



# The Agendas of the First New Christians Regarding Israel and the Portuguese Empire (Sixteenth Century)

JOSÉ ALBERTO RODRIGUES DA SILVA TAVIM

*Centro de História, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal*

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**ABSTRACT** This paper aims to reveal and interpret the messianic messages arising from the Inquisition of Évora (Portugal) trials against a group of first generation converts following the general expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1496 respectively. These messages point to a memorialist construction on the phenomenon of the expulsions of Jews from France until they reached Portugal. Consequentially, both their new status as Christians and the context of the Portuguese imperialist expansion are considered essential predestined stages for the meeting of the Lost Tribes and the final redemption. These messages also reveal a ‘contamination’ of other records, such as the famous *Toledot Yeshu* or the Christian or Jewish versions of the Story of Barlaam and Josafat, and must be overlooked in the context of other known (more or less) contemporary texts of a teleological nature.

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**KEYWORDS** Messianism, Portuguese New Christians, Expulsions, Lost Tribes, Portuguese Empire

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## Introduction

This paper focuses on the reworking of memory regarding the Jewish Expulsions during the Middle Age, assumed by Spanish *conversos* living in Portugal in the fourth decade of the sixteenth century. They belong to the first generation of Jews converted to Christianity and living in Portugal during a period in which the Empire was consolidated. The main concern of this paper is to consider the various messianic lucubrations of men from this generation concerning their special ‘place’ in this imperial state, as persons anchoring their perspectives in a changed Judaic world. [1]

It was by mere chance when mapping the trajectory of Garcia Fernandez Baxira, a *morisco*<sup>1</sup> who had been imprisoned on his escape route from Castile by Évora’s Inquisition in 1546 after killing Inquisitor Juan Martinez in Hornachos, that an extraordinary testimony was discovered, placing France as the country of origin of the Jews who had settled in Spain and [2]

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1 *Morisco* was the term used to refer to the Muslims converted to Christianity in Spain and Portugal.

later in Portugal. This is a marvellous account in which the Jewish expulsion from France was interpreted in the different context of the forced removal of the Jews from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1496) much later, as well as of the conversion and segregation dynamics of the converts by the Inquisition, and by the increased use of the Purity of Blood Statutes.<sup>2</sup>

## The Witnesses

A group of individuals, imprisoned at Évora's Inquisition jail in the 1540s, exchanged opinions on many matters, including religion. Garcia Fernandez Baxira, the *morisco* from Hornachos, would have been the least integrated member of this group. [3]

Garcia was one of the witnesses of the recounting of the Jewish expulsion from France at the jail of Évora, although there is no account of his reaction to it. Nonetheless, one of the central characters of this account, the *Cristão-Novo* (New Christian)<sup>3</sup> João Dias, originally from Odemira, claimed to have befriended other imprisoned New Christians as well as the *morisco* from Hornachos, from whom he received "good deeds." These "good deeds" lead to the suspicion that they probably all shared similar principles, namely the rejection of Jesus Christ as the son of God in the Christian tradition.<sup>4</sup> [4]

The other imprisoned men were all New Christians, such as Salvador Vaz from Lisbon;<sup>5</sup> Francisco Aires and Henrique de Miranda da Torre from Braganza; and Francisco Mendes, referred to as *Beicinho* [Pout], and Nuno Rodrigues from Vinhais. Each one of them would address his socio-religious condition while jailed in Évora in 1546. Henrique told Salvador, in *Castellano*, that "it would be better to be in Castile, the lesser of two evils, and to run away from these men and these gentiles," which hints at his possible Spanish origin.<sup>6</sup> Despite having a Portuguese mother and a home in Braganza, a town in the North of Portugal, Francisco Aires had been born in Medina del Campo.<sup>7</sup> Another cellmate, Nuno Rodrigues, had been born near the border with Spain, in Campo Maior,<sup>8</sup> and Salvador Vaz still knew the meaning of the Hebrew words he would chant: "Thovejeno Adonay Aloeno (...)," meaning "Adonai, my God."<sup>9</sup> [5]

This dispersed data reveals the strong ties that linked this group of men to the north of Portugal and neighboring Castile. Castile was also the place of origin of a central character of this study, namely Luis de Carvajal.<sup>10</sup> He was the ancestor (possibly the grandfather) of two namesakes, the renowned governor of Nuevo León, Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva (1539–1590), and of his nephew (Toro 1982, 278–79; Temkin 2008, 2019). Curiously, Martin Cohen mentions one member of this family, a man called Diego Rodriguez, who left S. João da Pesqueira in Portugal for Medina del Campo in Spain before settling in the south of France [6]

2 See, among others, for the case of Spain, Sicroff (1960); for the case of Portugal, Figueirôa-Rêgo (2011); and in general, Bethencourt (2021).

3 The term *Cristão-Novo* (New Christian) was the most common term used to refer to the converted Jews or their descendants in Portugal.

4 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 3308.

5 There are some "Autos de Sumários feitos a um Salvador Vaz" in Lisbon between 1545 and 1546 (ANTT, *IL*, proc. 17064). It is not known whether this is the same person as the individual in Évora.

6 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 6047, 57.

7 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 6117.

8 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 11239. The reading of this document was not permitted, due to its poor conservation.

9 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 6047, 57.

