provide them with knowledge about and commodities from the New World. Under Ferdinando well-placed spies were sent to the Spanish court alongside seasoned diplomats to provide him information about the Hispanic world and its Atlantic possessions.³⁴ In addition, he sought out the help of well-placed naturalized Portuguese Florentines who were longtime residents of Portugal and Brazil. Members of the Giraldi and Cavalcanti families who had first settled in Lisbon as prominent merchants and bankers then in the hereditary captaincies of Brazil further fueled Medici interest in the Americas. Brazil was a territory especially close to the heart of Ferdinando as was seen and alongside his colonial project there was that of having sugar arrive directly to Tuscany and refining sugar in Livorno, for which undoubtedly the practical skills of people acquainted with the trade would be useful.³⁵ Though the project of a Tuscan colony was shelved after Ferdinando's death in 1609

33. On the project see Sérgio BUARQUE DE HOLANDA, «Os projetos de colonização e comércio toscanos no Brasil ao tempo do Grão Duque Fernando I (1587-1609)», *Revista de História*, 142-143 (2000), pp. 95-122; Carlos ZILLER CAMENIETZKI and Carlos Alberto M. R. ZERON, «Nas Sendas de Sérgio Buarque de Holanda. Documentos sobre uma expedição florentina à Amazônia, em 1608», *Revista de História*, 142-143 (2000), pp. 123-211; Giuliano GUARNIERI, *Una audace impresa marittima di Ferdinando I dei Medici*, Arti Grafiche Nistri Lischi, Pisa, 1928, and *L'ultima impresa coloniale di Ferdinando I Medici: La spedizione R. Thornton al Rio Amazonas, all'Orenoco, all'isola Trinidad. Con documenti in appendice e tre carte fuori testo*, stabi. Tipo. G. Meucci, Livorno, 1910.

34. Paola VOLPINI, *Los Medici y España. Príncipes, embajadores y agentes en la edad moderna*, Sílex, Madrid, 2017.

35. Brian BREGE, «Renaissance Florentines in the Tropics: Brazil, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Limits of Empire», in E. Horodowich and L. Markey, eds., *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492-1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 206-226.

Medici interest in the American world, its products and trade links to it continued unabated.³⁶

4. *The nação and Ferdinando's American projection*

Alongside Florentines, another privileged group of intermediaries who could be useful to Ferdinando for his American projects, in particular for his interest in Brazil, were Portuguese New Christians. Though the wording of the 1591-1593 edicts clearly was calculated to entice merchants linked to the Levant, given Ferdinando's American penchant, *converso* merchants with links to the Americas could not have been far from his mind. As we have seen, throughout the sixteenth century Medici concessions to New Christians mirrored those extended to them in other Italian states. Behind them were painstaking negotiation and diplomacy, taking into account a myriad of factors: their situation in Portugal, their presence in economic networks, their settlement in other Italian states, and constant interloping on the part of Rome. These people were interesting to these states and their rulers and worth incurring diplomatic and economic costs because they had something to offer, be it products, contacts or knowledge. The path was not lacking in subtlety and ruse. At the outset they were officially accepted under the guise of Catholicism, be it a mere veneer or sincere. Only later were they able to live as Jews – a tacit acquiescence on the part of the rulers to their condition of renegades to the Christian faith.

In these intricate negotiations, in which what was at stake for them was the right to constitute communities without hinderance from civil and ecclesiastical authorities, there was a delicate interplay between the people who sought out the right to reside and the host society which would accept them. It was crucial to show that they had something dif-

36. FRANCISCO ZAMORA RODRÍGUEZ, «Interest and Curiosity: American Products, Information and Exotica in Tuscany», in *American Products in the Spanish Empire. Globalization, Resistance and Diversity, 1492-1824*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014, pp. 174-196.

ferent to offer, that some profit was to be gained for the risk of inviting them. The *livornine* were not inconsequential for the Grand Duchy. The arrival of apostates on Italian soil on the heels of the edicts alarmed Rome and the Habsburg crown and occasioned a series of investigations on the part of the Roman Holy Office.³⁷

