

EARLY MODERN WORKSHOP: Jewish History Resources

**Volume 7: Jewish Community and Identity in the Early Modern Period, 2010,
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT**

Communication and community : multiplex networks in the 18th Century Sephardi Diaspora

Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

ABSTRACT: In many aspects, the Sephardi diaspora functioned as a combination of overlapping circulations and networks, its many levels of communication and interaction involving family ties, economic partnerships, and official intercommunal links. Whereas the question of intercommunal networks has recently attracted some topical studies, little attention has been paid to the articulation between these various levels of circulation and interaction. I propose to explore this idea of a multiplex diaspora through a selection of documents emanating from the Amsterdam and London Sephardic community, essentially letters, addressed to Bordeaux, Safed, Surinam and Ferrara : these documents describe several paradigmatic situations of interaction between communities and delineate networks of information, of halakhic authority, of diplomatic intercession. The articulation between merchant and community networks will be approached through the role played by two Sephardic community agents, Francisco Pereyra in London and Abraham da Costa in Amsterdam. The case of diplomatic interaction relates to the defence of Polish Jewry faced with ritual murder trials in 1753, and through the involvement of Polish communities, as well as various and Sephardic kehilot, it shows an instance of interconnection between Ashkenazic and Sephardic networks, thus allowing us to reflect on the broader issue of community and communication in the early modern Jewish world.

This presentation is for the following text(s):

- Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (1): Resolution by the Mahamad of the congregation Shaar Hashamayim of London, 8 July 1705- 16 tammuz 5465.
- Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (2): A letter to the parnassim of Kahal Kados Beraha Vesalom in Surinam by Abraham da Costa, 1723
- Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (3): Letters from the Amsterdam parnassim to Bordeaux and Safed, 1728
- Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (4): A letter from the Amsterdam parnassim to their financial agent in London, Francisco Pereyra, 1733.

- Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (5): A Letter from Amsterdam to Ferrara on behalf of Polish Jews, 1753

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Introduction

The texts presented here come from various Sephardic archival funds : the resolution of the London *Mahamad* (1705) is an excerpt from the Minute book of the *Mahamad* of the Portuguese Community *Shaar Hashamayim* from London¹ ; the letters addressed to Bordeaux (1728), London (1733) and Ferrara (1753) come from three different registers of the outgoing correspondence of the Portuguese Community of Amsterdam, *Talmud Torah*. The outgoing correspondence of *Kahal Kadosh Talmud Torah* community (*borador de cartas* for the first one and *copiador de cartas*) has been preserved, except for a few gaps, from 1702 onwards, and contains over five thousand letters for the eighteenth century alone, addressed to a large number of communities as well as to a wide range of private persons², and constitutes an outstanding source not only for the history of the Sephardic networks, but also for the internal history of some of the Portuguese communities for which the *pinkassim* are not extant, such as for Bayonne, or where the available community registers is a late compilation, such as Bordeaux, and the same considerations apply for the Caribbean nations.

The letter to Surinam dated 1723 comes from the copybook of outgoing correspondence of Abraham da Costa, who acts as both a broker for the Surinam *kehillah* and planters in the 1720'S. His letterbook, a thick register of 558 folios starts in 1722 and covers 10 years; as a mercantile source, it is an exceptional document for studying a case of commission agency, but it is also very interesting for our purpose because it also contains numerous letters to the *parnassim* of the Surinam Portuguese community *Beraha Vesalom*. It is not part of the Amsterdam community archives, and belongs to a separate fund, the Da Costa family papers³. These letters and documents shed light on different aspects of communication and interaction between diasporic communities, through a great variety of situations :

The 1705 resolution of the London *Mahamad* ends an episode of intense communication between the Portuguese nations of London and Amsterdam, where a request was sent to the Amsterdam *parnassim* and *Bet din* to settle a sharp conflict

concerning the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of a sermon preached by Haham David Nieto in 1703. The letters from the Amsterdam *parnassim* to Bordeaux and Safed (1728) also deal with religious deviance, in the realm of praxis, and involve actors located in a fascinating triangle, linking Amsterdam, Safed and Bordeaux. In both cases, what is at stake and calls for discussion, is the metropolitan function of the Amsterdam *kehillah*. As well, these examples point to the existence of networks of halakhic authority, that contribute to the spatial hierarchized organization of the diaspora.

The letter taken from the copybook of Abraham da Costa (1723) and addressed to the *parnassim* of the Surinam *kehilah*, relates the process of hiring a new assistant *hazan* to be shipped to Surinam, and at the same time refers to mercantile transactions. The 1733 letter from the Amsterdam *parnassim* to Francisco Pereyra in London combines information about various financial transactions connected with the management of funds belonging or estates entrusted to the Amsterdam *parnassim*, and a request for intercession on behalf of some Jews from Gibraltar taken by the Spanish. Both these letters allow us to understand the articulation between transnational or intercommunal networks and mercantile networks, through the figure of these merchants or bankers acting as community agents, in a double capacity that involves handling economic affairs of the community and serving as a semi official intermediary in community matters. These two letters illustrate the porosity and the interpenetration of the mercantile, communal and intercommunal spheres.

