

CROSS-CULTURAL NETWORKS AND EXCHANGES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PORT CITIES DURING THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD: THE CASE OF A JEWISH MERCHANT COLONY IN MARSEILLE

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Abstract

This article outlines the commercial engagements of Sephardic networks in Marseille's Mediterranean trade during the second half of the seventeenth century. More than a century and a half after the expulsion of Jews from this city, the new mercantilist policies of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, minister of finance to Louis XIV, finally enabled Jewish merchants to enjoy trading, settlement, and naturalization privileges. While local policies geared toward foreigners and state-sponsored privileges were often inconsistent, Jewish merchants managed to exploit periods of "limited toleration," leveraging Marseille's monopoly in trans-Mediterranean trade to transcend boundaries of faith and economic limitations. In recent decades, scholarship in diaspora and network studies has transformed our understanding of networks beyond the confines of co-religionists, family, and kin by focusing on interfaith and cross-cultural connections. Despite this, the port city of Marseille, its merchant community, and commercial networks have frequently been overlooked in favor of studies centered around France's Atlantic ports. This case study directs attention to Marseille as a hub of the Sephardi trading diaspora and elucidates how merchants used both formal structures and informal networks, such as communal networks of trade and personal connections, to enhance France's Mediterranean reach and their influence in an era of global maritime expansion.

Keywords: Marseille, Jewish networks, cross-cultural trading, Sephardic diaspora, Mediterranean encounters.

Introduction

In March 1669, the royal "Édit Pour La Franchissement du Port à Marseille" declared Marseille a "Free Port," eliminating import fees, with a particular emphasis on cargo from Ottoman-controlled port cities. The

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intention was to attract “capable” foreign merchants, including Jews, to settle and trade through Marseille’s port and to stimulate sea-borne trade for Marseillais and other French merchants. The prospect of settlement, naturalization, and trading opportunities enticed skilled Jewish merchants to establish themselves in Marseille or engage in trade through the *Vieux Port*, drawing participants from across the Mediterranean. Marseillais and Jewish merchants transported goods from the Levant without duties, used newly built facilities for inspection and safety, and facilitated the exchange of merchandise, thereby expanding Marseille’s local industries. The “free port” policies positioned Marseille as a hub for diplomatic relations and commercial exchange, fostering interfaith relations between Marseillais and Jewish merchants, more specifically, Sephardic Jews.

This study underscores Marseille as a focal point of the Sephardi trading diaspora, illustrating how merchants leveraged both formal structures and informal networks, including communal trade networks and personal connections. This strategic approach expanded France’s Mediterranean reach and bolstered the influence of these merchants during an era of global maritime expansion. The study explores Jewish networks as a crucial dimension of Marseille’s success as a Mediterranean port city, showcasing the intersection of religion, commercial relations, and political change that contributed to Marseille’s status as a thriving early modern port city, facilitated by state-sponsored privileges and regional economic incentives recognizing the diversity of Jewish mercantile networks across the Mediterranean.²

Archival Sources

By examining notarial records containing shipping manifests, loading policies, and official regulations and decrees, the study argues that these documents reveal how the pre-existing mercantile connections and

2 While recent works touch upon the Jewish community of Marseille, their history exists within the larger studies of commerce in France or Italy, with no comprehensive analysis of the city in this context. See Junko Thérèse Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce: Marseille and the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), 2011; Jeff Horn, *Economic Development in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2015; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2009; Olivier Raveux, “Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes in the Mediterranean During the Later Seventeenth Century: The Case of Chintz Quilts and Banyans in Marseilles,” *Textile History* 45 (2014): 49-67.

trans-sea trading experience of Sephardic Jews enabled them to overcome boundaries of faith and economic limitations, establishing prosperous businesses in Marseille. The examination of the Sephardic trading houses of Joseph Vais Villareal and Abraham Attias serves as a compelling example, portraying Marseille as a crucial Mediterranean gateway for Jewish merchants. The case of Villareal and Attias is notable, as it provides historians access to information about Jewish trading companies through grievances filed at the Chamber of Commerce regarding their business and personal conduct. Three notarial registries form the foundation for mapping mercantile relations, illuminating the diversity of Jewish networks in Marseille and across the Mediterranean.³ While several scholars have referred to Villareal and Attias in their work as the first Jewish merchants to establish a trading firm and a community in Marseille, to my knowledge, very few have used these notarial records to explore the Jewish community of Marseille. French-speaking scholars, namely Jonas Weyl, Adolphe Crémieux, and Jean-Baptiste Xambo, are among the select number who brought attention to the seventeenth-century Jewish community.⁴ Early modern French history scholars have yet to use these records

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- 3 Jean Baptiste Audimard, « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, Fonds Notaire Mortel-Reisson, 393 E 93, Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône (AdBdR), Marseille. The last two notebooks of this large manuscript contain a report on the maritime insurance of Villareal and Attias' trading company; Pierre Maillet, « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 13-83, Fonds Notaire Flaugier, Recueils d'actes, 394 E 29, Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône (AdBdR), Marseille; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, ff. 319-332, t 1729, Provence, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, France, published in Crémieux, Adolphe, «Un établissement juif à Marseille au XVIIe siècle.» *Revue des études juives* 55, no. 109 (1908): 99-145.
- 4 In 1888, Jonas Weyl wrote "La résidence des Juifs à Marseille," a short article offering a brief history of Jews supported by primary sources. Weyl's work aimed to bring awareness to some important documents stored in the Chamber of Commerce archives, which shed light on this community when few were aware of such records. In the early twentieth century, Adolphe Crémieux was likely the first scholar to use the details of Villareal's business records from the files stored in the *Archives des Affaires Étrangères* in Paris, a similar version of which is preserved in *Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône* in Marseille. Crémieux, one of the pioneers of research on the life of Jews in Marseille during the Middle Ages and Early modern, published several works that also contained unpublished primary records about this case. In 1908, Crémieux wrote an article about Villaréal's case focusing on the Chamber's antagonistic attitude toward Jews but without concentrating on mercantile relations, see Adolphe Crémieux, "Un Établissement Juif à Marseille Au XVIIe Siècle." *Revue Des Études de Juives* 55, no. 109 (1908): 119-45.

effectively or explore Marseille within the parameters of diaspora, Sephardic history, or network studies. Upon examination of these records, one could argue that the inclusion of Jewish merchants in Marseille's official documentation affirms their indispensable role, not merely as instruments of state policies, but as pivotal socio-economic contributors to Mediterranean commerce, operating successful trade networks. The notarial records serve as a crucial tool for mapping out mercantile relations, delineating the scope of both informal and formal commercial ties that linked Marseille to other significant Mediterranean cities. This contextualization places Marseille and the merchants within the broader framework of networks involving commerce, collaboration, partnerships, and various other socio-economic connections.