10 ANTT, *IE*, proc. 8976.

(Cohen 2001, 35.).<sup>11</sup> Could this have been the source of the tradition regarding the expulsion of the Jews from France?

As for João Dias of Odemira, he was accused of performing Jewish ceremonies by the inquisitors and sentenced as a heretic in 1543 but acquitted of major excommunication. João Dias received an order of release on June 26, 1544 and hid the *sanbenito* under a cloak as he left Évora. In 1546, he was back in Évora's Inquisition jail, where he held discussions with other New Christian inmates, such as Salvador Vaz, on the veracity of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, which Dias refused to accept since in Christ's lifetime the Jews had not been scattered around the world. In his view, the coming of the Messiah was imminent since the Jews had finally been disseminated throughout the world.<sup>12</sup> Dias was later transferred to a cell shared by Luis de Carvajal, the *morisco* Baxira and other New Christians, such as Pedro Esteves, the *Licenciado* [graduate] Estêvão Pereira, and Alonso Garcia, known as the "Fermental." This latter prisoner was undoubtedly Spanish, as was Carvajal.<sup>13</sup> [7]

## One Version of the Expulsion of the Jews from France

During the session held on May 31, 1546, João Dias testified that he had had a conversation with other inmates on "the captivity of the New Christians and their exile." Dias stressed in his testimony that "they [his cellmates] had all participated in the discussion." However, he only told the account that had been narrated by Luis de Carvajal regarding the expulsion of the Jews from France and their migration to the Iberian Peninsula, or, in Dias' words, "how the Jews had come from France and spilled into Castile and Portugal." [8]

The 'story' is as follows: While the king of France was at Mass, his Jewish physician passed in front of the host without offering a sign of respect, as he did not remove his hat, thus indicating his socio-religious identity. The king summoned him to reprehend his behavior, but the Jewish physician replied that he had not acted wrongly, as "that God" was not his God. The king subsequently decided, for "his [the physician's] sake" to expel all the Jews from France, which led the physician to beg him to reconsider his decision. Given the monarch's adamancy, the physician made a merciful request, asking the king to walk with him to a field that was located two shots of a crossbow away. Having obtained this grace from the sovereign, the physician returned home, dug a hole in the ground, and jumped inside wearing a coarse cloth referred to as an *argal*,<sup>14</sup> covered in ashes. Just as the biblical Queen Esther had fasted for three days, so did the King of France. [9]

Once his fast had ended, the king summoned the physician and the Jew left the hole and walked barefoot to the field. There, the monarch awaited him and the two walked away from the crowd the distance of two crossbow shots, as promised, when suddenly a man wearing only a small cloth (*panetes*) around his waist appeared, showing an open wound on the right side of his chest, holding a cross in his hand and carrying a small bundle of wood on the top of his head. The king began to tremble before this apparition, but the physician told him "Sire, fear not," and insisted that he should ask who the ghost was. "Jesus Christ," replied the man, and the monarch then asked what he was doing walking in tatters and carrying a [10]

11 For further information on the branches of Carvajal's family, see Cohen (1968); Liebman (1970); Uchmany (1982); Gitlitz (2002); Bodian (2007, chap. 3); Temkin (2007); Temkin (2019).

12 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, 3.

13 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, 70.

14 *Argal* is a kind coarse textured mantle (*Grande Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa* [Great Dictionary of the Portuguese Language] 1949, 1:1097).

bundle of wood on his head. And Jesus replied, “I am here to pay a great penance given to me by God our Father to carry this small bundle of wood with which I immolate myself twice a day for every evil committed against the Jews, for every evil committed for my sake by the gentiles against the Jews.” After hearing this reply, the king asked the Jew, “Will you not show me your God?” The physician nodded but said it was necessary to walk the distance of two crossbow shots again, which they did. As they set off, the air and earth were suddenly shaken by thunder and lightning, which inspired great awe in the king of France, and the physician Jew told him not to fear, as it was nothing, and that no one who had ever seen God had lived to tell the tale. Then the sovereign said he had had enough and “for the sake of that” he would let the Jews remain in his kingdom for seven years until they could sell all their possessions.

After the seven years had passed, the Jews moved to Castile and to “Spain,” where they lived until the reign of King Ferdinand (of Aragon). Some of them then moved to Portugal, others chose to travel to Muslim countries, and another group remained in Castile. Carvajal explained the meaning of “Portugal,” which is literally translated as “port of here” (*gá*), a port of salvation and port of remission, and was inhabited on one side by the *egyptores* (Egyptians), who were the Castilians, and on the other by the sea, as Cape St. Vicent in the southernmost point of Portugal was considered to be the end of the world. He also stated that Portugal represented the end of the trials and tribulations for the Sons of Israel. Neither the *morisco* nor the New Christians commented on Carvajal’s ‘story,’ though they were stunned by “such things.”<sup>15</sup> And as will be seen, this ‘story’ had an influence on the teleological discourse of João Dias. [11]

## The History of the Jewish Expulsion from France: How to Narrate Expulsions

As is common in these wonderful stories, the social memory’s interpretation and selection of facts, recalled by its agents within a given context, depart from the social reality, the accuracy of which can be checked through the existing sources.<sup>16</sup> [12]

In short, there was not one but several expulsions of Jews from France during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries—from 1182 to 1394—which were motivated by different royal decisions, as were the various motives to allow them to return again and again. Although royal insolvency is the common denominator underlying all of these expulsions, growing nationalism in France from the end of the fourteenth century as well as the simultaneous evolution of royal power not only affected the immanent religious dimension of the process but also made the choice between conversion or expulsion more visible and pressing. Despite the different exile locations, most of the French Jews preferred to settle in neighboring Provence and the Iberian Peninsula (Jordan 1989; Schwarfuchs 1975; Nahon 1999; Dahan and Nicolas 2004; Einbinder 2008, 2009; Sibon 2016). All the memories of the Jews expelled from France were practically ‘crushed’ by the later catastrophe of their general expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century. In this regard, the literature relating to this period was extensive and subsisted throughout the ages. [13]

15 NTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, p. 70–72, for the reproduction of João Dias; NTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 8976, p. 38–40, for the original version of Luis de Carvajal.