The letter sent by the Amsterdam *parnassim* to Ferrara (1753) brings yet an altogether different subject matter, which still relates to networks of information and in this case legal-diplomatic cooperation : informed of the plight of the Pavlitch (Pawolocz) Jews sentenced in may 1753- one of the numerous instances of ritual murder accusations in mid-18th century Poland- the Amsterdam *parnassim* agree to the request for help, and proceed to collect documents pertaining to the defence of the Jews against such accusations, which is the object of their letter to Ferrara. Several similar letters were sent to other Italian communities, and this process was followed by diplomatic intercession via the States General. If the mission of Jacob Selek to Rome in 1758 and its impact on the relations between the Holy See and Polish Jewry, little attention has been devoted to this earlier episode of intercommunal cooperation. Apart from its broader historical significance, this episode serves a specific purpose in this presentation : it illustrates the distinct but layered networks of information and diplomatic intervention. As well, it allows us to understand through a very concrete example how distinct networks of information interconnect, here Eastern European Ashkenazi and Western European sephardic networks, the locus of the interconnection here being Amsterdam.

Endnotes

¹ These archives, formerly available at the Lauderdale Rd synagogue in London, were recently deposited at the London Metropolitan Archives, where they are presently being catalogued and can be accessed after requesting an autorisation from the archivist of the Spanish and Portuguese Community.

² For a cursory description of that source see Gérard Nahon, "Une source pour l'histoire de la diaspora séfarade au XVIIIe siècle: le *Copiadore de Cartas* de la communauté portugaise d'Amsterdam", *Proceedings of the First International Congress for the Study of the Sephardi and Oriental Jewry*, Jérusalem, 1981, pp.109-122. Similar registers existed for part of the 17th century, as can be surmised from references in the pinkassim of the Portuguese community, but they have disappeared. I have made a thorough use of this correspondence in my doctoral thesis, soon to be published.

³ This extensive fund was catalogued by Odette Vlessing, at the Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam).

Bibliography

General bibliography: (more specific references are mentioned for each document)

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Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: Circulation and the Global*

Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, 1605–1748. Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2007: a very insightful lecture of another mercantile diaspora, understood as a multilayered system of circulations.

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Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (1): Resolution by the Mahamad of the congregation Shaar Hashamayim of London, 8 July 1705- 16 tammuz 5465.

Copiador de cartas

**1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768**

Translated by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

Resolution taken by the *Mahamad* of the congregation Shaar Hashamayim of London, stating that it will not ever resort again to the arbitration of the Amsterdam Bet din or parnassim, 8 July 1705- 16 tammuz 5465.

Source : London Metropolitan Archives, archives of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, Minutes of the *Mahamad* of *Shaar Hashamayim*, MS 103, 1678-1724, f°53 verso.

« After a few persons from our Nation, all of which were then our *yehidim*, and some of which still are, requested recently, and without informing the Gentlemen of the *Mahamad*, from the *Mahamad* of the *Kaal Kados* of Amsterdam that they submit to their *Bet din* the doctrine preached in this Holy place by our Haham Rabbi David Netto on 23 kisleiv 5464, on the *perasa* of *Vayeseb Jahacob*, whether this [doctrine] was in contradiction with the Law of God or not, the said *Mahamad* decided (as the general information goes) that its *Bet din* would comprize for that occasion, instead of three *Hahamim* as it ordinarily does, five [*Hahamim*], and these were asked whether it would be a burden to their conscience were they not to answer the said question, and they replied that it would not burden their conscience.

Some time before, the Gentlemen of our *Mahamad*, prompted by the concern and desire to attain peace, as well as by a petition from several of these persons, had written the Amsterdam *Mahamad*, and sent the documents pertaining to this issue, [documents] both in favour of it as well as gainst it, beseeching them, (although the majority of our community was satisfied with this predication), to submit everything to the care of their *Bet din*, so that they render a final sentence, saying whether this predication was or not

in contradiction with the Law of God, in order to reach in this manner the desirable conclusion, they did not deem it appropriate to do so, and by ways of procrastination, they requested impossible things, as we had explained when answering their letter, reiterating therein our desire and request for a sentence on this point, for our peace depended upon it, and if not, that they should return all the documents, which they did promptly, thus demonstrating that they gave more consideration to a few individuals than to a whole *kehila*, and thus, in resentment for this mistreatment, the Gentlemen of the *Mahamad* have resolved to order and proclaim from the Holy Pulpit, that no *Mahamad* in the future, for whatever reason or imaginable reason, will ever request a *din* or another sentence from the *Bet din* or the *Mahamad* of Amsterdam, and if there is an urgent case, we shall resort to another *kehila*, that will be chosen by the Mahamad then in office, may God direct our actions toward His Holy service and grant His people the blessing of peace, Amen.

