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Transactions between Lisbon Jews and the Chelas Convent in the Late Middle Ages. Documental analysis.

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In the Portuguese archives, there are still countless documents that can enlighten us about the Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula and, in particular, about the everyday life of the Jews in the kingdom of Portugal. The focus of this article will be, therefore, to survey and analyse some charters that could conceivably mention the activities of Portuguese Jewish communities in the Late Middle Ages. The sources in question belonged to Chelas' Convent, whose archive was incorporated in the National Archives/Torre do Tombo. The main objective of the present study is to determine what kind of sources regarding the Jewish community were part of this religious institution's broader involvement in daily life in Lisbon, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, and to what extent the business transactions between Jews and Christians ignored issues of faith because of legal and monetary concerns. Hence, the present research is analytical with respect to the documentation and the role of agents in these transaction. Naturally we must bear in mind that only a small sample is available of what may must been a vast ensemble of documents once kept in the armaria of Portuguese monasteries and convents.

Introduction

Portuguese historiography has not dealt extensively with the documentation pertaining to the medieval Jewish community, though we must mention the pioneering contributions by Maria José Ferro Tavares,² who has been unveiling

- 1 FCT Doctoral Grantee SFRH/BD/137506/2018. This work is funded by national funds through the FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia and Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) under COMPETE 2020 – Programa Operacional Competitividade e Internacionalização (POCI) and PT2020, in the scope of the project UID/HIS/00057/2019.
- 2 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV*, Lisboa 2000; Idem, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV*, Lisboa (2 vols, 1982 and 1984); Idem, *As Judiarias de Portugal* (CTT Correios de Portugal, SA., Clube do Coleccionador dos Correios), Lisboa 2010; idem, “O Registo do Património Judaico. Entre a Chancelaria

much documentation from different Portuguese archives since the 1970's, focusing particularly on the documents from the Royal Chanceries in Portugal. It is also important to refer the more recent researching efforts of José Alberto Tavim,³ Carsten Wilke,⁴ Filomena Barros,⁵ François Soyer,⁶ and Beatrice Leroy.⁷

The archive of the Chelas convent is one of the largest surviving archives, hence, it is not surprising to come across documents regarding business transactions between Jews and Christians, some of which involved the convent itself, while others were documents connected with referent to properties in the vicinity of the convent. I chose to examine this archival collection because of its extent and the breadth of its time frame.

The entire archival collection, which comprises ninety-two bundles, and more than 1800 documents, makes it – alongside the archive of S. Vicente de Fora – one of the largest repository of medieval sources in Portugal. However, only eighteen of the analyzed documents refer to transactions involving Jews, which corresponds to approximately 1% of the total number of documents kept.⁸ The relevancy of the quantity of extant documents is a common cause of anxiety among medievalists: can one form an accurate historical picture from the few sources that survived over centuries, despite disasters. Even so, we believe that these sources delineate a credible historical pattern concerning the relationship between the Chelas' convent, the religious institutions abroad, and the kingdom's Jewish community.

Albeit a feminine community, this institution possessed a vast patrimony, partly self-acquired, partly result of dowries brought in by newly-accepted nuns. Its women-only nature impacted on its relations with the outside world, even if within society, as a whole, the convent fit in perfectly. In truth, it was not

da Comuna e a Chancelaria Régia”, José Alberto Tavim et al. (eds.), *Os Judeus na Península Ibérica Durante a Idade Média*, Lisboa 2018, pp. 141-160.

3 José Alberto Tavim, *Judeus e Cristãos-Novos de Cochim. História e Memória*, Braga 2003; Idem, *Os judeus na Expansão Portuguesa em Marrocos durante o século XVI. Origens e actividades duma comunidade*, Braga 1997; Alberto Tavim, Maria Filomena Barros and Lúcia Liba Mucznik (eds.), *In the Iberian Peninsula and Beyond. A History of Jews and Muslims*, Cambridge 2015 (2 vols).

4 Carsten Wilke, *História dos Judeus Portugueses*, Lisboa 2009.

5 Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros and José Hinojosa Montalvo (eds.), *Minorias étnico-religiosas na Península Ibérica períodos medieval e moderno*, Lisboa 2008.

6 François Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal (1496-7). King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance*, Leiden 2007.

7 Beatrice Leroy, *Les Menir. Une famille sépharade `a travers les Siècles XII-XX*, Atlantica 2001.

8 These numbers are related to the documents available for consultation between Dec. 2017 and March 2018; there may be others, but for reasons of conservation, poor condition or reproduction, they were not available to read in this period.

uncommon for convents to use representatives in their business transactions;⁹ this institution was not an exception on this matter, as will be shown below.

The pertinence of this institution's archive has also something to do with its advantageous geographic position in Lisbon, the capital of the kingdom and its being a *termo* (terminus), with interests along the Tagus basin. The sources attest to transactions extending as far as Alenquer, Aldeia Galega do Ribatejo or even Arruda dos Vinhos.