5. *A case in point: the negotiations for the arrival of Rui Teixeira*

One of the individuals who clearly evinced Ferdinando's interest in having Portuguese merchants with links to Brazil settle in Pisa was Rui Teixeira (1538?-1601), a Portuguese merchant from Lisbon. Though the exact nature of the *iter* of his departure from Portugal and arrival to Tuscany is unclear, it would seem that he sent feelers out to both Rome and Tuscany about his desire to leave Portugal to settle in the Italian Peninsula. Archival sources indicate that his departure was negotiated over the better part of a year and involved papal diplomats in Portugal, the Roma Curia, the Portuguese viceroy and Ferdinando himself, testimony to the interest which the parties had in having the Portuguese merchant relocate.

On the heels of the first *livornine* edict, Teixeira made overtures to move to Pisa, where his brother Manuel had been living for 27 years and where a daughter of his, Clara, was to marry the prominent merchant Duarte Dias, also a longtime resident in the city.³⁸ The diplomatic correspondence of Giovanni Battista Confalonieri (1561-1648), secretary to the Apostolic collector Fabio Biondi (1533-1618) during his tenure in Portugal (1592 to 1596), which has a wealth of first-hand information about Portugal at the end of the sixteenth century, also makes

37. On these investigations and the *livornine* see Giuseppe MARCOCCI, «Itinerari marrani. I portoghesi a Livorni nei secoli dell'età moderna», in A. Prosperi, ed., *Livorno 1606-1806, luogo di incontro tra popoli e culture*, Allemandi, Turin, 2009, pp. 425-417.

38. FRATTARELLI FISCHER, *Vivere fuori dal Ghetto*, p. 77.

it clear that from the outset that Teixeira had actively sought safe passage from Portugal and that Rome was also fully aware of it and indeed involved.³⁹

Writing to Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621), the nephew of Ippolito Aldobrandini – Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605) – on 12 June 1593, Confalonieri indicates that Teixeira had shown him a letter of Aldobrandini's in March, which sought safe conduct for him and his family to leave Portugal for Rome. The matter was to be taken up by Cardinal Albert (1559–1621), Portugal's first viceroy between 1583 and 1593, papal legate and the Inquisitor general of the kingdom. Confalonieri responded by indicating that he had made the matter known to Albert, who had given the order to undertake the necessary investigations regarding Teixeira's character and background.⁴⁰ The next day Confalonieri wrote to Cardinal Ottavio Paravicini (1552–1611), a curial insider as former legate to France, member of the Congregations of the Council and of the Congregation for the Examination of Bishops, whereby he made it known that he had in fact known of Teixeira's interest since at least

39. See Silvano GIORDANO, «Notizie di Portogallo nelle carte di Giovanni Battista Confalonieri presso l'Archivio Segreto Vaticano», in *Gli archive della Santa Sede come fonte di storia del Portogallo in età moderna. Studi in memoria di Carmen Radulet*, Edizioni Sette Città, Viterbo, 2012, pp. 25-44; Alessandro DELL'ARIA, *Grandezza e magnificenza della città di Lisbona. Dalle carte di Giovanni Battista Confalonieri, segretario del collettore apostolico (1593-1596)*, Nicolodi, Rovereto, 2005.

40. «Al Signore Pietro Aldodrandani, / Ruiz Teixiera mi diedi una lettera di Vostra Signoria illustrissima datata di 12 di marzo nella quale mi ordina ch'io l'aiuti col serenissimo legato in una sua occorrenza che in somma era di ottenere licenza di poter passare a Roma con la sua casa, trovandosi maritata una figliola in Pisa, essendo proibito a quei che vengono da christiani novi di poter partir del Regno senza licenza di Sua Maestà. Così feci l'ufficio et Sua Altezza si mostra molto pronta in fare qualsivoglia cosa che sia di questo di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et mi disse che daria ordine come feci subito che si pigliasse informazione s'era persona conosciuta et trovandosi che della sua famiglia non vi fosse alcuna macchia la consolaria nella sua richiesta. Io doppo non l'ho più rivisto et se mi richiederà d'altro non gli mancarò dell. Et le bacio humillissimamente le mani pregandole ogni desiderata sollicità. Il dì XII di giugno 1593.» Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), Fondo Confalonieri 27, Fol. 65v.

