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Seeing Islam as a Historian Sees It:
A Mediterranean Frame Tale

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Historians of the medieval Mediterranean have handled the category Islam (Ar. *islām*) in ways that weaken our grasp of the past.[1] Some of the reasons for this regrettable situation stem from the difficulty encountered in rendering the richness and complexity of usage across many languages and contexts. Other problems stem from employing modern frames to convey medieval usages. And yet others result from the pervasive unsystematic use of the category in modern historiography. While this situation is not unique to this category or to this subfield of history, the medieval Mediterranean stands out because 'Islam' is constitutive of its mapping of the past and because the very existence of Mediterranean Studies is tied to a critical reassessment of the historiographic positions that excluded, marginalised, or othered Islam in the past and those that continue to do so today.

Since its appearance in early Arabic sources, the category Islam has been the subject of continued and vigorous debate. Medieval authors did not settle on a single meaning or agree to use the category in a consistent manner. Modern historians have not done so either. Rather than proceed by defining the term, situating the active manipulation of the category by medieval and modern intellectuals seems more manageable and suitable, and has the benefit of shifting the focus to the study of the circumstances that illuminate particular usages. Since historians do not customarily state their 'working definitions' clearly or explicitly, doing so also seems sensible.

Mediterraneanists who work with Latin texts know that medieval Latin authors did not use the Arabic word *islām*, unlike their contemporaries who wrote in Arabic. This means that when they use the category 'Islam,' these medievalists are not simply reporting a usage found in their sources. Instead, they are referring to what they consider to be Latin equivalents of the Arabic original—or at least of a selection of Arabic usages they find authoritative, representative, or attractive for some other reason. Oftentimes, the use medieval Latinists make of Islam derives from their application of modern ways of framing the category as a religion, civilisation, polity, world, culture, etc. As it happens, there has

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never been a consensus on what 'religion' or 'civilisation' etc. refers to, or on how to apply these notions when studying premodern societies.[2] As they are not always transparent, such manoeuvres greatly complicate the task of understanding how Islam has been constituted in Mediterranean Studies, and thus that of formulating a systematic and critical approach to the question of its utilisation in historical arguments. That is why, although the historiography of the medieval Mediterranean is the primary 'archive,' the question here is not how historians interpret a particular set of texts, but rather what a young historian might learn about the handling of the category Islam from the modern historiography of the medieval Mediterranean.

Modern scholarship on the medieval Mediterranean does not take its cues from modern historiography in Arabic. If it did, the use of the same Arabic words in medieval texts and modern historiography and their translations into other languages would require examination. Rather, and for historical reasons, English is the dominant language in the field. This means that, in general, English-language studies inflect historiographic debates more than those in other languages. Naturally, considering only a small number of these studies for the purposes of a short essay does not equate to an exhaustive or fair representation of a rich and diverse historiography. However, for the purposes of drawing attention to a set of historiographic phenomena, it makes sense to select from broadly read contributions to the field. And since many Mediterraneanists rely primarily on Latin sources, it seems relevant here to examine how specialists handle the absence of the word Islam in Latin.

To be clear, and although it may frustrate the expectations of some, this essay will not attempt to identify the best scholarly approach to Islam or to the societies, cultures, world(s), or polities dubbed Islamic, and not only because doing so would require a great deal more space than is available here.[3] Its infinitely more modest goal is to show that the historiographic 'status quo' has been too tolerant of formulations that are demonstrably

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[2] For why the modern European category 'religion' is not suitable for defining Islam, see SHAHAB AHMED, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 176–245.

[3] This essay builds on critical insights made by scholars across fields and disciplines. For a sense of the diversity of approaches and for historiographic orientation, see TALAL ASAD, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); CEMIL AYDIN, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); ALEXANDER BEVILACQUA, *Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018); HAMID DABASHI, *The End of Two Illusions: Islam after the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022); JOSEPH A. MASSAD, *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015); TOMOKO MASUZAWA, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); JACK F. MATLOCK JR., 'Can Civilizations Clash?,' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143, no. 3 (1999): 428–39; SAMI ZUBAIDA, *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). For more specialised explorations, see for example AHMED, *What is Islam?*; MARSHALL G.S. HODGSON, 'The Role of Islam in World History,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 2 (1970): 99–123; JOHN O. VOLL, 'Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,' in *The Sage Handbook of Islamic Studies*, eds AKBAR AHMED and TAMARA SONN (London: Sage, 2010), 3–16.

problematic. To underline its own historicising preferences, it holds that one way around at least some of the difficulties identified here is to focus on those sites that have specialised in the production, reproduction, and dissemination of the category Islam in the past and those that do so today. Doing so may fall short of disentangling all the webs of interconnected issues, but it should be enough to allow young historians to recognise some of the lessons embedded in studies of the medieval Mediterranean, including those inherent in the unsystematic use of the category.

Writing Against History

For too many historians, using the category Islam presents itself as self-evident, straightforward, and unproblematic. Common figures of speech are pervasive; however, as they are not easily associated with identifiable positions, they tend to complicate the task of devising a formal critique. But to the extent that prevailing ways of writing about the past constitute a distinct challenge, examining a few examples should give a better sense of some of the difficulties historians create for themselves.

Representing human actions as personified abstractions is a chronic malady of historical prose, even though most historians acknowledge that it downplays specificity, precision, and accuracy, all *sine quibus non* of historicising. Consider these ostensibly harmless statements about the birth of Islam:

Islam was born into a world that was already made.[4]

Islam was born amongst the Arabs of early seventh-century Arabia.[5]

Everyone is entitled to the metaphors they find useful, but this one leaves a great deal out. What or who was born? And when? Was Islam born when Muḥammad (ca. 570–622) was born, when he became a prophet to his followers (610), when the caliph ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (d. 656) ordered the compilation of the Qurʾan, or was 'it' born on some other occasion?

The fact that Islam was born is so widely accepted that for some the issue is not whether but where it was born.[6]

Islam was not born in the Mediterranean, but it interacted from the earliest days with the rival monotheistic religions of the Mediterranean, Judaism and Christianity (it also

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[4] JONATHAN E. BROCKOPP, *Muhammad's Heirs: The Rise of Muslim Scholarly Communities, 622–950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 31.

[5] CHASE F. ROBINSON, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), XVI.

[6] For Islam growing up, see for example THOMAS F. X. NOBLE et al., eds, *Western Civilization: To 1715* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 340; MARK WHITTOW, 'Geographical Survey,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds ELIZABETH JEFFRIES, JOHN HALDON, and ROBIN CORMACK (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 229.

interacted with paganism, but in a negative way, since the Muslims refused to tolerate religions other than Judaism, Christianity and, in Persia, Zoroastrianism).[7]

For David Abulafia, Islam was not a natural-born Mediterranean but acquired its Mediterraneanness second-hand, by interacting with 'native' Mediterranean religions. And while the notion that Muslims stand out from Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians for being intolerant of followers of other religions is obviously problematic, its presence here illustrates well how certain modern discourses on identity find their way into historical interpretations.[8]

If personifying Islam leads to odd constructions, treating it as a biological entity can be outright mystifying.

Early Islam lived in symbiosis with the camel. The herded camel supplying milk, wool and meat was the basis of Arab bedouin nomadic pastoralism.[9]

In another vein, reading about Islam being born and growing up, prepares one to read about its economic circumstances.[10]

Between the densely populated blocks, Europe in the large sense, Black Africa, and the Far East, [Islam] held the key passes and made a living from its profitable function of intermediary. Without its *consent* or *will*, nothing could pass through.[11]

The scholarly person as a religious ideal was more widely popular in Judaism than in Islam. To be sure, Islam, with its ample economic resources was far more able to realize this ideal, namely, by making learning a salaried profession.[12]

In these instances, Islam obscures the details of economics. In others, it obscures those of politics, as this example from *The Corrupting Sea* illustrates:

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[7] DAVID ABULAFIA, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 244. Cf. 'Islam decided early not to force either Jews or Christians to adopt Islam.' HYAM MACCOBY, *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 150.

[8] See PEREZ ZAGORIN, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[9] SAMUEL A. M. ADSHEAD, *China in World History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 126. Cf. 'Islam was the animal kingdom par excellence, with its deserts both natural and man-made.' FERNAND BRAUDEL, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* 2 vols., vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 401.

[10] For an example of Islam's interests, see JACOB NEUSNER, TAMARA SONN, and JONATHAN E. BROCKOPP, eds, *Judaism and Islam in Practice: A Sourcebook* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 46: 'Islam takes special interest in what Judaism would term hand-washing.'

[11] BRAUDEL, *The Mediterranean*, 187. Italics mine. See also: '[The famous expedition of the Vivaldi brothers in 1291] must be seen as an attempt to deprive Islam of some of the benefits of being the middleman in trade between the Far East and western Europe.' DAVID ABULAFIA, *A Mediterranean Emporium: The Catalan Kingdom of Majorca* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 209.

[12] SHELOMO D. GOITEIN, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols., vol. 5, *The Individual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 9.

> It was the rise of Islam to naval dominance in the Mediterranean that, indirectly, shaped the northern economy of Charlemagne's empire, and hence the whole of subsequent medieval society.[13]

In addition to rising in power, medievalists sometimes conceive this 'political' Islam as bursting out of Arabia,[14] as conquering,[15] and then expanding its territory.[16] Unfortunately, when Islam gets a 'territory,' it comes with frontiers with abstract entities such as Christianity and even with actual kingdoms.[17]

> Unlike Galicia, [the kingdom of León] had a frontier with Islam and the possibility of expansion southward into the rich grazing lands of Extremadura.[18]

It is unclear whether information about 'Muslim' kingdoms in Iberia is unavailable or the historian does not believe it to be pertinent.[19] Identifying the kingdoms in question would have situated them organically within the politics of the time and reduced the exotic character of information about them. Instead, imagining frontiers with 'Islam' tends to normalise the uneven treatment of medieval kingdoms based on their 'religious identity.'

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[13] PEREGRINE HORDEN and NICHOLAS PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 32. See also KATHRYN REYERSON, *The Art of the Deal: Intermediaries of Trade in Medieval Montpellier* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 21: 'From the seventh and early eighth centuries, the southern, eastern, and, until the successes of the Spanish *reconquista*, the western shores of the Mediterranean were dominated by Islam.'

[14] JONATHAN P. BERKEY, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57; TARIF KHALIDI, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of the Golden Age* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1985), 29.

[15] 'The thoroughness with which conquering Islam denied the use of bells to its Christian subjects is a token of the importance of this often-neglected aspect of the religious landscape.' HORDEN and PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea*, 422.

[16] HORDEN and PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea*, 17.

[17] For frontiers with 'Christianity' see HENRI PIRENNE, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1939), 163. The territorialisation of the rule of medieval 'Islamic' dynasties involves both conceptual and empirical problems. See valuable observations in DOMINIQUE VALÉRIAN, *Bougie: Port Maghrébin 1067–1510* (Rome: École française de Rome: 2006), 103–73; DOMINIQUE IOGNA-PRAT, 'The Meaning and Usages of Medieval Territory,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 72, no. 1 (2017): 91–100. For an examination of the notion of borderland, see LINDA T. DARLING, 'The Mediterranean as a Borderland,' *Review of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 1 (2012): 54–63.

[18] TEÓFILO F. RUIZ, *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150–1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 105. See also DAVID ABULAFIA, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 41; SIMON BARTON, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 25; PAUL FREEDMAN, *The Origins of Peasant Servitude in Medieval Catalonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 27; WALTER KAEGI, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 252; MARÍA ROSA MENOCAL, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2002), 5.

[19] Some imagine Islam as a ruler, while others think that it was ruled. OLEG GRABAR, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, (1973; 2nd ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 35. The rulers of Islam were not all men. See FATIMA MERNISSI, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

In a different register, historians often attribute a political character to Islam by referring to processes taking places under its rule or more simply under it.[20]

> The end of Byzantine North Africa was categorically not the end of North Africa, which instead, together with its inhabitants, would flourish culturally, economically, and politically under Islam. [21]

> Sorghum was known in Coptic Egypt and spread rather slowly in the Maghreb under Islam.[22]

Of course, historians are entitled to apply the periodisation that best serves their purposes. But it is not at all clear that those who use 'Islam' (or 'under Islam') as a marker of time do so for a given reason—like a reasoned rejection of dynastic periodisation, for example. We are just asked to imagine a period when Islam ruled and to call that the Islamic period.[23] Interestingly, this brings modern historians in line with the theologically imbued medieval vision in which 'the coming of Islam' put an end to the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliya*), a way of ordering time that undoubtedly lives in symbiosis with ideology.[24]

Periodisation is not the only way the manipulation of Islam leads to a loss of neutrality. In his classic *The Formation of Islamic Art*, Oleg Grabar opined that

> Had Islam continued to be ruled from the secluded oases of central Arabia or from a poor and inaccessible region like the central Maghrib, it might have preserved a certain religious purity, but it would never have become the lasting cultural force it did become.[25]

Setting aside the assertion that Islam itself was ruled from an identifiable place, Grabar's ostensibly gratuitous negative assessment of the cultural potential of both Arabia and the central Maghrib is not accidental. For one thing, it reflects the ideology that prevailed at

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[20] Islam is not always on top. ROBERT I. BURNS, *Islam under the Crusaders: Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). For 'in the orbit of Islam,' see ROSS BRANN, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 4; BARBARA KREUTZ, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 18.

[21] WALTER KAEGI, *Muslim Expansion and Byzantine Collapse in North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 297, 67.

[22] HORDEN and PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea*, 208.

[23] On periodisation, see the special issue of *Der Islam* (91, no. 1, 2014) edited by ANTOINE BORRUT.

[24] *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds P. J. BEARMAN et. al., 12 vols., vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), s.v. 'Djāhiliyya,' 383–84. For orientation, see PETER WEBB, 'Al-Jāhiliyya: Uncertain Times of Uncertain Meanings,' *Der Islam* 91, no. 1 (2014): 69–94. Used by archaeologists, the Islamic label often refers to a period of unspecified length. For example, see 'In the Islamic assemblage, sorghum and pearl millet are definitely not associated with fodder, while the brassicas, safflower and black mustard may have been utilized for both purposes (one seed each of black mustard and safflower was found in the Islamic camel droppings).' MARIJKE VAN DER VEEN, *Consumption, Trade and Innovation: Exploring the Botanical Remains from Roman and Islamic Ports at Quseir al-Qadim in Egypt* (Frankfurt am Main: Africa Magna Verlag, 2011), 176.

[25] GRABAR, *The Formation*, 35.

the Abbasid court in which Baghdad was the centre of the world.[26] But then again, the dynastic ideology Grabar might have been endorsing here could be an Iberian one, which favoured an urbanised Andalus to a 'Bedouin' Maghrib.[27] By acknowledging the tendency of courtly discourses on 'civilisation' to discount 'uncivilised' regions and, by extension, their place in Islam, the Mediterranean, or other worlds, we can contextualise them and those modern arguments that echo them.

There are many more instances and contexts than can be discussed here. Even if brief, this survey does however show that, too often, references to Islam tend to occult what lies behind the manipulation of the category, and thus limit our ability to ascertain the relation between the agendas of medieval authors and those of modern historians. An examination of how specialists have handled the absence of the word Islam in Latin may offer a touchable illustration of the challenges the handling of the category present historians.

Islam in Medieval Latin

For years, Norman Daniel's path-breaking *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (1960) and Richard Southern's *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (1962) were the main reference works on medieval representations of Islam in Latin.[28] More recently, the subject has received renewed attention by John Tolan whose *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (2002) has become a standard reference in the field.[29] While these studies differ in many respects, they all make Islam their main object of focus. This is remarkable because, as Tolan makes clear, until the sixteenth century, the terms Islam and Muslim were largely unknown in Western languages.

> 'Islam' in Arabic means submission, submission to God's will; a 'Muslim' is one who has submitted to God's will. Yet medieval Christian writers did not speak of 'Islam' or 'Muslims,' words unknown (with very few exceptions) in Western languages before the sixteenth century. Instead, Christian writers referred to Muslims by using ethnic terms: Arabs, Turks, Moors, Saracens. Often they call them 'Ishmaelites,' descendants of the

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[26] AL-YAʿQŪBĪ, *The Works of Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbi. An English Translation*, eds MATTHEW GORDON et al., 3 vols., vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 66; AL-YAʿQŪBĪ, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. ABRAHAM W. T. JUYNBOLL (Leiden: Brill, 1860), 4.

[27] For a critical perspective and historiographic help, see ERIC CALDERWOOD, *Colonial Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018). See also DAVID A. WACKS, *Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction and the Mediterranean World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 3–13.

[28] NORMAN DANIEL, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960); RICHARD SOUTHERN, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). Famously, Southern lamented the 'extremely slow penetration of Islam as an intellectually identifiable fact in Western minds.' SOUTHERN, *Western Views*, 13.

[29] JOHN TOLAN, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), XVI. Below, I will use other works by Tolan too, if only to suggest that the issues are in some way persistent.

biblical Ishmael, or Hagarenes (from Hagar, Ishmael's mother). Their religion is referred to as the 'law of Muhammad' or the 'law of the Saracens.'[30]

In the accompanying note, Tolan explains that two exceptions confirm the rule against referring to Islam and Muslims in Latin texts:

> Two exceptions are William of Tripoli, *Notitia de Machometo*, in Wilhelm von Tripolis, *Notitia de Machometo*; *De statu Sarracenorum*, ed. Peter Engels (Würzburg: Corpus Islamo-Christianum, 1992), §6, p. 216; Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogi contra Iudaeos (Diálogo contra los Judíos)*, Latin edition by Klaus-Peter Mieth with Spanish translation by Esperanza Ducay (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1996), §5, p. 94. In English, *Moslim* is first attested in 1615; *Islam*, in 1613 (*Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971 and 1985], 1:1856, 1489). In French, *Mussulman* is used for the first time in the sixteenth century; Islam, in 1697 (according to Alain Rey, *Le Robert: Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* [Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 1992 and 1998], 1886, 2328).[31]

Although Tolan's wording leaves some doubt about this, in both these exceptions the reference is not to Islam but only to the adjective 'Muslim.' In fact, medieval Latin authors did not use the word 'Islam' at all and hardly ever used the adjective 'Muslim' because, as the Dominican William of Tripoli (d. 1273) explained, they preferred referring to Saracens.[32] Tolan offers a compelling explanation of the circumstances that led to the original depiction of Islam as the Law of the Saracens: Christian authors drew on a pre-existing discourse on Saracens and later Latin authors continued this practice because of its outstanding pedigree.[33] But writing about Islam in the abstract is not the same as writing about the law of Muslims or Saracens. Irrespective of one's stance on the difference between the two operations or their significance, few would argue that the two are the same. Yet, passing off medieval Latin representations of Saracens (Muslims) as representations of Islam has been the most common way modern historians have obscured the intriguing fact of the absence of 'Islam' in medieval Latin.[34]

In his discussion of Robert of Ketton (fl. 1136–1157), his work, and environment, Thomas Burman notes that the *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete* 'was the standard version of

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[30] TOLAN, *Saracens,* XV. See also 'Medieval Christians, with very few exceptions, did not use the words "Muslim" or "Islam"; instead they used ethnic terms such as "Arab," "Saracen," "Ishmaelite." Information about these peoples could be found in the venerable books of old.' TOLAN, *Saracens*, 4.

[31] TOLAN, *Saracens*, 284n1.

[32] 'Meslemin quod latine dicitur Sarracenos.' WILHELM VON TRIPOLIS, *Notitia de Machometo; De statu Sarracenorum*, ed. PETER ENGELS (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1992), 216. Tolan found one other instance of 'Muslim' in PETRUS ALFONSI, *Dialogi contra Iudaeos (Diálogo contra los Judíos)*, ed. KLAUS-PETER MIETH, Sp. trans. ESPERANZA DUCAY (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1996), 94.

[33] TOLAN, *Saracens*, XIX.

[34] See also 'This book is an exploration of how various Christian European authors from the ninth to the fourteenth century direct their pens against Islam.' JOHN TOLAN, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainsville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2008), XI. 'Muhammad has always been at the center of the European discourse on Islam.' JOHN TOLAN, *Faces of Muhammad: Western Views of the Prophet of Islam from the Middle Ages to Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 2.

the Qur'ān for European readers from the time of its translation down to the eighteenth century.'[35] But as Burman explains 'Robert's Latin Qur'ān eventually became very widely criticised as well, for from the fifteenth century to the present, scholarly opinion has condemned it as a loose, misleading paraphrase.'[36] Indeed, Robert changed the structure of the original text, altered the meaning of many Qur'anic terms, and ultimately produced a new text well adapted to the polemical designs the translation was meant to serve.

Here is a modern English rendering of a Qur'anic verse in which God's (true) religion (*dīn*) is Islam:

> The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): nor did the People of the Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account (Q. 3:19).[37]

By focusing on what he believed was the essential meaning of the verse, Robert of Ketton dispenses with the word Islam.

> Sin autem, tuum est mea praecepta gentibus solummodo patefacere. Increduli, et propheticidae, et iustorum quorumlibet interfectores, in hoc seculo contemptibiles, et in alio perpetue damnandi, poenam grauissimam tortoris atque uindicis expertes subibunt.[38]

Robert of Ketton gave a general sense of the meaning of the verse but did not use the word Islam.[39] He did likewise when translating these two other verses:

> Say: 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismā'īl, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes. And in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam).' If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good) (Q. 3:84-5).

> Dicite uos credentes in Deum, praeceptisque tibi, et Abrahae et Ismaëli, et Isaac atque Iacob duodecimque tribubus, similiter et Moysi et Cristo prophetisque caeteris, quos discernere nimis est, desuper a deo fide nostra missa, fidem et testimonium adhibemus. Quis aliud per

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[35] THOMAS E. BURMAN, '*Tafsīr* and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qur'ān Exegesis and the Latin Qur'āns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo,' *Speculum* 73, no. 3 (1998): 703–732 (705).

[36] BURMAN, *Tafsīr*, 705.

[37] 'ABDULLĀH YŪSUF 'ALĪ, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, 10th ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2001), 131.

[38] THÉODORE BIBLIANDER, *Le Coran en latin et autres textes sur l'islam*, eds TRISTAN VIGLIANO and HENRI LAMARQUE, 22. https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01306446.

[39] For a valuable examination of the medieval Arabic notion of '*dīn*,' the specificity of its origins and evolution in Arabic, and how it relates to the modern invention of 'religion,' see RUSHAIN ABBASI, 'Islam and the Invention of Religion: A Study of Medieval Muslim Discourses on *Dīn*,' *Studia Islamica* 116, no. 1 (2021): 1–106.

fidem quam legem assequi studet ? Omnis quidem incredulus saeculo futuro damnandis annumerabitur.[40]

Responding to criticism of Robert's translation, and more specifically the unfavourable treatment his Qur'an received compared to that of the second oldest translation prepared by Mark of Toledo (fl. 1193–1216), Burman opined that the *Lex Mahumet* was not necessarily a worse translation.

[Historian] Norman Daniel may well be correct in concluding that Mark's translation communicates, in its literalism, more of the feel and shape of the Qur'ān but this very concern to produce a word-for-word translation caused Mark to misrepresent the Qur'ān badly from time to time.[41]

There is naturally much wisdom in Burman's observation, and it is difficult to disagree with him on this point. Yet Mark of Toledo's so-called 'word-for-word' translation managed to avoid the word Islam too.[42] In another verse in which Islam is described as a religion (*dīn*), Mark renders it as 'the Law of the Ishmaelites.'

Hodie uobis uestram compleui legem adimpleuique uobis beneficium meum. Et acceptaui uobis Yshmahelitarum legem.[43]

Here is an English interpretation of the same:

This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Q. 5:3).[44]

Elsewhere, Mark's 'word-for-word' translation made him replace the word Muslim with what he believed was its meaning, the root of the word having something to do with obedience or submission.[45] By translating the meaning of the word, Mark avoided using it as the name of the 'religion.'

The last translation of the Qur'an considered here is the one prepared for Egidio da Viterbo (1469–1532), an Augustinian friar and eventually cardinal, whose keen interest in

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[40] YŪSŪF 'ALĪ, *The Meaning*, 150. BIBLIANDER, *Le Coran*, 24. Interestingly, the word 'religion' does not occur as a translation of the Arabic '*dīn*.'
[41] BURMAN, 'Tafsīr,' 731.
[42] Here is how Mark renders the two Qur'anic passages cited above: 'Lex enim non est apud Deum nisi Saracenorum. Et non dissenserunt illi quibus datus est Liber nisi postquam uenit ad eos sciencia inter seducti inuidia. Et qui blasphemat in miracula Dei, Deus quippe uelociter iudicat' and 'Dic: "Credimus in Deum, et in id quod destinatum est nobis et quod destinatum est Abrahe et Yshmaeli et Ysaac et tribubus; et quod datum est Moysi et Ihesu prophetis a creatore suo: non distingo inter aliquem eorum, nos ei obedimus". Et qui, preter legem Yshmahelitarum, aliam apetit non recipiatur ab illo, ipse enim in futuro seculo dampnabitur.' MARCUS TOLETANUS, *Alchoranus latinus quem transtulit Marcus canonicus Toletanus: estudio y edición crítica*, ed. NÀDIA PETRUS PONS (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2016), 43, 48.
[43] TOLETANUS, *Alchoranus*, 72.
[44] YŪSUF 'ALĪ, *The Meaning*, 245.
[45] Mark's translation of 'naḥnu lahu muslimūn' as 'nos ei obedimus' makes this clear.

scriptures led him to Hebrew and eventually to Arabic.[46] In his youth, Egidio famously met Erasmus (1509) and Martin Luther during the latter's visit to Rome in 1510/1511. It was during his time in Spain as an agent of the Medici Pope Leo X (r. 1513–1521) at the court of Charles I of Spain (1516–1556) that Egidio pursued his interests in the Qur'an. In 1518, he commissioned a Muslim convert by the name of Juan Gabriel of Teruel (Alí Alayzar) to prepare a new translation of the Qur'an.[47] Upon his return to Italy, Egidio had his godson and Arabic teacher Leo Africanus (d. c. 1554) review Juan Gabriel's text and make corrections and improvements. The final draft was completed in 1525.

Egidio's attitude towards Islam and Muslims reflected the political concerns and realities of his time. The struggle against the Ottomans around the Mediterranean focused all attention. During the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517), Egidio made a memorable speech in defence of mendicant brethren, in which he laid out a theologically suffused vision of the world.

> So we ourselves have seen, when religion has exchanged the weapons of prayer for those of steel, the Church has been driven, ejected, and expelled from almost the entire rim of the Mediterranean. Muhammed has grown into a behemoth. Unless we abandon steel and return in the bosom of piety to the altars and worship of God, he will increase day by day, will subject everything to his authority, and will occupy the whole Mediterranean basin as the most impious avenger of our impiety.[48]

The idea that the growth of Muḥammad, but not Islam, was a form of divine punishment must have roused at least some in the audience, since Egidio became Cardinal very soon after the conclusion of the Council. Unsurprisingly, Juan Gabriel, who had contributed to anti-Muslim polemics in Aragon, shared Egidio's general animus towards 'Muḥammad.'

There is no Islam in Egidio's Latin text. In the passages discussed above, Egidio prefers to talk of the Law of the Moors and the Law of the Ishmaelites.[49] The same applies to the remaining four occurrences of the word in the Arabic text. Yet, what is noteworthy about this late translation is a category switch and the introduction of the Moors (*Mauri*), which is consistent with what both Iberians and Italians called those Muslims they dealt with most frequently, 'the Turk' gradually gaining currency thereafter.[50]

Ultimately, Latin translators eschewed the word Islam and used Arabic texts in their possession to achieve maximum polemical effect.

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[46] For a helpful introduction to his biography, the text, and to the scholarship, see KATARZYNA K. STARCZEWSKA, *Latin Translation of the Qur'an (1518/1621): Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo. Critical Edition and Case Study* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), XIII–CXXI.

[47] Charles I of Spain (Aragon and Castile) became the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519–1556).

[48] STARCZEWSKA, *Latin Translation*, XIV.

[49] STARCZEWSKA, *Latin Translation*, 69, 80, 140.

[50] 'Et Deus aperit cor illius, quem uult dirigere in legem maurorum.' STARCZEWSKA, *Latin Translation*, 184. See also STARCZEWSKA, *Latin Translation*, 230, 488–89, 574, 642.

> Polemicists appeared to be almost incapable of believing what Muslims said about their own religion, preferring at every turn the tendentious, misleading interpretations of other Christians. 'The favorite technique,' as Daniel put it, 'was to decide what a [Qur'ānic] text must mean without consultation of those most concerned,' that is, Muslims themselves.[51]

Daniel, Burman, and Tolan are undoubtedly correct in linking the 'Islam' of medieval Latin to specifiable ideological agendas, although it is not immediately clear whether anti-Muslim rhetoric and the absence of Islam in Latin are distinct phenomena or facets of the same one. What a historian would still need to do, however, is determine who speaks for 'Muslims themselves.' Even then, setting up an equivalency between medieval Arabic Islam and the Latin 'Law of the Saracens' is not without its challenges.

From Religion to Civilisation and Back

In spite of there being no consensus around the handling of the category Islam, it is still possible to identify some of the ways historians have enabled the equivalency between the Arabic Islam and the Latin 'Law of Saracens.' In this regard, Tolan's work, which uses the modern notion of religion to achieve this effect, is a convenient example and reference point.

> For Tolan, 'their religion is referred to as the "law of Muhammad" or the "law of the Saracens."'[52] While some might think that the Latin 'law' refers to something like the Arabic *sharī'a* or the Hebrew *Halakha*, the prevailing practice is to use *lex* to make Islam a religion. This is not necessarily a problem. Still, the medieval Latin authors' non-application of the etymon *religio* raises questions about the difference between *religio* and *lex* and the ways modern 'religion' has come to absorb both. Moreover, the difference between the Latin *religio* and *lex* may not have been the same as that between the Arabic *dīn* and *sharī'a*, and thus the application of the modern 'religion' may be guilty of begging the question. And since not everyone agrees that the medieval organisation of knowledge reflected in Latin and Arabic texts included such a 'thing' as religion in the modern sense, a great deal is left out.

> Then again, for Tolan, Islam is not always the name of a religion.

> Damascus was the capital of an emerging Islamic civilization. More and more Christians were converting to Islam; Arabic was being increasingly used.[53]

The difficulties inherent in using 'religion' to set up an equivalency between the Arabic Islam and the Latin 'Law of the Saracens' multiply because the notion of Islam as a religion

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[51] BURMAN, *Tafsīr*, 732.

[52] TOLAN, *Saracens*, XV. 'This book is an attempt to fill this gap: to examine how and why medieval Christians portrayed Islam—or rather, portrayed what they preferred to call the "law of the Saracens."' TOLAN, Saracens, XVI.

[53] TOLAN, *Saracens*, 39.

coexists with that of a Muslim or Islamic civilisation and that of a Muslim world and culture.

> The first issue is to understand, in context, the development and expression of a variety of European images (most of them hostile) of the Muslim world, a civilization seen as a rival and a threat through the Middle Ages and beyond. The second issue involves how cultures define themselves over and against outside groups depicted as 'enemies.'[54]

And since modern historians treat Islam as a political entity too, difficulties abound.[55]

> Nothing in Isidore's *Etymologies* or his historical works could, of course, predict or account for the meteoric rise of Islam and *its* rapid conquest of an empire stretching from the Indus to the Atlantic. From the perspective of the twentieth-first-century historian, the rise of Islam and the Muslim conquests comprise one of history's great watersheds.[56]

A detour that historians have usually invited their readers to take around these and other issues has been to point to the existence of notions such as the Abode or House of Islam (*dār al-islām*) in Arabic sources.

> Muslims came to see the world as divided in two: the *dâr al-Islam*, the world of Islam, and *dar al-harb*, the domain of war. It is a licit—indeed holy—part of the Muslim's spiritual struggle (jihad) to expand the domain of Islam by war.[57]

> What about the 'Islamic world'? It can be assimilated to the term *dār al-islām*, widespread among the Arab authors, which literally means 'house of Islam' […] Clearly, the *dār al-islām* is no more stable a geographical entity than is Europe: it expanded rapidly throughout the Middle Ages. It came into being with a wave of lightning conquests that, over the century following Muhammad's death in 632, gave the Muslims control of an empire extending from the Indus and the Hindu Kush to the Atlantic coasts of Morocco and Portugal.[58]

In spite of the assertion that the House of Islam came into being with a wave of conquests in the seventh century, it took Arabic authors centuries before they began to map the world that way.[59] And it is not because it is like Europe that it is geographically unstable. Here is what the jurist al-Sarakhsī (d. ca. 1090) thought:

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[54] TOLAN, *Saracens,* XXIII. For the 'world of Islam' see TOLAN, *Saracens*, XVIII.

[55] 'Within a century from this revelation, Islam became the dominant religious and political force in much of the former Roman and Persian empires.' TOLAN, *Saracens,* 21.

[56] TOLAN, *Saracens*, 19. Italics mine. For an 'Islamic dominion,' see TOLAN, *Saracens*, 21.

[57] TOLAN, *Saracens*, 35.

[58] JOHN TOLAN, HENRY LAURENS, and GILLES VEINSTEIN, eds, *Europe and the Islamic World: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 2.

[59] MUḤAMMAD MUSHTAQ AHMAD, 'The Notions of Dār al-Islām and Dār al-Ḥarb in Islamic Jurisprudence with Special Reference to the Ḥanafī School,' *Islamic Studies* 47, no. 1 (2008), 5–37 (7). See also SARAH ALBRECHT, *Dār al-Islām Revisited: Territoriality in Contemporary Islamic Legal Discourse on Muslims in the West* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); GIOVANNA CALASSO, 'Alla ricerca di Dār al-Islām. Una ricognizione nei testi di giuristi e tradizionisti, lessicografi, geografi e viaggiatori,' *Rivista degli studi orientali* n.s. 83, no. 1 (2010), 271–96; GIOVANNA CALASSO and GIULIANO LANCIONI, eds, *Dār al-islam/dār al-ḥarb: Territories, People, Identities* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

> Minor children of non-Muslims are considered legally to be non-Muslims. The same holds true for children captured in war along with any of their non-Muslim parents. This is because while the child is in *Dār al-Islām*, he does not belong to it. He belongs to his parents.[60]

Likening the House of Islam to Europe is thus a mistake. That notwithstanding, the notion is not the only way Arabic authors contributed to the reification of the category Islam. One encounters references to the Kingdoms of Islam (*mamālik al-islām*) and to the history of Islam (*tārīkh al-islām*), both emerging when or because the 'Islamic world' was divided among competing political authorities, all claiming the Islamic label. The relative late date of these developments is worth keeping in mind too, if only because it took centuries to build the house, found the kingdoms, and conceive of an all-encompassing Islamic history.

Anachronism is not the only issue here. The House of Islam included populations that historians tend to leave out from their analyses of the making of the Islamic world. In fact, these populations, many of which were Muslim, receive far less scholarly attention than non-Muslims who lived 'under Islam' (*ahl al-dhimma*).

> In official Islam, the existence of the *djinn* was completely accepted, as it is to this day, and the full consequences implied by their existence were worked out. Their legal status in all respects was discussed and fixed, and the possible relations between them and mankind, especially in questions of marriage and property, were examined. Stories of the loves of *djinn* and human beings were evidently of perennial interest.[61]

The unstated and unexamined scholarly consensus behind the exclusion of the *jinn* from historical analysis shows that historians are selective in their treatment of representations of the world found in medieval texts. The Abode of Islam is *in* but the *jinn* who inhabited it are *out*. Questions abound.

When medieval intellectuals referred to the 'Abode of Islam,' they did so under specific intellectual, political, and social conditions. By itself, the existence of this notion is not sufficient evidence of the objective existence of a world in the singular, let alone of the probity of using the notion to interpret and explain historical processes. Indeed, the historical record does not show one Muslim world integrated politically, economically, or intellectually, but a series of independent polities, all claiming to represent or speak for the one true Islam. That is not the same thing.

Ultimately, the 'House of Islam' is much like the 'Free World' of the Cold War. It is important because it was useful to ruling elites and to intellectuals articulating a political

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[60] AL-SARAKHSĪ, *al-Mabsūṭ*, 30 vols., (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2001), vol. 10, 71 and vol. 9, 136, cited by AHMAD, 'The Notions,' 21–22.

[61] DUNCAN B. MACDONALD et. al., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds P. J. BEARMAN et. al., 12 vols., vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), s.v. 'Djinn,' 547; AMIRA EL-ZEIN, *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

vision of the world. But as the proponents of the Free World tend to insist on liberty and de-emphasise Jim Crow, napalm bombings, and union busting, medieval authors downplayed the social contests behind the 'House of Islam.' Yet, because medieval authors imagined politics as being the purview of elites, historians must take their representations of their societies with a grain of salt.

The Law of Islam

References to the Abode of Islam are often tied to arguments that employ Islamic law as a shorthand or stand-in for Islam. A few points should suffice to explain why that is not a satisfactory option. First, when systematic legal thinking (*fiqh*) began to develop, more than a century after 'the birth of Islam,' it took the form of competing formulations, which eventually became 'schools' (*madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*).[62] Naturally, selecting one, two, or even six schools as 'representative,' let alone 'orthodox,' as many still do, involves taking sides with some against others—in the past and the present. Doing so might also be anachronistic and teleological, since it would project later assumptions, values, and social arrangements onto a pre-*madhāhib* period and cast the development of *madhāhib* as somehow necessary. Plus, if the law is to be the measure of Islam, then Islam was born no earlier than the second 'Islamic' century.

Moreover, 'Islamic law' was not applied uniformly across all those areas historians have thought of as 'Islam' or 'Islamdom.' And this is not only because there were non-Muslims living 'under Islam' or that there were rebels fighting imperial Islamdom under the banner of a 'truer' Islam. In the period of imperial conquests, military commanders (*amīr*, pl. *umarā'*) signed peace treaties with a host of cities and tribes that acquiesced to surrendering and paying a tribute.[63] Resistance to imperial armies and refusal to submit led to defeat, enslavement, and the imposition of even heavier 'Islamic' tributes. These arrangements, which lasted for decades in some areas, did not follow a single Islamic rule, or law, and were often the reflection of a military leader's judgement and his ability to enforce them. Long after the conquests had ended, a process of homogenisation of fiscal practices at a regional level spearheaded by local Muslim elites created a new map onto which 'schools of law' charted the reach of their influence.

Severing the ties between the law and politics undermines our ability to appreciate the mobilisation of Islam in the course of struggles between particular groups and its utilisation for administering peace. For example, in 698, the Byzantine elite that had ruled Africa boarded ships and left Carthage forever. They left behind a complex agricultural

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[62] See for example WAEL HALLAQ, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); BROCKOPP, *Muhammad's Heirs*.
[63] DONALD R. HILL, *The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests, A.D. 634–656* (London: Luzac, 1971).

slave society subject to serious social upheavals.[64] In important ways, the leaders of the new Umayyad province of Ifrīqiya replaced the class of runaway slave owners. The new elite maintained the system of agricultural production that had prevailed, although the surplus found its way to their own coffers, which explains the emergence of a number of very wealthy 'patrician' families like the Fihrīs tied to the imperial conquests.[65] But whatever usage was made of Islam in the early period, it did not lead to the elimination of slavery. Like the runaway Byzantine elite and the local Christian elites, 'Saracens' maintained slavery in that corner of Africa. One technical problem they faced was that 'Islam' did not allow Muslims to enslave other Muslims. Some Berbers who had converted were still treated as if they were non-Muslims, their conversion declared insincere or superficial.[66] But when the rebellions against the exactions of 'Arab' families like the Fihrīs ended, the ostensibly anti-imperial dynasties that emerged in the region did not abjure slavery, but only limited its application to those that they considered to be non-Muslim. Not only did 'Islam' not put an end to social inequalities, Islamic law was one of the mechanisms that maintained and reproduced them, slaves not being the only ones on the receiving end of the ruling elites' Islam. For Muslim elites ruled over all members of their societies, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.[67] They coerced lower sectors of society into providing their labour by force, threat of force, or by ideological means, including the manipulation of the category Islam.

Consulting the Muslims themselves is thus not without its challenges. Muslim elites deployed Islam to secure their domination over 'their' societies. They built mosques, erected minarets, taught their fellow Muslims to accept their fate, and, with the wealth they accumulated from everyone else, they built aqueducts, canals, and schools for all Muslims. They patronised outstanding intellectuals who articulated ideas about theology, law, and politics. On the other hand, their opponents, whether they belonged to the elite or not, also used Islam and ideas associated with it to resist them. That is why the record shows that Islam served the justification and naturalisation of social inequalities and resistance to them. Unsurprisingly, the same applies to modern representations of the Muslims themselves.

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[64] See Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*; Jonathan Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439–700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Corisande Fenwick, *Early Islamic North Africa: A New Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

[65] The descendants of the conqueror 'Uqba b. Nāfi' al-Fihrī tried to establish an autonomous polity in Ifrīqiya. For other regions, see Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972); Michael Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[66] Nicola Clarke, '"They Are the Most Treacherous of People": Religious Difference in Arabic Accounts of Three Early Medieval Berber Revolts,' *eHumanista* 24 (2013): 510–25, https://www.ehumanista. ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.span.d7_eh/files/sitefiles/ehumanista/volume24/ehum24.clarke.pdf.

[67] See Louise Marlow, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

An Islam for History

There is an obvious need to historicise the term Islam and address the ways Mediterraneanists use the category. In this regard, retiring commonplaces that are obviously de-historicising seems like a reasonable, if transitional, goal. The absence of Islam from medieval Latin texts can help establish a historically sensitive 'minimal position' that eschews teleology, anachronism, Eurocentrism, and other sins against history.

Likewise, acknowledging that medieval Arabic authors mobilised the category Islam in the course of specific social contests can better situate the usages found in the sources. Putting social contests at the centre of a historicising approach to an ongoing making and remaking of Islam renders visible the production of those lenses that colour both historical sources and modern interpretations. Doing so also sheds light on operations designed to obfuscate and conceal these very processes. Historians already know this to be true, although, as seen, obstacles to the realisation of this knowledge abound.

The discourse on Islam in Mediterranean Studies is not uniform, homogeneous, or simple. It has a long and complicated history, draws on a variety of discourses, and finds sustenance in prevailing ways of representing the world. Although largely limited in scope, this article invites greater, or just better, stocktaking and discussion of the multiple layers of determination that weigh on our collective ability to conceive of the Mediterranean in historical terms.

When historians represent a variety of medieval societies as 'Muslim,' or worse as 'Islam,' they imply that once a society 'has Islam,' everything else about it is secondary to its being Islamic. They also give the impression that 'Islamic' societies resemble each other in some fundamental sense, and that their histories make sense when lumped together. An examination of such commonplace assertions and the assumptions on which they rest could help historicise Islam and more securely guard against the intrusion of ideological and other ahistorical matter into historical research.

Finally, an investigation of how the issues raised here are entangled would far exceed what a traditional historiographic essay does. The organisation of academic fields, the institutional basis of historical research, the implication of educational institutions in furthering governmental and nongovernmental ideological agendas, and the politicisation of Islam in public discourse come to mind as considerations that would be worth exploring. Incorporating these concerns into our thinking can help us gauge the extent to which prevailing usages of the category Islam are responsible for undermining the efforts to constitute a critical historical field.

Entangled Histories, Catholic Missions and Languages Mapping Amerindian, African and Asian Languages Through Portuguese in Early Modernity

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The Space of Languages

This essay focuses on a set of metalinguistic and multilingual documents, mostly in print, which for the first time brought together, described, and translated a vast set of languages unknown in Europe prior to Portuguese expansion and the missions, particularly the Jesuit ones, associated with it. Throughout the missions in the Portuguese Empire and under Royal Patronage (*Padroado*), the Portuguese language, Latin, and, to a more limited extent, Spanish and Italian, served as the first European translational languages for Tamil and Malayalam (Dravidic languages); Konkani, Marathi and Bengali (Indo-Aryan languages); Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese; three Brazilian 'general languages' (Tupi and Tupi-Guarani); Kimbundu, Kikongo, and Sena (Bantu languages), among others. To get a sense of the extent of this phenomenon, let us consider that in 1595 the Jesuit press published a grammar of Tupi-Guarani, printed in Coimbra, but prepared and edited in São Paulo, Brazil, by the Spanish Jesuit José de Anchieta SJ (1534–1597) in collaboration with several local students.[1] In contrast, in the same year it published, in Amakusa, in the Kyushu region of Japan, a trilingual Latin–Portuguese–Japanese dictionary, with approximately 27,000 entries for each of the three languages.[2]

The majority of linguistic studies dealing with the corpus of documents that use Portuguese as the translational language describe specific bilingual contacts, generally

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[1] *Arte de Crammatica* (*sic*) *da lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil. Feyta pelo padre Ioseph de Anchieta da Cõpanhia de IESV* (Coimbra: António Mariz, 1595); (2nd ed., Julio Platzmann, Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1874; 3rd ed., 1876; 4th ed., Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1933; 5th ed., São Paulo, 1946; 6th ed., Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1980; 7th ed., São Paulo: Loyola, 1990). See ANDREA DAHER, 'The "General Language" and the Social Status of the Indian in Brazil, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries,' in *Racism and Ethnic Relations in the Portuguese-Speaking World*, ed. FRANCISCO BETHENCOURT (London: British Academy, 2013), 255–67.

[2] *DICTIONARIUM LATINO LUSITANICUM, AC IAPONICUM EX AMBROSII CALEpini volumine depromptum: in quo omissis nominibus proprijs tam locorum, quàm hominum, ac quibusdam alijs minùs usitatis, omnes vocabulorum significationes, elegantioresque dicendi modi opponuntur: in usum, & gratiam Iaponicae iuuentutis, quae Latino idiomati operam nauat, nec non Europeorum, qui Iaponicum sermonem addiscunt. IN AMACUSA IN COLLEGIO IAPONICO SOCIETATIS IESU cum facultate Superiorum. ANNO M.D.XCV* [1595]. See EMI KISHIMOTO, 'The Adaptation of the European Polyglot Dictionary of Calepino in Japan: *Dictionarium Latino Lusitanicum, ac Iaponicum* (1595),' in *Missionary Linguistics II / Lingüística misionera II*, eds. OTTO ZWARTJES and CRISTINA ALTMAN (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 205–23.

from a one-direction linguistic perspective (e.g., Portuguese–Tamil, Portuguese–Japanese, Portuguese–Tupi, etc.). Within this intellectual landscape, the important documentary value of these corpora has all but gone unnoticed in terms of the history and periodisation of early modern culture, and not only with regard to the history of linguistics, lexicography, and grammatology. The implications of this shift in analysis perspective are strong in three main areas: the relationship between empires and languages; the current debate on the periodisation of connected histories; and the formation, in early modernity, of a new concept of spatiality, which clearly and explicitly included the spatiality of languages, in connection with and overlapping political, trade and religious spaces.

In the light of the valuable methodology contributed by area studies[3] and my own research in the exploratory project 'The Space of Languages. The Portuguese Language in the Early Modern World (15th–17th centuries),' conducted at the New University of Lisbon between 2014 and 2016,[4] it is possible to design a comprehensive geography of the languages first described and translated through Portuguese in early modernity. Examination of the sources supports the research hypothesis of a global emergence of new multilingual spaces, communities, and identities in the heterogeneous contexts of the missions within the territories of the Portuguese Empire in 1500–1700. Comprising primers for learning basic literacy skills through short Christian catechisms (*cartilhas*), Christian doctrines outlining the precepts of the Christian faith, the message of the Gospel, the revelation, the dogmas and the sacraments, sometimes in dialogue form (*Doctrina Christãa* or *Doutrina Christam*), grammars (*artes da língua*), and dictionaries (*vocabularios*), these sources provide a key framework for an analysis with an original contribution to make to early modern global cultural history, its periodisation and its spatialisation.

The documents considered refer to highly differentiated contexts of missionary and political interaction. In some cases, as in Brazil, on the coasts of sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian subcontinent, missions existed within the framework of Portuguese military occupations and conquests. In Japan, China, and the Tonkin region, missionaries found themselves operating in rather asymmetrical contexts, outside or, at most, on the margins of the Portuguese military and mercantile presence. Despite these contextual differences, analysis of this documentation indicates, for all

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[3] URS APP, *The Cult of Emptiness. The Western Discovery of Buddhist Thought and the Invention of Oriental Philosophy* (Rorschach & Kyoto: UniversityMedia, 2012); ANDREA DAHER, *L'Oralité perdue. Essais d'histoire des pratiques lettrées (Brésil, XVIᵉ-XIXᵉ siècle)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016); INES G. ŽUPANOV, *Missionary Tropics. The Catholic Frontier in India (16th-17th Centuries)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); ANTJE FLÜCHTER and ROUVEN WIRBSER, eds, *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures. The Expansion of Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS, 'Ethnography and Cultural Translation in the Early Modern Missions,' *Studies in Church History* 53 (2017): 272–310; OTTO ZWARTJES et al., eds, *Missionary Linguistics / Lingüística misionera I–VI* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001–2021).

[4] *O espaço das línguas. A língua portuguesa no mundo do início da Idade Moderna (séculos XV a XVII) / The Space of Languages. The Portuguese Language in the Early Modern World (15th-17th Centuries)*, P.I. ANGELO CATTANEO, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2014–2016, https://run.unl.pt/bitstream/10362/21224/1/file_001479.pdf.

the contexts considered, that the times and spaces of accumulation of cultural and linguistic processes and practices are inherently extensive. They require a broad periodisation, to be traced in documentary form, and a look at extended spaces, for the dynamics to become clear in a comparative and connected form. As an example, analysis of linguistic practices in the Jesuit missions in Japan, China, and Brazil reveals that the emergence of bilingual or trilingual lexicons or grammars took no less than forty to fifty years on average, from the beginning of the missions with the first word lists, during which time more complete documents were gradually drawn up. For these specific structural reasons, the present essay considers a time span from circa 1540 to 1700 and a plurality of locations. This period and the extensive spatiality of missions related to the Portuguese Empire allow us to capture in documentary form the sedimentation of cultural, linguistic, and translation practices that would otherwise remain invisible. Below is a select list of these documents, mainly in print, divided by macro geographical areas, following an internal chronological order, starting with India, followed by Japan, China, Tonkin, Brazil, and sub-Saharan Africa.[5]

INDIA

[Henrique Henriques SJ], *Arte malavar*, 1549.[6]

Cartilha que contè breuemète ho q[ue] todo christão deue aprẽder pera sua saluaçam. A qual el rey dom Joham terceiro deste nome nosso senhor mandou imprimir em lingoa Tamul e Portugues cõ ha declaraçam do. Tamul por cima de vermelho, Lisboa, Germão Galhardo, 1554.[7]

Doctrina Cristaã tresladada em lingua Tamul pello padre Anrique Anriquez da Cõpanhia de IESV, & pello padre Manoel de Saõ Pedro. Com approuaçaõ do Oridinario, & Inquisidor: & cõ licẽça do Superior da mesma Companhia: Impressa em Coulam

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[5] For a more complete and detailed review and analysis of works that translate through Portuguese numerous Amerindian, Asian, and African languages, and their historical contexts, see ANGELO CATTANEO, *Tradurre il mondo. Le missioni, il portoghese e nuovi spazi di lingue connesse nella prima età moderna* (Rome: Bulzoni editore, 2022), 17–33 (chap. 2, 'Le missioni, il portoghese, nuove traduzioni').

[6] Manuscript Tamil grammar, based on Latin syntax, but conveyed in Portuguese, authored by Henrique Henriques SJ (1520–1600), a Portuguese Jesuit missionary. Accepted into the Society of Jesus by Ignatius de Loyola himself in 1546, he was a companion in Goa of Francis Xavier SJ, who sent him in 1547 to the Pescheria Coast Mission in south-eastern India, of which he became Superior for twenty-five years. He compiled the first grammar and dictionary of the Tamil language, and wrote catechisms, the lives of Jesus, Mary, and the saints, and prayer books in this language, leaving an important epistolary, edited and printed in the *Documenta indica*, 2 vols. (Rome: IHSJ, 1958–1960). On Henriques's grammar, see OTTO ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars in Asia, Africa and Brazil, 1550–1800* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 23–44.

[7] This is the English translation of the title: 'Primer that contains briefly what all Christians should learn for their salvation. Which was sent to be printed by order of our King John III in both Portuguese and Tamil, with the [literal Portuguese] translation of Tamil printed in red above [the Tamil].' See INES G. ŽUPANOV, *Missionary Tropics*, 238–43.

[Kollam, close to Madurai, in Kerala] no Collegio do Saluador: aos Vĩte de Octubro de M.D.LXXV [20 October 1575].[8]

Doctrina Christaã, a maneyra de Dialogo: feyta em Portugal pello padre Marcos Iorge da *Companhia de* IESV:[9] *Tresladada em língua Malauar Tamul, pello padre Anrique Anriquez da mesma Cõpanhia.* Impressa cõ approuação do Ordinario, & Inquisidor, & cõ licença do Superior. Em Cochim, no Collegio da Madre de Deos. aos quatorze de Nouẽbro, do Anno de M.D.LXXIX. [1579].

Doutrina Christam em Lingoa Bramana Canarim. Ordenada amaneira de Dialogo, pera ensinar os mininos, Colégio de Rachol da Cõpanhia de IESVS, 1622.[10]

Declaracam da Doutrina Christam, collegida do Cardeal Roberto Belarmino da Cõpanhia de IESV & outros autores Composta em lingoa Bramana vulgar pello Padre Diogo Ribeiro[11] da mesma Companhia portugues natural de Lisboa, Rachol, Colégio de Santo Inácio, da Companhia de IESV, 1632.

Arte da Lingoa Canarim, composta pelo Padre Thomaz Esteuaõ da Companhia de IESVS & acrecentada pello Padre Diogo Ribeiro da mesma Cõpanhia. E nouamente reuista, &

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[8] The *Doctrina Christam en Língua Malauar Tamul* is a Catholic catechism translated by Henrique Henriques SJ and published on 20 October 1575 at Kollam (formerly known as Quilon) on the Malabar coast. It is the first printed work in an Indian language and script. See the digital reproduction made available by Harvard University, Houghton Library, Typ 100 578: https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:5 3909112$7i.

[9] Marcos Jorge SJ (1524–1571), born in Nogueira, in the Bishopric of Coimbra, studied Canon Law at the University of Coimbra; he then received a doctorate in Theology from the University of Evora. He was the first lecturer in Moral Theology at the Jesuit College in Lisbon. In January 1571 he was elected procurator in Rome at the time of the General Francisco de Borja, from where he returned to the University of Evora in December of the same year and died there soon after his arrival. He had a particular genius for instructing children and peasants in the Catechism and in 1561 authored and published a *Doutrina Christã* (Christian Doctrine), which was the first book to be printed in Portugal by the Society of Jesus. Jorge's *Doutrina* was republished several times and translated into Tamil by Henrique Henriques SJ (published in Cochim in 1579) and in the 'language of Congo' (Kongo or Kikongo) by Matheus Cardoso SJ (published in Lisbon by Giraldo da Vinha in 1624). Besides Tamil and Kongo, Marcos Jorge's *Doutrina Christã* was translated into Amharic (Ethiopia), Tupi (Brazil), Konkani, Malabar, and Tamil (India), Japanese, and Chinese. See JOSÉ MIGUEL PINTO DOS SANTOS, 'Illustrations of *Doutrina*: Artwork in the Early Editions of Marcos Jorge's *Doutrina Cristã*,' *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 2, no. 2 (2016): 149–67.

[10] This is the translation of the title: 'Christian Doctrine in the Konkani Language. Ordered in the way of a dialogue, to teach children.' Rachol is a village on the island of Salcete, some thirty kilometres south of Goa. In 1606 the Jesuits founded an important seminary there, which also housed the Jesuit press.

[11] Diogo Ribeiro (1560–1633) was a Portuguese Jesuit missionary in India, active in St. Paul's College in Goa and the Seminary in Rachol. He distinguished himself for his expertise in the Konkani language. See INNOCENCIO FRANCISCO DA SILVA, ed., *Dicionário bibliografico português*, 22 vols., vol. 2 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1859), 172.

emendada por outros quatro Padres da mesma Companhia, Rachol, Colégio de Santo Inácio, da Companhia de IESV, 1640.[12]

Vocabulario Tamulico com a significaçam portugueza. Composto pello P. Antam de Proença[13] da mesma Companhia de IESV missionario da missam de Madurey. Na imprenssa Tamulica da Prouincia do Malabar, 1679.

CHINA, JAPAN AND TONKIN

[*Dicionário Português-Chinês*], Macao, ca. 1578–1580.[14]

DICTIONARIUM LATINO LUSITANICUM, AC IAPONICUM EX AMBROSII CALEpini volumine depromptum: in quo omissis nominibus proprijs tam locorum, quàm hominum, ac quibusdam alijs minùs usitatis, omnes vocabulorum significationes, elegantioresque dicendi modi opponuntur: in usum, & gratiam Iaponicae iuuentutis, quae Latino idiomati operam nauat, nec non Europeorum, qui Iaponicum sermonem addiscunt. IN AMACUSA IN COLLEGIO IAPONICO SOCIETATIS IESU cum facultate Superiorum. ANNO M.D.XCV. [1595]**[15]**

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[12] A copy of the *Arte da Lingoa Canarim* (Grammar of the Konkani language) is held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, shelfmark RES-408-P, and is available in digital open access at the Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Portugal: https://purl.pt/31524. The *Arte* was based on earlier manuscript grammars developed at St. Paul's Jesuit college in Goa and the Jesuit Seminary of Rachol. The *Arte* was published in 1640 by the Jesuit press at Rachol after its final editors, Diogo Ribeiro SJ and Tomás Estevao SJ, had already died. The grammar is the result of more than fifty years of work on the Konkani language carried out within the framework of the Jesuit mission in the Goa region. See DIOGO RIBEIRO SJ and THOMAS STEPHENS SJ, *Arte da Lingua Canarim.* With an introduction by FR. IVO COELHO (Goa: CinnamonTeal Publishing, 2012). Tomás Estevão SJ (fl. 1549–1619), *alias* Thomas Stephens, was born in England. After his education at Oxford and at the *Collegio Romano*, he became a Jesuit and was sent to a mission in India. Along with Roberto de Nobili SJ, he adopted local practices and wrote religious books in Marathi and Konkani, including the *Krista Purana* (The Life of Christ). See ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 45–58.

[13] Antem (Antão, Antero) de Proença (1624/25–1666) was a Portuguese Jesuit missionary active in the mission of Madurai, South India. Proença was a pioneer of Tamil lexicography who also knew Sanskrit. See GREGORY JAMES, 'What Antão de Proença wanted to say: An initial look at the manuscript and printed version of de Proença's *Vocabulary tamulico* (1679),' *No:kku* 1, no. 1 (2007): 39–42; GREGORY JAMES, 'Aspects of the structure of entries in the earliest missionary dictionary of Tamil,' in *Missionary Linguistics IV / Lingüística misionera IV. Lexicography,* eds. OTTO ZWARTJES, RAMÓN ARZÁPALO MARÍN and THOMAS C. SMITH-STARK (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009), 273–302; CRISTINA MURU, *Missionari portoghesi in India nei secoli XVI e XVII. L'Arte della lingua Tamil. Studio comparato di alcuni manoscritti* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2010).

[14] Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Jap.Sin. I,198, ff. 32r.–156v. This manuscript Portuguese-Chinese dictionary includes ca. 6,500 entries, attributed, although not unanimously, to Michele Ruggieri SJ and Matteo Ricci SJ, the first missionaries to develop a consolidated knowledge of the Chinese language. Facsimile edition with an introductory essay, ed. JOHN WITEK SJ (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 2001). See also ISABEL MURTA PINA, 'Jesuítas de Macau: Intérpretes e tradutores (séculos XVI-XVII),' in *Para a História da Tradução em Macau*, eds LI CHANGSEN and LUÍS FILIPE BARRETO (Lisbon: IPM-CCCM, 2013), 29–47.

[15] This is the literal translation of the title: 'Latin–Portuguese–Japanese Dictionary, based on Ambrogio Calepino's [dictionary of Latin]: in which, omitting the proper names of both places and persons, as

Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam com a declaração em Portugues, feito por alguns Padres, e Irmaos da Companhia de Iesv […] Em Nangasaqui no Collegio de Iapam […] Anno. M.D.CIII (1603): (& Suplemento deste Vocabulário no ano de 1604).[16]

Arte da Lingoa de Iapam composta pello Padre Ioão Rodriguez Portugues da Cõpanhia de Iesv diuidida em tres Livros […] Em Nangasaqui no Collegio de Iapão da Companhia de Iesv Anno. 1604.[17]

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well as other lesser used names, all the meanings of the entries and the most elegant idioms are appended, for the use and benefit of Japanese youth, who are diligently devoting themselves to the Latin language, but also of Europeans learning the Japanese language.' The *Dictionarivm Latino Lvsitanicvm, ac Iaponicvm* was published in Amakusa at the time of Toyotomi Hideyoshy's persecutions, which led to the crucifixion of the so-called 'twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki' in 1596. Based on the *Dictionarium ex optimis quibusque authoribus…* by Ambrogio Calepino (ca. 1440–1510), first published in 1502 and reedited many times during the sixteenth century, the trilingual dictionary aggregates some forty years of mutual linguistic contacts between the Jesuit missionaries and their Japanese students and assistants, with the aim of teaching Latin and Portuguese to Japanese students and Japanese to European missionaries. Digital edition: *Latin Glossaries with vernacular sources* 対訳ラテン語語彙集, ed. TOYOSHIMA MASAYUKI, http://joao-roiz.jp/LGR/. See EMI, 'The Adaptation of the European Polyglot Dictionary of Calepino in Japan: *Dictionarium Latino Lusitanicum, ac Iaponicum* (1595),' 205–23.

[16] In 1603, the Jesuits started publishing a collective dictionary of Japanese with translation into Portuguese, the *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam com a declaração em Portugues, feito por alguns padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesu* (Vocabulary of the language of Japan, with definitions in Portuguese, written by some fathers and brothers of the Society of Jesus), with ca. 32,000 entries, printed in Nagasaki by the Jesuit press in 1603. Although the title page gives 1604 as the date of the 'Addition,' the colophon indicates instead that the 'Addition' was printed in 1608. The work is also known as *Nippo Jisho* (日葡辞書, literally the 'Japanese–Portuguese Dictionary'). The *Prologue* to the *Vocabulario* explains that almost immediately after the publication of the *Dictionarivm Latino Lvsitanicvm, ac Iaponicvm*, the Jesuits realised that it was a far too complex and difficult tool to use. Therefore, they invested in the preparation and publication of a new Japanese vocabulary translated into Portuguese, which would also explain the multiple contexts of use of the spoken language. Modern reedition: *Nippo jisho: kirishitanban: karā eiinban. Vocabvlario da lingoa de Iapam: Nagasaqui 1603-4*, ed. TSUKIMOTO MASAYUKI (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2013).

[17] The *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* is the first printed Japanese grammar, based on the Latin syntax, but conveyed in Portuguese, authored by João Rodrigues SJ (also known by the Japanese nickname of *Tçuzu*, 'the interpreter') and printed in Nagasaki by the Jesuit press in 1604. See ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 93–142. João Rodrigues SJ (1562–1633) reached Japan when he was only fifteen years old and became a fluent speaker of Japanese and the official interpreter between the Jesuit missionaries, the Portuguese merchants, and the Japanese daimyos (feudal lords), including Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1593–1598) and the future shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616). After more than thirty years spent in Japan, Rodrigues was forced to leave the kingdom right before the decree of expulsion of 1614. He then lived in China, in the Jesuit missions of Macao, Canton, Nanking, and Peking. Apart from Portuguese and Japanese, he also knew Spanish and Latin. Rodrigues authored two pioneer grammars of the Japanese language and collaborated on both the *Dictionarivm Latino Lvsitanicvm, ac Iaponicvm* and the *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam*. On Rodrigues's description of the Japanese script and language, see JOÃO RODRIGUES, *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan*, ed. MICHAEL COOPER (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2011), 310–30. On Rodrigues's life and works, see ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 94–111.

Arte Breve da Lingoa Iapoa tirada da Arte Grande da mesma lingoa, pera os que começam a aprender os primeiros principies delia. Pello Padre Ioam Rodrigvez … Em Amacao no Collegio da Madre de Deos…. Anno M.DC.XX. [1620].[18]

Dictionarivm sive Thesavri Lingvae Iaponicae Compendivm. Compositum, & Sacrae de Propaganda Fide Congregationi dicatum à Fratre Didaco Collado Ord. Praedicatorum, Romae anno 1632.[19]

ARS GRAMMATICAE IAPONICAE LINGVAE. IN GRATIAM ET ADIVTORIVM eorum, qui prædicandi Euangelij causa ad Iaponiæ Regnum se voluerint conferre. Composita, & Sacræ de Propaganda Fide Congregationi dicata à Fr. Didaco Collado Ordinis Prædicatorum per aliquot annos in prædicto Regno Fidei Catholicæ propagationis Ministro. EVNTES IN VNIVERSVM MVNDVM PRÆDICATE EVANGELIVM OMNI CREATVRÆ. Romæ, Typis & impensis Sac. Congr. de Propag. Fide. MDCXXXII. SVPERIORVM PERMISSV [1632].

Dictionarium Annnamiticum Lusitanum, et Latinum ope Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide in lucem editum ab Alexandro de Rhodes e' Societate Iesu, eiusdem Sacrae Congregationis Missionario Apostolico […] Typis, & sumptibus eiusdem Sacr. Congreg., 1651.[20]

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[18] Abridged and simplified edition of the *Arte* printed in Nagasaki in 1604, edited by João Rodrigues SJ after he left Nagasaki and moved to Macao, where the *Arte breve* was printed in 1620, six years after the Jesuits' expulsion from Japan. See ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 93–142.