The Formation of a Jewish Colony in Marseille. Jewish Community Prior to the Édít of 1669

A look at Jewish life in Marseille indicates that they were ancient settlers and legal "citizens" of the city. They lived among their Christian neighbours, participated in the city's civic life, and assumed various economic roles. The first documented evidence of a Jewish community was recorded by Gregory of Tours in 591. By the high Middle Ages, Jews made up around ten percent of the city's population with diverse economic roles, such as scholars, physicians, apothecaries, weapon makers, coral workers, porters, tax collectors, investors, money lenders, spice merchants, merchants and trade brokers for Christian trading houses.⁵ The municipal records show they had the distinc-

5 Gregory of Tours, *The History of Franks*, Volume II, trans. O.M. Dalton (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1927), 179. Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela: Text, Bibliography and Translation*, Vol I. Trans, A. Asher (London: Asher and Compagnie, 1840), 35-36 or 6.1 and 6.2 original text. The Spanish and Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela visited Marseille in 1165. By the high Middle Ages, the population of the city was around 30,000 residents, including 2000 Jewish households. For a detailed discussion and earlier history of Jews in Marseille see Armand Lunel, David Jessula and Samuel Rosenberg, "The Jews of the South France," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 89 (2018) 1-157; Adolphe Crémieux, « Les juifs de Marseille au Moyen Âge, » *Revue des Études Juives*, 46 (1903); 1-47, 247-268; Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Juliette Sibon, "La Communauté Juives Dans La Cite: La Juiverie De La Ville Basse," in *Les Horizons D'une Ville Portuaire*, ed. Thierry Pécout (Adverbum, 2009), 111-114.

tion of *civis massilie* or “citizens” under the charters of 1219 and 1257.⁶ Still there were some limitations to their social conduct and cultural practices compared to the Christian citizens. Therefore, periodic local religious antagonism often resulted in the implementation of several official regulations aimed at protecting the Jewish residents.⁷ By the second half of the fifteenth century, the growing antisemitic sentiments across Western Europe slowly threatened the protected status of Marseillais Jews as the city came under the rule of the French Crown, leading to their expulsion in 1501.⁸ However, surviving records, such as notarial registries published by Louis Blancard and examined by historians such as Julie Mell and John Pryor enable us to understand several elements of the history of Jews in the city prior to 1669.⁹

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- 6 Lunel, Jessula and Rosenberg, “the Jews of the South France,” 43-45, 48. See also articles of the Peace Treaty of 1257 in George Bernard Depping, *Les Juifs dans Le Moyen Âge: Essai Historique Sur Leur État Civil, Commercial Et Littéraire* (Wouters, 1844), 324. Julie Mell, *The Myth of the Medieval Jewish Moneylender*. Vol. II (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 119; Crémieux, « Les Juifs de Marseille Au Moyen Age, » 4. The first of such protections was in 1219, signed between the Bishop of Marseille and the municipality. This agreement considered Jews as citizens, or *civis massilie* and therefore offered them protection under the law from harassment and abuse. In 1257, the residents of Marseille and the Duke of Anjou (Charles Anjou most likely) signed a second charter to re-instate Jews’ status and protection as citizens with several statutes that included private and public laws which concerned the rights of Jews as citizens. These citizenship rights must not be viewed through a modern lens, as even Christian Marseillais were not equal in political and social liberties in their community.
- 7 Throughout the early modern period, the Counts of Provence protected Jews from local antagonism on various capacities with regulations issued in 1306, 1320, 1322, 1387, 1389, 1400, 1422, and 1463. For more details see Lunel, Jessula and Rosenberg, “The Jews of the South France,” 43-45, 48; Crémieux, « Les Juifs de Marseille Au Moyen Age, » 8, 18, 37; Raymond Collier, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille : De 1480 à 1515*. Vol. III (Paris: Plon, 1951); Gottard Deutsch and S. Kahn, “Marseille,” article on the unedited full-text of 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, Accessed 25 April 2021 <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10438-marseilles>; Haim F. Ghiuzel, *The Jewish Community of Marseilles*, Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot. <https://www.bh.org.il/jewish-community-marseilles/>.
- 8 See Nadia Zeldes, “Legal Status of Jewish Converts to Christianity in Southern Italy and Provence,” *California Italian Studies* 1, no.1 (2010): 2. In Spain and Portugal violent attacks against Jews had led to the Pogrom of 1391 and around the same time, in 1394, France expelled all Jews from its kingdom. See also William Chester Jordan, “The Jewish Cemeteries of France after the Expulsion of 1306,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History*, ed. David Engle, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Elliot R. Wolfson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 227-230.
- 9 Mell, *The Myth of the Medieval Jewish Moneylender*; John Pryor, “Historical Introduction,” in *Business Contracts of Medieval Provence: Selected Notulae from the*

First, Jews had a long history of trade in Marseille and across the Mediterranean, even before the early modern period. Second, they performed diverse activities, often associating with Christians, which were not exclusive to moneylending. Third, these associations speak to interfaith commercial relations that remained integral to Marseille's commercial history despite legal and religious barriers. Fourth, scholars have paid little attention to Jews in Marseille despite their ancient history and socio-economic importance. The Jews who arrived in Marseille after 1669 were foreigners and lacked recognition as Marseillais Jews or citizens. However, unlike earlier settlers, they had reputable status as sea traders and prosperous networks that provided them with trade, settlement, and naturalization opportunities. The case of Villareal and Attias' business ventures in Marseille enables us to see how competition between European powers for Mediterranean resources and the commercial ambitions of the Marseillais and Sephardic Jews alike, shaped attitudes towards the newly settled community, which necessitated a period of "untested toleration" in this port city.

The Édít of 1669 and the Sephardi Settlers

The case of Villareal and Attias begins with the *Édit* of 1669, which enabled Jewish merchants to settle and trade without prejudice in Marseille.¹⁰ In 1670, several Sephardic merchants arrived in Marseille to take advantage of these favourable state policies. At least officially, these families seemed to find some assurance in the protection provided by the French Crown. Notable among them were the families of Josef Nunnes Vais de Villareal, Abraham (Abram) Attias, Jacob Samuel Avidor, Jacob Hebran, Manuel Nunes (Nunnes), and Franco Dalmeda (Delmeyda).¹¹ In many

Cartulary of Giraud Amalric of Marseilles, 1248, 52-88 (Toronto: PIMS, 1981).

- 10 « Édít pour le franchissement du port à Marseille, » 1669, Série HH 452 (Franchise du Port 1669 – 1788), Archives Municipales de la ville de Marseille (AM), Marseille. This *Édit* was part of Jean Baptiste Colbert's mercantilist policies which aimed to expand France's Mediterranean trade through Marseille's port. The *Édit* designated Marseille a free of duty port for goods transported on French ships. Furthermore, foreign merchants such as Jews and Armenians could gain naturalized status through marriage or property acquisition or conducting business. For more details see Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 2011.
- 11 « Mémoires et Documents, » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332. Abraham's name is sometimes spelled Atias or Athias. Attias and Villareal were brothers in law to each other as well as associates. Some records exist in both of their names, others as separate individuals or the company ; « Réponse des seigneurs échevins et députés du commerce de Marseille au mémoire de Joseph Vais Villeréal Juif de

ways, Villareal and Attias were the “ideal” type of merchants Jean Baptiste Colbert, minister of finance to Louis XIV, had in mind to help boost France’s trans-sea trade: they possessed maritime trade experience, a solid reputation as trustworthy merchants, knowledge of principal trade markets, and diverse commercial networks. It was perhaps for these qualifications that on 16 June 1670, Louis XIV signed a *lettre patente* to allow them safe passage to Marseille and advised the authorities in Provence to “let them [foreign merchants], safely and freely pass through all the places and places of their powers and jurisdiction, without suffering, that they may not be given any impediment both incoming and returning...”¹² This order was a significant change from previous policies within which Jews entered the city with restrictions for trading purposes only with no possibility of settlement.¹³

