

*Lydia Collins has spent over 30 years researching the Sephardi community of Manchester. During the course of her research she has interviewed many family members in Manchester and throughout the world. She has also consulted archive material in the UK, France, Italy, Israel, Egypt and elsewhere which has helped to throw light on the origins and worldwide connections of the community.

Manchester has been home to the Sephardim & to the immigrants from Aleppo for a hundred and fifty years. From the early nineteenth century they were drawn to Manchester, centre of the Lancashire textile trade.

Many belonged to long-established merchant families in the Mediterranean and Middle East and their international trade was based largely on kinship networks, with a branch at the source of supply in Manchester acting as agents for relatives both back home and often at other branches in the Middle East and Central and South America.

Manchester was seen as a symbol of prosperity and in Aleppo it was sometimes the custom to add the words "...and may he live in Manchester" to the traditional circumcision blessing of infant sons.

Most of the Syrian Sephardim in Manchester came from Aleppo and its satellite towns. A smaller number, perhaps one tenth, came from Damascus. Daniel Hillel Piciotto from Aleppo who arrived in Manchester in 1842 was probably the earliest Syrian settler. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, immigration from Syria, mainly Aleppo, continued in increasing numbers until they became the largest single group amongst the Manchester Sephardim. Others left Syria for Beirut Egypt and North, South and Central

LYDIA COLLINS THE SEPHARDIM OF MANCHESTER THE FAMILIES FROM ALEPPO

America. Dismantling of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the emergence of Arab nationalism were further incentives to emigration and today scarcely any Jews remain in Syria; but there are thriving Syrian communities throughout the world, especially in America and in exile they have preserved their Syrian traditions.

Hereinafter an alphabetical list of the immigrant families from Aleppo to Manchester and their first settlers at Manchester.

ABADI: There is an early reference in the Leghorn Jewish Archives to a Yomtov Abadi of Aleppo who was buried at Leghorn in 1729. The name Abadi appears in Manchester from the early 1860s where the firm Laniado Abadi & Co traded at Manchester, Marseille & Aleppo. The partners were Shabetai Abadi at Manchester, Raphael Laniado at Marseille, and Abraham Ashkenazi, Moses de Piciotto, the Austrian consul-general, and Abdullah Alwan at Aleppo.

ADES: Widespread surname used by several families from Aleppo. Some were known as Ades-Antebi indicating an origin or connection with Aintab, a town 60 miles north of Aleppo. The word Ades means "lentil" in Hebrew and Arabic. Habib Ades (born Aleppo in 1830) was one of the founders of the Cheetham Hill Synagogue in Manchester.

ALTARAS: Originally from Venice, settled in Aleppo in the early eighteenth century and well documented in trading at Aleppo,



Hillel Altaras
b Aleppo 1834, d Manchester 1899

Leghorn and Marseille and so far afield as Basra. Baruch Ezra (known as Benedetto) left Aleppo and went to Leghorn in 1791, very shortly after marrying his second wife Laura Piciotto.

ANZARUT: Name used by a Cohen Family in Syria. The meaning of Anzarut is unclear but may be some kind of plant extract, probably tragacanth gum. The brothers Jacob, Joseph and Solomon Anzarut first appear in Manchester in 1861 when they built up a large shipping business with Syria and Egypt.

BIANCO: The Blancos were originally Ashkenazim who emigrated to Aleppo. French Foreign Ministry documents disclose that Joseph Bianco of Aleppo was born in Vladimir, Poland and in 1853 was in Constantinople where he obtained a French passport. His son Moses came to Manchester about 1864 to establish a branch of the family cotton business.