16 See, for example, Halbwachs (1997); Halbwachs (1952); le Goff (1984); Namer (1987); Connerton (1989); Ricoeur (2000).

However, the great Jewish ‘chroniclers’ of the Iberian expulsions never ceased to refer to the expulsion from France in their mythical and messianic teleology (Yerushalmi 1982, chap. 3). [14]

Such is the case of Selomoh ibn Verga in his *Sefer Sebet Yehuda* (The Stick of Judah), written in 1550. The king referred to in ibn Verga’s ‘story’ is called Philip, the son of “Filip,” thus identifying him with Philip IV ‘The Fair’ (r. 1285–1314). Selomoh described the king as a cruel man who seized all the Jews’ goods and properties, leaving them naked and deprived. Ibn Verga also reported a high total number of French Jews—twice as many as in Egypt—and mentioned only a small number of conversions. On the matter of the 1306 expulsion, ibn Verga referred to an “extraordinary” episode between the king and one of his favorite “sages.” This man, with the unusual name of Abugardan Delkadih, had asked Philip several times to put an end to the expulsion within three months and to adopt laws that would ultimately lead to the conversion of the Jews or their death. The king, however, declined the request, arguing that the mob had already risen violently in arms against the Jews, and his decision to expel them would protect the community from further harm (Selomoh ibn Verga [1550] 1991, 115–20). [15]

*’Emeq ha-Bakha* (The Vale of Tears), written by Yosef ha-Kohen in 1558, displays similarities with ibn Verga’s work, hinting at the use of similar sources. In the thirty-ninth story of his example collection, Kohen recounts the French revenge on the Jews, who were accused of drinking wine from chalices stolen from sanctuaries and of crucifying a Christian every year. It was on this basis that Philip II decreed their expulsion in 1186 (although the event occurred in 1182) and seized all their gold and silver. In Kohen’s narrative, a theme that is dear to this apocalyptic prose emerges: the use of strong *topoi* to compare the history of the Hebrews with recent events connected to the Jews. For instance, both ibn Verga and Kohen refer to the fact that twice as many Jews were expelled from France as those in Egypt. Kohen also states that they fled the evil country by seven different routes (ha-Kohen [1550] 1989, 79–80). The sequence of expulsions from France from 1306 onwards was summarized in the seventy-seventh story, with references to the few converts to Christianity and the kings who had expelled or readmitted the Jews. Here, once again, Philip IV’s tragic end is associated with divine retribution, although this is never stated, as a punishment for his expulsion of the Jews and cupidity. The king died while hunting dears, falling with his horse into the water where they both drowned (ha-Kohen [1550] 1989, 93–94). [16]

Between these two books, Samuel Usque’s *Consolação às Tribulações de Israel* (Consolation for Israel’s Tribulations) was printed in 1553, in Ferrara, in which Philip ‘The Fair’s’ cruelty, the small number of conversions, and the king’s violent death as a sign of punishment are reiterated. Usque also mentions all the expulsions and returns up to 1394 (Usque [1553] 1989, 2:cicccix v<sup>o</sup>-cxci). [17]

As highlighted by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, the birth of this Jewish historiography refers us back to the specific context of the Iberian expulsions at the end of the fifteenth century, considered a major catastrophe within the context of a series of negative events. These expulsions are interpreted as a teleological chain with a messianic content, as the ordeals endured by the Jews indicated the imminent and expected final remission of the ‘Chosen People’ (Yerushalmi 1982, 73–91). [18]



## One History, Many Stories

The expulsion of the French Jews is present in the memory of the Jewish ordeal in Europe, even when the reason for this occurrence is to stress the more modern and dramatic events taking place on the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 (Spain) and 1496 (Portugal) and to present them as a long line of similar episodes. For instance, Abraham Zacuto (1450–1510), in his *Sefer Yohassin* (Book of Lineage), explicitly mentions that both his grandfather and father had been expelled from France in 1306 and had taken refuge in Spain. There they faced enemies on one side and the sea on the other. Zacuto witnessed the expulsion from Spain in 1492 and, in the same year, from the Sicilian and Sardinian territories of the Kingdom of Aragon. Finally, in 1496, he was forced to leave Portugal with his son Samuel to avoid conversion to Christianity, but they were both taken prisoner in North Africa twice (Zacuto [1566] 2006, 545). [19]