The contracts here analysed were related to subsistence needs of the religious community: some of the properties were directly exploited, while others were farmed out (in different seigneurial modalities, such as *emprazamentos* and *aforamentos*). The resulting sources of income (*foro*) allowed the convent to meet its economic needs and to maintain the residents, particularly when it refers to *quintas* (grange) and *herdades* (manor). The *foro* (income) was divided into the *Cânone* (which, in turn, could be subdivided in money, food kinds or both of those) and the *Direituras* (namely the animals, products of animal origin and agricultural products).¹⁰

Because of the growing instability of the 1300s, the economy was increasingly based on trade of food in kind. This development is economy, mirrored by the sources, which allowed the convent to face the currency devaluation and the decrease in arable land, which were part of the context of crisis. In 1401, besides the payment of 200 *libras* (portuguese currency) for a rented house in the Jewish Quarter (*Judiaria*), the convent also charged an additional fee of two capons.¹¹ Document 616, from the sources' collection 31, states that besides the *foros* obtained, the *foro* – bearers should also maintain the houses, the stores. or any goods that had been previously negotiated. The maintenance costs would rest solely on the occupants, exempting the nuns of any eventual responsibilities.

As to the convent's urban properties, the Old Jewish Quarters (*Judiaria Velha* or *Judiaria Grande*) is the city site which appears more often, mentioned in a total of eighteen documents. This figure, according to Filomena Andrade,¹² is only surpassed by a property located in Santo Estêvão parish. The most commonly mentioned properties are "houses" a general term that could also refer to tents. Houses could have paved floors or not; similarly they might or might not have chambers, courtyards, gabled or flat roofs, one or more floors, etc.

Of these eighteen documents, the oldest one is written in Latin and dated to 1213. It mentions an *aljazaria*, that is, a Jewish-owned dry land, surrounded by

9 Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Lisboa, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 35, doc. 687.

10 Maria Filomena Andrade, *O Mosteiro de Chelas. Uma Comunidade Feminina na Baixa Idade Média*, Cascais 1996, p. 95.

11 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 50, nº 990.

12 Maria Filomena Andrade, *O Mosteiro de Chelas* (n. 10 above), p. 72.

seawater.¹³ The most recent ones both date from 1489.¹⁴ They are sales contracts made out by one Pero Prestes to Judas Galite, a Jewish merchant, dweller in Lisbon, of a site called *Mascote*, in the *termo* of Alenquer, and of another site, located in Ribeira de Pancas. Judas Galite was one of the most prestigious members of the Lisbon's thriving Jewish elite and was responsible for the king's *moradias* (houses). His son, José Galite, would later become *escrivão da câmara* (municipalities' scribe).¹⁵

Early on, the Jews used to be organized in *comunas*, a unifying centre, religiously, educationally, and judicially connected to the synagogue. Although their status changed periodically due to the pressure exerted by the Papacy and to the shifting attitudes of each Portuguese king, the attitude the Portuguese monarchy towards the Jewish community seems to have been generally kind. One often finds high-ranking Jews in royal positions. This period's legislation is not always clear, however: Afonso II (reign 1211-1223) issued some laws which prevented the Jews to gain access to certain offices in favour of the Christians; with the following King, Sancho II (reign 1223-1248), this practice seems no longer to have been enforced, leading the Pope to admonish the monarch; Afonso III (reign 1248-1253), on the other hand, intended to protect both Christians and Jews, making them equal before the law. Even so, the overwhelming difference in taxation relegated the Jews to second-class status.

The sources

From the eighteen abovementioned documents concerning the Jewish community, references to four Jewish quarters can be found in medieval Lisbon. The Old Jewish Quarter (*Judiaria Grande ou Velha*) is located in downtown Lisbon nowadays. The other three are the new Jewish quarter (*Judiaria Nova or Judiaria das Taracenas or Judiaria da Moeda*), the *Judiaria de Alfama*, and the *Judiaria da Pedreira*, the latter being the one about which information is very scarce, though it is known that the houses where the *Studium* (the medieval university) stood were afterwards rented out to the Navarro family. Later on, in 1317, it is known that these urban properties were donated to the Genoese admiral Manuel Pessanha¹⁶ by King Dinis, making him a great landowner in the Pedreira site,

13 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 8, doc. 142.

14 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 63, doc. 1258 e maço 90, doc. 49.

15 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV* (n. 2 above), pp. 57, 223, 289.

16 Manuel Fialho Silva, *Mutação Urbana Na Lisboa Medieval. Das Taifas A D. Dinis*. Tese de Doutoramento apresentada à Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa 2017, p. 388.

which undercut the Jewish influence in the area, roughly correspondent to nowadays Carmo district, in downtown Lisbon.

Even though this physical separation between Christians and Jews was very clear, some Jewish people worked outside the limits of their designated quarters, and Christians owned properties inside the *Judiarias* (Jewish quarters), as it will be shown later through the Chelas' documents, and this is confirmed by some other works already published.¹⁷

Although the Jewish quarters had their own scribes and notaries,¹⁸ no single document written by those have reached to us, which is not unusual. Jewish notaries would only record transactions pertaining to their own community; it was the job of Christian notaries to write down anything to do with transactions between people of both faiths. Besides, from a very early stage, the king ordered, that these transactions should be recorded in the presence of a notary and other authorities, such as a judge, an *alcaide* (governor) or an *alvazil* (justice official), in certain periods even in the presence of more than one authority.