[19] Both the *Dictionarium* and the *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* were reedited in Latin and published in Rome by the press of the *Propaganda Fide* and compiled by the Spanish Dominican Diego Collado (*Didacus* in Latin, ca. 1587–1638 or 1641). Collado reached Japan in 1619 and managed to travel and learn the Japanese language, despite the edicts ordering the expulsion of religious orders promulgated by the Tokugawa shogunate already in 1614. In 1622 he was recalled to Rome where he spent his time preparing the *Ars grammaticae Iaponicae lingvae* (Japanese and Latin), the *Dictionarivm sive thesavri lingvæ Iaponicæ compendivm* (Latin and Spanish); and the *Niffon no Cotôbani Yô Confesion / Modus Confitendi et Examinandi* (Japanese and Latin), all published in 1632. These publications, supported by the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, were meant to prepare a new mission in Japan, to be led by the Mendicant Orders. See JAN ODSTRČILÍK, 'Between Languages, Genres and Cultures: Diego Collado's Linguistic Works,' *Medieval Worlds* 11 (2020): 117–51. On the linguistic policies of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, see GIOVANNI PIZZORUSSO, 'Agli antipodi di Babele: *Propaganda Fide* tra immagine cosmopolita e orizzonti romani (XVII-XIX secolo),' in *Roma, la città del papa. Vita civile e religiosa dal giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al giubileo di papa Wojtyla*, eds LUIGI FIORANI and ADRIANO PROSPERI (Turin, Einaudi, 2000), 477–518; GIOVANNI PIZZORUSSO, 'Tra cultura e missione. La congregazione *de Propaganda Fide* e le scuole di lingua araba nel XVII secolo,' in *Rome et la science moderne. Entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. ANTONELLA ROMANO (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013), 121–52.

[20] Roland Jacques OMI studied the Jesuit mission in Vietnam and demonstrated that the main sources of the *Dictionarium Annnamiticum Lusitanum, et Latinum*, edited by the French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes (1593–1660) were the manuscript works of three Portuguese missionaries, Gaspar do Amaral SJ (1594–1646), António Barbosa SJ (1594–1647), based on the romanisation of Vietnamese or *quốc ngữ* by Francisco de Pina SJ (1585/1586–1625). Alexandre de Rhodes translated the entries into Latin and managed to bring the manuscript copy of the *Dictionarium Annnamiticum Lusitanum, et Latinum* to Rome, where it was published by the press of the *De Propaganda Fide* in 1651. See ROLAND JACQUES, *Portuguese Pioneers of Vietnamese Linguistics / Pionniers portugais de la linguistique vietnamienne* (Bangkok: Orchid Press,

BRAZIL

Arte de Crammatica da lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil. Feyta pelo padre Ioseph de Anchieta da Cõpanhia de IESV, Coimbra, António Mariz, 1595.[21]

Catecismo. na lingoa brasilica, no qual se contem a summa da doctrina christã […] composto a modo de dialogos por padres doctos, & bons lingoas da companhia de jesu ; agora novamente concertado, ordenado & acrescentado pello padre Antonio D'Araujo […], Lisboa, Pedro Crasbeeck, 1618.[22]

Arte da Língua Brasilica, Composta pelo Padre Luis Figueira da Companhia de IESV, Theologo, Lisboa, Manuel da Silva (c.1620).[23]

Vocabulário da Língua Brasílica, ms, Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Ms. 3144, 1621.

Vocabulário das Línguas Brasílica e Portuguesa, ms., London, British Museum, Codex 223, seventeenth century, ca. 5,000 entries.

Catecismo Brasílico da Doutrina Christã, com o Geremonial dos Sacramentos, & mais actos Parochiaes […] pelo P. Bertholameu de Leam […], Lisboa, Miguel Deslandes, 1686.

2002); CARLOS ASSUNÇÃO and GONÇALO FERNANDES, 'The First Vietnamese Dictionary (Rome 1651): Contributions of the Portuguese Patronage to the Eastern Linguistics,' *Journal of Foreign Language Studies* 41 (2017): 3–25.

[21] The Spaniard José de Anchieta (1534–1597) from Tenerife entered the Society of Jesus in Coimbra in 1551 and in 1553 was assigned to the mission of Brazil. Together with Manuel da Nóbrega SJ (1517-1570), Anchieta founded the Jesuit college in São Paulo de Piratininga in January 1554. Taking advantage of the Jesuit António Rodrigues's previous manuscript dictionaries and grammars (ca. 1553) and the linguistic skills acquired by Portuguese orphans who grew up among indigenous children learning native idioms and later taught them to the Portuguese missionaries and priests, Anchieta authored a grammar of Tupi that was later printed in Lisbon in 1595. He also composed numerous literary works in Castilian, Portuguese, Latin, and Tupi and is also credited with editing the manuscript of the *Vocabulario na Lingua Brasilica*, currently held in the Coleção do Departamento de Cultura of the Prefeitura de Sao Paulo. See SERAFIM LEITE, *Breve historia da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil (1549–1760)*, repr. (1965; Braga: Sociedade Grafica, 1993), 215–16; ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 148–62.

[22] Three copies of the *Catecismo. na lingoa brasilica* (Catechism in the Tupi language) authored by António de Araújo SJ (1566-1632) and printed by Pedro Craesbeeck (active 1597–1632) are held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (shelfmarks RES-244-P; RES-245-P; RES-305-V) and are available in digital open access at the Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Portugal: https://purl.pt/22940.

[23] Luiz Figueira (ca. 1575–1643) entered the Jesuit College of the Espirito Santo in Evora in 1592 and was assigned to the mission in 1602. After spending almost two decades in the Salvador de Bahia region, in 1622 he founded the Jesuit mission of Maranhão. Although Figueira does not mention Anchieta's *Arte* explicitly, his grammar, conveyed in Portuguese, is arranged according to the model of both the Jesuit Father Manuel Álvares's Latin grammar (*De institvtione grammatica libri tres*, Lisbon, 1573) and Anchieta's Tupi grammar. See ARYON DALL'IGNA RODRIGUES, 'Descripcion del tupinamba en el periodo colonial: el *Arte* de José de Anchieta,' in *La descripcion de las lenguas amerindias en la epoca colonial*, ed. KLAUS ZIMMERMANN (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1997), 371–400; ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 164–68.

ANGELO CATTANEO

CONGO AND ANGOLA

Doutrina Christã Composta pelo P. Marcos Iorge da Companhia de IESV Doutor em Theologia. Acrescentada pelo Padre Ignacio Martinz damesma Companhia Doutor Theologo. De novo traduzida na lingoa do Reyno de Congo, por ordem do P. Mattheus Cardoso Theologo, da Companhia de IESV, natural da cidade de Lisboa. Ao muito poderoso, et catholico Rey de Congo dom Pedro Affonso segundo deste nome.[24] Com todas as licenças necessarias. Lisboa, Por Geraldo da Vinha, 1624.[25]

Arte da lingua de Angola, oeferecida a Virgem Senhora N[ossa] do Rosario, Mãy, e Senhora dos mesmos Pretos, pelo P. Pedro Dias Da Companhia de Jesu. Lisboa, Na Officina de Miguel Delandes, Impressor de Sua Magesade. com todas as licenças necessarias. Anno 1697.[26]

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[24] The king (*mwene*) of the Kingdom of Congo (*Makikongo*) Pedro II, alias of Nkanga a Mvika (1575–1624), *mwene* from 1622 to 1624.

[25] The work transmits a new edition of the *Doutrina Christã* (Christian Doctrine, first edition 1566) by Marcos Jorge SJ (1524–1571) and Inácio Martins SJ (1531–1598) with an interlinear translation into Kongo by Mateus Cardoso SJ (ca. 1584–ca.1625). A copy of the the *Doutrina Christã* is held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, shelfmark RES-268-V and is available in digital open access: https://purl.pt/29608. The Kongo Christian church mostly developed under the supervision and direction of the Kongo authorities rather than missionaries. As a result, John Thornton writes, 'Christianity and Kongo religion merged to produce a syncretic result.' The translation into Kongo of Jorge's *Doutrina Christã* was probably meant to recall and clarify the basic principles of Christianity in one of the local languages of Congo, to face expanding syncretism. See JOHN K. THORNTON, 'Afro-Christian Syncretism in the Kingdom of Kongo,' *Journal of African History* 54 (2013): 53–77. The *lingoa do Reyno de Congo* (language of the Kingdom of Congo) is Kongo, also known as Kikongo, one of the Bantu languages of sub-Saharan Africa, currently also spoken in creolised forms in the Caribbean and South America by the descendants of slaves transported there from Africa from the sixteenth century onwards. See FRANÇOIS BONTINCK and NSASI NDEMBE, eds, *Le catechisme kikongo de 1624. Réédition critique* (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen/Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, 1978).

[26] The *Arte da lingoa de Angola* (Grammar of the Language of Angola, that is Kimbundu, a Bantu language) was authored in Brazil, at Salvador de Bahia, for the African people deported to Brazil during the transatlantic slave trade and for their descendants. It was penned by the Portuguese Jesuit Pedro Dias (1622–1700) and edited by Miguel Cardoso (1659–1721), a native speaker of Kimbundu, born in Angola, who corrected Dias's work. A native of Portugal, Pedro Dias (1622–1700) moved to Brazil during his childhood. In 1641, he joined the Society of Jesus, attending the Jesuit College in Rio de Janeiro. Dias started to learn 'the language of Angola' in 1663 at the Jesuit College in Rio de Janeiro and resolved to author a grammar of Kimbundu to communicate with Angolan people to meet 'the spiritual need of their souls' (*pela necessidade espiritual em que jazem os angolanos*). Dias added that 'until his time, no grammar of this language had yet been written in Angola, nor in Brazil' (*não se acha nenhuma Gramática desta língua, nem no Brasil nem no Reino de Angola*). As the printing press was still not available in Brazil in the seventeenth century, a manuscript copy of the *Arte da lingua de Angola* was dispatched to Lisbon where it was printed in 1697. See GONÇALO FERNANDES, 'Primeiras descrições das línguas africanas em língua portuguesa,' *Revista do Instituto de Língua Portuguesa* 49 (2015): 43–67 (45–46); EMILIO BONVINI, 'Revisiter trois siècles après, "Arte da lingua de Angola" de Pedro Dias S.I. - grammaire kimbundu, rédigée au Brésil, mais publiée à Lisbonne en 1697,' in *Proceedings of the Special World Congress of African Linguistics: Exploring the African Language Connection in Americas*, eds MARGARIDA PETTER and BELINE MENDES RONALD (São Paulo: Humanitas, 2009), 15–45; ZWARTJES, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars*, 214–20. The John Carter Brown Library in Providence, RI, has made available the digital open-access reproduction of the work: https://archive.org/details/artedalinguadean00dias.

'All major cultural exchanges in history involved translation: be it the rendering of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Pali into Chinese during the early medieval period; or the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic in the early medieval [period],' thus Peter Burke and Ronnie Hsia describe the seminal relevance of cultural translations.[27] Among these epochal cultural translations, and despite the size of the documentary corpus, the early modern missionary translations based on Portuguese as a translational language have largely been undervalued, outside of the history of linguistics, lexicography and grammatology.

Beyond 'the Companion Languages of Empires'

Looking at the broad expanse stretching from Brazil to Africa, then to Asia, Japan and the Spice Islands—the hemisphere assigned to Portugal by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and Zaragoza (1529)—the traditional research paradigm has mostly focused on Portuguese as a 'companion language of the Empire,' the emblem of a complex identity and a tenacious sentiment to propagate Catholicism worldwide through imperial expansion.[28] This approach is rooted in the *topos* 'la lengua, compañera del Imperio' (language, the companion of the Empire), introduced by the *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (Grammar of the Castilian language) of Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522), published in Salamanca in 1492. Nebrija celebrated the expressive virtues of Castilian compared to Latin, while legitimatising its imposition on conquered peoples. Less than half a century later, the discursive register of Nebrija was appropriated in Portugal by João de Barros (1496–1570). In the *Gramática da Língua portuguesa* (Grammar of the Portuguese language) and the *Diálogo em louvor da nossa línguagem* (Dialogue in praise of our language) published in Lisbon by Barros in 1540, Portuguese was celebrated as an instrument of political cohesion for the empire with the task of spreading Christianity throughout the world. The maxim 'the companion language of Empire' has since been accepted as the key to understanding early modern social and cultural practices at the interface of the Portuguese language in the framework of the Portuguese seaborne empire. From Lopes's classical pioneer work *Expansão da língua portuguesa no Oriente nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII* (Expansion of the Portuguese language in the Orient in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries)[29] to the works produced in the context of the *Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses* – CNCDP (The National Committee for the Celebrations of Portuguese Discoveries, active between 1986 and 2002),[30] most of the publications addressed the early modern

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[27] PETER BURKE and RONNIE PO-CHIA HSIA, eds, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

[28] For a comprehensive critical review, see DIOGO RAMADA CURTO, *Imperial Culture and Colonial Projects. The Portuguese-Speaking World from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*. Translated from the Portuguese by ALISON AIKEN (New York: Berghahn Book, 2020) and the extensive bibliography cited. For the Portuguese edition: DIOGO RAMADA CURTO, *Cultura imperial e projetos coloniais (séculos XV a XVIII)* (Campinas: Unicamp, 2009).

[29] DAVID LOPES, *Expansão da língua portuguesa no Oriente nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII*, 2nd ed., ed. LUÍS DE MATOS (Porto: Portucalense Editora, 1969).

[30] ANTÓNIO DE OLIVEIRA, 'The Activities of the CNCDP: A Preliminary Assessment,' *E-journal of Portuguese History* 1 (2003): 1–12.

spatial and diachronic evolution of Portuguese in contact with other languages, maintaining the traditional one-directional perspective of 'the companion language of Empire.' The same happened with the various works linked to the CNCDP, such as the *Atlas da língua portuguesa na história e no mundo* (Atlas of the Portuguese language in history and in the world)[31] and the exhibition held at the National Library of Portugal *Caminhos do português. Exposição comemorativa do ano europeu das línguas: catálogo* (Paths of the Portuguese language. Commemorative exposition of the European year of languages: catalogue).[32] An important exception to this approach was provided by the exhibition catalogue *A galáxia das línguas na época da expansão* (The galaxy of languages in the period of expansion)[33] published by the National Library of Portugal in 1992 and, in more recent years, by the works of the lexicographer Telmo Verdelho, who has highlighted the need for a revision of this approach through a digital repository that he has been coordinating at the University of Aveiro.[34] The pervasive influence of these historiographical approaches is evidenced by the fact that the corpus of dozens of wordlists, dictionaries, grammars, primers, and Christian doctrines, mostly compiled by missionaries, which use Portuguese as the translational language, remain scattered and understudied, despite their relevance and the pioneering works carried out by missionary linguists. This situation of severe dispersion and the lack of systematic studies are in stark contrast with the corpus of documents that used Spanish as the vehicular language to translate Amerindian languages. This corpus has been amassed and even made available in open-access digital archives, mostly in the USA.[35]

The language interactions documented by the corpora under consideration emerged in contact with violent imperial projects and in the context of religious proselytism which, when possible, did not disdain violence. Yet, despite the troubled past of conquests, global trade, colonialism and religious proselytism, it is remarkable that a language like Portuguese, spoken by just over a million people in Europe, became a fundamental translation idiom for a very large set of languages that had been ignored by Europeans until the mid-sixteenth century, but were spoken and/or written by peoples who made up a very significant portion of the world's population in the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[31] ANTÓNIO LUÍS FERRONHA, ed., *Atlas da língua portuguesa na história e no mundo* (Lisbon: INCM, 1992).
[32] *Caminhos do português: exposição comemorativa do ano europeu das línguas*, ed. MARIA HELENA MIRA MATEUS, exhibition catalogue (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 2011).
[33] MARIA LEONOR BUESCU, ed., *A galáxia das línguas na época da expansão* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1992).
[34] TELMO VERDELHO and JOÃO PAULO SILVESTRE, eds, *Dicionarística Portuguesa. Inventariação e Estudos do Património Lexicográfico* (Aveiro: Universidade de Aveiro, 2007); TELMO VERDELHO, 'Lexicografia portuguesa bilingue - breve conspecto diacrónico,' in *Lexicografia Bilingue. A tradição dicionarística Português - Línguas Modernas*, eds TELMO VERDELHO and JOÃO PAULO SILVESTRE (Lisbon, Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa; Aveiro: Universidade de Aveiro, 2011), 13–67.
[35] One of the most complete collections is the (Amerindian) 'Indigenous Languages Collection,' John Carter Brown Library, RI, USA https://archive.org/details/jcbindigenous. The Newberry Library of Chicago, the Lilly Library of Bloomington, IN, and Princeton University also hold important collections of Amerindian indigenous language primary sources.

From 'Self-contained Languages' to the Pre-modern System of Connected Languages

Four hundred years of cultural contacts, spanning from the first European travels beyond the space of the Ancients in the mid-thirteenth century, and the formation of the fully encompassed globe from the beginning of the sixteenth century, paved the way and laid the foundations of the premodern system of connected languages that this article analyses.

Notable missionary accounts include the *Historia mongolorum* (History of the Mongols) by the Franciscan Giovanni di Pian di Carpine (1247); the extensive report about the Mongols by the Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruck (*Itinerarium ad partes orientales* or Journey to the eastern lands, 1255);[36] the letters sent by Giovanni da Montecorvino in the first three decades of the fourteenth century from Dadu 大都, known in the West as Khan Baliq; the *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium Tatarorum* (Report on the wonders of the Eastern Tatars) by the Dominican Odorico da Pordenone (ca. 1330);[37] the travel narratives of the Mongolian patriarch of the Nestorian Church of Baghdad, Rabban Bar Sauma (ca. 1220–1294),[38] of Marco Polo (1254–1324),[39]

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[36] WILLIAM OF RUBRUCK, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255,* eds PETER JACKSON and DAVID MORGAN (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990). For Rubruck's biography and an historical contextualization, 1–55.

[37] The most recent comprehensive study on the Franciscans in Mongol Asia is PETER JACKSON, *The Mongols and the West: 1221-1410* (London: Routledge, 2005). See also the classic works: *Sinica franciscana*, 11 vols., vol. 1, *Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, ed. ANASTASIUS VAN DEN WINGAERT OFM (Florence: Apud Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929); IGOR DE RACHEWILTZ, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1971).

[38] The Nestorian monk Rabban Bar Sauma journeyed from Khan Baliq to Persia in 1260, together with the future patriarch of the Church in Persia, Rabban Marcos (1245–1317). In 1288, accompanied by two Genoese interpreters, Rabban Bar Sauma visited Constantinople, Sicily, Naples, Rome, Tuscany, the Republic of Genoa, and numerous localities in France, where he was received by the kings of France and England. Returning to Rome, he was received by Pope Nicholas IV (1227–1292) and returned to Baghdad in 1289. Rabban Bar Sauma recounted his voyages in a work composed in the Syriac language, describing specifically the journey from Khan Baliq to Persia, the vicissitudes of the patriarch Raban Marcos, and his peregrinations through Europe. The volume is one of the first Mongol sources to describe the Mediterranean world and Christian Europe, documenting political and geographic interests comparable to those of the travel accounts of the Franciscans and Dominican friars and Marco Polo. See [RABBAN SAWMA], *The Monks of Kûblâi Khân, Emperor of China. Or the History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Ṣâwmâ and Mâr Yahbhallâhâ III*, ed. and trans. E. A. WALLIS BUDGE (London: Religious Tract Society, 1928).

[39] There is an overwhelming historiography on Polo dating back to the nineteenth century, mostly in French, Italian, German, and English: see PAUL PELLIOT, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale & Librairie A. Maisonneuve, 1959, 1963, 1973); GIOVANNI BATTISTA RAMUSIO. *Dei viaggi di Messer Marco Polo*. Edizione critica digitale progettata e coordinata da EUGENIO BURGIO, MARINA BUZZONI, e ANTONELLA GHERSETTI (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2014), http://virgo.unive.it/ecf-workflow/books/Ramusio/main/index.html. For a critical and comprehensive reassessment of the available editions of Polo's text, transmitted in several languages by several textual traditions, see SAMUELA SIMION, MARINA BUZZONI, and EUGENIO BURGIO, 'Edizioni del *Milione*,' in GIOVANNI BATTISTA RAMUSIO, *Dei viaggi di Messer Marco Polo*, http://virgo.unive.it/ecf-workflow/books /Ramusio/main/testimoni.html. On the connections between the numerous redactions of the *Milione*, see CHRISTINE GADRAT-OUERFELLI, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen Âge. Traduction, diffusion et réception du Devisement du monde* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti (ca.1301–1350),[40] and the famous Muslim traveller, Ibn Battuta (1304–1377).[41] These works are all testimonies of the intensity and growing importance of these interactions. Their legacy lasted for at least two hundred years and even held up through fifteenth-century expansion projects.[42] Although very rich in terms of first-hand details that would be defined as 'ethnographic' in contemporary historiography,[43] these medieval accounts provide scant information about the diversity of the languages encountered. Languages that did not fit into the 'multilingual space of the Bible,' beyond the numerous cultures and peoples of the Mediterranean Basin, Central Asia, Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, were defined as 'self-contained languages' (*langajes por soi* or *langajes por elz, linguaggi da per sé* in Italian, or *proprium idioma et propria littera*, in the Medieval Latin of William of Rubruck OFM and Odorico da Pordenone OP), as they were not associated with any language known to the agents (merchants, missionaries, interpreters) involved. Following a similar intellectual model, all religions and systems of belief that did not fit into the Christian, Judaic, Islamic, or pagan cults of Antiquity were simply defined as 'idolatries.'[44]

Although the importance of medieval journeys to the East and descriptions of Mongolia, *Catai* and *Mangi* (the Western medieval names of China) and the importance of multilingualism in medieval Christendom are evident,[45] close examination of medieval mercantile and missionary sources, including Ibn Battuta's travel account, reveals that travel, trade, and religious proselytising in Asia, India, and China at the time of the Mongol Chinese Yuan Empire, under the *Pax Mongolica*, did not lead to cohesive, consolidated, and transmissible knowledge of the many languages spoken

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[40] See FRANCESCO BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, *La Pratica della mercatura*, ed. ALLAN EVANS (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), 21–23: 'Avisamento del viaggio del Gattaio per lo cammino della Tana ad andare e tornare con mercatantia' (Information on the journey to Catai by the way of Tanais [on the Azov Sea] to go and return with merchandise).

[41] See IBN BATTUTA, *The Travels of Ibn Battūta*, trans. HAMILTON A. R. GIBB and CHARLES BUCKINGHAM, 5 vols. (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1958–1994).

[42] Fra Mauro's *mappa mundi*, designed in Venice ca. 1450, and the Korean *Gangnido*, designed in Hanseong (now Seoul) ca. 1480, both rely on cartography and travel accounts from the Mongol period, which explains how Mongol worldviews were framed and conserved long after the Mongol Empire that had spawned them had fallen. See ANGELO CATTANEO, 'Connected Histories. The Mongol Empire and the Creation of New Worldviews in the Fifteenth Century: Fra Mauro's *Mappa Mundi* (Venice, c. 1450) and the *Honil Gangni Yeokdae Gukdo Ji Do* (Hanseong, c. 1480),' in *The Mongol Empire in Global History and Art History*, ed. ANNE DUNLOP (Florence, I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies; Rome: Officina Libraria, 2022), 265–94.

[43] On this, see JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 35–84.

[44] EUGENIO BURGIO, 'Marco Polo e gli "idolatri,"' in *Le voci del Medioevo. Testi, immagini, tradizioni. Atti del VII Convegno internazionale* (Rocca Grimalda, 21–22 settembre 2002), eds NICOLÒ PASERO and SONIA MAURA BARILLARI (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2006), 31–62; ROBERT TRENT POMPLUN, JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS, and INES G. ŽUPANOV, 'Early Catholic Orientalism and the Missionary Discovery of Asian Religions,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, no. 6 (2020): 463–470 and RUBIÉS, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance*, 213–22.

[45] MARK AMSLER, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); ALBRECHT CLASSEN, 'Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: The Literary-Historical Evidence,' *Neophilologus* 97, no. 1 (Jan 2013): 131–45.

beyond the 'multilingual space of the Bible,' that is, beyond the spaces of the cultures and peoples of the Mediterranean, Central Asia, Persia, and the Arabian Peninsula.[46]

Companion Languages of the Missionary Church?

The Catholic missions in which linguistic interactions developed over the course of 150 years or so appear, in the eyes of cultural historians, to be an extremely interesting laboratory of cross-cultural, political, linguistic, and religious interactions.[47] During this relatively short period of time, small communities of European Catholic missionaries experienced very heterogeneous forms of cultural interactions with much broader local political, mercantile, military, and religious communities. The mutual codification, teaching, and learning of previously disconnected languages were part and parcel of the foundation and organisation of religious pedagogical institutions like the itinerant Jesuit Colleges and Seminaries, the introduction of new technologies like the printing press using movable type in books (in both romanised and logographic scripts), and the teaching of European music and craftsmanship.[48] These cultural, economic and technological interactions—which entailed constructive forms of cooperation—developed almost concurrently with violent social and political processes of control that included rejection, persecution, and banishment of both European and local peoples.

Conspicuous linguistic interactions were an important constituent part of ambivalent power relations in which cooperation, acceptance, confrontation and rejection, dialogue and imposition, understanding and misunderstanding were in a constant fluid dialogue. Missionaries tried to cope with and negotiate with their local interlocutors regarding the radical asymmetries in the power balance and demographics by adopting and exploring (controversial) strategies of adaptation which, over the course of a few decades, ensured the implementation of important processes of mutual learning. Far from being an *a priori* philosophical position, an ethical or moral choice of (alleged and anachronistic) respect for cultural differences or otherness, or, conversely, a subtle, hidden, premeditated strategy to penetrate and conquer the (otherwise lost) souls of the *gentiles*, the so-called missionary—particularly the Jesuit *accomodatio* or 'adaptation' to local contexts of interactions in early modernity—was above all a reaction to and a consequence of the radical asymmetry

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[46] On the conceptualisation and definition of the languages beyond the 'space of the Bible' as 'self-contained languages' (*lingue per sé* or *proprium idioma*) in medieval Franciscan travel accounts in Asia, particularly in William of Rubruck OFM and in Marco Polo, see CATTANEO, *Tradurre il mondo*, 17–33 (chap. 1, 'Lingue per sé').

[47] On this, see JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS, 'From Idolatry to Religions: The Missionary Discourses on Hinduism and Buddhism and the Invention of Monotheistic Confucianism, 1550-1700,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, no. 6 (2020): 499–536; JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS, 'Comparing Cultures in the Early Modern World. Hierarchies, Genealogies and the Idea of European Modernity,' in *Regimes of Comparatism: Frameworks of Comparison in History, Religion and Anthropology*, eds RENAUD GAGNÉ, SIMON GOLDHILL, and GEOFFREY LLOYD (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 116–76.

[48] LUIS SARAIVA and CATHERINE JAMI, eds, *The Jesuits, The Padroado and East Asian Science (1552–1773)* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2008).

of power, aimed at securing safer living conditions in the potentially hostile local contexts of the mission.[49]

Well before it was theorised and described in the famous texts by Alessandro Valignano, composed following his first stay in Japan between 1579 and 1582—*Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão* (1581);[50] *Sumario de las cosas de Japón* (1583)[51] and *Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales* (1583)[52]—a reading and analysis of the letters and reports composed as early as the first twenty years of Jesuit presence in missionary contexts in India, Brazil, Japan, and then in China, reveal that the inculturation and acculturation of Christianity to and for the local audiences, later systematised by Valignano, largely depended on the practices that some Jesuits had tried to implement in the early years of the Society of Jesus missionaries. The power imbalance did not merely prevent the development of important cultural interactions, on the contrary, it encouraged some Jesuits to find creative communication strategies and practices and to engage in cultural translation, which later became the broader framework of early modern Catholic global missions.[53]

Cross-cultural interactions through the translation of several previously disconnected languages in missionary contexts, together with linguistic practices developed in Europe within the complex framework of European orientalism[54]—and thus of scholarly and academic linguistic studies which, beginning with the languages

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[49] For a critical assessment of the *status quaestionis,* see PAOLO ARANHA, 'Gerarchie razziali e adattamento culturale: La «Ipotesi Valignano»,' in *Alessandro Valignano S.I.: uomo del Rinascimento, ponte tra Oriente e Occidente*, eds ADOLFO TAMBURELLO, M. ANTONI J. ÜÇERLER, and MARISA DI RUSSO (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2008), 77–98; ANDRÉS I. PRIETO, 'The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World,' *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 395–414.

[50] ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO, *Il Cerimoniale per i missionari del Giappone. «Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos Costumes e Catangues de Jappão»*, ed. JOSEF FRANZ SCHÜTTE SJ (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1946; 2nd ed., ed. MICHELA CATTO, 2011).

[51] ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO, *Sumario de las cosas de Japon (1583). Adiciones del Sumario del Japan (1592)*, ed. JOSÉ LUIS ALVAREZ-TALADRIZ (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1954).

[52] ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542-64)*, ed. JOSEF WICKI (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1944).

[53] See ANGELO CATTANEO and ALEXANDRA CURVELO, 'Introduction,' and ANGELO CATTANEO, 'Spatial and Linguistic Patterns in Early Modern Global History. Iberian and Dutch Merchants, Jesuit Missionaries, Buddhist Monks and Neo-Confucian Scholars and Their Interactions in Japan,' in *Interactions Between Rivals: The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c.1549-c.1647)*, eds ALEXANDRA CURVELO and ANGELO CATTANEO (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021), 23–41 and 277–318 (esp. 290–95). The publisher provides open access to both the essay and the book: https://www.peterlang.com/document /1190560.

[54] 'Orientalism' has been a much-disputed concept since Edward Said's eponymous book published in 1978. In Said's conceptual framework, 'orientalism' is defined as a Western imperialist attitude in which the colonised subjects are perceived from a purely Western ideological standpoint. In this context, we refer instead to a reinterpretation of the history of orientalism, which brings the term back to European scholarly and erudite practices—both religious and secular—of researching the Orient through the study of languages and the critical analysis of original sources, in the early modern context, on a different historical and semantic level and preceding Edward Said's albeit important critical conceptualisation. See URS APP, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 1–132; RUBIÉS, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance*, 287–300 ('Re-Defining Orientalism'); ROBERT CLINES, 'Edward W. Said, Renaissance Orientalism, and Imaginative Geographies of a Classical Mediterranean,' *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 65 (2020): 481–533.

of the Bible, Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, as well as Arabic and Persian, would gradually come to include the entire body of world languages—are still overlooked as a major periodisation landmark in global history. Historians of culture have largely emphasised the first decades of the fifteenth century to highlight the humanistic rediscovery of and translation into Latin of ancient Greek as a paradigmatic milestone in world history, implicitly highlighting the importance of cultural translation as a major factor in historical periodisation.[55] Yet these highly celebrated events had nowhere near the global impact or the universal breadth claimed by influential and foundational works, such as Jacob Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy), published in German in Basel in 1860 (translated into Italian in 1876 and into English in 1878).[56]

Humanistic efforts with classical languages and the erudite European codification of biblical languages, particularly Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Syriac, have been widely recognised for their contributions to historical periodisation.[57] Yet early modern translations of living languages using Spanish and Portuguese as intermediary and translational languages have, in the broad, heterogeneous and asymmetrical contexts of Catholic missions, been overlooked—outside the field of missionary linguistics—as fundamental contributors to world-history periodisation which, together with European scholarly or erudite orientalism,[58] have helped form the modern global system of connected languages.

Europe's Reception of Missionary Linguistics

To conclude this article, we briefly examine how the multiple linguistic and cultural translations done in missionary contexts were received in Europe. Specifically, we look at a set of works compiled and published in Europe over the course of some seventy years, from the mid-sixteenth century to the early decades of the seventeenth century;

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[55] Sources like Leonardo Bruni's *Commentaria rerum suo tempore gestarum* (1440–1441), which emphatically praises the advent of the teaching and learning of Greek in Florence as an epoch-making event, marked the transition from Medieval to Renaissance or early modern culture. Within a vast historiography, see ALEXANDER LEE, PIT PÉPORTÉ, and HARRY SCHNITKER, eds, *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe, c.1300-c.1550* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), particularly ROBERT BLACK, 'The Renaissance and the Middle Ages: Chronologies, Ideologies, Geographies,' 27–44. For a socio-economic analysis, see JAN LUITEN VAN ZANDEN and ELTJO BURINGH, 'Charting the "Rise of the West": Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, a long-term perspective from the sixth through the eighteenth centuries,' *Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 2 (2009): 409–45.

[56] In 2018, in the bicentenary of Jacob Burckhardt's birth (1818–1897), the British Academy organised the conference entitled 'Burckhardt at 200: The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance reconsidered' (British Academy, 31 May–1 June 2018). Simon Ditchfield, Michelle O'Malley, and Stefan Bauer gathered together twenty-three scholars who carried out an in-depth critical review and contextualisation of both Burckhardt's work and his conceptualisation of the 'Italian Renaissance.' For the complete programme, see https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/184/Burckhardt_at_200_CURRENT_PROGRAMME_JE.pdf.

[57] On the study and teaching of Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic in Florence, see ANGELO MICHELE PIEMONTESE, 'Lo studio delle cinque lingue presso Savonarola e Pico,' in *Europa e Islam tra i secoli XIV e XVI*, ed. MICHELE BERNARDINI (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 2002), 179–202. For the study and teaching of Arabic, see JAN LOOP, ALASTAIR HAMILTON, and CHARLES BURNETT, eds, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[58] See note 52 above.

thus, before the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, which was founded in Rome in 1622,[59] had become fully operational and before the first attempts to systematise missionary knowledge—such as those made by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) and by Martino Martini (1614–1661) on China—had become well-established.[60] Below are the works considered, in chronological order:

Guillaume Postel, *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum introductio, ac legendi modus longè facilimus. Linguarum nomina sequens proximè pagella offeret.* Prostant Parisiis: apud Dionysium Lescuier, sub porcelli signo, vico Hilario, e regione divi Hilarii, 1538.

Theodor Bibliander, *De rationi communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius.* Tiguri: apud Christoph Frosch, 1548.

Konrad von Gesner, *Mithridates. De differentiis linguarum tum veterum tum quae hodie apud diversas nationes in toto orbe terrarum in usu sunt.* Tiguri: excudebat Froschoverus, 1555.

Blaise de Vigenère, *Traicté des chiffres, ou Secrètes manières d'escrire.* Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1586.

Angelo Roccha, *Bibliotheca apostolica vaticana a Sixto V Pont. Max. in splendidiorem commodioremq. locum translata et a fratre Angelo Roccha a Camerino* […] *commentario variarium artium* […] *illustrata etc.* Romae: ex Typografía Apostolica Vaticana 1591.

Hieronymus Megiser, *Specimen quinquaginta diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum, et dialectorum.* Francoforti: ex typographéo Ioannis Spiessij, 1592.

Hieronymus Megiser, *Thesaurus Polyglottus: vel Dictionarium multilingue, ex quadringentis circiter tam veteris, quam novi Orbis nationum linguis, dialectis, idiomatibus & idiotismis.* Francofurti ad Moenum: Sumptibus Authoris, 1603.

Claude Duret, *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest univers: contenant les origines, beautés, perfections, décadences, mutations, changemens, conversions et ruines des langues.* Imprime a Cologny: par Matth. Berjon, Pour la societé Caldoriene, 1613.

Published in some of the most important European cultural cities, with no direct ties to Catholic missionaries, these works with heterogeneous approaches and purposes aspired to review and map the languages of the world, starting with the primal core of the biblical languages, namely, Hebrew and Greek first, and later Aramaic, Chaldean, Syriac, Coptic, but also Arabic and Persian, and, potentially, to gradually embrace the entire spectrum of the world's languages. Continuing along a path of research mapped out by Stefano Gensini, and, I hope, going further, I will highlight the variety and

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[59] GIOVANNI PIZZORUSSO, 'Agli antipodi di Babele: *Propaganda Fide* tra immagine cosmopolita e orizzonti romani (XVII-XIX secolo),' 477–518.
[60] From an extensive bibliography, see the more recent ANTONELLA ROMANO, *Impressioni di Cina. Saperi europei e inglobamento del mondo (secoli XVI-XVII)* (Rome: Viella, 2020).

number of languages and alphabets in each of the works examined, for the purpose of verifying and reporting how the news, or at least the awareness, of the widening range of languages emerging from Catholic missionaries was initially received outside those contexts themselves.[61]

French-born Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) was an orientalist, cosmographer, professor of mathematics and languages at the French court of Francis I. He became acquainted with Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac. Relieved and removed from his teaching and assignments in Paris owing to his messianic beliefs, he was later active in Rome, where he tried in vain to be accepted by the Jesuits, but was rejected by Ignatius de Loyola, for the same reasons. He was later in Venice, before being declared insane by the Inquisition in 1555.[62] In his *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum introductio*, published in Paris in 1538, Postel analysed twelve languages, mostly of biblical origin—*Hebraica, Chaldaica, Samaritana, Punica Arabica, Indica, Graeca, Georgiana-Iacobitana, Tzerviana-Poznania, Hieronymiana Illyrica Dalmatarum, Armenica,* and *Latina*—and their respective alphabets. His research on the languages aimed to recognise their connections and derivations, as part of a messianic view of universal peace-making, which had also led him to seek the support of the Ottoman court, after being estranged from the French court and the Society of Jesus.[63] Large part of the alphabets published by Postel had originally been collected by Teseo Ambrogio degli Albonesi (1469–1540), of the Order of the Clerics Regular of Saint Augustine, who met Postel in Venice in 1537 and shared with him the results of his research on several alphabets. Postel surreptitiously published these materials before Degli Albonesi's *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam atque Armenicam et decem alias linguas* was published in Pavia in 1539, 'robbing' the latter of first place.[64]

Theodor Bibliander (1506–1564), alias of the orientalist Theodor Buchmann, a renowned professor of Old Testament theology in Zurich for about thirty years, lists thirty-three languages in the *De rationi communi omnium linguarum et literarum* (Zurich, 1548), including Tartaric, and transcribes the *Oratio dominica* (*Lord's Prayer* or *Pater Noster*) in fourteen languages, listed below in the order mentioned: *Ebraica, Chaldaica,*

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[61] STEFANO GENSINI, *Apogeo e fine di Babele. Linguaggi e lingue nella prima modernità* (Pisa: ETS, 2016), 16–26.

[62] On Postel's intellectual and biographical trajectory, see INA BAGHDIANTZ MCCABE, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism and the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).

[63] CHRISTINE ISOM-VERHAAREN, 'Sixteenth-century French travelers to the Ottoman Empire. The impact of travels in the Ottoman Empire on Guillume Postel's and Philippe Canaye's views of Reformation,' *The Muslim World* 107, no. 4 (2017): 698–713.

[64] See J. F. COAKLEY, *The Typography of Syriac. A historical catalogue of printing types, 1537–1958*, (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2006), 29–30, 155; RICCARDO CONTINI, 'Gli inizi della linguistica siriaca nell'Europa rinascimentale,' in *Italia ed Europa nella linguistica del Rinascimento: confronti e relazioni*, ed. MIRKO TAVONI, 2 vols., vol. 2, *L'Italia e l'Europa non romanza: le lingue orientali* (Modena: Panini, 1996), 483–502. For Degli Albonesi's work, see *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam atque Armenicam et decem alias linguas. Characterum differentium alphabeta, circiter quadraginta et eorundem invicem conformatio. Mystica et cabalistica quam plurima scitu digna. Et descriptio ac simulachrum Phagoti Afranii.* Theseo Ambrosio ex Comitibus Albonesii I.V. doct. Papien. Canonico Regulari Lateranensi, ac Sancti Petri in Coelo Aureo Papiae Praeposito, Authore. Pavia: excudebat Giovanni Maria Simonetta, 1539.

Arabica, Aethiopica, Graeca, Armenica, Germanica e Gothica, Latina Illyrica, Gallica, Hispanica, Italica, Islandica, Anglica, Polonica.[65]

Konrad von Gesner (also spelled Gessner, 1516–1565), a physician and professor of natural sciences, also from Zurich, considered both the languages of the ancients and current languages. In *Mithridates. De differentiis linguarum tum veterum tum quae hodie apud diversas nationes in toto orbe terrarum in usu sunt* he names at least ninety languages and examines twenty-two of them.[66] Gesner devotes one paragraph entitled 'De variis linguis, praesertim in remotissimis terris imperii Tartarici et orbis novi' to the languages of the remotest Asian regions ruled by the Great Khan and to those of the 'New World.' For Asia he lists fourteen idioms, accompanied by brief geographical descriptions, but without providing any linguistic indications. The only exception concerns the 'Provincia Cataia,' ruled by 'King Cham, who speaks a very difficult and "self-contained" language' ('habet autem linguam propriam et difficilem,' 70v). In the following section, entitled 'De linguis in Orbe novo,' he alludes to the great variety of languages spoken in the New World and describes the event of ten copyists being sent from the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean to Nueva España to transcribe the languages of all the Caribbean islands in the Latin alphabet, 'sine ullo discrimine.' Gesner was also the first scholar to mention the *Lingua Utopiensis*, that is, the language invented and codified by Thomas More for the Utopians, modelled on Greek (72v–73r).[67]

Blaise de Vigenère, a diplomat, linguist, and cryptographer, published in Paris in 1585 a *Traicté des chiffres, ou secrètes manières d'escrire*, for which he is recognised as one of the most important cryptographers. The *Traicté* lists and describes numerous alphabets, however, interestingly, the pages devoted to the Japanese and Chinese 'alphabets' are left blank. In fact, Vigenère had been promised these alphabets by the French Jesuit Edmond Auger (1530–1591)—who was active in France, first in the mission to the Calvinists, then as a preacher at the French court (1569–1588)—but did not receive them in time for printing.[68]

Angelo Rocca (1545–1620) was a scholar and a passionate collector of fine editions. His bequest of circa 20,000 books led to the founding of the Angelica Library

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[65] BRUCE GORDON, 'Theodor Bibliander,' in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, ed. DAVID THOMAS, 20 vols., vol 6. *Western Europe (1500-1600)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 643–53; HAGIT AMIRAV and HANS-MARTIN KIRN, 'Notes on the Reformation, Humanism and the Study of Hebrew in the Sixteenth Century: The Case of Theodore Bibliander (1505-64),' *Church History and Religious Culture* 87, no. 2 (2007): 161–171.

[66] GEORGE J. METCALF, 'Konrad Gesner's Views on the Germanic Languages,' *Monatshefte* 55, no. 4 (1963): 149–156.

[67] THOMAS MORUS, *De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula Utopia libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus* […] (Basileae: Frobenius, 1518), 13: 'Utopiensum alphabetum' (beside the map of Utopia, engraved by Hans Holbein).

[68] LUCA DINU, *The Chinese Language in European Texts: The Early Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 97–98.

in Rome, one of Italy's first public libraries.[69] In charge of the Vatican typography during the pontificate of Sixtus V, he oversaw the setting up of the new Vatican Apostolic Library, under construction from May 1587, to which he dedicated the *Commentarium variarium artium* (1591) and described the languages of the library holdings. The *Commentarium* lists some eighty languages, including an 'African language' (308), an 'Asiatic language' and a 'Tartaric language' (362–63), although he does not include specific alphabets or specimens, and merely lists the *auctores* who mention these languages in their works. The languages surveyed by Rocca are mainly *linguae antiquae*; he ignored new living languages encountered in the context of the Iberian expansions and missions.

Hieronymus Megiser (1554–1618), traveller, connoisseur and philologist of Slovenian and Slavic languages, Ordinarius Historiographus in Graz, later rector at the Collegium Sapientiae et Pietatis in Klagenfurt, and professor of history at the University of Leipzig,[70] reports approximately fifty languages in the *Specimen quinquaginta diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum* (for our purposes, the Frankfurt edition of 1603, printed by Joachinum Bratheringium). Megiser transcribes them via the Latin alphabet by translating phonetically the *Oratio dominica* (the Lord's Prayer). He also provides other Christian orations in a few languages, including Hebrew, Syriac-Chaldaic, Greek and the 'Turkic language,' (§ 1; § 2; § 6; § 42, respectively). Only Hebrew and Greek are also presented in their original alphabets. Significantly, Megiser also romanises the Lord's Prayer in the 'Tartaric language' (§ 44), in the 'Chiniaca or Sinensium language' (§ 46), and in a New World idiom that he calls '*lingua americanorum silvestrium*' (language of the American savages, literally 'Americans of the wilderness,' § 47).

In 1603, Megiser published a dictionary in two volumes, the *Thesaurus Polyglottus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1603) in which there is a most notable increase in the systematisation of new languages, news of which reached Europe through missionary networks. Megiser surveys some 400 languages and, for the first time in the history of linguistics and of culture tout court, presents them in ten plates (*tabulae*) placed at the beginning of the first volume. The *tabulae* are divided into three groups, arranged spatially and geographically, and establish derivations between languages through graphic devices. In the first group, consisting of five plates, the first is devoted to the Hebrew language and its derivations, the second to the Greek language and its derivations, the third to the Latin language and its derivations, the fourth to the Germanic language and its derivations and, finally, the fifth to the 'Slavonic language.' In the second group, consisting of three plates, the first (*Tabula sexta*) concerns European languages, the second (*Tabula septima*) Asian languages, and the third (*Tabula*

[69] PAOLA MUNAFÒ and NICOLETTA MURATORE, *Bibliotheca Angelica Publicae commoditati dicata* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004); ELISABETTA SCIARRA, 'Breve storia del fondo manoscritto della Biblioteca Angelica,' *La Bibliofilía* 111 no. 3 (2009): 251–82.

[70] In a bibliography, mostly in German, see NATALIE ROTHMAN, 'Disciplining Language: Dragomans and Oriental Philology,' in NATALIE ROTHMAN, *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 140–82.

octava) African languages, excluding the Arabic and Ethiopian languages, for which Megiser refers the reader to the *Tabula prima*, dedicated to Hebrew. The *Tabula nona*, dedicated to *America vel India occidentalis*, and the *Tabula decima*, dedicated to the *Novi orbis insulae*, include geographical representations in the form of diagrams of the main regions of the New World and the main islands of Europe, Asia, and Africa, respectively. The rest of the work is a huge multilingual dictionary, spread over two volumes, with thousands of lemmas translated into many languages, with cross-references to the last two geographical plates, in the case of the New World languages or those spoken on the main islands of the four continents known at the time.

Ten years later, in 1613, the *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest univers* by French polygraph and botanist Claude Duret (1570–1611) was published posthumously in Cologny, a municipality in the Canton of Geneva, near the French-Swiss border. Duret reports more than fifty modern and ancient languages, contextualised geographically, illustrated with letters of the alphabet carved on wooden plates, including several Chinese and Japanese characters, as part of a description of China and Japan. Continuing the work begun by his cousin Vigenère, whose preparatory materials he had inherited, Duret published the Chinese and Japanese 'alphabets' that the Jesuit Edmond Auger (1530–1591) had promised but failed to get to Vigenère.[71] He also provided a translation of numbers into Chinese and gave examples of how some European words are written in Japanese, using *kanji*, the Japanese logographic characters (913–16). The *Thresor* also includes a bilingual copy in (corrupted) Japanese and French of a document issued by the 'King of Bungo'—Ōtomo Yoshishige, the daimyo of Bungo, on Kyushu Island—in 1557 granting the Jesuits the right to build a church in the city of Yamaguchi (917–21). Duret's edition of the document adapted a letter by the Jesuit Gaspar Vilela, previously printed and translated into Portuguese in Évora in 1598.[72] Finally, one section focuses on Canada and American languages, before ending with a history of language and a chapter dealing with the language of animals.[73]

In summary, from the last decade of the sixteenth century, there was an exponential increase, in European scholarly circles, in the number of languages listed and, in some cases, described and even accompanied by their scripts generally exemplified by the *Oratio dominica* in various non-European languages and scripts. In the last part of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth century, beginning with the efforts of Megiser and Duret, the collation and systematisation of the languages encountered and described in missionary letters and reports, then learned and translated in missionary settings through grammars and lexicons, reached

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[71] DINU, *The Chinese Language in European Texts: The Early Period*, 127.
[72] *Gaspar Vilela a los Jesuitas de Portugal, Hirado, 29 de Octubre de 1557*, in *Cartas qve os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesus escreuerão dos Reynos de Iapão & China aos da mesma Companhia da India, & Europa des do anno de 1549. até o de 1580* […] *Impressas por mandado do Reuerendissimo em Christo Padre dom Theotonio de Bragança, Arcebispo d'Euora* […], 2 vols., vol. 1 (Évora: por Manoel de Lyra, 1598) ff. 177–182.
[73] CLAUDE DURET, *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest univers*, chap. 89, 'Des sons, voix, bruits, langages, ou langues des animaux et oyseaux,' 1017–30.

and were incorporated into orientalist and scholarly studies aiming to map the languages of the world.

At the same time, missionary linguistics led to considerable expansion of orientalist linguistic geography, which stemmed from and rested on the 'spaces of the Bible' integrated with the 'spaces of classical antiquity.' The pioneers of this change in scale, Megiser and Duret, explicitly incorporated languages into a spatial vision that encompassed the entire globe and laid the ground for an explicit global geography of languages, as a possible form of global spatiality. Their works show how the linguistic practices developed in missionary contexts in Asia, America, and Africa were progressively incorporated into scholarly and academic orientalist linguistics.

It is important, however, to be aware of the differences in the ways new languages were integrated in missionary settings and among scholars or orientalists in Europe. Whereas in 1603, Duret published in his *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest univers* the first rudimentary examples of Japanese characters, compiled by the first Jesuits in Japan around 1555–60—which they in turn had taken from the volumes published by the Jesuits in Coimbra and Évora in 1570 and 1598—in the same year, the Jesuits published a bilingual Japanese–Portuguese dictionary in Nagasaki, with about 32,000 entries and over 100,000 contexts of usage.[74]

Although the previously analysed cultural and linguistic interactions taking place in missionary contexts were very heterogeneous, they did share the characteristic of occurring outside of Europe; in other words, away from and disconnected from European academic and humanistic circles. At the same time, tools like dictionaries and grammars, adapted and transformed in missionary contexts, were originally prepared in humanistic educational circles for teaching and studying Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.[75] An interest in language coding and learning, coupled with an awareness and belief that translation practices were not only possible but desirable, were also rooted in the way languages were engaged with, which emerged with humanism.[76] The humanist influence on the formation of a missionary linguistic consciousness is paradigmatically evidenced by the importance attributed to learning and teaching classical languages in missionary orders. It is particularly evident in the Jesuit *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu*, published in Rome in 1599 as a result of nearly fifty

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[74] *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam com a declaração em Portugues*. See above the section 'Japan,' 22–24.

[75] PAUL F. GRENDLER, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe, 1548-1773* (Leiden: Brill, 2019). ANTONIO ROLLO, 'Study Tools in the Humanist Greek School: Preliminary Observations on Greek-Latin Lexica,' in *Teachers, Students, and Schools of Greek in the Renaissance*, eds FEDERICA CICCOLELLA and LUIGI SILVANO (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 26–54; PAUL BOTLEY*, Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396-1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2010); ROBERT BLACK, 'Italian Education: Languages, Syllabuses, Methods,' in *Language and Cultural Change: Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. LODI NAUTA (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 91–112.

[76] For the humanistic teaching and translation of Greek, see DAVIDE BALDI BELLINI, 'L'insegnamento del greco a Firenze da Leonzio Pilato a Pier Vettori (1360-1583),' in *Studium florentinum: l'istruzione superiore a Firenze fra XIV e XVI secolo*, ed. LORENZO FABBRI (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2021), 83–146. For an in-depth study of Pico della Mirandola and the learning and translation of Hebrew and Arabic, see GIOVANNA MURANO, *La biblioteca arabo-ebraica di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2022).

years of internal debate on the teaching practices to be pursued in the schools of the Society of Jesus, where great emphasis was placed on the pedagogy, study and practice of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.[77] The *Ratio studiorum* prescribed the use of Álvares's *De institutione grammatica libri tres*, dedicating an explicit reference to it in the 'Rules of the Provincial Superior.'[78] Regarding this, it is important to remember that missionary grammars (*artes*) were mostly based on or adapted from Manoel Álvares's Latin grammar first published in Lisbon in 1572;[79] whereas Ambrogio Calepino's dictionary of Latin (*Dictionarium ex optimis quibusque authoribus*), originally published in 1502, was translated and printed in Japanese (Amakusa, 1595, along with Portuguese), Vietnamese (Rome, 1650, along with Portuguese), and Mayan (seventeenth century, in manuscript form).[80] At the same time, a research hypothesis might also consider the extent to which orientalist research on biblical languages may have permeated and changed the way languages were thought of and related to, and influenced the pedagogy of the orders involved in missions, thereby helping to form, or at least encourage, an awareness for recognising and learning Amerindian, Asian, and African languages.

The Time and Space of Connected Languages

When stressing the importance of connected histories in their introduction to the edited volume *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840,* David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam mention at least two possible ways of conceptualising connected histories:

> A first would suggest that connections did exist and were known to past actors but have for some reason been forgotten or laid aside. The task of the historian would then be to rediscover these lost trails. A second view would instead posit that historians might act as electricians, connecting circuits by acts of imaginative reconstitution rather than simple restitution.[81]

The same can be argued about the documents and phenomena analysed in this essay, where lost trails are rediscovered and linked circuits are imaginatively reformed,

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[77] See ANGELO BIANCHI, 'Introduzione,' in *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu*, ed. and trans. ANGELO BIANCHI (Brescia: Scholè, 2021), 19–82; MARIO ZANARDI, 'La *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu*: tappe e vicende della sua progressiva formazione (1541-1616),' *Annali di storia dell'educazione* 5 (1998): 135–164.

[78] 'Rules of the Provincial Superior. 23. Father Emanuel Álvares's *Grammar*. He will ensure that teachers use Father Emanuel's *Grammar*. If then, in any place, his method proves too analytical for the young pupils to understand, adopt the Roman edition, or have a similar one composed, after consulting the Superior General, provided that it maintains the same force and precision as all the rules of Fr. Emanuel,' cf. *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu*, ed. BIANCHI, 102–03 (this is my translation from the Latin and Italian version).

[79] [Manuel Álvares], *Emmanuelis Aluari e Societate Iesu De institutione grammatica libri tres* (Olyssippone: excudebat Ioannes Barrerius, 1572).

[80] On the translation and transformation of Calepino's *Dictionarium* into Japanese and Vietnamese, see above 22n15. On the 'Mayan Calepino,' see RAMÓN ARZÁPALO MARÍN, *Calepino de Motul: Diccionario maya-español*, 3 vols. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995).

[81] DAVID ARMITAGE and SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM, eds, *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), XXXI.

attesting to the presence of various kinds of border-crossing networks—linguistic, religious, cultural—and a history that is in every respect transcultural and transnational. The different typologies of documents taken into consideration—primers, grammars, dictionaries, and doctrines—offer a polycentric and complementary look at a plurality of interactions which, over the course of two centuries or so, characterised the relations between Catholic missionaries, particularly the Jesuits, and their local interlocutors, including the military, political, and religious elites, but also more numerous commoners, with ties to the agents of the Portuguese expansion.

The macro spaces where these interactions emerged—India, Japan, China, Brazil, sub-Saharan African coastal territories—were clusters of numerous, heterogeneous micro spaces, like the Christian missions themselves. Regardless of their scale, all these spaces emerge as linked areas of contact that were the stage for processes with varying degrees of permeability, often resulting in adaptations, exchanges, and translations. Moreover, characterised by both linguistic and cultural translations, these processes were frequently marked by misunderstandings, incompatibilities, tensions, disputes, and rejections. Nevertheless, awareness of possible mutual translatability—and sometimes untranslatability—between a plurality of languages that had come into contact with each other for the first time contributed, along with humanism and orientalism, to the emergence of a new conception of spatiality that also included the global space of languages.

Traditional 'spatial' scholarship is mostly concerned with the process of constructing geographical space, accompanied by the notion of constructing commercial and political space; for example, representation of the main commercial routes in the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean; the space of empires.[82] From a re-examination of early modern primary linguistic sources dealing mostly with the global projection of Christianity from the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is clear that the construction of geographical space tout court appears to be just one layer in a much more complex process of mapping out places and peoples that were beginning to be seen as important culturally, and at the interface of trade, proselytism, and conquest. This process includes the overlooked topic of linguistic contacts and the complex path-breaking process of describing, learning, and translating Amerindian, African, and Asian languages that had been ignored or unknown to Europeans before the age of expansion.

The multilingual documents we have considered tell specific stories of interconnection that took place from around the mid-sixteenth century and whose main protagonists were some previously disconnected languages. Viewed from a distance and from the perspective of connected histories, these events, which we have observed through the lens of the linguistic dynamics that took place in the hemisphere

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[82] See the essays in DAVID WOODWARD, ed., *History of Cartography*, 6 vols., vol. 3, *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, 2 parts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). The publisher provides open access to the entire series of the *History of Cartography*: https://press.uchicago.edu/books/HOC/index.html.

between Brazil, Africa, and Asia, stand out as relevant forms of interconnectivity, specific to the history of early modernity and with no comparable equivalents in previous times, although not because people did not travel. About three hundred years apart, Medieval Franciscan friars, Marco Polo, and Matteo Ricci SJ and his confrères all travelled to China. Whereas the former only recognised 'self-contained languages,' the latter recognised, learned, and translated the Chinese language. As we have seen, this happened with a very large cluster of language families. From the mid-sixteenth century onward, a new space of interconnected languages was formed at the interface of Catholic missions and orientalism, a periodisation factor that is still not fully recognised.

Photomontage in the Fascist Magazine La Difesa della razza
Visual Sources, Manipulations, Controversies*

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An Impactful Cover

On August 5, 1938, the new propaganda organ of the Fascist regime and mouthpiece of its racist doctrine, *La Difesa della razza* (Defence of the Race), made its debut.[1] The image featured on the cover of that first issue and which, at the same time, served as a visual and ideological manifesto, was an eloquent photomontage. It consisted of three heads: one of a Jew, one of a black woman, and a third, that of a white man, separated from the others by a sword to preserve the alleged purity of the Italian race (fig. 1). Thus, the hatred machine was set in motion.

That summer, the Ministry of Popular Culture, which had total control over the media, launched a press campaign in support of the infamous racial laws of autumn 1938. The *Manifesto della razza* (Manifesto of Race), signed in July by eminent scholars, had summed up the essence of Fascist racism in ten points and was published in several newspapers.[2] And many of those scientists ended up on the editorial staff of *La Difesa*

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della razza under chief editor Telesio Interlandi, who also edited other anti-Semitic publications, such as *Il Tevere* and *Quadrivio*.[3]
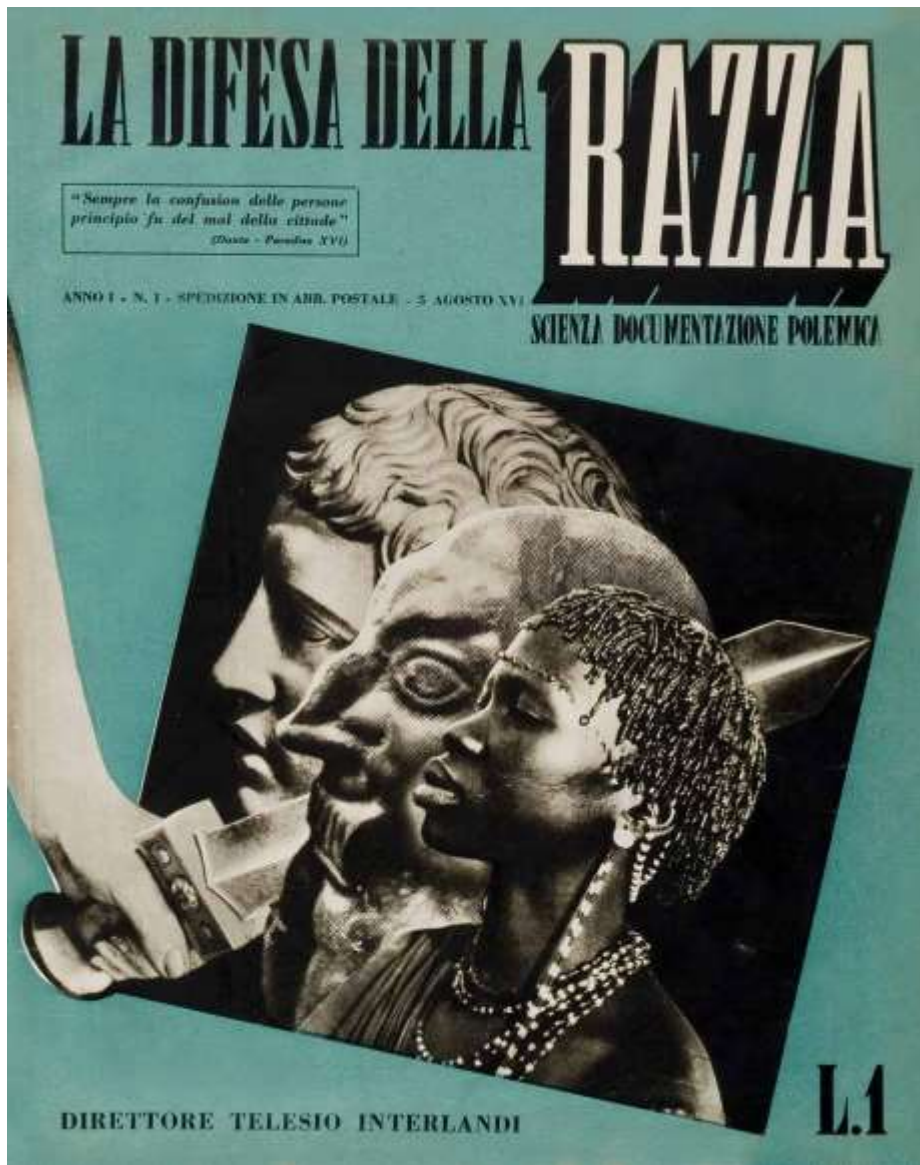
Figure 1. Idalgo Palazzetti, [Untitled], cover photomontage of *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938).

(Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1999); FRANCO CUOMO, *I dieci. Chi erano i professori che firmarono il Manifesto della Razza*, repr. (Milan: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2005; Acireale: Bonanno, 2017). The historiography on the racial laws and their consequences is abundant. For an extensive bibliography on racial studies, see VALERIA GALIMI, 'Politica della razza, antisemitismo, Shoah,' *Studi storici* 55, no. 1 (2014): 169–81.

[3] On Interlandi, see MICHELE SARFATTI, 'Telesio Interlandi,' in *Dizionario del fascismo*, eds SERGIO LUZZATTO and VICTORIA DE GRAZIA, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi, 2019), 673–74; MAURO CANALI, 'Interlandi, Telesio,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 100 vols., vol. 62 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2004), 519–21; GIAMPIERO MUGHINI, *A via della Mercede c'era un razzista*, repr. (Milan: Rizzoli, 1990; Venice: Marsilio, 2019).

The fortnightly magazine aimed to develop and disseminate a scientific doctrine of race that would justify colonial policy and, above all, discrimination against Jews. As the first article stated,

> with the creation of the Empire the Italian race has come in contact with other races; therefore, it should be wary of any hybridism and contamination. 'Racist' laws in such a sense have already been elaborated and applied, with Fascist energy, in the territories of the Empire.[4]

After Italy's 1936 conquest of Ethiopia, and the laws against 'madamism' and Jews in 1937 and 1938, according to Interlandi: 'This magazine was born at the right time. The first phase of the racist controversy is over, science has spoken, the Regime has proclaimed the urgency of the problem.'[5]

The purpose was thus to convince the public that colonialism, the ban on mixed marriages, and recent persecution measures were legitimate and necessary for defending Italians from racial degeneration. In short, it was time to spread the scientific and aesthetic Fascist theories about race: 'we will popularize, with the help of scholars of various disciplines related to the problem, the fundamental concepts upon which the doctrine of Italian racism is based; and we will prove that science is on our side.'[6]

As we read in the advertisements announcing the release of the new periodical, alongside the articles by journalists and anthropologists, the images would be no less important.[7]

Indeed, they were perhaps the periodical's most persuasive communication tool, especially thanks to the medium of photomontage, solidified by its success in many of the regime's exhibitions. This cut-and-paste technique of assembling images and texts offered a way to disassemble, reassemble, and manipulate heterogeneous sources, weaving them into a new texture: a modern language mobilised to engage the beholder through violent visual propaganda.[8] The first cover by Idalgo Palazzetti, a member of the GUF (Fascist University Groups) in Perugia,[9] quoted above, serves as a prime example.

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[4] 'Il partito e il razzismo italiano,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 2.

[5] T.I. [TELESIO INTERLANDI], [Untitled], *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 3.

[6] T.I., [Untitled]: 3.

[7] 'Sabato uscirà la rivista "La difesa della razza,"' *Corriere della Sera*, August 3, 1938: 2; 'Il primo numero della "Difesa della Razza,"' *Quadrivio* 6, no. 41 (August 7, 1938): 1.

[8] On photomontage in Italian magazines of this period, see SILVIA BIGNAMI, 'Il fotomontaggio nelle riviste illustrate degli anni Trenta tra ricerche d'avanguardia e cultura visiva di massa,' in *Forme e modelli del rotocalco italiano tra fascismo e guerra*, eds RAFFAELE DE BERTI and IRENE PIAZZONI (Milan: Cisalpino, 2009), 591–624, republished in *Gli anni Trenta a Milano. Tra architetture, immagini e opere d'arte*, eds SILVIA BIGNAMI and PAOLO RUSCONI (Milan: Mimesis, 2014), 199–222.

[9] Idalgo Palazzetti, an artist who excelled in poster design, as written by UMBRO APOLLONIO, 'Trieste. La mostra dei Littoriali,' *Emporium* 89, no. 533 (May 1939): 330–34 (333), is mostly associated with the famous cover of the racist periodical. Cf. CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza,'* 342–43; SIMONE DURANTI, *Lo spirito gregario. I gruppi universitari fascisti tra politica e propaganda (1930–1940)* (Rome: Donzelli, 2008), 340.

He arranged the three human faces on a single diagonal, an invitation to observers to make a comparison that would inevitably draw their attention to the evident, striking differences. The idea of a strict hierarchy between the races was also conveyed by the use of different visual sources including a classical statue;[10] a sculpted 'caricature from the third century, belonging to the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier';[11] and an ethnographic photograph by Lidio Cipriani, director of the National Museum of Anthropology in Florence and a contributor to the regime's racist magazine.[12] Those watching the montage thus ended up associating Italians with the perfect head of a classical sculpture, Jews with the hooked profile of a defamatory caricature, and black people with the prognathic face taken in Africa only a few years earlier.