February when he was still in Madrid, having received a letter from the Portuguese merchant included in a dispatch of Paravicini's.⁴¹

Teixeira's departure for Rome, however, was not to be a simple matter. On 10 July, Confalonieri wrote a letter to Grand Duke Ferdinando, responding to a request from the Medici ruler contained in a letter dated 1 May in which he had entreated the secretary to intercede on behalf of Teixeira and his family before Cardinal Albert, so they could reach Pisa to settle there.⁴² The matter dragged on. Another letter of

41. «Al cardinale Paravicino / Io non diedi conto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima da Madrid dal mio viaggio riserbandomi a farlo nell'amico in Lisbona si come feci già fin dal principio per il desiderio della antica mia servitù con lei. Siche hora le non dirò di più, non solo le rendo la maggior gratie ch'io posso della cortese [...] che si degna tener di me di che per sua benignità vi fa fede nella sua delli 15 di febraro ch'eccede ogni merito mio con Vostra Signoria Illustrissima. Con la medesima lettera hebbi il memoriale inclusa del portoghese che mi comanda ch'io aiuti col serenissimo legato et con questi ministri regi le come questo che altro più non desidero che occasione di servirla. Ho fatto efficace officio con Sua Altezza acciò riporti l'intento suo ch'è di passare a Roma con la sua casa, havendo maritata una figliola a Pisa et fu dato subito ordine che si pigliasse informatione delle sue qualità conforme agli ordini di questo Regno et non trovandosi impedimento legitimo mi diedi intentione Sua Altezza di contarmelo. Si come in conformità vi ho scritto a Monsignore Illustrissimo Pietro Aldobrandino che per sue lettere di diedi il medesimo carico doppo questo io non le ho scritto più et se occorerà fare altro non mancarò di aiutarlo con ogni mio potere che è quanto le ve devo dire et baciarlo humilissimamente le mani et pregarle ogni felicità. Il dì XIII di giugno 1593». Ivi, fols. 65v-66r. Confalonieri arrived in Lisbon on 11 March 1593. Ivi, Fol. 35.

42. «Al Gran Duca di Toscana / Con la lettera di Vostra Altezza del primo di maggio con la qual mi comandava ch'io procurassi licenza a Ruiz Texiera di uscire di questo Regno con la sua famiglia per venire ad habitare in Pisa hebbi anco quella che Vostra Altezza scriveva a questo serenissimo cardinale per il medesimo effetto et le presentai molto presto a Sua Altezza accompagnadola con quella efficaci officii che giudicai a proposito. Prese la lettera et rispose con molta humanità mostrando gran desiderio di voler servire a Vostra Altezza in questa et in ogni altra occasione di suo gusto et subito fu dato ordine che si pigliasse informatione della persona et della famiglia del sopradetto Ruiz Texeira (conforme al solito) et mi disse che non si trovando cosa alcuna alcuna contro della sua persona et della sua famiglia daria ogni soddisfazione a Vostra Altezza se bene con molta difficoltà si sogliono dare queste licenze

Confalonieri's to Cardinal Albert, dated 20 November 1593, testifies to the concern and exasperation at the delay for the safe conduct on the part of the secretary.⁴³ A subsequent letter to Albert thanked him for the safe conduct.⁴⁴ On 11 December 1593, the secretary of the collector finally conveyed the news to Ferdinand⁴⁵ and to Cardinal Paravicini,

a Christiani nuovi contro quali si fa esquisita diligenza per vedere se hanno macchia et trovandosi alcuna cosa non si lasciano uscire (del Regno). Io ho fatto officio col segretario del Regno che ha questo carico et m'ha promesso di spedirlo presto et di favorire il negotio et spero che Vostra Altezza ne restarà servita et io non mancarò di sollecitarlo et in ogni altra cosa che sarà di sua (...) di non avere altro in questo Regno che sia per servirla con maggiore prontezza di me.» AAV, Fondo Confalonieri 27. The letter also appears in Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Mediceo del Principato 840, fol. 136 and is published as Medici Archive Project Bia data base (MAP), doc. ID # 27440. A classic study which concentrates especially on Albert's tenure in Portugal is FRANCISCO CAEIRO, *O Arquiduque Alberto de Austria. Vice-rei de Portugal, cardeal legado do papa, governador e depois soberano dos Países Baixos, história e arte*, Lisbon, 1961. A recent biography is Luc DUERLOO, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars*, Ashgate, Surrey, 2012.