Despite some pushback from Marseille’s Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), citing these early restrictions against Jews, the merchants received their permission, and sometime between June 16 and June 22, Villareal and Attias, along with several others and their families, arrived at the *Vieux Port*.¹⁴ A notarial registry recorded by Pierre Maillet indicates that the two merchants operated a trading firm in Livorno, and potentially in Tunis, establishing networks that extended along the coasts of Barbary, the Levant, Italian cities, and various northern European ports. Their expertise encompassed the acquisition of diverse goods, including but not limited to various fabrics and spices. Among their traded commodities were leathers, muslin, cotton, wool, silk, clover, saffron, almonds, and more.¹⁵ They brokered trades and transported goods on behalf of other Jewish merchants as well as Italians, French, and Levantines.¹⁶ Like other foreigners, Villareal and Attias were attracted to Marseille due to the advantageous trading fees, the possibility of naturalization, and a chance to expand their trading net-

Livourne présente à monseigneur le marquis Seignelay tendant à voir permission de revenir en France, » 1679-1683, Ms. Français 18979, fol. 146, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris en Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii. »

- 12 « Mémoires et Documents, » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 304-305 ; « Pièces justificatives, III : lettre de cachet du roi, » 16 juin 1670, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, France, published in Crémieux, « Un établissement juif à Marseille au XVIIe siècle, »: 99-145.
- 13 « Édit pour le franchissement du port à Marseille, » 1669, Série HH 452.
- 14 « Réponse des seigneurs échevins et députes du commerce de Marseille au mémoire de Joseph Vais Villeréal Juif, » 1679 – 1683, fol. 146.
- 15 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 13-83, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents, » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332, AdBdR.
- 16 Audimard « Recueil d’actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR.

works through Marseille's port, an opportunity Jews had failed to achieve since the expulsion of 1501.

Josef Vais de Villareal and Abram Attias: A Brief Background

Trading diasporas in the early modern period achieved notable success due to their extensive connections across multiple regions and the crucial element of "trust" within the community of commercial actors they relied upon for conducting business. This emphasis on trust was not exclusive to Jewish networks but extended to other diasporas, including Armenians, Arabs, Greeks, Chinese, and Indians. Despite variations in the structural aspects of these networks, the common thread was the centrality of "trust" and reputation, stemming from their diaspora communities.¹⁷ As opportunities rose and trade networks expanded, merchants relied on "trust" outside regional and communal boundaries. Therefore, before discussing networks, we first need to understand the formative nature of the time spent by Villareal and Attias in Livorno, where they established thriving commercial firms, trading networks, and high social status as notable community members.

The two merchants belonged to some of the oldest and most respected merchant families of the Livornais Sephardim. This legal status as part of the community leaders came with a beneficial prospect of maintaining strong communal ties and trade networks across various regions as most of their family and acquaintances were notable merchants. At the end of the fifteenth century, when Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, Villareal and Attias families, like many other Jews, moved to several regions before settling in Livorno, where they received privileges of safe conduct, settlement, and trading through the articles of *Livornina* issued by the Dukes of Tuscany.¹⁸ In his study of the Portuguese Jews in Livorno, Leonel Lévy suggests that the family line of Attias and Villareal had many relations and connections in Amsterdam, Venice, London, Bordeaux,

17 See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers* and paper presented by Sushil Chaudhury, 2002; "Trading Networks in a Traditional Diaspora: Armenians in India 1600-1800," *XIIIth International Economic History Congress, Buenos Aires*, July 26, 2002. https://eablanchette.com/_supportdocs/armenians%20in%20Bengal.pdf.

18 Through the constitution of *Livornina*, the Dukes of Tuscany granted significant religious freedom to attract Sephardi migrants to the city who became instrumental in the city's international trade. See Francesca Bregoli, *Mediterranean Enlightenment: Livornese Jews, Tuscan Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Reform* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

Tunis, and Livorno.¹⁹ It appears that Abraham Attias pursued a legal career in Spain after studying for a period in Salamanca and that he is the father of Abram Attias, who relocated to Marseille in 1670. Abram Attias, in turn, had a son named Josef Attias, born in 1672, who later went on to become both a doctor and a rabbi.²⁰ His other son, Jacob de Abram Attias, succeeded Josef as an administrator of the *Mohar ha-Retulot* confraternity. Their cousin Jacob de Moise was born in 1675, possibly in Marseille.²¹ We know that at least two children were born in Marseille within the families of Villareal and Attias as per a memo addressed to the Secretary of State, Marquis de Seignelay, indicating that the Jewish merchants "... brought the rabbi of the synagogue of Avignon, who circumcised two male children...", one of which was Villareal's son and another Attias' nephew.²² It is uncertain to what extent the relationships suggested by the aldermen and deputies in the Chamber were accurate. However, one can infer that these events highlight aspects of Sephardic everyday social life in Marseille. Such occasions provided opportunities for the community to come together, celebrating events like births and religious ceremonies.

Trade contracts suggest that they also maintained close connections with the Sephardic community of Livorno and those who lived in the Ottoman port cities. For example, the Livornais Jewish merchants enjoyed a prestigious status in places like Tunis under the protection of the Duke of Tuscany and French Consuls.²³ The work of Guillaume Calafat on minorities shows that Livornais Jews could gain the status of *dhimmi* in Tunis and had a legal right to trade and settlement.²⁴ Jacob Attias, for instance, lived in Tunis around 1615 to conduct business while his family

19 Lionel Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise: Livourne, Amsterdam, Tunis, 1591-1951* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 234. Some Jews lived much earlier in 1553 in Northern Italy.

20 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 305-312.

21 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 141. The confraternity was responsible for providing dowry and other necessities for "deserving young girls."

22 Mémoire, "Mémoire a Monseigneur le Marquis de Seignelay Ministre et Secrétaire d'État," 1683, Archives Antérieures A 1801, Série G, Article no. 5, ACCIM, Marseille.

23 In addition to *Livornina*, in the Ottoman port cities Livornais Jews were protected by the French consuls as per the terms of the capitulations signed between the French Crown and the Ottoman Sultans.

24 Guillaume Calafat, « Topographies de « minorités », *Liame* [En ligne], 24 | 2012, mis en ligne le 10 juillet 2013, consulté le 10 décembre 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/liame/271>; Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 234-235. Jews as *dhimmi*s had protected status to practice their faith freely in the Muslim occupied territories.

lived in Livorno. It is unclear if he is the same Jacob as Attias' son, but we know from Lévy that Jacob had a brother-in-law named Jacob Levi, who handled some of his commercial affairs, especially with the Andalusian Moors of Tunis.²⁵ The descendants of Moisé Attias, who had close relations with Josef Attias, existed in Tunis as late as the 1840s.²⁶ The Sephardic merchants of Livorno maintained a flourishing community in Tunis, serving as a key market bridging the two cities and Marseille. These connections underscore the regional influence and extent of the Attias family in the Ottoman port cities.