These images had been circulating for some time. In fact, between 1937 and 1939, the anti-Jewish relief had been published with articles in both *Quadrivio* and *La Difesa della razza*: from Interlandi's 'Parliamo del razzismo' (Let's talk about racism) to Marcello Ricci's text on the 'biological legacies of racism' (fig. 2), through to Herman de Vries de Heekelingen's thoughts on the 'eternal Jewish question' (fig. 3).[13] The same is true for the Shilluk woman, who had already appeared in the popular weekly *La Domenica del Corriere* in an article showing the special hairstyles, tattoos, and colourful

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[10] Some recognise the Doryphoros of Polycletus: CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza,'* 343; OLINDO DE NAPOLI, *La prova della razza. Cultura giuridica e razzismo in Italia negli anni Trenta* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2009), 190; MARCO GIUMAN, *'La difesa della razza*: come educare all'odio per immagini,' in *Nigra subucula induti. Immagine, classicità e questione della razza nella propaganda dell'Italia fascista*, eds MARCO GIUMAN and CIRO PARODO (Padua: Cleup, 2011), 165–196 (182–83); MARLA STONE, 'Italian Fascism's Wartime Enemy and the Politics of Fear,' in *Facing Fear. The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective*, eds MICHAEL LAFFAN and MAX WEISS (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 114–32 (123); LUCIA PICCIONI, 'Images of Black Faces in Italian Colonialism: Mobile Essentialisms,' *Modern Italy* 27, no. 4 (2022), 375–96. Some, however, identify it as 'a portrait from the Augustan era': SIMONE VERDE, *Le belle arti e i selvaggi. La scoperta dell'altro, la storia dell'arte e l'invenzione del patrimonio culturale* (Venice: Marsilio, 2019), 160.

[11] As the photograph caption in the article by MARCELLO RICCI, 'Eredità biologiche e razzismo,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 19.

[12] Anthropologists like Cipriani were actively involved in the creation of the 'anthropology of race': MARIA PIA DI BELLA, 'Ethnologie et fascisme: quelques exemples,' *Ethnologie française* 18, no. 2 (1988): 131–36; BARBARA SÒRGONI, 'Racist Discourses and Practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism,' in *The Politics of Recognizing Difference: Multiculturalism Italian Style*, eds RALPH GRILLO and JEFF PRATT (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 41–57. On Cipriani and photography, see LIDIO CIPRIANI, 'Per la fotografia a servizio della scienza,' *AFT. Rivista di storia e fotografia* 6, no. 11 (1990): 20 (originally appeared in 1934 in *Rivista di Biologia*); JACOPO MOGGI-CECCHI, 'La vita e l'opera scientifica di Lidio Cipriani,' *AFT. Rivista di storia e fotografia* 6, no. 11 (1990): 11–18; PAOLO CHIOZZI, 'Gli album fotografici di Lidio Cipriani (1927–1955),' *AFT. Rivista di storia e fotografia* 6, no. 11 (1990): 21–28; PAOLO CHIOZZI, 'Autoritratto del razzismo: le fotografie antropologiche di Lidio Cipriani,' in *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, ed. CENTRO FURIO JESI, exhibition catalogue (Bologna: Grafis, 1994), 91–94; LUCAS O. IANNUZZI, 'Lidio Cipriani (1892–1962), the Photographs in His Popular Science Literature,' *Nuncius* 36, no. 3 (2021): 611–45. On the visual and museum aspects of Cipriani's collections, see also LUCIA PICCIONI, 'Dupliquer et hiérarchiser l'humanité,' *Passés Futurs*, no. 6 (2019), https://www.politika.io/fr/article/dupliquer-hierarchiser-lhumanite; LUCIA PICCIONI, 'Empreintes de l'altérité. Moulages faciaux Africains et conceptions de la "race" dans l'Italie fasciste,' in *Valeurs et matérialité*, ed. FRÉDÉRIC KECK (Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2019), 81–94.

[13] TELESIO INTERLANDI, 'Parliamo del razzismo,' *Quadrivio* 5, no. 23 (April 1937): 1; RICCI, 'Eredità biologiche e razzismo,' 19; HERMAN DE VRIES DE HEKELINGEN, 'L'eterna questione ebraica e la sua soluzione,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 1 (November 5, 1939): 29–31. For a discussion of these sculptures, which are not recognised as anti-Semitic caricatures, see GIUMAN, *'La difesa della razza,'* 184–85.

accessories of the indigenous[14] (fig. 4). But the same girl had been immortalised in other similar photographs. One of these, almost identical except for the different direction of the protagonist's gaze, could be found in Cipriani's book *In Africa dal Capo al Cairo* of 1932, next to a page that dwells on the mental inferiority of black women, which bordered 'often on outright stupidity,' we read[15] (fig. 5).

Figure 2. *Caricatura di Ebreo, del III secolo, esistente nel 'Rheinisches Landesmuseum,' di Treviri*, photograph from Marcello Ricci, 'Eredità biologiche e razzismo,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 19.

Figure 3. [Untitled], images from Herman De Vries De Hekelingen, 'L'eterna questione ebraica e la sua soluzione,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 1 (November 5, 1939): 30.

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[14] ARMANDO FRACCAROLI, 'Eleganze dei negri,' *La Domenica del Corriere* 36, no. 5 (February 4, 1934): 8–9 (8).

[15] LIDIO CIPRIANI, *In Africa dal Capo al Cairo* (Florence: Bemporad, 1932), 586. The same image would later be reproduced in the photomontage in the article by RITA HAUSCHILD, 'Gli incroci negro-cinesi,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 10 (March 20, 1940): 51–52 (51). While a frontal photograph of the same woman is published in CIPRIANI's article 'Razzismo,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 12–13 (13); EDMONDO VERCELLESI, 'Le razze dell'Impero,' *La Difesa della razza* 2, no. 13 (May 5, 1939): 35–37 (35).

Figure 4. *Questa pettinatura a tetto di capanna, con la quale una giovane Shilluk […]*, photograph from Armando Fraccaroli, 'Eleganze dei negri,' *La Domenica del Corriere* 36, no. 5 (February 4, 1934): 8.

Figure 5. *Donne Scilluk*, photograph from Lidio Cipriani, *In Africa dal Capo al Cairo* (Florence: Bemporad, 1932), 587, figure 278.

The volume and the articles sought to reaffirm racial diversity and inculcate in the Italian masses the regime's political imperatives. The photomontage also aimed to signal the supposed distance between white people and other races, Africans and Jews, and the irreducible inferiority of the latter.

The profile view of the three heads in the montage thus emphasised not only the stereotypical Jewish nose, which has a long tradition in Western visual culture,[16] but also the prognathism of the African face, equally well known thanks to the nineteenth-century obsession with ranking human races. For instance, the Dutch anatomist Petrus Camper systematised faces by facial angle in the eighteenth century

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[16] On the stereotypical Jewish nose, see, among others, MELVIN KONNER, *The Jewish Body* (New York: Schocken, 2009); SARA LIPTON, 'The Invention of the Jewish Nose,' *The New York Review*, November 14, 2014, https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/11/14/invention-jewish-nose/; GIOVANNI TARANTINO, 'From Labelling and Ridicule to Understanding: The Novelty of Bernard and Picart's Religious Comparativism,' in *Through Your Eyes: Religious Alterity and the Early Modern Western Imagination*, eds GIOVANNI TARANTINO and PAOLA VON WYSS-GIACOSA (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 236–66 (238–44); also, on the Nazi case, KONSTANTIN AKINSHA, 'Il naso di Alfred Flechtheim. Antisemitismo e immagini nella propaganda nazista,' *Storicamente* 5, no. 54 (2009), https://storicamente.org/antisemitismo-akinsha.

along a spectrum beginning with apes, then black people and finally white people, characterised by the perfect proportions exemplified in ancient Greek statues.[17] His illustrations became famous and inspired many other versions,[18] and were later republished by the racist magazine in one of its articles on prognathism as a 'distinguishing feature of the race.' The analysis of facial proportions was therefore based on precise 'canons,' on 'anatomical and artistic laws,' and ancient masterpieces of art history, such as the Apollo of Belvedere, the Venus de Milo, and even Leonardo's drawings, were instrumentally mentioned.[19]

Greek, Roman, Renaissance works of art: all could become a weapon to claim the superiority of whiteness. Significantly, even the sword-armed hand on Palazzetti's cover, often overlooked and dismissed as a mere gladius,[20] seems to come from a masterpiece of Italian art: specifically, from a reversed photograph of Antonio Canova's sculpture, *Perseus with the head of Medusa*.[21] It was the sword of the famous hero of Greek mythology, the slayer of the gorgon Medusa, that divided and defended the civilised races from the lesser ones. An expedient that brought to mind other images from the same period. For example, in this Fips (Philipp Rupprecht) cartoon for the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer*, we see a sword engraved with the inscription 'Nuremberg Laws' dividing the beautiful, white, Aryan couple from a group of ugly, hook-nosed Jews (fig. 6).[22]

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[17] For an overview of Camper, see MIRIAM CLAUDE MEIJER, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722–1789)* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). On Camper and the introduction of ancient marble masterpieces in the sequence of human faces, see ANNE LAFONT, *L'art et la race. L'Africain (tout) contre l'œil des Lumières* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2019), 85–130.

[18] E.g., JULIEN-JOSEPH VIREY, *Histoire naturelle du genre humain*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie de F. Dufart, 1800), pl. IV, and later editions like JULIEN-JOSEPH VIREY, *Histoire naturelle du genre humain, nouvelle édition, augmentée et entièrement refondue avec figures*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Bruxelles: Aug. Walen Libraire Imprimeur de la Cour, 1826), pl. VIII.

[19] EDMONDO VERCELLESI, 'Il prognatismo. Carattere differenziale della razza,' *La Difesa della razza* 2, no. 8 (February 20, 1939): 27. Camper's plates also appear in GUIDO LANDRA, 'Antropologia. Forme esterne nel corpo umano, variazioni nel sesso e nell'età,' *La Difesa della razza* 4, no. 12 (April 20, 1941): 18–20.

[20] From the description of the logo made by the magazine itself: 'The very title of our magazine and the small coat of arms with the gladius separating the Jew and the Negro from the Roman refer specifically to the problem of crossbreeding.' GUIDO LANDRA, 'Studi italiani sul meticciato,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 10 (March 20, 1940): 8–10 (8).

[21] Many thanks to Federica Rovati for the correct insight. For an Anderson photograph taken from a similar angle, see STENDHAL, 'La gloria del Canova,' *Dedalo* 3, no. 2 (1922–1923): 312–40 (325); Fondazione Zeri, Bologna, http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/scheda/fotografia/145711/And erson%20-%20Roma%20-%20Il%20Perseo%20-%20Antonio%20Canova%20%20Museo%20Vatica no%20-%20insieme.

[22] On this cartoon, see ERNST H. GOMBRICH, 'The Cartoonist Armoury,' in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art*, ed. ERNST H. GOMBRICH (London: Phaidon Press, 1963), 127–42 (138–39) [It. transl. CAMILLA ROATTA, *Le armi del vignettista*, in *A cavallo di un manico di scopa. Saggi di teoria dell'arte* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), 192–215]; PAOLA PALLOTTINO, 'Origini dello stereotipo fisionomico dell'"ebreo" e sua permanenza nell'iconografia antisemita del Novecento,' in CENTRO FURIO JESI, ed., *La menzogna della razza*, 17–26 (22–23).

Figure 6. Fips [Philipp Rupprecht], 'Rassenschutz,' caricature from *Der Stürmer*, no. 25 (June 1938): 1.

No doubt for compositional reason, but equally for its symbolic value, *La Difesa della razza*'s first cover was so popular that it was replicated in the next two issues and became the official logo of the periodical.[23] According to a blurb published in *Quadrivio* in September, it had been 'a huge success due to the happiness of the idea and the sobriety of the realisation';[24] but the work had only just begun. After receiving compliments from Benito Mussolini,[25] Interlandi thus announced a 'permanent competition' for the future covers of the review, in the hope of recruiting new graphic designers, with one thousand lire up for grabs for each accepted cover.[26] The

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[23] *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 2 (August 20, 1938) and no. 3 (September 5, 1938). The first three issues of the magazine and their covers were criticised at the time by FRANK M. SNOWDEN JR., 'Race Propaganda in Italy,' *Phylon* 1, no. 2 (1940): 103–11.

[24] 'Concorso permanente per la copertina della Difesa della razza,' *Quadrivio* 6, no. 47 (September 18, 1938): 8. The same advertisement also appeared in *Il Tevere*, cf. CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza*,' 343–44.

[25] [Untitled], *Quadrivio* 6, no. 42 (August 14, 1938): 1.

[26] 'Concorso permanente per la copertina della Difesa della razza,' 8. On the magazine covers, see CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza*,' 342–51; GIUMAN, *'La difesa della razza*'; for the anti-Semitic ones, GUIDO GRAMIGNI, 'L'antisemitismo nelle copertine de "La Difesa della Razza,"' in *Matite razziste. L'antisemitismo nell'illustrazione del periodo fascista*, eds GIOVANNA LAMBRONI and DORA LISCIA BEMPORAD (Florence: Edifir, 2015), 95–109; for some useful hints, see also GIULIANA TOMASELLA, 'La rappresentazione

advertisement encouraged artists to create photographic montages, either in colour or black and white, and the only recommendation was to create an effective composition, fully consistent with the editorial line, and easily accessible to the 'great mass' of readers.[27]

Figure 7. [Untitled], cover photomontage of *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 2 (November 20, 1939).

Figure 8. *Ai pozzi di Gullui (Morelli o Fontanesi?)*, photograph from T. Doria, 'Africa d'oggi (Due diari di viaggio),' *Rassegna d'espansione italiana. Illustrazione coloniale* 16, no. 10 (October 1934): 36.

Things worked out very differently. The idea of attracting prominent artists foundered. However, the magazine continued to churn out covers, rarely signed, and mostly done with the photomontage technique, which became an everyday pictorial language. The sources were many and varied: from Cipriani's photographs to readily available images from current newspapers or postcards.[28] The compositions, on the other hand, were

dell'alterità africana negli anni fra le due guerre,' in *Imago animi. Volti dal passato*, exhibition catalogue (Padua: Università degli Studi di Padova; Cles: Comune di Cles, 2018), 28–31.

[27] 'Concorso permanente per la copertina della Difesa della razza,' 8. The certified print run of the first four issues of the magazine is as follows: 140,500, 140,000, 130,000, and 150,000 copies. See 'Certificazione,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 5 (October 5, 1938): 7. This is an impressive print run, at the relatively low price of one lira per booklet, as explained by CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza*,' 56–57. See Cassata also for further information on the distribution of the magazine in schools and libraries as a result of the circulars issued by the Minister of National Education, Giuseppe Bottai.

[28] Two more examples in addition to figures 5–6: the photograph *Barentù: tipo Cunama* from Cipriani's album *Raccolta fotografica. Africa Orientale: Eritrea* (Archivio Fotografico Toscano, Prato) for the cover of

often unsophisticated, both visually and in terms of content, which hinged on the dualisms of black and white, Aryan and Jewish, to elicit fear and disgust at the practice of miscegenation.[29] A small red fence depicted in the very foreground, above the photograph of some African women near a water well, was enough to give the idea of a clear separation: on one side were the white, Italian readers of Interlandi's magazine, on the other the black people (figs. 7–8).

Beauty and Monstrosity

The photomontage technique was not restricted to the covers of the magazine. In July 1941, for instance, a two-page montage extended this technique to the inside pages. On the first page, an image of a white man had been superimposed onto a picture of indigenous huts; on the second, a black woman wearing a lip disc had been superimposed onto a photograph of Modena Cathedral. 'The harmony of the race is also harmony between the race and the environment it creates,' the caption read: 'See how this young Aryan man's face contrasts with the desolate African landscape and how the admirable architectural background repels the deformed face of this negress'[30] (fig. 9).

As is evident, both the images and the words revealed a patent hostility towards Africans. This is understood even more clearly by identifying the visual materials used in the assembly. To begin with, the photograph of the woman had been taken by the Austrian anthropologist Hugo Adolf Bernatzik, who had published it in his book *The Dark Continent* a decade earlier.[31] The cut-out chosen for the montage came from *Le razze e i popoli della terra* (Races and peoples of the earth), a series of volumes edited by Renato Biasutti in 1941, together with other Italian scholars. Here we see that the woman's shoulders and bare breasts were cropped out of the original image[32] (figs. 10–11).

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no. 24 (October 20, 1939); the postcard *L'Afrique qui disparait. 92. Ruanda – Un Mutudzi* by C. Zagourski for the cover no. 24 (October 20, 1940).

[29] As has been observed, the dualism of black and white had long implied many other dualisms in Western thought since early modern history; for an in-depth study, see GIOVANNI TARANTINO, *Feeling White. Beneath and Beyond*, in *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe*, eds ANDREW LYNCH and SUSAN BROOMHALL (London: Routledge, 2020), 303–19.

[30] From the image caption, *La Difesa della razza* 4, no. 17 (July 5, 1941): 8–9.

[31] It was also published in Italy: UGO ADOLFO BERNATZIK [HUGO ADOLF BERNATZIK], *Il continente nero. Africa. La Terra e l'Uomo* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1931), 23.

[32] RENATO BIASUTTI, 'I Negri del Sùdan centrale ed orientale,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. RENATO BIASUTTI, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 204–36 (224). At the time, Biasutti was professor of geography and biology of human races at the University of Florence. On the scholar and his work, see ERNESTA CERULLI, 'Biasutti, Renato,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 100 vols., vol. 10 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1968), 296–98; CLAUDIO POGLIANO, *L'ossessione della razza. Antropologia e genetica nel XX secolo* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2005), 386–402.

Figure 9. *L'armonia della razza è anche l'armonia fra la razza e l'ambiente che essa si crea. Guardate come contrasta il volto di questo giovane ariano con il desolato paesaggio africano e come il mirabile sfondo architettonico respinge il volto deforme di questa negra*, photomontage from Giulio Cogni, 'Armonie di razze,' *La Difesa della razza* 4, no. 17 (July 5, 1941): 8–9.
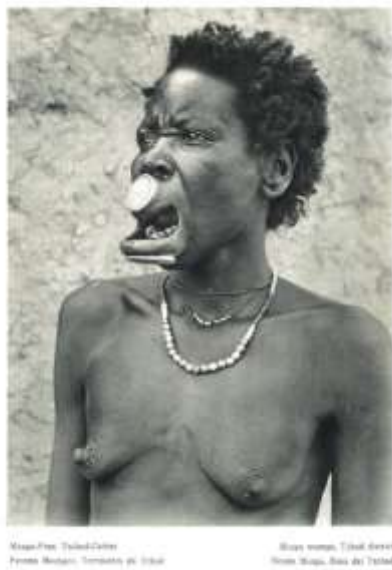
Figure 10. *Donna Musgu, Zona del Tschad*, photograph from Ugo Adolfo Bernatzik [Hugo Adolf Bernatzik], *Il continente nero. Africa. La Terra e l'Uomo* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1931), 23.

Figure 11. *Donna Musgu, con duplice disco labiale*, photograph from Renato Biasutti, 'I Negri del Sùdan centrale ed orientale,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. Renato Biasutti, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 224.

As can be seen from the caption, this was a Musgu woman from the Chad area of central Africa, a place where, as Biasutti wrote, the use of buttons or labial discs was very common. Often, he recounted, the weight made the discs hang downwards; at other times, they broke and, as they could not be replaced, gave the women 'an even more repulsive look.'[33] Repelling, deformity, repugnance: these are the keywords associated with the images of these women, both in *La Difesa della razza* and in Biasutti's text, as in many others.[34] This was nothing new. Indeed, it was not the first time that Interlandi's periodical had used the image of a black woman to suggest her presumed physical unpleasantness. The case of the portrait of Saartjie Baartman, a Khoisan woman known since the nineteenth century as the 'Hottentot Venus,' is exemplary.

Although some attempts to denigrate African women dated back to the victory in Ethiopia, when the regime had unsuccessfully tried to forbid interracial unions between colonisers and the colonised,[35] Baartman's dark-skinned figure appeared again only in 1938, in the first issue of the racist periodical (fig. 12).[36] She had been a genuine icon in the past, with hundreds of portraits and satirical prints of her being disseminated since her presentation to the European public in London and Paris.[37] During these exhibitions, she attracted crowds of visitors mainly for her steatopygia (enlarged buttocks), but her body had also been the subject of scientific curiosity, as evidenced by various illustrations by naturalists and scholars. A century later, the Fascist newspaper also drew on this rich iconographic apparatus, and the engraving first published in Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Frédéric Cuvier's book, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères*, was passed off as a real photograph (fig. 13).[38]

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[33] BIASUTTI, 'I Negri del Sùdan centrale ed orientale,' 204–36 (224).

[34] E.g., 'Eva africana allo specchio in cerca di grazie occidentali,' *Corriere della Sera*, October 21, 1938: 6. See the other examples mentioned by PRISCILLA MANFREN, *Icone d'Oltremare nell'Italia fascista: artisti, illustratori e vignettisti alla conquista dell'Africa* (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2019), 190–91.

[35] On the visual consequences of this controversy, see the recent studies by VANESSA RIGHETTONI, *Bianco su nero. Iconografia della razza e guerra d'Etiopia* (Macerata: Quodlibet; Milan: Fondazione Passarè, 2018), 55–80; ALESSANDRO VOLPI, 'Da Veneri nere a sudice e fetide: immagini italiane delle donne africane negli anni Trenta,' *Visual History*, no. 4 (2018): 91–111.

[36] G.L. [GUIDO LANDRA], 'I bastardi,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5,1938): 16–17 (17).

[37] On Baartman's visual representation, see ZOË S. STROTHER, 'Display of the Body Hottentot,' in *Africans on Stage. Studies in Ethnological Show Business*, ed. BERNTH LINDFORS (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1–61; NICHOLAS HUDSON, 'The "Hottentot Venus" Sexuality, and the Changing Aesthetics of Race, 1650–1850,' *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 41, no. 1 (2008): 19–41; ALISON E. WRIGHT, 'The Hottentot Venus: An Alternative Iconography,' *The British Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (2013): 59–70; ALISON E. WRIGHT, 'The Face of Saartjie Baartman: Rowlandson, Race and the "Hottentot Venus,"' in *Burning Bright. Essays in Honour of David Bindman*, eds DIANA DETHLOFF et al. (London: UCL Press, 2015), 115–25; KATHERINE BRION, 'Courbet's The Bathers and the "Hottentot Venus": Destabilizing Whiteness in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Nude,' *Word & Image* 35, no. 1 (2019): 12–32.

[38] As the image caption said; cf. ÉTIENNE GEOFFROY SAINT-HILAIRE and FRÉDÉRIC CUVIER, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères*, 5 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: C. de Lasteyrie, 1819), plate 39. These plates had already circulated in the late nineteenth century in scientific texts, see RAPHAËL BLANCHARD, 'Étude sur la stéatopygie et le tablier des femmes boschimanes,' in *Observations sur le tablier des femmes hottentotes*, eds

This was not the most important misrepresentation, given that the misleading caption presented the woman as the product of a mix between Bushmen and Dutch farmers who had settled in Africa. She was a 'monster of nature,' they asserted bluntly, and it was by no means an isolated case; on the contrary, she represented 'the most genuine specimen of a human type,' namely a 'Nation of Bastards.'[39] Next to the naked female silhouette, seen only in profile, were photographs of the 'Rehoboth Bastards'; while on the previous page there was an article by the anthropologist Guido Landra, 'I bastardi' (The Bastards), focused on the danger of miscegenation.[40] As studies have shown, the aim was certainly not to clarify Baartman's origin. Following the regime's racist policies, the priority was to prove that crossbreeding between white people and black people produced nefarious, monstrous outcomes.[41]

Not surprisingly, in the same years, the exact same image of the Hottentot Venus would be republished on other occasions. In 1941, Cipriani would use it to talk about the 'impressive' steatopygia of Hottentot women and their drooping breasts in his essay within Biasutti's book (fig. 14).[42] Shortly before it also appeared in *La Difesa della razza* to illustrate Eugene Fischer's research on the 'Rehoboth Bastards' (fig. 15),[43] together with even older images, such as a famous frontispiece from Peter Kolb's 1719 account of Khoikhoi customs depicting the meeting between half-naked Africans and fully clothed Dutchmen.[44] The purpose was always the same: to point out the

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FRANÇOIS PERON et al. (Meulan: Imprimerie de la Société Zoologique de France, 1883), 41, figures 1–2; 70.

[39] From the image caption in G.L., 'I bastardi,' 16–17 (17).

[40] G.L., 'I bastardi,' 16–17. He never quoted the source of the pictures of the 'Rehoboth Bastards,' i.e., Eugen Fischer's study, because it disavowed Baartman's ascription to that 'mixed' community, as observed by BARBARA SÒRGONI, 'Defending the race. The Italian reinvention of the Hottentot Venus during Fascism,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, no. 3 (2003): 411–24 (420–21). Regardless, the use of German photographic sources in the Italian magazine was extensive, as noted at the time: 'Editorial Notes. Italian "Racism" and Islam in Africa,' *Journal of the Royal African Society* 38, no. 151 (April 1939): 216–17.

[41] BARBARA SÒRGONI, 'La Venere Ottentotta. Un'invenzione antropologica per "La difesa della razza,"' *Il Mondo* 3, no. 2 (1995): 366–75; BARBARA SÒRGONI, 'Defending the race': 411–24. On racist discourse and anthropology in the same newspaper, see also MARIA TERESA MÌLICIA, 'La Maschera e il Volto: l'identificazione del nemico nella "Difesa della Razza,"' *Voci. Annuale di Scienze Umane*, no. 7–8 (2010–2011): 123–53; MARIA TERESA MÌLICIA, 'Forging the New World: an Anthropological Gaze into *La Difesa della Razza* Panopticon,' in *World Art and the Legacies of Colonial Violence*, ed. DAN RYCROFT (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 153–73; SOPHIE NEZRI-DUFOUR, 'La notion de peuple et de race italique dans la revue *La difesa della razza*, publiée en Italie de 1938 à 1943,' *Cahiers d'études romanes*, no. 35 (2017): 477–91.

[42] LIDIO CIPRIANI, 'Gli Ottentotti (Koi-Koin),' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. RENATO BIASUTTI, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 378–94. Referring to an ancient stereotype witnessed in many engravings dating back to the early modern age, Cipriani wrote that the breasts of Hottentot women were so saggy that they could be turned backwards to suckle babies resting on their shoulders; for some examples see images in THOMAS HERBERT, *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Africa, and Asia the Great* (London: Printed by R. Everingham for R. Scot, T. Basset, F. Wright, and R. Chiswell, 1677), 18; PETER KOLB, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Espérance; où l'on trouve tout ce qui concerne l'histoire-naturelle du pays; la religion, les mœurs & les usages des Hottentots; et l'établissement des Hollandois*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Jean Catuffe, 1741), unnumbered plate (between p. 270 and p. 271).

[43] EUGENE FISCHER, 'I bastardi di Rehoboth,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 10 (March 20, 1940): 12–18.

[44] PETER KOLBEN [PETER KOLB], *Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum* (Nuremberg: Monath, 1719), frontispiece; and FISCHER, 'I bastardi di Rehoboth,' 12–18 (14).

differences between human races, to elicit shock and disgust at the idea of contamination, and to discourage miscegenation in the Italian colonies of East Africa. It did not matter that Italy had no colonies in South Africa or Khoisan people in its empire, or that the same was also true for the Chad territories and the Musgu people cast in the photomontage. All that mattered was stoking the racial discourse through impactful, hateful images.

Figure 12. [Untitled], images from G.L. [Guido Landra], 'I bastardi,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 1 (August 5, 1938): 17.

Figure 13. C.P. de Lasteyrie (engraving), Wermer (drawing), *Femme de race Bôchismanne*, engraving from Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Frédéric Cuvier, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères avec des figures originales enluminées, dessinées d'après des animaux vivants*, 5 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: C. de Lasteyrie, 1819), plate 39.

Figure 14. *La 'Venere Ottentotta' e una donna Ottentotta*, images from Lidio Cipriani, 'Gli Ottentotti (Koi-Koin),' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. Renato Biasutti, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 381.

Figure 15. *La famosa 'Venere ottentotta,'* engraving from Eugene Fischer, 'I bastardi di Rehoboth,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 10 (March 20, 1940): 12.

Using this visual strategy, the regime's magazine sought to shape the Fascist obsession with the purity and prestige of the race. But that was not all. The montage with the Musgu woman was included in an article by the philosopher Giulio Cogni entitled 'Armonie di razza' (Harmonies of race), that explored the concepts of 'harmony' and 'race' beginning with the question, 'can one speak of inferior and superior races by nature?'[45] In his text, he distinguished between 'true works of art' full of 'boundless harmony' and, conversely, 'defective works.'[46] So, just as there were minor and major artworks, there were also minor and major races, inferior and superior races, according to a hierarchy that put the 'perverted,' 'fallen' races in last place.[47] He alluded to those who were now 'corrupt' and 'bastardised': 'their substance is disharmonious; they are the direct children of the devil.'[48] The latter were not only inferior to the 'Aryan

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[45] GIULIO COGNI, 'Armonie di razza,' *La Difesa della razza* 4, no. 17 (July 5, 1941): 6–9. On Cogni's role in the racist campaign and the misfortune of his 'biological mysticism,' see CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza,'* 24–47.
[46] COGNI, 'Armonie di razza,' 6–9 (8).
[47] COGNI, 'Armonie di razza,' 6–9 (8).
[48] COGNI, 'Armonie di razza,' 6–9 (9).

blondes,' but also to 'any other good race of reds and niggers,' because, he explained, 'the healthy and smiling negro' was better than 'the sick and corrupt European.'[49]

On these dates, during the Second World War, there were many European enemies of Italy. Political and military adversity, linked to the ongoing events, thus added to racial differences. For that reason, the photomontage could be read in this twofold key: unquestionably hinged on the visual comparison with African otherness, but at the same time a clear assertion of Italian supremacy, now more urgent than ever in wartime. As we have seen, anything could be used to claim a strong identity: if the problem of race was 'a problem basically of divine proportion,' as Cogni argued, the presence of a monumental building in those delirious pages illustrating 'the architectural perfection of the race' was soon explained.[50]

Based on the principle of contrast, the assembly conveyed its racist message that tied 'harmony' to 'disharmony,' counteracting the Romanesque church with the face of the black woman, disfigured by the typical lip disc: on one side there was beauty, on the other monstrosity. As stated in the above-mentioned caption, what was intended to be emphasised was the solemnity of the 'admirable' structure. The effect was accentuated by the frontal and distant framing that favoured an overall view of the building, while glossing over the details of the medieval sculptures on the facade filled, this time for real, with fantastic and monstrous creatures.

By inserting the image of an illustrious church, known the world over, the photomonteur thus chose to use cultural heritage instrumentally, and thereby feed into the myth of Italian superiority. He appealed directly to the national pride of observers of his art. In this case we see a medieval building, but it was the same with the works of ancient Romans or Renaissance masters, recurring in the visual apparatuses of the magazine[51] and, before that, in numerous initiatives that delivered a stereotypical image of artistic beauties.[52] In other words, even the fine arts could be a propaganda tool, aimed at glorifying the greatness of Italian tradition and, consequently, its innate superiority.

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[49] COGNI, 'Armonie di razza,' 6–9 (9).

[50] COGNI, 'Armonie di razze,' 6–9 (6). For an analysis of this assembly in relation to other photomontages and the architectural debate, see VANESSA RIGHETTONI, '"La perfezione architettonica della razza". Alcuni fotomontaggi tra gli anni Trenta e Quaranta,' in *Il confronto con l'alterità tra Ottocento e Novecento. Aspetti critici e proposte visive*, ed. GIULIANA TOMASELLA (Macerata: Quodlibet; Milan: Fondazione Passarè, 2020), 103–15.

[51] For more examples, see PICCIONI, 'Images of Black Faces in Italian Colonialism,' 375–96.

[52] For example, the Augustan Exhibition of Romanity in 1937. An extensive bibliography exists on the visual rhetoric of Romanity during Fascism. For an overview of the propagandistic use of cultural heritage, see VERDE, *Le belle arti e i selvaggi*, 145–96. On artistic heritage as an instrument of Western cultural hegemony, these recent studies are also useful: MARIA PIA GUERMANDI, *Decolonizzare il patrimonio. L'Europa, l'Italia e un passato che non passa* (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2021); SIMONA TROILO, *Pietre d'oltremare. Scavare conservare, immaginare l'Impero (1899–1940)* (Rome: Laterza, 2021).

Ultimately, while art historians debated the most appropriate measures to take to protect monuments from bombing,[53] *La Difesa della razza*'s photomontage related race to culture, architecture, and landscape, mobilising the rhetoric of beauty in the context of war. Race, cultural heritage, and environment were inextricably intertwined.

In this context, it seems worth considering the purpose of the African straw piles in the other half of the montage. The visual comparison with the majestic religious house was obviously intended to celebrate Italian primacy above all else. But it also lent legitimacy to the many articles on the poor artistic skills of Africans, insistently depicted as being naturally incapable of creating artworks and building decent houses or buildings of worship. When contemporary newspapers cast their gaze on African artistic production, they often stressed the alleged lack of talent of black people, or, at any rate, their childlike creativity.

Many had expressed themselves in these terms since the time of the Ethiopian War, if not before that, both in art magazines such as *ABC Rivista d'arte* and *L'Artista moderno*, and in publications that gravitated towards Interlandi.[54] For example, *Quadrivio*, long engaged in artistic controversy, had in 1936 dismissed an African painting as a product of a 'crude artist.'[55] Yet, the contempt was then more explicitly marked in *La Difesa della razza*: first by lashing out against the art of the so-called 'savages,' equating it with that of 'demented people' and Jews;[56] then, going so far as to assert that 'the decadence of the races and cultures of the Dark Continent was confirmed by the deficiency in the balance and proportions of the figurative arts and music.'[57] Ethiopian art, specifically, was thus a clear sign of the 'state of regression of this people,' as the author argued, and the reasons were various: 'the childish technique, the lack of perspective, the crudeness of the colouring, the monotony of the subjects treated, both in sacred and profane figurations.'[58] Not even the housing structures were spared the harsh criticism. Indeed, in a January 1941 article, the *Rivista delle colonie* singled them out as yet another confirmation of the 'almost primordial primitiveness of the

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[53] In the late 1930s, after the Spanish Civil War and the bombing of the Prado Museum, an international debate began on the best protection strategies. For a bibliography, see VANESSA RIGHETTONI, *Vittorio Viale e l'Archivio fotografico dei Musei Civici di Torino. Dagli anni Trenta alla seconda guerra mondiale* (Udine: Forum, 2022), 73–74. In Italy, even the Minister of National Education had spoken out on the subject: GIUSEPPE BOTTAI, 'La tutela delle opere d'arte in tempo di guerra,' *Bollettino d'arte*, no. 10 (1938): 429; GIUSEPPE BOTTAI, 'La Protection des chefs-d'œuvre de l'esprit,' *Nouvelles littéraires* (February 12, 1938): 8.

[54] More information in RIGHETTONI, *Bianco su nero*, 127–28. On the 'art and race' controversy, see CASSATA, *'La Difesa della razza*,' 249–314; GIORGIO BACCI, '"L'ansiosa attenzione di tutti": "Emporium" intorno all'ottobre 1938,' in *Emporium II. Parole e figure tra 1895 e 1964*, eds GIORGIO BACCI and MIRIAM FILETI MAZZA (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2014), 479–507; LUCIA PICCIONI, *Art et fascisme. Peindre l'italianité, 1922-1943* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2020), 301–88.

[55] From the caption, *Quadrivio* 4, no. 27 (May 3, 1936): 1.

[56] DOMENICO PAOLELLA, 'Espressioni rappresentative di selvaggi, di dementi, di ebrei,' *La Difesa della razza* 2, no. 7 (February 5, 1939): 24–26: photographs of African artworks were near the so-called 'degenerate' ones. Cf. FRITZ KAISER, *Führer durch die Ausstellung Entartete Kunst* (Berlin: Verlag für Kultur und Wirtschaftswerbung, [1937]), 7, 19.

[57] ALESSANDRO LEONORI CECINA, 'L'arte etiopica e le sue possibilità,' *La Difesa della razza* 3, no. 18 (July 20, 1940): 24–26 (24).

[58] LEONORI CECINA, 'L'arte etiopica e le sue possibilità,' 24–26 (24).

Ethiopian peoples and their inability to achieve higher forms of living and thinking on their own.'[59]

These stereotypes were already established and widespread in Italy well before Fascism. One example is the description of indigenous art that was presented in Italy during the 1891–1892 National Exhibition in Palermo. As mentioned, African works of art were described as 'naïve,' 'childish,' demonstrating the cultural gap between Italy and the colonies.[60] For a long time now, the image of the African as a figure largely devoid of culture and certainly devoid of talent had firmly taken root. This was also suggested, at least in part, by the book from which the photograph of the stilts in the photomontage was taken. As with the image of the Musgu woman, it was clipped from one of Bernatzik's photographs recovered by Biasutti and related, this time, to the Giur (Luo) people (fig. 16). The accompanying text, signed by the ethnologist Renato Boccassino, did not provide much information. Only a few pages further on we find something about the artistic and architectural production of these Nilotic peoples: 'Neither clay, bronze nor ivory statues are made'; and then, 'In the huts, human or animal figures are crudely represented, accentuating some of their parts (eyes, limbs) grotesquely. Architecture is missing. Even the houses of the king and chiefs are crude thatched huts, cylindrical with conical roofs, larger than common.'[61]

The photograph of the cathedral was chosen from Alinari photographs from the early twentieth century, which had already been used to illustrate art history books and slides for educational purposes (fig. 17).[62] As was the case for the first cover by Palazzetti, the visual power of this composition also lay in the unusual combination of cut-outs: photographs of indigenous women and dwellings, with a clear ethnographic flavour, were mixed with images of famous Western works of art, created for publications of historical and artistic interest.

The same is true for many other covers and inside pages of the bimonthly. Indeed, within the large corpus of illustrations, we certainly do find images that are unsettling in topic and rendering: ranging from the comparison of photographs of fifteenth-century Madonnas and indigenous women,[63] up to the strange relationship between a statuette from Gabon and Michelangelo's allegory of Night, sculpted for the Medici tombs in the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. This was the montage for the October 5, 1941 front cover, where the sharp contrast between races, cultures, and

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[59] GUIDO GUIDI, 'Le abitazioni indigene di Addis Abeba,' *Rivista delle Colonie* 15, no. 1 (January 1941): 93–105 (93). LIDIO CIPRIANI's book, *Abitazioni indigene dell'Africa Orientale Italiana* (Naples: Edizioni della Mostra d'Oltremare, 1940) was published the previous year.

[60] CARMEN BELMONTE, *Arte e colonialismo in Italia. Oggetti, immagini, migrazioni (1882-1906)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2021), 118–20.

[61] RENATO BOCCASSINO, 'I Nilotici settentrionali,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. RENATO BIASUTTI, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 237–59 (257).

[62] See LAUDEDEO TESTI and NICCOLÒ RODOLICO, *Le arti figurative nella storia d'Italia. Il Medio Evo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1907), 382. On the Alinari slide purchased in 1927 by the Liceo Galvani in Bologna, where it is still preserved, see https://catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/PhotographicHeritage/080036 5686.

[63] 'Madri e figli di tutte le razze,' *La Difesa della razza* 1, no. 3 (September 5, 1938): 24–25.

values was expressed, once again, as a series of oppositions: the whiteness of Carrara marble and the blackness of African wood; the sinuous shapes of the Florentine sculpture and the rigid contours of the fetish, which was replicated some thirty times, almost as if to reaffirm the uniqueness of Michelangelo's work compared to that of Gabon.[64] With its visual multiplication of the same motif, already experienced in the great exhibitions of the regime, the photomontage technique sought to persuade as much as to provide content.

Figure 16. *Abitazioni su palafitte dei Giur (Luo) orientali*, photograph from Renato Boccassino, 'I Nilotici settentrionali,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. Renato Biasutti, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 253.

Figure 17. Alinari, *Facciata e campanile del Duomo di Modena*, photograph from Laudedeo Testi and Niccolò Rodolico, *Le arti figurative nella storia d'Italia. Il Medio Evo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1907), 382.

A month later, a new photomontage of *La Difesa della razza* contained visual attacks on 'Negro art': African artworks were face to face, this time, with Greco-Roman sculptures (fig. 18). Some of them were two Boyo fetishes from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Florence, which would soon disappear in Naples during the war, together with other artworks from the 1940 Triennial Exhibition of Italian Overseas Lands.[65] The image of the two African sculptures was cut from a

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[64] For an in-depth analysis of the montage, including images and visual sources, see RIGHETTONI, 'La perfezione architettonica della razza,' 103–15 (112–15).

[65] On this matter, see EZIO BASSANI, 'Due grandi sculture Buye già a Firenze,' *Critica d'arte* 45, no. 172–74 (July–December 1980): 164–72; GIGI PEZZOLI, '"Arte negra" alla Biennale di Venezia del 1922,' in *Ex Africa. Storie e identità di un'arte universale*, eds GIGI PEZZOLI and EZIO BASSANI, exhibition catalogue (Milan: Skira, 2019): 285–91. The exhibition in Naples, with its impressive architectural achievements,

photograph published in the aforementioned book by Biasutti(fig. 19).[66] The banal assembly was included in an article by Cogni, 'Inferiori e superiori' (Inferior and superior), which tried with difficulty to reconcile political and racial demands. The attempt was not to identify 'races,' said the philosopher, but rather inferior and superior 'peoples,' taking care to distinguish, for example, between Italians and their French enemies; or, again, warning against the seductions of the 'cheap beauty' of American films, far removed from authentic beauty which 'is also the health of the race,' he asserted.[67]

Ultimately, 'the race-beauty equation' was always valid, according to Cogni; but with the world conflict, the discourse became more complicated, and the visual comparison between Western and African art still played on two rigid polarities—positive and negative values, morality and immorality, beauty and ugliness, light and darkness, humanity and bestiality. The theme of race was thus likened to a struggle between good and evil, while, on these dates, the troops of the Italian army were about to be overwhelmed by the Allied advance in East Africa.[68] All illusion of empire, and racial policy, was already fading.

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indigenous villages, and exotic artefacts, was supposed to consecrate the Italian empire on the international stage. But with Italy's entry into the war and the end of its imperial dream, even the ethnic exhibits known in Europe for almost a century were out of the picture for good, as explained by GUIDO ABBATTISTA in *Umanità in mostra. Esposizioni etniche e invenzioni esotiche in Italia (1880-1940)* (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2013), 381–405. For an overview of colonial exhibitions during Fascism, see, among others, NICOLA LABANCA, *L'Africa in vetrina. Storie di musei e di esposizioni coloniali in Italia* (Treviso: Pagus, 1992); GIULIANA TOMASELLA, *Esporre l'Italia coloniale. Interpretazioni dell'alterità* (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2017).

[66] The photograph came from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Florence, as the caption reveals: RENATO BIASUTTI, 'Razze e culture africane,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. RENATO BIASUTTI, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 3–41 (35). However, it is no longer traceable in the museum's photographic archive. My thanks to Maria Gloria Rosselli for providing this information. On the museum, part of the University of Florence, see JACOPO MOGGI CECCHI and ROSCOE STANYON, eds, *Il Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze. Le collezioni antropologiche e etnologiche* (Florence: Florence University Press, 2014); MONICA ZAVATTARO, 'Le collezioni etnografiche del Museo di Storia Naturale di Firenze: storia e prospettive museologiche e museografiche,' *Museologia scientifica*, no. 8 (2014): 56–66.

[67] GIULIO COGNI, 'Inferiori e superiori,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 1 (November 5, 1941): 18–21.

[68] On colonial affairs in these years, see, among others, ANGELO DEL BOCA, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 4 vols. (Rome: Laterza, 1976–1984); NICOLA LABANCA, *Oltremare: storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002); ANGELO DEL BOCA, *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, (Rome: Laterza, 2008).

Figure 18. *Inferiori e superiori*, photomontage from Giulio Cogni, 'Inferiori e superiori,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 1 (November 5, 1941): 18–19.

Figure 19. *Arte plastica negra: feticci scolpiti in legno, maschio e femmina, dei Baluba, Congo*, photograph from Renato Biasutti, 'Razze e culture africane,' in *Le razze e i popoli della terra*, ed. Renato Biasutti, 4 vols., vol. 2, *Africa Asia* (Turin: UTET, 1941), 35.

Fragments of Caricatures

Things would become even more difficult for Italy in the final years of the war. But, once again, the racist journal was able to find an enemy to point at, drawing on the resources of the racist hate campaign it had been fomenting for some years. One section of the February 5, 1942 issue was entitled, significantly, *Jewmockracy*:[69] a portmanteau aimed, this time, at distilling into one word two recurring targets of Fascist propaganda: the dreaded Jews and the values they allegedly embodied, in this case democratic principles.[70]

Here too, for the layout of the internal pages, the magazine relied on the modern and eye-catching language of photomontage, mixing photographic fragments with drawings. Pictures and cartoons mingled with text explaining how the Jews had dragged America into the war.[71] They were the real culprits, the real enemies. Thus, amid the tall skyscrapers, the hideous and frightening face of a Hebrew stood tall, towering over two other characters: a white man and a black person depicted, as per stereotype, with large lips coloured white to stand out against the dark skin (fig. 20). It was a full-page collage devoted to Jewish and mixed American society. As Interlandi explained, the issue featured 'scenes and types of a racial degradation' that the world war had only made 'more topical'; in 'that wretched country the human species had produced the most bastard of creatures.'[72]

The montage was disguised, almost imperceptible given the inclusion of only graphic inserts. As in the famous first cover of *La Difesa della razza*, in this instance, too, the Jew was represented through caricature, meaning careful and intentional adoption of well-established imagery. In the cartoon, originally published in the Romanian newspaper *Porunca vremii*, the draftsman employed various means to elicit aversion to the Hebrew: first, through the powerful use of stereotypical features such as the hooked nose, curly beard, and fleshy lips; further, by representing the protagonist as a kind of monster with its claws on the planet, in keeping with a very old stereotype related to the so-called 'world Jewish conspiracy' and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.[73] Observers would immediately recognised those stable signs of racial difference.

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[69] 'Jewmockracy. Ebrei in U.S.A.,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (February 5, 1942): 39.

[70] For an example of visual propaganda against democratic countries, see VANESSA RIGHETTONI, 'Le grandi democrazie. La satira antifrancese di Livio Apolloni sulla "Gazzetta del Popolo,"' *Studi culturali* 16, no. 3 (2019): 429–53.

[71] JOHAN VON LEERS, 'Come i giudei hanno trascinato gli Stati Uniti in guerra,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (February 5, 1942): 40–43. In those years, the link between Jews and America was also the focus of many Italian cartoons. For examples, see CENTRO FURIO JESI, ed, *La menzogna della razza*, 153–54.

[72] T.I. [TELESIO INTERLANDI], [Untitled], *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (August 5, 1942): 6.

[73] This iconography circulated widely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, the cover by ALBERT ESNAULT, 'Leur patrie,' *La Libre Parole illustrée* 1, no. 16 (28 Octobre 1893); the cover by CHARLES LÉANDRE, 'Rothschild. Dieu protège Israël,' *Le Rire* 4, no. 180 (April 16, 1898); the caricature 'Das größte Getreide-Wucherthier der Welt,' in EDUARD FUCHS, *Die Juden in der Karikatur. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (München: Albert Langen, 1921), 201; and the cover of *Exposition Le Juif et la France au Palais Berlitz*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Institut d'étude des questions juives, 1941). Cf. MARIE-

The same cartoon was then republished in 1938 in the anti-Semitic French newspaper *Je Suis Partout*[74] (fig. 21) and finally picked up again by the unknown photomonteur of the Fascist magazine, who only retained the Jewish facial caricature from the original scene.

Figure 20. *Caos razziale*, photomontage from *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (February 5, 1942): 7.

Figure 21. *La mainmise sur le monde*, caricature from *Je Suis Partout* 9, no. 386 (April 15, 1938, special issue of 'Les Juifs'): 5.

This also happens a few pages later, with the publication of a caricature from the Turin newspaper *Gazzetta del Popolo*. Renamed 'The Wandering Jew' and removed from its background with Golgotha, the character is sandwiched between two photographs of elegant men with bourgeois attitudes, exponents of the 'North American plutocracy' (fig. 22).[75] The juxtaposition was intended to underscore Jewish involvement in American elections and political power. But the purpose of the original drawing (fig. 23), signed by Italian artist Amerigo Bartoli, had been entirely different.

ANNE MATARD-BONUCCI, 'La caricature témoin et vecteur d'internationalisation de l'antisémitisme: la figure du "juif-monde,"' in *Antisémythes. L'image des juifs entre culture et politique (1848-1939)*, ed. MARIE-ANNE MATARD-BONUCCI (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2005), 439–57.

[74] On the French magazine, see VALERIA GALIMI, 'La "guerre juive". La propaganda antisemita di "Je suis partout" nella Francia occupata,' *Italia contemporanea*, no. 207 (1997): 258–84; VALERIA GALIMI, 'Intellettuali e collaborazionismo: l'itinerario di "Je suis partout" tra Maurras e Hitler,' *Passato e presente* 18, no. 49 (2000): 69–95; VALERIA GALIMI, 'Une internationale antisémite des images? *Je suis partout* et le cas des caricatures,' in *Antisémythes*, 427–37.

[75] 'I giudei e le elezioni americane,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (February 5, 1942): 47.

Figure 22. *L'ebreo errante*, photomontage page from 'I giudei e le elezioni americane,' *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 7 (February 5, 1942): 47.

Figure 23. Amerigo Bartoli Natinguerra, *'Il sangue suo su noi e su i nostri figli' (Matteo, XXVII-25)*, caricature from *Gazzetta del Popolo*, September 15, 1938: 3.

Taken from a series of anti-Semitic cartoons published in 1938, in tandem with the promulgation of the Italian racial laws, it focused on deicide, the oldest of the accusations levelled at the Jewish people. The title, *'Il sangue suo su noi e su i nostri figli'* (His blood upon us and our children), was in fact a sentence uttered by the Jews in response to Pilate (Matthew 27:25). And the protagonist, seated and pensive was portrayed as he asked himself a question: 'I wonder why red attracts me...'. Those viewing the picture could imagine the answer: his attraction to red was part of him and his Jewish identity, indelibly stained by the blood of Christ.[76]

As is well known, blood libel is the accusation wielded against Jewish people since the Middle Ages that is constructed around the themes of deicide and ritual infanticide.[77] It was widely used in twentieth-century racist propaganda. In other issues,

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[76] For an in-depth discussion, see VANESSA RIGHETTONI, 'Le vignette antisemite sulla "Gazzetta del Popolo". 1938-1939,' *L'uomo nero* 12, no. 11–12 (2015): 320–39.

[77] On anti-Semitic medieval iconography, see BERNHARD BLUMENKRANZ, *Le juif médiéval au miroir de l'art chrétien* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966) [It. transl. *Il cappello a punta. L'ebreo medievale nello specchio dell'arte cristiana*, ed. CHIARA FRUGONI (Rome–Bari: Laterza, 2003)]; GABRIELLA FERRI PICCALUGA, 'Ebrei nell'iconografia del '400,' *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 52, no. 2–3 (1986), 357–95; SARA LIPTON, *Dark Mirror. The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014). On Jews in Christian art, see also ENRICO CASTELNUOVO, 'Osservazioni in margine alla presenza ebraica nel campo artistico,' in *Ebraismo e antiebraismo: immagine e pregiudizio* (Florence: La Giuntina, 1989), 51–57.

La Difesa della razza had also published ancient and contemporary prints relating to well-known episodes such as the alleged martyrdom of Simon of Trent, itself becoming part of an iconographic and, at the same time, hate tradition, which it thereby renewed and perpetuated.[78] But not this time.

This choice encouraged the perception of these images not, or not just, as a remnant of old stereotypes like the 'world Jewish conspiracy' or 'blood libel,' but as expressions of topical issues that concerned everyone closely. Jews were not part of an ancient, far-off tradition, at a safe distance from the readers; on the contrary, they were extremely close, so much so that they were influencing the ongoing war. On the other hand, the reference to red in Bartoli's cartoon also evoked Soviet communism, that is, Fascist Italy's supreme enemy. The juxtaposition of Jews and communists had a precedent in Nazi propaganda. Already in 1937, the Jew in the poster for the Munich anti-Semitic exhibition *Der ewige Jude* was flanked by the red hammer and sickle.[79]

The same stereotypes, and even the same images, thus circulated in different countries and editorial offices, ready to be reused, manipulated, and adapted time and again for specific propaganda purposes.[80] Clearly, the cases described here are just some of the many that can be found in the regime's magazine, where images and racial hatred were brought to the reader's attention again and again, throughout its entire run. But they can be considered cases in point for a more general understanding of the use of visual materials and stereotypes as tools in racist communication strategies. Photomontage, in particular, was intended to be quickly grasped. Meaning and message were often immediate: the message could be absorbed in a few seconds. The editorial challenge was thus to engage Italians with assemblies and fragments of photographs and caricatures, making use of distortions and exaggerations right from the magazine's first, hateful cover.

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[78] For example, the cover of *La Difesa della razza* 5, no. 6 (January 20, 1942), which showed medieval scenes already used by the Nazi *Der Stürmer*, no. 12 (May 1934). For a gallery of images, see MAGDA TETER, 'Simon of Trent: A Story of an Image,' *AJS Perspectives*, The Hate Issue (2020), https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/docs/default-source/ajs-perspectives/ajs-perspectives-hate-issue-teter.pdf?sfvrsn=c42f9306_0. Simon's case is at the centre of a recent study: *L'invenzione del colpevole: il 'caso' di Simonino da Trento dalla propaganda alla storia*, ed. DOMENICA PRIMERANO, exhibition catalogue (Trento: Museo Diocesano Tridentino-Temi Editrice, 2019). In addition, one book that has caused much controversy is ARIEL TOAFF'S *Pasque di sangue. Ebrei d'Europa e omicidi rituali*, rev. ed. (2007; Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008). It deals with the accusation levelled at Jews for centuries that they kidnapped and killed Christian children to use their blood in Passover rites.

[79] On the poster, see PALLOTTINO, 'Origini dello stereotipo fisionomico dell'"ebreo" e sua permanenza nell'iconografia antisemita del Novecento,' 17–26 (23, figure 13).

[80] On the circulation of anti-Semitic stereotypes, see also MARIE-ANNE MATARD-BONUCCI, 'L'image, figure majeure du discours antisémite?,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 72 (2001): 27–39; VALERIA GALIMI, 'Transfer e circolazione di temi antiebraici nell'Europa fra le due guerre: l'esempio delle caricature,' in *A settant'anni dalle leggi razziali. Profili culturali, giuridici, e istituzionali dell'antisemitismo*, eds DANIELE MENOZZI and ANDREA MARIUZZO (Rome: Carocci, 2010), 69–87.

Historians and Their Craft

An Interview with
Konrad Hirschler

CATERINA BORI
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Konrad Hirschler is a historian of manuscript cultures with a focus on Arabic North Africa and West Asia in the pre-print era. He combines social and cultural history to study what meanings different social strata and milieux ascribed to written artefacts and for what purposes they employed such artefacts. His work has focused in particular on reconstructing vanished libraries. This has led to a strong interest in the question of artefacts' trajectories and provenances. In recent years, he has become increasingly interested in the materiality of the written word. As a result, he strives to develop cross-disciplinary initiatives among various disciplines in the humanities as well as between humanities and natural sciences.

Konrad, you are a historian of the pre-Ottoman Middle East with a strong interest in book and manuscript culture. Our field of research has been undergoing huge transformations in recent years and your work has been highly influential in many respects.

The first challenge I see is the massive irruption of the global perspective into a scholarly tradition – also known as 'Area Studies' – where a place-based approach tightly linked to the study of local languages determined the focus and scope of historical practice. How do you think this injection of the global scale is impacting our field?

The break-down of disciplinary silos has certainly been a most positive development. This has meant that theoretical debates, changes in methodology and new topics move at a faster pace across fields of study and more voices contribute to these discussions. This is one of the developments that has driven most innovative work in the field of pre-Ottoman history and elsewhere. In my own work I have benefited enormously from research on book collecting practices in other world areas and, more importantly, on thinking about the materiality of manuscripts in a more systematic fashion. The central argument of my last book, *A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture: The Library of Ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi* really only started to develop after I had read transregional work on the social meaning of book binding practices.[1] Before

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[1] KONRAD HIRSCHLER, *A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture: The Library of Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

that I had worked for two years on this book catalogue without really knowing where this work might take me in argumentative terms.

However, there are three areas where I am not entirely convinced that we have been moving into the right direction. Firstly, the reconfiguration of academic practices inevitably entails institutional reconfigurations. In the past, area-focused disciplines were able to offer numerous languages, even if this was highly loss-making in financial terms. In 'globalised' university settings those colleagues studying areas with languages weakly represented in the European or US-American university system have little chance now to get 'their' languages taught. It's a great scholarly loss. Take for instance the UK: History departments across the country have recruited in the last decade many historians working on regions in Africa and Asia. This in turn had a severe impact on the institution that had been the centre for teaching the history of these world regions for most of the twentieth century, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Students interested in studying history beyond the UK and Europe now have a much larger choice than before and have shifted in large numbers to history departments other than SOAS. Yet, these universities rarely offer the special range of languages in which SOAS also excelled such as intensive Arabic, Persian, Swahili or Hausa. Thus, there will be a real challenge to prevent global history becoming an academic practice centred on a small range of languages and thus a small range of sources and perspectives.

Secondly, one has to be realistic that the globalisation of history takes place in a setting where universities in Europe and the US still play the central role in the humanities. In consequence, the history of these world regions, their sources, methodologies and debates, tend to dominate 'global' academic settings. It will be a major challenge to make sure that the move towards provincializing Europe does not turn out to be globalising Europe once again.

Finally, there is some danger when taking a step back to see the broader picture that phenomena become essentialised in order to make them comparable on a global level. In recent years, I have for instance seen a revival of the category of 'Islamic X' where the benefit of seeking common ground between widely divergent phenomena is in my view not entirely compelling.

Global history values broad narratives. It tends to stress circulation, mobility and connectivity. Let's take somebody like the Syrian scholar Yusuf ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi (d. 1517), whose book collection is at the centre of your last book: **A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture***. Yusuf was not exactly a 'globe-trotter'. He lived in a Damascus suburb all his life, wrote a lot and was a keen bibliophile. Still, your book suggests that seemingly unconnected spaces or lives can be also worth of scholarly engagement. What are your thoughts on this point?*

Well, I am a historian who has primarily worked on the micro level so that the importance of studying unconnected or weakly connected historical phenomena is

for me beyond doubt. Overall, I think it is crucial for the intellectual sustainability of our field that it retains a diverse research culture with a wide variety, including 'non-fashionable', approaches and methodologies. Many stories are simply better told and many arguments more elegantly made with a focus that is emphatically local and gloriously parochial. For instance, one of my side-research interests is the presence of Frankish ('Crusader') communities in the Levant in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I study these groups with an emphasis on the question on how they went local and in what ways they became part of the Levantine political, social and economic landscape.

Yet, even if our subjects and objects of study may appear at first as historically unconnected there is usually a chance to generically connect them in terms of methodology or final argument. You are entirely right, Yusuf ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi was as suburban as one might imagine with a distinct disinterest for the world beyond his home turf. It would thus have required a lot of passages with forced and weak arguments to turn this into a story of transregional connections. Yet, on the methodological level it was exactly stepping out of the scholarship of our field that allowed me to develop the book's central argument. The book suggests that Yusuf's library was part of his symbolic strategy to monumentalise a vanishing world of scholarship bound to his life, family, quarter and home city. This argument rests to a large extent on an analysis of his binding practices, i.e., how he produced thick books by bringing together what had previously been stand-alone thin booklets. This material logic was neither local nor parochial, but rather a practice that we find in most manuscript cultures around the world at the time. The push for thinking beyond my own field has thus led me to an approach and an argument that would have hardly developed had I stayed in my own disciplinary tradition.

Your research trajectory is also symptomatic of the second big transformation the field is currently experiencing, that is the increasing attention to documents in a field for decades dominated by the hegemony of narrative sources. We were told that up to the Ottomans archives scarcely existed and record-keeping was a marginal activity… When did this change?

As a discipline in European universities, the study of pre-Ottoman history emerged in the course of the nineteenth century. As it primarily emerged out of a combination of philology and biblical scholarship, there was a deeply ingrained disinterest for something like tax lists or legal documents. The argument on the purported absence of documents was never really made in a sustained fashion but was rather taken as a given. This only changed from the mid-twentieth century onwards when social history approaches started to make a stronger impact. Perhaps more importantly, colleagues in the newly independent and decolonising countries of the Middle East started to take a very different perspective on history as their new departments did not stand in the same double tradition of philology and religious studies. Among them was Abd al-Latif Ibrahim in Cairo who pioneered the study of endowment deeds, Abdul-Karim Rafeq in Syria who did the same for court records and my

personal hero Youssef Eche who introduced documentary sources into writing the history of books and libraries.[2] This is a process that became visible from the 1960s onwards and gained in pace in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, an explicit debate on archives only started from the 1990s onwards and lasts to some extent until today. At first, this debate was an 'internal' one conducted exclusively within the parameters of our field. This was not a terrifyingly interesting debate to be honest, but probably necessary to say goodbye to traditional assumptions on the absence of documents, and thus archives. Since then, our field – as much as many other fields – has discovered the archive as a topic that easily connects to much wider debates such as how knowledge was produced, in what forms political authority was implemented and where economic exchanges took place. It is thus a wonderful example for how Eurocentric scholarly traditions and assumptions on what proper archives were was in dire need of revision to open new avenues of research.

How does this development reverberate in the field?

Numerous documentary collections, which had been known for a long time, were freed from their previous epistemological shackles of 'trash bin' or 'random left-overs', like the Haram al-sharif corpus from Jerusalem or the Qubbat al-khazna corpus from Damascus. By taking their documentary configuration seriously these collections are now in the centre of our interest. The academic 'discovery' of the archive allowed to reconnect documents to historical archives so that they become meaningful again. This in turn has firstly allowed to revise received wisdom in numerous cases. Striking examples of this is Petra Sijpesteijn's book on the gradual implementation of Islamicate political authority in early Islamic Egypt, Marina Rustow's book on political practices in the Fatimid caliphate and Daisy Livingston's work on the numerous archival sites in the late medieval period.[3] At the same time these new archives allow to write into history individuals who had simply been under the radar of narrative sources. This includes the modest Koran reciter Burhan al-Din from fourteenth-century Jerusalem whose life and library Said Aljoumani and I discuss in our forthcoming book.[4]

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[2] 'ABD AL-LATIF IBRAHIM, *Dirasat fi l-kutub wa-l-maktabat al-islamiyya* [Studies on Islamic Books and Libraries] (Cairo: 1962); ABDUL-KARIM RAFEQ, *The Province of Damascus, 1723-1783* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966); YOUSSEF ECHE, *Les bibliotheques arabes publiques et semi-publiques en Mesopotamie, en Syrie et en Egypte au moyen age* (Damas: Institut français de Damas, 1967).

[3] PETRA SIJPESTEIJN, *Shaping a Muslim State: The World of a Mid-Eighth-Century Egyptian Official* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); MARINA RUSTOW, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); DAISY LIVINGSTONE, 'The Paperwork of a Mamluk Muqṭaʿ: Documentary Life Cycles, Archival Spaces, and the Importance of Documents Lying Around,' in *al-ʿUsur al-wusta. The Journal of Middle East Medievalist* 28 (2020): 346–375.

[4] SAID ALJOUMANI and KONRAD HIRSCHLER, *Owning Books and Preserving Documents in Medieval Jerusalem: The Library of Burhan al-Din al-Nasiri* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming in 2023).

Your recent work has taken the materiality of manuscript objects very seriously. Why so?

Because of the roots of our field, scholarship has been incredibly text focused. My first book on Arabic historiography and most of my second book on writerly culture and reading practices in the Medieval Arabic world were dominated by this approach.[5] This text-focused tendency was very much driven by the dominance of print editions as the central point of reference in the twentieth century. We had forgotten that the transition of a text from one medium to the other does not come without costs. Manuscripts are also very much material objects and their materiality tells us as much about their history as the texts themselves: The tear and wear, the invocation against insects, the layout, the effaced ownership statement, the remnants of an old binding, the scribbles on the flyleaf and other signs of engagement are all lost (or at least difficult to grasp) when the text is transmediated into the world of print.

What was it, then, that reminded you of the materiality of texts, and determined your shift of focus from texts to manuscripts as material objects?

As said, while I was working on my *A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture* book, I had for a very long time not the slightest idea where this project would be going in argumentative terms. I was making my way through the fifteenth-century book list that sits at the heart of my book. I struggled to make sense out of it and felt that there was something unique about this book list which I could just not pin down. Only when I materially saw for the first time one of the hundreds of manuscripts listed in this catalogue it dawned upon me that I had just looked the wrong way. The textual configuration of the manuscripts was certainly crucial, but it was not at the heart of this catalogue's logic. It was rather the specific way of how thousands of small booklets had been bound together by Yusuf Ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi that made this library historically meaningful. Without the differentiation between a (material) composite manuscript and a (textual) multiple-text manuscript, I doubt that I could have written this book.

Since writing this book, I moved to the *Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures* in Hamburg where interdisciplinary work between the humanities, the natural sciences and IT is very much at the heart of our work. This has been a very steep learning curve, but there is no doubt that integrating the material object into our perspective will open up exciting new lines of research over the next years.

Where are Yusuf Ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi's books today?