London, 16 tamus 5465

Read from the *tebah* on shabbat 19 tamus 5465.

M. de Medina, *Gabay*. »

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First published in E. Oliel-Grausz, "Relations, coopération et conflits intercommunautaires dans la diaspora séfarde: l'affaire Nieto, Londres, Amsterdam, Hambourg (1704-1705)", in Henry Mechoulan et Gérard Nahon (Ed.), *Mémorial I.-S. Révah. Etudes sur le marranisme, l'hétérodoxie juive et Spinoza*, Paris-Louvain, E. Peeters, 2001, p.398-99.

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Source : London Metropolitan Archives, archives of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, Minutes of the *Mahamad* of *Shaar Hashamayim*, MS 103, 1678-1724, f^o53 verso.

« Havendo em dias pasados algumas pessoas de nossa Nação que entã erao todos nossos *yehidim*, e agora ainda alguns o saõ, sem o conhecimento dos Senhores do *Mahamad*, pedido ao do *Kaal Kados* de Amsterdam referise a seu *Bet din* a doutrina que predicou neste Santo Lugar o senhor Nosso Haham Rabbi David Netto em 23 de *kislef* 5464, na *perasa* de *Vayeseb Jahacob*, se era contraria a a Ley de Deus ou naõ, resolveu ditto Mahamad (comforme as noticias gerais) que seu *Bet Din* se compuzesse por essa vez em lugar de tres *Hahamim* que he ordinariamente, de cinco, aos quais lhe preguntarao, se emcargavao sua conciencia em naõ responder a ditta pergunta, lha levarao que a naõ encarregavao.

Depois para ca os senhores deste *Mahamad* levados de seu zello e dezejo de adquerir a paz, como por a petiçaõ de algumas de dittas pessoas, escreverao a ditto *Mahamad* de Amsterdam, mandandolhes os documentos pertencentes ao ponto tanto pro como contra, suplicandolhes, (ao passo que o geral se achava satisfeito de ditta doutrina), sometesem todo a seu *bet din* para que desem huma sentença difinitiva se era ou naõ contrario a Ley de Deus, para por essa via alcançar o fim dezejado, naõ acharaõ

apreposito o fazelo, antes para dilatado pediraõ couzas imposiveis de alcansar, como selhes representou em reposta a sua carta, reysterando nella nosso dezejo e nova suplica de fazer julgar ditto ponto, pois dependia delles nossa paz, e em falta de otorgalo bolvesem a entregar nossos papeis o que logo fizeraõ, mostrando fazer mais cazo de hums particulares que de toda huma *kehila*, e assi em resentimento deste trato, resolveraõ os Senhores do *Mahamad* fazer esta ordem e que se publique neste sagrado Pulpito, que para o futuro nenhum *Mahamad* possa, por rezaõ imaginada ou por imaginar, mandar pedir *din* ou outro julgado ao ditto *bet din* ou *Mahamad* de Amsterdam, e havendo cazo urgente que se necessite de hum ou outro ou ambos, se recurra a qualquer outra *kehila* que parecer ao *Mahamad* que entaõ servir, e Deus de Israel diriga nossas accoems a seu santo serviço e bendiga a seu povo com paz, amen.
Londres a 16 de tamus 5465
Se leu na *thebah* em *sabath* 19 de *tamus* 5465
M de Medina *Gabay* »

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First published in E. Oliel-Grausz, "Relations, coopération et conflits intercommunautaires dans la diaspora séfarade: l'affaire Nieto, Londres, Amsterdam, Hambourg (1704-1705)", in Henry Mechoulan et Gérard Nahon (Ed.), *Mémorial I.-S. Révah. Etudes sur le marranisme, l'hétérodoxie juive et Spinoza*, Paris-Louvain, E. Peeters, 2001, p.398-99.

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**A letter sent to the parnassim of Kahal Kados Beraha Vesalom in Surinam
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copiador de cartas**

**1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768**

Translated by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

A letter sent to the parnassim of Kahal Kados Beraha Vesalom in Surinam by Abraham da Costa, agent and commissioner, 1723.

Source : Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam), Da Costa Archives, 946-10, *Copiador de cartas dos annos 1722-1733*, f^o40.

Illustrious Gentlemen of the Mahamad, Sir Jacob henriques de Barrios, Abraham da Costa, and Mosseh de Britto

We were duly favored with your esteemed [letter] of 11 Sept, in which we saw that you had selected us as a correspondent for your *K[aal] K[ados]*, which we accept with much zeal and pleasure in everything that could be of appreciation to you.

By virtue of your order, we devoted our attention and zeal , together with our Haham Aylon and Hazan David Abenatar to finding a young man fit to serve in your Kaal as Ruby and assistant Hazan, and after having received various young gentlemen, we selected a person named Mordohay Mendes Quiros, young man of 26, a bachelor free of obligations, virtuous, from a good family, and presently serving as a Hazan in Narde^t, and as well he served with the same position for 6 years in Bajona, his birthplace ; as well we think he is a very peaceful and courteous, and thus finally we assure you that he comes with all the desired dignities that a man of virtue should possess, and thus we hope that this election will be of utter satisfaction to you and to your Holy Kaal.

