The Portuguese Dreyfus, Apostle of the Marranos and more: Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto Collection at The Ohio State University Library.

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I would like to thank the The Association of Jewish Libraries, the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at The Ohio State University, The College of Arts and Sciences of the Ohio State University for the financial support for my travel expenses to this conference. In the next twenty minutes I will talk about Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, a key figure of 20th Century Portugal, and about the collection of materials he wrote, translated and/or edited that are held by The Ohio State University Libraries.
Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto was born in Amarante, northern Portugal, in 1887, and passed away in Porto in 1961. When he formally converted to Judaism in Tangier, Morocco, in 1920, he chose the Hebrew name “Ben-Rosh” because of its similarity with his Portuguese family name “Barros”. Apparently, Barros Basto claimed that the name Barros derived from the Hebrew-Aramaic “Bar-rosh” (which indeed sounds similar). There are biographical articles about Barros Basto and also a biography. The press took interest in him – especially in his dismissal from the Portuguese Army in 1937 for allegedly performing “immoral” acts. Because of his activities of Jewish proselytism among Portuguese New Christians, historian Cecil Roth called him “apostle of the marranos”.

Biographies:
- _____, L’apôtre des Maranes. Paris [1930].

In the press:
Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, alias Abraham Israel Ben-Rosh  
- some biographical data -

1887 – Born in Amarante, Portugal, in a Catholic family with Jewish roots

1905 – Became aware of the existence of Jews in Portugal

c. 1905 – Joined the Portuguese Military Academy in the city of Porto

1906 – Tried to join the Jewish Community of Lisbon, but was not admitted

1917 – Participated in the First World War as a lieutenant and commanded a battalion of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in the front of Flanders. He was promoted to captain for acts of bravery and honor.

1920 – Formal conversion to Judaism in Tangier, Morroco

1921 – Married Lea Israel Montero Azancot, of the Jewish Community of Lisbon.

1923 – Founded a Jewish community in Porto

1927 – Started to publish the newspaper *Ha-Lapid* (until 1958).

1929 – Started the construction of synagogue “Makor Haim” (Kadorie), inaugurated in Porto just in 1938.

1930s – Change of regime in Portugal (Estado Novo). Barros Basto is associated with the opposition and chased by the army.

1937 – Dismissed from the Portuguese army for allegedly participating in circumcision ceremonies of the students of the Israelite Theological Institute of Porto, which was considered an "immoral" act.

During **World War II**, having been already dismissed from the army, Barros Basto helped hundreds of Jews escape the war and the Holocaust. Recently, the Jewish Community of Porto signed a protocol with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in order to provide it with thousands of documents and records of individual refugees, who with the help of Barros Basto could then rebuild their lives with a start point in Porto.

1961 – Died in Porto and was buried in his hometown Amarante.

Barros Basto in the front of Flanders during World War I. This image is one example of the 177 pictures that belonged to Barros Basto and were discovered in 2005. The pictures portray the participation of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps (Corpo Expedicionário Português) in the World War I. See: https://www.publico.pt/2014/11/16/portugal/noticia/o-capitao-barros-basto-escondia-um-secredo-1676260
Synagogue “Makor Haim” (Kadorie), inaugurated in Porto in 1938.

From: *Marranos in Portugal: Survey by the Portuguese Marranos Committee* (1938)
Ha-Lapid. All 156 volumes are digitized (http://www.rebordelo.net/cripto-judaismo/halapid/).
We are talking about more than 3 decades of activity (1927-1958). It is improbable that any other Jewish newspaper published in Europe in the 20th Century had been active for so long a time.
Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto Collection at The Ohio State University Library
Besides publishing the newspaper *Ha-Lapid* between 1927 and 1958, Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto also published a series of pamphlets (around 30 in total according to my calculations). The Ohio State University Library holds 27 items related to Barros Basto (none has been digitized insofar). The items were purchased from Fishburn Books in 2015, and are not held by many libraries in the United States. Some copies are held by UPenn, Harvard, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and UCLA. The majority of these 27 items were written, edited, translated or arranged by Barros Basto himself; others, I believe, may had belonged to his personal library. The publication year of these items ranges from 1927 to 1947. The items were publish mainly by two institutions: *Instituto teológico Israelita* (also known as *Yeshibab Rosh-Pinal*) and the *Comunidade Israelita do Porto*. Some of the items publication was supported by the *Fundo Educativo Rabi Dr. David de Sola Pool, de Nova Iorque*. Topics vary a lot: there are translation into Portuguese of Medieval and Early Modern Sephardic classics and biographies of outstanding Sephardic leaders. There are also prayer books and pamphlets related to Jewish holidays – sometimes Menasseh ben Israel’s *Thesouro dos Dinim* (1645-7) was one of the sources Barros Basto consulted and cited. There are also items about Portuguese civil legislation. The items’ publication supported Barros Basto to conduct his “obra do resgate” (“rescue mission”) – a project whose goal was to make Portuguese people of Jewish background aware of their Jewish origins, and to familiarize them of Jewish practices and ritual.
In this example we see that besides translating the liturgical poem *Hag Gadiyah* into Portuguese, Barros Basto also strived to show the impact of Jewish culture into Portuguese folklore.