Yusuf Ibn ʿAbd al-Hadi created his library of composite manuscripts as a monument to a scholarly tradition that was about to disappear. In consequence, his books were

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[5] KONRAD HIRSCHLER, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London and New York: Routledge 2006); HIRSCHLER, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

rarely used in the subsequent centuries and stayed rather undisturbed in the library of a Damascene *madrasa*. The fact that they were of so limited interest to readers and book dealers meant that his library is arguably the best preserved medieval Syrian library. Some manuscripts made their way on the book market and are today in libraries such as Cairo, Paris, Berlin and Princeton. Yet, the vast majority stayed in the *madrasa* and were moved in the late nineteenth century into the new Ottoman public library in Damascus (today part of the Syrian National Library). Fascinatingly so, after 500 years these books are still standing next to each other in the classmark system that the National Library adopted in the 1980s.

Your interest in the trajectories of written artefacts brings up sensitive ethical questions about how they became or are made accessible, or about their provenance. How can we activate a constructive self-reflecting posture in this regard?

To some extent manuscripts and libraries remained on the margins of the heated debates that are taking place on museums and their objects. This is about to change, and we urgently need to integrate ethical questions of provenance and ownership into our scholarly practices. Whether this debate will lead to large scale reconstitutions is entirely open, as the historical processes that have led to the translocation of written artefacts to European and US-American collections are often more complex than theft and robbery. Yet, the fact that unprovenanced written artefacts are today still traded *en masse* and that even some reputed university libraries buy such objects until today shows that we are in the very first beginnings of this debate. Many of us have been indirectly involved in this market by working on problematic objects and thus contributing to establishing a clean reputation for them. We need to establish clearer guidelines as a field and at least stop working on unprovenanced artefacts that have changed ownership over the last decades. We also need more research on the collections that were established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries so that we can actually take a position on them. Finally, more shared forums with colleagues from the Middle East who have often a very different position vis-à-vis this issue are an urgent desideratum.

Are there important digitisation projects of manuscripts going on? Or, is it too a sensitive material?

Large amounts of Arabic-script manuscript have been digitised over the last years and this is an important factor that has brought the manuscript back into the focus of our research and teaching. In Europe and the United States this has been a rather embarrassingly slow process that has only recently gained in pace. On the positive side, many of these libraries now make the scans freely available on their websites with some exceptions, such as the British Library. As many of these manuscripts have been acquired in colonial or semi-colonial contexts it is obviously a moral obligation to make sure that researchers from around the world, especially those based in countries that have low GDPs, have easy access to this heritage. It is simply

outrageous that colleagues based in countries such as Egypt are quoted prices of several hundred Euros if they request digital images. Libraries in North Africa and West Asia have generally been much faster in digitising their collections. Yet, they are often quite hesitant to make them freely available as it is seen as highly sensitive material. There are numerous reasons for this and one of them is the perception that as much as unprovenanced written artefacts continue to circulate in Europe and the United States, digital artefacts might also be appropriated in future and put to illegitimate uses.

For a long time, the field of our discipline has typically been borrowing concepts and theoretical frameworks from historians specialising in other regions of the world, the 'West' in particular. Why do you think this happened?

I am not entirely sure that this has been such a clear process. In fact, I think that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century we have also been heavily indebted to Middle Eastern scholarship. Many crucial works of our field could not have been written without including local expertise, but the role of these scholars was often written out of the publication, or their contribution marginalised. For instance, when E.G. Browne catalogued the 'Muhammadan manuscripts' in Cambridge he had 'a helping Oriental hand', but that is nowhere acknowledged in his publications. This is by the way the main problem I have with Edward Said's *Orientalism* as he ascribes way too much agency and expertise to European scholars. However, there is no doubt that since the mid-twentieth century we have heavily adopted methods and theories developed with reference to European history. There are numerous reasons for this, starting from the very simple fact that the number of colleagues working in the Humanities on a rather small part of this world, Europe, has been so much larger than those working on the vast regions of Africa and Asia. It is thus hardly surprising that more methodological and theoretical developments took place in studying European history than in let's say studying West African history. More important was certainly that differences from models familiar from European history were often seen as deviation or deficiencies in the 'what-went-wrong' line of scholarship.

Is this changing?

I think that now there is much more interest in understanding divergence and seeing its argumentative potential rather than side-lining it as a problem. Two examples are particularly pertinent in my view: Work on the transition from handwritten writerly practices to print in the nineteenth century is now not so much studied as part of Middle Eastern societies having failed to do for centuries the 'right thing', i.e. adopting print. Rather, the question is more why handwriting remained so successful there for such a long period. At the same time, the fact that we have here a massive technological change so close to our time is now also seen as an opportunity to study such transition processes in more detail. The second

example is Thomas Bauer's book on what he calls the 'culture of ambiguity'.[6] Bauer's book is a brilliant conceptualisation of the intellectual world that emerges from Arabic Muslim texts. Here, the 'failure' of many medieval scholars to avoid taking definite positions on legal issues or theological debates is not seen as a shortcoming, but rather as a defining trait of an intellectual world that could live with such a degree of ambiguity. In that sense, I definitely feel that scholarship on non-European regions is now much less on the receiving end than it used to be let's say 50 years ago.

So, between similarities and differences you seem to value more the former as an analytical tool for historical investigation.

Yes, sure, differences are easier to conceptualise and argumentatively richer ground…

Which is for you the most urgent challenge historians of pre-modern Islamicate societies currently face?

The fact that we have underperformed in building a scholarly community with our colleagues in the Middle East. In too many areas, discussions in English scholarship and those in Arabic scholarship are hardly interacting. There have been valid efforts in terms of exchanges, institutional partnerships, invitations and so on. Yet, the fact remains that Arabic scholarship is simply insufficiently integrated into our work as much as English scholarship is insufficiently integrated into Arabic scholarship.

Can you tell us something about your personal history? Has there been a scholarly personality who inspired you to become a historian of the Middle East?

After studying with moderate enthusiasm for one year Economics I set my eyes on learning a non-European language to make university more interesting. Arabic was the only language that fitted my economics schedule, so I went for it. In addition to the Arabic courses, I took the introductory lecture by Albrecht Noth on early Islamic social history. This experience simply blew me away: There was nothing more fascinating than to enter such a different linguistic world. In addition, here was finally a professor who talked about research problems rather than presenting facts we were meant to learn by heart. After three weeks I entirely dropped economics. Initially, I was rather interested in modern history (I took Turkish as my second language) and wrote my MA on a twentieth-century topic. Yet, when I thought about a possible PhD it was quickly clear that the period between the twelfth century and the fifteenth century offered so much space for new research.

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[6] THOMAS BAUER, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des islam* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen im Insel Verlag, 2011), Eng. tr. *A Culture of Ambiguity. An Alternative History of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

Once I started to work on that period it was difficult to let go as fascinating research topics just keep popping up.

A book on Middle Eastern history scholars cannot do without?

Jo van Steenbergen, *A History of the Islamic World, 600-1800: Empires, Dynastic Formations, and Heterogeneities in Islamic West-Asia*.[7] This is at last a textbook for our field that explicitly states its arguments, that tries to conceptualise broader trends and that gives the reader a feel for what working on Islamicate history entails in practice. With its comparative perspective it makes the history of West Asia much more approachable for English reading (academic) audiences.

What's next?

The project closest to my heart at the moment is a study of the library of Ahmad al-Jazzar, the Ottoman governor of Akkon around the year 1800. This was a breath-taking library that was sadly ripped apart and its 1,800 manuscripts (and 5 printed books) are today in libraries around the world. We do this as a team of more than 20 colleagues and it is just so much fun (before it comes to the editing stage) to collaboratively work on a book project.

And at some point I would love to write a book that some more people might read …

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[7] JO VAN STEENBERGEN, *A History of the Islamic World, 600-1800: Empires, Dynastic Formations, and Heterogeneities in Islamic West-Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020).

The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' (Toledot Yeshu)
in Early Modern Contexts: Case Studies

Ed. by Daniel Barbu

Foreword
The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' (Toledot Yeshu)
in Early Modern Contexts: Case Studies

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The essays gathered here all concern the history, reception, and circulation of various versions of the Jewish 'Life of Jesus' (or *Toledot Yeshu*) in the early modern period (sixteenth to eighteenth century).[1] *Toledot Yeshu* is perhaps the most infamous retelling of the gospel narrative of the premodern era. While the texts may differ on several points, all versions agree on the essential facts: in no way can Jesus be considered a god, and his life and actions, far from being a pivotal moment in human history, are merely an example of deception, abuse, and treachery, worthy of opprobrium and scorn. The story is best described as a parody of the Gospels, or perhaps an 'anti-gospel,' in which the foundational narrative and basic tenets of Christianity become an opportunity for ridicule and laughter. Jesus himself, whose purportedly shameful origins are narrated in detail, is thus railed as an antihero, a disgruntled student of the rabbis who sought to gain recognition by performing magic and duping the crowds, claiming to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets, but ultimately unable to save himself.[2] *Toledot Yeshu* of course does not belong to the normative corpus of rabbinic Judaism. It was even rejected by many Jewish scholars, fearing that the story would only confirm the Jews' enduring reputation as a hostile and blasphemous people.[3]

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[1] For a recent edition and translation, see MICHAEL MEERSON and PETER SCHÄFER, eds, T*oledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), with the reservations offered by DANIEL STÖKL BEN EZRA's review in *Asdiwal* 11 (2016): 226–30. Seminal studies on *Toledot Yeshu* include SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902); WILLIAM HORBURY, 'A Critical Examination of the Toledoth Jeshu' (PhD diss., Clare College, Cambridge, 1970); GÜNTHER SCHLICHTING, *Ein jüdisches Leben Jesu: die verschollene Toledot-Jeschu-Fassung Tam u-Muʿad* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1982); RICCARDO DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985); YAACOV DEUTSCH, '"Toledot Yeshu" in Christian Eyes' (MA diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997). See also the studies gathered in PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); DANIEL BARBU and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu in Context: The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

[2] I borrow the expression 'antihero' from ALEXANDRA CUFFEL, 'Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis: Jesus as Antihero in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. RYAN SZPIECH (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 155–70. On *Toledot Yeshu* as parody, see PHILIP ALEXANDER, 'Jesus and His Mother in the Jewish Anti-Gospel (the *Toledot Yeshu*),' in *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities*, eds CLAIRE CLIVAZ et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 588–616.

[3] See DANIEL BARBU, 'Some Remarks on the Jewish Life of Jesus (*Toledot Yeshu*) in Early Modern Europe,' *Journal for Religion, Film and Media* 5, no. 1 (2019): 29–45.

Nevertheless, the story was undoubtedly very popular among medieval and early modern Jews, certainly also reflecting a widely shared view of Christianity, by contrast, as a deceitful religion. As a Jewish story on Jesus and the origins of Christianity, *Toledot Yeshu* in fact provided them with a corrective to the Christian story, a 'counter-history,' which also allowed them to contest the dominant Christian narrative and uphold their distinct identity in a dominantly Christian world.[4]

The scholarly treatment of *Toledot Yeshu* has often been devoted chiefly to questions of textual history. Such questions are doubtless fundamental, but they sometimes come at the cost of broader historical questions. The texts and manuscripts that have come down to us, as well as the rich body of sources reflective of the circulation and uses of the Jewish Jesus story, do more than just bear witness to a history of textual transmission. Each of these documents needs to be situated within its individual context if we are to understand what *Toledot Yeshu* was called to do at different times and in different places, and how it was received by both Jewish and Christian readers. 'Reception' here refers to more than the passive transmission of knowledge or texts; it is a way to also address the agency of a given tradition in a variety of contexts, to consider the various ways in which it was appropriated and used, politicised, by different actors for the purpose of asserting, modifying, or contesting ideas and structures. In each and every context it is thus necessary to ask who read and copied these texts, and more importantly, why, to what effect, in response to whom, and within what broader framework. How, when, and why does the Jewish story of Jesus—or fragments of that story—come to light in our documentation? How was it used (or abused) in specific historical and cultural contexts, either by Jews or crypto-Jews struggling to preserve their identity in a Christian world, or by Christians thinking about Judaism as part of their own theological tradition? How can the history of *Toledot Yeshu* illuminate the broader discourse on Jewish books and Jewish blasphemy or heresy in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period? What role did the story play in conversion or re-Judaisation processes? What can the sources under investigation in the current issue reveal about the circulation of ideas, exchanges across political and cultural realms, about religious conflicts and interactions, but also about the emotions of those who read or heard the story, about the fashioning of Jews and Christians as 'emotional communities' in various historical and geographical contexts?[5]

The essays gathered in this thematic section of *CROMOHS* precisely address these questions. While pursuing a similar research agenda as a previous collection of studies coedited with Yaacov Deutsch and published in 2020,[6] these essays are more specifically devoted to the early modern contexts of *Toledot Yeshu*, a period

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[4] DAVID BIALE, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics Against Christianity: The *Sefer Toldot Yeshu* and the *Sefer Zerubavel*,' *Jewish Social Studies*, n.s., 6, no. 1 (1999): 130–45.
[5] See DANIEL BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish. Emotions, Identity, and the Jews' Inverted Christmas,' in *Feeling Exclusion. Religious Conflict, Exile and Emotions in Early Modern Europe*, eds GIOVANNI TARANTINO and CHARLES ZIKA (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 185–206, with further reference to Barbara Rosenwein's notion of 'emotional communities.'
[6] BARBU and DEUTSCH, *Toledot Yeshu in Context*.

characterised by the dissemination of new versions of the narrative, increased circulation of manuscripts, translations into vernacular languages, and renewed interest—both on the Jewish and on the Christian side—in polemical and apologetic writings. The aim of this section is not to analyse the various versions of *Toledot Yeshu* in and for themselves, but rather to use this remarkable tradition as a guide to explore and problematise Jewish-Christian relations in the early modern world through a selection of circumscribed case studies. Certainly, more cases could have been examined, but our aim is to suggest new lines of inquiry rather than seek to exhaust the topic.

Marian Devotion and the Jewish Gospel (Toledot Yeshu) In Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam

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Yiddish Manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* in the Netherlands

While cataloguing Yiddish manuscripts from the Netherlands I noted the peculiarity of the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition and decided to consider the manuscripts of this Jewish life of Jesus in a distinct chapter.[1] Whereas the origins of this polemical narrative remain debated, its enduring popularity throughout the centuries is truly astonishing. The story of Jesus was constantly retold, with slight changes updating the general narrative and adapting it to new historical situations. The Yiddish texts from the Netherlands are all handwritten and were compiled from Hebrew texts. But the compilers also felt free to supplement their sources and alter and fit them to their current situation. So far, little attention has been given to the Yiddish versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. In an earlier study examining the oldest extant *Toledot Yeshu* manuscript from the Netherlands, produced in 1711, I sought to show a connection between the declining messianic movement generated by the seventeenth-century Jewish 'messiah' Sabbatai Zvi and this retelling of the life of Jesus.[2] In the same volume, Claudia Rosenzweig published a transcription of this manuscript, along with a translation and critical apparatus, making it available for further research.[3] In another study, Rosenzweig also examined another early Yiddish manuscript of *Toledot Yeshu*, now held in the Russian State Library in Moscow.[4] In an article published in 2011, Michael Stanislawski offered some preliminary remarks on a very long Yiddish version of the narrative, preserved in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (JTS 2211), but which we can now confirm is also of Dutch origin.[5] Furthermore, the text analysed by Stanislawski is also very similar to the one found in another Yiddish manuscript now

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[1] EVI MICHELS, *Jiddische Handschriften der Niederlande* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 403–29.

[2] EVI MICHELS, 'Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* Manuscripts from the Netherlands,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context: The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History,* eds DANIEL BARBU and YAACOV DEUTSCH (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 231–62.

[3] CLAUDIA ROSENZWEIG, 'The "History of the Life of Jesus" in a Yiddish Manuscript from the Eighteenth Century (Ms. Jerusalem, NLI, Heb. 8° 5622),' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds. BARBU and DEUTSCH, 263–315.

[4] CLAUDIA ROSENZWEIG, 'When Jesus Spoke Yiddish. Some Remarks on a Yiddish Manuscript of the "Toledot Yeshu" (Ms. Günzburg 1730),' *Pardes* 21 (2015), 199–214.

[5] MICHAEL STANISLAWSKI, 'A Preliminary Study of a Yiddish "Life of Jesus,"' in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, eds PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 79–87.

held in the Ets Haim library in Amsterdam (EH 47 A 21). We are thus to assume that both manuscripts were produced using the same (Hebrew?) *Vorlage* or originated from a very close context.

In what follows, I will focus on these two particular manuscripts, JTS 2211 and EH 47 A 21, addressing their dependence on each other by looking at the chapters concerned with Mary. Indeed, both manuscripts divide the story into chapters concerned with *Yeshu* (Jesus) and chapters concerned with *Maryem* (Mary), perhaps so that each chapter could be read aloud on specific days. What is striking in these manuscripts and distinguishes them from other versions of *Toledot Yeshu* is indeed their emphasis on the figure of Mary. Both manuscripts either expand the episodes of the narrative dealing with Mary or include new ones.[6] In particular, they include a story about Mary's death and burial which does not appear in any other known version of the narrative. Where could the authors of this text have obtained this story, and why did they think it important to tell it in Amsterdam in the mid-eighteenth century? Why was it added to the narrative, and what was its function in this specific context? Before I address these questions in more detail, a few general remarks on the genre and history of *Toledot Yeshu* are in order.

The Text Genre of *Toledot Yeshu*

The Jewish story of *Yeshu* (Jesus)[7] dates back to the early Middle Ages and is well documented across several linguistic and cultural boundaries. In addition to the 107 Hebrew manuscripts listed by Peter Schäfer and Michael Meerson in their critical edition,[8] the predominantly fragmentary Aramaic, considered to be the oldest (ninth or tenth century), at least twenty-one Judeo-Arabic,[9] one Judeo-Persian, two Judeo-Spanish, and twenty-six Yiddish manuscripts[10] have survived to this day. These were copied and used until the last century at least, if not up to the present day, and

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[6] On the figure of Mary in the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, see SARIT KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts: Gender, Motherhood, and Power in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds. BARBU and DEUTSCH, 99–129, esp. 111–16.

[7] The name ישו (Yeshu) is an abbreviated version of ישוע (Hebr. for 'Jesus'). As an acronym יש״ו is also a curse ימח שמו וזכרו (meaning 'May his name and his memory be erased'). Although many manuscripts and printed editions use the title *Toledot Yeshu* ('Life of Yeshu') other titles, such as מעשה ישו ('Story of Yeshu') and גזירות ישו ('Bad deeds of Yeshu') are also frequently attested; cf. WILLIAM HORBURY, 'Titles and Origins in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds. BARBU and DEUTSCH, 13–42; DANIEL BARBU, 'Some Remarks on *Toledot Yeshu* (*The Jewish Life of Jesus*) in Early Modern Europe,' *Journal for Religion, Film and Media* 5, no. 1 (2019): 29–45, (30n5).

[8] Cf. MICHAEL MEERSON and PETER SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); PETER SCHÄFER, 'Introduction,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 1–11; SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, repr. (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1994); RICCARDO DI SEGNI, 'Due nuove fonti sulle *Toledoth Jeshu*,' *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 55, no. 1 (1989): 127–32; DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985); DI SEGNI, 'La tradizione testuale delle 'Toledòth Jéshu': manoscritti, edizioni a stampa, classificazione,' *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 50, no. 1–4 (1984): 84–100.

[9] MIRIAM GOLDSTEIN, *A Judeo-Arabic Parody of the Life of Jesus: The* Toledot Yeshu *Helene Narrative* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022).

[10] MICHELS, 'Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* Manuscripts from the Netherlands,' 253–62.

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sometimes read as entertainment during Jewish anti-Christmas celebrations.[11] A preliminary review of most of the extant manuscripts allows a rough classification into three main groups, named after the ruler presiding over Jesus's trial in the narrative (Pilate, Herod, or a queen named Helena). A more detailed classification proves difficult, since all variants of the story reflect a relatively free use of narrative styles and motifs. In their recent edition Meerson and Schäfer proposed subdividing the tradition into no fewer than fifteen distinct recensions.

The oldest complete Hebrew manuscript dates from ca. 1200 and was copied using oriental square script, meaning that it was most likely produced in the Middle East.[12] The Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, some of which date back to the eleventh century, also testify to an early tradition situated between Christianity and Islam.[13] The versions of *Toledot Yeshu* that started circulating in the Western world in the Middle Ages provided 'counter-narratives'[14] to the Christian tradition. Rather than fighting against the predominant Christian doctrine, they testify to the Jews' self-confidence and capacity for entertainment, despite their status as a demonised minority.[15] On first reading, it is already noticeable that these texts presuppose a good knowledge of Christian doctrine for them to be understood. The New Testament is never quoted verbatim, but the most important episodes of Jesus's or his early disciples' life are easily recognised. As is well known, the New Testament, and other early Christian writings, quote many verses from the Old Testament as proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah announced in biblical prophecies. This method, frequently found in the Gospel of Matthew, is also used extensively in the different versions of *Toledot Yeshu*, but in order to parody the Christian interpretation of Jesus and contest the notion that his messiahship can be grounded in the Hebrew Bible. In that sense, *Toledot Yeshu* differs

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[11] See https://www.yivo.org/JewishChristmas2021. On this topic, see also MARC SHAPIRO, 'Torah Study on Christmas Eve,' *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1999): 319–53; REBECCA SCHARBACH, 'The Ghost in the Privy: On the Origins of Nittel Nacht and Modes of Cultural Exchange,' *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (2013): 340–73; DANIEL BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish. Emotions, Identity, and the Jews' Inverted Christmas,' in *Feeling Exclusion: Emotional Strategies and Burdens of Religious Discrimination and Displacement in Early Modern Europe*, eds GIOVANNI TARANTINO and CHARLES ZIKA (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 185–206.

[12] MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 39.

[13] Cf. MIRIAM GOLDSTEIN, 'Judeo-Arabic Versions of *Toledot Yeshu*,' *Ginze Qedem* 6 (2010): 9*–42*; GOLDSTEIN, 'Jesus in Arabic, Jesus in Judeo-Arabic: The Origins of the Helene Version of the Jewish "Life of Jesus" (*Toledot Yeshu*),' *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 111, no. 1 (2021): 83–104.

[14] On the notion of 'counter-history,' see AMOS FUNKENSTEIN, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); with regard to *Toledot Yeshu* and other Jewish Polemics cf. DAVID BIALE, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics Against Christianity: The *Sefer toldot yeshu* and the *Sefer zerubavel*,' *Jewish Social Studies*, n.s., 6, no. 1 (1999): 130–45.

[15] On the demonisation of Jews in the Middle Ages, see JOSHUA TRACHTENBERG, *The Devil and the Jews* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1984). I would like to thank Daniel Barbu for this reference. Humor in the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition has not sufficiently been examined, but see ALEXANDRA CUFFEL, 'Between Epic, Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis: Jesus as Antihero in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean,* ed. RYAN SZPIECH (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 155–70.

from other medieval Jewish polemical texts, such as *Nizzachon Vetus*[16] or disputation narratives,[17] which typically argue over the precise meaning of the scriptural verses used by Christians. In what follows, I will suggest that the Yiddish versions of the story circulating in Amsterdam in the eighteenth century not only served as polemic texts directed against Christians; they can also be read within the broader framework of Jewish parody and entertainment.

Toledot Yeshu in Western Europe up to the Eighteenth Century

It was difficult to preserve and pass on manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* in the Jewish communities of Western Europe up to the Reformation. Historical evidence consistently emphasises that Jews themselves had an interest in keeping these writings secret.[18] It is thus not surprising that our earliest textual evidence in the European context was handed down by Christian clergymen and scholars, who were mainly interested in exposing Jewish beliefs as faulty and blasphemous. From their point of view, *Toledot Yeshu* essentially offered a false and defamatory portrayal of Jesus Christ. Yaacov Deutsch remarks that '*Toledot Yeshu* is a unique example of a Jewish text, insofar as the information about it in Christian sources is richer than the information in Jewish sources.'[19] Indeed the oldest textual evidence about it is from the ninth century and comes from writings of the archbishops Agobard (796–840) and Amulo of Lyons (d. 852), who confirm the reception and circulation of the narrative in the Carolingian context. In his anti-Jewish writing, *De Judaicis superstitionibus* (ca. 827), Agobard quotes from a *Toledot Yeshu* narrative that predominantly recounts the end of Jesus's life.[20] Amulo's effort as Agobard's successor to provide further textual material incriminating Jews seems to have reached its goal, as he indeed provided new narrative elements concerning the Jewish life of Jesus, such as the draggling of his corpse in the mud, or his birth from the illegitimate union of Mary and Joseph Pandera.[21] The next evidence of the circulation of *Toledot Yeshu* in Europe is from the thirteenth century and is provided by the Dominican Raymundus Martini from Spain, who wrote against both Jews and Moors.[22] Around 1420, the priest and theologian Thomas Ebendorfer, a

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[16] DAVID BERGER, ed., *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979).

[17] SAMUEL KRAUSS, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy from the Earliest Times to 1789*, vol. 1, *History*, ed. WILLIAM HORBURY, rev. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), chap. 2.

[18] Cf. DANIEL BARBU and YANN DAHHAOUI, 'The Secret Booklet from Germany: Circulation and Transmission of *Toledot Yeshu* at the Borders of the Empire,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds. BARBU and DEUTSCH, 187–218.

[19] YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'The Second Life of the Life of Jesus,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 283–95 (285); cf. his comprehensive study '"Toledot Yeshu" in Christian Eyes: Reception and Response to "Toledot Yeshu" in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period' (MA diss.; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997 [Hebrew]).

[20] PETER SCHÄFER, 'Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH 27–48.

[21] SCHÄFER, 'Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*,' 46.

[22] *Pugio fidei adversus Maruos et Judæos*, see an English translation in MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 10–2.

professor at the young University of Vienna, obtained a previously unknown and detailed version of the polemical story, which he translated first into German and then into Latin with the help of a convert from Judaism.[23] The Hebrew and German preliminary versions of his translation are unfortunately no longer extant.[24] Martini's and Ebendorfer's texts represent the earliest testimony to the old Ashkenazic tradition, the so-called 'Strasbourg version,' as it closely corresponds with the Hebrew text provided by a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Hebrew manuscript now in the Strasbourg University library.[25] This tradition is closely related to the Yiddish texts from the Northern Netherlands. However, many parallels can also be found in Judeo-Arabic manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, confirming that we are dealing with a rather ancient and widespread tradition.[26] Ebendorfer's allows us to list the main episodes of the narrative:

- o Miriam, the mother of Yeshu has a fiancé, Yochanan from the house of David. A wicked neighbour, Joseph Pandera, comes to Miriam while she is impure (i.e., she was menstruating). She conceives from him
- o Yochanan leaves for Babylon and Miriam gives birth to Yeshu
- o Yeshu grows up as a learned Jewish boy both wise and pious
- o Through his insolent and disrespectful behaviour towards his teachers Yeshu reveals that he is a bastard and the son of a menstruating woman
- o Miriam admits the sinful origins of her son. A ban is imposed on him
- o Yeshu steals the holy name of God from the Jerusalem temple
- o He performs miracles using the name and gathers disciples around him
- o At the instigation of the Sanhedrin, he is summoned before Queen Helena to be judged as a seducer of the people. After a second trial, and with the help of an opponent appointed by the Sanhedrin, Yeshu is condemned, stoned, and hanged. He is then buried in a garden
- o His body disappears
- o Jews are in distress and must prove that Yeshu is not resurrected

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[23] See Brigitta Callsen et al., eds, *Das jüdische Leben Jesu*. Toldot Jeschu. *Die älteste lateinische Übersetzung in den* Falsitates Judeorum *von Thomas Ebendorfer* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003). Ebendorfer's *Falsitates Judeorum* could also be dated later, in the 1450s, see Manuela Niesner, 'Einführung,' in *Das jüdische Leben Jesu*, eds Callsen et al., 25–33; on the assistance of a convert, see also Deutsch, 'The Second Life,' 290.

[24] However, he sometimes added a German or Hebrew word in brackets when seeking to clarify the meaning of an expression.

[25] For the classification of this text, see Meerson and Schäfer, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 14. The 'Strasbourg version' belongs to Meerson and Schäfer's Group II, and is labelled 'Ashkenazi A.' It is printed in Meerson and Schäfer, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 167–84 (Eng.); vol. 2, 79–95 (Hebr.). On the Strasbourg manuscript, cf. William Horbury, 'The Strasbourg Text of the *Toledot,*' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, 49–60. On the date of this manuscript, cf. Daniel Stökl ben Ezra, 'On Some Early Traditions in *Toledot Yeshu* and the Antiquity of the "Helena" Recension,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds Barbu and Deutsch, 43–58. On further testimony of the circulation of the 'Strasbourg version' in the late Middle Ages, see Barbu and Dahhaoui, 'The Secret Booklet from Germany.'

[26] Goldstein, 'Jesus in Arabic,' 88.

o It turns out that the gardener took Yeshu's body away from the grave site. Peace and quiet returns between Yeshu's followers and the Sanhedrin

o Apostles of Yeshu proclaim the Christian message in all corners of the world, and many Jews are seduced

o The rabbis are forced to intervene. They allow one of them to learn the holy name again, so that he will be able to convince the Christians that he was sent by Yeshu. He thus provides them with new laws and customs that will help distinguish them from the Jews

o The separation of the two religions is sealed and both coexist peacefully

o [Appendices about Nestorius and Peter][27]

The Jews themselves had no interest in publishing this narrative about Jesus Christ.[28] Thus, it is not surprising that the printed versions of the story preserved from the early modern period were all commissioned by Christians, and testify to the success of missionary efforts at converting the Jews, since converts often mediated the texts.[29] In 1520, the narrative transmitted by Raymundus Martini was printed for the first time in Paris, although in the writings of a Genoese Carthusian monk, Porchetus Salvaticus (d. ca. 1315), who had copied Martini's text. It was through Porchetus that it became accessible to Martin Luther who used it in his anti-Jewish tract *Vom Schem Hamephorasch und vom Geschlecht Christi* ('On the Ineffable Name and on the Lineage of Christ') in 1543.[30] Martini's (and Salvaticus's) text offered only a (short) variant of the larger *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, and later Christian scholars thus felt challenged to search for longer versions of the narrative and publish them in line with the new philological standards developed in the course of the seventeenth century. Thus, in 1681, the German Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil produced a Hebrew edition along with a Latin translation and commentary of the narrative in his *Tela Ignea Satanae*[31] ('Satan's Fiery Arrows'). In 1705, another version edited by Johann Jacob Ulrich ('Huldricus')[32] was printed.

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[27] Since both appendices are missing in the Yiddish manuscripts I discuss here, I do not provide any further information.

[28] DEUTSCH, 'The Second Life,' 283.

[29] BARBU, 'Some remarks,' 31–33, and see Yaacov Deutsch's contribution to this thematic section.

[30] Cf. STEPHEN BURNETT, 'Martin Luther, *Toledot Yeshu*, and "the Rabbis",' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds. BARBU and DEUTSCH, 219–30; MATTHIAS MORGENSTERN, *Martin Luther und die Kabbala* (Wiesbaden: Berlin University Press, 2017).

[31] JOHANN CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignea Satanae. Hoc est: Arcani et horribiles Judaeorum adversus Christum Deum, et Christianem religionem libri anekdotoi. Sunt vero:* [...] *Libellus Toldos Jeschu / Johann Christophorus Wagenseilius ex Europae Africaeque latebris erutos, in lucem protrusit* [...] (Altdorf, Joh. Henricus Schönnerstaedt, 1681). The text is printed in two columns, on the left the Hebrew original, on the right the Latin text. Wagenseil also offered a *confutatio* ('reply') to the text, refuting it. For the Wagenseil text, see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 286–304 (Eng.) and vol. 2, 211–37 (Hebr.).

[32] JOHANN JACOB ULRICH, ed., *Sefer Toledot Yeshua ha-Notsri / Historia Jeschuae Nazareni, à Judaeis blasphemè corrupta, ex Manuscripto hactenus ineditio nunc demum edita, ac Versione et Notis* [...] *illustrata* (Leiden: Johannem du Vivie, Is. Severinum 1705). In Meerson and Schäfer's classification, both the Wagenseil and the Huldricus texts belong to Group III. For the Huldricus text, see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 305–22 (Eng.) and vol. 2, 238–51 (Hebr.).

Mss. New York, JTSA 2211 and Amsterdam, EH 47 A 21

Yiddish texts of *Toledot Yeshu* can be traced from 1652 (the date of our earliest manuscript) onward.[33] As noted above, a trigger for the renewed diffusion of the narrative starting in the early eighteenth century may have been the controversy over the false messiah Sabbatai Zvi. In 1711, the Ashkenazi rabbi Leib ben Ozer produced a Yiddish version of *Toledot Yeshu* titled *Gzeyres Yeshu* using three Hebrew sources. The text is now bound into one and the same manuscript with the addition of ben Ozer's Yiddish biography of Sabbatai Zvi.[34] The sources he used differed in many respects and thus, the compiler sometimes included alternative versions of certain episodes, as he was not able to decide which was more 'truthful.'[35] One of his sources was likely of Sephardic origin, as many close parallels to ben Ozer can be found in a manuscript also copied in Amsterdam at the end of the seventeenth century, but by a Sephardic scribe, Zaddik Belinfante.[36]

The two Yiddish manuscripts I examine below similarly attest to the copyist's knowledge of several Hebrew texts, further suggesting that many different versions of the story circulated in Amsterdam at that time. These two manuscripts from the middle of the eighteenth century are from the 'heyday' of the Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* corpus. As mentioned, both also attracted attention due to their inclusion of otherwise unattested stories concerning Mary (Maryem, Miryem or Mirele in Yiddish), particularly the story of Mary's death and burial, which I will illuminate in more detail.

The first of these two manuscripts is now in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (henceforth abbreviated *JTS*).[37] It has seventy-six foliated leaves and a title page, the reverse of which is blank, except for an Arabic numeral (5375) added later.[38] Preceding the title page is an additional leaf showing on its reverse an *ex libris* stamp from Mayer Sulzberger's library, as well as other numbers and notes referring to the auction catalogue *Mekor chaim*, Amsterdam 1907. Since an excerpt from Alexander Marx's catalogue of the Jewish Theological Seminary manuscripts was pasted at the bottom of this additional leaf, one can also find the latter's original description of the manuscript there. According to Marx's measurements, the manuscript is 25.8 × 18.4 cm (today's library information is slightly different, indicating 26.4 × 19 cm) and has twenty-four to twenty-six lines per page. The pages are numbered with Hebrew letters in the upper left corner and are further linked to each other by catchwords. The entire

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[33] See the two lists of manuscripts provided in EVI MICHELS, 'Jiddische Jesus-Polemiken (*Toledot Yeshu*),' *Jiddistik-Mitteilungen* 57/58 (2017): 1–26 and MICHELS, 'Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* from the Netherlands,' 252–62.

[34] Cf. MICHELS, *Jiddische Handschriften der Niederlande*, 293–99 (no. 71); MICHELS, 'Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* from the Netherlands,' 234–39.

[35] Cf. ROSENZWEIG, 'The History of the "Life of Jesus",' 271–72.

[36] For Belinfante's text, see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 185–203 (Eng.) and vol. 2, 96–111 (Hebr.).

[37] ALEXANDER MARX, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Polemical Mss.* (unpublished typescript), 262 (no. 60).

[38] Whoever added this number caused later readers to misinterpret this as the date of the manuscript (5375 = 1615).

manuscript bears the running title *Toldes yeshe*.[39] Even though Marx described the handwriting as German cursive, it is in fact typically Dutch. Considering also the Dutch linguistic influence on the text, it should be dated to the eighteenth century and not, as Marx assumed, the seventeenth century. However, there is no dating on the title page or elsewhere.

Figure 1 (left). Ms. New York, JTSA 2211, Title page. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

The second manuscript I will discuss is now in Amsterdam in the Ets Haim library / Livraria Montezinos, where it bears the shelf mark Ms. EH 47 A 21 (henceforth abbreviated *EH*). It has seventy-two original leaves, again foliated with Hebrew letters. In addition to the foliation, the leaves are again joined at the end of each page by catchwords. The manuscript measures 25.3 × 18.2 cm and has twenty-four lines per page. Each page bears the running title *Toldes Yeshu*. The title page is preceded by a blank leaf, which served to protect the manuscript and was later glued to the book cover. After the title page, the reverse side of which is blank, there is another blank leaf. The following folios are numbered as noted above. At the end of the manuscript (fol. 67v), there is another blank leaf, although adorned with a frame, and an additional blank leaf, which, like the front one, served to protect the manuscript and was later glued to the back cover of the book. The book cover itself is made of parchment and is now soiled. The leaves and edges bear witness to the frequent use of the manuscript, as do the grease and water stains. This manuscript can also be dated by its writing, language, and style to the middle of the eighteenth century.[40]

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[39] The codicological description of the New York manuscript is based on the information provided by the JTS library catalogues.

[40] Cf. MICHELS, *Jiddische Handschriften der Niederlande*, 419–21 (no. 102).

Figure 2. Ms. Amsterdam, EH 47 A 21, Title page. Courtesy of the Library Ets Haim – Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam.

In addition to these external similarities (tab. 1) both the *JTS* and *EH* manuscripts stand out as the most extensive Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*. Both texts narrate the story at length, while also repeatedly addressing the reader or listener, referring either to what has already been narrated or to what is yet to be narrated, and making abundant use of direct speech. Both texts also sometimes indicate that there are variants to a particular episode, the scribe thus expressing his knowledge of different textual traditions and his wish to share this knowledge with the reader (without mentioning his sources). Most often, the scribe simply reports two existing variants, but sometimes he also weighs which variant, in his opinion, is to be considered the correct one.[41] In both manuscripts, the scribe divided the long text into numerous 'chapters' (concerning, as already noted, either Jesus or Mary), which he calls ביטרייף (for the Dutch word *bedrijf*, i.e., 'theatre act'). In the back, numbering is abandoned and both scribes added headlines to divide the sections. In fact, the two manuscripts are so similar that we can postulate very closely related production and reception milieus.

	Ms. JTS 2211	Ms. EH 47 A 21
Size	25.8 × 18.4 cm	25.3 × 18.2 cm
Folio pages	76	72
Lines per page	24–26	24
Title	*Toldes Yeshe*	*Tolde' Yeshe*, born in 3760
Running title	*Toldes Yeshe*	*Toldes Yeshe*

Table 1. Codicological elements showing the similarity of both manuscripts.

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[41] At present I cannot point out any further parallels beside the passages discussed below. A more detailed comparison of these texts, both with each other and with other Yiddish and Hebrew *Toledot Yeshu* texts from the Netherlands, needs further study.

Maryem the Impure Mother of Yeshu in JTS 2221 and EH 47 A 21

Maryem usually has a fixed place in the opening section of *Toledot Yeshu* narratives: the episodes dealing with Jesus's birth and adolescence. According to the story as we find it in *JTS*, Maryem[42] opens her heart to her neighbour, Joseph Pandera, because she is not satisfied with her fiancé, Yochanan. She is described as sitting on her doorstep 'like a whore' (fol. 2r). She is very beautiful and attractive, and so is Pandera, who immediately falls in love with her. Since Maryem loves 'all worldly things and tournaments' (טורנירן, fol. 3r), unlike her pious fiancé, she answers positively to Pandera's desire. In *EH*, things are somewhat different: Maryem is called a whore (הור) only later in the story (fol. 6r) and she does not actively pursue her sexual misdemeanour. Pandera remains the active party and is indeed accused of having performed a shameful deed by sleeping with her (fol. 5r). Both manuscripts discuss several variants of the intercourse itself (the scribe indicating: 'the one writes' and 'the other writes'; see *JTS*, fol. 2r–3v; *EH,* fol. 3v–4v):

> 1. Maryem remained silent, thinking she was sleeping with Yochanan (who did not consider her impure state);
>
> 2. Maryem was touched from behind. Thinking it was Yochanan, she accused him of touching her despite the fact that she was impure;
>
> 3. Maryem deliberately slept with Pandera and was satisfied with her deed.

These different narrative strands are followed through in the description of Maryem's behaviour towards her fiancé, Yochanan. *EH* thus adapts the dialogue between Maryem and Yochanan, which he probably found in his sources (fol. 4v[43]). Since Yochanan cannot prove that he did not sleep with Maryem, but knows for certain that the child is not his (even discussing the matter with his teacher, Shimon ben Shetach), he abandons her and leaves for Babylon. Maryem then gives birth to Yeshu, remaining silent about his true paternity. When the child grows up to become a clever and wise Talmudic student, her infamy is almost forgotten, and no one talks about it anymore. But Yeshu attracts attention because of his insolence and disrespect towards the men of the Sanhedrin. Maryem is thus summoned to testify about his origins (*JTS*, 'Second chapter of Mary,' fol. 10r–12v; *EH*, 'Second chapter of Yeshu,' fol. 8v–12r). In *EH*, the episode is expanded: Maryem at first keeps silent and lies, but eventually she tells the truth when confronted with Yochanan's teacher, Shimon ben Shetach. In the same manuscript, her speech also changes, and she starts to speak insolently and impudently in front of the Sanhedrin, admitting that she continued to live unchastely with Pandera even after Yeshu's conception (fol. 12r). Yeshu himself then wants to learn the truth

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[42] When citing the Yiddish text, I use the Yiddish names *Maryem* for Mary and *Yeshu* for Jesus.

[43] In all likelihood, a text very similar to Meerson and Schäfer's 'Ashkenazi A' recension (see note 25 above).

about his birth, thus he tortures his mother and makes her talk (*JTS*, fol. 13r–v; *EH*, fol. 13v). After the truth is revealed, he orders her to say that he was in fact born 'from her forehead' (*JTS*, fol. 14r; *EH*, fol. 14r).[44] Indeed, later in the story, when Yeshu is summoned before the Sanhedrin, Maryem stands up for him, claiming that he was born from her forehead and that she is still a virgin (*JTS*, 'Third chapter of Mary,' fol. 31v; *EH*, 'Fourth chapter of Mary,' fol. 29v). *EH* somewhat embellishes this image of Maryem as a virgin, associating her with the prophetess Miriam (Exod. 15:20) and calling her the 'mother of all women and maidens' (*EH*, fol. 29v).

These two Yiddish manuscripts provide further information regarding the involvement of Mary in the story. Thus, while Yeshu is held in prison in the city of Tiberias, Maryem once again sets out to help her son. She gathers a crowd and makes such a great clamour while lamenting before the Sanhedrin, that Yeshu is eventually released. In *JTS*, the crowd (חברותה; fol. 39v) is referred to as 'men, women, and children' (מאנין אז ווייבר אונ' קליין געזינד), but the text also mentions an armed mob (חיל; רעגימענט; fol. 39v–40r) of sinners (פשעים) and villains (פריצים), as well as the Apostles (תשמידים).[45] This mob attacks the Sanhedrin and pelts it with stones. The tumult is such that 'one brother contends against another' (fol. 40r). *EH* leaves things to the imagination of the listener or reader and only mentions a quarrel (מחלקות; fol. 36r).

As noted by Sarit Kattan Gribetz, there are different approaches to Mary's culpability with respect to her son's career in the various versions of *Toledot Yeshu*.[46] Some texts depict Mary as a pious and innocent woman, who was tricked into or forced to have sexual intercourse while she was impure. Others depict her as assuming a more active role, fooling her fiancé and indeed behaving 'like a whore.'[47] Our two manuscripts make it clear from the beginning that her behaviour can be variously interpreted, and the compilers thus note that, while some say that she was chaste, pious, and virtuous, others claim that she was 'good for nothing all her life' (*JTS*; fol. 1v). In *EH*, Maryem is also said to have enticed other young women to believe in Jesus, even becoming a model for them (fol. 1v). These two aspects of Mary are explained as her being initially pious and chaste, then eventually changing her conduct (fol. 1v).

Maryem's Death and Burial

The story of Maryem's death and burial appears in both Yiddish manuscripts after the account of Jesus's death and before the so-called 'Anti-Acts' narrative, which is found also in other manuscripts and provides a parody of the Apostles' story and the establishment of the early Church. In order to analyse this episode in more detail, I

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[44] I found this literal description of the virgin birth only in these manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*.

[45] תשמידים is a pun on Jesus's students, combining the words תלמידים ('students') and שמד ('to convert').

[46] KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts,' 111–16.

[47] See JOHN G. GAGER and MIKA AHUVIA, 'Some Notes on Jesus and his Parents. From the New Testament Gospels to the *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventeenth Birthday*, ed. RAANAN S. BOUSTAN (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 997–1019, esp. 1008–16.

provide it here in Yiddish and English, following the text of both manuscripts. Words written in Ashkenazic square script are set in bold letters. In the manuscripts dots were set to separate sentences and half-sentences, but not in the way we are used to setting them today.

תלדות ישי (Ms. JTS 2211)	תולדו' ישי שנת ג' אלפים ושבע מאות ושישים (Ms. EH 47 A 21)
/62r/ **איצונדר** ווערט איר גֿעפֿינדן דיא פֿיגֿור פֿון מרים	/54r/ איצונדר דר ווערקט זיך ווידר איין אנדרה גזירה איבר דען (ישי) מיט זיינה מוטר מרים

נון דער מוטר פֿון (ישי) האט אלז גוואר ווארן וויא עש איז צו גיגאנגן מיט דען (ישי) אונ' וויא ער האט איין סוף אין גנומן /62v/ וויא אובן גישריבן שטיט. דא האט זיא פֿר גרושי שרעק איין בּרירונג[48] גיקראגין. און איז קראנק גוואר מיט איין גר גרושי בּילעמרינג.[49] אזו איז זיא גלעגן עטליכה טעג אונ' איז גֿפֿייגֿרט אבר אין אירי קרענק האט זי **צוואה גילֿאזין** ווען זי שטערבּן ווערט. דען זאלן אלי אירי גֿעטליכר קינד האבּן מאמן גוועזן. דיא זאל איר איין **מצבה** זעצין פֿר איין זכרון. אונ' דיא זעלבּגה ווערן אך אזו גלֿערינט זיין דש זיא ווערן וויֿשן וואש זיא אויף דיא מצבה זעצין ווערן. דש איז אירי צוואה גוועזן אנדרשט ניט:

ויהי אונ' עש וואר דז דיא מוטר פֿון דען (ישי) זעלבּש גהערט האט דז איר זון (ישי) אזו איין גר שֿלעכֿטה סוף האט נון אין גנומן אז וויא איך אובן גשריבן הב אזו איז זיא פֿר גר גרושי שרעק קֿרֿאנק גֿוֿארֿן אונ' איז עטליכֿי [טעג] אזו קראנק גלעגן אונ' איז גֿפֿייגֿרט אונ' אין אירי קרענק וויא זיא גלעגן האט אזו האט זיא צוואה גטאן ווען זיא זעלט שטערבּרן אזו זאלן אלי דיא זעלבּיגֿה דיא אן איר זון (ישי) האבּן מאמן גוועזן אונ' דיא זיך אן דען (ישי) האבּן גיהעפֿט דיא זאלן ניט נאך לאזן אונ' ניט פֿר געשין אונ' זאלן איר איין מצבה זעצן אויף אירי קבר פֿר איין גדעכֿטנוס. אונ' דר בּייא האט זיא גזאגֿט דז זיא וואל ווערן וויֿשן וואש זיא ווערן אויף דיא מצבה זעצן. אזו איז דיא מרים נאך עטליכֿה טעג גֿפֿייגֿרט מיט גר גרושי /54v/ פֿר שטאנט. אונ' זיא האט ניט אנדרשט אז גיבעטן אן דיא חברותה דיא זיך אן דען (ישי) גיהעפֿֿט האבּן בּייא זייין לעבּן דז זיא זיך ניט זולן אפֿקערן פֿון (ישי) אל איז ער טוט דען איך ווייש ניט בּעשר אודר ער ווערט אייך וואל גלֿערינט האבּן זיינה האבּן גֿעצֿ. אונ' דז איז איין גבעט אן אייך אלי פֿר געשט ניט פֿר אום אן מיר איין מצבה צו זעצן:

וויא דיא מרים נון טואיט ווער איז דז גשריבן ווארן פֿון **בּית לחם** דארך דז גאנץ לאנד ירושלים. דז דיא היילוֿגֿה מוטר מרים פֿייגֿר איז אונ' וויא זיא אזו איין צוואה גֿלאזן האט אום איין מצבה. זא זיֿינה גיקומן צו לֿופֿין זער פֿיל פֿון דיא פֿשעים אונ' השמידים דיא אן דען (ישי) האבּן מאמן גוועזן. אזו וואל מאמ אן אז וויבּר אונ' קליין גזינד אונ' זיֿינה אלי גלֿאפֿֿין בּייא דז קבר דיא מרים אום איר צו בּיקלֿאגין. אך אום מיט אויֿינים אן העסבּעט צו מאכֿן איבּר איר. אונ' איבּר איר היילוֿגֿר זון (ישי) אונ' אירי מעשים אונ' (ישי) זיֿינה מעשים צו פֿֿר צֿיילו. אך אום אירי צוואה נאך צו קומן דיא זיא האט נאך גֿלֿאזן. דען זיא האבּן זיך פֿר איר גֿעפֿֿריכֿטן ווען זיא זעלבּש ניט נאך קומן.

נאך דיא עטליכֿי טג אז זיא פֿייגֿר ווער איז דז גשריבן גֿווארן פֿון **בּית לחם** בּיז דֿארֿך דז גנצֿי לאנד (ירֿשֿולֿים). אזו איז דז גהֿֿערֿט ווארן בֿייא דיא פֿשֿעֿים דיֿא זֿיֿךֿ האבּן בֿייא זֿייֿן לעבּן אן דען (ישֿי) גֿיֿהֿעֿפֿֿט. אזו זֿיֿינֿה זֿיֿא גֿלֿייֿךֿ גֿצֿאֿגֿן נאך בּית לחם נאך דז קבר פֿון (מרים) אים אן דיא (מרים) דֿארֿטֿין צו בֿיֿקֿלֿאֿגֿן אויֿֿף איר קבר. אונ' זֿיֿא האבּן זֿיֿךֿ פֿֿאֿר גֿנֿוֿמֿן אום מיט אויֿינֿים איֿֿין העֿס בּעֿט צֿו מֿאֿכֿן אויף דאש קבר פֿֿוֿן (מרים) אֿוֿןֿ פֿֿר (ישֿי) מֿיֿט אויֿֿינֿים. אין דיא צֿייֿט אז זֿיֿא זֿיֿינֿה גֿקֿוֿמֿן נֿאֿךֿ בֿית לֿחֿם צֿו דֿֿאֿרֿנֿייֿן גֿוֿועֿֿזֿן פֿֿיֿל ווֿייֿבּֿֿש בֿיֿלֿדֿר דֿיֿא אך (מרֿים) האט מֿטֿמֿה גֿוֿועֿֿזֿן בֿייֿא איֿֿר לֿעֿבּֿן אונ' האבּן פֿֿֿר צֿוֿואֿֿה פֿֿוֿן (מרֿים) אֿוֿם נֿאֿךֿ צֿו קֿוֿמֿן וֿואֿֿש זֿיֿא האט צֿוֿֿואֿֿה גֿלֿֿאֿֿזֿן.

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48 From the Dutch *beroering*.
49 From the Dutch *belemmering*.

ווא דיא פשעים האבן אן מרים איין מצבה טון זעצין
וויא וויטר שטיט

נון דיא פשעים פֿון דען (ישי) דיא האבן זיך בייא אננדר
גמאכט אונ׳ זיינה דיא צוואה נאך גיקומן אונ׳ האבן אן
(מרים) איין מצבה גזעצט.

אונ׳ האבן דיא היילגה פסוק אויז אונזר תורה דא אויף
גזעצט. **וישכב מרים במקום ההוא והנה סלם מצב ארצו
וראשו מגיע השמימה והנה מלאכי אלקי׳ עולם וירדים
בו.**

אזו /63r/ האבין זיך פֿר גאדירט דרייא טג
לנג זער פֿיל פֿון דיא פשעים. ענטליך האבן דיא
פֿריינט אין דיא צייט איין מצבה קלאר גמאכט פֿר דיא
מרים. אונ׳ איינר פֿון דיא אפוסטלי האט אויף גיבן דיא
פסוק אוז דיא תורה אום אויף דיא מצבה צו זעצין.
**וישכב מרים במקום ההוא והנה סלם מצב ארצה.
וראשו מגיע השמימה. והנה מלאכי אלקים עלים
וירדים בו.** דז איז טייטש אונ׳ דיא מרים רואיט אויף
דיא פלאטץ. אונ׳ איין לייטר דז שטיט פֿון דר ערד ביז
אן דען הימל. אונ׳ נון גיין ענגלין ארויף אונ׳ ארונטר.
אונ׳ וויטר האבן זיא אירי **הבל** אונ׳ **שבח** אויף דיא
מצבה גזעצט:

דז האבן ווידר דיא סנהדרים גהערט וויא אלי דיא פשעים
ופריצים האבן אן דיא (מרים) אזו איין מצבה טון זעצין. אזו
זיינה זיא גלייך גיגאנגן אונ׳ האבן גשיקט אירי שמשים
אום דיא מצבה נידר צו ריישן וויא אך גלייך אן שטונד
גשעהן איז.

אונ׳ נאך מער זיא האבן דר בייא אזו גריבט בייא דיא
הלנות המלכה דז זיא האבן גיקראגן זער פֿיל רייקום
אום אן דיא שמשים צו העלפֿן דר ווארטן דז דיא פשעים
אזו גר פֿיל גוועגן זיין אנדרשט העטן דיא פשעים אן דיא
שמשים אום אירי לעבן גיבראכט. /55r/ אונ׳ דר בייא
האבן דיא סנהדרין נאך מער אוז גריכט בייא דיא הלנ׳
המלכה דז זיא וויטר האט אורדר גיגעבן אן דיא רייקום דז
דער הופמן זאל אוז רופֿין דז אל דער ערשטר דער זיך דר
וועגן ווערט אום ווידר אויף דיא זעלבגה פלאטץ איין מצבה
ווידר צו זעצין דער זעלבגר זאל דיא סנהדרין מעגן מיט
טאן נאך אירי וואל גפֿאלין אונ׳ קיינר זאל ווארן פֿר שונט.
אונ׳ זאל ניקס טערפֿין אין ברעגנג. אונ׳ דר בייא האבן דיא
סנהדרין לאזן דז קבר אין רייצן דז גר ניקש איז צו זעהן
גוועזן וואו איין קבר גוועזן איז:

דז האבן דיא סנהדרין גהערט פֿון דיא מצבה
וויא דיא פושעים האבן אן דיא מרים אזו איין מצבה
טון זעצין. אונ׳ דר צו מיט אזו איין שבח אז וויא אובן
גשריבן איז. זא האבן דיא סנהדרין גלייך גשיקט אירי
שמשים מיט זער פֿיל מאנשאפֿט מיט אורדר פֿון דיא
הילנות המלכה. אונ׳ האבן דיא מצבה דר נידר גריסן.
אונ׳ אין פֿיל שטיקר צו בראבין אונ׳ דר בייא איז איין
ביפֿעל אוז גאנגין מיט אורדר פֿון די מלכה. אל דער
זלבגר דער זיך ווערט ווידר אונטר שטין אום ווידר דוא
איין מצבה צו זעצין אויף דז קבר פֿון מרים דר זאל אין
דיא מאכט זיין פֿון דיא סנהדרין. אונ׳ דיא זעלין אן
קיינם טערפֿין פֿר שונין:

Now you will find the figure of Maryem /fol. 62r/

Now a new bad deed starting from Yeshu and Maryem /fol. 54r/

When Maryem found out everything that had happened to her son Yeshu, the end he had met /fol. 62v/ (as written above), she was shocked and confused. She became sick and was heavily paralysed. She lay like that for several days and died. But at [that time], as she lay sick and paralysed, she made a will in case she should die: all who have found faith in her divine child should raise a tombstone in memory of her. And anyone doing this would be instructed, so that they would know what to put on the tombstone. That was her will and nothing else.

And it was so: When Maryem heard that her son Yeshu had come to such a bad end, as I have written above, she fell ill and was in great fright. She lay sick [in bed] for several days before she passed away. While she was lying down in her sickness, she made a will in case she should die, that all who believed in her son Yeshu and had followed him should not be negligent [in their faith] and not forget [her], and that they should set a tombstone on her grave in remembrance of her. And to this she added that they would know well what they should write on the tombstone. Thus, Maryem passed away after several days with a very clear /fol. 54v/ mind. And she did not do anything else but ask the flock that had united behind her son Yeshu in his lifetime not to turn away from Yeshu only because he was dead. 'For I know that otherwise, he would have taught you his laws! And this is my commandment to you: Do not forget to set a tombstone for me!'

When Mother Maryem was dead, [letters] were written from Bethlehem to the whole land of Jerusalem, [saying] that the Holy Mother Mary had died and that she had left a will regarding her tombstone. Thus, many of the apostates and lost ones, who believed in Yeshu, came running around, men and also women and children. They all came to Maryem's grave to mourn her, and to give a funeral oration about her and her holy son Yeshu, and to tell about her deeds and the deeds of Yeshu, and to obey the will that she had left behind. Because they were afraid of her should they not follow this.

After a few days she died, and [letters] were written from Bethlehem throughout the whole land of Jerusalem.

Thus, the wicked also heard the news [of her passing], those who had joined her son Yeshu during his lifetime. They immediately went to Bethlehem, to Mary's tomb, to mourn her there, on her tomb. And they planned to make a funeral oration at her tomb for her and at the same time for her son Yeshu.

How the followers of Yeshu set the gravestone, as written above

/fol. 63r/ Thus, many of the apostates gathered for three days. Finally, when it was time, these friends placed the tombstone for Maryem. And one of the Apostles had the verse from the Torah written on the stone: 'And Mary rests in this place and behold, a ladder stood on the earth and its upper end reached up to heaven. And behold, angels ascended and descended on it.' And furthermore, they

At the time they came to Bethlehem, there were many women there whom Maryem had incited to impurity in her lifetime. These had kept Maryem's will in order to [be able to] comply with it. The wicked joined them to fulfil the will and set a tombstone for Maryem. On it they inscribed a passage from the Holy Torah, *va-yishkav maryem 'be-*

engraved their wanton deeds and praises on the tombstone.	*makom ha-hu sulam matsev artso ve-rosho magiya ha-shamima ve-hine malakhe elohim olam veyirdim bo.*'[50]
[The men] of the Sanhedrin heard about the tombstone that the apostates had placed for Maryem with much eulogy, as written above. So, the men of the Sanhedrin immediately sent their servants with many strong men at the behest of Queen Helena. They tore down the tombstone and broke it into many pieces. At the same time, there was an order by the queen that everyone who dared erect a tombstone on the grave of Maryem should be handed over to the Sanhedrin. And these [men] did not spare anyone.	The Sanhedrin heard that the apostates and scoundrels had set a tombstone for Maryem. Immediately they sent their synagogue attendants to pull the tombstone down, and this was done immediately, in the same hour. Moreover, they informed Queen Helena, and she gave them armed men, since the apostates were so many. Otherwise, the apostates would have taken the synagogue attendants' lives. /Fol. 55r/ Also, the Sanhedrin arranged with Queen Helena for a herald (הופמן, literally 'courtier') to proclaim that whoever would set a tombstone (on Maryem's grave) again would be at the mercy of the Sanhedrin and that the Sanhedrin could act with them as it wished. No one would be spared, and petitions would be denied. In the meantime, the Sanhedrin had the tomb destroyed so that nothing could be seen in the place where the tomb had previously been.

In both manuscripts this story about Mary's entombment constitutes an additional narrative module. The headings *Itsunder wert ir gefinden di figur fun Maryem* ('Now you will find the figure of Mary,' *JTS*, fol. 62v) and *Itsunder der vekt zikh vider ayn ander gzeyre iber den yeshe mit zayne muter Maryem* ('Now there arises another bad deed (גזירה literally: 'decree') concerning Yeshu and his mother Maryem,' *EH*, fol. 54r) interrupt the broader narrative and are not tied to the preceding text. Only the word 'again' in *EH* seems to refer to the other episodes 'concerning Maryem' earlier in the narrative.

    JTS divides the episode into two sections while *EH* has only one: Maryem became ill after the death of her son and therefore made a will. She ordered the faithful followers of her son to set a tombstone over her grave. She died and the news quickly spread. Many came to her funeral to mourn her and deliver a funeral oration (העסבעט in Hebrew, הספד in Yiddish), recounting her good deeds and those of her son. The second section in *JTS* and the remaining text of *EH* 7 deal with the setting up of the tombstone, citing the inscription that was engraved on the monument. The Sanhedrin then had the tombstone torn down and forbade anyone to erect a new one in the same place. *EH* tightens the story by adding that now it was impossible to see that anyone had ever been buried there.

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[50] The passage quoting Gen. 28:12 is cited in Hebrew, although the name of Mary replaces that of Jacob: '[In a dream he saw] a ladder, which rested on the ground with its top reaching to heaven, and angels of God were going up and down on it' (I quote from *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* [Oxford: Oxford University Press; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996]).

The two manuscripts offer a slightly different text and set their own emphasis. The linguistic freedom of both narrators is clear when considering the use of specifically Dutch-Yiddish expressions. Here, as in other places, small details point to the individual creativity of the scribe, but also shed light on the context of the manuscripts. *JTS* mentions that apostates (פשעים) and the Apostles (תשמידים) were present at Maryem's funeral, and both groups were divided into men, women and children (קליין גיזנד[51]), while *EH* highlights the presence of women (ווייבש בילדר) whom Mary had enticed to live impurely during her lifetime (דיא אך [מרים] האט מטמה גוועזן בייא איר לעבן, fol. 54v). *JTS* is more detailed in its description of the tombstone, as, not only does it provide the biblical quotation from Genesis 28:12 (in Hebrew followed by a Yiddish translation), it adds that all present also wrote down their merits and demerits (הבל אונ' שבח). In both texts, the apostates (פשעים) seem particularly violent when defending the tombstone. Thus *JTS* (fol. 63r) indicates that it took 'many strong men' (זער פיל מאנשאפֿט) to drive them out. In *EH* (fol. 54r), the violent nature of Jesus's followers is emphasised through reference to the support of Queen Helena, without whose help 'the servants [of the Sanhedrin] would have lost their lives.'

Maryem's Death in a Hebrew Text of *Toledot Yeshu*

Of all the extant *Toledot Yeshu* texts, only the so-called Huldricus version preserves a story about Mary's death which can be compared to the one found in our two Yiddish manuscripts.[52] Of the Hebrew text and Latin translation published by Johann Jacob Ulrich (Huldricus) in 1705, we only know that it was based on a manuscript provided by a Jew known to the editor.[53] It is most likely a compilation of several versions that are no longer extant. Adina Yoffie points out the differences in this particular text from other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*.[54] She dates the origins of this particular version to the fifteenth or sixteenth century, but assumes that many episodes of the narrative must date back to the Middle Ages (probably the twelfth century).[55] Maryem's death and burial are recounted somewhat later in the Huldricus text, in the context of the 'Anti-Acts' narrative, almost at the end of the whole story. Here we read the following:

> In those days, Mary, the mother of Jesus, died. King (Herod) ordered her to be buried under the tree where her son had been hanged, as well as the brothers of Jesus and his sisters, whom the king ordered to be hanged. And they hanged them and wrote on the tombstone, 'Here the children of fornication (Hos 2:6) were hanged, and their mother was buried beside them. Shame on them!' But some villains (פריצים) from Jesus's family came and stole the tombstone and put another in its place, on which they wrote, 'Behold, a ladder is set up on the earth with its top reaching the heavens, and the angels of God are ascending (Gen. 28:12). The mother of the

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[51] The Yiddish term *klayn gezind* could include the house servants as well, see also *JTS*, fol. 39v and 62v.
[52] On this episode in the 'Huldricus,' see KATTAN GRIEBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts,' 116–18.
[53] Cf. ADINA M. YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscripts of the *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 61–77(63).
[54] YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscripts,' 62.
[55] YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscripts,' 68.

children rejoices. Praise the Lord! (Ps. 113:9).' When the king heard what the villains (פריצים) had done, he ordered to demolish the tombstone, and he killed about 100 relatives of Jesus.[56]

Unlike the Yiddish manuscripts, the 'Huldricus' makes no mention of Mary's testament. Instead, it mentions the fate of Yeshu's siblings, who are hanged after their mother's death and buried alongside her under the very same tree upon which Jesus himself had been hanged. Here, we also learn of two tombstones, one set up by Herod and one set up by the 'villains' in Jesus's family. The tombstone set up by the latter bears the same inscription we find in our Yiddish sources, namely a quotation from Genesis 28:12 and a verse from the Psalms. The inscription describes the destruction of the monuments and also the killing of Yeshu's entire family. As in the New Testament, there is no mention of Joseph (or any other biological father) in the post-Easter context.[57] King Herod is the sole commander, and it is he who orders all the executions. The men from the Sanhedrin are absent. Only when the first tombstone is erected does the text refer to an unspecified collective.

Before returning to our Yiddish texts, we need to turn to Christian narratives on the death of Mary, anti-Jewish narratives attested in various forms (oral traditions, but also liturgical practices, pilgrimages, church iconography) to which we can in fact trace the material found in the Jewish story.

The Dormition of Mary in the Christian Tradition

Mary's role and function within the Christian tradition is clear: she is, from the very beginning, part of the divine plan for the salvation of humanity. She is the one who gives birth to the Messiah and Son of God. According to the Council of Ephesus in 431, a decisive moment in the crystallisation of a number of Christological themes and dogmas most Christian confessions still agree on today, Mary is the 'God-bearer' (θεοτόκος), the woman chosen by God for His incarnation. Jesus Christ is thus described as 'true man and true God,' united through his mother's pure body to the inseparable and indistinguishable Unity (ὁμοούσιος).[58] As a 'god-bearer' Mary remains a pure virgin until her death. According to a well-established Christian legend, her own death was announced to her twenty-two years after Jesus's passing by the archangel Gabriel, holding a palm branch from paradise in his hand.[59] Mary's last wishes were to have the Apostles surrounding her when she died and to be spared the horrors of hell

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[56] I quote the translation from MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 320; see vol. 2, 250 for the original Hebrew. One of the oldest Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* probably bears witness to the Huldricus text; cf. ROSENZWEIG, 'When Jesus Spoke Yiddish.'

[57] For a discussion of the absence of Jesus's father in *Toledot Yeshu*, see GAGER and AHUVIA, 'Some notes,' 998–1004.