43. «Al cardinale archiduca / Quel Rui Texera che fu incommandato a Vostra Altezza dal Gran Duca di Toscana per haver licenza d'uscire di questo Regno con la sua famiglia non è stato mai spedito con quante diligenza io ce habbia usato sebene il segretario Lupo Soarez ci fu detto molte volte che si aspetta la spedizione dalla corte. Et credo che se Vostra Altezza non si mette della sua autorità non se vedrà mai il fine». AAV, Fondo Confalonieri 27, fol. 384r.

44. «Al cardinale Archiduca / È venuta la licenza firmata da Sua Maestà per Ruiz Texeira da potere uscire da questo Regno con la famiglia et tutte le sue facultà per andare a Pisa, et di là andare ad habitare a Roma, se ben l'astringe a dar di ciò sicurtà di due mila ducati, la quale egli dubita di poterla dare non restando di qua delle sue facultà per le quali havesse credito trovarla se non con molto suo danno a Pisa. Però a questo vi pensi lui, assai è, che ha avuto la gratia, della quale ne darò conto al Gran Duca di Toscana, che ne scrisse a Vostra Altezza et così al Cardinale Aldobrandino, che ne fece istanza, le quali ne dovranno restar con obbligo a Vostra Altezza che gli l'ha procurate». AAV, Fondo Confalonieri 27, fol. 399v.

45. «Al Gran Duca di Toscana / Alcuni mesi sono fu scritta Vostra Altezza comandava ch'io facessi officio con il Cardinale Arciduca che a quel tempo si trovava in questo Regno acciò si desse licenza a Ruiz Texeira di uscir di questo Regno con la famiglia et tutte le sue facultà. Siccome feci et essendo questo negotio di natura che portò seco molte difficoltà et lunghezza di tempo (a a se n'è potuto riportare l'inspe-

explaining that the matter dragged on so long because similar cases were always addressed with scrutiny as often *conversos* used their safe conducts to flee to the Ottoman Empire and embrace Judaism.⁴⁶ The departure came at no small expense to Teixeira himself, as a letter from Ferdinando to Albert from 1595 indicated that he had paid 1500 scudi in Portugal in order to leave, a sum which the Grand Duke requested be returned to him.⁴⁷ It is known that Teixeira and his family left Portugal in February 1594, passing through Spain, where they were submitted to further scrutiny, before arriving in Pisa.⁴⁸

tione prima che... essendomi accesia in la mano di sua Maestà finalmente con l'autorità delle altezza del cardinale è stato spedito et se glie concessa detta licenza dando sicurtà di venire a Pisa et di là a Roma come egli diceva di voler fare nella sua domanda. Questo stile di fare dar sicurtà si osserva perché in essi simile è occorso che altri sotto pretesto di venire in Italia sono andati a parte d'infedeli se ben questo non s'ha da tenere del sospetto Teixeira essendo di molto buon qualità. Ho voluto dare conto a Vostra Altezza acciò si faccia gratia di pretendarmi altra occasione per la quale fosse continuare a servirla attualmente siccome faccio sempre con l'avia et le bacio humilmente le mani pregandole ogni felicità. Il d'i XI di dexembre 1593». AAV, Fondo Confalonieri 27, fol. 400r.