It is true, however, this would change slightly in the fifteenth-century: when the official notaries for the Jewish *comunas* first appeared, they could be either Jewish or Christian. As for the former, it was not uncommon for the office to become hereditary, as it happened in 1450, when Mestre Nacim's son, Mestre Jacob, replaced his father in office. Members of the royal family could also attempt to appoint trusted men among this kind of officials, as in the case of the surgeon (*cirurgião*) José Branco, who was nominated notary-general (*tabelião geral*) of the kingdom's *comunas* in 1453.¹⁹

These eighteen documents were drafted by many different notaries. Two documents, however, do not mention a single notary, the first one having been divided in ABC (a common notarial authentication technique used prior to the establishment of the notaries' officials and their signs) and sealed with

17 Maria José. Ferro Tavares. *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV*, pp. 76-79; José Alberto Tavim, "Judeus e Judiarias de Lisboa nos Alvares dos Descobrimentos: Perspectivas dos Espaços e das Gentes", João Fontes Ingles et al. (eds.), *Lisboa Medieval. Espaços, Gentes e Poderes*, Lisboa 2017, pp. 440-442.

18 José Alberto Tavim and Lucia Liba Mucznik, "Jóias Da Documentação Judaica Medieval Portuguesa", José Alberto Tavim, et al. (eds.), *Os Judeus na Península Ibérica Durante a Idade Média: Análise das suas fontes*, Lisboa 2018, pp. 65-96; Maria José Ferro Tavares, "O Registo do Património Judaico. Entre a Chancelaria da Comuna e a Chancelaria Régia", *Os Judeus na Península Ibérica durante a Idade Média*, *ibid.*, pp.141-160; Maria Filomena Barros, "Cultura Tabeliônica e Língua: a propósito de uma Kettubá da Biblioteca Pública de Évora", *Os Judeus na Península Ibérica durante a Idade Média*, *ibid.*, pp. 161-178.

19 Maria José Ferro Tavares. *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV*, (n. 2 above), p. 117.

the convent's sigilum. The other one, not carrying a *signum tabellionis*,²⁰ was therefore dated before the emergence of specialized notaries' officials.

The document from 1285²¹ is written in Latin and refers to the purchase of a dwelling by a Jew? Christian? From a Christian? Jew? It was validated by *Dominicus Petri*, a notary from Lisbon. There is also a document issued by the kingdom's general official notary, Fernão Rodrigues, in 1473,²² and finally two documents pertaining to a much smaller administrative unit, in this case the town of Alenquer, both documents being recorded by the same notary – Pero Lourenço, the Queen's notary, and dating from 1489.²³

Among the remaining documents, several are signed by the same notary, as is the case of Estêvão Eanes,²⁴ hardly surprising considering that this Lisbon-based notary enjoyed a long career and recorded a great many documents, including more than 500 certificates for several Lisbon-based institutions between 1366 and 1400. Chelas convent alone carries Eanes's signal in ninety-three documents, namely in *emprazamentos*. Additionally, two documents in this *corpus* carry the signal of Estêvão Gonçalves.

In two cases, a scribe employed by the notary was the actual writer of the document, the notary's signet having been appended afterwards: one is the case of Gonçalo Eanes,²⁵ whose scribe – Martim Domingues – had written the document itself, and also that of Rui Lopes,²⁶ his scribe – Estêvão Peres – being the actual writer of the document.

Finally, in some isolated cases, such as the notaries Afonso Peres, Vasco Gonçalves and Pero Esteves, their names appear on only one document. Vasco Gonçalves is known, however, to have recorded five documents for Chelas convent, his career in Lisbon extending from 1369 to 1393.

The Content of the Documentation

It is now time to focus on the documentation itself and its contents. One of the receipts (*cartas de quitação*) in Chelas' archival collection points to money-lending. In 1344²⁷ Samuel Justo, a Jewish man, acknowledged settlement of a debt to Clara Martins, without revealing how much was the actual amount involved in

20 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 8, doc. 141 and maço 8, doc. 142.

21 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 3, doc. 51: *venda de casas entre judeu e cristão*.

22 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 41, doc. 804.

23 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 63, doc. 1258 e maço 90, doc. 49.

24 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 41, doc. 811 e maço 55, doc. 1090.

25 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 23, doc. 448.

26 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 35, doc. 687.

27 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 23, doc. 448.

the transaction, and much less the interest charged, both strictly forbidden actions. On the convent's side, the receipt acknowledges payment of charges attached to certain properties²⁸ rather than repayment of the money that the institution lent to the Jewish community.