[58] WILFRIED HÄRLE, *Outline of Christian Doctrine: An Evangelical Dogmatics,* trans. RUTH YULE, trans. and ed. NICOLAS SAGOVSKY (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 289. This was again formulated at the Council of Chalcedon (451) as a Christological dogma. See STEPHEN J. SHOEMAKER, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 256–77, which shows that the rising cult of the Marian dormition and assumption paralleled debates on the Chalcedonic dogma, and perhaps also aimed to refute that dogma.

[59] A summary of several variants of this legend is provided in CHRISTA SCHAFFER, *Aufgenommen in den Himmel* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1985), 9–37.

through Gabriel's blessing. She withdrew and prayed in order to overcome her fear of death, entrusting herself to the care of Christ. When she returned home[60] and lay down to die, the Apostles were carried by clouds (cf. Heb 12:1) or angels, surrounding her as she breathed her last breath.[61] Christ himself is present to take her soul immediately into his hands. He disappears into heaven with Mary's soul, surrounded by a host of angels.

The story of Mary's entombment varies more.[62] Most ancient sources, however, suggest that Peter and Paul carried her bier to the grave, while John preceded them holding the angel's palm branch. Choirs of angels accompanied the procession, singing hymns along with the Apostles. Yet Jews interrupted and disturbed the procession (a point to which I will return). After three days, Mary was laid in an empty tomb. Following her assumption to heaven, only her garments remained and were preserved as relics.[63] Christ then reunited Mary's body with her resurrected soul and established her as the Queen of Heaven.

From early on, the figure of Mary allowed pagan influences to enter the Christian tradition. Many popular ideas and beliefs, sometimes even contradictory ones, could coexist with the orthodox Christian doctrine.[64] The legend of Mary has come down to us by way of several late ancient and early medieval pseudepigrapha, but also through doxologies and homilies circulating both in the East and in the West in oral or written form. Ritual practices related to the worship of Mary also varied greatly. For a long time, both Ephesus and the garden of Gethsemane, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, were remembered as the site of her passing. The original date commemorating Mary's Assumption was January 18. It was emperor Mauritius (582–602) who was responsible for unifying the various traditions and who decided to set the date to August 15, the day on which the Assumption is still celebrated today.[65] In the High Middle Ages, August 15 became an occasion for large and elaborate pilgrimages to sanctuary churches and cathedrals.[66] I suggest that these Christian traditions surrounding the

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[60] We read that Mary was then living in the house of the Apostle John, to whom she had entrusted Jesus on the cross (cf. John 19:27).

[61] In the older Byzantine versions of the story, the twelve Apostles are often accompanied by Paul, the patriarchs, and Mary's virgin friends, cf. SCHAFFER, *Aufgenommen in den Himmel*, 83.

[62] SCHAFFER, *Aufgenommen in den Himmel*, 33.

[63] Other variants mention the whereabouts of Mary's corpse in the heart of earth, where it awaits Judgment Day; cf. SCHAFFER, *Aufgenommen in den Himmel*, 33.

[64] See HEINER GROTE, 'Maria / Marienfrömmigkeit II,' in *Theologische Realenzyklopedie*, 36 vols., vol. 22 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992) 119–37; MARY B. CUNNINGHAM, '*The Life of the Theotokos* by Epiphanios of Kallistratos: A Monastic Approach to an Apocryphal Story,' in *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium. Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, eds THOMAS ARENTZEN and MARY B. CUNNINGHAM (Cambridge: University Press, 2019), 309–323 (319).

[65] Since that time, Marian celebrations and large processions have been held in Rome on both August 15 and September 8, the day of Mary's birth; cf. GROTE, 'Maria / Marienfrömmigkeit II', 126; E. PERETTO, 'Feasts of Mary,' in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. ANGELO DI BERARDINO, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 718–19.

[66] ANNETTE WEBER, "'… Maria die ist juden veind." Antijüdische Mariendarstellungen in der Kunst des 13.–15. Jahrhunderts,' in *Maria. Tochter Sion? Mariologie, Marienfrömmigkeit und Judenfeindschaft*, eds JOHANNES HEIL and RAINER KAMPLING (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 69–112 (82).

death of Mary (and the associated rituals) illuminate the background of the Jewish story we find in our Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*. However, there is one episode in the medieval Christian narratives which probably deserves closer attention.

An Anti-Jewish Episode in the *Transitus Mariae*

One of the most important textual traditions on the Assumption of Mary is the *De Transitu Beatae Mariae Virginis* ('The ascending of the Blessed Virgin Mary'), a pseudepigraphic work written in the fourth century.[67] Numerous Latin manuscripts attest to the great importance of this narrative, originally written in Greek, but which encountered wide circulation in the Western Latin world. Transmitted by Gregory of Tours (538–594), the *Transitus Mariae* found its way into several French and German monasteries where, from the twelfth century onwards, a strong tradition of Marian devotion was starting to take hold. Eventually, the *Transitus Mariae* narrative also began to circulate in vernacular languages.[68] Jacobus of Voragine (1230–1298) knew the story when he composed his widely read *Legenda Aurea*. He arranged the various legends concerning the Christian saints and Mary according to days of the year and associated festivals. The story of Mary's Assumption is found in the 119th chapter of the *Legenda*, corresponding to August 15.[69] The story provided by Jacobus of Voragine and the earlier witnesses of the *Transitus Mariae* includes an episode involving 'infidels' and 'sacrilegious' people, obviously Jews, interrupting Mary's entombment.[70] I quote this passage from Peter Schäfer's translation of the *Transitus*:

> When the high priest of the Jews—who was the priest of that year in his turn—saw the wreathed funeral couch and the disciples of the Lord singing with exultation around the bier, filled with anger and wrath he said: 'Behold the tabernacles of he who threw us and our whole people into disorder, what sort of glory has she received?' And saying these things, he wanted to overturn the funeral couch and bring it down to the ground. And at once both his hands dried up from the very elbows and they clung to the bier. Then, while the apostles were carrying around the bier, part of him was hanging and [the other] part was clinging to the funeral couch, and he was tortured by the harsh punishment, while the apostles were walking about with exultation and singing praises to the Lord. The angels who were in the clouds struck the crowd [of the Jews], who had gone out of the city, with blindness. Then the high priest, who was clinging to the bier began to shout and say: 'I beseech you, Saint Peter, do not despise me in so urgent a moment as this! Remember when the door servant accused you, it was I who spoke well on your behalf. Rather, now I beg you to have pity on me before the Lord.' Then Peter said to him: 'We [apostles] have no power to make alterations in the world, but if you believe in God and in him, whom

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[67] MONIKA HAIBACH-REINISCH, ed., *Ein neuer 'Transitus Mariae' des Pseudo Melito. Textkritische Ausgabe und Darlegung der Bedeutung dieser ursprünglicheren Fassung für Apokryphenforschung und lateinische und deutsche Dichtung des Mittelalters* (Rome: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1962).

[68] HAIBACH-REINISCH, *Transitus Mariae*, 17 and chap. 3, 201–309. ANNETTE WEBER mentions public theatre plays showing this anti-Jewish legend on stage in the High Middle Ages, '"Maria die ist juden veind",' 80.

[69] JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. WILLIAM GRANGER RYAN, with an introduction by EAMON DUFFY (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 463–83. On the relationship of Jacobus's text with his source, see HAIBACH-REINISCH, *Transitus Mariae*, 184–200.

[70] On anti-Jewish tropes in earlier Marian traditions, see STEPHEN J. SHOEMAKER, '"Let Us Go and Burn Her Body": The Image of the Jews in the Early Dormition Traditions,' *Church History* 68, no. 4 (1999): 775–823.

that [woman] carried [in her womb], Jesus Christ, our Lord, [then] your hands will be released from the bier.' He answered him: 'Is there anything that we do not believe? But what shall we do? Since the enemy of the human race completely blinded our hearts, so that we may not confess the wondrous deeds of God, especially when we ourselves have cursed Christ, shouting: "His blood is upon us and upon our sons." And the stain of so great a sin clung to us.' Peter responded to him: 'This curse will harm those who have continued in their unbelief, but mercy will not be denied to those who turn to the Lord.'

When Peter caused the bier to stand still, the high priest said: 'I believe in the Son of God, whom that [woman] carried in her womb, Jesus Christ, our Lord.' And at once his hands were freed from the bier, but his forearms were withered and the punishment did not leave him [completely]. Then Peter said to him: 'Approaching the body, kiss the funeral couch and say: "I believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom that woman carried in her womb, and she remained a virgin after the birth".' When he had done thus, he instantly returned to health. And he began to praise God magnificently and to bear witness of Mary from the books of the Old Testament, namely that she is the Temple of God, that even the apostles wept with joy and admiration.[71]

The high priest now inflamed by his Christian faith subsequently touches the eyes of some Jews with a palm branch. As a result, those who profess their faith in Jesus regain sight, while those who remain 'obstinate' die. In her study of the Byzantine-Oriental and Western descriptions of the Assumption of Mary, Christa Schaffer shows that this so-called 'Jephonias scene' (from the name given to the high priest in many versions of the narrative) was represented in Christian iconography, especially in the beginning of the twelfth century.[72] Annette Weber, for her part, has suggested analysing these pictorial representations as they relate to contemporary anti-Jewish agitation.[73] Several wall paintings and glass windows from that period (e.g., in Chartres and Freiburg) show scenes inspired by the *Transitus* tradition, suggesting an anti-Jewish polemic. We can furthermore note that many other anti-Jewish narratives, besides the story of Mary's resurrection, soon become associated with the Holy Virgin in the late medieval context.[74] What interests us here is of course the fact that Jews play an important role in the Christian traditions narrating the death and burial of Mary.

Genesis 28:12 and the Gateway to Heaven as a *Typos*

The quotation of Genesis 28:12, which appears in both our Yiddish manuscripts from Amsterdam and the Huldricus version of *Toledot Yeshu*, is linked in a particular sense to the Christian tradition. Taken from the biblical story of the patriarch Jacob, this quotation was not chosen arbitrarily. Indeed, I would argue that it echoes Christian interpretations of the Assumption of Mary.[75] Already in early Christian homilies in

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[71] PETER SCHÄFER, *Mirror of His Beauty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 174–75 (and chap. 9 in general). For a critical edition of the Latin text, see HAIBACH-REINISCH, *Transitus Mariae*, 80–83.
[72] CHRISTA SCHAFFER, *Koimesis. Der Heimgang Mariens. Das Entschlafungsbild in seiner Abhängigkeit von Legende und Theologie* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1985), 81–83; on earlier texts, see SHOEMAKER, 'Let Us Go and Burn Her Body,' 799. In some sources, the high priest is named 'Reuben' or 'Zephaniah'; see ORA LIMOR, 'Mary and the Jews: Story, Controversy and Testimony,' *Historein* 6 (2006): 55–71 (60).
[73] WEBER, ''…Maria die ist juden veind'',' 80–2.
[74] SCHÄFER, *Mirror of Her Beauty*, 191–209.
[75] This connection was already noted in KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts', 118no6.

both Greek and Latin, the stairway to heaven mentioned in Genesis 28:12 could serve as an image (*typos*) for the mother of God, explaining in particular her salvific function for faithful Christians. Mary, who found the doors of heaven open while she was asleep, and thus experienced death and resurrection while on earth, surrounded by the Apostles, and in heaven, surrounded by angels, could herself be interpreted as a stairway to heaven for those who believe in her son Jesus Christ. As is well known, passages from the Old Testament were generally interpreted by late ancient and early medieval Christian writers in relation to the events of the New Testament: every *typos* found in the Old Testament was taken to have a counterpart (or *anti-typos*) in the Gospels. Indeed, according to the Christian tradition, only the side-by-side reading of both the Old and New Testaments provides a true understanding of either text.[76]

In his first homily on the *Koimesis*, for instance, the Byzantine theologian John of Damascus (b. ca. 650) wrote:

> I had nearly forgotten Jacob's ladder. Is it not evident to everyone that it prefigured thee, and is not the type easily recognized? Just as Jacob saw the ladder bringing together heaven and earth, and on it angels coming down and going up, and the truly strong and invulnerable God wrestling mystically with himself, so art thou placed between us, and art become the ladder of God's intercourse with us, of Him who took upon Himself our weakness, uniting us to Himself, and enabling man to see God. Thou hast brought together what was parted. Hence angels descended to Him, ministering to Him as their God and Lord, and men, adopting the life of angels, are carried up to heaven.[77]

The Virgin Mary also served as a model for the various virgins mentioned in the pastoral letters of the New Testament (e.g. 1 Cor 7:25–28; Acts 21:9), but also for many young, married women who embraced Christianity.[78] It is thus not entirely surprising that the motif of a stairway to heaven shows up in one of the four visions of Perpetua, martyred—along with her slave, Felicitas—by Septimius Severus on March 7, 203.[79] According to the *Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, Perpetua foresaw her death in a vision in which the ladder appeared:

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[76] Cf. BRITTA STRENGE, 'Typos; Typologie,' *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, eds JOACHIM RITTER, KARLFRIED GRÜNDER, and GOTTFRIED GABRIEL, 13 vols., vol. 10 (Basel: Schwabe, 1998), 1587–94; PHILIPPE BORGEAUD: 'Antijudaïsme et théorie des figures: plagiat par anticipation, vol de language at histoire des religions,' *ASDIWAL. Revue genevoise d'anthropologie et d'histoire des religions*, 11 (2016): 33–46.

[77] I quote from the English translation provided by the Internet Medieval Sourcebook of the Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies, New York, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/johndamascus-komesis.asp. See also JOSÉ MARÍA SALVADOR GONZÁLES, 'La docrtrina de San Juan Damascenon sobre la muerte y la asunción de María al cielo, y su posible influencia e las correspondientes iconografías medievales,' *Eikón Imago* 6, no. 2 (2017): 139–68; FRANCESCA DELL'ACQUA, 'Mary as "Scala Caelestris" in Eighth- and Ninth-Century Italy,' in *The Reception of the Virgin,* eds ARENTZEN and CUNNINGHAM, 235–56 (250–51 on John of Damascus).

[78] MARIA MARITANO, 'Mary,' in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. ANGELO DI BERARDINO, 3 vols., vol. 2, 714–18 (715).

[79] ROSEMARY RADER, 'Perpetua,' in *A Lost Tradition. Women Writers of the Early Church*, eds PATRICIA WILSON-KASTNER et al. (Washington: University Press of America, 1981), 1–32. On Mary as an exemplum of asceticism in the monastic tradition, see CUNNINGHAM, 'The Life of the Theotokos,' 310, 323.

> There was a bronze ladder[80] of extraordinary height reaching up to heaven, but it was so narrow that only one person could ascend at a time. Every conceivable kind of iron weapon was attached to the sides of the ladder: swords, lances, hooks, and daggers. If anyone climbed up carelessly or without looking upwards, he would be mangled as the flesh adhered to the weapons. Crouching directly beneath the ladder was a monstrous dragon who threatened those climbing up and tried to frighten them from ascent. Saturus went up first […] When he reached the top of the ladder, he turned to me and said, 'Perpetua, I'm waiting for you, but be careful not to be bitten by the dragon.' I told him that in the name of Jesus Christ the dragon could not harm me. At this the dragon slowly lowered its head as though afraid of me. Using its head as the first step, I began my ascent.[81]

For virgins of Christ, the ladder, or staircase,[82] served as an image of the ascent towards the sphere of the divine. In Perpetua's visions, the image also evoked consolation and the hope to be able to endure martyrdom. In later hymnologies, such as Notker Balbulus's (840–912) *De sanctis Virginibus* ('On the Holy Virgins'), the ascent on the ladder can also be described as a 'moment of danger.' As noted by F. R. Gahbauer, 'Love for Christ or love of Christ paved the way for the virgins over the ladder to heaven, sharply guarded by the dragon.'[83] Another hymn preserved by the Ethiopian Church and attributed to Queen Helena of Ethiopia, translated into Latin under the title *Helenae Aethiopum Reginae Quae Feruntur Preces et Carmina*, praises Mary and describes her as a golden ladder on which angels can climb up and down. Mary is the ladder directing the prayers of the saints towards heaven: *O Virgo! Tu facta es precationum scala et gradus orationis* ('O Virgin! You have become the ladder of devotions and the steps of prayers').[84]

We can note that the biblical text relating the story of Jacob's ladder also had a fixed place in the Roman Catholic Mass, and was included in the vespers of Marian holidays. Genesis 28:10–17 is thus the first passage read in the liturgical sequence of biblical texts on August 15. The same passage also found its way into the liturgy of the other Marian festivals, when believers are required to fear God and direct their gaze (as Jacob did) towards the 'gate of heaven,' which now stands open before them.[85]

Toledot Yeshu as a Counter-Narrative to Marian Traditions

We can observe many parallels between these Christian traditions and the story of Mary as it is found in our two Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*. In both the Jewish and the Christian stories, Christians and Jews are present when Mary dies and is buried.

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[80] Some texts mention 'a golden ladder'; cf. FERDINAND R. GAHBAUER, 'Die Jakobsleiter, ein aussagenreiches Motiv der Väterliteratur,' *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 9, no. 2 (2006): 247–78 (269).
[81] Cited from RADER, 'Perpetua', 21.
[82] HANS JOCHEN BOECKER, *1. Mose 25, 12–37,1. Züricher Kommentare 1,3* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992), 60: 'Es handelt sich […] um ein aus massiven Steinen errichtetes Bauwerk' ('It is a matter of a structure built of solid stones').
[83] GAHBAUER, 'Jakobsleiter', 269.
[84] GAHBAUER, 'Jakobsleiter', 272.
[85] See KLAUS GAMBER, 'Die ältesten Messformulare für Maria Verkündigung. Ein kleines Kapitel frühmittelalterlicher Sakramentargeschichte,' *Sacris erudiri* 29 (1986): 121-50; KLAUS GAMBER, *Sacramentorum. Weitere Studien zur Geschichte des Messbuches und der frühen Liturgie* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1984), 68–91.

In *Toledot Yeshu*, the Christian 'others' are described as 'apostates' (פשעים), 'scoundrels' (פריצים), or 'scholars of the false Christian belief' (תשמידים). In the Christian narrative, the Apostles and the Jews, represented by the Jewish high priest Jephonias, appear as earthly figures, in contrast to the heavenly figures represented by the angels and Christ. In the Huldricus version of *Toledot Yeshu*, family relations also play an important role in delineating Mary's identity. In both the Jewish and the Christian narratives, Mary does not die suddenly but is aware of her impending death. In the Yiddish texts she falls ill and decides to make a will. In the Christian legend, it is the angel Gabriel who announces her death. The episode thus closes the circle of her life as, according to the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:28), it was Gabriel who also announced to Mary that she would conceive the Son of God. It is her closeness to her son, whom she has carried in her virgin body, which allows her to ask to be spared the torments of hell. In the Yiddish manuscripts, by contrast, Maryem suffers various illnesses, and her death is described as a 'perishing' (גפייגרט; *JTS*, fol. 62v; *EH*, fol. 54r), a term associated with impurity and commonly used for the death of animals. The Jewish story thus similarly implies a circle: Maryem conceived in impurity and died an impure death.

Both the Jewish and the Christian story also imply a funerary ritual, with close relatives and fellow believers. Ms. EH 47 A 21 emphasises that as she lay sick, Maryem exhorted Yeshu's followers to hold fast to their faith. According to the Christian legend, most conspicuously in Christian iconography, Mary dies surrounded by the Apostles. Peter, representing the Church, appears at her bedhead and leans towards her. Mary herself serves as a typological embodiment of the Church in that context. By her breast is John, Christ's 'favourite disciple' (John 13:23); at the foot of her bed is Paul, 'the least of the Apostles' (1 Cor 15:9), humbly kissing her feet. In our Yiddish manuscripts, by contrast, Maryem is not mourned. Rather, her death is proclaimed all round and becomes a source of joy.[86] In the Huldricus version, all the members of Yeshu's family and some hundred more people belonging to this circle meet the same fate as Mary,[87] just like the Jews in the 'Jephonias scene,' recorded in the Christian legend, who do not agree to convert. All these narratives describe a reversal of circumstances, reminiscent of the story recounted in the biblical Book of Esther (a point to which we shall return). In the Jewish tradition, the erection of a tombstone is usually separated from the burial itself, taking place at a later time. For the family of the departed, this provides another opportunity to come together and ritually remember the loved one and his or her deeds.[88] In the Jewish story of Maryem,

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[86] Here, as in many other places, *Toledot Yeshu* is likely influenced by the biblical book of Esther, suggesting that the narrative was perhaps also read or could be linked to the Jewish festival of Purim. On the parallels, see Sarit KATTAN-GRIBETZ, 'Hanged and Crucified: The Book of Esther and *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 159–80. On *Toledot Yeshu* as a work of entertainment perhaps used in the carnivalesque context of Purim, see below.

[87] Probably a play on the expressions 'brothers [and sisters]' in the New Testament Pauline epistles; for the execution of family members, cf. Est 9:7–10.

[88] Usually, a tombstone is set after one year on the first *yortsayt*. I would like to thank Nathanja Hüttenmeister for her assistance regarding the setting of tombstones in the Ashkenazic context.

however, everything seems to be done in haste. *JTS* thus notes that only 'three days' after her passing, the followers of Maryem had to ready a tombstone (fol. 63r). This short time span echoes the Christian story of Christ's and Mary's empty tombs.

The parodic function of the biblical epitaph mentioned in the Jewish story is also illuminated by the Christian traditions discussed above. The use of Genesis 28:12 in the context of the Marian liturgy can be contrasted in our *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts with the destruction of the tombstone bearing the same words. I would further suggest that the citation of this verse in this context not only refers to its use in the Marian vespers, but also, and more broadly, to the theological interpretation of the *Assumptio Mariae* as the very moment when Mary's soul is received by Jesus Christ, and she is established as the Queen of Heaven (*Regina Caeli*). Mary's soteriological significance as a divine intercessor or *mediatrix* between heaven and earth is rooted in the Christian understanding of Jacob's ladder. We can identify several levels of interpretation in the Jewish narration of the destruction of Maryem's tombstone, an event which occurs with the support of the secular powers. We must first bear in mind Jewish burial practices, in which the preservation of tombs plays an important role (I shall return to this below). The yearly commemoration (in Yiddish *yortsayt*), which is the reason for Maryem's request for a tombstone to be erected on her grave, is no longer possible once the grave has been destroyed. Her descendants, or those who have faith in her son, will no longer find her grave, and her memory will thus be annihilated (as prescribed by Exod. 17:14 and Deut. 25:19). Things are even clearer in the Huldricus, which underlines that what needed to be destroyed was not merely a gravestone, but a stone 'bearing this inscription,' implying that both Mary's memorial and the Christian interpretations of Jacob's ladder had to be erased.[89]

Genesis 28 is far more than just a *typos* for the Assumption of Mary. The entire Jacob story contains a series of important statements regarding the divine promise, central to both the Christian and Jewish traditions. Standing at the top of the ladder, God speaks to Jacob in his dream:

> I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and Isaac's God; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt be spread abroad toward the west, and toward the east, and toward the north, and toward the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I do all that I have promised thee (Gen. 28:13–4).

In the Jewish account of the destruction of Maryem's tombstone, the Christian interpretation of God's promise, referring to the Church and repeatedly asserted by the dominant Christian culture, is nullified. According to the biblical text, Jacob, Rebecca's beloved but younger son gained the birthright of his older twin Esau, and

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[89] Note that there is another 'ladder' in the 'Huldricus'. In the conception story, the wicked Joseph Pandera uses a ladder to enter Mary's house and commit adultery with her. This ladder invites us to consider a whole horizon of parodic humour on Marian devotion and Christian dogma in the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition; cf. KATAN GRIEBETZ, 'Mothers in the Manuscripts,' 118.

the latter was forced to serve him (Gen. 25:23). In the New Testament, the Jews are not explicitly equated with Esau, but Jacob, the bearer of promise, is already interpreted as prefiguring Christ and those who believe in him (Rom 9:10–3; Heb 12:14–6). This did allow room for the Jews, who had lost the Covenant, to be interpreted as the heirs of Esau.[90] Even if Paul still understood the story as an invitation to non-Jews to take part in the divine promise, while nonetheless considering the Covenant valid for Jews, in subsequent centuries, most Christian writers interpreted the contrast of Jacob and Esau in binary terms: salvation or disaster. The Jews were now subjected to the Christian order and were deemed a hated and excluded 'other.'[91] The significance of a counter-story like *Toledot Yeshu* in this context is obvious enough. This is a story whose aim is, as noted by David Biale, 'to reverse the sense of Jewish powerlessness in the face of Christian enmity by arguing that the Jews really control Christian history after all.'[92] The same strategy is also evinced in the Jewish use and subversion of Marian legends as attested in our Yiddish manuscripts. There could, however, be other reasons for telling stories about Mary.

An Updated Story for Amsterdam Ashkenazim

To some extent, the account of Mary's death and burial in our manuscripts also reflects the burial rituals and practices common among Jews in eighteenth-century Amsterdam. Death, followed by the rituals of farewell, mourning and the funeral was obviously a familiar experience, as were the norms and traditions framing these rituals.[93] In the context in which our manuscripts were written, the poor and lonely received a collective burial with the help of the community, as their death also had to be ritually mourned.[94] Avriel Bar-Levav has shown how, in the Northern Netherlands, especially in the early modern period, instructions for mourning rituals were made widely available through printed booklets and edification literature.[95] Thus, for instance, the *Sefer ha-Hayyim* ('Book of Life') was composed in around 1703 by Shimon

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[90] See ISRAEL YUVAL, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 13–14.

[91] YUVAL, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 3–20 (13–14); HANNE TRAUTNER-KROMANN, 'From "Jacob or Esau?" to "Has the Messiah Come?" Controversies Between Jews and Christians As Reflected in Bible Exegesis,' in *Zutot. Perspectives on Jewish Culture* 2, eds. SHLOMO BERGER et al. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002): 95–101.

[92] DAVID BIALE, 'Counter history,' 136.

[93] See for example DANIEL SPERBER, *The Jewish Life Cycle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2008), part 2: 'Death,' 357–609. On *Toledot Yeshu* as a casuistic narrative which could be 'updated' in relation to concrete historical situations, see DANIEL BARBU, 'The Case about Jesus: (Counter-)History and Casuistry in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *A Historical Approach to Casuistry*, eds CARLO GINZBURG and LUCIO BIASIORI (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 65–97.

[94] Cf. JUDITH BUTLER, *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004).

[95] AVRIEL BAR-LEVAV, 'Ritualisation of Jewish Life and Death in the Early Modern Period,' *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 47, no. 1 (2002): 69–82; BAR-LEVAV, 'The Amsterdam Way of Death: R. Shimon Frankfurt's *Sefer ha-Hayyim* (the Book of Life), 1703,' in *The Religious Cultures of Dutch Jewry*, eds YOSEPH KAPLAN and DAN MICHMAN (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 100–23; HERMAN POLLACK, *Jewish Folkways in Germanic Lands (1648–1806). Studies in Aspects of Daily Life* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971), 40–9.

Frankfurter and circulated in both Hebrew and Yiddish.[96] It explains the meanings of even the smallest movements, prayers, and customs. These rituals served to structure the period in which mourners were exposed to perplexity, despair, and fear. Members of funeral brotherhoods, men and women, were there for each other in both life and death.[97] They regularly prayed together and took care of the funerary rituals of fellow members.[98] The grieving community first ordered a time of fasting and prayers, followed by farewell ceremonies for the deceased.[99] Ethical wills are attested already in the Middle Ages. In Amsterdam, they were common among both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews.[100] Also, a eulogy (Hebrew הספד) was necessary to fulfil the commandment to 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' The eulogy usually took place in front of the coffin, in a public space or in the cemetery.[101] All these rituals and customs are reflected in the story of Maryem's death and burial as we find it in our two Yiddish manuscripts.

Initially, we can assume that the inclusion of this story in the *Toledot Yeshu* narrative originates from a time and place when Marian devotion and pilgrimages still characterised Christian public life. In the Middle Ages, stories about Mary, as we have seen, were common among Christians, and prayers addressing the Holy Virgin were a daily practice. This was no longer the case in the Northern Netherlands in the eighteenth century, where most of the population was Protestant. In that context, the figure of Mary had undergone a thorough reinterpretation: while not denying her importance as the mother of God, Protestants rejected her salvific function.[102] Stories

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[96] Cf. YESHAYAHU VINOGRAD, ed., *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, 2 vols., vol. 2, *Places of Print* (Jerusalem: The Institute for Computerized Bibliography, 1993), 111. The book was printed thirty-nine times (sic!); MIRJAM GUTSCHOW lists two prints from Amsterdam 1703 and 1716, in *Inventory of Yiddish Publications from the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 47 (no. 149) and 62 (no. 210). See also AVRIEL BAR-LEVAV, 'The Concept of Death in Sefer ha-Khayim (The Book of Life) by Shimon Frankfurt' (PhD diss., University of Jerusalem [ha-universita ha-ivrit] 1997 [Hebr.]).

[97] For the history of the *Hevra Kadisha* ('Holy brotherhood'), its origins and development in early modern times, see SYLVIE ANNE GOLDBERG, 'Hevra Kaddisha,' in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. DAN DINER 7 vols., vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2012), 36–9.

[98] Cf. EVI MICHELS, 'Caring for the Dying and the Dead,' in 'Yiddish Manuscripts from the Netherlands: Written for Women and Written for Men,' *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2019): 258–81 (268–71).

[99] These rituals also require a *minyan* (ten Jewish men), which is provided by the *Hevra Kadisha*, cf. BAR-LEVAV, 'The Amsterdam Way,' 112–13; BAR-LEVAV, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death: A Society Between Time, Space and Texts,' in *Death in Jewish Life. Burial and Mourning Customs Among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities*, eds STEFAN C. REIF, ANDREAS LEHNARDT, and AVRIEL BAR-LEVAV (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 3–15.

[100] Cf. TIRTSAH LEVIE BERNFELD, 'Religious Life among Portuguese Women in Amsterdam's Golden Age,' in *The Religious Cultures of Dutch Jewry*, eds KAPLAN and MICHMAN (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 57–99 (84–89). The Ets Haim library in Amsterdam has a manuscript written by Isaac Cohen Belinfante in 1765 that includes several eulogies on famous Jewish individuals, including Yomtov Lipman Heller, Samuel Aboab, Saul Levie Morteira, and others (Ms. EH 47 E 34).

[101] MEIR YDIT, 'Hesped,' in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 16 vols., vol. 8 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972) 429–30.

[102] HÄRLE, *Outline of Christian Doctrine*, 353–54, note 61; see also the chapter 'Luther and the Protestant Critique of Mary,' in MIRI RUBIN, *Mother of God. A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 367–76.

about her birth and childhood, and legends about her death and ascension to heaven were characterised as untrue, lies or 'false belief.'

Our two manuscripts probably only provide us with a glimpse of the narrative treasure trove from which enlightened Ashkenazim living in Amsterdam could draw when rewriting the story of Jesus and early Christianity. It is likely that only a fraction of all the *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts circulating in that context have come down to us. As noted above, we know that Leib ben Ozer, for instance, made use of three different Hebrew manuscripts when writing his own version of the story in Yiddish. Although none of the extant Hebrew manuscripts from Amsterdam tells the story of Mary's death and burial, we can speculate that other texts circulating at the time did.[103] The question of origins, however, does not really explain why two Yiddish scribes addressing a Yiddish-speaking audience decided to include the story of Mary's death in the narrative. What resonance could the story have had in that context?

The confessional situation of the Northern Netherlands in the eighteenth century may possibly offer an answer to this complex question. Amsterdam was a place where questions of religious differentiation and self-understanding were discussed extensively, and where each religious community had its own way of creating demarcation.[104] Polemics against Mary had an obvious anti-Catholic tone and could perhaps be shared by both Jews and Protestants. But more complex delineations were also possible. The presence of various Protestant denominations in the Northern Netherlands in the eighteenth century also allowed Jewish-Christian relations to be renegotiated.[105] Political influence and economic prosperity created the conditions for thinking about religious equality, and Jews, in particular, sought to redefine their place within the broader society of that time. The Jewish story could thus perhaps be understood in relation to Protestant polemics against Mary and her alleged salvation function. Can the deliberate inclusion of that story in our manuscripts reflect a joke shared by Jews and Protestants alike, mocking traditions about Mary and her representation by Catholics as a (quasi) divine redeemer? The question of laughter and humour leads us to another significant aspect of *Toledot Yeshu* texts in general, and our two Yiddish manuscripts in particular.

Parody, Entertainment and Laughter

According to the *Shulḥan Aruk*, the sixteenth-century authoritative code of Jewish law, entertainment and laughter are required during the celebration of Purim. Following

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[103] *Pace* YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscript,' 67; CLAUDIA ROSENZWEIG, who examined a Yiddish Huldricus manuscript, assumes an earlier written tradition for this particular recension, that is, independent of the printed text; see ROSENZWEIG, 'When Jesus spoke Yiddish,' 213–14.

[104] Cf. BENJAMIN J. KAPLAN, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), chap. 9 and 10; on Sephardic women transmitting a converso culture and participating in religious discourse in Amsterdam, see LEVIE BERNFELD, 'Religious Life among Portuguese Women,' 92.

[105] Cf. JONATHAN ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall. 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 662–69 (on Johannes Coccejus).

the Fast of Esther on 13 Adar, Jews are forbidden to fast. They must eat, drink, and be merry.[106] Purim commemorates the near extermination of the Jews of Persia in ancient times because of their cultural religious distinctiveness, as told in the biblical Book of Esther (Est 3:8). The holiday was an important festival for the Jewish communities of the Diaspora, who were sometimes subjected to similar attacks. In the Christian context, the story of Esther could also serve to denounce Christian persecution and reject Christian claims of supremacy.[107] A number of rabbinic homilies (*midrashim*), as well as liturgical songs and prayers recited in the context of Purim point to the festive practices linked to this holiday, particularly carnivalesque traditions, including parody, staged rituals, and theatre plays. The development of Jewish parodies in the context of Purim celebrations certainly illuminates the background of a text genre like *Toledot Yeshu*.[108] The Esther story also refers to an evil character, Haman, the Persian vizir and archenemy of the Jews, who, in a Christian environment, could easily be interpreted as a Christian villain. This fictional character thus came to serve as a screen on which Jews could project Christian enmity in specific historical situations.

In fact, many Jewish parodies and polemics composed essentially by Sephardi Jews in eighteenth-century Amsterdam are preserved today in the Ets Haim library.[109] Among these, we can mention David Raphael Polido's *Testament of Haman and Funeral Service for Haman, the Son of Hammedatha*, a text copied and printed several times in the first half of the eighteenth century. Polido's original manuscript, dated to 1703, is part of the library collection, which also contains a copy from The Hague (dated 1885), testifying to the continuing interest in this parody in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century.[110] In the polemical narrative, we find an episode reminiscent of the story of Mary's burial in our Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*:

> Haman lingers in prison awaiting his execution. In the meantime, he calls his family to him and reads his will. In his will, he parodies Jacob's blessing of his sons (Gen. 49) as well as the 10 Commandments. Haman admonishes his children to live peacefully among themselves and to unite in hatred toward Jews. They are also to have no pity for the poor, to refrain from any helpfulness, for poor relief is profitless. They are to threaten their creditors with violence if the latter harass them, but they are not to give their debtors any peace if the latter cannot pay

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[106] See PHILIP GOODMAN, ed., *The Purim Anthology* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988) 148–50.

[107] ELLIOTT HOROWITZ, *Reckless Rites. Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), esp. chap. 4: 'The Eternal Haman.'

[108] Cf. KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'Hanged and Crucified,' 160–61.

[109] Cf. LAJB FUKS and RENA FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections*, 2 vols., vol. 2, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim / Livraria Montezinos, Sephardic Community of Amsterdam* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 91–132.

[110] Ms. EH 47 E 49, cf. FUKS and FUKS-MANSFELD, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim*, 164-65 (no. 307); for the copy of 1885 see 165 (no. 308). The parody was printed in Livorno 1703 with the title ספר זחות פורים ('Commemoration of Purim'). As ISRAEL DAVIDSON writes, the text was included in collections of other parodic texts and reprinted repeatedly, cf. *Parody in Jewish Literature* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1907), 196. On the Livorno 1703 print, see VINOGRAD, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, 2 vols., vol. 2, 379.

immediately. Finally, he urges his descendants not to take anything from the poor, for they have little worth stealing.[111]

It is likely that the story of Mary would have been associated with this story about Haman in the audience's imagination, assuming, that is, that Jews were familiar with both texts.

Conclusions

I would like to conclude by returning to the question of the unusual structure of our two Yiddish manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*, namely their division into theatrical 'acts.' Both scribes deliberately used this term to establish a proximity with the world of theatre, perhaps reflecting the general enthusiasm aroused by theatre plays in the eighteenth century, but perhaps also suggesting a link to the Purim celebrations. Read in this light, we can imagine that the scribes responsible for these manuscripts viewed the text as potentially providing good entertainment, a sort of 'Curtain up!' moment on the history of Christianity. We can perhaps also detect a certain touch of exoticism in the story of Mary's death and burial, taking up elements of well-known Catholic legends about Mary as stage material for Purim entertainment, thus bringing them to life in the imagination of the audience—perhaps confirming that, in the Baroque period, Catholicism did indeed have an 'aesthetic appeal, no Protestant confession could match,' to quote Benjamin Kaplan.[112] Even though Mary and Marian devotion did not play a role in the public and visible religiosity of the Northern Netherlands in the eighteenth century, this was nevertheless a strong marker of difference between Catholics and Protestants, and the latter were most likely aware of traditions upheld by the former.

The narrative elaboration on Mary's burial we find in our manuscripts may have been appealing in many ways: it drew from ancient Christian legends about Mary whose anti-Jewish bias had not been forgotten; it offered a commentary on contemporary burial practices; and it could enhance the entertaining character of the story of Jesus by alluding to other popular stories and parodies recited or staged in the context of Purim, such as the story of Haman's will. Perhaps we need to imagine the audience for a moment, those men, women, and children, gathered together listening to the story and laughing, enjoying hearing the series of episodes over a couple of merry, cheer-filled days, celebrating how the enemies of the Jews had been vanquished, and their memory erased. The story of Jesus, but also that of his mother, Mary, could certainly entertain both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews established in Amsterdam in the eighteenth century. The latter had fled the Iberian Peninsula, where they had been forced to convert, before finding refuge in the Netherlands and returning to their faith; the former had arrived from Poland or Ukraine, fleeing the Cossack riots and massacres, seeking asylum in Amsterdam. The updated retelling of familiar material found in our two manuscripts correlated with contemporary questions and criticisms

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[111] See DAVIDSON, *Parody in Jewish Literature*, 48–49.
[112] KAPLAN, *Divided by Faith*, 267.

of Christian dogma and practices, while intra-Jewish differences, for their part, could be diluted by the shared laughter prompted by listening to the story of Mary and Jesus retold as a cabaret 'on stage.'

Emotions and the Hidden Transcript:
The Jewish Gospel Toledot Yeshu in Early Modern Italy [*]

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A Tour of the Ghetto

In 1611, the English tourist Thomas Coryat (1577–1617) published his *Crudities*, describing his journey across France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. The son of a Protestant minister, Coryat left Oxford without a degree, then became a favoured jester of the English court before setting out on his European expedition between May and October 1608. Among the many exploits and adventures he recounted with much humour and irony in the *Crudities*, Coryat included his 'dangerous encounter with cruell Jewes' while visiting the Jewish ghetto in Venice.[1] A trip to the ghetto could indeed provide plenty of excitement for a seventeenth-century Englishman, whose knowledge of Jews might well have been limited to quasi-mythical accounts, such as Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* or Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.[2] The ghetto was, after all, an 'exotic microcosm within the Christian city.'[3] In his autobiography, the Venetian rabbi Leone Modena often recalls how Christian travellers visited the synagogue to marvel at the Jewish

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[1] Here I am using Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), citation at 75. See MIRJAM YARDENI, 'Descriptions of Voyages and a Change in Attitude Toward the Jew: The Case of Thomas Coryate,' in MIRJAM YARDENI, *Anti-Jewish Mentalities in Early Modern Europe* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 71–91; ELLIOTT HOROWITZ, 'A "Dangerous Encounter": Thomas Coryate and the Swaggering Jews of Venice,' *Journal of Jewish Studies* 52, no. 2 (2001): 341–53; CRISTIANA FACCHINI, 'Il Gesù di Leone Modena. Per una storia materiale e urbana del *Magen we-herev* di Leone Modena,' *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 35, no. 1 (2018): 161–85. In general, see BENJAMIN RAVID, 'Christian Travelers in the Ghetto of Venice: Some Preliminary Observations,' in BENJAMIN RAVID, *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382–1797* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 111–50.

[2] On English knowledge about Jews ca. 1600, see JAMES SHAPIRO, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). See also EVA HOLMBERG, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination: A Scattered Nation* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).

[3] ALBERTO CASTALDINI, *Il ghetto di Verona nel Seicento* (Verona: Archivio Storico Curia Diocesana, 1997), 27.

rituals and hear the rabbis sing and preach.[4] While Modena does not mention him by name, Coryat was among them. He observed the synagogue rituals with curiosity and interest, noting that Jewish prayers were in fact more akin to shouting than to singing.[5] He also deplored the Jewish custom of entering the synagogue without uncovering their heads or kneeling. The experience was evidently alienating, but also somewhat ambivalent. While Coryat admired the beauty of Jewish women and the elegance of Jewish men, he could not avoid feeling sad for these Jews and their antiquated religion. 'Truly,' he noted, 'it is a most lamentable case for a Christian to consider the damnable estate of these miserable Jewes, in that they reject the true Messias and Saviour of their soules.'[6]

The question obviously tormented him, to the point that he decided to try out his own missionary skills and engage in a 'discourse with the Jewes about their religion.' Thus he embarked upon a discussion with a 'learned Rabbin that spake good Latin,' asking him 'his opinion of Christ, and why he did not receive him for his Messias.'[7] The rabbi apparently replied that, while he was willing to accept that Jesus was a prophet, he could not acknowledge his divinity or recognise him as the Messiah. Coryat replied by citing Jesus's miracles and the biblical prophecies referring to his coming. He insisted that the rabbi 'renounce his Jewish religion and undertake the Christian faith, without the which he should be eternally damned.' His interlocutor, however, was not convinced. For him, it seemed Christians only interpret Scripture according to their will, adding that, for his part, he was 'confidently resolved to live and die in his Jewish faith.'[8] By this time, Coryat noted, the rabbi was also 'somewhat exasperated.' Coryat could only conclude that the Jews were indeed a stubborn people, who could not be converted as most of them only view Jesus as a 'silly poor wretch' unworthy of being the Messiah. The discussion had taken an uncomfortable turn, and Coryat reports that '[a]fter there had passed many vehement speeches to and fro betwixt us, it happened that some forty or fifty Jewes more flocked about me, and some of them beganne very insolently to swagger with me, because I durst reprehend their religion.'[9] He eventually had to escape the ghetto, 'least they would have offered me some violence.' Fortunately, he encountered the English ambassador who quickly conveyed him to safe grounds, away from his 'unchristian' attackers.

Coryat's account of his Jewish encounter was doubtless meant to provoke the reader's amusement. The panegyric poems written by his friends and published along with the *Crudities* wittily noted that the author nearly escaped circumcision and had to

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[4] LEONE MODENA, *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi. Leon Modena's* Life of Judah, ed. MARK R. COHEN (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[5] CORYAT, *Crudities*, 370–76.

[6] CORYAT, *Crudities*, 373.

[7] CORYAT, *Crudities*, 374.

[8] CORYAT, *Crudities*, 375.

[9] CORYAT, *Crudities*, 376.

flee from the Jews as he had fled from the 'stewes'—the brothels—where he likewise claims to have engaged in an uncanny theological discussion.[10]

Figure 1. Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (London, 1611), title page. Wikimedia Commons.

There has been some speculation as to the identity of the 'learned Rabbin' with whom Coryat claimed to have conversed. Some have suggested that the latter might in fact

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[10] The two scenes are in fact represented on either side of the frontispiece of *Crudities* (fig. 1). See HOROWITZ, 'A Dangerous Encounter,' 350–51.

have been Leone Modena (1571–1648), or perhaps his younger colleague, Simone Luzzatto (1583–1663).[11] At the time of Coryat's visit in 1608, Leone Modena would have just recently been fully ordained a rabbi, but his reputation as a scholar was already well established, among both Jews and Christians. His sermons attracted crowds and he was also pursued by Christian scholars interested in Jewish laws and customs.[12] Just a few years after Coryat's visit, Modena undertook to write what is today perhaps his best-known work, the *Historia de' Riti Hebraici*, a description of Judaism intended for a Christian audience and aimed at changing negative perceptions of Jews.[13] The *Riti* was well received in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was eventually included in the first volume of Jean-Frédéric Bernard's *Cérémonies et coutumes de tous les peuples du monde* (Amsterdam, 1723).[14] Modena in fact claimed to have composed the work at the request of an English lord. According to Cecil Roth, the latter may have been none other than the poet Henry Wotton, who resumed his position as ambassador to Venice for James I in 1616 and who had delivered Coryat from his Jewish 'aggressors' some years earlier.[15] Modena was in all likelihood well acquainted with Latin,[16] and Coryat's claim that his Jewish interlocutor had admitted that Jesus may well have been an 'esteemed' prophet among Jews but certainly not a god seems to conform to Modena's relatively favourable opinion of Jesus. Indeed, in a later work, Modena described Jesus as a one-time Pharisee who wished to be regarded as 'more than a prophet'—hence his claim to be the 'Son of God'—albeit never professing himself to be God, contrary

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[11] CECIL ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and England,' *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 11 (1924–27), 206–27 (222, 222n20); RAVID, 'Christian Travelers,' 142n71; and the discussion in CRISTIANA FACCHINI, 'Il Gesù di Leone Modena'; CRISTIANA FACCHINI, 'The City, the Ghetto and Two Books. Venice and Jewish Early Modernity,' *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 2 (2011): 11–44, https://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=266.

[12] CECIL ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and his English Correspondents,' *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 17 (1951–52): 39–43; CECIL ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and the Christian Hebraists of his Age,' *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams* (New York: Press of the Jewish Institute of Religion, 1927). On Modena and his life, see HOWARD E. ADELMAN, 'Leon Modena: The Autobiography and the Man,' in MODENA, *Autobiography*, 19–49. On both Modena and Luzzatto see also MARINA CAFFIERO, *Storia degli ebrei nell'Italia moderna, dal Rinascimento alla Restaurazione* (Rome: Carocci, 2014), 139–48. On intellectual relations between Jews and Christians in the Venice ghetto, see also GIUSEPPE VELTRI and EVELIEN CHAYES, *Oltre le mura del ghetto. Accademie, scetticismo e tolleranza nella Venezia barocca* (Palermo: New Digital Frontiers, 2016).

[13] The *Riti* was first printed in Paris in 1637, but as Modena himself indicates, the work had been written some twenty years earlier; cf. MODENA, *Autobiography*, 146. Moreover, the work circulated in manuscript form well before 1637, and had already been cited by John Selden in his *De successionibus in Bona Defuncti, seu Iure Haereditario, Ad Leges Ebraeorum*, published in 1631; see ibid., 170–1, ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and England,' 215; and JASON P. ROSENBLATT, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 48–49.

[14] Cf. JACQUES LE BRUN and GUY G. STROUMSA, eds, *Les Juifs présentés aux chrétiens. Textes de Léon de Modène et de Richard Simon* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998).

[15] ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and England,' 207.

[16] ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and England,' 221n16; MODENA, *Autobiography*, 86.

to what Christians say.[17] Modena himself in fact admitted to have engaged often in theological discussions with Christians, even noting in a letter to R. Gershon Cohen that much of what he discussed with Christian scholars could not be committed to writing—in all likelihood out of fear of the Inquisition.[18]

Simone Luzzatto, Modena's younger colleague, was even more deeply immersed in the intellectual debates of his time and infused with renewed seventeenth-century passion for 'science.'[19] His late work, *Socrate overo Dell'humano sapere* (1651), considered an example of radical seventeenth-century scepticism in disguise, displays Luzzatto's thorough acquaintance with ancient philosophy and classical literature, as well as with the natural sciences. Luzzatto is more often remembered, however, for his *Discorso circa il stato degl'Hebrei*, published in 1638, an apologetic work divided into eighteen 'considerations' and advocating for the political rights of Jews. This work would later be used by the Irish freethinker John Toland in his *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews* (1714).[20] The *Discorso* included a long commentary on Tacitus's Jewish excursus, in which Luzzatto criticised the Roman historian for asserting, among other things, that Jews feel only 'hate and enmity' *(hostile odium)* towards other nations.[21] It is likely that

[17] LEONE MODENA, *Magen va-Herev. Hibbur neged ha-Nazrut*, ed. SHLOMO SIMONSOHN (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1960), 43 (III.10). Here I am using ALLEN H. PODET, ed., *A Translation of* Magen wa-Hereb *by Leon Modena 1571-1648* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 97–102. Giulio Morosini, who had been a student of Modena's prior to his conversion to Christianity, notes that his former teacher spoke of Jesus in favourable terms; see GIULIO MOROSINI, *Via della fede mostrata a'gli ebrei*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Rome: Nella Stamparia della Sacra Cong. de Prop. Fide, 1683), 105, cited by ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and England,' 222 and TALYA FISHMAN, 'Changing Jewish Discourse About Christianity: The Efforts of Rabbi Leone Modena,' in *The Lion Shall Roar: Leone Modena and His World*, ed. DAVID MALKIEL (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), 159–94 (173). That Jesus was a Pharisee is also repeated in a letter Modena wrote in 1640 to a Christian Hebraist; cf. ROTH, 'Leone da Modena and the Christian Hebraists,' 391. On Leone Modena and Jesus, see also FACCHINI, 'Il Gesù di Leone Modena,' and CRISTIANA FACCHINI, 'Jesus the Pharisee: Leon Modena, the Historical Jesus, and Renaissance Venice,' *Journal for the Study of the historical Jesus* 17, no. 1–2 (2019): 81–101.

[18] YOSEF H. YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 353–54.

[19] See DAVID B. RUDERMAN, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 153–84; ARIEL VITERBO, 'Socrate nel ghetto: lo scetticismo mascherato di Simone Luzzatto,' *Studi Veneziani* n.s. 38 (1999): 79–128; and the studies collected in GIUSEPPE VELTRI, ed., *Scritti politici e filosofici di un Ebreo scettico nella Venezia del Seicento* (Milan: Bompiani, 2013). On Luzzatto's life and work, see also LISA SARACCO, 'Luzzatto, Simone (Simchah Ben Itzaq),' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 100 vols., vol. 66 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2006), 747–49.

[20] See SIMONE LUZZATTO, *Discourse on the State of the Jews. Bilingual Edition,* eds GIUSEPPE VELTRI and ANNA LISSA (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019). On the *Discourse* and its contexts, see also GIUSEPPE VELTRI, 'The City and the Ghetto: Simone Luzzatto and the Development of Jewish Political Thought,' in GIUSEPPE VELTRI, *Renaissance Philosophy in Jewish Garb. Foundations and Challenges in Judaism on the Eve of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 195–225; BENJAMIN RAVID, 'The Venetian Context of the Discourse,' in LUZZATTO, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, eds VELTRI and LISSA, 243–74. On Luzzatto's influence, see ISAAC BARZILAY, 'John Toland's Borrowings from Simone Luzzatto,' *Jewish Social Studies* 31, no. 2 (1969): 75–81; GIOVANNI TARANTINO, *Lo scrittoio di Anthony Collins (1676-1729): i libri e i tempi di un libero pensatore* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007), 102.

[21] LUZZATTO, *Discourse*, 151–189, on Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5.1. See MENAHEM STERN, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities,

this was also a way for Luzzatto to criticise contemporary Christian authors levelling similar accusations.[22]

Indeed, even though the early modern age also saw the rise of a different discourse, more inclined to toleration and dismissive of such slanders (albeit often born of a missionary agenda), age-old accusations of Jewish perfidy and hatred of Christians still very much pervaded contemporary discussions on Jews and Judaism. The notion that the 'blind' and 'obstinate' Jews engaged in all sorts of hostile activities aiming to harm the Christian social body guided much of the anti-Jewish policies of the sixteenth century, including their expulsion from the Papal States and, of course, the establishment of ghettos throughout the peninsula. The Talmud, which was said to contain blasphemies Christians 'could not hear without feeling nauseous,' had been convicted and burned in Rome in 1553 and subsequently in a number of Italian cities, and Jewish books in general were subject to the strict scrutiny of the Holy Office.[23] Modena himself feared the reaction of the Inquisition following the publication of the *Riti Hebraici*, which had first been published without his permission, and which could seem to contain 'matters contrary to [the Christian] religion and beliefs.'[24] By addressing anti-Jewish slanders by way of a discussion of Tacitus, Luzzatto perhaps sought to escape such dangers. Both Modena and Luzzatto certainly had reasons to be anxious, as Jews, whether in Venice or any other Italian city, were always at risk of being expelled if suspected of unlawful activity. It was precisely the threat of such an expulsion which had prompted Luzzatto to write his discourse defending Jews and stressing their usefulness to the Venetian Republic.[25]

Jewish–Christian Polemics in Early Modern Italy

In evoking the figures of Modena and Luzzatto my aim is not to establish with absolute certainty the identity of the 'learned Rabbin' upon whom Thomas Coryat imposed his

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1980), 17–63 (19); RENÉ S. BLOCH, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum. Der Judenexckursus des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 199–201.

[22] See BENJAMIN RAVID, '"Contra Judaeos" in Seventeenth-Century Italy: Two Responses to the "Discorso" of Simone Luzzatto by Melchiore Palontrotti and Giulio Morosini,' *AJS Review* 7–8 (1982–1983): 301–53.

[23] On the condemnation and ensuing censorship of Jewish books in early modern Italy, see FAUSTO PARENTE, 'L'Église et le Talmud,' in FAUSTO PARENTE, *Les Juifs et l'Église romaine à l'époque moderne (XVᵉ-XVIIIᵉ siècle)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 233–394 (311–372); see also AMNON RAZ-KRAKOTZKIN, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text. The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); PIET VAN BOXEL, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands: Theology, Exegesis and Conversion under Gregory XIII (1572–1585)* (Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 2016). Many thanks to Theodor Dunkelgrün for this last reference.

[24] MODENA, *Autobiography*, 147. See CECIL ROTH, 'Léon de Modène, ses *Riti ebraici* et le Saint-Office à Venise,' *Revue des études juives* 87, no. 173 (1929): 83–88, and in general BRIAN PULLAN, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550–1670* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983). Modena's orphaned grandson had in fact been imprisoned for a short time in 1634 for working at a press and contributing to the publication of rabbinic works.

[25] VELTRI, 'The City and the Ghetto,' 215–16; RAVID, 'The Venetian Context of the Discourse,' 250–55.

theological jousting. Rather, I wish to sketch a few outlines of the Jewish–Christian conversation in early modern Italy—a conversation of which Coryat provides a distant and distorted echo. The itineraries of Modena and Luzzatto also underline some of the ambiguities of the age of the ghetto, as an age of both social segregation and cultural interaction. They illuminate the permeability of Jewish and Christian cultures in that context, as well as their deep entrenchments. Both fully took part in the literary and scientific episteme of their time, but were also very much concerned with polemics and apologetics. Of course, segregation did not mean isolation, and Jews fully participated in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the early modern Italian Peninsula. Despite the ghetto—an institution designed to enforce the strict separation of Jews and Christians—interactions were constant and inevitable.[26] However, they were also strictly regulated, as well as being informed by mutual mistrust and stereotyped ideas.

The border separating the two communities, which authorities on both sides would supervise with extreme scrutiny, was not only tangible (and sensatory), it was also emotional.[27] From a Christian perspective, contact with Jews always threatened to contaminate the Christian social body with heresy and blasphemy.[28] The case of Giorgio Moretti is perhaps emblematic.[29] A Christian, Moretti was born and raised just outside the ghetto in Venice. It seems he was a regular visitor to the ghetto, working as a sort of go-between or smuggler between the two communities *(facendo qualche sansaria)*. In 1589, he was denounced for his overfamiliarity with Jews. Moretti allegedly attended Jewish weddings, ate meat during Lent, and often stayed in the ghetto so late that the guards would not let him out. Worse than anything else was his relationship with a Jewish girl named Rachel, whom he claimed to want to marry, after bringing her to the Christian faith—a plan which was naturally greeted with much hostility from Rachel's family, too. Moretti was initially prohibited from returning to the ghetto, however, having failed to comply, he was eventually condemned to the galleys. As noted by Brian Pullan, '[i]n all probability (Moretti) was no serious Judaizer, but rather

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[26] See MARINA CAFFIERO, *Legami pericolosi. Ebrei e cristiani tra eresia, libri proibiti e stregoneria* (Turin: Einaudi, 2012). That the ghetto boosted the autonomy of Jewish communities and enabled Jewish culture to flourish in early modern Italy is suggested by JONATHAN I. ISRAEL, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 60.

[27] See DANA E. KATZ, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), esp. 84–111. Many thanks to Cristiana Facchini for this kind reference.

[28] CAFFIERO, *Legami pericolosi*; PULLAN, *The Jews of Europe*, 145–67. Even clerics could be 'infected' by Judaism and start spreading calumnies against the Church; see the case of the Franciscan friar Pietro de Nixia (1553) in PIER CESARE IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, 14 vols., vol. 1, *1548–1560* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980), 101–43. On the sexual anxieties of Christian authorities, see KATZ, *The Jewish Ghetto*, 100–10. See also SALO W. BARON, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 18 vols., vol. 14, *Late Middle Ages and era of European expansion, 1200-1650. Catholic restoration and wars of religion*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 121–22.

[29] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, 14 vols., vol. 8, *1587–1598* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990) 81–97.

a person so familiar with the Ghetto and so alive to its possibilities for entertainment that he could not bring himself to respect the social distances created by the state and the Church alike for the protection of the Catholic faith and the proper observance of its dietary laws.'[30]

For Jews, facing relentless pressure to convert to Christianity and encouraged to do so should they wish to climb the social ladder, interactions with Christians could also be perceived as a threat, as the reaction of Rachel's family towards Moretti would suggest. Jewish authorities were thus similarly engaged in an effort to prevent Jews from succumbing to the charms of Christian society and converting to 'idolatry,' or, indeed, they worked to convince Jews who had converted to Christianity to revert to their ancestral faith.[31] Jewish culture in early modern Italy thus witnessed an intense revival of polemical activity, be it in the form of new polemical compositions dealing with the New Testament and Christian doctrines—both in Hebrew and in the vernacular—or through the copying, translation, and circulation of influential polemical works from the late Middle Ages. William Horbury notes that 'Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rivals Holland as the setting in which Jewish polemical literature probably reached its climax.'[32] This flourishing of Jewish polemical literature in Italy, as in Holland, perhaps resulted from the influx of Jews of Iberian descent, who imported the strong Spanish tradition of engaging in fierce scriptural polemics with Christianity.[33] The revival of polemical activity was perhaps also a by-product of the effort to re-educate former conversos who had fled to Italy in order to practise their ancestral faith openly. Despite the restrictive anti-Jewish policies

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[30] PULLAN, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice*, 164–66.

[31] YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 56–60. Indeed, inquisitorial sources also point to the existence of well-organised networks designed to bring Marranos back to the Jewish faith and transport them to safe ground on the eastern side of the Mediterranean. See, for example, the case of Francesco Colonna below.

[32] WILLIAM HORBURY, 'Judah Briel and Seventeenth-Century Jewish Anti-Christian Polemic in Italy,' *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1993–1994): 171–92; reprinted in *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), here at 41. See also, DANIEL J. LASKER, 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century Italy,' in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, 9 vols., Division B, vol. 1, *The History of the Jewish People. Second Temple Period to Modern Times* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1993), 185–92 (in Hebrew). Jewish-Christian polemics in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy are currently the subject of a research project led by Karoly Daniel Dobos and Gerhard Langer at the University of Budapest; see the resources available online at http://www.jcrpolemicsinitaly.at. There is certainly an even greater number of Christian anti-Jewish writings composed in the same context; see FAUSTO PARENTE, 'La confrontation idéologique entre le judaïsme et l'Église en Italie (Esquisse d'une histoire de la littérature judéophobe en Italie aux XVIe-XVIIIe siècles),' in PARENTE, *Les Juifs et l'Église romaine*, 93–176.

[33] That philosophical polemics against Christianity (with a few notable exceptions) essentially belong to the world of Sephardic Jews has already been noted by DANIEL J. LASKER, 'Jewish Philosophical Polemics in Ashkenaz,' *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews*, eds ORA LIMOR and GUY G. STROUMSA (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 195–213. On Jewish polemics in Holland and their influence, see RICHARD H. POPKIN, 'Jewish Anti-Christian Arguments as a Source of Irreligion from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century,' in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, eds MICHAEL HUNTER and DAVID WOOTTON (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 159–82.

promoted by the Church, Italy—like the Netherlands—soon came to be seen as a safe haven for Iberian Jews who had been forcibly converted to Christianity in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and now sought to convert back to Judaism (possibly because of its political fragmentation).[34] It is within that framework that we ought also to consider the circulation and transmission of the Jewish narratives on the life of Jesus in early modern Italy.

Hidden Transcript(s): The Jewish Gospel *Toledot Yeshu*

While Coryat's 'learned Rabbin' might have been inclined to accept the notion that Jesus was a prophet, the English tourist also noted that the rest of the Jews were of a different opinion and had little regard for the Christian saviour. Theological discussions with Christians were obviously a risky game and implied a certain tongue-in-cheek attitude.[35] As noted by Yosef H. Yerushalmi, while apologetic works defending Judaism or explaining Jewish laws and rituals—such as Modena's *Riti Hebraici* or Luzzatto's *Discourse*—could be printed, active polemics only circulated in manuscript form.[36] Among these, the Jewish story of the life of Jesus commonly known as *Toledot Yeshu*—a highly popular work among late medieval and early modern Jews—undeniably informed the way Jews perceived Jesus, and reacted to Christian missionary attempts. The story has come down to us in a number of different versions (and in many different languages), but the essential plot is rather straightforward: Jesus was not the Son of God born of a virgin, whose death and resurrection atoned for the sins of mankind. Rather, he was a spurious child, conceived in adultery (and what is worse, while his mother was menstruating), who resorted to magic and sorcery to seduce his people into idolatry and to worship him as a god.[37] According to the texts already circulating in Europe in the Middle Ages, Jesus had in fact stolen the Ineffable Name of God in the Jerusalem Temple, using its magical powers to work his miracles and impress the crowds, until he was eventually captured by the rabbis and rightfully sentenced to hang.

I have described elsewhere the Jewish story of Jesus *(Toledot Yeshu)* as a 'hidden transcript,' the visible fragments of a subversive discourse secretly shared among the

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[34] See YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 194–206. The economic opportunities offered by these Jewish immigrants and the quasi-global commercial networks they had developed doubtless incited a number of Italian principalities to simply ignore the anti-Jewish policies promoted by the papacy and turn a blind eye to their 'apostasy.'

[35] On Leone Modena's 'double personality,' see CAFFIERO, *Storia degli Ebrei*, 139–43.

[36] YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 355.

[37] See MICHAEL MEERSON and PETER SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). Other seminal studies include SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902); RICCARDO DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985). See also the essays in PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) and DANIEL BARBU and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu in Context: The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

members of a minority culture and taking aim at the dominant narrative or 'correcting' the dominant view. This 'infrapolitical' critique of power most often escapes both the attention and the understanding of the powerholders, yet deeply informs the attitude and self-consciousness of the minority culture.[38] Hidden transcripts are an expression of a culture's willingness to withstand hegemonic pressure, but they also provide subordinate cultures with a way to cope with their subaltern and often despised status and to give voice to their alternative perspective. It is certainly true that, while they are meant to remain concealed, such hidden transcripts frequently end up escaping the secrecy to which they are theoretically confined, and also come to the attention of the dominant culture, often to the great shock and horror of its members. In the late Middle Ages and early modern period, many Christians were certainly aware of the existence of *Toledot Yeshu*, which they described as an outrageous work 'written by the devil' and sometimes used it to reinforce the image of Jews as a blasphemous people.[39] Jews, by contrast, often denied that the work even existed, or claimed it was a thing of the past which no one knew or read.

In situations like the one described by Coryat, for instance, Jews would obviously have to be hard-pressed to reveal their true opinion. But hard-pressed they often were. Venice was perhaps a dangerous place in which to voice the story in public. In safer places, however, Jews were sometimes more willing to speak out their truth when 'exasperated' by Christian travellers and missionaries, and the few echoes of their voices that have come down to us reflect how much their views were informed by the themes and motifs we find in *Toledot Yeshu*.

Thus, the English divine William Biddulph also recounted his unsuccessful 'conferences' with Jews whilst travelling in the Ottoman Empire. Jews, Biddulph claimed, are 'blasphemous wretches who, when they are pressed with an argument which they cannot answer, break out into opprobrious speeches.' According to them, Jesus was a false prophet who was 'deservedly' crucified by their ancestors, even adding that 'if he were now living, they would use him worse than ever their forefathers did.'[40] John Sanderson, another English traveller who engaged in a similar exercise, noted that the 'better sort' of Jews had refused to talk with him about Jesus 'for [fear of] offending or being unpleasant unto me; for whithout scoffinge they never talk of Him or his followers.' One day, however, he did have an argument with Jews of the 'meaner

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[38] DANIEL BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish. Emotions, Identity, and the Jews' Inverted Christmas,' in *Feeling Exclusion. Religious Conflict, Exile and Emotions in Early Modern Europe*, eds GIOVANNI TARANTINO and CHARLES ZIKA (London: Routledge, 2019); see JAMES C. SCOTT, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Scott, it must be noted, insisted that dominant groups also have a hidden transcript, namely these 'activities, gestures, remarks, and dress that [are] unseemly to [their] public role' and which they can afford only when secluded from public scrutiny.

[39] DANIEL BARBU, 'Some Remarks on *Toledot Yeshu* (*The Jewish Life of Jesus*) in Early Modern Europe,' *Journal for Religion, Film and Media* 5, no. 1 (2019): 29–45 (31–35).