46. «Al Cardinale Paravicino / Sapendo Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che le risoluzioni de li negotii che si trattano in queste parti vanno con molta tardanza, non si meravigliarà, se nel particolare di Ruiz Texeira per il quale si compiacque di scrivermi s'è caminato con tanta larghezza di tempo, oltre che la natura del negotio portava seco molte difficoltà, finalmente con l'autorità del Cardinale Arciduca s'è riportata la licenza per lui de poter uscire dea questo Regno, con la famiglia et tutte le sue facultà, et venire a Pisa et di là a Roma, con questo che dia sicurtà di due mila ducati di venire in quelle parti. Il che lo fanno perché altre volte è occorso, che altri dicevano di venire in Italia, et poi passavano in facti infideli per apostatarum. Ho voluto darne avviso a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima acciò le piaccia di darmi spesso occasione di servirla, che non mi potria far gratia maggiore. Et le bacio etc. Il di XI di dicembre 1593». AAV, Fondo Confalonieri 27, fols. 400r-v.

47. Letter dated 17 February 1595, Mediceo del Principato vol. 3875 unfoliated ASF and published as doc. 28402 on the BIA website of the Medici Archive Project.

48. See James NELSON NOVOA, «The Many Lives of Two Portuguese Conversos: Miguel Fernandes and Rui Teixeira in the Tribunal of the Holy Office in Rome», *Hispania Judaica*, 12 (2016), pp. 127-184.

Where was Teixeira really destined to go? Why such interest on the part of Ferdinand for someone who apparently considered Tuscany a mere stop on the way to Rome? The answer could perhaps be two-fold. Rome often constituted a symbolic space of legitimation. A stay in the Eternal City could have served to further consolidate Teixeira's Catholic credentials and that of his family. Though New Christians were never formally invited as a group to Rome to constitute a community in the way they had been to other Italian localities by the end of the sixteenth-century, the city could boast a firmly entrenched number of them, among them important merchant-bankers with links to the Iberian world and the Curia.⁴⁹ In reality, Pisa and Rome were not so far apart, as both places could boast Portuguese *converso* communities which were even united by ties of kinship. A New Christian merchant like Teixeira could easily work between both places and maintain interests in them. We know that he did briefly sojourn in Rome along with his son-in-law, Miguel Fernandes, ostensibly looking for a house for Miguel and his wife in May 1595 with the help of Jerónimo da Fonseca (1546-1596) – a prominent Portuguese merchant-banker who represented the interests of Iberian ecclesiastics in the Curia, especially from his home diocese of Miranda – who was a longtime resident of the city with family links to Pisa. It was a planned meeting between the three men in order to look for a home that gave rise to an accusation of blasphemy and investigation by the Roman Inquisition when Fernandes was overheard uttering what were construed to be blasphemous statements. It made the pair prolong their stay and both men returned to

49. James NELSON NOVOA, «Being a New Christian in Sixteenth Century Rome», in M. Wainwright and E. Michelson, eds., *Religious Minorities in Early Modern Rome*, Brill, Leiden, 2021, pp. 192-236; *Idem*, «The Portuguese New Christian *nação* as a Catholic Diaspora in Rome», in N. Terpstra, ed., *Reframing Reformation: Understanding Religious Difference in Early Modern Europe*, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Toronto, 2020, pp. 191-214; *Idem*, *Being the *nação* in the Eternal City. Portuguese New Christian Lives in Sixteenth Century Rome*, Baywolf Press, Peterborough, 2014.

Pisa in October after a few months spent in an Inquisitorial dungeon.⁵⁰ The interrogations of the two men in the spring and summer of 1595 were linked to the general investigations taking place in Tuscany as well on the part of the Roman Inquisition after concerns about the Duchy as a safe-haven for Judaizing apostates.