Villareal and Attias likely retained a favourable social status among the Sephardic Jews in Marseille as notables and trusted community leaders once they migrated. In one deliberation, the *échivens* (aldermen) and deputies of commerce referred to Villareal as the leader, accusing him of building a synagogue in his house where several religious ceremonies occurred over the years. Marseillais locals suggested they saw Jews "assemble every Saturday in the house of the said Villareal and in another house in Saint Jean," which most likely was the house of Abram Attias.²⁷ Villareal's response to the allegations implies that he did not deny practicing Judaism or his status in the community. Instead, he blamed the Chamber and others of violating his rights to safe conduct according to the *Édit's* privileges and the protection promised by the Crown.²⁸ Whether Villareal was a leader in the community, we cannot confirm, but the celebration of religious ceremonies in his house, such as the *fete des Trumpettes* on the 7th of September, *Grand-Jeune* on the 16th and the 22nd of the month *fete des Cabanes* suggests he was a noteworthy member of the community.²⁹ We know that like the Attias family, the Vais or Nunes-Vais line of families were notables of Amsterdam and eventually acquired a socially high standing in Livorno.³⁰ Vais de Villareal's family existed in Livorno and Tunis until the nineteenth century as merchants, rabbis, and stockbrokers. At the time of his arrival in Marseille, Villareal was about thirty-four years of age, and Abram Attias was married to

25 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 305-312.

26 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 234.

27 « Réponse des seigneurs échevins et députés du commerce de Marseille, » 1679 – 1683, AdBdR.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 See Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*. Their names appear on archives of Amsterdam as Vaes, Vaz or Vas.

his sister, Garcia.³¹ Villareal quickly established their import and export business with Attias, which facilitated trade mostly but not exclusively between Marseille, Livorno, Tunis, Smyrna, and Alexandria.

The Villareal and Attias families were members of the *massari* or lay oligarchy in Livorno, further establishing our merchants' status as important figures in Marseille and Livorno.³² The *massari* or *parnasim* system of self-government was hereditary, with roots in the Roman system of governance.³³ In 1593, the Constitution of *Livornina* introduced the institution of the *massari* in the Jewish community, which had administrative and legislative autonomy to regulate their community affairs according to Hebrew laws that the Tuscan government recognized. The *massari* chose their members through secret ballots annually that comprised five *massari*. They had jurisdiction over civil, commercial, and minor criminal matters without interference from the state authorities, with a special judge who settled cases between Christians and Jews.³⁴ The court functioned according to Jewish law and customs but was not necessarily obliged to follow rabbinical recommendations. By 1614, the *massari* had the power to naturalize Jews as Tuscan subjects, select which members to admit into the community, and award protection under Tuscan law through a procedure called *ballottazione*. Community members enjoyed "diplomatic and consular" protection from the Dukes of Tuscany and its "allies." In exchange for these privileges, the Tuscan government required Jews to have permanent residence in Livorno. It is important to state that the Sephardic community held these official positions at least until 1698 by preventing non-Iberian Jews from gaining access to the role. Only notable Jews of Spanish and Portuguese descent could become members of the *massari*, preventing those of Levantine and Italian origin from joining them even if they were wealthy.³⁵ Eventually, in 1698, Abram Attias, one of the nobles and *massari*, proposed the democratization and opening of the office to

31 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 32, 140, 305-312. Lévy suggests that it is unlikely that there will be a second Josef given that there were only fifty people in the community in Marseille at this point. As early as 1645, the Vais were among the five families who received official control of the tobacco business.

32 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 234, 235, 309.

33 Ivi, 23.

34 Guillaume Calafat, "L'Indice de la Franchise: Politique Économique, Concurrency des Ports Francs et Condition des Juifs en Méditerranée à Époque Moderne," *Revue historique* 2, no. 686 (2018): 280; Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 77.

35 Moises Orfali, "Reforming and Conforming: A History of the Jews of Livorno, 1693-1707," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 7, no. 2 (1992): 214. Most cases

other Jews. Despite these proposed changes, the hereditary aspect of the position persisted.³⁶

Abram Attias played a significant role in Livorno, serving as a *massaro* ten times, and his son Jacob became a *massaro* in 1738. On the list of names of 1693 for the election of *massari* by the board of sixty, the name of Abram Attias appears as one leader who was part of the selection committee. The Vais family appears after 1682 with Villareal's name in the minute books of the Jewish community judicial records between 1693-1707 preserved in Livorno Jewish Community Archives (*Archivio della Comunità Israelitica di Livorno*).³⁷ The appearance of Villareal and Attias in these records attests to the importance of their prestigious status in Livorno, a significant social standing that they retained in Marseille. It is no surprise that from the beginning, the case of these two merchants attracted the attention of the authorities and Marseillais merchants even though they were not the only foreign merchants who arrived hoping for permanent settlement and expanding their businesses.³⁸

Villareal, Attias and their associates eventually settled in the district of *Le Panier* in the modern-day 2nd Aggrandizement.³⁹ A testimony by a notary, Pierre Maillet, suggests that Villareal resided in the house of a Marseillais noble, where he also kept his business records. Villareal and Attias likely operated their firm from the same place, a practice not uncommon for the time. They were proactive in setting up an import and export business, promptly engaging Marseillais notaries to draft trade contracts. A particular registry reveals four entries for contracts in June 1670, aligning with the timeframe of their arrival. These contracts involved shipments between

that came forward were commercial disputes, so they primarily settled with civil, municipal, and maritime laws.

- 36 *Ballottazione* was a secret vote through which Jewish leaders admitted foreign Jews to the *nazione ebraica* of Livorno; Orfali, "Reforming and Conforming," 214-215; Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 234.
- 37 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 234; Orfali, "Reforming and Conforming," 209, 214.
- 38 Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii, » 127. Armenians were another group of merchants who formed a small colony in Marseille. See Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*.
- 39 Jean-Baptiste Xambo, « Citoyenneté et commerce. L'affaire Villareal ou la fabrique controversée du mercantilisme marseillais (1669-1682), » *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome-Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* [Online], 127-1 | 2015, Online since 30 June 2015, connection on 02 October 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/mefrim/2147> ; DOI : 10.4000/mefrim.2147.

Livorno, Cyprus, and Algiers.⁴⁰ Merchants who landed with Villareal and Attias in Marseille, such as Avidor, Hebran, Nunnes, and Dalmeyda, were likely close business associates. In a *memoir* and documents concerning captains who arranged shipments on behalf of Villareal and his company, they frequently appear as partners.⁴¹ On numerous occasions, Dalmeyda and Avidor created contracts even without Villareal or Attias and transported goods from Alexandria in saffron, curcuma, wool, and other fabrics. In other instances, partnerships existed with either Villareal or Attias. For instance, Nunnes, Attias, and Dalmeyda, on 16 August 1678, transported one case of coral and one case of *senne*.⁴² Attias and Nunnes requested several shipments from Livorno and Alexandria in muslin, wool, leathers, ostrich feathers, and madder.⁴³ While the affiliation of the merchants with a specific firm or trading house is not clear, we know that at least one of them, Franco Delmeyda, had his own company because he later filed for bankruptcy.⁴⁴

The Jewish merchant community, though not large in number, had sufficient members to establish a small merchant colony near the port area. This colony included essential facilities such as a school, a synagogue, and shops. Unfortunately, few physical traces of this once-vibrant community remain today.⁴⁵ Determining the precise number of merchants is challenging due to limited sources, but certain documents provide estimates suggesting that around ten Jewish families or approximately fifty individuals arrived during this period. Notable merchants from this influx included Joseph Campos, Emanuel Rodrigues, Abraham Nunnes, and the individuals mentioned earlier.⁴⁶ French historian Charles Carrière estimated that at the end of the seventeenth century, there were around 250 to 275 *négo-*

40 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-3, AdBdR.