The frequent references to merchants, winemakers, goldsmiths, brokers, and butchers throughout the documentation indicate the diversity of Jewish occupations. Several documents also mention the chief rabbi, Yuhda and Josepe Navarro, the son of Moussem (Moses) Navarro, himself a chief rabbi, and whose family had been in Portugal since the times of King Dinis, eventually merging with the *Negro* family (another important and powerful Jewish family). The office of chief rabbi who had been appointed by the Crown was very prestigious. For example, Dom Yuhda b. Menir, the chief-rabbi under King D. Fernando (reign 1367-1383), was also the treasurer and one of the wealthiest Jews of his time, due mainly to the royal favour.²⁹

Guedelha Palaçano, an important Jewish merchant and influential courtier, owned the urban property which would become the Study of Palaçano (*Estudo de Palaçano*), near the synagogue, behind which there was a library.³⁰ He also owned several properties and houses, not only in the outskirts of Lisbon, but also in its *termo*: there is a reference to the purchase of a farm,³¹ including houses and trees, nearby Arruda dos Vinhos. The farm would be later on rented out to a Christian.³²

Seigniorial contracts such the *aforamento* (a rent for "eternity", a perpetual lease) or the *emprazamento* involving the Jewish community do not differ much from the ones drawn up among the Christians. Paying the *foro* (rent) was compulsory, as well as preserving the properties of the landowner, and selling without the owner's consent was prohibited. In addition to rental contracts, the archives also contain sales contracts, in which the Jews were allowed to take part. They were also authorized to buy real estate. The purchase, sale, and rental of real property also indicate the peaceful and prosperous environment the Jewish community enjoyed in the kingdom of Portugal.³³

28 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 77, doc. 1531.

29 Maria José. Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV* (n. 2 above), pp. 109. 96, 135-138; François Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal* (n. 6 above), pp. 33-34.

30 Ibid., p. 369.

31 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 40, doc. 783.

32 ANTT, *Mosteiro de Chelas*, maço 44, doc. 874.

33 Maria José Ferro Tavares, "Revoltas contra os Judeus no Portugal Medieval", *Revista de História das Ideias*, 6 (1984), pp. 161-173.

Through these sources,³⁴ one can find, for example, a sale of a vineyard by the sons of Moussem (Moses) Navarro, who had been the chief rabbi under King D. Pedro (reign 1357-1367). Dated in 1381, this document attests to the commitment of Josepe (José) Navarro, Isaque Navarro and Jantor Navarro to sell a vineyard (which had previously belonged to their father) located in Aldeia Galega do Ribatejo, to Lopo Martins, the chief financial official in Lisbon's municipal system (*almoxarife das portagens*). The price was 200 *libras de dinheiros portugueses*.³⁵ Another document records the awarding of the inheritance of Moisés Navarro's son, Josepe, who was left a farm in Montijo, and another one in Carnaxide, both in Lisbon's *termo*.³⁶

On the other hand, a 1396 document shows this Josepe to be a tenant of the convent, bound by a contract extending over three lifetimes to hold three houses located in the Old Jewish Quarter (*Judiaria Grande*), for the amount of 300 *libras* per year.³⁷ This document provides additional evidence that there were Christian-owned properties with the Jewish-majority district.

A similar example would be the 1401 *emprazamento*, extending over three lifetimes drawn up by the convent to Antetor (or Entetor), *porteiro* of the Jewish *comuna*, awarding a whole floor of a residence in which he was already living, located in the "Old Jewish Quarter near the Jews' butchery" (*Judiaria velha, a par da carniçaria dos judeus*), nearby "Cordeira" and "Jewish shelters" (*casas de albergaria dos Judeus*). The price was 200 *libras* and a pair of capons.³⁸

The very same Jew, along with his concubine (*manceba*) Alegria Judia, were also involved in another *emprazamento* extending over three lifetimes of a one-storey building, situated in the Old Jewish Quarters, for 200 *libras* and 2 capons per year. This document, number 616, which can be found in the sources' collection 31, cannot be accurately dated, for the piece of the parchment where the date can be usually found is ill-preserved: the only information which can be correctly read refers "the era of one thousand four hundred and thirty and..." (*Era de mil quatrocentos e trinta e...*). Deducting the thirty-eight years gap separating Common Era (C.E.) and Caesarean Era, the timeframe must be placed sometime between 1392 and 1402, which is approximately the same as that of the aforementioned *emprazamento* already analysed.

34 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 33, doc. 650.

35 In this study, it was decided to maintain in the Portuguese terms employed by the notary to name the currency traded in any given situation. Given the great variations and currency devaluation felt throughout this period in the Portuguese kingdom, this seemed to be the most reliable way to convey the information.

36 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n. 2 above), p. 113.

37 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 55, doc. 1090.

38 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 50, doc. 990.

Even though the documents' information is limited because it is restricted by their notarial *formulae*, one can still extract valuable information from them with respect to social history. For example, they show, as one would expect, that the butchers in the Jewish Quarters were separate from the Christians, a common feature of the Jewish presence in medieval Europe. They also show the existence of a Jewish shelter (*Albergaria dos Judeus in Judiaria Grande*), an institution of solidarity, of which not much is known. According to Maria José Ferro Tavares,³⁹ hospitals (such as the one in *Judiaria Grande*, whose construction was mandated by Salomé Negro), leper hospitals (*gafarias*), and charity institutions (*confrarias*) can only be traced from 1450 onwards, as confirmed by a reference in a 1473 document.⁴⁰ The fact remains that this charter, dating from the early 1400s, unmistakably reports a functioning Jewish hospital, bounded by convent-owned houses, rented to Entotor, the *porteiro da Judiaria* (gatekeeper of the Jewish quarters). These institutions, just like the *confrarias*, aided the poor and the sick.