According to his narration of the story of the Jews expelled from France in the Inquisition jails in Évora, Carvajal appears to allude to Joseph's story as told in the *Book of Genesis*: that of a man who became famous for interpreting the dreams of powerful Egyptians, including the Pharaoh (*Genesis*, 37. 50). Furthermore, Michael McGaha has proven that 'Joseph's story' was a transcultural theme dear to the Spain of the 'Three Religions' and cultivated by many literati of the Golden Age (McGaha 1997, 1998). [20]

Conversely, the bizarre Abugarden Delkadih mentioned by Selomoh ibn Verga appears to be a character taken from an oriental tale, which may represent the 'intrusion' of an Islamic narrative—perhaps of Persian origin<sup>17</sup>—in the history of the expulsion of Jews from France. This distant episode was eventually transformed into a confusing and somewhat enigmatic event. [21]

The story of Luis de Carvajal as narrated in Évora's Inquisition appears to have undergone a similar process. The Jewish behavior of hiding in a hole to meditate on the king's order of expulsion, and the intimate dialogue between the two, also as a means of demonstrating Jehovah's power, reminds us, with the usual caution of adjusting this fantasy to the factual context of the Jewish expulsion from France, of the celebrated "Story of Barlaam and Josaphat," which was highly popular at the time, particularly in the reading of the *Flos Sanctorum*. Much has been written and proven as regards the Indian origin of this narrative, and its integration in a Christian context is fully understood given its original virtues and their similarity to those expressed in the teachings of Christ. This purged Christian 'adaptation' of the story of the Buddha (Siddhārtha Gautama), first in Persia and then in Syria, frequently taking its textual inspiration from the *Lalitavistara Sūtra* (Pereira 1915–1917),<sup>18</sup> was rightfully recognized as such by Portuguese chronicler Diogo do Couto in the early seventeenth century (do Couto 1616, vol. 7, chap. X). Barlaam and Josaphat's story had a specific objective in its Oriental roots: to prove that learning pushes mankind beyond the borders of material comfort to focus on spirituality (of the celestial city) (Lucas 1986, 24). [22]

Marie Campbell has shown how excerpts of the 'Story of Barlaam and Josaphat' have en- [23]

17 Is this designation a corruption of the name of the theologian, preacher, and Sufi, of Persian origin, 'Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani (c. 1077–1166), considered one of the greatest Islamic 'saints', with an important intermediary role, and for whose body Süleyman I (1520–1556) ordered the construction of a tomb, in Bagdad? (see Braune 1960).

18 On the subject of the popularity of this story in Portugal, see also Abraham (1938); Pupo-Walker (1967); Martins (1969); Sobral (2000). One of the witnesses who testified in the trial raised by the Inquisition of Évora against João Dias de Odemira—namely the old Christian Francisco Rodrigues—stated that João had already read the *Flos Sanctorum* (ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, 111).

tered into Jewish folklore, especially the main episode of the “Three Teachings of the Bird” (sometimes specified as the Nightingale) (Campbell 1960). The story was translated from Arabic into Hebrew in the thirteenth century, with the title *Ben ha-Melech veba Nazir* (The Prince and the Hermit) by Abraham ben Hasdai from Barcelona (Habermann 1950, 346–60).

Beyond the question of whether or not the “Story of Barlaam and Josephat” underlies Carvajal’s story on the expulsion of the Jews from France, and if so, which version influenced him—the Jewish, the Christian (to which the cultivated New Christians had the same access as any other Christian), or both—it is important to search for further evidence of plasticity in addition to the oral material acquired by the author. This will reinforce the hypothesis that the “Story of Barlaam and Josaphat,” or something similar thereto, can be discovered in Carvajal’s story. [24]

## Towards an ‘Archeology’ of the Stories Surrounding Luís de Carvajal’s Luso-Hispanic Messianic Circle

As already mentioned, Luís Dias, born in the Alentejo, was accompanied by cellmates in jail when he heard Carvajal’s story. Most of his cellmates were Spaniards and lived in Portugal’s northernmost region, near Braganza. This was also the case for Carvajal and his relatives. Through the trial of Lisbon’s Inquisition against Catarina de Carvajal, Luis’ daughter, one learns that his widowed aunt, Francisca de Carvajal, lived near Mogadouro, and another widowed aunt lived in Fermoselle, in the Castilian province of Zamora. As the trial informs us, Fermoselle was also the birthplace of Luis de Carvajal. Married to Margarida Nunes while living in Sambade, Portugal, he was sixty years of age at the time of his arrest in 1548 and was pardoned later that same year by a bull issued by Pope Paul III (1538–49).<sup>19</sup> [25]

Other relatives of Carvajal were also imprisoned at Évora’s inquisitorial jail during his imprisonment there, such as his daughter, Leonor de Carvajal, who was married to Álvaro de Leão. Álvaro had been born in Trás-os-Montes, in Mogadouro, although he lived in Cortiços near Macedo de Cavaleiros.<sup>20</sup> Another member of the family, called Diogo de Leão, born and living in Mogadouro, claimed that his parents Afonso and Ana de Leão were Jews from Alcanizes (Alcañizes), a Zamoran locality close to the Portuguese border, though they later settled in Miranda do Douro.<sup>21</sup> [26]

Through the inquisitorial trials, it is possible to note themes in their discourses and in the accusations made against them by witnesses that share similarities with those of Luis de Carvajal’s story. For example, Álvaro de Leão was accused of mentioning to his cellmates that the Messiah was still to come and that the Old Christians would regret having caused so much harm to the New Christians—which is echoed in Jesus’ words in Carvajal’s story.<sup>22</sup> [27]

This group’s ideological mentor appears to have been António de Valença, a physician established in Mogadouro, who had been the Jew Moses until his baptism in Miranda do Douro in 1495, a year before the expulsion or forceful conversion of Jews in Portugal. Valença was considered Mogadouro’s chief dogmatist by the inquisitors and had been arrested for his apocalyptic views. One João Fernandes Pinheiro, from Vinhais, had accused him of denying Christ’s divine character and his being the Messiah. According to Valença, the Messiah would [28]

19 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 8976.