[40] WILLIAM BIDDULPH, *The Travels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bithynia, Thracia, and to the Black Sea…* (London: T. Haviland for W. Aspley, 1609), 74–75.

sort,' who told him their version of the gospel story 'in a scornefull opprobiouse manner.' Jesus, they claimed, had entered the Jerusalem temple and stolen God's holy name in order to work magical feats (such as flying or giving life to birds made of clay) and be worshipped as a god. He was told by an oracle, however, that he would not be worshipped in life but only after his death. Sanderson also cites the Hebrew words referring to Jesus as a bastard *(mamzer)* and the son of a menstruating woman (*bemidatah*, in all likelihood *ben ha-niddah*), without understanding their meaning, however, as he merely repeats the claim of his Jewish interlocutors that these words simply mean 'let the people serve me.'[41] Another version of the narrative is again reported by George Sandys in his *Relation of a Journey begun A.D. 1610*, recounting his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In the middle of his description of Jewish beliefs, Sandys cited a 'fable' which Jews tell about Jesus. Jews confess, wrote Sandys, that, wishing to be worshipped like a God, Jesus stole the names of God from the Jerusalem temple and 'sew them in his thigh. By virtue whereof he went invisible, rid on the Sunne beames, raised the dead to life, and effected like wonders.' Yet again his divine ambitions would not be granted him until his death. He thus surrendered himself to the Jewish authorities, who killed him and buried him in a dunghill, 'lest his body should have been found, and worshipped by his followers.' Sandys concluded: 'Such, and more horrible blasphemies invent they; which I fear to utter. But they be generally notorious liars.'[42] It is of course difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction in such accounts, and whether their authors had indeed, as they claim, acquired familiarity with *Toledot Yeshu* through their discussions with Jews. Yet, while some might be more sceptical, I would argue that the idiosyncrasies of the versions provided by these travellers (as well as their approximate use of Hebrew phrases) provide as many subtle yet discernible 'cracks' in their dialogical rhetoric, as Carlo Ginzburg would say, suggesting that they may indeed have heard (and not merely read) the Jewish story of Jesus. I am thus inclined to think that these travel accounts do allow us to hear the

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[41] *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1548-1602*, ed. WILLIAM FOSTER (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), 119: 'They said that there was a stone in the Lord's house at Jerusalem, the middest of the wourld, caller Evenasediya [i.e. *even ha-shetyyah*], upon which was written the name of God, and that whosoever could gett in thether and retorne with it written might have what he required and doe what he would; which they said Jesus, Josipth the carpenters sonne, by extraordinary means gott unto and writt it, cuttinge his owne thigh, so hid it and escaped out of the temple; said: *Yea afdoni anni* ("let my people serve me"), but was presentlie answered: *Mamzer bemidatah*; which interpreted, as the Jewes tell me, is: ("Saith Christ) lett the people serve me." The oracle answeared: "After death, not in life." Then, say they, first he began, first he bagan to flie and make of earth birds, with many more sutch like wourks, as these Jewes to me confessed in a scornefull opprobiouse manner.'
[42] GEORGE SANDYS, *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (London: W. Barrett, 1621), 147. See the parallels to Sandy's version in WILLIAM HORBURY, 'A Critical Examination of the Toledoth Jeshu' (PhD diss., Clare College, Cambridge, 1970), 66–73, all pointing to the Spanish origins of this particular version.

voice, however muted and distorted, of actual Jews expressing their sentiments with regard to the Christian saviour.[43]

Toledot Yeshu among Early Modern Jews and Crypto-Jews

The Jews whom Biddulph and others like him met on their oriental travels were mainly of Iberian descent and had settled in the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain in 1492.[44] The Jewish story of Jesus had long been popular among Iberian Jews and was evidently part of the texts and traditions they had brought with them following the expulsion.[45] That it continued to be told among those who had remained and converted to Christianity can be seen from inquisitorial records, suggesting that the 'hidden transcript' was still very much active among crypto-Jews long after their conversion. To quote but one example, in 1526 Alvaro Gonzales, aged seventy-two, was found guilty of heresy and apostasy and burned at the stake in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. After a long trial in front of the recently established Inquisition of the Canary Islands, it was concluded that Alvaro had 'reverted to the deadly creed of the Jews after having received the privilege of baptism.' Worse, he had in fact sought to '[spread] the Jewish faith among others.'[46] The trial revealed that, some twenty years earlier, after fleeing Portugal (where Jews who had fled Spain in 1492 were converted by force in 1497) and settling in the Azores, Alvaro had already been convicted for various acts of impiety, including throwing down and spitting on a crucifix.[47] He was thus a relapsed Judaiser and, as such, was inevitably subject to the death penalty. It seems Alvaro had in fact spent much of his life trying to flee the Inquisition after his conversion, seeking a place where his family and relatives could continue to practise their faith relatively

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[43] See CARLO GINZBURG, 'Alien Voices: The Dialogic Element in Early Modern Jesuit Historiography,' in *History, Rhetoric and Proof* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 71–91. That the Jewish story of Jesus might, however, have been known to English literary circles can be inferred from the trial of Christopher Marlowe, who, among other things, was accused of saying that 'Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest'; see PAUL. H. KOCHER, *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning and Character* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946), 28. Whether Marlowe's words reflect the influence of his alleged converso acquaintances remains, however, a matter of speculation.

[44] Sandys in fact indicates that, apart from the Bible, the Jews read their books 'in the Spanish tongue.' I warmly thank Ignacio Javier Chuecas Saldias for this observation. See also his contribution to this thematic section

[45] On *Toledot Yeshu* in medieval Spain, see DANIEL BARBU and YANN DAHHAOUI, 'Un manuscrit français des *Toledot Yeshu*: le ms. lat. 12722 et l'enquête de 1429 sur les juifs de Trévoux,' *Henoch. Historical and Textual Studies in Ancient and Medieval Judaism and Christianity* 40 no. 2 (2018): 223–88, esp. 259–60 and the references cited there. See also ELEAZAR GUTWIRTH, 'Gender, History, and the Judeo-Christian Polemic,' in *Contra Iudaeos,* eds LIMOR and STROUMSA, 257–78; RAM BEN-SHALOM, 'The Converso as Subversive: Jewish Traditions or Christian Libel,' *Journal of Jewish Studies* 50 no. 2 (1999): 259–83.

[46] LUCIEN WOLF, ed., *Jews in the Canary Islands*, repr. (London: Jewish Historical Society, 1926; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 71.

[47] See the depositions in WOLF, ed., *Jews in the Canary Islands*, 14, 24, 43. Alvaro's eldest son, Silvestre, was also burned at the stake in February 1526. Alvaro's wife, Mencia Vaez, was executed in March 1526. Their two other sons were reconciled with the Church the same year after deposing against their parents. The youngest, Duarte, would be convicted again eight years later but managed to escape. Their daughter, Ana, was reconciled in 1530 after she publicly abjured her parents' faith and spent another three years under house arrest.

discreetly. He had even established a clandestine synagogue in his house on Gran Canaria, often visited by other crypto-Jews. In 1524, a new wave of denunciations put an end to their activities. One of the accusations recorded against Alvaro Gonzales was particularly detailed. On July 3, 1524, a certain Juan Fernandez deposed to having had a chat with Alvaro some seven years earlier. Apparently thinking he was speaking with a fellow converso, Alvaro pointed to a crucifix. He said that this was 'a land of dogs' who claim the crucified as their god, commenting that:

> [While Jesus was] playing ball one day in the synagogue, [he] read a writing which he saw there, and which taught him all those things which he professed to know, and that because of what he said, their [the Jews'] God had commanded them to hang him on a tree. Upon which deponent exclaimed: 'What are you saying, Alvaro Gonzales? What you say is very wrong,' but Gonzales nudged him with his elbow, saying 'You could understand me if you wished,' and walked away.[48]

We can presume that what the witness was describing here was an attempt by Alvaro Gonzales to enter into conversation with a newcomer whom he thought might be a crypto-Jew like himself. He was thus, apparently, sending out a form of 'dog whistle' that only another crypto-Jew was meant to understand, thereby testing his interlocutor—perhaps with a view to inviting him to join his small community and practice his faith with fellow crypto-Jews. What is noteworthy, however, is that, here, his speech took the form of a short allusion to the 'true' story of Jesus as it was known to Jews—and obviously also to many crypto-Jews who could still use it as a sort of rallying cry—as there can be little doubt that the source of the narrative behind Alvaro's words (if indeed he expressed them) was *Toledot Yeshu*.[49]

It is possible that copies of *Toledot Yeshu* were among the polemical books Spanish and Portuguese émigrés brought with them to the Italian Peninsula, although nothing prevents us from conjecturing that the narrative would already have circulated in Italy at an earlier date.[50] At any rate, there is little doubt that it had become quite

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[48] WOLF, ed., *Jews in the Canary Islands*, 33.

[49] See HORBURY, *Critical Examination*, 265–68.

[50] Parallels between *Toledot Yeshu* and *Sefer Yosippon* (the Hebrew version of Josephus) suggest that early versions of the work circulated in the Italian peninsula in the tenth century, although these parallels could reflect later interpolations; see SASKIA DÖNITZ, *Überlieferung und Rezeption des* Sefer Yosippon (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 50–61. That *Toledot Yeshu* circulated in northern Italy among Jews of German descent in the late Middle Ages is suggested by the records of the 1475 ritual murder trial in Trent. These make a clear reference to the narrative, as noted in RICCARDO DI SEGNI, 'Due nuovi fonti sulle *Toledoth Jeshu*,' *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 55, no.1 (1989), 127–32; see also ANNA ANTONIAZZI VILLA, *Un processo contro gli ebrei nella Milano del 1488* (Milan: Cappelli, 1986), 132–35. It is difficult, however, to determine whether the story was in effect formulated by the accused Jews or whether it was put into their mouths by their Christian accusers. The accusation is also reported by the Christian convert from Judaism turned anti-Jewish polemicist Giulio Morosini in his *Via della fede mostrata a'gli Ebrei*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Rome: Nella Stamparia della Sacra Cong. de Prop. Fide, 1683), 1396–97. On young Simon of Trent and his alleged ritual murder, see RONNIE PO-CHIA HSIA, *Trent 1475. Stories of a Ritual Murder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). We can also note that similar accusations—that the Jewish story

popular by the end of the sixteenth century. In the 1560s, the young Joseph Scaliger noted after his visit to Italy and discussion with Jewish rabbis in Rome (in biblical Hebrew!) that Jews were both erudite and subtle, but contemptuous of Christians, and can only be convinced if the Talmud is used, as the New Testament 'makes them laugh.'[51] We can assume, in fact, that they knew another version of the story. Leone Modena himself, in his unfinished polemic against Christianity, *Magen va-Herev* ('The Shield and the Sword'), lamented the disgraceful 'lies' and 'mockeries' spread among Jews about the life of Jesus.[52] In doing so he also bore witness to the wide circulation of *Toledot Yeshu* among his contemporaries.[53]

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of Jesus was part of the Jews' 'bloody Passover' rituals—appear in other contemporary ritual murder trials; see FIDEL FITA, 'La verdad sobre el martirio del santo Niño de la Guardia, ó sea el proceso y quema (16 Noviemre, 1491) del judío Jucé Franco en Ávila,' *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 9 (1887), 88, with HORBURY, *Critical Examination*, 69–74. I have also found a reference to what may have been a Yiddish manuscript of *Toledot Yeshu* (entitled 'Signs and allusions concerning the fate of that man') in a list of Jewish books attested to in Mantua in 1595 and cited in SHIFRA BARUCHSON ARBIB, *La culture livresque des Juifs d'Italie à la fin de la Renaissance* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2002), 161.

[51] *Scaligerana, ou bons mots, rencontres agréables et remarques judicieuses & Sçavantes de J. Scaliger* (Cologne: Chez ***, 1695), 219–20. On *Scaligerana*, which should be read with some caution, see THEODOR DUNKELGRÜN, 'The Humanist discovery of Hebrew Epistolography,' in *Jewish Books and their Readers. Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe*, eds SCOTT MANDELBROTE and JOANNA WEINBERG (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 211–259(235n82).

[52] MODENA, *Magen va-Herev. Hibbur neged ha-Nazrut*, 43 (III.9): כי ספור דברים, אשר ראיתי סובב הולך ביד איזה אחד מבני שמנו, על חטאת נעוריו ופשעו בחיו, ואיך היה פועל הנסים, ועד מיתתו, ברור לי כי הכל שקר וכזב, חובר מאיזה איש שהיה נגדו לכתחילה לכלימה ובוז. וכלימה היא לכל בן ישראל שיאמינוהו לכמה סבות. Here I am using PODET, *A Translation of* Magen wa-Hereb *by Leon Modena 1571-1648*, 94–5. TALYA FISHMAN, 'Changing Jewish Discourse About Christianity: The Efforts of Rabbi Leone Modena,' in *The Lion Shall Roar: Leone Modena and His World*, ed. DAVID MALKIEL (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), 159–94, suggests that Modena's *Magen va-Herev* was written as a manual aimed at re-educating New Christians into the Jewish faith. Modena's conciliatory approach to Jesus was thus to reach out to conversos without hurting their dual allegiance. Fishman also suggests situating *Magen va-Herev* within a broader trend aimed at minimising the theological gap between Christians and Jews and thus mitigating the guilt of forced converts by claiming that they had not taken part in 'idolatry.' See also DANIEL J. LASKER, 'Jewish Anti-Christian Polemics in the Early Modern Period: Change or Continuity?,' in *Tradition, Heterodoxy and Religious Culture: Judaism and Christianity in the Early Modern Period*, eds CHANITA GOODBLATT and HOWARD KREISEL (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 2006), 469–88; CRISTIANA FACCHINI, 'Historicizing Jesus: Leon Modena (1571–1648) and the *Magen va-herev,*' in *Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Meeting on Christian Origins*, eds ADRIANA DESTRO and MAURO PESCE (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

[53] It may be argued, however, that Modena's knowledge of *Toledot Yeshu* in fact depended on Christian sources, in particular Petrus Galatinus's *De arcanis catholicae veritatis* (1518), which was a favourite target of Modena's polemic, as noted by Facchini, 'Historicizing Jesus.' Galatinus—who himself relied on medieval sources—mentioned 'a small booklet filled with lies and blasphemies, composed at the Devil's advice' in which Jews attribute Jesus's miracle to his use of the Ineffable Name; see WILLIAM HORBURY, 'Petrus Galatinus and Jean Thenaud on the Talmud and the *Toledot Yeshu,*' in *Jewish Books and their Readers,* eds MANDELBROTE and WEINBERG, 123–50. Miriam Benfatto kindly informed me (in private correspondence) that 'evidence of the *clandestine* circulation of *Toledot Yeshu* in the eighteenth [century] can be found in Giovanni Antonio Costanzi's unpublished *Norme per la revisione de libri composti dagli Ebrei*, preserved in the archives of the Holy Office and of which the most recent version dates from 1782. The *Norme* are accompanied by two substantial indexes. These include, respectively, a list of 188 unacceptable Jewish books, entitled *Indice de' libri Ebraici di cui non può permettersi agli Ebrei né la lettura, né*

That fact is confirmed by the inquisitorial archives from the Holy Office in Venice (published by Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini), where we encounter a number of references to *Toledot Yeshu* or *Toledot Yeshu*-related motifs among the accusations brought against Jews or suspected crypto-Jews. Thus, for instance, in 1553 a convert from Judaism named Francesco Colonna was admonished by a Levantine Jew, who told him: 'Wretched one, your mother is a Jew and you want to live in this way [i.e., as a Christian]?' The man continued saying 'many vile and blasphemous things against Christ and the Virgin Mary, his mother, that it was known that the Jews had hanged Jesus and that he was a bastard and a seducer' who had stolen the Name of God in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem temple to perform would-be miracles.[54] Francesco agreed to return to Judaism and flee to Istanbul, where he could openly live as a Jew. Before he could do so, however, he was recognised by a friar, confessed his attempted apostasy, and betrayed the man and the network that had sought to exfiltrate him. Echoes of the narrative surfaced in other denunciations of Jews or crypto-Jews in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1571, Abraham Righetto was accused of proclaiming 'that our Savior was but a wicked man who was killed as a wicked man deserves.'[55] In 1578, Odoaro Dies was said to have asserted that Jesus was a bastard.[56] In 1648, a New Christian, Salvatore Caglione refused the sacrament on his deathbed saying 'that he did not wish to receive a hanged man.'[57] The same year, an anonymous Jew reportedly commented on Deuteronomy 13 ('If a prophet or a diviner appears among you […] and says "Let us worship other gods" […] that prophet or diviner must be put to death'), saying: 'Go and see in this chapter who is Christ whom you adore as a god!'[58] In 1563, two poor Jews who had immigrated from Poland joined the house of catechumens, probably with the hope of improving their situation, or at least of finding shelter. But they 'soon proved unable to suffer the institution' and planned to escape. However, they were arrested on blasphemy charges before they could do so.[59] One of them was accused by another catechumen of having proclaimed that all Christians go to hell, and that 'the Lord God was a bastard and the son of a whore, [conceived] at a time when the Madonna had her periods or menstruation, and what is worse calling him *mamzer barhanid* [*mamzer ben ha-niddah*], which [in Hebrew] means what I just said' (*Domenedio era un bastardo fio de una putana al tempo che la Madona haveva la fior over menstruo, per più despresio dicendo mamzer barhanid, che vuol dir quell che ve ho ditto*

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la ritenzione ("Index of Jewish books which Jews shall not be allowed to read or possess"), and a list of 415 books deemed tolerable after revision, entitled *Indice de' libri ebraici, di cui si può tolerar la lettura, la ritenzione agli Ebrei previa la necessaria correzione* ("Index of Jewish Books whose reading and possession by Jews may be tolerated, pending on the necessary corrections"). The first index mentions *Toledot Yeshu* (i.e. N° 188).'

[54] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, 14 vols., vol. 1, *1548–1560*, 97.
[55] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 3, *1570–1572*, 51.
[56] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 4, *1571–1580*, 89.
[57] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 11, *1641–1681*, 60.
[58] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 11, *1641–1681*, 64.
[59] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 2, *1561–1570*, 18.

supra).[60] In 1578, a dubious Portuguese monk, Antonio Saldanha, accused a group of fellow countrymen of having secretly returned to Judaism and celebrating Jewish holidays. Also, while in their house, and following a religious disputation over the prophecies referring to Christ in the book of Daniel, one of them, not knowing how to answer, allegedly exclaimed:

> Why would you want me to believe in one who was hanged on a cross? Speaking of our lord Jesus Christ, whom he also called by this name of Manzel [*mamzer*], which means son of an adulteress, and of whom he said was rightly condemned [to death], for what he did he did by way of magic.[61]

The story of Elena de' Freschi, a New Christian, is quite remarkable. In 1555, at the age of seventy, she was accused of uttering blasphemies during Mass.[62] Some twenty years earlier, hearing that her sons had decided to convert, she begged them 'not to do this evil and bring shame on the Jews,' but they would not listen. Being a widow and not wishing to leave her sons, she had acquiesced in baptism as well. At first, she took on all the new habits and observances that were expected of a pious Christian widow, diligently absorbing the rites and doctrines of her new religion. Yet she apparently found it much more difficult to adapt to her new culinary habits and started fasting and engaging in all sorts of suspicious crypto-Jewish practices. One of her maids also revealed that she would sometimes return to the ghetto and weep. One Sunday, it seems she could not take it anymore, and as the priest raised the host and proclaimed *incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine*, she shouted: 'You lie in your teeth! You are a bastard, born from a whore!' Her son, a respected doctor and theologian, who had worked as a censor responsible for finding and suppressing blasphemies in Jewish books, pleaded madness. Seeking to mitigate the accusation, he also claimed that his mother's words should not be taken as a sign of Judaising, saying that 'the Jews who at present live among the Christians neither use such words themselves nor teach anyone else to use them, on account of their fear of Christians.' And yet the sources suggest otherwise.

The influence of the Jewish story of Jesus even spread beyond Jewish or crypto-Jewish circles. In 1588, Giovanni Battista Capponi was accused of heresy, having disputed the authority of the New Testament and Jesus's messiahship, after engaging in conversations with Jews—or at least, he attributed the most violent of his statements to such conversations. These statements included

> saying that Christ was not the true Messiah, that his miracles had all been accomplished with the aid of the kabbalah, that all who believed in Christ were lost and damaged, that

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[60] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 2, *1561–1570*, 32–33 and 46.
[61] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 4, *1571–1580*, 139.
[62] IOLY ZORATTINI, *Processi del S. Uffizio*, vol. 1, *1548–1560*, 151–224.

the Gospel was untrue, and that the Virgin and saints were incapable of interceding for humankind.[63]

The Italian Manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*

There is in fact an important corpus of *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts of Italian provenance, all dating from the early modern period. Of the 102 Hebrew manuscripts listed in the recent Meerson and Schäfer edition of *Toledot Yeshu*, 29—that is, close to a third!—are attributed to an Italian hand.[64] The bulk of the production of these manuscripts is divided equally between the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Just one manuscript can be dated earlier, to the sixteenth century, and a few were produced later in the early nineteenth century. Apart from one fragmentary manuscript testifying to the continuing circulation of the standard medieval version of the narrative (i.e., the so-called Strasbourg version) and a handful of manuscripts that provide a text either very close or identical to the one published in 1681 by the German Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil, the Italian manuscripts mainly attest to a recension not observed in other contexts.[65] In other words, they present us with a version of the narrative which, although expanding on the standard medieval version, is distinctively Italian. The most distinctive feature of these Italian texts is the inversion of the names of Mary's husband and her rapist in the account of Jesus's conception. Whereas in most versions of the narrative Mary's husband is called Yohanan and her rapist Pandera, here, Pandera is her husband and Yohanan her rapist. As has long been noted, moreover, the Italian texts also preserve a number of Italianisms, such as the names Pietro for Peter and Iscariota for Judas Iscariot. We are thus dealing with a version of the narrative which was probably crafted on the Italian Peninsula sometime in the sixteenth century and circulated mainly in Italy throughout the early modern period.

These Italian manuscripts, it should be noted, do not provide a stable text. They nonetheless all manifest the same broad recension. The latter can be further divided into two branches, which, for the sake of convenience, can be called the long Italian

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[63] PULLAN, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice*, 61.

[64] See the catalogue of manuscripts in MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 2–48. Further verifications might however be needed. I have excluded from the list Ms. Amsterdam, Hs. Ros. 414, which Meerson and Schäfer wrongly ascribe to an Italian hand (vol. 2, 2; and information corrected at vol. 2, 96); see LAJB FUKS and RENA FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections*, 2 vols., vol. 1, *Catalogue of the manuscripts of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, University Library of Amsterdam* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 135 (no. 290). Note that Ms. New York, JTS 2236.2, albeit a fragmentary witness to the short Italian version, is in fact written in Ashkenazic script. The number of Italian manuscripts is only surpassed by the number of manuscripts of mixed eastern European provenance (31).

[65] Ms. Budapest, Kaufmann 229 (dated after 1617) provides a fragmentary witness to the Strasbourg text. Mss. Leipzig, BH 17 (2) (dated 1707), Oxford, Opp. Add. 20 (seventeenth or eighteenth century), Paris, AIU, H 31 (seventeenth century), St. Petersburg, Inst. Or. St. 12 (nineteenth century), and Wolfenbüttel, Extrav. 157.1 (seventeenth century) provide a proto-Wagenseil text, while Mss. Paris, BnF, Heb. 1384 (seventeenth century) and Warsaw, Zydowsky Inst. 6 (eighteenth century) were likely copied after the Wagenseil printed edition; see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 212.

and the short Italian types.[66] Manuscripts of the short Italian type do not predate the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, when the text was likely created as an abridged and straight-to-the-point version of the story.[67] Apart from the conception narrative, which is preserved in its entirety, and the account of Jesus's execution and burial, most of the episodes in the story are either drastically summarised or altogether omitted (thus, for instance, the famous account of Jesus's theft of the Ineffable Name of God is missing). Perhaps some of these episodes were considered too extravagant, although other, presumably no less extravagant, episodes are in fact preserved, albeit in abridged form (for instance, the account of Jesus's aerial combat with Judas Iscariot). Remarkably, all the short Italian texts were copied together with other, either late medieval or contemporary polemical works, which suggests that the work was part of a learned tradition of critiquing Christianity and the New Testament. In that context, a work like *Toledot Yeshu* could serve to illuminate, from a Jewish perspective, the historical background of the Christian narrative.[68]

While the short Italian texts offer a rather dry version of the narrative, the long Italian manuscripts provide one of the longest extant versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. In fact, the long Italian texts add a number of details to the narrative, including an account of the discovery of the Holy Cross in the days of Constantine, centuries after the death of Jesus.[69] More interestingly, however, this amplified and somewhat baroque version of the story gives much more space to emotions, and in particular, to the emotions of the individual characters in the narrative—a topic which deserves closer attention.[70]

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[66] Corresponding to Italian A and Italian B respectively in the classification offered by MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 32–33.

[67] See the discussion and text in HORBURY, *Critical Examination*, 152-202; see also MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 273–85 (English) and 192–210 (Hebrew).

[68] HORBURY, *Critical Examination*, 166. In the two earliest manuscripts (Mss. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina 2300 and Jerusalem, JNUL Heb. 8°2667), the short Italian text of *Toledot Yeshu* was appended to *Kelimat ha-Goyim* ('Shame of the Gentiles'), a work pointing to the contradictions in the gospels composed at the end of the fourteenth century by the Spanish-born scholar Profiat Duran. In four later manuscripts, the short Italian text was appended to a similar critique of the New Testament composed in the early eighteenth century by the Modena rabbi Judah Briel (1643–1722), *Hassagot al sippure ha-sheluchim (Criticisms of the Writings of the Apostles)*, copied and expanded by one of Briel's pupils, Joshua (Salvador) Segre of Scandiano as a sequel to his own polemical work *Asham Talui (The Crucified's Trespass-Offering)* ca. 1770. It remains a matter of debate whether the short *Toledot* text was already appended to Briel's work when it came to Segre's knowledge (after ca. 1730, when the first part of *Asham Talui* was published) or whether it was added by Segre at a later date; see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 193–94. In all events, it is clear that Segre approved the joining of *Toledot Yeshu* to the second part of *Asham Talui*, along with a number of satirical anti-Christian poems he had penned. He may also have added the few historical footnotes that are preserved in these particular manuscripts. On Segre and his polemical writings, see SAMUEL KRAUSS, 'Josua Segre und sein polemisches Werk,' *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie* 8, no. 1 (1904): 20–27; DAVID MALKIEL, 'The Jewish-Christian Debate on the Eve of Modernity. Joshua Segre of Scandiano and his *Asham Talui*,' *Revue des études juives* 164 no. 1–2 (2005): 157–86.

[69] For the text, see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 233–72 (English) and 139–191 (Hebrew).

[70] I address the question of emotions and *Toledot Yeshu* in BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish.'

Two identical copies of the long Italian text (bearing the title *Ma'aseh Yeshu we-Heleni ha-malkah we-otam she-qorim Apostolim*, i.e., 'The story of Jesus and Helena the queen and those who are called Apostles'), now preserved in Leipzig in one case and Rostock in the other, were produced at the end of the seventeenth century by the Verona rabbi Saul Merari.[71] Merari was rather actively involved in copying polemical works, such as Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut's *Eben Bohan* or *Toledot Yeshu*, but he also composed polemics of his own.[72] His collections of polemical works seem to have been designed as handbooks to Christianity for Jewish readers, bearing an ornate title page (fig. 2) showing the Messiah entering the gates of Jerusalem preceded by Elijah and describing the contents as an argument against Christians *(vikuah neged ha-notzrim)* and a way to know how to respond to heretics *(apikores)*. Indeed, the recent troubles caused by the Sabbatean movement in Verona and other Italian cities may well have encouraged Merari to compile such works not only in order to confront Christianity, but also to illuminate, through Christianity, the enduring consequences of false messiahship, communal dissension, and heresy.[73]

One of the particular features of the Merari text is precisely its attention to emotions and its extensive use of biblical quotations as a way to express the feelings of the protagonists. (This is a feature we find in many other medieval and early modern Jewish texts, but within the corpus of *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts, it is by and large in this text that it is most prominent). Another striking characteristic is the extent to

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[71] For a description of Ms. Leipzig, B.H. 17 (dated 1695/96), previously in the library of the Protestant theologian Daniel Ernst Jablonski, see JOHANN CHRISTOPH WOLF, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (Hamburgi: apud Theodor. Christoph. Felginer, 1721), 484–85 and 1445–47 for Jablonski's description of the *Toledot* text; see also H. O. FLEISCHER and F. DELITZSCH, *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum, qui in bibliotheca senatoria civitatis Lipsiensis asservantur* (Grimae: Genhardt, 1838), 300–301 (no. 38). The manuscript also includes a copy of the Wagenseil version of *Toledot Yeshu*, added at a later date. On Ms. Rostock, Orient. 38 (dated 1696), see HANS STRIEDL, LOTHAR TETZNER and ERNST RÓTH, eds, *Hebräische Handschriften. Teil 2* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965), 358–60 (N° 575).

[72] LASKER, 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Eighteenth-Century Italy' and DANIEL J. LASKER, '*Sefer Herev Pifiyyot* of Saul ben Joseph Merari (?). An Italian Jewish Anti-Christian Polemic of the Eighteenth Century,' *Italia* 12 (1996): 7–35 (in Hebrew); ASHER SALAH, *La République des lettres. Rabbins, écrivains et médecins juifs en Italie au XVIIIe siecle* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 419. On Merari, very limited information can be found in MORDECHAI S. GHIRONDI, *Toledot Gedole Israel u-Geone Italia* (Trieste: 1853), 325 and MARCO MORTARA, *Mazkeret Hakhme Italia/Indice alfabetico dei rabbini e scrittori israeliti di cose giudaiche in Italia* (Padua: F. Sacchetto, 1886), 39.

[73] See YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, citing Merari's 1665 letter to Samuel Aboab of Venice on this topic; cf. also ALBERTO CASTALDINI, *La segregazione apparente. Gli Ebrei a Verona nell'età del ghetto (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2008), 145–50. This was also what led the Dutch rabbi Leib ben Oyzer to compose a Yiddish translation of *Toledot Yeshu* along with a biography of Sabbatai Tzvi and the story of the infamous Kabbalist Yosef della Reina; see EVI MICHELS, 'Yiddish *Toledot Yeshu* Manuscripts from the Netherlands,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds BARBU and DEUTSCH, 231–62; JEAN BAUMGARTEN, *La légende de Yosef della Reina, activiste messianique* (Paris: Éditions de l'éclat, 2018). MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 137, suggest that Merari could also have produced collections of Jewish anti-Christian works for commercial purposes, in response to the Christian demand for Hebrew polemical manuscripts. Ms. Leipzig, B.H. 17 was indeed sold by Merari to the Huguenot polymath Louis Bourguet in 1701, who later offered it to Jablonski, as can be seen from the dedication on the title page. I have been unable to verify Meerson and Schäfer's claim that Ms. Rostock, Orient. 38 also formerly belonged to D. E. Jablonski.

which this text dwells on the emotions of Jesus himself, who is, after all, the chief villain in the plot. This is especially clear in the account of the Flagellation, which is interlaced with a series of long biblical citations, mainly from the Psalms. Hence the following passage:

> The elders and people came with sticks in their hands and hit him [Jesus] with many blows, and the women also hit him with their shoes. Then So-and-So [Jesus] raised his eyes heavenward and said, 'My Father in heaven, *I shall not die but live* (Ps. 118:17), and *who will give me a wing like a dove, so that I could fly away and be at rest?* (Ps. 55:7) *God, hear my prayer, let my cry come before you. Do not hide your face from me in my time of trouble; turn your ear to me. When I call, answer me speedily. For my days have vanished like smoke, and my bones are charred like a hearth. My heart is stricken and withered like grass, because I have forgotten the taste of bread. On account of my loud groaning, my bones cling to my flesh. I am like a great owl in the wilderness, a little owl among the ruins. I lie awake, and I am like a lone bird upon a roof. All day long my enemies revile me; those who deride me use my name to curse. For I have eaten ashes like bread and mixed my drink with tears, because of your wrath and jury, for you have lifted me up and cast me far away. My days are like an evening shadow, and I wither away like grass. But you, God, are enthroned forever* (Ps. 102:2-13), and *your throne endures for all generations'* (Lam. 5:19). He finished the Psalm until *He drained my strength in mid-course; he shortened my days. I say, My God, do not take me away in the midst of my days* (Ps. 102:24-25). *When (my power) is weakened, (do not leave me)*, etc. (Ps. 71:9). *Do not leave me, Lord, my God; do not distance Yourself from me* (Ps. 38:22); *Save my soul from the sword, my only one from the power of the dog* (Ps. 22:21). (He said,) 'And if you leave me in the power of these dogs, *my soul would have dwelled soon in the land of silence* (Ps. 94: 17); *who will rise for me against the wicked? Who will stand up for me against the wrongdoers?* (Ps. 94:16). For regarding them the prophet prophesized, *They have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to turn back'* (Jer. 5:3). And when the villains who believed in him heard his words, they screamed great screams and cried a great cry and tore out the hair from their heads and beards.[74]

The despair of Jesus and his followers is met with the collective joy the of Jews, when Jesus is sentenced to be killed 'like an insignificant and despised person, like a sorcerer, a bastard, a wicked man and the son of a menstruating woman […] the sorrow of Israel was turned to joy and from mourning to a holiday'—echoing the book of Esther, where another enemy of the Jews (the wicked Haman) is similarly defeated (Est. 9:22).

There is nothing unique in the fact that Jesus would start reciting psalms as he is tried and scourged. Obviously, the narrative, here as in other versions, essentially pastiches the New Testament gospels. The Merari text of *Toledot Yeshu* is distinct on two accounts: it gives a lot more space to Jesus's recitation of the psalms; most of the verses he recites do not appear in any other version of the narrative. These are certainly relatively minor scribal interventions, the copyist (Merari or his source) expanding on some aspects he thought would better describe the scene. Yet these interventions also

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[74] MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 249–50 (English) and 165–66 (Hebrew).

reveal the extent to which the scribe and the text he is producing are both witnesses and actors of their very own time.

Figure 2. Ms. Leipzig, B.H. 17, copied by Saul Merari, Verona, 1695, title page. Courtesy of the Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig.

A Psalm for the Afflicted: Emotions and *Toledot Yeshu*

At the risk of stating the obvious, the citation of a specific psalm or verse from the Bible in such a polemical text is not random. But to what degree can we shed light on the particular images or notions this citation is meant to evoke in the mind of the audience? What connotations are associated, for instance, with Jesus's recitation of Psalm 102, the 'prayer of the afflicted'—'God, hear my prayer, let my cry come before you,' etc.—which Jesus is described here as reciting in its entirety? In the New

Testament gospels, *testimonia* from the psalms generally serve to underline Jesus's status as the suffering servant prophesied in Isaiah 53 and interpreted as the Messiah.[75] The different versions of *Toledot Yeshu* explicitly refute such Christological readings, most often through the voices of Jesus's opponents.[76] To the best of my knowledge, however, Psalm 102, is not cited in the gospels and does not belong to the standard repertoire of Christological proof texts; nor is it cited in any other version of *Toledot Yeshu*. There might, however, be other explanations for the choice of this particular psalm.

Psalm 102 is considered by both Jews and Christians to be a song of repentance, the psalmist expressing sorrow for his sins. In the Middle Ages, Rashi and other Jewish commentators had already suggested that the 'afflicted' *('ani)* asking God for mercy is in fact Israel, 'who is an afflicted people' (*'am 'ani).*[77] Obviously, Jesus is not presented here as a Jew repenting the sins of Israel, although he may be portrayed as atoning for his own sins (Psalm 102 is indeed sometimes included in the Sephardic Yom Kippur liturgy). Yet I wish to suggest another possible interpretation, namely that the narrative might be subverting the Christian use of this psalm, as a way to further 'Christianise' Jesus, by associating him with Christian rituals and—from a Jewish viewpoint—their mistaken use of Scripture. In a Christian context, Psalm 102 is indeed one of seven so-called psalms of confession—the most famous of which is the *Miserere*, Psalm 50—associated with penitential devotion and rituals of penance.[78] As such, it was included in the book of hours, a common Christian devotional handbook in the late Middle Ages, and often set to music in subsequent centuries. It would also have been regularly recited during Christian holidays, especially Lent and the ceremonies culminating with Easter. The penitential psalms would moreover have been recited as part of the Passion plays, the liturgical dramas staging the trial, suffering, and execution of Christ. Clearly, such public displays of religious devotion would also have been familiar to Jewish spectators—all the more so in the wake of the Counter-Reformation. Thus, my tentative hypothesis is that the long Italian text and its elaborate rendering of the Flagellation scene engages in a form of 'polemical ethnography,' with the scribe responsible for this version picturing—and, we may presume, mocking—Christian

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[75] MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 94–95; see also PETER STUHLMACHER, 'Isaiah 53 in the Gospel and Acts,' in *The Suffering Servant. Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian* Sources, eds BERND JANOWSKI and PETER STUHLMACHER (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 147–62. For Jewish interpretations of Isaiah's prophecies, see the classic study by SAMUEL R. DRIVER and ADOLF NEUBAUER, *The Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah according to the Jewish interpreters*, 2 vols. (Oxford: J. Parker, 1876).
[76] MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 93–94 provide a list of the biblical *testimonia* cited by Jesus in the different versions of the narrative.
[77] Cf. Rashi, ad loc.
[78] In general, see SUSAN GILLINGHAM, *Psalms Throughout the Centuries*, 3 vols, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 113–14.

rituals.[79] The very drama meant to foster collective Christian piety (and hatred of Jews) is thus subverted to foster the Jews' feelings of disdain for Christian rituals and Christianity.

There is also another form of public ritual which the text may be parodying: executions.[80] Here the scribe may have been inspired by his own concrete expertise of such death rituals—which were, after all, not entirely uncommon—or by narrative accounts of executions, which frequently included detailed descriptions of the convict's final confession. In all events, in a context in which Jews themselves could not inflict the death penalty, their imagination of an execution would understandably have been informed by that of the surrounding culture. It is worth noting that hanging—the death suffered by Jesus according to *Toledot Yeshu*—was also the most common form of execution in early modern Italy, especially when it came to executing commoners.[81] The much-publicised narrative of the final hours of Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi, who were executed for plotting against the Medici in 1513, talks of a friar assisting the two convicts in their final hours and encouraging them to repeat, among other things, verses from the Psalms.[82] Such accounts were widely circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and often emphasised the emotions of both the convict and his or her comforters. The latter were often members of confraternities dedicated to helping convicted criminals and offering spiritual consolation, their members escorting convicts to their place of execution, all the while reciting litanies, orations, prayers, and the penitential psalms.[83] Of course, the display

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[79] I have borrowed the notion of 'polemical ethnography' from YAACOV DEUTSCH, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[80] In general, see NICHOLAS TERPSTRA, ed., *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), and in particular KATHLEEN FALVEY, 'Scaffold and Stage. Comforting Rituals and Dramatic Traditions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy,' 13–30, discussing the parallels between Passion plays and execution rituals, and PAMELA GRAVESTOCK, 'Comforting with Song Using Laude to Assist Condemned Prisoners,' 31–51, on the use of devotional songs to comfort the executed in his final hours. See also ADRIANO PROSPERI, *Delitto e perdono. La pena di morte nell'orizzonte mentale dell'Europa cristiana. XIV-XVIII secolo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2013), 212–62 (on the spiritual comforting of convicts) and 280–325 (on the public spectacle of executions).

[81] See the figures offered for Bologna by NICHOLAS TERPSTRA, 'Theory into Practice Executions, Comforting, and Comforters in Renaissance Italy,' in *The Art of Executing Well*, 118–58 (127).

[82] RICHARD C. TREXLER, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 197–211. Many thanks to Jean Wirth for this reference. See also ALISON KNOWLES FRAZIER, 'Luca della Robbia's Narrative on the Execution of Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi,' in *The Art of Executing Well*, ed. TERPSTRA, 293–326, with a translation of the narrative; ELENA TADDIA, 'Les mots et les actes. Consoler le condamné à mort en Italie à la Renaissance : la *Recitazione* de Luca Della Robbia (1513),' *Exercices de rhétorique* 9 (2017), online: http://journals.openedition.org/rhetorique/523.

[83] See CHRISTOPHER F. BLACK, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, repr. (1989; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003;), 217–23. It is also worth noting that Psalm 50 was known in eighteenth-century England as the 'hanging song,' as it was sung at executions by the convict and the crowd alike; cf. PETER LINEBAUGH, 'The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons,' in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, eds DOUGLAS HAY et al., , rev. ed. (1975; London: Verso, 2011), 65–117 (116), quoted in UNA MCILVENNA, 'The Power of Music: The Significance of Contrafactum In Execution Ballads,' *Past and Present* 229, no. 1 (2015): 47–89 (58).

of emotions both at actual executions and in narrative accounts of executions also aimed to move the audience and encourage it not so much to empathise with the executed as to reflect on their own sins. That public executions themselves aimed to edify the crowds was already observed by Montaigne who, after witnessing the hanging of a convict in Rome, noted that, immediately after his death and the quartering of his body, 'several Jesuits or whatever they were, mounted upon tressels at different points, and began exhorting the people to take warning by the example they had just witnessed.'[84] That the audience—both inside and outside the text—participates in the drama is in fact clearly emphasised in *Toledot Yeshu*, which describes how Christians cry and Jews rejoice as Jesus is being scourged for his crimes. The scribe's effort to imbue the scene with a certain impression of realism might also explain the note we find in the long Italian texts describing how, as Jesus was being hanged, 'the young men and the women threw refuse and excrement and arrows and stones at him.'[85] The inverted Passion scene of *Toledot Yeshu* depicts Jesus as a common criminal reciting his confession, thus underlining with poignant realism that this pivotal moment of Christian theology—the death and Resurrection of Christ—which Christians celebrate with an extraordinary display of religious emotion, was in fact nothing more than the abject execution of a lowly human being, who is rightly despised by Jews, and in no way the son of God whose death redeemed the sins of mankind.

It is perhaps possible to go further still with regard to the social performative effects of the narrative. Much insight can indeed be drawn from the work of Una McIlvenna on execution ballads in the early modern period.[86] Evoking the final moments of executed criminals and describing in graphic details their crimes and final moments, such songs were widely disseminated in early modern Europe, most often in the form of cheap broadsides or small pamphlets. Regional variations notwithstanding, execution ballads constituted, McIlvenna observes, a 'pan-European-tradition' and an important 'vehicle for broadcasting news' in early modern Europe.[87] Sung on the streets by itinerant vendors seeking to market them, such songs easily reached beyond literate audiences. They often involved the convict repenting his or her crimes and asking God for mercy in order to impress on the audience a moral discourse on sin and crime. The lyrics, moreover, would typically be set to familiar melodies 'allowing anyone to sing the new words instantly.'[88] This strategy, which

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[84] *The Works of Montaigne*, ed. WILLIAM HAZLITT (London: Templeman, 1842), 571. See PROSPERI, *Delitto e perdono*, 326–35.
[85] MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 256 (English) and 174 (Hebrew).
[86] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music' and MCILVENNA, 'Singing Songs of Execution in Early Modern Italy,' in *Voice and Writing in Early Modern Italian Politics, Religion, and Society*, eds STEFANO DALL'AGLIO, MASSIMO ROSPOCHER, and BRIAN RICHARDSON (London: Routledge, 2017), 52–68; see also HANS-JÜRGEN LÜSEBRINK, 'La letteratura del patibolo. Continuità e trasformazioni tra '600 e '800,' *Quaderni storici* 17, no. 49 (1982): 285–301. I am much indebted to Erika von Kaschke for this suggestion.
[87] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music,' 48.
[88] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music,' 49.

McIlvenna terms 'contrafactum,' obviously made these songs easy to remember and further enabled their dissemination and effect. McIlvenna herself is interested in the 'affective potency' of these songs, and is less concerned with their textual content than their melodies, as well as the 'emotional response' these melodies were meant to provoke. Interestingly, she notes that execution songs could sometimes be set to the tunes of psalms, though mainly in Protestant contexts, where they would thus celebrate the death of Protestant martyrs.[89] Others, particularly songs in the *barzelletta* ('jest') form, specific to the Italian context, were meant to be more cheerful and entertaining, using repeated refrains as a way to encourage the listeners' participation.[90] Frequently involving humour and incongruity, such songs derided the convicts—who were often commoners, foreigners, enemies, or generic outsiders, such as Jews and Moors—and turned their final moments into an occasion for collective amusement. The listeners'

> sharing and participation helped to forge communal bonds, echoed in the communal and performative means by which each member of society was expected to participate in the punishment of criminals. As they laughed at the satirical use of tunes that mocked despised traitors and murderers […] the listener-singers of execution ballads participated in an exchange of cultural references that perpetuated beliefs around punishment and repentance.[91]

There is no reason to believe that Jews would not have been familiar with this cultural practice. On the contrary! I am not, however, suggesting a direct link between execution ballads and early modern versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. That Jesus sings penitential psalms does not make the narrative an execution ballad—even though the narrative often circulated under the title 'Story of the hanged man' (*Ma'ase Talui*).[92] Yet it may be suggested that, through this deliberate intervention, the scribe responsible for the long Italian text did more than just deploy his creativity and polemical wit. He also sought to increase the emotional effect of the narrative, to cause Jews to 'feel' specific emotions as they heard the story of Jesus, including his singing of biblical psalms; to be outraged at the account of his crimes and heresies; to laugh at the account of his punishment and death; and to lament the enduring consequences of his shameful career. In other words, the story of Jesus served, among Jews no less than among Christians, as a powerful medium for collective emotions and communal bonds, also playing an important part in solidifying Jewish communities, although, in the Jewish case, by offering a figure that could be communally derided and ridiculed rather than revered and worshipped. Furthermore, although our evidence is limited, the collective recitation or performance of the story among Jewish communities—protected from view by the ghetto walls—might perhaps also have been an occasion of communal joy,

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[89] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music,' 68.
[90] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music,' 81–83.
[91] MCILVENNA, 'Power of Music,' 89.
[92] In fact, a number of Italian manuscripts bear this title.

a way to vent some of the tensions and uncertainties born out of their constant interaction with the Christian world.[93]

The Dialectics of Hidden and Public Transcript

The account of Coryat's encounter with the Jews of Venice illustrates the ambiguities in the Christian imagination of Jews and Judaism. Learned rabbis or wretched Jews (in Sanderson's words, the 'better' and 'meaner' sorts of Jews) constitute the two poles defining the Christian perception and understanding of Jews as both an ancient and exotic font of wisdom, and a blasphemous and hostile people whose denial of the true religion is indeed a threat for Christians. Such tropes merely reflect a broader and all-pervasive discourse and ideology asserting the superiority and domination of Christianity and the demise and subordination of Jews. This discourse and ideology, embodied in countless texts, images, and institutions, outlines what James C. Scott called by contrast the 'public transcript,' and inevitably informed all forms of interactions between Christians and Jews. Little is gained by simply calling such a discourse and ideology 'anti-Jewish'—a term which fails to provide an analytical framework to address the politics of religious domination and the opposite strategies of resistance they generate in a larger, transcultural perspective. As Scott noted, hidden transcripts contesting the public transcript while voicing the perception, emotions, and hopes of subordinate groups, logically stand in dialectical relation to the public transcript, with the hegemonic practices and discourse with which subordinates are confronted. What is more, hidden transcripts, very much like the public transcripts from which they derive (and against which they react), become deeply embedded within a group's culture, in this case within the deep structures of the subordinates' distinct, albeit usually concealed, *sub*-culture.

I do not seek to reduce the culture of Italian Jews in the early modern period to their opposition to Christianity, though the importance of apologetics and polemics in that particular context suggests that this was a nonnegligible aspect. However polemical and distorted by the public transcript, I believe accounts of Christian travellers, inquisitorial sources, and other descriptions of Jews and Judaism do offer a glimpse into a widespread Jewish subculture, and on the way Jewish perceptions of Christianity and interactions with Christians were informed by a hidden transcript. Coryat's 'conversation' may have touched a sore spot by insistently imposing his theological jousting on a growing crowd of exasperated Jews. The latter had their own version of the gospel story, their own impression of the Christian saviour; yet only seldom, if ever, could they make such an impression public. Only in the background—

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[93] On possible performances of *Toledot Yeshu*, see SARIT KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'Hanged and Crucified: the Book of Esther and *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 159–80 (176–79); see also the discussion in BARBU, 'Some Remarks on *Toledot Yeshu*,' 37–38 and BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish.' A similar conclusion is reached by Evi Michels in her contribution to this thematic section.

in the 'cracks' in the Christian discourse[94]—can we see the shadow and influence of a powerful Jewish counter-story to the Christian narrative.

Scholarship on the *Toledot Yeshu* has often focused on questions of philology and textual history rather than the cultural contexts to which the texts belong. By looking at emotions in and around the narrative, however, we can see how the various versions of the work reflect the cultural worlds to which they belong, the time-bound worries and preoccupations of those by whom and for whom the story was told and the texts copied. Here, I have sought to consider the long Italian text of *Toledot Yeshu* as a historical, rather than merely textual, witness, as an *actor* within a given historical context, a narrative effectively acting upon the perceptions, attitudes, and reactions of early modern Italian Jews.

Although segregated and divided by social, theological, and emotional borders, Jews and Christians did not inhabit separate realities. The Italian text of *Toledot Yeshu* shows how Jews absorbed the elements of the surrounding culture, appropriated contemporary ideas and practices in the service of a critique of the dominant culture, and invested the Jewish story of Jesus with greater emotional poignancy. By focusing on emotions in the narrative, we can see how much the texts and manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* are indeed products of their time and reflect their contemporary culture. But we also need to take into account how the texts conversely influenced that culture and impacted the lives and emotions of those who knew, heard or read the story. We need to consider how the Jews' hidden transcript nourished a subculture capable of triggering spontaneous—and sometimes hearty—responses and reactions among Jews confronted with Christian sermons, rites, and practices, or more dramatically, endangered by inquisitorial authorities.

The Structure of Christian Domination and the Hidden Transcript of Jews

According to Scott, '[b]y definition, the hidden transcript represents discourse—gesture, speeches, practices—that is ordinarily excluded from the public transcript of subordinates by the exercise of power.'[95] Works like *Toledot Yeshu* and other polemical writings (medieval or modern) attacking the tenets of Christianity were in principle not meant for everyone to see and were intended primarily for a Jewish audience. When confronted with such texts or vilified on their account by Christian polemicists, Jews strongly denied their very existence or dismissed their importance. Scribes often warned their readers not to read such works in public or in front of children, women, or the simple-minded, for fear of Christian retaliation.[96] It is indeed important to bear in mind that the conflict between Church and Synagogue in the late Middle Ages and

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[94] See note 43 above.
[95] SCOTT, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 27.
[96] See BARBU and DAHHAOUI, 'Un manuscrit français des *Toledot Yeshu*,' 230n24; BARBU, 'Some Remarks on *Toledot Yeshu*,' 34–35.

early modern period was not merely theological, but also, and most perceptibly, institutional. In Italy, the walls of the ghetto served as a constant reminder of the fact that Jews were confined to a delineated and limited space in the Christian polity, and their activities strictly supervised.[97] The social and religious hierarchies defining Jewish-Christian relations were obvious to all, and spoliations, expulsions, and other forms of sporadic violence against Jews were always possible—and not uncommon. The structure of Christian domination essentially relied on discourse rather than force. As Bruce Lincoln has argued, 'discourse supplements force in several important ways, among the most important of which is ideological persuasion. [...D]iscourse of all forms—not only verbal, but also the symbolic discourses of spectacle, gesture, costume, edifice, icon, musical performance, and the like,' enables rulers to obviate 'the need for the direct coercive use of force and transform simple power into "legitimate" authority.'[98] And indeed, that hegemonic discourse and practices asserting the victory of the Church over the blind Synagogue—the Christian public transcript—were everywhere and constantly imposed themselves on the eyes and ears of all in the early modern world, with demonstrations of power ranging from the burning of Jewish books—when not the burning of Jews themselves—to the lavish ritual reconstitutions of the Passion staged every year at Easter, and in which the roles of true and false believers, Christians and Jews, were clearly assigned. Crowds could see the blindfolded Synagogue with her broken staff facing the triumphant Church, adorning the gates of the Paris and Strasbourg cathedrals, to cite the most prominent examples. In Vienna and elsewhere, engraved into the city walls themselves were stories of Christian converts from Judaism who had been tortured and burned at the stake after failing to adapt to their new faith and having purportedly profaned the name and image of Christ.[99] Sermons recalled the miracles of the Virgin, saving Christian children from their Jewish aggressors, when these children were not themselves turned into holy

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[97] KATZ, *The Jewish Ghetto*, passim.

[98] BRUCE LINCOLN, *Discourse and the Construction of Society. Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4–5, with the further observation that 'discourse can also serve members of subordinate classes (as Antonio Gramsci above all recognized) in their attempts to demystify, delegitimate, and deconstruct the established norms, institutions, and discourses that play a role in constructing their subordination,' thus describing what here I have called, following Scott, the hidden transcript.

[99] One famous case is that of Ferdinand Francis Engelsberger, executed in Vienna in 1642, and to whom later Christian authors also attribute an edition of *Toledot Yeshu*. For a summary of the case and a reproduction of the Viennese inscription, see JOHANN CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignea Satanae*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Altdorf: Joh. Henricus Schönnerstaedt, 1681), 188–93; among other authors who report the events, see GIULIO BARTOLOCCI, *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Rome: Ex Typographia Sacrae Congreg. de Propag. Fide 1693), 348–51; JOHANN CHRISTOPH WOLF, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Hamburgi: Christiani Liebezeit, 1715), 982. See Yaacov Deutsch's contribution to this thematic section.

figures and objects of worship, and their suffering at the hands of the Jews lamented in widely disseminated narratives.[100]

From a Christian vantage point, Jews were of course themselves responsible for their own subordination because of their enduring rejection of Christ and hostility towards Christians. In late antiquity, Saint Augustine had laid the groundwork for toleration of Jews in a Christian society: Jews had to be preserved, albeit dispersed and subjugated, as bearers of the sacred writings upon which Christianity relied and as witnesses to the truth of biblical prophecy (which they themselves, however, failed to understand).[101] That model started to crumble in the later Middle Ages, when Jews were increasingly demonised and classified among the irreducible foes of Christianity.[102] The theoretical distinction between the ancient Hebrews and contemporary Jews *(iudaei moderni)* served to counter the Augustinian doctrine: contemporary Jews had in fact deviated from the Judaism of the Bible known to the fathers of the Church; they had been corrupted by the Talmud and teachings of rabbis and their Judaism was essentially a religion driven by their anti-Christian animus and rage. Contemporary Judaism was a 'heresy' as compared with Judaism as it ought to be, and on that basis the Augustinian doctrine could be regarded as void.[103] Contemporary Jews were in fact a threat to Christian society, not only because of the extravagant acts of hostility described by that anti-Jewish discourse, such as the daily iteration of anti-Christian curses or the savage murder of Christian children. Contemporary Jews were also considered a threat because of their alleged corrupting effect on Christian society, ranging from economic exploitation to the promotion of heretical ideas and blasphemous texts.

These arguments found an important echo in late medieval Spain. In the mid-fifteenth century, the influential anti-Jewish polemicist Alonso de Espina, one of the most ardent promoters of the expulsion of Jews from the Spanish realms, summarised

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[100] RONNIE PO-CHIA HSIA, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) and HSIA, *Trent 1475*; MIRI RUBIN, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

[101] Augustine. *De Civitate Dei* 18.46, with JEREMY COHEN, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19–71; see also PAULA FREDRIKSEN, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews anf Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[102] JOSHUA TRACHTENBERG, *The Devil and the Jews. The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943); and see the studies in JEREMY COHEN, ed., *From witness to witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian thought* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996).

[103] COHEN, *Living Letters*, 313–89. On changes in attitude towards Jews in the later Middle Ages, see also AMOS FUNKENSTEIN, 'Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages,' *Viator* 2 (1972): 373–82; JEREMY COHEN, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 51–76; ROBERT CHAZAN, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); ALEXANDER PATSCHOVSKY, 'Der "Talmudjude". Vom Mittelalterlichen Ursprung Eines Neuzeitlichen Themas,' in *Juden in Der Christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters*, eds ALFRED HAVERKAMP and FRANZ-JOSEF ZIWES (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1992), 13–27; and SARA LIPTON, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014) for the iconography.

in the third book of his *Fortalitium fidei* (the 'Fortress of faith') the various ways in which Jews wage their 'war' against Christians, including countless narratives of host profanation and ritual murder.[104] The work also included a lengthy citation (from Ramon Marti) of the purported lies and blasphemies on the life and miracles of Christ contrived by Jews under the influence of the devil and written down in a mendacious booklet, the *Toledot Yeshu*.[105] The *Fortalitium fidei*, it should be noted, was a bestseller in late medieval anti-Jewish literature, and after it was first printed in Strasbourg in 1471, it was reissued no fewer than seven times between 1475 and 1525.[106] That discourse encountered an important echo in the Reformation era and the early modern age, and was often reiterated in the vernacular by later polemicists, who, remarkably, were often themselves converts from Judaism and claimed to know the secret anti-Christian doings of Jews from personal experience.[107]

In Italy, for instance, Giulio Morosini, a former pupil of Leone Modena, converted to Christianity in Venice in 1649 (perhaps as a result of his family's bankruptcy) and became a zealous promoter of the mission to the Jews. He devoted a chapter of his hefty anti-Jewish opus, the *Via della fede* (the 'Way of the faith'), published in 1683, to the Jews' hatred of Christians. In it he recapitulated the litany of ostensible Jewish crimes, and cited the papal bulls calling for the destruction of the Talmud and other blasphemous Jewish books, whose only aim—so he claimed—was to 'instil hatred.'[108] Morosini refuted Luzzatto's argument that Jews were an asset in

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[104] See the discussion in YERUSHALMI, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 455–67. For a description and summary of the work, see STEPHEN J. MCMICHAEL, *Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? Alphonso de Espina's Argument Against the Jews in the* Fortalitium Fidei *(c. 1464)* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); ALISA MEYUHAS-GINIO, *La forteresse de la foi. La vision du monde d'Alonso de Espina, moine espagnol (?-1466)* (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1998).

[105] ALONSO DE ESPINA, *Fortalitium Fidei* III.4 (in the edition Lyon: Stephano Gueynard, 1511, fol. 111c–113c); see YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'The Second Life of the Life of Jesus: Christian Reception of *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 283–295 (289). Another version of the narrative would have been known to Alonso (see f. 76b [II, 6]), as noted by ERNST BAMMEL, 'Der Tod Jesu in Einer 'Toledoth Jeschu'-Uberlieferung,' *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 6 (1968): 124–31 (192n14), closely resembling the version reported by George Sandys (see note 42 above).

[106] ELISHEVA CARLEBACH, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 49–50.

[107] CARLEBACH, *Divided Souls*, 170–99; DEUTSCH, *Judaism in Christian Eyes*; see also the studies in JONATHAN ADAMS and CORDELIA HEß, eds, *Revealing the Secrets of the Jews. Johannes Pfefferkorn and Christian Writings about Jewish Life and Literature in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). For references to *Toledot Yeshu* in that context, see BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish.'

[108] GIULIO MOROSINI, *Via della fede mostrata a'gli Ebrei*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Rome: Nella Stamparia della Sacra Cong. de Prop. Fide, 1683), 1383ff. (III.12: 'Del odio, che portano gli Ebrei alli Christiani, e delle maledicenze, & altri effetti di quest'odio'), with RAVID, '"Contra Judaeos" in Seventeenth-Century Italy,' 339–48. See MICHELA ANDREATTA, 'Raccontare per persuadere: Conversione e narrazione in *Via della fede* di Giulio Morosini,' in *Non solo verso oriente: Studi sull'ebraismo in onore di Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini*, eds MADDALENA DEL BIANCO and MARCELLO MASSENZIO (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2014), 85–118; English translation in *Bastards and Believers: Jewish Converts and Conversion from the Bible to the Present*, eds THEODOR DUNKELGRÜN and PAWEL MACIEJKO (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2020), 156–181.

the Christian world, insisting that, on the contrary, they posed a constant threat to Christians so long as they refused to embrace the Christian faith. He recalled how, in 1475, the Jews of Trent were said to have once again sought to re-enact the Passion, murdering a Christian child in the process.[109] He further recounted how Christian merchants in Venice would sometimes entrust the keys of their palazzos to Jews, and how he himself, prior to his 'illumination,' as he remembers 'with extreme pain,' would, along with other Jews, profane the image of Christ in every way possible—even spitting on it—when no Christians were around.

What deserves notice here is not so much the lasting influence of medieval anti-Jewish tropes—which is alas obvious enough—but the fact that the public transcript about Jews itself emphasised that the latter have a hidden transcript assailing the holy figures of Christianity and refuting the Christian narrative in various ways, be it through blasphemous gestures and speeches or polemical texts. Christian scholars of Jewish literature who eagerly sought to uncover the 'secret and dreadful books of the Jews against the Christian Religion' reflected the contemporary fascination for the hidden 'anti-Christian library' of the Jew, including *Toledot Yeshu*. One can think, for instance, of the subtitle of Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanae* (1681), namely: *Hoc est arcani, et horribiles Judaeorum adversus Christum Deum, et Christianam religionem libri anekdotoi*, or Giovanni Bernardo De Rossi's *Bibliotheca Judaica Antichristiana* (Parma, 1800).[110] The notion that Jews secretly conspired against Christians and blasphemed against the holy figures of Christianity also justified many of these institutions through which Christian domination over Jews was made most tangible. The censorship of Jewish books, for instance, almost explicitly aimed to control—or silence—Jews' hidden transcript and its alleged influence on Christian society.[111] In other words, Jews were expected to blaspheme against Christians, mock and slander Jesus, and erupt into all sorts of anti-Christian speeches, whenever given an opportunity. Thus, to some extent, even when voicing their hidden transcript, Jews also followed the playbook of a Christian hegemonic discourse.

Scott's model therefore needs to be revised in part to include public transcripts in which the subordinates are in fact *expected* to have a hidden transcript, and where the

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[109] MOROSINI, *Via della fede*, 1396–97. See also note 49 above.

[110] THEODOR DUNKELGRÜN, 'The Christian Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe,' in *The Cambridge History of Judaism,* 8 vols., vol. 7, *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815.*, ed. JONATHAN KARP and ADAM SUTCLIFFE (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 316–48, notes that these Christian Hebraists 'studied, translated, and anthologized [Jewish polemical and anti-Christian works] with a blend of hostility and fascination'; see also STEPHEN G. BURNETT, '"Spokesmen for Judaism": Medieval Jewish Polemicists and their Christian Readers in the Reformation Era,' in *Reuchlin und seine Erben: Forscher, Denker, Ideologen und Spinner*, eds PETER SCHÄFER and IRENE WANDREY (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2005), 41–51. On the early modern fascination with Jewish secrecy, see ELISHEVA CARLEBACH, 'Attribution of Secrecy and Perceptions of Jewry,' *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 3 (1996): 115–136. DANIEL JÜTTE, *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), shows how Jews could also use their reputation for secrecy to their advantage.

[111] RAZ-KRAKOTZKIN, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, passim.

fight over that transcript largely structures the relations between the dominant and the dominated. The exasperation of Coryat's 'learned Rabbin' and the surrounding crowd of menacing Jews, the frustration and spontaneous anger of unwilling converts, such as Elena de' Freschi, who eventually erupted into a blasphemous speech during Mass, somehow reflect more than just public intrusion of the hidden transcript: they are themselves also a reflection of the public discourse and the unconscious submission of Jews to that discourse.

<p align="center">***</p>

Certainly, the tension between public and hidden transcripts was real, and the hidden transcript also allowed Jews who shared it to create an emotional community, bound by a shared discourse and perspective that gave shape to their communal emotions and—ideally—supported their unremitting rejection of the Christian myth. Rupture, however, was always possible and could take many forms, from conversion to sudden outbursts of anger or violence. A straightforward, poignant, and nonetheless humorous narrative like *Toledot Yeshu* was perhaps a way to negotiate the border between Jews and Christians and relieve some of that tension, and was hence a tool, not only for polemics, but also, indeed, for mediation.

An Unknown German Translation of *Toledot Yeshu* by Franz Ferdinand Engelsberger, a Seventeenth-Century Christian Convert from Judaism

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The History and Reception of *Toledot Yeshu*

Toledot Yeshu is the name usually given to a corpus of Jewish stories retelling the life of Jesus from a polemical point of view. They are in many ways parodies of the New Testament narrative. These texts have been known since the early Middle Ages and were popular among Jews throughout the medieval and early modern periods. They often include a description of Jesus's birth, his youth, the miracles he performed, his capture at the hands of the rabbis and his death. Some versions also recount the events occurring after his death and leading to the separation of Judaism and Christianity.[1] At some point, probably in the late Middle Ages, it became customary among central European Jewish communities to read the book on Christmas Eve, as Jews refrained from studying the Torah that night, a custom that persisted up to the nineteenth century, if not later.[2]

Judging by the number of extant manuscripts, *Toledot Yeshu* is one of the most popular Hebrew texts that has survived from the medieval period, and arguably the most popular Hebrew polemical text of all times.[3] In addition, *Toledot Yeshu*

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[1] On *Toledot Yeshu* see: SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902); WILLIAM HORBURY, 'A Critical Examination of the Toledoth Jeshu' (PhD diss., Clare College, Cambridge, 1970); RICCARDO DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985); PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); MICHAEL MEERSON and PETER SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); DANIEL BARBU and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu in Context: The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

[2] MARC SHAPIRO, 'Torah Study on Christmas Eve,' *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1999): 319–53; REBECCA SCHARBACH, 'The Ghost in the Privy: On the Origins of Nittel Nacht and Modes of Cultural Exchange,' *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (2013): 340–73; DANIEL BARBU, 'Feeling Jewish. Emotions, Identity, and the Jews' Inverted Christmas,' in *Feeling Exclusion: Emotional Strategies and Burdens of Religious Discrimination and Displacement in Early Modern Europe*, eds GIOVANNI TARANTINO and CHARLES ZIKA (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 185–206.