D. Pedro I intended to regulate the relationship between Christians and Jews by instating certain measures such as imposing a rigorous curfew, following sunset, on the Jewish community,⁴¹ which increased the importance of the job of gatekeeper. He controlled the exit and entry of not only of Jews, (against whom the gates were closed at night), but also of Christians who, despite the restrictions, continued to do business with the Jews and had tents on the properties they owned in the Jewish quarters. Albeit not being the most prestigious job, it certainly was relatively important.

The ownership of property in the Jewish quarter by Christians is further confirmed by documents 804 and 811 from the bundle 41 of the Chelas' archive, in which references to shops occur, though they are separated by a gap of one hundred years. (Of course there is more evidence of this phenomenon, but not in Chelas' archive.⁴²) The first deed⁴³ was written in 1473 and attests to an exchange (*escambo*) of houses owned by the convent, located in *Judiaria Grande*, in *Rua do Poço*, near *Confraria Grande*. Among other properties, the houses in question were part of another contract of *empresamento* for three lifetimes to Salomão Faião, for the amount of 6,5 *coroas de ouro*, 120 *reais* for each *coroa*. The houses were exchanged for other two-storey houses, both including shops and terrace, of Salomão Faião, as well. It is further mentioned that these houses were close

39 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n. 2 above), pp. 42-45.

40 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 41, doc. 804.

41 Maria José Ferro Tavares, "Quando Vieram os Judeus para Portugal?", Catálogo da Exposição LUSA A Matriz Portuguesa, disponível online em <https://www.bb.com.br/docs/pub/voce/dwn/MariaJoseFerTavares.pdf> (last access 29.10.2019). See also Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n. 2 above), p. 400

42 idem, *ibid*, pp. 273-349.

43 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 41, doc. 804.

to Moussem (Moses) Colodro's stables. The latter was a surgeon, and his son followed in his father's steps. Moisés Colodro was indeed an important member of the Jewish community, as shown by his having obtained from Afonso V (reign 1438-1477) the authorization to grant a manumission letter to a female Muslim captive of his.⁴⁴

The second document,⁴⁵ from 1376, almost a century earlier, displays the importance of property exchange within the Jewish community: the convent again resorts to an *emprazamento*, this time to one D. Yuhda (Judas), a Jewish merchant, of a one-storey house, in Poço da Fotea, Lisbon. It is not easy to identify the Jewish personalities in the two centuries covered in this documentation, since many of the names and surnames refer to different people. Even so, judging by the timeframe and the description of the business itself, it is conceivable that the D. Yuhda mentioned here was D. Yhuda (Judas) Negro, an important Jewish merchant. Given the date in question (1376), however, he might also have been D. Yhuda Aben-Menir, the chief rabbi and top official of Fernando I's court, a wealthy man who held several royal privileges.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the location of this house, in Poço da Fotea, tells us something about its importance, since this area was one of the main districts of the Old Jewish Quarter, right next to Rua do Picoto (*merchants' street*). Poço da Fotea is recorded as the location of a school wherein children learnt how to read, being adjacent to the small synagogue of Poio.⁴⁷ Before this document was drawn up, the siege that Lisbon endured at the hands of King Henrique III Trastâmara of Castile destroyed the butcheries which were also very near this thoroughfare. The community's prison was nearby, as was another synagogue. This was also the site of a violent riot between Christians and Jews (the single episode of this nature recorded for medieval times in Lisbon, in 1383), resulting in several deaths and pillaging all over the district. Among other things, because of this riot, the notary Vasco Lourenço was sentenced to exile (*degredo* in Portuguese sources).⁴⁸

44 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n. 2 above), p. 246.

45 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 41, doc. 811.

46 Inácio Steinhardt, *Raízes dos Judeus em Portugal. Entre Godos e Sarracenos*, Lisboa 2012; Meyer Kayserling, *História dos Judeus em Portugal*, S. Paulo 2009; Joaquim Mendes dos Remédios, *Os judeus em Portugal*, [s. l.] Coimbra 1928.

47 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XV* (n. 2 above), pp. 48, 369; Augusto Vieira da Silva, *As Freguesias de Lisboa, estudo histórico*, Lisboa 1943; José Alberto Tavim, "Judeus e Judiarias de Lisboa nos Alvores dos Descobrimentos: Perspectivas dos Espaços e das Gentes", João Luís Inglês Fontes et al. (eds.), *Lisboa Medieval. Espaços, Gentes e Poderes*, Lisboa 2017, pp. 443-444.