20 ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. 6065, 11.

21 ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. 4532, 20.

22 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 3659, 27.

descend from the House of David, while the anti-Christ would come from the tribe of Dan to destroy the world. He believed that Jewish Law would replace Christianity in the 1550s, and everyone would become a Jew. Not surprisingly, he denied Mary's virginity and prophesied that prince João (1537–1554) would be the last King of Portugal after the death of his father, King João III (r. 1521–1557).<sup>23</sup>

Another member of Évora's circle was Francisco Aires, a landowner who lived in Braganza. Aires had been born in Medina del Campo, the famous trading and banking center in Castile, and was baptized in Lousã, Portugal. The Inquisition accused him of spreading the rumor that Jesus was a sorcerer and a conjuror, crucified on a cross made of wicker, as this was charm-proof material, or on a cabbage stalk. Aires also accused Jesus of having stolen the Temple's flag bearers (*semíforos*), of making small birds out of plaster and, more importantly, of denying his resurrection from the dead, and since he was a "dead man" all Christian "things" were "ephemeral" ("cousas de vento").<sup>24</sup> [29]

All his ideas were taken from the Hebrew *Toledot Yeshu* (Stories about Jesus): as the theft of the *semíforos* and the use of God's secret name—*Shem ha-Meforash*—enabled *Yeshu* to perform miracles using wizardry with this magic name.<sup>25</sup> The *Toledot Yeshu* existed as far back as the tenth century, as there are fragments of this narrative in the Cairo Genizah written in Aramaic (Schäfer 2011, 3). It is known to have been used in Castille in the late fourteenth century in a controversial text written by Semtob ibn Shaprut (Sokoloff 2011, 13), as well as in Aragon, where some Jews successfully dissuaded a former coreligionist who converted to Christianity, using extracts of the *Toledot* (Tartakoff 2011). One may suspect that Aires had access to a Christian version of the *Toledot Yeshu* since the Franciscan Alfonso de Espina copied Raimundus Martinus' work, *Pugio Fidei adversus Mauros and Judaeos* (Dagger of Faith against Moors and Jews), (1280) verbatim, where extracts of the *Toledot* were transcribed (Carpzov [1280] 1687, 362–64; see also Deutsch 2011, 288–89; Cuffel 2015a, 2015b; Hasselhoff and Fidora 2017) in his famous work *Fortalitium Fidei* (Fortress of Faith), published in 1470 (Ginio 1998). However, this is only a hypothesis, since, as proven by Paola Tartakoff, the *Toledot Yeshu* circulated orally and across the Iberian Jewry (Tartakoff 2011, 303). [30]

As mentioned, this group had close links with Spain, particularly with its border regions, shared elements of Jewish culture in their daily life, was more jovial and prone to reflect on the Jewish expulsion (its own in particular and of the rest in general), and to understand the eschatology of their position as converts. Luis de Carvajal's story is more objective regarding the desired New Christian integration, as Jesus appears as an 'intermediary' character with a positive image since he sacrificed himself to atone for the misdeeds of Christians towards the Jews. If the Spaniards were like the Egyptians of the Old Testament, Portugal was to Carvajal the land's end of Western Europe and emerged as the messianic destination for the exiled. Considering Portugal as the end of the trials and tribulations for the Sons of Israel, Carvajal revealed a theme common to his time, as shown by Samuel Usque in the *Consolação às Tribulações de Israel*, printed in 1553. The final destination of the Jews after their expulsion from France and "exile" from Castile had to be Portugal, according to Luis de Carvajal, perhaps [31]

23 See the trial of Master António de Valença (ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 8232, mostly 2–3, 24–25, 58–59, 73v<sup>o</sup>–78v<sup>o</sup>, 94–94, 136, 166–170 and 180–190). On António de Valença and his religious teachings, see Tavares (1985, 381, 383–88, 1991, 265, 1993, 253–54).

24 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6117, 3, 7, 15, 89–90 and 160 (see also Tavim 2015, 166). On Francisco Aires see Tavares (1987, 358).

25 In the Vienna, Strasbourg, and Wasengeil versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, the *Shem ha-Meforash* was inscribed on a rock placed inside of the Holy of the Holies (see Osier 1984, 38–39, 71–72, 89–90).



as he remembered the early benevolent policy of King Manuel (r. 1495–1521) towards the converted.