We drew an agreement with the said Quiros that you would give him a salary of 750 f. in

current money of this colony, and we gave him an added 250f. for his passage and freight abroad and another 300 f. for his dispatch, all of the above to subtract from his salary, by virtue of your orders, and considering his being a man of great virtue we hope you shall be satisfied with his person and with our choice as we have written in two general [letters] signed by our Haham and Hazan Abenatar and by ourselves. With the present [letter] we include the contract that the said Mordohay Mendes Quiros signed to serve as Ruby and assitant Hazan in your *K[aal] K[ados]* , for which we charged [your Kaal Kados] 550 f. as appears in the said contract , which the said Quiros received, and which he takes along as a second route for this contract, his dispatch having been done with the utmost brevity for fear of missing any opportunity, and thus the said Mendes Quiros embarked on the ship the Serinamse Coopman, Capt. Jan Neyman, which left together with 3 or 4 other ships, and he was recomended to the said Capt. so that he would provide him with a pleasant passage, and the freight is paid, and thus we beg you to favour the said Capt. with some cargo of sugar for us, for th rest we refer to the said general[letters], remaining whenever the occasion arises, and praying to God that He may protect and favour you as you wish, your devoted servants.

Endnotes

¹ Naarden , Northern Holland

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copiador de cartas

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Source : Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam), Da Costa Archives, 946-10, *Copiador de cartas dos annos 1722-1733*, f^o40.

Muy Magnificos Ss[enhore]s do Mahamad Os S[enhore]s Jacob henriques de Barrios, Abraham da Costa, eMosseh de Britto
Amsterdam a 31 março 1723 que corresponde a 26 de adar seny 5483

Achamonos favoresidos com a muy estimada de Vms de 11 de 8bro passado pelaqual vemos haverem Vms rezolvido nossa corespondencia para esse *K[aal] K[ados]* o que aseytamos com muito zello y gosto em tudo que foi de seu agrado.

Em virtude do sua ordem de vms nos ocupamos com todo cuidado y zello em companhia dos[enho]r nosso Haham Aylon y Hazan David Abenatar, para procurar hum moço para servir nesse Santo Kahal de Ruby y ajudante Hazan, y depois de senos haverem prezentado diferentes moços, fizemos eleisao da pessoa de Mordohay Mendes Quiros, moço de idade de 26 annos, solteiro desobrigado, virtuozo e de boa familia, y de presente exercitava o cargo de Hazan en Narde como tambem o exzercitou ditto cargo 6 annos em Bajona, lugar de seo nasimento, y tambem achamos ser moço muy pasifico y cortes y asim por ultimo lhe asigramos a vms lhe acompanhao todas as dignidades que deve de ter hum moço de bem y asim esperamos seja esta eleisao acontatamento de vms e de todo esse santo Kahal.

Nos ajustamos com ditto Quiros, que lhe darao vms de salario f.750 dinheyro corrente dessa colonia y mais lhe demos em contado f250 de presente para sua matelotaje y frette

do transporte para essa e mais f.300 para d[itt]o despacho adescontar de seo salario tudo asima, em virtude de sua ordem de vms, y por ser moço de toda virtude esperamos ficarao vms satisfeitos desua pessoa y da nossa eleisao que fizemos como escrevemos a vms em 2 gerays firmadas por o senhor nosso H[a]H[am] e Hazan Abenatar enos outros.

Com esta vay incluzo o contracto que firmamos com d[itt]o Mordohay Mendes Quiros como Ruby y ajudante hazan para servir nesse *K[aal]* *K[ados]* aoqual cargamos dittos f55 como consta por dito contracto havelos resebido d[itt]o Quiros o qual leva hua segunda via de ditto contracto seo despacho hasido com toda brevidade para nao perder ocaziao, y asim se embarcou ditto Mendes Quiros no navio o Serinamse Coopman Cap[ita]o Jan Neyman oqual parti em companhia de outros 3 ou 4 navios vay bem recomendado a d[itt]o Capitaio para quelhe fassa bom passaje, yo frette vay pago y asim suplicamos a Vms favoresao a d[itt]o Capitaio em seo despacho com algum frette de asucar, no demais nos refirimos aditas cartas gerays sendo quanto senos ofrese e ficharemos rogando a Deos g[ar]de y prospere a Vms como dezejao estes seu muy servidores de Vms.

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Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (3): Letters from the Amsterdam parnassim to Bordeaux and Safed, 1728

copiador de cartas

1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768

Translated by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

Two letters sent by the Amsterdam parnassim to Bordeaux and Safed about the supervision of religious observance in Bordeaux, 1728.