48 Maria José Ferro Tavares, "Revoltas contra os Judeus no Portugal Medieval" (n. 33 above), pp. 161-173.

A document dated 1469⁴⁹ attests to the *aforamento* of a farm by Guedelha Palaçano to Tristão Borges, a Christian, including its trees and a mill, in A-dos-Calços, located in Arruda-dos-Vinhos' *termo*. This is one of the few examples in which a Jewish proprietor rents property to a Christian. In fact, Guedelha Palaçano, had the said farm bought from Tristão Borges two years earlier, renting his former property to him for 1,5 *moio* of bread (*pão meado*) and 1 cask of white wine. Two years later, he sold the farm to Gonçalo Vasques de Castelo Branco for 30,000 *reais brancos* (the currency in question).⁵⁰

Guedelha Palaçano was a member of the Jewish élite: he had been a servant of Prince Henry, the Navigator (1394-1460),⁵¹ a courtier very close to the king, and enjoyed tax-exemptions and royal privileges. He attempted to negotiate the terms regarding the marriage of two of his daughters with two of the Moses Sassan's sons (Benedict and Yhuda Sassan),⁵² another important merchant from Lisbon, whose family occupied important offices in the Jewish community throughout 1300s. Guedelha was an important moneylender, who possessed royal credentials (*cartas de segurança*) and transacted business involving the king. Besides his working relationships and business transactions, he maintained personal friendships with Christians courtiers.⁵³

The Jews' wealth did not consist primarily of real state, but usually of money, merchandise, and precious metals, all movable property. Consequently, they were able to buy horses and rise to a social position equivalent to that of *cavaleiros-vilãos* – a Christian social status related with free men who served in municipal militias that served the king.⁵⁴

Further evidence of the importance of wine and olive oil for Jewish⁵⁵ proprietors is provided by document in 1381.⁵⁶ The document in question states that a sales contract drawn up by Samuel Guedelha, through a warrant issued by the king's treasurer and chief-rabbi of the kingdom Dom Yuhda (Judas), attested to the sale of a wine cellar to Lopo Martins, a top official of the kingdom (*almoxarife da portagem*), through the payment of 1000 *libras de dinheiros portugueses*. Another

49 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 44, doc. 874

50 ANTT, MSosteiro de Chelas, maço 40, doc. 783

51 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n.2 above), p. 223.

52 Ibid., p. 242.

53 Ibid., pp. 276, 310-313.

54 Ibid., p.24.

55 Maria José Ferro Tavares, "O registo do património Judaico. Entre a Chancelaria Da Comuna e a Chancelaria Régia" (n. 17 above); Anísio Saraiva, 'Metamorfoses da cidade medieval. A coexistência entre a comunidade judaica e a catedral de Viseu, *Medievalista* 11 (2012). Disponível online em <http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/iem/medievalista/MEDIEVALISTA11/anisio1106.html> (last access 29.10.2019).

56 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 59, doc. 1176.

document, dated in 1299,⁵⁷ confirms the exchange of a convent-owned vineyard with another one held by one Abraão, son of Isaac Logro and Dona Mayor, the latter located in Vale das Donas, in the outskirts of Lisbon.

As to rental contracts involving Jews, there were several strict rules they had to abide by, namely the duration of the contracts (they could not normally exceed a five-year period), they had to have a guarantor and pre-defined rent-payment dates, besides some licenses and protection clauses; however, this did not prevent some transactions to go awry, at times.

Not all the Jewish professions depended on the fertility of the land, or trading practices or finances. Some Jews also worked as shoemakers, cutlery-makers or goldsmiths.⁵⁸ A Document from 1345, displays one *emprazamento* made by Chelas' convent representative to Abraão Cochecho, a Jewish goldsmith, and to his wife Dona Judia, of certain houses (*casas sobradas*) located in *Judiaria Velha*, by the door of the *Rua de S. Nicolau*. The amount exchanged was of eighteen *libras de dinheiros portugueses* per year.⁵⁹ Six years before, a rental contract pertaining to these houses had been drawn up, the *emprazamento* thus being merely an extension of the deadline for a longer period of time. Even if the profession of goldsmith was less prestigious than that of a physician, it was not underrated, and goldsmiths could reach high social circles and be part of the community's ruling board.

This document from 1345 presents a peculiar feature: it presents a Jewish witness, Isaque de Montemor, along with Christians. It was more frequent for Christians to bear witness to contracts. Moreover, the sites wherein the contracts were issued were Christian dominions. Of the eighteen documents analysed, only one was signed in a Jewish venue: Guedelha Palaçano's house, in *Judiaria Velha*. Other archives I have had the opportunity to consult conform to this pattern. Typically contracts were signed in the notary's house, in a convent, or even in the Cathedral itself.

All the contracts recorded between the convent and Jewish people are, without exception, *emprazamentos*, and not *aforamentos*. This makes sense, since an *aforamento* stipulated that the property remained in perpetuity with the lessee, which would prevent, the nuns from renegotiating better terms with another party. Solely rental contracts were very short-term, but time. *emprazamentos* were the only form of rental that allowed the convent to limit the terms of rental, which were otherwise extended over three lifetimes. This also enabled the convent to adjust the rent in accordance with the volatile currency fluctuation, thus ensuring further financial stability. On the other hand, the subject of such a contract would

57 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 8, doc. 141.

58 Maria José Ferro Tavares, *Os Judeus em Portugal no séc. XIV* (n.2 above), p. 273.

59 ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 35, doc. 687.

not to commit himself to long-term rental, for fear of failing to meet the conditions during a period subject to wars and pillaging.

In summary: all eighteen documents were written on parchment between 1213 and 1489; Only the oldest one is written in Latin, the others being all in Portuguese; seven record sales of property, six are emphyteusis' contracts, such as *emprazamentos* or *aforamentos* (six), two discharge debts (one by which Chelas' convent recognises the *foro* paid by some Jews, the other one having been drawn up to a Christian woman who had borrowed some money from a Jew) and, finally, by two are letters of exchange (*escambos*).