Conversely, in face of the Jewish dissemination throughout the world and the dangerous inquisitorial persecutions, it is logical that many men belonging to this circle were closer to Usque's thought since it appealed to resistance based on his knowledge of Judaism. Of all the men imprisoned with Carvajal, João Dias was his counterpart and the man with more affinities with Usque's vision. Both claimed that the salvation of the New Christians could only be achieved in the Diaspora, not in Portugal, because only there could they live freely as Jews. However, Dias' vision differs from Usque's ideals since he admitted the possibility of crypto-religiosity. According to Dias, the Jews had been expelled from France to Castile, then to Portugal, and from Portugal they were exiled to Flanders, where Dias expected the reunion of the nine and a half tribes to await the coming of the Messiah. Afterward, the Jews would rule the world, which meant that Jesus Christ was a simple messenger and not the Messiah, as during his lifetime only two and a half tribes had stayed together while the rest had remained in hiding.<sup>26</sup> [32]

João Dias was well aware of the world around him, as the mercantile activity and the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal (1536) had led to a migratory flux of New Christians to Flanders. Most of the *conversos* had settled in Antwerp around the Portuguese Royal Factory, feeling they would be better protected from the grip of the Holy Office, although their religion was kept secret as Judaism was still forbidden there (Goris 1925; Tavares 1987, 21, 90, 1993, 282, 332–33). Carvajal's ideas were more dramatic regarding the means used to justify Portugal as the location to put an end to the wandering of the Jews, particularly in his use of Jesus Christ to atone for the hardships inflicted by the Christians on the Jews. This difference in perspective can be explained by their own lives. [33]

Luis de Carvajal usually spoke Castilian even after his long sojourn in Portugal, since he is said to have replied “no mas, no mas” to the *bacharel* (Bachelor) Manuel Álvares. He was 58 to 60 years of age in 1548 and informed the inquisitors of his circumcision as a Jew (though Carvajal had forgotten his Jewish name), and was later baptized in Fermoselle by Fr. Miguel Gonzales,<sup>27</sup> which meant that he had been converted in Spain before the expulsion in 1492 (Suárez 1992, 325–27, 341–44; Tavares 1987, 348–50; Soyer 2007, 122). Years later, Carvajal married Margarida Nunes in Sambade (Trás-os-Montes). In his opinion, Portugal would be the location where the wandering of the Jews across Europe, from the East to the farthest West, would have an end—the last place of the multiple expulsions since the times of medieval France, to be remembered by the Jews. However, due to the pressing inquisitorial persecution, Carvajal created a discourse denying Christianity.<sup>28</sup> Other references reveal that Carvajal's ideas tended to become similar to João Dias' thoughts, though he exceeded his fellow inmate from Odemira by using Jesus in the story of the expulsion of the Jews from France. For instance, he asked to be taken to the King under protection, to say to all the bishops that Christian Law was false and the true law was Mosaic Law.<sup>29</sup> He also told *bacharel* Manuel Álvares that Jesus Christ had done penance by carrying a cross on his back for all the evil committed against the Jews.<sup>30</sup> [34]

Luis de Carvajal was pardoned by a bull issued by Pope Paul III dated June 10, 1548,<sup>31</sup> and [35]

26 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, 93–94 and 110.

27 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 8976, 42–44.

28 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 8976, 14.

29 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, 14 and 41.

30 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, 41v<sup>o</sup>.

the family name continued, as seen in the namesake of the governor of *Nuevo Reino de León* (in present-day Mexico) and the ‘martyrized’ nephew. The family saga showed how crypto-Judaism ran strong, as the old Luis Carvajal wanted all Christians to assume that Mosaic Law was better than their own, and dreamt that the authorities, including bishops, and even a humanized Jesus Christ, would serve as the vehicle of a teleological victory against the oppression exerted by many Christians. Until then Carvajal had traveled very little outside the Hispanic world but entered into the gallery of *conversos* whose resistance was heroic.

## In Conclusion: New Christians and the Empire

Luis de Carvajal’s story appears to be objective regarding the desired New Christian integration, as Jesus appears to be an ‘intermediary’ character with a positive image due to his sacrifice to atone for Christian misdeeds against the Jews. But why, according to Luis de Carvajal, did the destination of the Jews after their expulsion from France and ‘exile’ from Castile have to be Portugal? [36]

As already mentioned, the teleological discourse of Luis de Carvajal changes dramatically following his trial, perhaps due to inquisitorial pressure, which may have led him to consider the figure of Jesus Christ as being close to the image of *Yeshu* in the famous *Toledot*. [37]

However, did his final teleological dream not reveal the dreams of many coreligionists of transforming Catholic Portugal into a Jewish Portugal, when this extreme Western part of Europe, in an age of building Empires, was seen as a concrete and messianic step towards a world adventure? Since he considered Portugal as the end of the trials and tribulations of the Sons of Israel after their expulsion from other European countries, this means that he believed that the Jews had reached a new stage here, maybe one conducive to the discoveries he had witnessed. [38]

One may suspect the existence of a bridge with the millenarianism of the ideology characterizing the Portuguese Empire during the reigns of King Manuel (1495–1521) and King John III (1521–1557). In the case of both Jews and Christians, insistence on a new period is observed—a period of harmony and material abundance—as a sign of the beginning of a messianic age. Furthermore, in both cases, the idea of the superiority of a Chosen People—Jews and Portuguese alike—is based on their smallness and humility, which attracted divine favor, as well as their loyalty to God. The idea of considering Portugal as the end of the trials and tribulations for the Sons of Israel after their expulsions from other parts of Europe appears to have a connection with the dream of a messianic Portuguese imperialism of the unification of the word by the Portuguese, where King Manuel is seen as the future emperor (Thomaz 1990). The famous Jesuit Father António Vieira brought together different versions of the immigration of the Jews to the biblical *Sefarad* in his famous *História do Futuro* (History of the Future), written in the second half of the seventeenth century, to assume how this phenomenon had benefitted Christian realms, since the prophet Malaquias or Samuel, who became Pedro, the future bishop of Braga (later known as S. Pedro de Rates), converted by Santiago after his resurrection by this apostle, may be found among these migrants. Thus, according to Vieira, the biblical prophecy in Abdias—that the sons of Israel who had migrated to *Sefarad* would conquer Austral territories—would apply to Israel and then to Portugal (in this sequence), as the Portuguese had discovered and conquered these “southern lands” (Vieira [1649] 1953, [39]