[3] In their 2014 edition Meerson and Schäfer mention 149 manuscripts (*Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, vol. 2, 1), but the number of extant manuscripts is in fact higher. This survey does not mention all of the manuscripts that are recorded in KTIV, the National Library of Israel's database of Hebrew manuscripts, such as Ms. Amsterdam, Rosenthaliana 212, a Hebrew manuscript of *Toledot Yeshu* from the eighteenth century, or Ms. Jerusalem, Krupp 4256 from 1874. Moreover, other manuscripts have been sold over the years in auctions, for example, a nineteenth-century manuscript sold by Kedem in

manuscripts circulated in almost every place where Jews were found, from Eastern and Western Europe to Yemen, Persia, and North Africa. Moreover, records of inquisitional trials reveal that many New Christians (i.e., converted Jews) in places like the Canary Islands and even Peru were familiar with the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions.[4] Nonetheless, there are still many unknown versions of the story. In this article I will focus on one such version, a text published in 1640 by a Christian convert from Judaism named Franz Ferdinand Engelsberger, which has hitherto never attracted scholarly attention. I hope to offer some considerations on the uniqueness of this text and its importance for the study of *Toledot Yeshu*.

In his research on the various existing versions of the narrative, Riccardo Di Segni divided all of the *Toledot Yeshu* texts into three major groups, named after the person ruling over the land of Israel in the story: Pilate, Queen Helena or Herod.[5] In many ways the general outline of the story in each of these three groups is similar,[6] yet, when looking more closely at certain details, we can discern significant differences. Thus, for example, in all three text types, Jesus acquires magical forces, but the explanation of exactly how he did so diverge. According to the 'Pilate' group, he learned magic in Egypt using ancient books. In the 'Helena' versions, we are told that he stole the Holy Name of God from the Jerusalem temple, while in the 'Herod' texts, he simply learned the name while at the Beit Midrash (the Jewish school).

This is but one example of the significant divergences existing between the three groups of manuscripts. If we consider the major building blocks of the story, however, all of the versions are very similar and differ only at the level of details.[7] Thus, with respect to the example just mentioned, regarding the way Jesus acquired his magical powers, we may note that despite the differences, all three versions relate how Jesus used his illegitimately acquired powers to perform miracles. Furthermore, differences in details do not only allow us to distinguish between distinct groups of manuscripts. We may also note many divergences within texts belonging to the same group. In many cases, these differences reveal the local character of *Toledot Yeshu* and its nature as a fluid text that could be changed for various reasons and depending on the context.

Most of the research on *Toledot Yeshu* to date has focused on broader textual families and few studies have dealt with specific texts and their local contexts. The

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auction 37 (2014), lot 273, or a manuscript from 1889 offered for sale by Winner's in auction 87 (2015), lot 390. In addition, a number of manuscripts are also kept in private collections.

[4] For the Canary Islands see: LUCIEN WOLF, ed., *Jews in the Canary Islands* (London: Jewish Historical Society, 1926), 33. For Peru see: IGNACIO JAVIER CHUECAS SALDÍAS, 'Felippa Cardosa y el Sefer Toledot Yeshu: agencia femenina, prácticas judaizantes y polémica anticristiana en un proceso ante la Inquisición de Lima (1588–1603),' *Memorias: Revista Digital de Historia y Arqueología desde el Caribe colombiano* 18, n. 47 (2022): 8–42.

[5] See DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto*, 29–41.

[6] Günter Schlichting was the first to divide the text into its components, or narrative blocks; see GÜNTER SCHLICHTING, *Ein jüdisches Leben Jesu: Die verschollene Toledot-Jeschu-Fassung Tam ū-mūʿād* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1982), 230–66.

[7] See YAACOV DEUTSCH, '*Toledot Yeshu* in Christian Eyes: Reception and Response to *Toledot Yeshu* in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period' (MA diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997), 7–17 [Hebrew].

articles gathered in this thematic section of *Cromohs* try in particular to offer a more local approach. In what follows, I will focus on one specific text, dating from the seventeenth century and probably circulating in central Europe. As mentioned, this previously unknown text was published in 1640 by Franz Ferdinand Engelsberger, a former Jew who had converted to Christianity in 1636. Like other converts, he used his familiarity with Judaism to reveal the 'secrets' of the Jews, especially Jewish texts and ceremonies that he considered to be anti-Christian.[8] As I hope to show, this text has a number of unique features that do not appear in other versions of the narrative. It also seems to include certain narrative elements that had hitherto been known only from the Huldricus version of the story, which is from a later date however, namely 1705. These elements show that the boundaries between the three main families of texts identified by Di Segni are not as strict as previously thought, and that there could indeed be much fluidity between the different versions.

Before considering this specific text, however, and in order to understand its importance, I will start with some remarks about the textual traditions of *Toledot Yeshu* and the role played by Christians in the transmission of the narrative.

The Textual Transmission of *Toledot Yeshu*

The earliest manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* were uncovered in the Cairo Genizah and are dated to the eleventh or twelfth century. These manuscripts are either in Judeo-Arabic or Aramaic and belong to the 'Pilate' group. Later manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah dating from the twelfth to fourteenth century also attest to the 'Helena' version.[9] All the texts from the Cairo Genizah are fragmentary and we thus lack a full picture of the various versions circulating in this early context.[10] Aside from the fragments found in the Cairo Genizah, we have one early Hebrew fragment, from the fifteenth century, preserved in the Maria Saal library.[11] Our earliest complete Hebrew manuscript, however, comes from St. Petersburg and is dated to 1536.[12] There are several other Hebrew manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but most of the

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[8] In general on Christian converts from Judaism revealing the 'secrets' of the Jews, see ELISHEVA CARLEBACH, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); MARIA DIEMLING and YAACOV DEUTSCH, '"Christliche Ethnographien" von Juden und Judentum: Die Konstruktion des Jüdischen in Frühneuzeitlichen Texten,' in *Die Konstruktion des Jüdischen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. MICHAEL KONKEL (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2003), 15–27; YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'Jewish Anti-Christian Invectives and Christian Awareness: An Unstudied Form of Interaction in the Early Modern Period,' *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 55 (2010): 41–61; YAACOV DEUTSCH, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[9] See MIRIAM GOLDSTEIN, 'Jesus in Arabic, Jesus in Judeo-Arabic: The Origins of the Helene Version of the Jewish "Life of Jesus" (*Toledot Yeshu*),' *Jewish Quarterly Review* 111, no. 1 (2021): 83–104.

[10] Many Genizah fragments, in Aramaic, Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic, have been published over the years. Currently, Gideon Bohak is completing a monograph on all the 'Pilate' fragments from the Genizah while Miriam Goldstein's book on all the 'Helena' fragments is in press.

[11] URSULA RAGACS, 'MS Maria Saal: Ein originelles Fragment aus der *Toledot Yeshu* Tradition,' in *'Let the Wise Listen and Add to Their Learning' (Prov 1:5): Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, eds CONSTANZA CORDONI and GERHARD LANGER (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 593–604.

[12] YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'New Evidence for Early Versions of *Toledot Yeshu*,' *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 177–97 [Hebrew].

extant manuscripts are in fact from later, the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and even the beginning of the twentieth century.[13]

In addition to the Hebrew manuscripts, we have many references to *Toledot Yeshu* in medieval and early modern Christian sources. Due to the small number of extant early modern Hebrew sources, they are of great significance for the textual history of *Toledot Yeshu*. Many Christian authors, starting with Agobard of Lyons in the ninth century, mention the Jewish story of Jesus and provide many details from the narrative.[14] In some cases they offer, if not the entire text, at least long parts of it, and hence shed light on its transmission history. Thus, already in the thirteenth century we can find a sizeable part of the story in Latin translation in Raymundus Martini's *Pugio fidei*.[15] Later on, in the fifteenth century, following an investigation and the arrest of Jews in Trévoux, the text was also translated into French;[16] and just a few decades later, probably around 1450, the entire text was again translated into Latin by Thomas Ebendorfer in his *Falsitates Judeorum*.[17] These last two translations actually provide the earliest witnesses of the full text of *Toledot Yeshu*, given the fact that the earliest complete Hebrew version dates from the sixteenth century. The role of Christians as transmitters of information about *Toledot Yeshu* continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with numerous references to components of the text in the works of Christian scholars and polemicists. Moreover, Martini's text from the *Pugio fidei* was printed in Alonso de Espina's *Fortalitium fidei* no later than 1471, the first time a partial version of the text was printed.[18] In 1520 it was printed again in Porchetus Salvaticus's *Victoria adversus impios Hebraeos*.[19] Salvaticus's book was the source of Martin Luther, who quoted this text of *Toledot Yeshu* in his treatise *Vom Schem Hamphoras*, published in 1543.[20]

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[13] For a list of the manuscripts see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 2–46.

[14] On the reception history of *Toledot Yeshu* see: DEUTSCH, *Toledot Yeshu in Christian Eyes*; YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'The Second Life of the Life of Jesus,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 283–95. KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu*, was the first to refer to the Christian sources that mention *Toledot Yeshu*; HORBURY, 'A Critical Examination' added a few more sources to Krauss's list. See also DANIEL BARBU, 'Some Remarks on the Jewish Life of Jesus (*Toledot Yeshu*) in Early Modern Europe,' *Journal for Religion, Film and Media* 5, no. 1 (2019): 29–45.

[15] The text that appears in Martini's book does not include the beginning of the story describing Jesus's birth, but starts with the description of Jesus stealing the holy name of God from the temple. Martini's text ends with the description of Jesus's death and does not include the description of what happened to his body after it was buried, elements that appear in all the versions of the text. For a discussion of Martini's reference to the text see: DEUTSCH, *Toledot Yeshu in Christian Eyes*, 32–34. Martini's text is translated in MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1, 10–12.

[16] DANIEL BARBU and YANN DAHHAOUI, 'Un manuscrit français des *Toledot Yeshu*. Le ms. lat. 12722 et l'enquête de 1429 sur les juifs de Trévoux,' *Henoch* 40, no. 2 (2018): 223–88.

[17] BIRGITTA CALLSEN et al., eds, *Das jüdische Leben Jesu* Toldot Jeschu*: die älteste lateinische Übersetzung in den* Falsitates Judeorum *von Thomas Ebendorfer* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003).

[18] ALONSO DE ESPINA, *Fortalitium fidei* (Strasbourg: s.n., 1471), fol. 65v.

[19] PORCHETUS SALVATICUS, *Victoria Porcheti adversus impios Hebraeos, in qua tum ex Sacris Literis, tum ex dictis Talmud, ac Caballistarum et aliorum omnium authorum, quos Hebraei recipiunt, monstratur Veritas Catholicae Fidei* (Paris: François Regnault, 1520), 30–32.

[20] STEVEN BURNETT, 'Martin Luther, *Toledot Yeshu* and Judaizing Christians in *Vom Schem Hamphoras* (1543),' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds BARBU and DEUTSCH, 219–30; see also MATTHIAS MORGENSTERN, 'Martin Luther und das Jüdische *Leben Jesu* (*Toledot Jeschu*),' *Judaica* 72, no. 2 (2016): 219–

Besides these early printings of part of the text, two versions of the entire text were published by Christian Hebraists. First, in 1681 Johann Christoph Wagenseil included the text in his collection of Jewish polemical writings, *Tela Ignea Satanae*.[21] The version published by Wagenseil, in Hebrew with a parallel Latin translation, belongs to the 'Helena' group. Twenty-four years later, in 1705, Johann Jacob Ulrich (using the Latinised name Huldricus) published a very different text under the title *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*.[22] The text published by Ulrich belongs to the 'Herod' group and is in fact the earliest known example from this group. Like Wagenseil, Ulrich published the original Hebrew text with a parallel Latin translation. While Christian authors published the narrative for polemical and anti-Jewish purposes, their services to scholarship and to our knowledge of *Toledot Yeshu* cannot be underestimated, as they preserved variants of the story not known from other sources. Therefore, any study of the textual traditions of *Toledot Yeshu* must take the reception history of the narrative and these Christian chains of transmission into account.

Franz Ferdinand Engelsberger

Let us now turn to Franz Ferdinand (or Chaim, as was his given name) Engelsberger, an important and yet almost unknown figure in the reception history of *Toledot Yeshu*. Personal information about him is very scarce and based mainly on what that he said about himself in his writings as well as on the few accounts of his life that appeared after his death.[23] According to these sources, he was born in Engelsberg in Bohemia (today Andělská Hora in the Czech Republic), probably at the beginning of the seventeenth century. According to some, he had been a rabbi and circumciser, but there is no extant evidence in contemporary Jewish or non-Jewish sources to support this claim or any other information about his earlier years. In 1636 he was caught stealing money from one of the synagogues in Prague and put on trial. Before he was convicted, he decided to convert to Catholicism and as a result was saved from punishment. After his and his wife and children's conversion, which took place in Rackonitz (now Rakovník) in Bohemia, he apparently wrote several books, including one addressing *Toledot Yeshu*.

52; MATTHIAS MORGENSTERN, ed., *Martin Luther und die Kabbala: vom Schem Hamephorasch und vom Geschlecht Christi* (Wiesbaden: Berlin University Press, 2017).

[21] JOHANN CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignea Satanae. Hoc est: Arcani et horribiles Judaeorum adversus Christum Deum, et Christianam religionem libri anekdotoi* (Altdorf: John. Henricus Schönnerstaedt, 1681).

[22] JOHANN JACOB ULRICH, *Sefer Toledot Yeshua ha-Notsri / Historia Jeschuae Nazareni* (Leiden: Johannem du Vivie, Is. Severinum, 1705). See Evi Michels's remarks on this text in the present thematic section, as well as Ignacio Javier Chuecas Saldias's essay concerning its possible Ladino *Vorlage*.

[23] FRANZ FERDINAND ENGELSBERGER, *Dieses Büchlein offenbahrt die Geheimbniß Gottes den verstockten blinden Juden* (Vienna: bey Maria Rickhesin Wittib, 1640). Reports about him include the following anonymous texts: *Warhaffter Bericht So sich zu Wien in Oesterreich mit dreyen Juden zugetragen…* (s.l., 1642); *Warhaffte und erschröckliche Zeitung, So geschehe[n] diß 1642. jar, den 26. Augusti, in der Kays. Hauptstatt Wien in Österreich, von drey Gottlosen Juden…* (Augsburg: s.n., 1642); *Kurtzer Innhalt der Execution, So inn der Statt Wien den 22. Augusti dises Jahrs durch rechtmessiges Urthail zween verzweifleten Juden so jünger* (s.l.: s.n., 1642). I am currently preparing a monograph on Engelsberger, in which I intend to discuss these sources extensively. In the meantime, see the discussion in VICTORIA LUISE GUTSCHE, *Zwischen Abgrenzung und Annäherung: Konstruktionen des Jüdischen in der Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 99–122.

Following the publication of these writings, Engelsberger became known to Emperor Ferdinand III and was received at the imperial court in Vienna. However, he seems to have maintained a fondness for theft even after his conversion, or he may simply have not had any other source of income. Indeed, in 1642 with two other Jews he was again caught stealing a very expensive vessel from the emperor's treasury room. The three thieves stood trial and were convicted and sentenced to death. The execution was set for August 22, 1642. On that day, a Jesuit friar offered him Holy Communion and instructed him to confess his sins. According to a contemporary report of the events, because he was now a Christian, Engelsberger apparently thought that he would not receive the death penalty.[24] To his great disappointment, however, all three culprits were sentenced to death and Engelsberger realised that he was not going to be pardoned. At that point, he took the crucifix that he was holding in his hand, threw it onto the floor, stamped on it and smashed it. When asked what he was doing, he answered that he was ready to go to hell as he had no intention of dying a Christian. He also declared that he had desecrated the host he had just been given, a detail that was soon confirmed. These shocking developments led the authorities to send him back to prison and subsequently to charge and sentence him for blasphemy too.

The two other thieves were hung as planned, on August 22. Four days later, on August 26, Engelsberger endured torture before being put to death in the cruellest manner. His body was then burned, and the ashes thrown into the Danube. According to the same contemporary source, his tongue and one of his hands were also sent to the Jewish community in Vienna.[25] These events are recorded by a number of different authors, among them Johann Christoph Wagenseil, who describes a memorial plaque affixed to the walls of the Vienna city hall commemorating Engelsberger's execution in order to warn anyone who might have considered blaspheming Christianity.[26] It is not clear when the plaque was removed but it was still visible in 1663, when the English traveller Philip Skippon visited the city.[27]

Engelsberger's Writings

Wagenseil also informs us about Engelsberger's writings. In the *Tela Ignea Satanae*, he reports that, following his conversion, Engelsberger wrote a small book in Hebrew entitled מורה הדרך, or *Catholischer Wegweiser*.[28] Despite my best efforts, I have not been able to find additional references to this work. Wagenseil did not mention the fact that Engelsberger had also published a text on *Toledot Yeshu*. Additional information about Engelsberger's writings can be found in the fourth volume of Giulio Bartolocci's opus *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica*, a work completed after Bartolocci's death by his student

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[24] *Kurtzer Innhalt der Execution*, A1v.

[25] *Kurtzer Innhalt der Execution*, A2r.

[26] WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignea Satanae*, 188–92 ('Confutatio carminis R. Lipmanni').

[27] Skippon's text was published in AWNSHAM CHURCHILL, ed., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts, Others Translated out of Foreign Languages, and now First Published in English*, 6 vols., vol. 6 (London: Printed by Assignment from Messrs Churchill, 1732), 361–736 (480). Skippon also provides the text of the inscription.

[28] WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignea Satanae*, 189 ('Confutatio carminis R. Lipmanni').

Carlo Giuseppe Imbonatus.[29] Whether Bartolocci or Imbonatus, the author of the brief account on Engelsberger's life and work in the *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* writes that he gathered information about him from a printer, Zacharia Dominico Acsametik, who used to work in Vienna and had known Engelsberger personally. According to Acsametik, Engelsberger had written two works, the first comparing the ceremonies of the Old and New Testaments, and the second, in German, entitled *Toledot Yeshu.* In addition, the *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* also indicates that Engelsberger's writings had been printed in Vienna in 1640 by Matheus Rictius.[30] There is, however, no additional information on these editions in the *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* and it is not clear if the author of the notice actually saw these works.

In his *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, printed in four volumes between 1715 and 1733, the great bibliographer Johann Christoph Wolf mentions the information provided in the *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* but adds that he does not believe Engelsberger's writings were ever printed.[31] Later scholars of *Toledot Yeshu* like Samuel Krauss used the same information, but admitted that they had not seen the work.[32] George Mead for his part simply stated that 'no copy of it is now known to exist.'[33]

Fortunately, they were wrong: I was able to locate two different editions of a book by Engelsberger, made up of two parts, the first being his treatise comparing the ceremonies of the Old and New Testaments and the second a German translation of *Toledot Yeshu*, with further references to other Jewish texts against Christianity.[34] Both editions of the work were indeed printed in Vienna in 1640, however not by Matheus Rictius (as stated in the *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica*) but by his mother, Maria Rictius, who inherited the printing house from her husband Michael Rictius after his death in 1635. It was only after her death, in 1640, when Matheus inherited the printing house, that he started printing under his name.[35]

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[29] GIULIO BARTOLOCCI, *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica, de scriptoribus, & scriptis rabbinicis ordine alphabetico hebraice, & latine digestis*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Rome: Ex Typographia Sacrae Congreg. De Propag. Fide, 1693), 348.

[30] Matheus Rictius was indeed a printer in Vienna, but according to ANTON MAYER, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte, 1482-1882*, 2 vols., vol. 1, *1482-1682* (Vienna: Wilhelm Frick, 1883), 265–70, he started to work as a printer only in 1641.

[31] JOHANN CHRISTOPH WOLF, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Hamburg: Christiani Liebezeit, 1715), 982.

[32] KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu*, 17.

[33] GEORGE R. S. MEAD, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.? An Enquiry into the Talmud Jesus Stories, the Toldoth Jeschu, and Some Curious Statements of Epiphanius—Being a Contribution to the Study of Christian Origins* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1903), 253.

[34] Three copies of the first edition are preserved, respectively, in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (4 Polem. 1037), in the Ludwig Maximilian University Library, also in Munich (0001/4 H.eccl. 2116) and in the National Library of Scotland (D.C.s.88[10]). I have found only one copy of the second edition in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Polem. 857), however, it is incomplete and six pages (5–10) from the second part are missing.

[35] According to MAYER, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte*, vol. 1, 225–32, between 1628 and 1635, the printing house was operated by Matheus's father, Michael, and between 1636 and 1640 by his mother Maria; see also JOSEF BENZING, *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963), 459.

The two editions bear a very similar title, and any difference mainly lies in the pagination and layout. The text seems to be almost identical.[36] It is tempting to suggest that the work encountered such popular demand that it was reprinted, but there is no evidence to support this claim. In contrast, the fact that less than one hundred years after being printed in two different editions, a scholar like Wolf suggested that it had never been printed indicates that it was most likely little known. Another possibility is that the first edition indeed proved popular, and that the work was thus reprinted, but following Engelsberger's return to Judaism, all copies were confiscated and destroyed, hence its quasi-disappearance. But again, there is no evidence to support this assumption.

Engelsberger's *Toledot Yeshu*

The book has two title pages: the first serves as a title page for the entire volume, with its two parts, and the second serves as a title page for the second part of the volume, namely the translation of *Toledot Yeshu* and discussion of Jewish anti-Christian texts. The first reads as follows:

> Dises Buch offenbaret die Geheimbnussen Gottes den verstockten blinden Juden welche Christum den Herrn verspottet vn[d] verachtet haben […] Der Erste Theil erweist vnd widerspricht das Jüdische Gesatz, daß es schon langst auffgehoben ist worden […]. Der ander Theil erweist wie die Juden lästern den Christlichen Glauben […]

> This book reveals the mysteries of God to the blind Jews who mocked and despised Christ the Lord […] the first part shows and proves that the Jewish law has been abrogated long ago […]. The second part shows how the Jews blaspheme the Christian faith.

The title page of the second part is:

> In dem Anderen Thail dieses Buchs ist zu erfahren, wie die Juden ein Büchlein haben trucken lassen von der Geburth Christi, und wie sie mit Ihm umbgangen seyn, auch von der grossen Lästerung Unserer lieben Frawen […].

> In the second part of this book we learn how the Jews had printed a little book about the birth of Christ, and how they dealt with him, also about the great blasphemy against our dear lady […].

The text of *Toledot Yeshu* is entirely in German with just a few words in Hebrew which are transliterated and printed in italics rather than Hebrew characters. Most of it is probably a verbatim translation of a Hebrew version of *Toledot Yeshu* but, as I will argue, it is not similar to the other known versions of the text. In some places the text seems

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[36] The title of the first edition is: *Dises Buch offenbaret die Geheimbnussen Gottes den verstockten blinden Juden welche Christum den Herrn verspottet vn[d] verachtet haben*. The first part has 27 pages and the second 22. The title of the second edition is: *Dieses Büchlein offenbahrt die Geheimbnuß Gottes den verstockten blinden Juden welche Christu den Herrn verspottet vnd verachtet haben*. The first part has 58 pages and the second 44 (as mentioned before, pages 5–10 in this section are missing).

to have been abridged. Engelsberger himself states at one point that he is not providing the entire text.[37] In his introduction to the text, Engelsberger starts by claiming that the Jews from *Welschlandt* (probably Trentino, in southern Tyrol) have printed a book entitled *Toldus Jeschua*. He adds that the Jews could not print the book 'here' (probably referring to Vienna where he was living, or to the Holy Roman Empire), and therefore had to copy it from one another in order to be able to study it.

There is no evidence to support Engelsberger's claim that *Toledot Yeshu* was printed in Trentino or in Italy ('Ein Buch haben die Juden trucken lassen in Welschlandt'), as no printed edition of the entire work has reached us prior to 1640. On the other hand, a significant number of *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts were copied in Italy in the seventeenth century, and external evidence also suggests that the text was well known among Italian Jews in the same period.[38] Therefore, it is not impossible to believe that Engelsberger was in fact referring to a manuscript and not a printed edition, perhaps even a manuscript that looked like a printed edition. Alternatively, we may speculate that a version of *Toledot Yeshu* had indeed been printed in Italy before 1640 and that we simply do not have any extant copies of it.

Whether Engelsberger used a printed edition of *Toledot Yeshu* or a manuscript, it is nevertheless clear that he was using a text, and not oral traditions, as the main source of his translation, and thus had a copy of the written work in front of him. For instance, in several places the story includes quotations of biblical verses, and Engelsberger's text provides the exact source for each of these quotations. Of course, one may argue that he took the time to check each reference and include citations from a German translation of the Bible. The biblical citations included in the text, however, diverge from contemporary German translations of the Bible, and it seems more likely that Engelsberger translated these verses as they appeared in his Hebrew source. Moreover, in one instance, the text translated by Engelsberger refers to the claim that the Jews had sent an impostor named Shimon (i.e., Peter) among Jesus's disciples in order to give them their own laws.[39] According to Engelsberger's text, Shimon also changed the alphabet and created an alphabet especially for Christians (I will return to this point later). When recounting this episode, the text provides three different examples of letter combinations that have no meaning in or by themselves; therefore, it is likely that these letter combinations were simply copied by Engelsberger, further confirming that he was indeed using a written and not an oral source.[40]

As a matter of fact, Engelsberger's text is the first known complete version of *Toledot Yeshu* to have been printed.[41] Prior to that, only the partial text included in

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[37] ENGELSBERGER, *Dises Buch offenbaret*, part 2, 8–9.
[38] See Daniel Barbu's contribution to this thematic section.
[39] On this episode, see SIMON LEGASSE, 'La légende juive des apôtres et les rapports judéo-chrétiens dans le haut moyen âge,' *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 75 (1974): 99–132; JOHN G. GAGER, 'Simon Peter, Founder of Christianity or Saviour of Israel?' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 221–45.
[40] See p. 156–58 for a discussion of this episode.
[41] Unless of course his reference to a prior printed text is not a fantasy.

Martini's *Pugio fidei* had been printed. Thus, although it is a German translation, its importance for the history of *Toledot Yeshu* cannot be neglected. Moreover, as noted above, most of our manuscripts are relatively late (from the eighteenth century onwards). Engelsberger's text thus records an early version of the narrative as it would have circulated in the first half of the seventeenth century. The fact that Engelsberger provides a different version of the narrative from the texts we know again suggests that any serious study of the textual history of *Toledot Yeshu* needs to take into consideration not only the Hebrew manuscripts, but also manuscripts in vernacular languages such as Yiddish, Ladino or Judeo-Arabic, as well as all indirect testimonies we can find in both Christian and Jewish sources.[42]

For the convert Engelsberger, *Toledot Yeshu* was first and foremost a sign of the Jews' hatred of Christianity and of the blasphemous nature of Judaism. As we know, Engelsberger was not the first convert to use the *Toledot Yeshu* text for this purpose.[43] It is tempting to suggest, however, that Engelsberger, who had thus accused the Jews of blasphemy, himself sought to die as a blasphemer in order to atone for the anti-Jewish polemics he had engaged in while a Christian.

The Jewish Story of Jesus According to Engelsberger

As mentioned above, the version of the story that Engelsberger included in his book is similar to other known versions of *Toledot Yeshu*, but with important differences. Some details are unique to his text, which seems to combine elements from different versions of the story rather than follow one specific text type.

In order to understand the distinctiveness of Engelsberger's version I will start with a brief summary of the text he provides, which will serve as a basis for the analysis that follows.[44] According to Engelsberger, Yohanan (John) was betrothed to Mary, but he had left her alone to go and study. Next to their house, in Nazareth, lived a carpenter named Joseph Bandera, who opened a hole in the roof of Mary's house one night, entered the house and slept with her. Thus, she became pregnant. This occurred while she was menstruating. As a result of her pregnancy, her betrothed rejected her and she fled to her relatives in Bethlehem. The latter, however, refused to help her. Abandoned by all, she gave birth in a stable. Later, the baby was circumcised and named Jesus. When people saw that he had survived, there was a great dispute between the Pharisees and other rabbis as to what to do with him. Many wanted Jesus and his parents, Mary and Joseph, to be executed. Jesus was not killed and was eventually sent to the temple, in Jerusalem, to study. There, he became an excellent student and people started wondering and inquiring about his parentage. Jesus replied that he was an orphan and

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[42] On *Toledot Yeshu* in Islamic sources, see PHILIP ALEXANDER, 'The *Toledot Yeshu* in the Context of Jewish-Muslim Debate,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 137–58; ALEXANDRA CUFFEL, 'The Judeo-Arabic Toledot Yeshu and Its Implications for Jewish Relations with Christians and Muslims in the Fatimid-Mamluk Periods,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds BARBU and DEUTSCH, 131–67.
[43] See DEUTSCH, *Toledot Yeshu in Christian Eyes*.
[44] ENGELSBERGER, *Dises Buch offenbaret*, part 2, 3–9.

that he did not know his parents. We are also told that he was so learned that he knew the Holy Name of God, and that he then entered the temple, using this name. Later on, Jesus went to a place where the three most important rabbis were accustomed to meeting, with his head uncovered. When the rabbis saw him, they proclaimed that his uncovered head was a sign of the fact that he was a bastard, the son of a whore and a menstruate woman.

Subsequently, the rabbis decided to investigate, and they discovered the circumstances of Jesus's birth. This is when Jesus decided to use the divine Name and perform miracles, claiming to be the son of God who had been sent to redeem the world from hell. He abrogated the commandments of circumcision and the Sabbath and permitted the consumption of forbidden food. As a result, many people began following him and his fame spread. The Jews decided to send a rabbi named Judas to fight against him. As such, Judas also learned the Holy Name of God. He then started performing miracles too, contending that Jesus was making false claims and requesting that the latter stand trial. When Jesus heard this, he proclaimed the Name and flew off in order to see all the trees. He then made the trees vow that they would not allow him to be hung on them at any future time. Judas flew after Jesus and urinated on him. As a result, Jesus lost his powers and fell to the ground. The Jews caught him and sentenced him to death. He was tried together with two other people, a father and son. The Jews who captured him took his clothes and divided them among themselves. When Jesus arrived at the execution place, he was thirsty, and the Jews gave him vinegar to drink. Jesus was then stoned, and his body was set to be hanged. When the time came, however, the trees refused to let his body be hung from them. A rabbi named Jose said that his father had planted a cabbage in his garden that was as tall as a tree, so Jesus was hung on this cabbage stalk. When the evening came, his body was taken down and buried according to the biblical mandates.

The narrative continues: some Jews were afraid that Jesus's disciples would take him out of his grave and claimed that he was resurrected. Therefore, a rabbi named Gamliel, who lived far from the city, extracted Jesus's body from its grave and buried it in his own garden before moving a stream of water to run over the new resting place. After several days, Jesus's followers discovered that the original grave was empty. They told the Jews that if they could not find the body, they would pay for it with their lives. The Jews were highly fearful, they fasted and prayed but Gamliel was unaware of this unfortunate turn of events. Eventually, when Gamliel saw people searching for the body, he told them what he had done, and the Jews were very happy. They opened Jesus's new grave and tried to pull him out by his hair. Because the body was soaked with the water from the stream, however, the hair stuck to their hands. This, explains Engelsberger, is why friars shave their heads.

At the same time, some people refused to believe that this was the body of Jesus, and they started causing an uproar. The Jews consulted each other and decided that a rabbi named Shimon should preach to Jesus's believers as if he was one of them. Shimon joined Jesus's followers and told them that he had seen Jesus in a dream and

that Jesus had told him that he was now sitting in heaven on the right side of his father. Jesus, he claimed, also ordered him to tell his people to abrogate the Scriptures and the holidays. In addition, Shimon taught Jesus's followers a new alphabet as well as some abbreviations that stood for phrases reflecting the beliefs of the new religion he had invented. In this way, Shimon was able to trick Jesus's followers, who believed that he was indeed a messenger sent by Jesus. But Shimon was afraid that following his death, the Christians would turn him into a saint and put a cross on his grave. Therefore, he chose to live in a special tower where he died a Jew.

Some Unique Features of Engelsberger's Text

The outline of the story as told by Engelsberger will be familiar to readers of *Toledot Yeshu*. Most of the text resembles other versions of the 'Helena' group. Parts of it, however, are reminiscent of the 'Herod' version, thus suggesting that the accepted divisions between the two textual families are not cut and dried. Moreover, as I will show, some details that appear in this text are unique and are not attested in any other version, suggesting the circulation of further variants of the narrative of which we have no knowledge.

The story of Jesus's conception and birth varies dramatically depending on the various versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. According to some versions, Mary was tricked or raped by an acquaintance of her betrothed (or husband), but in other versions she willingly cooperated with her lover.[45] The result, however, is the same in all versions of the narrative: she became pregnant and gave birth to Jesus who was thus the fruit of an adulterous union, in other words, a bastard. In Engelsberger's text, Yohanan is described as a student from Nazareth who was betrothed to Mary. When he left home, a neighbour, Joseph Bandera, slept with Mary, who was menstruating, and impregnated her. What is unique to this version is the mention of the fact that Yohanan had left his betrothed in order to study outside the land of Israel, as well as the detailed description of Joseph entering Mary's house via a hole in the roof. It is not clear from Engelsberger's text whether Mary knew that Joseph was not her betrothed, and thus willingly committed adultery, or not. Joseph is also explicitly said to have violated the Jewish law (*halakhah*) by opening a hole in the roof on the Sabbath and by having sex with a woman who was married to another person, what is more while she was menstruant. Another detail that stands out in this version is the mention of the fact that Joseph was a carpenter, something that could reflect more detailed knowledge of the Christian version of the story. In the rest of the *Toledot Yeshu* corpus, this detail only appears in two other versions of the narrative, the late Oriental and Byzantine types (following Meerson and Schäfer's classification).[46] The story of Jesus's

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[45] On the portrayal of Mary in the different versions of *Toledot Yeshu*, see SARIT KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts: Gender, Motherhood, and Power in the *Toledot Yeshu* Narratives,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds BARBU and DEUTSCH, 99–130.

[46] It thus appears in Ms. St. Petersburg EVR. I 274 (dated 1536), the only manuscript attesting to the Byzantine version (see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 74, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 160, for the English) as well as in Mss. Jerusalem 864, Benayahu 25.4 and Sasson 793. The last two

conception in Engelsberger's text illustrates how the latter provides a unique version of the narrative.

Moving to the episode of Jesus's birth, the story provided by Engelsberger is in fact quite different from what we find in other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. Indeed, several details have no parallels in other variants of the story. According to Engelsberger's text, after Mary became pregnant, she was ashamed and did not want to stay in Nazareth. For this reason, she left for Bethlehem, but her friends and family did not want to help her because they were embarrassed and so she had to give birth in a stable and use a manger as a crib for the newborn baby. Here too, the story might also reflect Engelsberger's knowledge of the narrative, and his free use of the Christian tradition in retelling the Jewish story. Engelsberger's text also narrates how, after Jesus was born, his mother did not have any napkins for the baby, since everyone, including her friends, had refused to give her swaddling clothes as they wanted the baby to die. We do not know how Mary resolved this situation. We are simply told that when the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised according to the Jewish law, and named Jeschua.

There are various accounts of Jesus's birth in the different versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. In most versions of the story, however, Mary remained where she was. Also, according to some versions, Jesus was named after Mary's father while in other ones he was named after her brother. The version provided by Engelsberger again includes several details that are not part of the standard narrative. Engelsberger's text is closer to the story as it appears in the gospels. The circumstance of the pregnant Mary leaving Nazareth appears in only one other version of *Toledot Yeshu*, as found in Ms. St. Petersburg RNL EVR 1.274. In this manuscript, however, the decision to leave was her fiancé's, and the couple did not go to Bethlehem.[47]

Another detail unique to Engelsberger's version of the story is Jesus's birth in a stable. To the best of my knowledge, the stable is never mentioned in any other version of *Toledot Yeshu*. Yet here too, a parallel can be drawn with Ms. St. Petersburg RNL EVR 1.274, where we read that Mary gave birth in a manger.[48] Engelsberger, however, indicates that the manger was used as a makeshift crib for the baby, as we know from the Gospel of Luke 2:7. It is noteworthy that the story provided by Engelsberger, like the text of the St. Petersburg manuscript, are both closer to the nativity scene as it appears in the gospels than any other version of *Toledot Yeshu*. In all likelihood, this reflects how knowledge of the Christian story allowed scribes to insert new details within the narrative. Another unique feature of Engelsberger's version of the story is the fact that Mary did not have any swaddling clothes, a detail probably introduced to

belong to the late Oriental type, of which we only have manuscripts from the nineteenth century (see MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 127, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 221, for the English).
[47] See MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 72, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 156, for the English.
[48] See MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 73, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 156, for the English.

underline the general animosity towards Jesus and his parents. This is not found in any other version of *Toledot Yeshu*.

The section describing how Jesus became an excellent student, before eventually angering the rabbis, who subsequently discussed his lineage, prompting him to learn the Name of God in the temple and start performing miracles, is relatively similar to what we find in other versions of the narrative. Nonetheless, Engelsberger's text provides some noteworthy elements in its description of the miracles performed by Jesus and their consequences. According to our text, Jesus performed various miracles: reviving the dead, curing the sick, returning sight to the blind, allowing the deaf to hear and the lame to walk. But he also abrogated the commandments of circumcision and the Sabbath and permitted the consumption of forbidden food.

Only two other manuscripts mention Jesus returning sight to the blind.[49] No other known version of *Toledot Yeshu* mentions the claim that Jesus made the deaf hear again. It may be noted that, in the New Testament, all four gospels mention how Jesus was able to heal the blind (Mk 8:23–24 and 10:46–52; Mt 9:27–31; Lk 18:35–43; Jn 9:1–12), but only the Gospel of Mark describes his curing a deaf and dumb man (Mk 7:32–35). Again, we can see how Engelsberger's text is closer to the New Testament gospels and differs from other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*.

The description of the events leading to Jesus's arrest and trial in Engelsberger's text is also similar to the account we find in other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. The only difference is that, according to Engelsberger's text, the purpose of Jesus's aerial escape was not to flee from the rabbis but to see all the trees and make them vow not to carry his body upon his execution. While the vow appears, in various forms, in many other versions of the story, it is usually not connected to Jesus's flight. Engelsberger's account of Jesus's trial also contrasts with other known versions of the narrative. According to Engelsberger's text, Jesus was tried along with two other men, a father and son sentenced to death for having slept with a betrothed woman on Yom Kippur. Again, this does not appear in any other version of *Toledot Yeshu*, but likely refers to the gospel narrative in which Jesus was put to death with two other felons (Mt 27:38; Mk 15:27–28; Lk 23:33). It is probably noteworthy that the crime of Jesus's two fellow lawbreakers in Engelsberger's version, sleeping with a betrothed woman on Yom Kippur, is similar to the crime explicitly attributed to Jesus's 'true' father in other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. Thus, according to Ms. New York, JTS 1491 (probably eighteenth century), Mary's husband was delayed at the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur, and this was when Joseph ben Pandera entered his house and slept with his wife.[50] Similarly, in the Huldricus text, published 1705, we read that Mary's husband

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[49] Ms. New York, JTS 2221 (MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 101, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 191, for the English) and Ms. Amsterdam Ros. 414 (MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 110, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 204, for the English).

[50] See MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 82. The same motif also appears in Ms. Jerusalem Heb. 8 3044. Unfortunately, the latter manuscript was not included by Meerson and Schäfer in their edition of *Toledot Yeshu*.

was keeping her locked inside the house because he did not want evildoers to sleep with her, but on the night of Yom Kippur, Joseph ben Pandera, who was walking by, saw that she was alone, and suggested that she run away with him. He then slept with her on Yom Kippur and she became pregnant.[51]

Another detail unique to Engelsberger's version of *Toledot Yeshu* but which again parallels the New Testament is the story of Jesus's clothes. According to Engelsberger's text, the Jews divided Jesus's clothes among themselves, but could not decide who would get his coat—therefore, they had to roll the dice. When Jesus saw this, he claimed that they were fulfilling the words from Psalm 22:18: 'They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.' In all four canonical gospels, Jesus's clothes were divided by casting lots. Again, Engelsberger's reliance on the New Testament is evident.

We may also note his account that Jesus was given vinegar to drink, reflecting the words of Psalm 69:21: 'And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' This motif, which is again taken from the gospels (Mk 15:23 and 36; Mt 27:34; Lk 23:36), can however also be found in other versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. We can thus see that although Engelsberger's text often adds details that seem to be taken from the New Testament, similar inclusions sometimes appear in other known versions of the narrative.

Engelsberger's is however the only version which names the rabbi who took Jesus's body out of its grave and buried it elsewhere as Gamliel (and not Yehudah the gardener). Moreover, Engelsberger provides an original explanation for Jesus's hair coming off his body. In most of the other versions of *Toledot Yeshu* which preserve the same motif, the reason for this is that after Jesus's body was taken out of the grave, it was tied to a horse's tail by its hair and then dragged through the streets of Jerusalem. In Engelsberger's text, the motif is connected to pulling Jesus's body from the grave by its hair.

The Parting of the Ways and the Christians' Alphabet

As in many versions of *Toledot Yeshu*, the story does not end with Jesus's death. The final part of the narrative accounts for the separation between Jews and Christians into two independent religions. Engelsberger's text preserves the story as it is also known from other versions, telling how a rabbi named Shimon led the followers of Jesus astray. An interesting element in Engelsberger's text is provided by the letter combinations that Shimon is said to have taught the early followers of Jesus: the letters 'a, b, c, d,' apparently implying that Jesus was born from two people (I shall return to this below); then the letters 'l, m, n,' signifying that God did not have a mother; and finally, the letters 'a, b, q, r, s,' meaning 'heretic' or 'unbeliever' (*apikores*). Shimon also called the Christian Scriptures an *evangelion*, which, as the text suggests, in fact means

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[51] Ms. New York, JTS 1491, fol. 128r (MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 82, for the Hebrew); ULRICH, *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 4.

'to discover the sins.'[52] In the end, Shimon was afraid that following his death, the Christians would turn him into a saint and set a cross on his grave. Therefore, as Engelsberger's text tells us, he decided to live in a tower where he would die as a Jew.

The general outline of the story provided by Engelsberger is similar to what we find in most of the other versions of *Toledot Yeshu* that preserve the story of the 'parting of the ways' between Jews and Christians. The Jews, wanting to distance themselves from Jesus's followers, sent a rabbi among them who would pass for one of them while in fact providing them with new laws and customs, and even a new alphabet. To understand the letter combinations mentioned by Engelsberger in this context, we need to compare his text with the Huldricus version of the story. According to the latter, Shimon invented a new alphabet in which he deliberately inserted hidden signs revealing that everything that Jesus had commanded was wrong. The passage in the Huldricus text reads as follows:

> א בֵ צֵ ד עֵ יֵף חֵ יָ כָ אֵל אֶם אִין אָ פִּי קוּ רֵ סָ תָּע וּ עִיקֵשׁ אֵיזֶד זֶד (A, be, ce, de, e, ef, cha, i, ke, el, em, en, o, pe, ku, er, es, te, u, icx, etzet, zet). And this is the interpretation: Father, this is Esau, he was a hunter and he was tired (**א.בא צ.יד ע.יף**). But behold, his sons believe in Jesus that lived like a God (**ח.י כ.אל**) may they die, for God has no mother (**אם אין**) while Jesus had a mother but he was an *apikoros* (**ס.ר.קו.פי.א**), deceiver, swindler and fervid (**תעו ומעקש ומיזד**) like Esau who ate stew (**נזיד**).[53]

If we compare the two texts, we see that Engelsberger's version repeats some of the same combinations of letters we find in the Huldricus text, but the meaning attributed to these combinations is somewhat different. According to Engelsberger, the letters 'a, b, c, d' somehow mean that Jesus had two parents, although I fail to see how this specific combination of letters actually supports this interpretation. Then, the letters 'l, m, n,' taken to mean that God had no mother (אם אין), is similar (but not identical) to what we find in the Huldricus text. The only combination that is identical in both texts is 'a, p, q, r, s,' standing for an 'Epicurean' (*apikoros*), that is, an 'unbeliever.'[54] Perhaps this is an indication that he did not fully understand the original text that he had at hand.

A last detail appearing in Engelsberger's text and requiring an explanation is the claim that Shimon called the New Testament an 'evangelion,' which here is said to mean 'to reveal the sin,' based on the Hebrew meaning of the word עו״ן, 'sin,' and the verb ג.ל.י, 'to expose.' A similar claim appears in the Huldricus version, where we learn

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[52] The derogatory pun *evangelion/aven gilayon* ('false scroll' or 'sin scroll') already appears in the (uncensored versions of the) Babylonian Talmud, *Shabb.* 116a. As noted below, it also appears in the Huldricus version of *Toledot Yeshu*, *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 119. In Jewish polemical writings from the Middle Ages, it is commonly used to describe the New Testament; see David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publications Society of America, 1979), 167.

[53] Ulrich, *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 107–8 (my translation). The letters in bold are the letters of the new alphabet as they appear in Hebrew and the meaning attributed to the letters is based on the way they are pronounced in Hebrew. Nonetheless, they reflect the Latin alphabet.

[54] The only difference is that in Engelsberger's text he has b and not p (a, b, q, r, s).

that Shimon wrote books of lies for Christians to use, calling them *Avon Killayon* ('sin and annihilation'). However, they thought he meant *Aven Gillayon*, which they interpreted as 'the Father, the Son and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.'[55] Thus, while both texts make use of the same pun, they differ in their interpretation.

The comparison of Engelsberger's text with the text published by Ulrich in 1705 thus sheds light on some of the details we find in it. It also suggests that some idiosyncratic motifs, so far in *Toledot Yeshu* scholarship only associated with the Huldricus text (e.g., the story of Shimon's new alphabet) already existed in the first half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, and more importantly, the comparison of both texts suggests that the Huldricus text may also have drawn from other, now lost versions of the narrative, sharing elements from both the 'Helena' and 'Herod' traditions (here represented by Engelsberger and Ulrich respectively). The two groups are hence likely to have more in common than previously assumed.[56]

Engelsberger in Context

As noted above, Engelsberger was born in Bohemia and later moved to Vienna. The Jewish story of Jesus he translated in his works, however, has many unique features and certainly differs from the other versions of the narrative originating from the German-speaking world. Neither the text provided in Latin translation by the Austrian theologian Thomas Ebendorfer in the fifteenth century, nor the Hebrew text published in Altdorf by Johann Christoph Wagenseil in 1681, correspond to Engelsberger's text. As mentioned, Engelsberger claimed that the story he translated had been printed in Italy. If we compare his text with the extant Italian manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* (from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) we can observe that these are also quite different. For instance, in many Italian texts Jesus learnt God's Holy Name after the rabbis declared him a bastard; furthermore, he had to stand trial twice. In Engelsberger's version of the story, Jesus learnt the Holy Name before the rabbis discovered that he was a bastard, and he was put on trial only once. The many details from Engelsberger's text discussed above—Jesus's birth in a stable, his execution along with a father and son, Shimon's invention of a new alphabet—do not appear in the Italian versions that have come down to us. Hence, even if his text was indeed of Italian origin, as Engelsberger claimed, it would represent a different branch of the tradition.

The many unique features of Engelsberger's text confirm that, although there are more than 150 known manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu*, they still do not represent the full wealth of this complex tradition. They also highlight the fact that *Toledot Yeshu* was essentially a flexible and fluid tradition, and that the narrative could be modified and updated depending on who told, wrote, copied, or translated the story, and where. The

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[55] ULRICH, *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 119; see also MEERSON and SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 2, 250, for the Hebrew, and vol. 1, 319, for the English.

[56] On the Huldricus text as synthesis of various *Toledot Yeshu* traditions, perhaps composed in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, see ADINA YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscripts of the Toledot Yeshu,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 61–77.

text provided by Engelsberger, as we have seen, also suggests a greater familiarity with the New Testament. Considering this, one may suggest that Engelsberger's text could be an early version of *Toledot Yeshu*, which was later edited because the copyists responsible for the transmission of the narrative knew neither the New Testament, nor the reason for many details of the story; thus, these details were omitted in other versions of *Toledot Yeshu* and only resurface here. It is, however, also possible that these details were added by Engelsberger himself, based on the knowledge he had acquired of the Christian narrative after his conversion to Christianity. As things stand, it is of course difficult to determine with certitude which of these two possibilities is more convincing. Hopefully, further research on the history and reception of *Toledot Yeshu*, including a discussion of both the existing manuscripts and the external evidence witnessing the wealth of this tradition, will continue to change our understanding of the Jewish story of Jesus and its multiple contexts.

The *Ladino* Istoriah de Iesus natsareno *(EH 47 D 10)*
as the Vorlage *of the Huldricus version of the* Toledot Yeshu[*]

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My interest in the narratives linked to the *Toledot Yeshu* began a couple of years ago as a result of my work on an inquisitorial lawsuit brought by the Holy Office of the Ciudad de los Reyes (Viceroyalty of Peru) against New Christian Francisco Coronel de Acevedo, who brought his crime of Judaism before this tribunal in 1603.[1] In the course of his confessions, Francisco recounted how, in his native village of Salvatierra de Galicia around 1588, his own sister Felippa Cardosa convinced him that Jesus was not the Messiah ('que xp̃o no hera el mexias') and that the Law of Moses was the only way to salvation. In order to achieve her goal, Felippa had shown her brother a series of proofs that refuted traditional Christian arguments. As she put it, Jesus was not entirely a Jew ('no hera judio entero'). What is more, he performed miracles—one of which was to climb up a ray of sunlight—because he had stolen some papers from the Temple of the Lord, hiding them in the flesh of his thigh or his arm. In a first instance, because I was interested in other subjects, this passage did not attract my attention. Only somewhat later did I realise that the mention of Jesus hiding some papers in his own flesh reminded me of something I had read many years before.

This article intends to take this interest a step further. In particular, I would like to add information to the question of the Iberian traditions linked to these narratives.[2] From my research on the case of Felippa Cardosa and her brother, it became evident

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[1] Inquisitorial trial against Francisco Coronel de Acevedo (1603–1604), Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid, Consejo de la Inquisición, leg. 1648, exp. 3, fols. Ir–28v; IGNACIO CHUECAS SALDÍAS, 'Felippa Cardosa y el Sefer Toledot Yeshu: Agencia femenina y polémica anticristiana en un proceso ante el Santo Oficio de la Ciudad de los Reyes (1588–1603),' *Memorias: Revista Digital de Historia y Arqueología desde el Caribe colombiano* 18, n. 47 (2022): 8–42.

[2] Among the few articles that deal with the Iberian traditions of the *Toledot Yeshu*: PAOLA TARTAKOFF, 'The *Toledot Yeshu* and Jewish-Christian Conflict in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,' in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, eds PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 297–309.

that a series of characteristic versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* were in circulation among the Jewish communities of the Iberian Peninsula and later among Judaising circles during the medieval and early modern period. Basically, they were the narratives that Samuel Krauss identified as belonging to the Wagenseil type,[3] and Riccardo di Segni to the Helena group.[4]

The most significant testimonies of these versions relating to the Iberian Peninsula include: the quotations of the *Pugio fidei* composed by Raimundo Martín (or Raymundus Martini) in Barcelona around 1280 and published in Paris in 1651;[5] the mention in the inquisitorial trial against Janto Almuli and his companions, again in Barcelona, in 1341;[6] the quotations in the *Even Bohan* written by Shem-Tob Ibn Shaprut in Tarragona around 1385;[7] the quotations in the trial of Francisco Coronel de Acevedo that must date from around 1588;[8] and the quotations that appear in the *Relation of a Journey begun Anno Domini 1610* by George Sandys published in London in 1615.[9] One of the features linking these versions has to be the episode of the theft of the Holy Name guarded in the temple of Jerusalem by two magical statues of lions or dogs. In addition, these versions describe a series of miracles performed by Jesus following the model of the canonical and apocryphal gospels. Some of these descriptions mention Jesus climbing or riding on a sunbeam.

As can be seen, all of the sources relating to Iberia consist of fragmentary texts. However, in my search for complete versions of Judeo-Iberian origin, I came across two Ladino manuscripts kept in the Ets Haim library in Amsterdam which contain complete handwritten versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* in the language of Castile. The first is an Aljamiado text entitled איסטורייה די ישו״ז נאצארינו (*Istoriah de Iesus natsareno*) bearing the signature EH 47 D 10 folios 196r–206v, while the second is a text in Latin script with the title *Historia De xp̃o: su Nasimiento Vida y Muerte*, bearing the signature EH 48 E 15.[10]

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[3] SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902), 27–31.

[4] RICCARDO DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985), 33–40.

[5] RAIMUNDO MARTÍN, *Pvgio fidei adversvs Mauros, et Iudæos; Nunc primum in lucem editus* (Paris: Mathurinum Henault, Iohannem Henault, 1651).

[6] JOSEP PERARNAU I ESPELT, 'El procés inquisitorial barceloní contra els jueus Janto Almuli, la seva muller Jamila i Jucef de Quatorze (1341–1342),' *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 4, no. 2 (1979): 309–53.

[7] JOSÉ-VICENTE NICLÓS, *Šem Ṭob Ibn Šapruṭ. 'La Piedra de Toque' (Eben Bohan). Una Obra de Controversia Judeo-Cristiana* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997); ISRAEL BARUCH MESINGER, ניטל ומאורעותיו חשיפת מקורות טעמים ונימוקים עם הערות וציונים עם אוסף אגדות (Spring Valley: Israel Baruch Mesinger, 2000).

[8] Inquisitorial trial against Francisco Coronel de Acevedo, 1603–1604, Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid, Consejo de la Inquisición, leg. 1648, exp. 3, fols. Ir–28v.

[9] GEORGE SANDYS, *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (London: W. Barrett, 1615).

[10] Although a transcription of this text has been published (with some minor errors), the editors failed to recognise it as a version of the *Toledot Yeshu*: HARM DEN BOER and KENNETH BROWN, eds, *El barroco*

An initial inquiry into both texts shows that, without doubt, the second belongs to the tradition of the Wagenseil-Helena type. The first, on the other hand, is undoubtedly of the Herod type, in the nomenclature of Riccardo di Segni,[11] or *Huldreich* in that of Krauss.[12]

The manuscript of the *Historia De xp̃o: su Nasimiento Vida y Muerte* (EH 48 E 15) has a printed frontispiece, to which a handwritten title has been added (there is also a second variant of the same title in the heading of the first folio), as well as the date 1700 and the place of composition: Lisboa (Lisbon). Both the calligraphy and the frontispiece confirm its eighteenth-century origin. It is very likely, although more careful analysis is needed, that it is indeed a translation of the text published by Johann Christoph Wagenseil in 1681.[13]

This article is primarily concerned with the text entitled איסטורייה די ישו״ז נאצארינו (EH 47 D 10). It is a manuscript that was bequeathed to the Ets Haim library in 1885 together with a set of 37 other documents following the death of their owner Jacob van Jacob Ferrares, rabbi of The Hague.[14] As for the origin of this manuscript, one can only speculate that Ferrares acquired it around the middle of the nineteenth century in the same city of Amsterdam or another place in the Low Countries.[15]

While it is practically impossible to account for the complexities of a text of this nature in such a short article, I nevertheless intend to cast light on two central aspects: first, the internal features of the text (dating, authorship and the cultural-literary context of its first redaction), and second, its relationship with the version published by Johann Jacob Ulrich in 1705[16] (I will refer to this version as Huldricus).

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sefardí. Abraham Gómez Silveira. Arévalo, prov. de Ávila, Castilla 1656–Amsterdam 1741. Estudio preliminar, obras líricas, vejámenes en prosa y verso y documentación personal (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2000), 264–77.

[11] DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto*, 40–41.

[12] KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 33–35.

[13] JOHANN CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL, *Tela Ignæ Satanæ. Hoc est: Arcani et horribiles Judæorum adversus Christvm Deum, et Christianam religionem libri anekdotoi* (Altdorf: Joh. Henricus Schönnerstædt, 1681).

[14] LAJB FUKS and RENA G. FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections,* 2 vols., vol. 2, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos, Sephardic Community of Amsterdam* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), IX. Jacob van Jacob Ferrares (b. Amsterdam, 1805, d. The Hague, 1884), studied at the Jewish-Portuguese seminary in Amsterdam, his hometown, where he later served in the Kenéseth Abraham synagogue, before completing his studies in The Hague, where he served as chief rabbi until his death: PHILIPP CHRISTIAAN MOLHUYSEN, PETRUS JOHANNES BLOK, and FRIEDRICH KARL HEINRICH KOSSMANN, eds, *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek,* 10 vols., vol. 7 (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1927), 433–34.

[15] There is evidence that Rabbi Ferrares acquired a series of manuscripts belonging to the estate of the broker Meijer Levien Jacobson (b. Rotterdam, 1782, d. Amsterdam, 1864) in Amsterdam in 1864, FUKS and FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts,* 89.

[16] JOHANNES JACOB ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni, à Judæis blasphemè corrupta, ex Manuscripto hactenus inedito nunc demum edita, ac Versione et Notis (quibus Judæorum nequitiæ propius deteguntur, et Authoris asserta ineptiæ ac impietatis conuincuntur) illustrata* (Leiden: Johannem du Vivie, Is. Severinum, 1705).

Dating EH 47 D 10

The current copy of the text is a Ladino edition in cursive Mughrabi (מערבית) Hebrew script written around the middle of the seventeenth century by a scribe probably born in North Africa, but who may well have worked in Amsterdam or elsewhere in the Western Sephardic Diaspora.[17] If this dating is correct, then this version must automatically be considered to predate Huldricus and hence to be the probable *Vorlage* of the 1705 edition. A characteristic of the handwriting of EH 47 D 10 is the tendency to ligate letters, especially Yod, which is often linked to the accompanying consonants, especially Aleph, Tet, Mem, Nun, Pe and Qof. Something similar happens with Waw, but to a lesser extent. Then, of course, there is the common ligature of Aleph and Lamed. At the same time, the consonants Gimel, Kaf and Pe are often marked with the Rafe sign (רפה) in order to identify the fricative sounds typical of Spanish: Gimel (ג̇) = Ch, Kaf (כ̇) = J and Pe (פ̇) = F.

When looking for an analogous example in Ladino orthography, the closest printed text is undoubtedly the ריגימיינטו דילה וידה by Moses Ben Baruch Almosnino (1515–1580), published in Thessaloniki in 1564.[18] Both works display the same continuous tendency to transcribe the usual characters in the Castilian text using exactly the same letter strands. For example, T is always Tet and never Taw. The Spanish feminine ending (-a) is frequently reproduced with the letter He (and not Alef) and the masculine (-o) with Waw. Perhaps the only important digression between the two writing systems lies in Almosnino's differentiation between the use of Bet and Waw to reproduce the Castilian B and V. EH 47 D 10, on the other hand, as a rule only employs Bet and never Waw (but a differentiation sometimes occurs when ב is used to reproduce V). At the same time, our manuscript shows a clear preference for Samech when reproducing the letter S, unlike Almosnino's text which often uses Shin as well in this case.[19] An important feature of our text is the very frequent occurrence of words beginning with the letter He (on the first folio of the document one already finds:

[17] As happens to be the case of Isaac Ben Abraham Uziel, born in Fez, who arrived in Amsterdam around 1615 to assume the role of rabbi at the K.K. Neve Shalom, and died in that city in 1622. The repertory of manuscripts of the Ets Haim library preserves a collection of Hebrew poetry (EH 47 E 32) copied by this rabbi showing very similar North African cursive handwriting to EH 47 D 10. On this author, see also MARVIN J. HELLER, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book. An Abridged Thesaurus,* 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 456–57.
[18] MOSE BEN BARUCH ALMOSNINO, ספר הנהגת החיים or ריגימיינטו דילה וידה (Thessaloniki: Yosef ben Yishaq ben Yosef Yaabes, 1564).
[19] PASCUAL PASCUAL RECUERO, 'Nota para la historia del Ladino: una teoría vocálica desdeñada,' *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos. Sección Hebreo* 34 (1985): 113–45 (120). This does not mean that EH 47 D 10 does not sometimes also use Shin, as is the case of the word אירמוזישימה in the first folio.

היגֿוס אי היגֿאס הוײרון, האסטה, הירמוזו, הידֿאלגו (and היגֿוס אי היגֿאס). As Aldina Quintana has shown, this is a common phenomenon in Ladino texts prior to the seventeenth century.[20]

In EH 47 D 10, the majority of the proper names preserve the original Spanish spelling, which is very striking, because Ladino texts generally tend to reproduce Hebrew proper names according to the Hebrew orthography. Some of the most representative examples include:

EH 47 D 10	EH 47 D 10	EH 48 E 15	Huldricus
Iesús	ישֿוֹ	Jeosua	יזו"ש
Ieudah	יאודה	Jeudá	יהודה
Jerusalém	כֿירוסאלם	Jerusalaim	ירושלים
Josefe	כֿוסיפי	Josseph	יוסף
Simón	סימון	Simon	שמעון

Table 1. Examples of spelling of proper names showing different orthographies.

As can be seen from the comparison in Table 1, the Huldricus version regularly follows the Hebrew variant, with the significant exception of the name of Jesus which seems to retain the original spelling of EH 47 D 10. Something similar happens in the Ladino version of EH 48 E 15 which in general, despite being written in Latin characters, tends to transcribe the proper names according to the Hebrew forms. A characteristic of our text is the consistent reproduction of the Castilian Jota (J), as in the case of Josefe (כֿוסיפי) and Jerusalém (כֿירוסאלם), with the consonant Kaf accompanied by a Rafe (כֿ) to differentiate it from the K (כ) sound.

Similar phenomena occur in EH 47 D 10 with regard to the numerous institutions and terms proper to the Jewish tradition, nearly always referred to using the Castilian words and rarely the usual Hebrew ones (Table 2).[21] Once again, the comparison with EH 48 E 15 demonstrates the tendency of EH 47 D 10 to prefer Castilian variants over Hebrew ones. This is even more surprising considering that EH 47 D 10 is written in Hebrew characters (Aljamiado) while EH 48 E 15 uses the Castilian alphabet.

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[20] 'The regular spelling of the etymological voiceless labiodental fricative [f] in the initial word position with pe and he is characteristic of the 16th century, but in texts of the 17th century, he begins to disappear in word initial position, and after the 18th century, it is very sporadic,' ALDINA QUINTANA, 'From the Master's Voice to the Disciple's Script: Genizah Fragments of a Bible Glossary in Ladino,' *Hispania Judaica Bulletin* 6 (5769/2008): 187–236 (207).

[21] Suffice it to compare the Ladino version of the Maʿasé Yerušalmí published by Elena Romero, which is a very good example of Ladino narrative in the language used from the eighteenth century onwards in the Sephardic Jewries of East and North Africa. Indeed, the presence of Hebrew words is so recurrent in this text that for the uninitiated it becomes practically impossible to read. ELENA ROMERO, 'Una versión Judeoespañola del relato hebreo Maʿasé Yerušalmí,' *Sefarad* 55, no. 1 (1995): 173–94.

	EH 47 D 10	**EH 48 E 15**	**Huldricus**
Bastard	ממזר (only once)	mamzer	ממזר
Egypt	איליטו	-	מצרים
Gemara	-	gemara	-
Holy and ineffable name	נומברי סאנטו אי איניפֿאבלי	nombre grande ynefable	שם המפורש
House of learning	קוליכיו	-	בית מדרש
Law	ליי	ley and din	תורה
Marriage contract	-	quedusim	-
Menstruation	אריגלאדורה	nida	נדה
Mount of Holiness	מונטי די לה סאנטידאד	-	הר הבית
Nazarene	נאצארינו	-	נוצרי
Sabbath	סאבאדו	sabat	שבת
Sages	סאביוס	sabios	חכמים
Talmud	-	talmud	-
Trumpets	-	sopharot	-

Table 2. Examples of spelling of institutions and terms proper to the Jewish tradition showing different orthographies.

It was most probably the author of this transcription who Hebraised some terms, such as משה (Moses) and ישראל (Israel), in order to bring the text closer to the vernacular literature of the Sephardic communities which he frequented and for which his work was intended.[22] In this transcription process, the copyist misunderstood, or misinterpreted, some characteristic features of the original text, in particular the ligatures of some words, but in general no significant interventions seem to have been made.

The document is currently bound in a volume whose texts have usually been dated between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[23] Upon closer scrutiny, there is no doubt that EH 47 D 10 folios 196r–206v belong to the group of manuscripts copied in the seventeenth century, of which the copy of the ספר לקח טוב by Abraham ben Hananiah dei Galicchi Jagel (1553–1623) on folios 27r–43v, and the *Precepts for the Washing of the Deceased* on folios 207r–209v, are noteworthy examples. The first case is a work originally published in Venice at the end of the sixteenth century.[24] At the same time, a comparison with EH 47 E 37, a collection of texts by Shalom ben Moses Ben Ṣur

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[22] However, it is also likely that the author read ישראל according to the Spanish pronunciation.

[23] FUKS and FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts*, 231–32.

[24] On this author see ABRAHAM BEN HANANIAH DEI GALICCHI JAGEL, *A Valley of Vision. The Heavenly Journey of Abraham ben Hananiah Yagel,* trans. and ed. by DAVID B. RUDERMAN (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

copied in cursive Mughrabi Hebrew script at the end of the seventeenth century,[25] can demonstrate with certainty that our manuscript dates from earlier than these texts. In this regard, the phenomenon of vowel ligature mentioned above is revealing: not only is it closely related to the typical forms of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Hispanic procedural writing (*escritura procesal*), but in the case of the cursive Mughrabi script[26] it is a feature that tends to peter out over time, to the point of its near-disappearance from texts of the eighteenth century.

All the arguments listed above lead to the certain conclusion that EH 47 D 10 is a seventeenth-century copy (or perhaps transcription from the Latin to the Mughrabi alphabet) of an older Castilian text probably written in the mid-sixteenth century.

Narrative Features of the Text

The text of EH 47 D 10 consists of a series of stories or accounts that could very well have an independent existence,[27] and in turn are part of larger ensembles that may be called cycles. In total, four of these cycles can be identified in the current text:

First Cycle: The Birth of Jesus
    (1) Miriam and Josefe Pandera
    (2) Jesus's bastardy

Second Cycle: In the Desert of Ay (Rome)
    (1) Jesus denies the law
    (2) The king and sages send Judas to Jesus
    (3) The shepherd and the maiden
    (4) Night at the inn
    (5) The woman with the pitcher
    (6) The men of Qeriates (קירייאטייס)

Third Cycle: Death in Jerusalem
    (1) Return to Jerusalem
    (2) Death of the disciples and Jesus
    (3) Wars between Jerusalem and Ay

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[25] FUKS and FUKS-MANSFELD, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts*, 231.