41 « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332. The manuscript contains testimonies by captains and patrons of Marseillais ships agreeing to signing contracts with Villareal and Attias for shipments arranged for their company and associates as published by Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii ».

42 « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332. Used for medicinal, aesthetic, and religious purposes.

43 « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

44 « Premier mémoire, » G1 Résidence des Juif à Marseille, ACCIM, Marseille cited in Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii, » 127. The Chamber of Commerce used his case as an excuse to show how Jews were unsuitable in opening their businesses in Marseille.

45 « Mémoire à Monseigneur le Marquis de Seignelay Ministre et Secrétaire d'état (environ 1687 – concernant Joseph Vais Villereal), » fols. 393-398, 408. Série G5 (Affaires religieuses – Juif à Marseille et à Aix), ACCIM, Marseille.

46 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 307 ; Xambo, « Citoyenneté et Commerce, » see note 22 ; Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii, » 127.

*ciants*⁴⁷ or merchants in Marseille. It is unlikely that Carrière considered Jewish merchants in his assessment. If we accept this number as accurate for merchants in Marseille, it is reasonable to assume that Jewish merchants engaged in sea trade were likely a smaller fraction of this total. The specialization in sea trade within the broader merchant community could have contributed to a more modest representation of Jewish merchants in this specific sector. However, the volume of business conducted by Villareal and Attias as well as their associates considering the small population is astonishing, adding up to over 861 loads in cargo between 1670 and 1679.⁴⁸ In 1671, Colbert wrote that “it is a great advantage for us... that the merchants have abandoned Leghorn [Livorno] and that Armenians have brought silk to Marseille.”⁴⁹ The Crown’s mercantilist goals depended on the cooperation and collaboration of merchants who had wide trade networks and extensive experience in Mediterranean markets.

Commercial Undertakings of Sephardic Merchants in Marseille

Sephardi merchants conducted business across several port cities in the Mediterranean, signed *commendae* with other Jews as associates, arranged for shipments as brokers, and hired the services of Marseillais captains and brokers to transport the most necessary goods for French and Livornais markets. Villareal’s contracts involved over thirty cities around the coast of Barbary, the Levant, the Greek Islands, the Spanish Peninsula, and Italian cities, with Marseille, Livorno, Alexandria, Smyrna, Algiers, and Tunis as some of the principal points of entry.⁵⁰ In recent years, it has become clearer that networks did not rely solely on trust within the structure of family, kin, or coreligionists.⁵¹ While family, kin and kith were essential in the organization

47 In the seventeenth century the term referred to Marseille’s elite merchants or honourable merchants who took part in trans-sea trade, particularly in the Ottoman port cities as wholesalers. This designation differentiated them from the local merchants.

48 See Charles Carrière, *Négociants marseillais au XVIIe siècle. Contribution à l’étude de économies maritimes*, 1 vol (Provence: Institut historique de Provence, 1973), 259-260 cited in Xambo, «Citoyenneté et Commerce,» see note 22.

49 Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 99.

50 Audimard « Recueil d’actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR. There is variation on the names in the registries. In some cases, Nunes appears as Nunnes, and Dalmeyda is recorded as Delmedo and Delmydo, used interchangeably.

51 See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, for a discussion on the networks of Livornais Sephardic Jews.

of Sephardi networks, economic relations required one to cross intergroup dynamics.⁵² Merchants were interested in accumulating wealth; thus, they sought various associations to maximize profit and expand their business geographically. In this capacity, they forged business relations outside their faith, social status, or social linkage. An analysis of Sephardi's networks allows us to observe Marseille's commercial reach and the extent of the city's engagement in cross-cultural networks facilitated by formal institutions and informal relationships of Jewish and Marseillais *commerçants*.

Local Networks – The Role of French Censaux in the Sephardi Contracts

Without the added support of personal correspondence, the contracts, shipping manifests, and loading policies that have survived for early modern merchants can help us make some conclusions about the commercial ties Jews crafted in Marseille. They reveal the complexity of these relations, the diversity of Mediterranean trade, the link between individual merchants, and the multiplicity of goods, characters, and spaces of interaction. The three registries primarily document shipments arranged by Villareal and his company, serving as associates or brokers on behalf of other Jewish merchants. This underscores their central role in facilitating trade and acting as intermediaries within the Jewish merchant community in Marseille. However, notary records permit us to observe other associations outside the boundaries of the Jewish community, such as hiring Christian notaries to prepare contracts, French *censaux*⁵³ to broker trades on their behalf and ship patrons to arrange cargo transportation.

In Villareal and Attias' account book, French *censaux* appear regularly and were instrumental in arranging shipments or possibly mediating the exchange of goods between buyers and sellers; in this case Villareal, his associates, and those who supplied the merchandise. A *censal* was a broker who took a percentage of the value of the goods to ensure or guarantee the exchange of goods from one port to another. They performed a similar function that Jews played for many merchants in the Ottoman territories, sometimes also referred to as "courtiers" in the Levant. Like their counterparts, Villareal and his associates mediated between merchants and traders, facilitating the buying, and selling of merchandise, as well as engaging in various other mercantile negotiations. Edham Eldem suggests that in the

52 Bregoli, *Mediterranean Enlightenment*, 213.

53 The term *censal* has its origin in the Levantine borrowed from the Arabic word *simsar* or *dellal* for a broker or middleman.

Ottoman port cities, the function of a broker or *censal* was necessary for any trade to occur. Each broker or *censal* in Mediterranean markets took a brokerage fee paid by each party involved in buying and selling of goods in question.⁵⁴ Eldem explains:

[...] all goods sold by the weight by the [French] nation of Constantinople has always paid the inner and outer brokerage fee; that is to say that the French who sell goods pay this fee to the brokers who perform the sale, while the Turks and Jews who buy these goods pay it to the brokers or *censaux* who perform the purchase. These fees are called inner in one case and outer in the other.⁵⁵

By the mid-seventeenth century in France, the terms broker, courtier, or *censal* were applied to individuals who served as intermediaries between merchants, *négociants*, bankers, and others in need of mediation in commerce. These individuals played a pivotal role in facilitating transactions and negotiations within the commercial landscape of the time. From Audimard's registry, based on the names of the *censaux*, we can assume they were French and most likely from Marseille. There is no indication whether they were in Marseille, or if they arranged for goods exchanged in the corresponding ports. If we consider Eldem's definition, we can hypothesize that Villareal and Attias paid the Marseilles *censaux* a fee to facilitate the exchange of goods that arrived or departed from port cities across the Mediterranean. The registry in question focuses on ships, captains, and merchant accounts for whom the notary drew the contract as per Villareal and Attias' request. The only two figures available to us are the ensured amount for the shipment and the percentage paid to each *censal* for guaranteeing the cargo. The contracts reveal frequent commercial interactions between the Jewish merchants and the Marseillais *censaux* in the span of ten years. For example, on 19 December 1678, Villareal arranged a shipment for the accounts of Moyze Israel Medina, Izaac Rodrigues, and Simon la Coutte for 1500 livres. The shipment left Tunis and arrived in Livorno on *le Mercure*. From the 1500 livres, Granetto, as a *censal*, brokered this deal at 5 percent commission, amounting to 75 livres.⁵⁶ In 1671, the same *censal* ensured seven trips through Livorno, Alger, Alexandria, Marseille, and La Salles ports.⁵⁷

54 Ephem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 221-224.

55 Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul*, 223; see also *Dictionnaire universel de la géographie commerçante* <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k97350212>).