244–49).<sup>32</sup> Therefore, one may wonder whether this idea of Vieira regarding the prophetic migration of Jews to Portugal is, as seen in the idea of Carvajal, a common eschatological topic in the messianic circles of Jews (and crypto-Jews) and Christians during this period, with different patterns and purposes.

Let us explore a little of the prophetic topic of Portugal as the westernmost point in Europe. [40] The famous shoemaker from Trancoso, Gonçalo Anes Bandarra (1500–1556), sought after by the New Christians (Tavares 1991, 255–61), said in his prophetic *Trovas*:<sup>33</sup>

Forte nome é Portugal, [41]  
Um nome tão excelente,  
É Rei do cabo poente,  
Sobre todos principal.  
Não se acha vosso igual  
Rei de tal merecimento.  
Não se acha, segun sento,  
Do Poente ao Oriental. (Costa, n.d.)

Strong name is that of Portugal, [42]  
Such an excellent name,  
It is the King of the West Cape,  
Principal among all others.  
Its equal cannot be found  
King of such merit.  
Or comparison, say I,  
From West to East.

The position of Portugal can be considered peripheral at first glance but becomes privileged [43] in the Christian or Jewish prophetic mind, thus paving the way for millenarian lucubration. The western point of Europe appears to mean ‘mirus locus,’ far from disturbances, which facilitates the transition to a better stage of humanity. For example, during the Portuguese Restoration (from the rule of the Spanish Habsburgs, 1580–1640), Fr. Gil (d. 1265), one of the first Dominicans in Portugal, prophesied:

Portugal, thanks to its kings, will weep many tears and suffer in many ways. But [44]  
God will offer His hand and, unexpectedly, [Portugal] will be redeemed by an  
unexpected one. (...) All will be transformed. (...) It will live again a Golden Age.  
Peace will reign everywhere. Blessed are those who will see this.<sup>34</sup>

The redefinition of Portugal as a Jewish Kingdom—the same Kingdom considered as the [45] end of the trials and tribulations for the Sons of Israel—in the lucubration of Luis de Carvajal appears to incorporate the messianic *topoi* developed in the Christian milieu. The idealized ‘Jewish Portugal’ was formally the neighbor of the ‘mirus locus’ expressed by Portuguese

32 Vieira is based on the work of the Archbishop of Braga, who cites, D. Rodrigo da Cunha (see da Cunha 1634, 1:62n8; see also Saraiva 1992, 83–84).

33 All translations by the author unless indicated otherwise.

34 “Portugal, por parte de seus reis, gemerá por muito tempo e padecerá de muitas maneiras. Mas Deus te será propício e, não esperadamente, será remido por um não Esperado. (...) Tudo será transformado. (...) Reviverá a Idade do Ouro. Por toda a parte reinará a Paz. Bem-aventurados os que virem isto” (in den Basselaar 1987, 43).

Christian messianic ideals. But the ‘Portuguese dream’ of Luis de Carvajal may also reveal the powerful influence of Iberian Jewish eschatology and messianic hopes, expressed during his youth by the well-known Don Isaac Abravanel.<sup>35</sup>

One of the most important issues in “the path to final redemption” was the end of the *Galut* (Exile)—the reunion of the Lost Tribes—and the establishment of the Fifth Empire as a universal empire. Don Isaac Abravanel argued that the fourth empire was still Rome, as the head of the *Respublica Christiana* was the papal capital. Yet according to Abravanel, its end was near as shown in the struggle between the *dar al-Islam* and the West. A Fifth Empire would be established with the coming of the Messiah and the role of Israel. Contrariwise, to the Christians—as can be seen in Fr. António Vieira’s works—the Fifth Empire was the Universal Christian Empire, which in Vieira’s case was the Portuguese Empire. This empire would be established after the rule of the Antichrist, Judgement Day, and the coming of Christ.<sup>36</sup>

As already highlighted, the agonic ideal of Luis de Carvajal appears to be reborn in Portugal: His main objective is to transform Christian Portugal into a Jewish Portugal, but there are no signs of the Ten Tribes in his Discourse. Instead, this topic is present in the teleological discourse of another man imprisoned in the same jail as Carvajal, namely Luís Dias, the New Christian from Odemira. As previously mentioned, according to his testimony, France expelled its Jews to Castile, which, in turn, expelled them to Portugal, from where they went into exile in Flanders, where Dias expected the reunion of nine and a half Jewish tribes to await the coming of the Messiah, after which the Jews would rule the world. In his view, Jesus was a simple messenger, as during his lifetime only two and a half Jewish tribes had lived together, while the rest had remained in hiding.<sup>37</sup>