Letter 1 :

Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentlijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam)
PA 334 107 1719-1728, Borador de Cartas, f°87

Amsterdam, 26 January 1728

Bordeaux

Dear Gentlemen

We received your letter (although without a date) and we regret as we should its contents, for it is not agreeable to read the copies of the letters from Safed that arrived together with it, the reading of which indeed brought no satisfaction although we hope that God willing these Gentlemen were ill-informed ; since the wish of our *Kaal Kados* is to offer its protection to all the *quehilot* under its tutelage as is the case with you, we shall instruct you with this letter about the various matters that are necessary in order for us to help in everyway as is our wish and we pray God to guide us cautiously for the tranquility of everyone, and they are as follows :

You will oblige us by sending us an authentic copy of the first letter you received from the *rab* from Safed, which you emphasize was signed by his own hand, and concerning which you made the mistake not to reply immediately, and it should be sent promptly with your answer so that we may acquaint ourselves of its contents with certainty and be informed without any further delay.

As pertains to what you ask, whether your [*Kaal Kados*] is subjected to the authority of our *Kahal Kados* in this matter, the answer is yes, but in such matters as those alleged by the people from Safed, and no one can suppose anything different, all of us Israel owe submission, and it is a commandment to stand up for the honor of our Holy Law and to come up with a prompt remedy.

We approve of your decision to write to Isidro in Safed to appease the first fire and to proceed without any delay to give explanations to the abovementioned of Safed so that they know the truth.

You will oblige us by sending us, if possible, a declaration in which the bathing ladies will declare which ladies use [the bath], which you have to obtain in the utmost secret from the said ladies, and as well you will send another relation comprising those who do not use the said bath, with the guaranty that these certificates will remain locked up in the power of the Gentlemen of the Mahamad so that they will never come out to the public knowledge, which will be for your benefit, and will guide us to prepare a reply in the proper form to those of Safed, and may God grant us love and fear and help us bring some relief to those who avail themselves of us, and inspire us with the means to bar the evil that, for our sins, manifests itself among us, blessing your *Kahal Kados* with the increase of our Holy Law and protecting your persons as we request.

Sres Ab. Cohen Peixotto Parnas, Ab. Fereira e S. Nabarro.

D[aniel] B[ueno] signed

Letters placed in the President's locker.

Letter 2 :

Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam)
PA 334 107 1719-1728, Borador de Cartas, f°89-90

To H[a]H[am] R[ab] Moseh Malqui
Amst[erda]m 6 nisan 5488¹

The present letter is to inform you that we received various letters from the Kaal in Bordeaux with information about the severity with which Your Highness treated them based on false relations, and how with much contempt, prompted by the fact that they had not been diligent in responding to that first letter, Sir Gabay Isidro wrote a second one in Your name containing such shocking terms that we can hardly wish to believe it could have been done upon your order, and we want to tell you, besides referring in everything to the letter that our haham wrote you on this matter, that, firstly, this Kaal, for a long time, in order to observe Judaism, it was necessary to do it with much caution because they were in lands in which they had little freedom, but now, by the grace of God, they obtained the benevolence of the Governor and may now observe Judaism, as we can attest they do, and they hosted with great respect and expense the Haham and the emissaries that came from your city, and it is probably these people, because of a bad

contribution, that informed you of these and other calumnies, - and had they been right, God forbid, we would have expected from your cautiousness that you would have written about their complaints to the [Bordeaux] Haham who is a man of great virtue, or to us, under which protection they are, for they are our close neighbours, and we would have informed him of everything, and had it been necessary we would have diligently acted in order to uphold Judaism as ordered by our Holy Law; thus, we hope that your wisdom will guide you to answer their letter with comforting words, because they are consternated, as is appropriate in this case, and encourage them, if any violation happens among them, to seek a remedy with fervour and zeal, may God in His mercy grant us love and fear, and [we wish] You, together with your family, happy celebrations, with many more to come, as we wish you, and may God protect you for many years. B.N.H. and D.B. signed².

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Evelyne Oliel-Grausz, « Patrocinio and Authority : Assessing the Metropolitan Role of the Portuguese Nation of Amsterdam in the Eighteenth Century », in Y. Kaplan ed., *The Dutch Intersection. The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, *Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, nov 2004, Brill, 2008, pp. 149-172.

Endnotes

¹ 16 March 1728.

² Benjamin Nunez Henriquez and Daniel Bueno, *parnassim* in 5487.