56 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 75, AdBdR.

57 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 2-3, AdBdR.

The consistent employment of several *censaux* by Villareal and Attias suggests a mutual trust between them and the Marseillais *censaux*. This collaboration points to a strong and reliable working relationship between the parties involved, highlighting the trust and confidence that had been established over time. Between 1670 and 1679, Audimond, Berenguier, Besson, Dodun Greffier, Fabri Yadis, Gauthier, Gouffré, and Rosset appear more frequently than others. Berenguier was involved in around 34 shipments in total and charged his highest commission at 18% for a trip from Livorno to Lisbon for the account of Abraham Boccara. On 14 August 1673, Gouffré charged only 6% for a 6000-livre contract for a trip between Marseille and Tripoli, but Ponsoie charged 12% for the same insured amount and distance on 7 March 1678.⁵⁸ Of course, the reason for the fluctuation of commission is unknown to us. Sometimes, two or three *censaux* split the commissions. In one instance, Gouffré took three percent on 3300 livres and four percent on 2400 livres; both trips were in January 1672 on the same ship, *Saint Spirit*, by Jacques Olivier at the request of François Martin.⁵⁹ In 1674, Charles Rosset and Dodun Greffier divided commission on two shipments for the accounts of Gabriel Rivero Enriques and another for Izaak Alcalay and Abraham de Benjamin. The first traveled between Livorno, Marseille, and Lisbon, and the second between Tunis and Marseille.⁶⁰

The period from 1674 to 1676 marked one of the busiest phases for Villareal and Attias, during which they collaborated primarily with two or three *censaux*. This concentration of work with a limited number of intermediaries suggests a focused and efficient approach to their commercial activities during these years. In 1674, they signed contracts with Dodun Greffier more than others, who were involved in over 65 shipments. His highest commission percentage was 12 percent, with only one shared with Charles Rosset, another *censal*. He made 2500 livre in commissions paid by Villareal and Attias hiring various ship captains, including Boniface, Jean Quison, Jean Wilson from England, and Marc Allegre from Livorno. If we calculate the year 1674 alone, Villareal and his company paid 107 350 livres in premiums for shipments, of which French *censaux* made approximately 6000 livres in broker commissions.⁶¹ Now, not all commissions paid may exist in this specific book. Pierre Maillet's registry suggests the contracts they assessed included three books obtained from Villareal's

58 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 10, 68, AdBdR.

59 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 4, AdBdR.

60 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 20-21, AdBdR.

61 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 15-84, AdBdR.

house with seven hundred and seventeen loading policies. However, the supplementary details Cremieux published from the same records come only from one of the books. If we compare the three registries, there are discrepancies because of missing shipment details or even contracts that appear in one registry but not in the next. For example, in January 1674, one book recorded ten shipments; in the second book for the same period, there were eighteen trips. In 1671, there were fifty-six trips, while another register records only thirteen.⁶² Furthermore, we have missing data for any trade contracts signed between 1679 and 1683. Because the court case came into full effect by 1679, there was likely no assessment of his books after this date, especially since Villareal left Marseille by 1683. What is noteworthy is the relationship between the Jewish merchants and the Marseillais in the contracts. Audimard's registry shows 53,065 livres paid in commission in the ten years Villareal conducted trade in Marseille, a significant contribution to the city's local commerce.⁶³

Relations with Ship Patrons and Captains

Jewish merchants maintained close business connections with non-Jewish counterparts in Marseille and other locations, as evidenced by the shipping contracts that Villareal and his company engaged in to facilitate the transportation of cargo. The *Édit* of 1669 allowed foreign merchants to use French ships to transport goods in and out of Marseille with favorable exemptions from port duties and tariffs whether they dealt directly with the captains or through connections like intermediaries. In Audimard's registry, between Jun 1670 and Dec 1679, Villareal and his company contracted to arrange for over 861 loads on ships belonging mostly to Marseillais captains. A significant number of shipments occurred in 1674 with 128 trips some lasting up to six months.⁶⁴

French captains and patrons handled the bulk of the shipments; however, they also used the services of the English, Italian, Genoese, and Levantine ships. An entry for 26 June 1670 shows that Villareal's firm received a contract from their Jewish associates in Livorno, requesting shipments between Algiers and Livorno for the account of Moyze Isaac Naas and Gabriel de Faro, who gave a commission to Villareal and his firm. The goods

62 See both registers for comparison of data: Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 13-83, AdBdR ; Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR.

63 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 87v, AdBdR.

64 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 15 – 87, AdBdR.

involved were silk, and they used a Livornais ship under the command of Marc Allegré.⁶⁵ Several Venetian captains also appear on shipments: Barthellemi Toni, Mathieu Franchaisquo, Jean Stefano, and Jean Ora Bouche. The vessel of *Sainte Marie*, under the command of Jean Stefano, for instance, traveled between Venice and Tripoli in January 1677 for the account of Aaron Volterra of Venice and Abraham Nessi and Saloman Nessi of Livorno. The same ship embarked on another voyage on 31 March 1677 for the account of Jacob Franco of Venice.⁶⁶ On other occasions, on 15 February 1673, they contracted the ship *l'Agar*, operated by the Venetian patron Barthellemi Toni, to transport goods between Venice, Alexandria, and another port in Egypt for the account of Dalmeyda and Jacob Franco Dalmeyda.⁶⁷ English captains such as Boniface Giffor (Giffore) and Henri Jarde also appear on records, who brought goods like leathers from Tunis for the account of Villareal and Franco Dalmeyda. In 1675, another Boniface, also English, brought Mondragon tobacco, tobacco walnut, pearl, and cream of tartar for Daniel Lombroso from Tunis on the ship of *la Soumission*, while on the same day, he brought yarn of Luton for Michel Calvo and Gabriel Valenzi.⁶⁸

In 1679, almost one hundred captains and patrons, mostly Marseillais, testified that Villareal and Attias frequently made use of French ships traveling to several regions across the Mediterranean.⁶⁹ For example, the captain of a *tartane* and a *barque*, named Teissiere, made twelve trips to Livorno between 1673 and 1679 for the account of Villareal, Attias, and Franco Dalmeyda. The bulk of the shipments were muslin, cotton, *escamite*,⁷⁰ and two cases of wine from Livorno. Andre Teissiere (sometimes recorded as Teissiero) appears in another account book, taking several trips between Marseille, Livorno, Tripoli, and Lisbon. He is possibly the same person who transported goods for the accounts of Gabriel Nessi and Saloman Nessi between Livorno and Tripoli and another between Marseille and Livorno for the accounts of Saloman de Medina.⁷¹

65 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 1, AdBdR.