None of the documents record an agreement exclusively between Jews, which is understandable, since this is an archive of a monastic institution preserving documents concerning the convent itself.

From the records analysed, three belong to the 1200s, eight to the 1300s and, lastly, six to the 1400s. This distribution is not implausible, since the fourteenth-century was the most problematic one with regards to the economic and social conditions, the need for signing more contracts following unexpected deaths, plus the complex issue of migration between countryside and city centres, and, obviously the financial difficulties many families underwent.

The documents mainly in refer to an essentially urban patrimony, with the Old Jewish Quarter (*Judiaria Velha ou Judiaria Grande*) figuring in eleven documents, possibly twelve, as one of them simply reads *Judiaria* (Jewish quarter). The remaining places are dispersed around a 50 km-radius from the kingdom's capital. Two documents refer to properties in Alenquer, and two others refer to Arranhó: one pertains to Arruda-dos-Vinhos, and another one to Aldeia Galega do Ribatejo. Finally, a single document mentions a property in Lisbon, aside those connected to the Old Jewish Quarters (already mentioned).

Final remarks

While the difference in religion might have interfered with these transactions, financial issues and questions of power were the main features transactions in this conflict-stricken period, in which monetizing goods and promoting business were vital for each party to survive and thrive.

Although extant documentation regarding Christian and Jewish business dealings is still scarce, so that certain conclusions inevitable are provisional in character, nevertheless these documents expand general knowledge about the everyday life of medieval institutions and their agents.

It is worth noticing that, half of the eighteen documents refer to prominent members of the Jewish community: Dom Judas b. Menir, Guedelha Palaçano, Judas Galite, Moisés Colodro, José Navarro – men who were commonly

associated to the Court and benefiting from the king's trust. It is not surprising that these names appear so often, since they would be the ones more actively involved in lucrative business transactions.

The documents issued by the Jewish Chancery (that is, the documents emanating from the commune's desk/*scriptorium*) itself, in which the documentation redacted by their own notaries and scribes and plausibly corresponding to decisions of the community and the business conducted among themselves, are also very scarce. Nevertheless, the documents from the Chelas convent relating to Jews surveyed in this article show how this community would still feel integrated in the society of that period.

Concerning specifically the Chelas convent, considering its adaptation to the crises of the 1300s, the independence and autonomy accorded to the convent gave it a privileged position whenever interacting with the authorities and provided it with strategically placed and very valuable sources of income, which would prove essential to overcome the crisis that affected the city.⁶⁰

The most recent document surveyed, dated from 1489, does not yet reflect the instability that marked the following decade: even though social and economic unrest had become evident since 1482-84. This would be much more apparent in 1492,⁶¹ when the Castilian Jewish community came to Portugal, after the definitive expulsion decreed by the Catholic monarchs took place. However, it would be only under King Manuel I, from 1496-97, that the Portuguese Jews were compelled to convert.⁶² This measure led to the sale of much property, in order to recover the greatest amount of money possible, as well as to subsequent waiver of contracts (*emprazamentos*) which also produced a very pronounced deflation of real estate values.

This very brief analysis of the sources belonging to one of the most important Portuguese medieval convents, even if does not fully address many of questions pertaining to the Jewish presence in Lisbon, during the Middle Ages, does consolidate some of the information one can have regarding the situation of this religious minority, its most distinguished members, and their activities, research that can be expanded by analysing other archives.

60 Maria Filomena Andrade, *O Mosteiro de Chelas* (n. 10 above), pp. 111-116.

61 Maria José Ferro Tavares, "Revoltas contra os Judeus no Portugal Medieval" (n. 32 above), pp. 169-173.

62 Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal* (n. 6 above).

Addenda

Documentation surveyed in this study⁶³

1213 – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 8, doc. 142. Documento em latim onde se menciona a aljazaria [terreno seco, cercado de água do mar] dos judeus;

1285 – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 3, doc. 51 latim. Instrumento de Venda: *venda de casas entre judeu e cristão*

1299 – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 8, doc. 141. Instrumento de Escambo: *Troca de uma vinha por outra que o mosteiro faz com Abraão, filho de Isaac Logro e Dona Mayor, em Vale das Donas, termo de lisboa*

1339, Janeiro 19 – Paço do Concelho – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 24, doc. 473. Arrendamento: *documento de arrendamento que Maria Domingues, condessa de Chelas, faz de umas casas de sobrado que tem na Judiaria Velha, à porta de S. Nicolau, a Abraão, filho de Isaque Cochecha, corretor.*

1344, Dezembro 12 – Lisboa – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 23, doc. 448. Instrumento de Quitação: *um judeu, Samuel Justo, dá como quite uma quantia que uma Clara Martins lhe devia.*

1345, Junho 17 – Casas do tabelião Rui Lopes – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 35, doc. 687. Emprazamento: *Emprazamento que é feito pelo procurador do Mosteiro de Chelas a Abraão Cochecho, judeu ourives e à sua mulher Dona Judia, de umas casas sobradas na Judiaria Velha, junto à porta da Rua de S. Nicolau, sem sôtão por 18 libras de dinheiros portugueses por ano. Testemunha: Isaque de Montemor.*