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Volume 7: Jewish Community and Identity in the Early Modern Period, 2010,
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

copiador de cartas

**Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (3): Letters from the Amsterdam
parnassim to Bordeaux and Safed, 1728**

**1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768**

Prepared by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentlijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam)
PA 334 107 1719-1728, Borador de Cartas, f°87

Letter 1 :

Amst[erda]m 26 Jan[ei]ro 1728
Bordeus
Ss[eno]res Meus

Resebimos su carta de Vms (aun que sin fecha) y sentimos como se deve su contenido pues no da gusto ver las copias de las cartas que veniam adjuntas de Saphet que sierto no dan la menor satisfasion el verlas aun que esperamos mediante dios que a esses Señores habran informado mal y como el deseo deste *K[aal] K[ados]* es de patrisionar a todas las *quehilot* que estan debaxo denos como lo estan Vmd le instruiremos por esta los puntos q[ue] se nesesan para poderles ayudar en todo como es n[uest]ro deseo y pedimos a dios nos guie a la sierto para la tranquilidad de todos q. son los sigientes a saber:

Ums se sirviran mandarnos copia autentica de la prim[e]ra carta que resibieron del *rab* de Saphet que Vms apuntan vino firmado de su mano en que andaron Vms algo diminutos en no aver respondido luego a dicha carta y assy venga luego en repuesta sin mas delasion para podernos capasar desu contenido con sertesa p[ar]a n[uest]ro gobierno en la repuesta .

Y porlo que toca a lo que Vms preguntan si estan v[uest]ro sugetos a n[uest]ro *K[aal] K[ados]* en esta, le diremos que si pero en cosas semejantes que quieren imputar los de Saphet, lo que no se puede suponer, todo Israel estamos sobrepuestos y es de obligasion

a salir p[or] honra de N[uest]ra S[an]ta Ley acudir con el mas pronto remedio. Aprovamos lo que Vms dispusieron en escrevir luego a Isidro de Saphet para aplacar el primer fuego y sin dilasion p. quanto antes procurar el darles la clarezas a los referidos de Saphet para q[ue] sepan la verdad.

Vms nos deven mandar una declarasion si fuese posible en que se declare por las Bañad[o]ras quien son las Ss[eñor]as que sirven lo qual deven Vms hazer muy en lo inculto de las d[ic]has Ss[eñor]as, como asi mandaran otra cazo que las haiga de no servirse de d[ic]ho baño con la seguridad de que d[ic]has atestaciones quedaran sequestradas em poder de los Ss[eño]res del *Mahamad* para que jamas puedan salir al publico lo que sera en benif[ic]io de Vms y guia para nos en dar la repuesta en devida forma a los de Saphet y dios premita consedernos su amor y temor y nos asista para ser de alivio a los q[ue] se valieren de nos inspirandonos los medios p[ar]a ataxar el mal que per pecados se manifiesten entre nos Bendiga esse *K[aal] K[ados]* en augm[en]to de N[uest]ra S[an]ta ley y g[ar]de las personas de Vms como les anunsiamos.

Ss[eño]res Ab Cohen Peixotto parnas, Ab Fereira e S. Nabaro. F[irm]o D.B.¹

As cartas na gaveta do presidente.

Letter 2 :

Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentlijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam)
PA 334 107 1719-1728, Borador de Cartas, fº89-90

Saphet

S[enho]r H[a]H[am] R[ab] Moseh Malqui

Amst[erda]m 6 nisan 5488

S[enho]r meu a presente serve de notisiar a V.M. como resebemos varias cartas do *K[aal]* de Bourdeux com notisia do rigor com que S.M. os trata sobre informes falsos y logo com despreso por nao averem sido puntuais en responderlhe a prim[ei]ra, lho faz a segunda o S[enho]r Gabay Isidro em n[om]e de V.M. com termos tão chocantes q[ue] quazi não podemos querer seja de ordem de V.M. a q[ue]m depois de nos referir em tudo a carta q[ue] lhe escreveo a V.M. oS[enho]r nosso H[a]H[am] sobre este particular, lhe diremos primeiram[en]te que o ditto Kahal est[?]² muito tempo p[ar]a manter o judesmo ser nessesario fazelo com m[ui]ta precausão por estarem en teras donde tiñão poca liberdade, e agora pela grasa de D[eu]s alcansarão benignidade no governador a q[ue] posão observar o judesmo como nos consta fazem, y agazalhão com toda estimação e dispendio aos H[a]H[am] o seluhim q[ue] vem dessa os quais sobre aver lhes dado mao pago deverão de aver informado a V.M. estas e outras alevozas (he quando fose asi o q[ue] D[eu]s não premite) aguardavamos da prudenciade V.M. ouvese escrito suas queixas ao seu H[a]H[am] que he homen m[ui]to de bem, o a nos debaixo de cuja protecsao estão pois sao nosos vezinos mais proximos lo informariamos de tudo e sendo sesecario[sic] fariamos a deligencia p[ar]a manter o judesmo como

manda nossa Santa Ley, asi esperamos de sua m[ui]ta prudencia queira responder lhes a sua carta afalagandoos³ pois se achão consternados, p[or] merecelo o cazo,y amimalos⁴ asi ouver algum abuzo entre elles procurem remedialo com todo frevor e zelo e D[eu]s por sua misericordia nos conseda seu amor e temor e V.M. em companhia de sua familia melhoradas festas chegando os a outros muitos e melhoradas como de coração lhes anunciamos e g[ar]de a V.M. m[ui]tos a[nn]os.