66 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 20-21, 23, AdBdR.

67 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 8, AdBdR.

68 « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

69 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 20-21, AdBdR. Cremieux, “Un Établissement Juif à Marseille Au XVIIe Siècle,” 99.

70 Most likely, *escamite* or *demites*, which were fabrics from a region of Turkey called *Menemen*, a district of Izmir or Smyrna.

71 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

Villareal and his company hired Jean Carle and Pierre Carle, on numerous occasions, operating several ships, including *Saint Anne*, *Jesus Maria Saint Anne*, *Saint Spirit*, *Saint Nicholas*, and *Saint Josef*. They traveled mostly to Livorno but also to Genoa and Tripoli. On 9 December 1678, Pierre Carle imported from Tripoli 4 bales of *senne* and 220 pieces of animal skin for the account of Attias and Nunnes, 56 bales of *senne* and six bales of wool for Franco Dalmeda and Avidor, and for Villarreal and Attias, six bales of *senne*, three sacks of powder, and two bales of wool.⁷² Between Jun 1671 and May 1675, Captain Jean Carle loaded around 23 cargos as requested by Villarreal and Attias for their Jewish contacts. Several merchants, such as Albuquerque Altouné, Isaac Gomez Silvera, Jacobo Nunez, Jacob Mercades, Jacob Fortado, Judah Nunes, and others, received the transported goods. For example, Altouné received 20 cases of paraffine, Jacob and Abram Mercado bought a bale of silk, and Judah Nunes and Ishac Lopus Matos acquired six cases of stave wood.⁷³

We cannot be sure about the extent to which they had direct contact with the shipowners or under what circumstance they hired the services of the *censaux*, but these associations still give us a sense of the extensive networks that linked Villarreal and Attias with numerous other Marseillais traders. They used over 170 ships, engaged with over 350 patrons and captains, and hired more than 20 *censaux* based on the records I obtained.⁷⁴ These associations show the diversity of Villarreal's business, the success of his establishment in Marseille, and the extensive trade he arranged between Marseille and Livorno for his contacts. From the 686 entries of Audimard's registry, there is evidence of 92 trips between Marseille and Livorno. In the list of manifests declared by captains, 143 shipments arrived from Livorno by French captains and patrons.⁷⁵ One potential explanation is that Livorno emerged as a key hub for the redistribution of goods across Mediterranean Europe, connecting Italian cities, northern Europe, and the Ottoman Empire. This development occurred concurrently with Marseille's gradual ascent to dominance, a shift that unfolded during the mid-seventeenth to

72 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

73 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

74 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332; Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villarreal & Compagnie » 1679, fols. 13-83, AdBdR.

75 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR.

the eighteenth centuries.⁷⁶ Villareal and his company traded over a hundred types of goods, exported French products, and brought foreign ones to the city. From Livorno, they brought spices, leather, woolen, and cotton fabrics. They imported from the Levant balls of goat wool, silk, tanned hides, and spices; from the coast of Barbary, they brought leathers, gum Arabic, wax, sponges, and coral.⁷⁷ On 30 April 1676 alone, Villareal and Attias shipped 200 pieces of *indienne*, handkerchiefs and other fabrics. In September of the same year, they transported 100 textile pieces from Marseille to Livorno, including robes and painted fabrics.⁷⁸ According to Maillet's registry, out of 861 loads, Villareal and his company transported 7,126 bales of assorted goods, 7,707 pieces of leather, and 427 loads of wheat.⁷⁹ Villareal claimed that his company conducted 856,400 livres in business when he moved to Marseille.⁸⁰ Maillet's registry has over 680 contracts between 1670 and 1679 and in Audimard's registry, just between 1670 and 1679 alone, there are over 459 contracts. In the register of contracts in the archives of Paris published by Crémieux, there are 250 contracts listed, which might be the entries from one book.⁸¹ Therefore, we might conclude that the number of contracts may not represent the entirety of his business; however, the three manuscripts shed light on the relationships Villareal and Attias forged by using state privileges and their expansive network ties across the Mediterranean.

Sephardi Communal Networks Across the Mediterranean

Up to this point, we have focused on examining local networks and interfaith relations between Jewish and non-Jewish merchants in Marseille. However, it is important to recognize that the success of these merchants and their impact on the local economy in Marseille was also contingent on

76 Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 107.

77 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 13-83, AdBdR.

78 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 36-42, AdBdR. See also Raveux, "Fashion and Consumption of Painted and Printed Calicoes," 59.

79 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 36-42, AdBdR.

80 "Certificat délivré," December 21, 1679, Fonds f314, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, cited in Crémieux, « Un établissement Juif à Marseille au xvii, » 122.

81 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR ; « Mémoires et Documents. » 23 Janvier 1680, fols. 319-332.

their establishment of networks with Sephardic merchants in Livorno. The communal networks they maintained played an indirect yet instrumental role in the frequent activities of Villarreal's firm in Marseille. These networks not only contributed to the acquisition of services but also played a significant role in sustaining the business flow within the city's Mediterranean trade. It is unlikely that Villarreal and other Sephardi merchants who resided in Marseille completely relocated their residency and business firms from Livorno, especially since many of them moved back after 1683 and they were also required to keep a residence in Livorno. A significant number of shipments occurred between Livorno and Marseille, as well as between Livorno and various cities in the Mediterranean. According to Maillet's registry, approximately 395 trips were recorded on these routes. The Pennas (Penha) family, who frequently hired Villarreal's firm, were among the notable merchants of Livorno. Abram Penha and later his son Aron Penha, for example, were part of the Group of Fifteen merchants active in the community's public life. In 1683, Abram Attias suggested one of the family members, Abraham de Haim Penha, become part of the 30 deputies.⁸² In Villarreal's records, Aron Penna and Emanule Nunnes Penna signed several agreements. In January 1672 for instance, Aron Penna ordered one bale of fabrics containing several pieces of Cordillera pattern fabric and five pieces of *cadis*. The order was under the name of Aron Penna and his company, which was loaded on the ship of *Saint Jean Baptist* under the command of Jean Jauvas and arrived in Livorno.⁸³ On 27 May 1671, Francois Martin ensured a shipment on behalf of Villarreal for Emanule Nunnes Penna between Livorno and La Salles.⁸⁴

Most of Villarreal and Attias's associates were transients and did not live in Marseille for business. Villarreal brokered trade for over 250 merchants, some of whom had trading houses in Livorno and Ottoman cities, such as the Ergas, Nessi, and Lomboros. The most common names that appear frequently are Anthoine de Lemos, Daniel Lombroso, Jacob de Mera, Louis de Lemos, Shlomo de Medina, Abraham Nessi, and Jacob de Soria. For instance, in 1676, Villarreal signed eighteen agreements for shipments requested by Izaac de Soria. Izaac partnered with Jacob de Soria, Gabriel and Ludegio de Leon, and David de Leon in these contracts. Twelve were trips between Livorno and Alexandria.⁸⁵ In a second registry, Izaac and Jacob

82 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 280-281.

83 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villarreal & Compagnie, » 1679, fol. 9, AdBdR.