Through their testimony before the tribunal in Rome we know that both men had spent years in the northeast of Brazil in Bahia, where they were involved in the sugar trade, having resettled in Portugal in the early 1590s. Fernandes, in particular, could boast a life story of genuine interest, having participated in the fateful battle of Ksar el-Kebir in 1578 alongside King Sebastian (1557-1578) and in the conquest of Sergipe in 1589-1590 alongside Cristovão de Barros, which gained him Portuguese ennoblement.⁵¹ Their prolonged years in the *Estado do Brasil*, their intimate knowledge of its geography and inhabitants, coupled with what must have been their skills in sugar production, would have been of great interest to the Medici ruler, who was hoping to refine sugar in Livorno and likely already concocting the idea of the colonial foray to Brazil. They were the kinds of merchants that Ferdinando was hoping to lure to settle in Tuscany through his *livornine* edicts. Curiously, their trial before the Holy Office in 1595 also treated the tribunal to a rare and exceptional glance into the religious life of Brazil, as in their testimony they provided important information about New Christian merchants there, their activities and religious practices. Apparently unbeknownst to Rome, only a few years before the tribunal, the Holy Office of Lisbon had carried out its first mission in 1591-1593 largely to seek out New Christian Judaizers on Brazilian soil.

It is likely that Teixeira sent out feelers to Ferdinando, conscious of the ruler's New World interests and the appeal he could have for the Medici ruler, in a carefully staged strategy to gain the right to leave Portugal. He could very well have conceived of the idea even before returning to Portugal. Men like Teixeira and Fernandes, with first-hand expe-

50. The trial is published in *Ibidem*.

51. The details are provided in *Ibidem*.

rience of the conditions in Brazil, would have proved to have been especially important to the Grand Duke. It is likely that, given Teixeira's links to the Pisan New Christian merchant community, he was already conducting business with Pisa and Livorno before he even left Portugal. That it is likely that the Roman sojourn was to have been short-lived is attested to by Ferdinando's concern once again, this time in securing their release from prison over the summer and autumn of 1595, stating emphatically that they were his subjects and that he was keen on their return. The diplomatic correspondence with Rome makes it clear that Ferdinando took an active and constant interest in the matter, a further indication that he wanted them back in the Grand Duchy.⁵²

6. *Conclusion*

Rui Teixeira's arrival to Pisa and the negotiations involved in securing his exit from Portugal are similar to the trajectories of other members of diasporic communities that settled abroad in the early modern period. With their skills honed at negotiations after decades of having to come to terms with minority status, persecution and the right to settle in safe havens, the denizens of the New Christian diaspora such as Teixeira could flaunt belonging to a group in order to accrue political and social advantages. Both professing Jews and Christians could claim to be part of it, and often the frontiers between the two were blurred for them and in the eyes of the host societies which received them. Throughout the sixteenth century and where they could in Italy, they managed to

52. On the trial see NELSON NOVOA, «The Many Lives of Two Portuguese Conversos»; *Idem*, «A Family of the Nação from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and Beyond (1497-1640)», in Y. Kaplan, ed., *Religious Changes and Cultural Transformations in the Early Modern Western Sephardi Communities*, Brill, Leiden, 2019, pp. 22-42; *Idem*, «I "cristiani nuovi" di Pisa e il mondo Atlantico nelle carte del Santo Uffizio durante il Granducato di Ferdinando de' Medici», in A. Cifres, ed., *L'inquisizione romana e i suoi archivi. A vent'anni dall'apertura dell'Archivio della Congregazione della Dottrina della Fede*, Gangemi, Rome, 2019, pp. 177-192.

secure what were at times albeit transient homelands through a mixture of ruse, diplomacy and calculated self-representation. Whether it was the flaunting of their Levantine, Asian, Adriatic or American commercial networks, purported or real, their possession of specific knowledge or their ostentation of piety, all stood to gain from being different and offering something else to the rulers who would accept them. This is evinced in the case of the securing of Rui Teixeira and his family the right to settle in Pisa and Rome.

In Pisa and Livorno, through their links to Portugal and its imperial world, they could be of interest to its society and ruler thanks to the products and knowledge which they were especially privy to. In negotiating their arrival, settlement and integration into Tuscan society, they undoubtedly studied what could have appealed and have been in its interest. Medici's interest in putting Tuscany on the map as an important European state with a prominent port and an Atlantic projection was something they were able to tap into and which they used to their advantage. In the case of Rome, links to a community with a stable presence for several decades firmly ensconced in the city, its social life and with important ties to the Curia made of them an interesting asset to have in the city as well. Through them the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds met and were brought together in a moment in which, in places like Rome and Tuscany, such a meeting was possible and sought after.