Firmarao B.N.H.⁵ e D.B.⁶

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Archive: Statdsarchieff Amsterdam, 334-94, 946-10

Endnotes

¹ Daniel Bueno, parnas in 5487.

² Estava ?

³ afagando ?

⁴ animarlos ?

⁵ Benjamin Nunez Henriquez, parnas in 5487

⁶ Daniel Bueno, parnas in 5487

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Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (4): A letter from the Amsterdam parnassim to their financial agent in London, Francisco Pereyra, 1733.

copiador de cartas

**1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768**

Translated by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

A letter sent by the Amsterdam parnassim to their financial agent in London, Francisco
Pereyra, 1733.

Source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam)
PA 334 91 1728-1737, Copiador de cartas, f°119.

Dear sir,

By way of Mr Selomoh de Lima we received the letter for João Alvares, whom we credited, while wishing you on these upcoming holydays that God may inscribe you in the books for a long life and peace, with all contentment that you might get from your sons. The present [letter] is also meant, since we are assured that you are diligent to act on behalf of cases related to *misvot* [Jewish precepts] with much goodwill, to beseech you to convince the gentlemen of the *mahamad* [community board] to go about with their accustomed kindness to intercede with His Royal Highness, so that all effort may be undertaken, by way of which freedom can be obtained for these poor Jews that went from Gibraltar to Tetuan and were captured by the Spanish and taken to Ceuta, as you have been informed; and since the vexation was done to your flag, this should be an easy endeavour, to which we are all obliged in order to achieve freedom for our brethren. May God will that they return[?] and they be liberated, as we wish, and may He grant us occasions for *misvot* [accomplishing Jewish precepts] and blessings. May He protect you many years. We shall appreciate knowing the outcome of this endeavour.

D. M. da C[os]ta

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PA 334 91 1728-1737, Copiador de cartas, f°119.

Lond[re]s Francisco Pereyra

Amst[erda]m 8 7bro 1733

S[enho]r meu

Por via do s[enho]r Selomoh de Lima resebemos a lettra para JuãoAluares q[ue] se lhe abonava anunsiandole estas festas que se nos aprosimão o escreva D[eu]s em livros de muita vida & desonso com toda satisfasão que tenha dos s[enhor]res fillos, sirvendo a presente como estamos sertos que Vmd se emprega em causas de misvot com boa vontade de suplicarle se remostre aos s[enho]res do Mahamat que com sua acostumada benignidade procure yntreseder com S.M. a que fasa j[?] esforso por que se ponha en liberdade aos pobres judeos que hirão de Gibraltar para Tetuan e foron sacados por os espanois & levados a Seuta como Vmd terão notisia que como he a veijação feyta a sua bandeyra sera fasil a deligencia a que todos estamos obrigados para buscar a liberdade de nossos jrmaos quira D[eu]s volla [?] e que se livrem como desejamos e nos depare occasions de misvot y m[ercés]. G[uar]de a Vmd m[uito]s a[nnos]. Estimaremos saber de que suseso foy a deligencia.

D. M. da C[os]ta

Archive: Statdsarchief Amsterdam, 334-94, 946-10

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Copiador de cartas/Letter copybook (5): A Letter from Amsterdam to Ferrara on behalf of Polish Jews, 1753 copiador de cartas

**1/31 mars 1723; 2/ 26 janvier 1728, 5 mars 1728, 16 mars 1728;
3/ 10 octobre 1745, 4/ 18 nov 1768**

Translated by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

Communication and transnational cooperation for the defense of Polish Jewry against blood libels: a letter sent from Amsterdam to Ferrara

**Source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst
Amsterdam)**

PA 334 93 1750-1757, Copiador de cartas, f°149-50

Illustrious Gentlemen Hahamim and parnassim of the Kaal Kados (Holy Congregation)
of Ferrara,

Amsterdam, 14 tamuz 5513¹

Mrs, Having ben informed by the Haham of the Ashkenazim of the sad news that he received from Paulitz in Poland², [in a letter] written by the Hahamim and parnassim of the Kaal Kados (Holy Congregation) of Brod³, with a description of the calumny made against the [Jewish] Nation, accused of using Christian blood for Easter, which was followed by so much violence and harshness that they intend to take the lives of the individuals fom this kehila [community], in which are to be found some very learned men, and which sentence they have already started to execute ⁴: for this reason, these oppressed people, lamenting their situation, resort to all the kehilot (communities), imploring their help and devoted efforts to request by all possible means letters of protection which will demonstrate that this is a false accusation, that in past times on various occasions Jews were blamed [for such crimes], and that everytime they were proved innocent, and this [was proved] even to be against our religion. Considering this calamity and these oppressed people, we cannot fail to bring all our attention and contribution in order to provide the most judicious way to have those decrees rescinded, for which end we beseech you urgently, Illustrious Gentlemen, to make all efforts in

order to obtain as soon as possible an authentic copy of a certain sentence rendered in Senigallia dated 14 July 1721, in which the innocence [of the Jews] was proclaimed following a similar calumny, and that it be sent without delay to Rome, so that the Pope may suppress and annul this sentence, and indeed a hundred years ago the Pope together with 13 cardinals wrote to Poland against such false accusations and in defence of the Jewish Nation⁵, and we beseech you at the same time to send us as well an authentic copy so that we may use it and show it to those who may be of service to us in this case, and since these are efforts in which all of us must engage, since the case is pressing as you Illustrious Gentlemen will see in the copy included in this letter, we have no doubt that you will diligently and devotedly bring your contribution towards achieving the wished for conclusion, as well as the persons who may be useful in this case ; and we pray that God may grant us His mercy and assist our scattered People, May He protect you Illustrious gentlemen for many happy years as we wish.