1376, Junho 4 – Mosteiro de Chelas – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 41, doc. 811. Emprazamento: *Emprazamento que o mosteiro fez a D. Yuhda, judeu mercador, de uma casa com loja e sobrado, no Poço da Foteia, em Lisboa.*

1381, Fevereiro 25 – Portagem d'el Rei – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 59, doc. 1176. Instrumento de Venda: *venda feita por Samuel Guedelha, através de procuração passada pelo tesoureiro d'el rei e rabi-mor Dom Yhuda (Judas) de uma adega a Lopo Martins, almoxarife da portagem, por 1000 libras de dinheiros portugueses.*

1381, Agosto, 30 – Casas do Almoxarife – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 33, doc. 650. Instrumento de Venda: *Venda que Josepe Navarro, Isaque Navarro*

63 The list of documents displayed here is organized in accordance with the norms habitually utilized in Diplomatics-related works. The same applies to the documental typologies described throughout this study. The documents were also disposed in chronological order and not through the order of the original archive.

e Jantor Navarro, filhos de Moussem Navarro, fazem de umas vinha do pai na Aldeia Galega de Ribatejo a Lopo Martins, almoxarife da portagem em Lisboa, por 200 libras de dinheiros portugueses.

1392-1402?, Novembro 11 – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 31, doc. 616. Emprazamento: *Emprazamento a 3 vidas que o Mosteiro faz de um sobrado de casas na Judiaria Velha a Entotor judeu, porteiro da comuna dos judeus e Alegria Judia, sua manceba, por 200 libras por ano e 2 capões. Documento com lacunas de suporte.*

1396, Dezembro 28 – Adro da Sé – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 55, doc. 1090. Emprazamento: *Emprazamento a 3 vidas que o mosteiro fez a Josepe Navarro, filho de Moussem (Moisés) Navarro que foi rabi-mor, de umas casas térreas na Judiaria Grande por 300 libras por ano.*

1401, Novembro 11 – Casas junto à igreja de S. Brás, Lisboa – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 50, doc. 990. Emprazamento: *Emprazamento a 3 vidas que o Mosteiro faz de umas casas na Judiaria a Entetor judeu, porteiro da comuna dos judeus de um sobrado de uma casa onde ele já morava na Judiaria Velha, a par da carniçaria dos judeus, sobrado que faz confrontação com a Cordeira e com casas da Albergaria dos judeus, por 200 libras a pagar no dia de Natal e um par de capões.*

1467, Agosto 19 – Casas de Guedelha Palaçano, Judiaria Velha – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 44, doc. 874. Aforamento: *Aforamento feito por Guedelha Palaçano a Tristão Borges em A-dos-Calços, termo de Arruda, de uma quinta de pão e vinho, com árvores, casa, lagar e dar 1,5 pão meado, 1 tonel de vinho.*

1469, Abril 10 – casas de Gonçalo Castelo Branco do conselho d’el rei – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 40, doc. 783. Instrumento de Venda: *Gadelha Palaçano, mercador judeu, morador na Judiaria Grande comprou a Tristão Borges uma quinta e casal em A-dos-Calços em 31 de julho de 1467, no termo de Arruda-dos-Vinhos e depois da compra aforou em perpétuo a Tristão Borges por 1,5 moio de pão meado e 1 tonel de vinho branco. Em 1469, Guedelha Palaçano e a mulher venderam a quinta a Gonçalo Vasques de Castelo Branco por 30 mil reais brancos.*

1473, Abril 30 – Mosteiro de Chelas – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 41, doc. 804. Instrumento de Escambo: *Escambo de umas casas que o Mosteiro de Chelas tem na Judiaria Grande, na Rua do Poço, que confrontam com a Confraria Grande, com cavaliariças de Moussem Colodro, com casas de Salomão Faião, o velho e com um beco que dá com rua pública; as quais casas traz agora emprazadas em 1ª vida de 3 Salomão Faião por 6,5 coroas de ouro, a 120*

reais por coroa. E escambavam estas casas com outras casas, com lojas e dois sobrados, do mesmo Salomão Faião.

1489, Novembro 26 – Casas das sisas de Alenquer – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 63, doc. 1258. Instrumento de Venda: *venda que é feita por Pero Pestes a Yhuda (Judas) Gualite ou Galite, judeu mercador morador na cidade de Lisboa, de um lugar a que chamam Mascote, no termo de Alenquer por 20 mil reais brancos.*

1489, Novembro 26 – Alenquer, feito pelo tabelião da rainha Pero Lourenço – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 90, nº 49. Instrumento de Venda e Posse: *Venda (treslado) que é feita a Yhuda Gualite, judeu mercador morador na cidade de Lisboa, de um lugar na Ribeira de Pancas.*

Várias datas – ANTT, Mosteiro de Chelas, maço 77, doc. 1531. Instrumento de Quitação: *documento com recebimentos do mosteiro de Chelas, onde consta alguns pagamentos de foros feitos por judeus ao mosteiro.*

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