In the converted milieu of early modern Portugal, and in the Jewish milieu abroad, the question of the reunion of the Ten Lost Tribes became, as highlighted by Benzion Netanyahu, deeply connected with the issue of the discovery of new worlds, where it was thought the Lost Tribes were hidden (Netanyahu 1982, 229–30). In the prophetic dream of João Dias, the New Christians fleeing to Flanders met the Ten Tribes from the newly discovered countries, thus escaping the Inquisition’s grip. This powerful topic ‘overflows’ to the Christian milieu, as seen in the “Third Dream of Bandarra,” where he spoke of the hidden Ten Lost Tribes and their reunion (Costa, n.d., 81–85). This is also present in the eschatological thoughts of Fr. António Vieira, even if he included it “to conceive” the Universal Kingdom of Christ. In his *Esperanças de Portugal* (Hope of Portugal), the Jesuit uses the topic of the sudden reappearance of the Ten Tribes, which a Portuguese king—King John IV (1640–1656)—will present to the Pope and to “The Faith of Christ”: a sign of the rapid concretization of the Universal Christian Kingdom, ruled by that resurrected king (Vieira [1659] 1952, 34–37). Of course, the Inquisitors of Coimbra who judged Vieira stressed in their sentence read on December

35 Among the many studies on Don Isaac Abravanel and his work, see Netanyahu (1982); Attias (1992); Skalli (2007).

36 A part of the book of Netanyahu (1982, 205–42); and the article of Tavares (1991, 248–53), see Scholem (1971) and Idel (1998). On this process of purification seeking to impose religious uniformity, see Terpstra (2015).

37 ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. 6047, 93–94 and 110. The question of the nine and a half tribes arose as the tribes that formed the (Northern) kingdom of Israel were the tribes of Reuben, Simon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, Ephraim and a half of the Manasseh tribe. Therefore, it is supposed that during the period when Jesus Christ lived, only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and half of the tribe of Manasseh survived in the Judaea Roman kingdom (Wigoder 1996).

23, 1667 the heterodoxy of his proposition concerning the “ten tribes of Israel (Exodus XIII), which had disappeared more than two thousand years ago without a trace (...)”<sup>38</sup>

The ‘migration’ of this eschatological topic to the messianic Portuguese agenda, with transformations for its insertion in a Christian teleology, also reveals how strong and generalized it was at the core of the Iberian Jews’ agenda. An extraordinary letter, whose authorship is attributed to the Jewish moneylender Davide di Dattilo da Tivoli by Cédric-Cohen Skalli and the late Michele Luzzati in their book *Lucca 1493: un sequestro di Lettere Ebraiche. Edizione e Commento Storico* (Lucca 1493: a Seizure of Hebrew letters. Edition and Historical Commentary), refers to a relationship between the topic of the Lost Tribes and the first discoveries in the New World. In the letter, probably written around 1496, David says that while in Siena with his brother-in-law (possibly Isaac da Vitale da Pisa) the latter informed him of the arrival of Spanish ships carrying some eighty sons of Israel in Lisbon. We are dealing here with the arrival of Christopher Columbus (Cristoforo Colombo) from America in 1493, bringing aboard his ships some natives taken in Hispaniola. Columbus kidnapped around 10 to 25 natives and took them to Spain with him. Only seven or eight natives arrived alive in Spain, where their presence caused a strong furor (see Phillips and Phillips 1992; Marques 1992; Axtell 1992). Far from the real facts, the Jewish milieu tried to inscribe this event in their former patrimonial memory of the Lost Tribes. The seven or eight natives were transformed into eighty in the news that reached Davide di Dattilo da Tivoli in Italy; but more importantly, according to his story, they were described as being “Hebrews [of Judea] or Hebrews, sons of Israel.” The only doubt was whether they belonged to a single Tribe or the Ten Tribes. David asserted the truthfulness of the news, even if the Jews could live in Spain no more.<sup>39</sup> But this news could, and probably was, transmitted by Jews allowed to enter Spain for business, or others who visited the country in disguise, or by New Christians exchanging correspondence with their Jewish relatives living outside the Iberian Peninsula (see García-Arenal 2003; López Belinchón 2003; Muchnik 2005; Tavim 2013a, 2013b).

Hence, the ‘transmigration’ of the old major topic of the Ten Tribes to the new early modern Jewish and *converso* context may be verified, enriched by, and adapted to the conjuncture of the European discoveries and expansion: a phenomenon whose nuances and complexity have been studied in relation to the political and/or intellectual activity of such different men, separated in time and ideas, as David Reubeni (see Birnbaum 1958; Eliav-Feldon 1992, 2001; Tavim 2004; Benmelech 2011) or Menasseh ben Israel.<sup>40</sup>

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38 “(...) os dez tribos de Israel (Êxod. XIII), que desapareceram há mais de dois mil anos, sem se saber deles,”\* “Sentença que no Tribunal do Santo Offício de Coimbra se leu ao padre António Vieira” [Coimbra, December 23, 1667] (in Vieira [1659] 1952, 183).

39 “(...) ebrei [of Judea] o ebrei figli di Israele” (see Skalli and Luzati 2014, 189–90).

40 Highly prolific subject. See among others, ben Israel ([1650] 1979); Roth (1945); Katz (1982); Kaplan, Méchoulán, and Popkin (1989); Popkin (1994); Ifrah (2001); Rauschenbach (2012).



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