84 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fol. 3, AdBdR.

85 Audimard « Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679), » 1679, fols. 11, 7, 4, 8, 9, 12, AdBdR.

de Soria appear in four contracts in October 1672 and loaded cargo on four ships heading for Livorno.⁸⁶ We know from Lévy that Jacob de Soria died in 1689, and his family, like Villareal and Attias, were some of the prestigious members of the community.⁸⁷ Isaac de Soria, who had arrived in Livorno in the early seventeenth century, lived in a large room within the house of a Christian in *Via Genovese*. In 1645, Jacob de Soria and Mordochay de Soria were part of the community, notably taking the role of a *massaro*. By 1678, their family was wealthy and prestigious enough to run a Talmudic school. De Soria's also had a trading house with Ditta Juda Pinhero and Abram de Soria in Smyrna in 1670. In 1688, Abram replaced his father Mordochay as *Massaro* and as a member of *the Twelve* and Jacob de Soria was replaced by his nephew David. De Soria's family appears on the list of the aristocrats of early seventeenth-century Livorno.⁸⁸

Another notable connection was with the de Medina or Medinas, who had family ties in Venice, Amsterdam, Tunis, Aleppo, Bayonne, Bordeaux, and Tunis and were one of the oldest noble Jewish merchants in Livorno by the seventeenth century. David, Rafael, Samuel, and Selomoh of the de Medina family were on the list of Livorno's community leaders. For example, Selomo de Medina, together with Jacob Ergas, another notable family, Mosé Attias, Aron dei Rio, and Manuel de Mora, were involved in the re-establishing of the confraternity of *Moher ha-Betulot*.⁸⁹ In 1687, which the community created in 1654.⁹⁰ In Villareal's accounts, we can pinpoint over thirty shipments or agreements for the Medina family between two notary registries within four years. For example, in 1671, Selomo de Medina received three shipments of *draps* (sheets/cloth): two bales containing thirteen pieces in the ship of *Saint Joseph* by Martin Vellin, two bales in *Saint Jacques* containing twelve pieces and one bale containing eight pieces in *Saint Jean Baptiste* with Jean Jauvas as Captain in charge.⁹¹

86 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 15-16, AdBdR.

87 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 299 (see also note 81).

88 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 263, 299, 321.

89 The confraternity provided clothing and shoes for the poor and, in particular, students and teachers at Talmud Torah school. Due to lack of organization and structures, the organization almost closed but in 1687, Jacob Ergas, Mosé Attias, Aron dei Rio, Selomo de Medina and Manuel de Mora restored the organization. The names of these prestigious merchants appear in Villareal's business books (see Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 46, 255 for more details on this organization).

90 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 46, 266-269.

91 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR.

With Abram de Medina, on 16 May 1674, Selomo received four bales containing 679 pieces of mittens of Smyrna. On the 21st of the same month, he received another shipment on *Saint Jacques*, consisting of one bale of ar-dasse silk from Smyrna.⁹² The shipments of the Medina family were mostly textiles with some spices.

The members of the Medina family in Livorno, similar to the Attias, were also affiliated with the *massari*. Gabriel de Medina and Mosé held the title of *massaro* three times, and in 1686, Raphael de Medina succeeded his father Gabriel as *massaro*. Additionally, they operated trading houses in various cities, including the firm of Mosé Israel de Medina. This firm was notably listed among the most active merchants in the community records of Livorno in 1678. During that year, Mosé Israel de Medina oversaw the unloading of goods from approximately fourteen ships for his business.⁹³ Israel de Medina, who had a trading house in Livorno and Simon la Coutte, ordered several shipments between Livorno, Tunis, Marseille, and Alger. In another shipment, he partnered with La Coute and Izaac Rodrigues.⁹⁴ Izaac Israel might be the same person who received a shipment of tobacco in Tunis on 27 March 1675 in four cases.⁹⁵ Between March 1674 and March 1678, Moise (Moyze) Israel de Medina had fourteen contracts with Villareal and Attias, goods exchanged between Livorno and Tunis, with some involving Marseille and Alger.⁹⁶ Other members of the Medina family who had networks in Tunis were Abram de Jacob, Abram Isaac, Aron de Moise, Isaac Israel Jacob Israel, and Moise Israel.⁹⁷ Jacob Israel Rodriguez, if identified as the same person, requested a shipment comprising sixteen boxes of Clairac tobacco, with a total weight of 952 pounds, in March 1676.⁹⁸ On March 27, 1675, Henry Jarde, captain of the ship "le Mercure," transported sixty cases of Mondragon tobacco to Tunis on behalf of Jacob Israel and Isaac Abram de Medina. An additional eighty boxes of Mondragon tobacco, weighing 15,587 pounds, and forty-seven bales of Clairac tobacco,

92 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR.

93 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 266-269. The name of Gabriel also appears in Villareal and Attias' book.

94 Audimard «Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679),» 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR.

95 Maillet «Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie,» 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR.

96 Audimard «Recueil d'actes notaire (1678-1679),» 1679, fols. 1-88, AdBdR.

97 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 266-269.

98 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR.

co, amounting to 9702 pounds, were carried by Guilheume Audimare, the patron of Notre Dame du Rozaire, to the same merchants. It is noteworthy that this second cargo, consisting of Rodriquez's tobacco, shared the same date and ship as the previous tobacco shipment.⁹⁹ Among the notable families, the name de Medina is consistently found in records from Livorno, Tunis, and Amsterdam until the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰ The distinguished status of Villareal and Attias in Livorno enabled them to associate with some prestigious merchants. These connections were vital in the flow of their business between Marseille, Livorno, and several Ottoman ports.

Conclusion

The mid-seventeenth century witnessed significant economic growth in various Western European port cities. This era saw a surge in demand for foreign merchants, leading to substantial changes in city structures, infrastructure, and administration to accommodate increased movement of people, goods, and money. Sephardi Jews played a crucial role in connecting the East and the West during the seventeenth century, by gradually integrating into Christian port cities. Despite established networks and a communal trust system, Jewish merchants relied on support from local players, trading privileges, and state protection. In Marseille, they effectively utilized formal structures, such as state-sponsored privileges, and informal mercantile networks for trade, liberties that were uncommon for Jewish merchants during the Middle Ages.

In 1683, local religious antagonism and commercial jealousy resulted in the expulsion of several Jewish families from Marseille, however, the case of Villareal, though not unique within the Sephardic network, stands out as exceptional for Marseille due to surviving archival records. These records offer a rare glimpse into a prosperous era for Jewish merchants in Marseille, evident in the thriving colony, successful businesses, and active networks sustaining trade with other Mediterranean cities. The success of Sephardi Jewish merchants underscores the importance of alliances with local commercial entities and leveraging state-sponsored privileges, enabling them to navigate cross-cultural trade dynamics. This contributed to

99 Maillet « Polices de chargement de Villareal & Compagnie, » 1679, fols. 9-86, 13-83 et 1-83, AdBdR.

100 Lévy, *La Nation Juive Portugaise*, 325, 416.

Marseille's economic vitality and reinforced its role as a crucial hub in the broader Mediterranean trade network. The surviving archival records provide valuable insights into Sephardi merchant activities and their lasting impact on Marseille's economic landscape in the seventeenth century.

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