Illustrious Gentlemen,

Your devoted servants

The parnassim of Kaal Kados (Holy Congregation) Talmud Tora

Selomoh Curiel

Isaac da Veiga Henriques

Ishac de Joseph de Meza

Endnotes

¹ 16 July 1753.

² Pawolocz (Pavlitch), located c. 30 km South East of Zytomierz (Zhytomir)

³ Brody

⁴ The accused, mostly from Pawolocz, were tried in Zytomierz ; 33 Jews were imprisoned, 13 were sentenced to death by the court of Zytomierz on 26 May 1753, out of which two were spared after converting. The others met a cruel death : See Zenon Guldon, Jacek Wijaczka, « The Accusation of Ritual Murder in Poland, 1500-1800 », *Polin*, 10, 1997, pp.132-3, and חיים בר־דיין, "גזרות פבולוצ' ומשפת ז'טומיר", אדר היקר, תל אביב, תש"ז, קלאַקמזד .

⁵ Possibly referring to the report written in 1664 by Giovanni Battista de Marinis, General of the Dominican Order, addressed to the Holy Office, declaring the accusation to be a baseless invention.

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Prepared by Evelyne Oliel Grausz, Université Paris 1 Sorbonne, France

**Communication and transnational cooperation for the defense of Polish
Jewry against blood libels : a letter sent from Amsterdam to Ferrara**

**Source : Stadsarchief Amsterdam (formerly Gemeentlijke Archiefdienst
Amsterdam)**

PA 334 93 1750-1757, Copiador de cartas, f°149-50

Muy Illustres SS[enhor]es Hahamim & Parnassim do K[aal] K[ados] de Ferrara q[ue]
D[eu]s aumente

Amsterd[a]m 14 de Tamus 5513¹

SS[enhor]es, Havendonos sido representado pello Haham dos Asquenasim a trista nova que recebeo de Paulitz na Polonia, escrita pellos Hahamim e Parnassim do K[aal] K[ados] de Brod , com narraçao da calumnia fizerao a Naçam de uzarem da sangue de Cristão na Pascua, o que seguio com tanta violensia e rigor que pretendem privar da vida aos individuos de ditta kehila em que se achao homens muito sapientissimos , havendo ya começado a exçerser a execusão : motivo que essa opprimida gente lamentendose de sua situasao ocurem a todas as kehilot e implorao sua assistensia com todo empenho para solicitar por todas as vias cartas de favor em que fasao ver ser hua alevosia , que em tempos passados em diversas occasioems forão atacados os Judeos, e sempre reconheserão a inosensia e mesmo ser directamente contra nossa religiao . Avista desta disgraçã e opprimida gente, nam podemos deixar de ocoer com toda vigilançia para contribuir a procurar as vias mais asentadas para derogar este decretos, a cuyo fim suplicamos a Vms m[ui]to Ill[ustres]s com toda instançia façao seo esforço quanto antes de opter hua copia authentica de çerto edito passado em Senigalia data 14 julio 1721 em que declarao a inoçensia sobre semelhante calumnia e que a expidao sem

perder tempo a Roma para que o Papa suprima e anule este decreto, pois a 100 anos que o Papa com 13 cardenais escreverao a Polonia contra semelhantes aleives em favor da Nação Judaica suplicandolhes ao mesmo remeternos tao bem hua copia authentica para serviros della , e remostrala aos que nos podem servir de amparo neste cazo, e como sao empenhos em que todos nos devemos enteressar , pois o cazo e presante como Vms m[ui]to Ill[ustres]s verao pella incluza copia nao duvidamos de seo zelo contribuirão con todo fervor a solicitar o dezejado fim com as pessoas que possam ser de utilidade neste cazo: e rogamos a Deos nos conserve sua graça e asista a nosso esparsido povo, guarde e prospere a Vms m[ui]to Ill[ustres]s por largos & felizes anos como dezejamos.

Muy Ill[ustres]s SS-res

Muy servidores de Vms

os parnassim do K[aal] K[ados] de T[almud] T[ora]

Selomoh Curiel

Isaac da Veiga Henriques

Ishac de Joseph de Meza

Archive: Statdsarchieff Amsterdam, 334-94, 946-10

Endnotes

¹ 16 July 1753.

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