[26] On the origin of the Hebrew Mughrabi cursive during the medieval period, its relationship with Arabic script and the use of ligatures, see JUDITH OLSZOWY-SCHLANGER, 'Crossing Palaeographical Borders: Bi-Alphabetical Scribes and the Development of Hebrew Script – The Case of the Maghrebi Cursive,' in *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan*, eds NADIA VIDRO, RONNY VOLLANDT, ESTHER-MIRIAM WAGNER, and JUDITH OLSZOWY-SCHLANGER (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018), 299–319.

[27] That is to say, each of them usually has an introduction, a climax and a denouement. However, this does not mean that they have an independent origin from the actual text, but rather that they function as units of meaning, like a collection of anecdotes relating to a main character.

Fourth Cycle: Simon el Qalfoseo (סִימוֹן אֶל קאלפוֹסִיאו)
    (1) The king and sages send Simon to Ay
    (2) The new alphabet
    (3) The meaning of the beast in the Book of Revelation
    (4) Idolatry of Ay
    (5) Eradication of all the kindred of Jesus

The first cycle, which could be defined as the birth of Jesus, includes two different stories: (1) the story of the elopement of Miriam and Josefe Pandera and (2) a second story whose central theme is the bastardy of Jesus. The first story makes an evident allusion to a literary genre popular in sixteenth-century Iberia but of late medieval origin: the romances or chivalric tales in which a dashing young man rescues a maiden from the place where she is imprisoned (usually a tower) and the two flee to a foreign country where they are not known.[28] In the case of EH 47 D 10, the story is full of clichés from this genre: Miriam is very beautiful (אירמוזישימה); her husband (or keeper) locks her in the house (די פוּאירה סיראבה קון לייאבי); Pandera is a nobleman (הידאלגו); both fall in love at first sight; they engage in a dialogue through the window; Pandera runs to look for a ladder (באסי אי בוסקה אוּנה איסקאלה); Miriam descends by means of this ladder (אי בהלֹו דיגֹה מרים פור אילייה). At the same time, the second story reveals a deep interest and concern with the issue of bastardy, which is treated, as was the norm in sixteenth-century Spain, under the category of honour.[29] This second passage includes important elements taken from the religious culture of the sixteenth-century Spanish milieu, while showing the same traits of anticlerical critique as Iberian burlesque literature.[30]

Perhaps the most admirable feature in the narrative layout of these two stories, however, which in turn speaks for the compositional skill of the author, is the way these literary references are interwoven with material originating from Jewish sources, especially the Talmud.[31] In our case, nonetheless, access to the Talmudic sources most

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[28] JOAQUÍN GIMENO CASALDUERO, 'El Abencerraje y la hermosa Jarifa: Composición y significado,' *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 21, no. 1 (1972): 1–22; JOSÉ LUIS ALONSO HERNÁNDEZ, 'El tema de "Hero y Leandro" en la poesía sefardí,' *Castilla: Estudios de literatura* 13 (1988): 7–16. A burlesque version of this motif is found in LUIS VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA, *El diablo cojuelo. Novela de la otra vida. Traducida a esta por Luis Velez de Guevara* (Madrid: Imprenta del Reyno. A costa de Alonso Pérez, 1641).

[29] GRACE E. COOLIDGE, *Sex, Gender, and Illegitimacy in the Castilian Noble Family, 1400–1600* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022).

[30] BILLY BUSSELL THOMPSON and JOHN KEVIN WALSH, 'The Mercedarian's Shoes (Perambulations on the Fourth *Tratado* of *Lazarillo de Tormes*),' *Modern Language Notes* 103, no. 2 (1988): 440–48; MICHEL BOEGLIN, 'Discours anticlérical et littérature au milieu du XVIᵉ siècle. Le cas du *Lazarillo de Tormes*,' *Sociocriticism* 22, no. 1–2 (2007): 65–96.

[31] There is no doubt that the editions of the Talmud produced in Venice during the first half of the sixteenth century by the Flemish printer Daniel Bomberg were of central importance in extending the knowledge of this text to a wider public of Jews and Christians, and in the new wave of censorship and burnings in Italian territories: ANGELO M. PIATTELLI, 'New Documents Concerning Bomberg's Printing

likely did not occur through Hebrew editions of the text, but rather through the abundant material available in Spanish (and Latin) circulating among the Sephardic communities of the Western Diaspora as a result of the controversies surrounding the alleged mentions of Jesus of Nazareth in the Talmudic treatises.[32] As is well known, the link between the narratives of the *Toledot Yeshu* and the Talmud is longstanding and it is even probable that the Talmud is the origin of the first stories in the textual history of the *Toledot Yeshu*.[33] The novelty of this new composition lies in its evident linguistic and thematic connection to a new type of controversial and apologetic literature composed in the vernacular.[34]

The second cycle, here entitled 'In the Desert of Ay (Rome),' consists of a sequence of short stories, most of which are of a markedly picaresque, pastoral character:[35] (1) Jesus denies the law; (2) the king of Jerusalem and the wise men send Judas as a spy; (3) the lazy shepherd and the diligent maiden; (4) the night at the inn and the dispute over the only piece of food, mentioned as 'a roasted bird' (אבֿי אססאדה); (4)

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of the Talmud,' in *Meḥevah le-Menaḥem. Studies in Honor of Menahem Ḥayyim Schmelzer*, eds SHMUEL GLICK, EVELYN M. COHEN, and ANGELO M. PIATTELLI (Jerusalem: JTS-Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 5779/2019), 171–99; KENNETH R. STOW, 'The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in the Light of Sixteenth Century Catholic Attitudes toward the Talmud,' *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 435–59.

[32] One of the works of anti-Talmudic polemic published during the sixteenth century that had the greatest impact among Sephardic authors was the *Bibliotheca sancta ex præcipuis Catholicæ Ecclesiæ auctoribus collecta* published in Venice in 1566 by Dominican convert Sisto da Siena or Sixtus Senensis (1520–1569). The works written in Spanish which comment on numerous passages relating to the version of EH 47 D 10 include a manuscript by Saul Levy Mortera, numerous copies of which are currently preserved in different archives: *Respuesta a las ojectiones con que el Sinense injustam.ᵗᵉ calumnia al Talmud; Compuesto por el muy Docto Señor Haham Saul Levy Mortera en Amsterdam anno 5406*, Varios Tractados, Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, The British Library, Or. 8698, 175–222. See also, MOISÉS ORFALI, ed., *Tratado que fez mestre Jerónimo médico do papa Bento XIII, contra os Judeus. Impresso em Goa por João de Emdem, 1565* (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, 2014).

[33] KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 181–94.

[34] The foundation of the community of Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century was the start of a true explosion of apologetic literature among the Western Sephardim in reaction to the Christian polemic. Undoubtedly this literary production finds its antecedents in works composed during the previous century in the Italian Sephardic communities (such as *Consolacam as tribulacoens de Israel* by Samuel Usque). How this vernacular production (mainly in Spanish and Portuguese) is linked to Jewish apologetic literature of medieval Iberia is still a matter for further study. When looking at a source like the *Respuesta a las ojectiones con que el Sinense injustam.ᵗᵉ calumnia al Talmud*, written by Saul Levy Mortera, exactly the same employment of hispanised Hebrew names can be observed as in EH 47 D 10: 'R. Eliezer,' 'hijo de Satada,' 'Egipto,' 'hijo of Pandera,' 'Papos hijo de Jeudah,' 'Jesus Nazareno,' 'R. Aquiba,' 'Jeosuah hijo de Perahia,' *Respuesta a las ojectiones*, 176–77. For an excellent introduction to this type of theological-literary production, consult: CARSTEN L. WILKE, *The Marrakesh Dialogues. A Gospel Critique and Jewish Apology from the Spanish Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[35] On the Spanish pastoral novel, see FRANCISCO LÓPEZ ESTRADA, *Libros de pastores en la literatura española* (Madrid: Gredos, 1974); JUAN BAUTISTA AVALLE-ARCE, *La novela pastoril española* (Madrid: Istmo, 1975). On the fusion of picaresque, courtly and pastoral genres during the Spanish Golden Age, see the doctoral thesis MISUN KWON, *La fusión de los géneros en las novelas picarescas femeninas del siglo XVII* (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filología, Departamento de Filología Española II, 1993).

the woman with the pitcher of water; (5) the men of Qeriates (קירייאטייס) and the dance of Jesus. The close connection between these comical narratives and the popular literature of the Spanish Golden Age can be seen in the great affinity between them and the stories that make up *La Celestina* or *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* (1500), *La Lozana andaluza* (1528), *Cancionero de Romances* (1547), *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), *Los siete libros de la Diana* (1559), *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), *Quijote de la Mancha* (1605) and *La vida del Buscón* (1626).[36] In many of these works, the result is always very similar in that they all portray the adventures or buffoonish situations experienced by an antihero in his wanderings through the wasteland, situations in which the protagonist does not seem to be aware of how ridiculous his actions are, while justifying them by resorting to arguments that in the end make no real sense (as Jesus does by quoting verses from Scripture).

These first two cycles demonstrate a high degree of homogeneity from a literary and cultural point of view. They both deal with typical themes, in a way typical of sixteenth-century Spain. As examples, suffice it to cite the classic picaresque topoi of the lovers' elopement, the problem of bastardy, the pastoral and the vagabond. In particular, the cycle of the desert of Ay demonstrates the evident intention to mock and scorn a Jesus who is continually ridiculed by the actions of others as well as his own. At the same time, what is striking in these first two cycles is the scarce development of the most characteristically Jewish themes, even to the point of it seeming unlikely that the author knew the Hebrew language well. For the most part, the typically Hebrew elements present in these cycles seem to be taken from the Talmud, and the Old and perhaps also the New Testament.

The third series follows what might be called the cycle of death in Jerusalem. It includes three stories: (1) the first tells how Judas organises the return of Jesus to the city; (2) the second tells of the condemnation to death, first of the disciples and then of Jesus himself; (3) finally, the third, concluding story is an account of the wars generated between the Jews of Jerusalem (led by the king and the sages) and the inhabitants of Ay (Rome), adherents to the new doctrines of Jesus. These accounts—in particular the topic of the death on the cross—seem to deliberately avoid the canonical versions of the Christian gospels.[37] At the same time, the central argument seems to be the rivalry

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[36] On many of these works, see the introduction and especially the basic chronology of the picaresque novel, in BEGOÑA RODRÍGUEZ RODRÍGUEZ, ed., *Antología de la novela picaresca española. Introducción, selección y edición* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2005). Perhaps these features are what Krauss is referring to when he notes the resemblance of the Huldricus stories to Boccaccio's *Decameron*: 'Künstliche Verwertung talmudischer, neutestamentlicher, legendarischer un lokalsangenhafter Momente, manchmal an den Decamerone erinnernd,' KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 34.

[37] In EH 47 D 10 the death of Jesus takes place on a fork (*horca*): אי אינהורקארון אה ישׄוׄ אין לה הורקה פואיראס די כירוסאלם. On this topic, the *Istoriah de Iesus natsareno* coincides not only with the version of EH 48 E 15

between Jews and Christians, identified with the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Rome.[38] These motifs have to be seen in relation to the continuous recurrence in the text of EH 47 D 10 of other moments of criticism and denigration of institutions proper to Roman Christianity: baptism; clerical tonsure; the canonical gospels and the book of the Apocalypse of John; the papacy through the figures of Peter, Simon el Qalfoseo and the magistrate of Ay (Rome); the cult of holy images; and the veneration of Mary, mother of Jesus.[39]

The fourth and last cycle, which could be called the cycle of Simon el Qalfoseo (סימון אֶל קאלפוסיאו) includes:[40] (1) the king and sages send Simon to Ay (Rome); (2) the story of the origin of the Christian alphabet; (3) an interpretation of the vision of the beast in the Christian book of Revelation (Rv 13:1–10); (4) the story of idolatry in Ay; (5) and an account of the eradication of the kindred of Jesus by Simon himself, who happens to be the uncle of all those exterminated. The centrality of the figure of Simon el Qalfoseo in the final cycle could be related to his mention in relation to Mary at the beginning of the story, in that the allusions to both Simon and Mary at the beginning and at the end act as a sort of framework for the whole story.

In general, in all the stories making up the text, the author expressly avoids treating the central motifs in the same way as in the canonical Gospels. This is evident not only in the case of the death of Jesus, but also in the way in which the stories of 'miracles' are told. In this connection, there is in turn an important difference in relation to the larger,

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('lo condenaron a muerte de apedrearlo y despues ahorcarlo') but also with a great number of testimonies from Iberian Judaisers, including the well-known case of Luis de Carvajal in New Spain (Mexico) whose autobiography written around 1595 refers to Jesus as the *ahorcado* ('oyendo la campanilla, que sacan delante del ahorcado, q[uan]do lo lleban por las calles': Manuscript of Luis de Carvajal alias Joseph Lumbroso, Mexico City: 1580–1596, available at http://pudl.princeton.edu/objects/s7526g29j). The forcefulness of the mentions of the fork in the Iberian versions seems to cast new light on the perspectives raised by Peter Schäfer on this subject within the traditions of the *Toledot Yeshu*: PETER SCHÄFER, 'Agobard's and Amulo's Toledot Yeshu,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited,* eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 27–48.

[38] This evidently could hint at editorial activity on Italian territory or, in any case, in a place where the author came face to face with Roman Catholic institutions. In other words, such a massive presence of specifically anti-Catholic polemic would lose its significance in spaces such as the Ottoman Empire, North Africa and even territories with a majority of Christian Reformed churches.

[39] These are usually very heated issues among conversos, who continually have to generate arguments against these institutions. An example of how the *Toledot Yeshu* was employed during the sixteenth century by Judaising New Christians can be found in the inquisitorial trials involving members of the Coronel family: CHUECAS SALDÍAS, 'Felippa Cardosa y el Sefer Toledot Yeshu.'

[40] As for the name קאלפוסיאו to indicate the uncle, then disciple of Jesus, it is very likely that the author invented it by blending the names of two different disciples mentioned in the canonical gospels: Simon Peter (שמעון כיפא) on the one hand and James, son of Alphaeus (יעקב אלפי), on the other, as they appear, for example, in the Hebrew version of Matthew's gospel published in 1555: *Evangelium Matthaei ex Hebraeo fideliter redditum* (Paris: Martinum Iuvenem, 1555). The forms כיפא and אלפי would have given rise to the Castilian gentilic קאלפוסיאו. In general, the author of EH 47 D 10 shows the clear tendency to allude to the figure of the Pope of Rome by merging different biblical figures.

so-called Elena group of *Toledot Yeshu* variants.[41] In the argumentation of these texts, the narrator never questions Jesus's ability to perform miracles, which is explained through the story of the theft of the Holy Name from the temple of the Lord.[42] The author of EH 47 D 10 probably knows this story,[43] however, not only does he not develop it, the Jesus of this text performs practically no miracles. Indeed, this is what is ridiculed in the story of the woman with the pitcher.[44]

The Original Author of EH 47 D 10

The original author of the text is undoubtedly an individual influenced by an Iberian Jewish background, writing in a Spanish very close to the Ferrara Bible (1553), but without the syntactic problems of the latter.[45] Hebrew terms are conspicuous by their absence (unlike in the Ferrara literature and later Ladino texts) and sometimes when the author makes etymological explanations of supposed Hebrew words or expressions it is difficult to extract a coherent interpretation (in spite of the narrative clarity) because the connection with the Hebrew is nonexistent or extremely weak. On the other hand, on the numerous occasions that one would expect the text to use Hebrew variants, the author surprises us with the use of Castilian.

The place in which the text was originally written could very well be some Italian republic or the pontifical state,[46] which is much more plausible than Castile or another kingdom of the Hispanic monarchy. It is also impossible to rule out that the author was somewhere in the East, that is, in the Ottoman Empire, although it must have been a

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[41] DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto*, 33–40.

[42] The story of the theft of the Holy Name from the temple of the Lord, typical of the Helena version of the *Toledot Yeshu*, is a feature present in practically all versions attested to in the Iberian Peninsula from the medieval period to the early modern age: CHUECAS SALDÍAS, 'Felippa Cardosa y el Sefer Toledot Yeshu,' 22–31.

[43] EH 47 D 10 has a brief allusion to Jesus learning the Holy Name at the beginning of the story about his bastardy: קואנדו קריסייו ישׁוֹ איל באסטארדו סי פֿואי אה כירוסאלם אי סי פוזו קון ר' יהושע איגﬞו די פרחיה פארה אפרינדיר לה לﬞיי סאנטה די משה רבינו אי נו קידו קוזה גﬞיקה ני גראנדי קי נו אפרינדייו האסטה לאס קוזאס סאגראדאס אי סיליסטייאליס אי איל נומברי סאנטו אי איניפֿאבלי.

[44] 'She answered him, "oh fool if you can do miracles why don't you do them for yourself and you wouldn't need anyone (to do something for you)"' ריספונדייו לי או ניסייו סי פואידיס האזיר מילאגרוס פורקי נן) (נו ניסיסיטאראס די נינגונו לוס האזיס אה טי מיזמו אי.

[45] On the language and style of the Ferrara Bible: IACOB M. HASSÁN, ed., *Introducción a la Biblia de Ferrara. Actas del simposio internacional sobre la Biblia de Ferrara, Sevilla, 25–28 de noviembre de 1991* (Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, 1994).

[46] Samuel Krauss had already pointed to a connection between the Huldricus text and the Italian milieu: 'Das Lokalkolorit ist völlig romanisirt: עי = Rom, die Wüste di Campagna etc.,' KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 34. On the presence of Sephardic immigrants in Italy during the early modern age, see NELLO PAVONCELLO, 'Gli ebrei di origine spagnola a Roma,' *Studi Romani* 28 (1980): 214–20; RENATA SEGRE, 'Sephardic Settlements in Sixteenth-Century Italy: A Historical and Geographical Survey,' *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6, no. 2 (1991): 112–37; ANNA ESPOSITO, 'The Sephardic Communities in Rome in the Early Sixteenth Century,' *Imago temporis. Medium Aevum* 1 (2007): 177–85; FEDERICA RUSPIO, *La nazione portoghese. Ebrei ponentini e nuovi cristiani a Venezia* (Turin: Silvio Zamorani Editore, 2007).

place where Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions coexisted, as both seem to have left traces in the work. As already stated, the original author of the text must have composed it in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Despite knowing the fundamental texts of the Hebrew tradition and sharing a great number of the Jewish customs, the fact that the author's knowledge of the holy language appears to be rudimentary, and the familiarity with texts and themes of Roman Christianity, shows that the writer probably grew up as a convert, probably in Castile or Portugal, and only later in life immigrated to some community in the free lands.[47] In this same direction, it can be affirmed that the author must have received some kind of education (perhaps even at university level) because of the use of the cultured language of the time and the way the various narrative cycles that make up the work are elaborated. A good example of these traits is the original passage in the *Toledot Yeshu* literature about the origin of the Latin alphabet (or rather the Hispanic version of it). There are many examples throughout the text concerning the linguistic identity of the original author. And a very important factor is that the author of the Huldricus text was not able to eliminate this imprint, which emerges again and again in the Hebrew version, for example, in the way the letters of the Latin alphabet are reproduced.

The New Alphabet

Within the cycle of Simon el Qalfoseo we find the story of the origin of the Christian alphabet, which is interpreted as a perversion of the original Hebrew alphabet.[48] At first sight it is evident that the version of EH 47 D 10 is more complex than that of Huldricus:[49]

he meant that everything he told them was false and in this way he arranged for them the letters אַ בֵ צֵ דָ עֵ יפַ = which mean for Hebraic *our father was a traitor and a murderer* and other letters חַ י דְ אַלְ אֲמָ אין = mean *they have faith that Jesus is alive as god* but they are to be very deceived because to be god it was necessary that he did not =	סיניפיקאן קי טודו לוקי ליס דיזייה אירה פֿאלסו אי אין איסטה = פורמה ליס אינריגלו לאס ליטראס אַ בֵ צֵ דָ עֵ יפַ = קי סיניפיקאן פור אבראייקו נואיסטרו פֿאדרי אירה טראידור אי מאטאדור ~ אי די מאס ליטראס חַ י כ אַלְ אֲמָ אין = סיניפיקאן די קומו טיינין פי קי ישׂוֹז אסתה ביבו קומו דייוס מאס באן מוי אינגאנייאדוס פורקי פארה סיר דייוס אירה ניסיסארייו נו = טובייסי מאדרי פירו

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[47] As is the case of Imanuel Aboab, author of the nomology *Nomologia o Discursos legales. Compuestos por el virtuoso Haham Rabì Imanuel Aboab de buena memoria* (Amsterdam: Estampados à costa, y despeza de sus herederos, 5389 [1629]).

[48] As an example of the interest in the interpretation of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet among Western Sephardic authors writing in the vernacular, see: *Discurço sobre á significação das letras Hebraicas, Pello Doctissimo Señor Haham Rabi Mosseh Rephael de Aguilar*, Varios Tractados, Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, The British Library, Or. 8698, 332–37.

[49] ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 106–14.

have a mother but Jesus has a mother ~ and other letters = אוּ פֶּ רֵ סַ תֵ עוּ ~ *signify that* he who has such faith should not doubt that he denies the blessed god *and they go wrong and twisted and malicious ~ moreover the said Simon wrote them many books of vanity and called them* אָוֶן = גִלְיֹון *and they thought that the meaning of this name signified* father and son and holy spirit *and he meant that* all is false ~

ישׁוֹ טייני מאדרי ~ אי די מאס ליטראס = או
פֶּ קוּ רֵ סַ תֵ עוּ עִיקֵש אי זָדָה ~ סיניפיקאן קי
איל קי טייני טאל פי נו איה קי דודאר קי
ריינייגה דיל דייו בינדיטו אי בה ייראדו אי
ריאטורסידו אי מאליסייוזו ~ מאס ליס
איסקריבייו דיג'ו סימין מוג'וס ליברוס די
באנידאד אי לוס לייאמו אָוֶן = גִלְיֹון אילייאס
פינסארון קי איל סינטידו דיסטי נומברי אירה
סיניפיקאנדו אה פאדרי אי היג'ו אי איספריטו
סאלטו אי איל קיג'ו דיזיר קי טודו איס פ'אלסו
~

EH 47 D 10 divides the alphabet into three sections and each is understood according to a supposed meaning intended by Simon. The Huldricus version goes to pains to explain these interpretations.[50] However, the truth is that the Castilian text reveals how the original author interpreted the meanings starting from a series of misperceptions stemming from a precarious understanding of Hebrew.

According to EH 47 D 10, in Hebrew the first series of letters of the alphabet (אָ בֵ צֶ דֶ עֶ יפֵ) mean 'our father was a traitor and a murderer.' In this first case, what seems to be happening is that the author presents an interpretation according to the order of the Hebrew alphabet (אבגדהוז), whose letters were read as [א]בינו [ב]ו[ג]ד [ו]הו[ר]ג.

The second series (חַ י כ אַלְ אַמְ אין) which the author interprets as 'they have faith that Jesus is alive as god,' and whose Hebrew sequence is similar to the Castilian except for the insertion of the letter Tet (חטיכלמנ), was probably read as חי כ אלוהים or something similar.[51] As shown, it is very likely that in both cases the author was aware of some kind of explanation made on the basis of a Hebrew phrase.

In the following two cases the procedure followed by the author seems to be different. The third sequence (או פֶּ קוּ רֵ סַ תֵ עוּ עִיקֵש אי זָדָה) is interpreted according to a more complex formulation 'he who has such faith should not doubt that he denies the blessed god' (איל קי טייני טאל פי נו איה קי דודאר קי ריינייגה דיל דייו בינדיטו) which does not seem to originate from a Hebrew phrase. This situation may have arisen from the

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[50] Johann Jacob Ulrich attempted to interpret the Hebrew terms by resorting to supposed allusions to Esau, son of Isaac ('אבא Pater meus est Esau, ציד ועיף Venator & lassus ille erat'), and to Epicurus ('sed אפיקורס תעו ומעקש ומיזד Epicureus, Seductor, defraudator, et fervidus ille est instar Esaui, qui comedit נזיד coctum'): ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 108.

[51] In this particular case the Huldricus interpretation ('et ecce filii ejus credunt in Jesum, qui חי כאל vivit ut Deus; Suffocetur anima illorum, quia Deo אם אין non est mater, Iesus vero habet matrem') broadly coincides with the EH 47 D 10 version: ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 108.

difficulty in finding a formula starting from the order of the Hebrew alphabet (סעפצקרשת). In this case, therefore, the author simply created a phrase in Spanish by choosing a section of the alphabet (פֶ קֹו רֶ), which was read as 'fe que reniega' (פי קי רייניינגה).

Finally, the text concludes with an interpretation of the term Evangelium (אֶוֶן גְלְיֹון) which the author claims that Christians understood as 'father and son and holy spirit' (פאדרי אי היכֹו אי איספריטו סאלטו), but which actually means 'it is all false' (קי טודו איס פֿאלסו). This way of disqualifying the Christian gospels seems to be directly inspired by the Talmud and later receptions of it, such as the *Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer*.[52]

Moreover, by making a comparison between the version of the alphabet provided by EH 47 D 10 and the Hebrew and Latin versions provided in Huldricus, new relevant background information emerges:

Letter	EH	H-Hebrew	H-Latin	Letter	EH	H-Hebrew	H-Latin
a	אַ	אַ	A	O	אֹו	אָ	o
b	בֶ	בֶ	be	P	פֶ	פִי	pe
c	צֶ	צֶ	ce	Q	קֹו	קֹו	ku
d	דֶ	דֶ	de	R	רֶ	רֶ	er
e	עֶ	עֶ	e	S	סֶ	סֶ	es
f	יפֶ	יֶף	ef	T	תֶ	תֶע	te
g				U	עֹו	וּ	u
h[53]	חַ	חַ	cha	V			
i	י	יְ	i	X	עִיקֶש	עִיקֶש	icx
j/k	כ	כְ	ke	Y	אִי		
l	אֶל	אֶל	el	ß		אִיזֶד	etzet
m	אֶמְ	אֶם	em	Z	זֶדָה	זֶד	zet
n	אִין	אֵין	en				

Table 3. Comparison between the version of the alphabet provided by EH 47 D 10 and the Hebrew and Latin versions provided in Huldricus.

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[52] 'This pun is originally talmudic,' DANIEL J. LASKER, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Liverpool: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization and Liverpool University Press, 2007), 175, note 24; DANIEL J. LASKER and SARAH STROUMSA, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest. Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf and Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer. Introduction, Annotated Translations and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, 1996), 30 and 149.

[53] In EH 47 D 10 the series between the letters H and N are on the last line of the folio. This section is slightly water-damaged, causing some vowel signs to be a little blurred.

At first glance, it is obvious that both the author of EH 47 D 10 and Huldricus tend to reproduce the corresponding Castilian and German rather than Latin pronunciation of the alphabet. Conclusive arguments in this direction are the way EH 47 D 10 spells the letter X (עִיקֶשׁ) and the incorporation in Huldricus of the German ß (אֶיזֶד / etzet).

The absence of the letter G (ג) in all three versions is highly significant, because this letter is included in all four alphabets (Hebrew, Spanish, Latin, and German). However, a comparison of the composition of this section in EH 47 D 10 and in Huldricus shows that the Ladino version is much more complex. In EH 47 D 10, the alphabet is not reproduced only once in its entirety (like in the Hebrew and Latin versions of Huldricus) but is subdivided into three different blocks (A–F, H–N and O–Z) which are interspersed with texts explaining the supposed Hebrew meaning of these letters. In carrying out this operation, it seems evident that the author simply made a mistake leading to the omission of the letter G due to the gap between the first block (A–F) and the second (H–N). Since in Huldricus the alphabet is copied in a single run, omitting the G both times, we are clearly faced with new evidence of how in this its author follows the *Vorlage* of EH 47 D 10.

Finally, additional evidence is provided by the fact the name of the letter X (עִיקֶשׁ) appears in Huldricus in the exact same way as in EH 47 D 10. In this case the name of the letter must use the Castilian spelling, and certainly not the German or Latin one.

A Hebrew Who Did Not Know Hebrew Well

The passage recounting Rabbi Aquiba's visit to the city of Nazariah (נאזארייה), the hometown of Jesus, begins with the interrogation of the latter and the revelation of the false names that both adulterous parents have assumed in order to hide their true identity.[54] The rabbi then personally goes to the place to certify the authenticity of the facts:

… r' Aquiba asked the said Jesus which was the city of his birth, he answered that it was Nazariah and that his father was called *Misery* and his mother *Carajat* ~ then r' Aquiba went to Nazariah to investigate and certify how he was begotten in filth and the son of a harlot and bastard according to the proofs he	פריגונטולי ר׳ עקיבא אה דיגֿו ישׁוֹ קי קוואל אירה סיוודאד די סו נאסימיינטו ריספונדייו לי קי אירה נאזארייה אי קי סו פאדרי סי לייאמאבֿה מיזירייה אי סו מאדרי קאראלֿאט ~ אינטונסיס פֿואי ר׳ עקיבא אה נאזארייה פארה איספֿיקולאר אי סארטיפֿיקאר אין קומו אירה יינלֿינדראדו אין אינמונדיסייה אי אִילֿו די ראמירה אי באסטארדו סיגון לאס

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[54] It seems evident that this account centring around the figure of Rabbi Aquiba must bear some relation to the text of the tractate *Massekhet Kallah*. However, in his thorough study of this work, David Brodsky concludes that 'it is very difficult from this one parallel to determine the relationship between these two sources,' DAVID BRODSKY, *A Bride Without a Blessing. A Study in the Redaction and Content of Massekhet Kallah and Its Gemara* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 148, note 74.

had = he entered Nazariah, asked for the house of *Misery* that has a woman called *Carajat*, they showed it to him, he entered the house...	מואיסטראס טינייה = אנטרו אה נאזארייה פריגונטו פור קאזה די מיזרייה קי טייני מוג'יר לייאמאדה קאראבֿאט סי לה מוסטרארון אנטרו אה קאזה

The text of EH 47 D 10, as befits the Huldricus-type manuscripts, provides names for the parents of Jesus without precedent in the *Toledot Yeshu* narratives. Perhaps the most surprising thing is that, in this Ladino version, unlike the rest of the Huldricus group, the new names are much more coherent with the plot of the story, making perfect sense to the reader. Josefe Pandera is called 'Misery' (מיזרייה) a name that needs no explanation. From this point on, the ironic tone introduced by the narrator when he makes Rabbi Aquiba inquire after the 'house of Misery' (קאזה די מיזרייה) is evident. At the same time, Miriam's new name takes on full meaning in this Ladino version: Carajat (קאראבֿאט) turns out to be the feminine form of 'carajo' (קאראבֿו), a term already used in medieval Spanish with an extremely pejorative meaning.[55] Among the characteristic vocabulary of this passage, one has to mention the verb 'especular' (איספיקולאר) in the sense of investigating, which was very rare in Castilian but usual in the language of the Ferrara Bible.[56]

The passage concludes with a surprising explanation, put in the mouth of Rabbi Aquiba, about the etymology of both nicknames:

then he said to her: 'It was not in vain that the traitor was called *Misery* and you *Carajat* because these names mean in Hebrew *destruction* and *villainy*'	אינטונסיס לה דיבֿו נו אין באלדי סי לייאמו אל טראידור מיזרייה אי טו קאראבֿאט קי אסטוס נומבריס סיניפיקאן פור איבראאיקו דיסטרואיסיון אי בילייאקירייה ~

How the narrator comes to link both names to the Hebrew roots 'destruction' and 'villainy' is certainly a paradox. Nevertheless, this factor seems to be of little importance to the thread of the narrative. What is very important is that the original author of EH 47 D 10 does not know Hebrew beyond perhaps some very rudimentary notions. In this, the author differs from the vast majority of the producers and translators of *Toledot Yeshu* texts, including the author of the closest text, EH 48 E 15.

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[55] Although all authors, beginning with Johann Jacob Ulrich, have accepted the etymology of the word as deriving from the Hebrew קרחת, relying on the account of the tonsure of Jesus, the fact is that this link is not so evident, even in the Hebrew version of Huldricus. At the same time, it is also possible that the author of EH 47 D 10 intended to make an ironic allusion to the assonance between קאראבֿאט and קרחת.

[56] 'Yo Koheleth fuy rey sobre Ysrael ẽ Yerusalaim y di mi coraçõ para requerir y para especular enla sciẽcia sobre todo lo fue q̃ fecho debaxo delos cielos' (Eccl 1:12–13), ABRAHAM USQUE and YOM-TOB ATIAS, eds, *Biblia en lengua Española traduzida dela verdadera origen Hebrayca por muy excelentes letrados* (Ferrara: a costa y despesa de Yom Tob Atias, 5313 [1553]), 393v.

The same technique of constructing pseudo-Hebrew appellatives from Castilian forms is observed in the name of the city that receives him warmly, קירייאטייס (*queriates* = 'they love you'), and in the name of the inhabitant of Jerusalem ייבאר פורה (*llevar fuera* = 'to take out'), in whose house Jesus is staying, alluding to the plan that Judas has hatched to get Jesus out of Ay and take him to Jerusalem.

In this same context, it is necessary to explain the use of another term that the Huldricus version, and later researchers, were not able to decipher. The term is what the Huldricus text introduces as מי בולט or *aquis Boleth*.[57] But before attempting an interpretation of the term, it is necessary to solve a palaeographic problem. It turns out that in all the quotations of the formula throughout the text of EH 47 D 10 (four in all), the first letter of the word that in Huldricus is read as בולט could actually be interpreted as a Bet (ב) or a Kaf (כ). From a thorough intratextual comparison, it is my opinion that in this manuscript the original term is כולאטי and not בולט as interpreted in Huldricus. Indeed, if it is transcribed in EH 47 D 10 as אגואס די כולאטי (and in one of the appearances as אגואס די כולאט), then it is highly probable that this is a witticism based on the Spanish 'culo' (like the present-day 'culete') and that the original formula, in conformity with the language and popular burlesque style of the author, is to be understood as 'aguas de culo' ('ass waters').[58]

So, if the original author did not know Hebrew well—indeed most of his etymological interpretations are based on Spanish—how could he translate a Hebrew text into Ladino? And if indeed this Ladino text is the *Vorlage* used by the Huldricus text, then it is evident that Johann Jacob Ulrich, who himself was not so comfortable in the holy language, was faced with the immense challenge of making sense of a text that had not been composed for a Hebrew-speaking audience.

The Lazy Shepherd and the Diligent Maiden

Given the difficulty in carrying out an in-depth analysis of the entire work within the framework of this article, I have selected the passage that tells the story of Jesus's encounter with the lazy shepherd and the diligent maiden as a case study. The reason for choosing this particular passage is the picturesque nature of the story and the narrative

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[57] 'Nominis quoque ratio in obscuro est,' ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 31.
[58] The topic of 'water' appears a second time in EH 47 D 10, in the story of the return of Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem, in the form of the 'forgetful waters' (אגואס אולבידאדירא) that Judas gives Jesus to drink. What is more, according to Daniel Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa's version of this work, the baptismal waters already seem to be related to impure and malodorous notions in the *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf*: '… you approach the foul, filthy baptismal water, which, if the birds were to smell it, would make them fall ill from its odor. You believe that it is pure and can cleanse the impure, but in fact even an essentially pure person who approaches this baptismal water will in reality become impure,' LASKER and STROUMSA, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 78.

coherence which, as will be seen, far exceeds the Huldricus version. The idea is to submit the text to a more detailed analysis, trying on the one hand to highlight its most relevant stylistic characteristics, while at the same time placing it in the context of other related texts. Then a comparison will be made with the same passage in Huldricus, quoting both the Hebrew and Latin texts.

The story of the lazy shepherd and the diligent maiden can be defined as the story of an anti-miracle.[59] It is a very well-structured, self-enclosed narrative. Basically, it can be split into four moments:

> 1) Meeting the lazy shepherd
> 2) Encounter with the diligent maiden
> 3) Jesus casts his blessing on the maiden
> 4) Peter's surprise and Jesus's response

The first two scenes are parallels that allow us to compare the behaviour of the shepherd and the girl in exactly the same situation. Two more parallel scenes follow: Jesus's blessing of the girl and the interpretation of the meaning of this blessing.

Below I analyse the four scenes, presenting the Aljamiado text and the translation of each one:

And they were lost in the desert.	אי סי טראסיירארון אין איל דיזיירטו
Walking along they came upon a shepherd lying in the road;	איליִיוס קאמינאנדו טופארון קון און פאסטור אקוסטאדו אין איל קאמינו
Jesus asked him if there was an inn nearby	לי פריגונטו ישׁוֹז קי סי אביה אלגונה פוזאדה סירקה
and which way they should go along the road.	אי קי פור קואל פארטי אביאן די טומאר איל קאמינו
The answer he gave him was	לה ריספואיסטה קי לי דייו פֿואי
that there he, lying down, pointed his foot	קי אי איל אקוסטאדו לי טינדיו איל פיי
to show him the way.	פארה מוסטראר לי איל קאמינו

The first scene opens with Jesus and two disciples, Peter and Judas, wandering in the wilderness of Ay. There they come across a shepherd lying in the middle of the road. The allusions to pastoral burlesque literature are evident. In this type of narrative, the figure of the shepherd usually appears as the epitome of laziness, theft, and cunning

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[59] On the topic of burlesque miracles in early modern Spanish literature, see INMACULADA OSUNA, 'Las oraciones y coplas de ciego como motivo burlesco culto en la poesía religiosa del siglo XVII,' in *Eros Divino. Estudios sobre poesía religiosa iberoamericana del siglo XVII*, ed. JUAN OLIVARES (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2010), 335–65.

ignorance.[60] The picture of the shepherd lying in the road, rather than at its side, demonstrates not only his carelessness, but also his brazenness in the face of passers-by. At the same time, the fact that it is Jesus himself who takes the initiative to inquire about the way ironically demonstrates that he who is supposedly the son of God is as ignorant as anyone else and has to submit to shameful situations of dependence. The motif of the way is certainly important. The question of 'which way they should go along the road' (קי פור קואל פארטי אביאן די טומאר איל קאמינו) is not naive, and most probably should be confronted with the New Testament passages where Jesus assures that he is the only way (Jn 14:6). As can be seen in the following story, centred around the nocturnal events at the inn, the mention of the rural inn (פוסאדה) and the hunger that afflicts the wandering Jesus belongs to this type of literary genre.[61] The scene concludes, without the shepherd even opening his mouth (such is the extent of his laziness), with him pointing his foot at the road. This last gesture fits the context of similar stories in the literature of the Spanish Golden Age very well. As for the vocabulary, it is a literary Castilian that corresponds to the novelistic texts of sixteenth-century Iberia. Among the terms used, the verb 'traserrar' (טראסיירראון), of medieval origin and preserved in Judeo-Spanish literature in the Ferrara Bible and in later texts, stands out for its unusualness.[62] The expressions in the language of the time include: 'toparon con' (טופארון קון); 'por cual parte' (פור קואל פארטי); 'habían de' (אביאן די); 'tomar el camino' (טומאר איל קאמינו); 'tender el pie' (טינדיו איל פיי).

They went further on [and] came upon a maiden	פואירון מאס אדילאנטי טופארון קון אונה מוסה
grazing cattle;	פאסיינדו גאנאדו
Jesus also asked her	לה פריגונטו ישׁוֹז טאמביין
to show them the way.	קי ליס מוסטראסי איל קאמינו
So, she went with them	קונקי פואי קון איליוס
until the division of the roads	האסטה דיביסיון די לוס קאמינוס
and showed them the way and turned back.	אי ליס מוסטרו איל קאמינו אי בולבייוסי

The second scene is constructed as an antithesis of the first. What the shepherd is not, the girl is, despite their common traits in terms of their activity and social background. At the same time, perhaps for stylistic reasons, the girl is never expressly identified as a herderess, but as a 'moza paciendo ganado' (מוסה פאסיינדו גאנאדו). What the narrator achieves through this device is to identify the girl through her activity. Jesus's question

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[60] According to Peter Burke, 'the Spanish nativity plays had their lazy shepherd and their quarrelling newly-weds,' PETER BURKE, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 185.

[61] JOSÉ ANTONIO NEGRÍN DE LA PEÑA, 'La mesa del Dómine Cabra: comida y vino en la novela picaresca del siglo de oro español,' *Estudios Avanzados* 18 (2012): 75–99.

[62] 'y fue como traserraron a mi dioses de casa de mi padre' (Gen. 20:13), USQUE and ATIAS, eds, *Biblia en lengua Española*, 8v.

marks a second point of irony in the story: the girl's activity is not only opposed to the shepherd's indolence, but also to Jesus's ignorance. Indeed, she knows the way well. The final sentence leaves Jesus facing a crossroads. A text that seems to function as a model for this scene is the passage from the narrative cycle of the patriarchs in the book of Genesis, in which Abraham's servant meets the young Rebekah at the well (Gen. 24). The analogy is quite evident: her activity as a herderess; the diligence with which she attends to the traveller; and the marriage of the young woman to Isaac as the conclusion of the story. The following section, when I compare this passage with the Huldricus version, will show how this passage can give clues about the relationship between the two texts and the translation process.

Then Peter told Jesus to cast	אינטונסיס דילו פיטרו אה ישׁוֹ קי איגׄאסי
a blessing on that maiden for the good	בינדיסייון אה אקילייה מוסה פור איל ביין
which she did for them as she came with them	קי ליס היזו קי בינו קון אילייוס
to the point of even showing them the way.	האסטה מוסטראר ליס איל קאמינו
Then he blessed her that she should marry	קונקי לה בינדילו קי סי קאזארה
that lazy shepherd	קון אקיל פאסטור פיריזוזו
who would not show them the way.	קי נו ליס קיגׄו מוסטראר איל קאמינו

At the beginning of the third scene, Peter intervenes to request a blessing/miracle in favour of the maiden. The term used—to cast a blessing (איגׄאסי בינדיסייון)—is characteristic of the time. The irony of the helplessness of Jesus and his companions is expressed by their need for others to do good to them, in this case a girl (איל ביין קי ליס היזו), rather than being the ones to do good to the miserable and afflicted. Indeed, the girl hardly needs the help of Jesus and his disciples.[63] This situation is then made clear in the content of the blessing: the marriage of the girl to the shepherd. It is a miracle that the girl has never asked for. This topic evidently has to be framed in the great importance attached by the family culture of the time to the duty of marrying daughters. This extreme social concern is reflected abundantly in literature and in both personal (e.g., testamentary dispositions) and institutional documentation (e.g., of confraternities set up to endow maidens). In the case of the Western Sephardim, a good example of the great importance of this obligation is the confraternities to endow orphan girls founded in Venice and Amsterdam.[64]

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[63] Her self-sufficiency and know-how resemble the type of heroines in the *Lozana andaluza*, a picaresque novel that has often been suspected of having a converso origin: FRANCISCO DELICADO, *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza en lengua española muy clarissima. Cõpuesto en Roma. El qual Retrato demuestra loque en Roma passaua y contiene munchas mas cosas que la Celestina* (Venice: 1528).

[64] MIRIAM BODIAN, 'The "Portuguese" Dowry Societies in Venice and Amsterdam. A Case Study in Communal Differentiation within the Marrano Diaspora,' *Italia. Studi e Ricerche sulla Storia, la Cultura e la Letteratura degli Ebrei d'Italia* 6, no. 1–2 (1987): 30–61; JESSICA V. ROITMAN, 'Marriage, Migration, and

Peter answered:	ריספונדייו פיטרו
How could he have cast her such a blessing?	קי קומו לה איגֿו סימיגאנטי בינדיסייון
because it was not fitting for that shepherd	קי נו אירה קונביניינטי קי אקיל פאסטור
to marry such a maiden.	קאזאסי טאל מוסה

Jesus replied that since he was so lazy	ריספונדייו יֹשֹוֹ קי סיינדו איל טאן פיריזוזו
it was not convenient for him	נו לי קונבינייה
to marry anyone other than that maiden	קאזאר מאסקי אקילייה מוסה
who was very diligent;	קי אירה מוי דיליגֿינטי
that she should seek life for both of them;	פאראקי אילייה בוסקי לה בידא פור אמבוס
and that he was a merciful god and matchmaker	אי קי איל אירה דייוס פייאדוזו אי קאזאמינטירו
and that he was in charge of arranging and adjusting	אי טינייה קארגו די אפֿאריגֿאר אי אקונגֿאבאר
the husband to his wife according to their deeds,	איל מארידו קון סו מוגֿיר סיגון סוס אובראס
so that they may live with each other.	די מודו קי פואידאן ביביר אונו קון אוטרו

As might be expected, the narrative enables the absurdity of Jesus's blessing to be made explicit. In this case, the common sense is personified by Peter. Once again, the narrator uses the technique of contrasting the character of Jesus with a counterpart to highlight the ridiculousness of his actions. Contrary to what everyone (Peter and the readers) would deem logical and right, Jesus's response focuses on the lazy shepherd (נו לי קונבינייה). The irony goes so far that Jesus's actions seem to overturn the basic norms of traditional society: it is the girl who must procure a livelihood for the man and support their married life (אילייה בוסקי לה בידא פור אמבוס). Once Jesus has explained this ridiculous situation, with no rational sense regarding the social culture of the time, he makes a sort of theological substantiation according to the model of the Gospels. This consists of a series of affirmations taken from biblical passages, which also appear buffoonish. This is concluded by the recourse, usual in the Christian Gospels, to quotations from the Old Testament in order to explain his actions as the fulfilment of prophecies. In this context, Jesus begins by identifying himself as a merciful god (דייוס פייאדוזו). The motif of the matchmaking god (קאזאמינטירו), however, obviously does not correspond to traditional theology, but is much closer to Spanish burlesque literature, in particular to a text such as *La Celestina*.[65] The idea that Jesus also fulfils the function of harmoniser between couples seems to allude to another common topic in the literature of the Spanish Golden Age: the theme of the ill-married couple (*malcasados* or

Money: The *Santa Companhia de dotar orphãs e donzelas* pobres in the Portuguese Sephardic Diaspora,' *Portuguese Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2005): 347–67.

65 FERNANDO DE ROJAS, *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Toledo: Pedro Hagenbach, 1500).

malmaridados).[66] At the same time, with its intense focus on the theme of marriage and marital difficulties, and the ability of Jesus to act at this level, this passage appears extremely questionable in the light of the stories in the first narrative cycle, where the issue is marital infidelity, and Jesus's response is to end up killing his own father, Josefe Pandera.

He said (even) more:	דיכֿו מאס
that because of him King David prophesied,	קי פור איל פרופֿיטיזו איל ריי דוד
saying 'He diminished my strength through the race'	קי דיכֿו אפֿליכו קון לה קארירה מי פואירסה
because that was the reason	קי איסה פֿואי לה קאוווזה
they were wandering in the wilderness.	איסטאבאן ריבולטאנדו אין איל דיזיירטו

Finally, the story concludes with a biblical quotation, taken from Psalm 102:24 (אפֿליכו קון לה קארירה מי פואירסה), in a textual variant very close to the Ferrara version.[67] Again, this has little or nothing to do with the theme of the passage, accentuating the sense of the absurdity of Jesus's arguments.

Comparison with the Huldricus Text

After looking at the characteristic features of the Ladino version of the narrative, I will now compare it with the Latin and Hebrew versions of Huldricus. The idea, in this case, is not to go into superfluous details, but principally to highlight the main textual phenomena that appear in these versions and to try to explain the inconsistencies and major shortcomings that can be found.

Aberrantes vero de via in deserto	ויתעו במדבר
offendut pastorem	וימצאו רועה
in terra recubantem;	שובב על הארץ
alloquitur eum Iesus,	ויאמר יזו"ש אל הרועה
sciscitaturque an longe illinc distet diversorium,	הרחוק מכאן לבית מלון
& quae via illuc ducat?	ואיו הדרך
Resp. pastor;	ויען הרועה
en vobis viam quae prae oculis est,	הנה הדרך לפניכם
ejusque indicium facit protenso pede:	וירמז הרועה ברגלו

[66] JOSÉ ENRIQUE LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, 'El entremés de *El juez de los divorcios* y otros infelicísimos malcasados,' *Anales Cervantinos* 47 (2015): 289–322; ROBERT LAUER, 'Las enfermedades de las malcasadas en los dramas de honor del Siglo de Oro,' in *El matrimonio en Europa y el mundo hispánico. Siglos XVI y XVII*, eds IGNACIO ARELLANO and JESÚS MARÍA USUNÁRIZ (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2005), 55–63.
[67] 'Afligio en la carrera mi fuerça' (Ps 102:24). USQUE and ATIAS, eds., *Biblia en lengua Española*, 304.

Eunt rursusque	וילכו
incident in puellam pastricem	וימצאו נערה רועה
ex qua iterum inquirit Iesus,	וישאל יזו״ש אל הנערה
qua eundum sit?	איו הדרך
Comitatur eos puella	ותלך הנערה אתם
uſque ad Calceum	והביאם על הנעל
aliquem viæ indicium	סימן הדרך
Ait igitur Petrus ad Jesum	ויאמר פיטרוס ליזו״ש
Benedic puellae isti	ברך את הנערה
quae nos hucusque deduxit	שהביאנו הלום
Benedixit ergo puellae Jesus, vovens,	ויברך יזו״ש את הנערה
ut nuptui collocaretur pastori	שתנשא לזה הרועה
qui viam iis monstrare recusasset	שלא רצה להראותם הדרך
Ait Petrus	ויאמר פיטרוס
quare benedicis pastori, vovens,	למה תברך את הרועה
ut puellam ducat quails haec est	שיקח נערה כזו
(indolis adeo probae?)	
Respondet Jesus	ויאמר יזו״ש
cum ille piger admodum sit,	באשר שהוא עצל
haec vero alacris singulariter,	והיא זנזנת
servare poterit maritum suum	ותחיה את בעלה
(inertia sua alias ruiturum:)	
sum vero ego Deus misericors,	ואני אל רחום
connubia jungens juxta opera hominum:	מזווג זיווגים כפי מעשיהם
& de me prophetavit David	ועלי ניבא דוד
debilitavit in via vim mean:	ענה בדרך כחי
Et hinc in devia nos defleximus.	על כן אנחנו תועים בדרך

From the very beginning, a synoptic comparison of the Hebrew and Latin versions of the story of the lazy shepherd and the diligent maiden in the Huldricus text reveals two extremely striking phenomena: on the one hand, the desperate poverty of the Hebrew text, and on the other, the need for the Latin version to go beyond the Hebrew model.

Indeed, although some specialists have noted the precariousness of the Hebrew version,[68] it is also true that others do not seem to share this opinion.[69] A synoptic

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[68] Krauss attributes this to the difficulty in deciphering the cursive characters of the original: 'Manche Unbeholfenheiten derselben haben vielleicht ihren Grund in mangelhafter Auflösung der Kursiv-Charaktere der Handschrift durch den Herausgeber,' KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 34. Riccardo Di Segni is even more radical in his judgement of the quality of the language: 'La forma ebraica del testo è peggiore delle altre che conosciamo, che peraltro non brillano per qualità di lingua,' DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto*, 40.

comparison between the Hebrew text, the Latin text and the Ladino version of EH 47 D 10 shows that the Hebrew text is indeed an extremely simple artefact, so much so that the reader must wonder how any sense could be made of it by means of the Latin, Ladino and even Judeo-German versions.[70] The Hebrew sentences are surprising not only for their extreme brevity (most of them only consisting of two parts) but also for the desperately basic vocabulary. The thread of the narrative is held up by the typical Hebrew parataxis, with no other even slightly more elaborate stylistic devices. In fact, the few phrases (or rather expressions) that show any degree of stylistic development turn out to be typical expressions of biblical literature.[71]

The Latin version must be considered in contrast to this somewhat bleak picture. Once again, it is not an exceptional text from either a stylistic or a narrative point of view. What is interesting, however, is that it clearly fulfils the function of contributing to the narrative coherence that the Hebrew text lacks.[72] In the face of the crude repetition of the appellative רועה in the Hebrew, and the narrator's failure to use to some other form, the Latin text at least employs the third person pronoun (*eum*) in order to create some variety. At the same time, the text is riddled with expressions that turn out to be unpolished translations into Hebrew.[73] In this same context, there is one passage that is clearly very confused, a matter which both the Hebrew and Latin fail to resolve. This is even commented on by Johann Jacob Ulrich himself in his notes. It is the text stating that the girl went with Jesus and his disciples, accompanying them on the road.

Comitatur eos puella	ותלך הנערה אתם
uſque ad Calceum	והביאם על הנעל
aliquem viæ indicium	סימן הדרך

The problem that arises in the formulation of both the Hebrew and Latin texts is the incoherent mention of footwear (*calceum* and נעל), from which it is practically impossible to extract any kind of meaning. However, this same gap in the text may help us to find an answer regarding the translation-redaction process that gave rise to these texts.

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[69] Adina Yoffie, on the other hand, has a more positive opinion about the literary value of the Hebrew text: 'but the author of the Huldreich was also a talented writer of Hebrew,' ADINA M. YOFFIE, 'Observations on the Huldreich Manuscripts of the Toledot Yeshu,' in *Toledot Yeshu … Revisited*, eds SCHÄFER, MEERSON, and DEUTSCH, 65.

[70] CLAUDIA ROSENZWEIG, 'When Jesus Spoke Yiddish. Some Remarks on a Yiddish Manuscript of the "Toledot Yeshu" (MS. Günzburg 1730),' *PaRDeS. Journal of the Association of Jewish Studies in Germany* 21 (2015): 199–214.

[71] Such as the expression הנה הדרך לפניכם which Huldricus, unlike EH 47 D 10, places in the mouth of the shepherd.

[72] For example, through the addition of 'indolis adeo probae?' and 'inertia sua alias ruiturum.'

[73] These include expressions like שובב על הארץ; רמז ברגל; שהביאנו הלום; חיה את בעל.

The Huldricus Translation Process

The previous section concludes by mentioning the erratic presence in both Huldricus texts of the nouns *calceum* and נעל. This is an anomaly that results in both versions losing coherence, a situation that Johann Jacob Ulrich was apparently not in a position to remedy, beyond writing a note about it.[74] In order to try to find a solution to the conundrum posed by this situation, let us once again consider the same passage in EH 47 D 10:

So, she went with them	קונקי פ֫ואי קון איליוס
until the division of the roads	האסטה דיביסייון די לוס קאמינוס
and showed them the way and turned back.	אי ליס מוסטרו איל קאמינו אי בולבייוסי

As can be seen, the Ladino version is quite clear, although very probably for a reader not accustomed to the Castilian language of the previous centuries, expressions such as 'división de los caminos' (דיביסייון די לוס קאמינוס) and 'volvióse' (בולבייוסי) could represent a problem. This fact demonstrates something obvious: a translator who was probably unfamiliar with the type of language of the text (sixteenth-century Castilian) would need a transcription into contemporary Spanish. It was this process, which in my opinion must have worked as follows, that generated the texts discussed in this article:

Original text > Contemporary Spanish > Latin > Hebrew.

As can be seen in the diagram, my theory is not only that Ulrich needed to update the text of EH 47 D 10 (or another very similar one), but at the same time that the direction of the translation shifted from Spanish to Latin and from Latin to Hebrew. This process must have occurred more or less according to the following pattern:

E 47 D 10	Hypothetical text	Huldricus-Latin	Huldricus-Hebrew
קונקי פ֫ואי קון איליוס	Los acompañó la moza	Comitatur eos puella	ותלך הנערה אתם
האסטה דיביסייון	por la **calzada**	usque ad **Calceum**	והביאם על **הנעל**
די לוס קאמינוס	hasta algún indicio del camino	aliquem viæ indicium	סימן הדרך
אי ליס מוסטרו			
איל קאמינו אי בולבייוסי			

Table 4. Possible pattern of translation from E 47 D 10 to Huldricus.

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[74] '*Calceum*] על הנעל Hebr. ambigua hæc sunt, & verti possunt, vel *ad claustrum aliquod* aut *pessulum*, vel *ad calceum aliquem*; quod malo, quia *calceus*, ut Symbolum quoddam hominis iter facientis, viæ signum accomodatius & vulgatius esse videtur *clauſtro*,' ULRICH, ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, 50.

The Ladino text, already tricky in vocabulary and style for Ulrich due to its origin, and most probably necessitating transliteration from the cursive Hebrew into the Latin alphabet, gave rise to a new version in early eighteenth-century Spanish. This will surely have included the term *calzada* as a very usual synonym for road. Moreover, if we consider the Latin and Hebrew wording, the more complex formulation of EH 47 D 10 gave rise to a phrase that was probably something like: 'the maiden accompanied them along the path (*calzada*) to some sign of the road.' The problem that arose next is that the author of Huldricus, who probably did not know the Spanish language well, confused *calzada* (path, road, way) with *calzado* (sandal, shoe) giving rise to the impossible translation using the terms *calceum* and נעל.

Conclusions

From a synchronic point of view, EH 47 D 10 is a complex but at the same time very well-articulated literary text. In general, the language and textual structure show a great coherence to the current style of the Spanish sixteenth century. The few hitches in grammar and syntax are probably due not so much to the original wording but to the composition history of the copy. From a diachronic point of view, the text does not appear to be the translation of a preexisting *Vorlage*, but an original composition. On the other hand, the organisation of the narrative, based on a succession of stories, makes it likely that not all of them were composed by the original author, but that they may already have existed (a common custom in those communities) and were accommodated to fit the general sense of the work. This process seems more evident in the cycle of Simon el Qalfoseo, which includes linguistic interpretations that the author does not seem to have fully understood.

At the same time, it is clear that the author is familiar with the traditional Iberian version of the *Toledot Yeshu* (Wagenseil-Helena type) but believes it necessary to present an alternative.[75] In this sense, from a diachronic point of view, EH 47 D 10 represents a rewriting process. There seem to be three main motives that led the author to undertake this task: (1) the problem of Jesus's ability to perform miracles in the standard version; (2) the desire to develop a more intense polemic against the prevailing Roman Catholicism; (3) a great interest in the literary culture of sixteenth-century Spain, in which the author was probably educated.

The *Istoriah de Iesus natsareno* (איסטרייה די ישו״ז נאצארינו) corresponds to a type of cultured literature of sixteenth-century Spain, in which elements coming from the medieval substratum (romances of chivalry and pastoral genre) can be seen to blend with

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[75] Samuel Krauss also hypothesised in the case of Huldricus a 'bewusste Abweichung von den anderen Typen zum Zwecke schärferer und handgreiflicher Polemik,' KRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 34.

the new sensibilities proper to Spanish picaresque literature (e.g., *Lazarillo de Tormes*). From this perspective, it would be possible to affirm that this version of the *Toledot Yeshu* is not far from the classic novel *Don Quixote de la Mancha* written by Miguel de Cervantes at the end of the sixteenth century. At the same time, the author succeeds in blending elements that undoubtedly come from Jewish environments. The stories that he certainly uses as models not only include a Wagenseil-Helena version of the *Toledot Yeshu*, but also texts from the Talmud (probably in vernacular) and minor stories (such as the stories in the cycle of Simon el Qalfoseo) that probably circulated among the Jewish milieus that the author frequented.

As has been argued in the article, the author of EH 47 D 10 is probably a Jew coming from an experience of forced conversion in Castile, Aragon, or Portugal. The text was written around the middle of the sixteenth century, somewhere in the free lands, as part of the converso reaction against Christianity and therefore the work must be framed within the intense Judaising polemics against Roman Catholicism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The collection in the Ets Haim library in Amsterdam also preserves other texts which, despite not strictly belonging to the tradition of the *Toledot Yeshu*, are without doubt good examples of this type of fashionable burlesque literature cultivated in Iberian environments by Judaising and Christian authors.[76]

The literary quality of this work, as well as numerous elements that emerge from a comparative analysis, point to the fact that the Huldricus version (1705) is undoubtedly a faulty translation of this text and not the other way around. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the originality of EH 47 D 10 stemming from the rewriting process hypothetically described throughout this article, whose purpose was to adapt the traditions of the *Toledot Yeshu* to the historical-social context of the author, was not so much a novelty but a common practice in medieval Sepharad, whose traditions concerning the life of Jesus the Nazarene remain largely to be discovered.

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[76] The *Quintillas de Dn Ger[oni]mo Cancer al Nacimiento* is copied following the text of the *Historia De x͂po: su Nasimiento Vida y Muerte*, in manuscript EH 48 E 15. The *Quintillas* is a satirical Christmas poem published by Jerónimo de Cáncer y Velasco (1599–1655): *Obras Varias de D. Geronimo de Cancer y Velasco. Dedicadas al excelentissimo Señor D. Gaspar Alonso Perez de Guzmã el Bueno, Duque de la Ciudad de Medina Sidonia, Marques y Conde, &c. Gentil-Hombre de la Camara de su Magestad* (Madrid: Diego Diaz de la Carrera, 1651), 52–55v. On the other hand, in manuscript EH 48 B 07 it is possible to find a composition in rhyme entitled *Fabula Burlesca de Xpto ÿ La Magdalena*. Its author is identified as Fray Antonio Márquez, prosecuted by the Inquisition, who is thought to have composed the poem in London in 1623. However, several specialists have disputed this identification of the author.

Afterword
The Changing Fortunes of Toledot Yeshu *Research*

Riccardo Di Segni

This thematic section thanks to Daniel Barbu brings together a number of new studies on various aspects of the 'Jewish Life of Jesus' or *Toledot Yeshu*. In addition to the intrinsic value of the individual contributions, it offers an opportunity for more general considerations. Indeed, *Toledot Yeshu* is an excellent example of a topic which is not only interesting in itself but also worth considering in terms of the history of research on the subject.

Research on *Toledot Yeshu* is not new but has recently encountered a remarkable revival. In this regard, I wish to offer a personal testimony. In the early 1980s, Alfonso M. Di Nola, a historian of religions and anthropologist who was editing a series of texts on religion and magic with Newton Compton at the time, invited me to write a popular book on the topic in Italian.[1] Before that, I knew nothing about *Toledot Yeshu*. I was asked to provide a translation of the narrative and a short introductory essay, in a volume of a hundred pages or so. As I got further into the subject, I became aware of several problems: first, the delicacy of the subject matter, which would not be 'palatable' (as I was told) to the Christian public; second, the state of the research, which had almost come to a halt following the publication of Samuel Krauss's 1902 seminal monograph *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (with the exception of a few later studies in particular on the Aramaic fragments discovered in the Cairo Genizah).[2] William Horbury's 1970 dissertation on the subject was unfortunately not published and inaccessible to me at that time.[3] I quickly realised that there in fact existed innumerable manuscripts and versions, as yet unknown and unpublished, scattered in various libraries—a veritable treasure trove! This meant that the only way to avoid publishing a book that would merely repeat what had already been done and might also be offensive for certain audiences was to back it up with up-to-date research and a solid critical approach. The planned volume was now triple the length originally agreed on, leading to lengthy discussions with the publisher. The research itself was

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[1] Riccardo Di Segni, *Il vangelo del Ghetto. Le "storie di Gesù": leggende e documenti della tradizione medievale ebraica* (Roma: Newton Compton, 1985).

[2] Samuel Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu Nach Jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1902); followed by Krauss, 'Fragments araméens du *Toldot Yéschou*,' *Revue des études Juives* 62 (1911): 126–30; Krauss, 'Neuere Ansichten Über „Toldoth Jeschu",' *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 76 (n.s. 40), no. 6 (1932): 586–603; Krauss, 'Une nouvelle recension hébraïque du *Toldot Yêšû*,' *Revue des études juives* 103 (1938): 65–90.

[3] William Horbury, 'A Critical Examination of the *Toledoth Jeshu*' (PhD diss., Clare College, Cambridge, 1970).

not easy either, despite the willingness of many libraries to provide reproductions of the texts. Some libraries, in what was then the Soviet Union, politely refused, citing 'technical issues.' Nevertheless, the work resulted in a rich list of manuscripts and printed editions that allowed me to make a new classification of texts (still quite widely used today) and identify a number of problems that remained to be solved. One of the episodes of the narrative to which I devoted most research was the account of Jesus's conception and birth. I sought to place the episode, in which Mary appears as the unsuspecting victim of a lustful impostor, in the long history of a well-established literary motif from mythology to recreational literature, that of the adulterer in disguise.[4]

When my book was published in 1985, it encountered a rather unhappy fate. It was promptly (and discreetly) removed from bookstores, briefly sold among leftover stock, and then taken out of print altogether. In the following years, a copy could occasionally be found on second-hand bookstalls here and there. The book and research to which I had devoted so much time had stalled (except for a brief later study on a text found in a Spanish inquisitorial trial).[5] For me, *Toledot Yeshu* had become a thing of the past, as it seemed to be for the world of research in general, except for a few rare and valuable contributions by Gunter Schlichting, Hillel I. Newman and Yaacov Deutsch.[6]

Yet to my great surprise, some twenty years later there was a sudden resurgence of interest in the issue, in large part due to the efforts of Peter Schäffer, at the time professor of Judaic Studies at Princeton University. Schäffer launched the idea of a synoptic critical edition of all the known *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts and coordinated a research project involving an international group of scholars, each approaching the narrative from a different viewpoint.[7] In the wake of this revival, new studies were published, international conferences organised, scholars working on the topic connected through the web, and important classes and seminars devoted to *Toledot Yeshu* research were held in universities, notably in Israel, Switzerland and France.[8]

Various goals can be identified in this ongoing research on *Toledot Yeshu*, calling for interventions by specialists from very different fields. These goals are: 1) to further

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[4] DI SEGNI, *Il vangelo del Ghetto*, 113–32.

[5] RICCARDO DI SEGNI, 'Due nuovi fonti sulle *Toledoth Yeshu*,' *Rassegna mensile di Israel* 55, no. 1 (1989): 127–32.

[6] GÜNTER SCHLICHTING, *Ein Jüdisches Leben Jesu: Die Verschollene* Toledot-Jeschu-*Fassung* Tam û-Mûʿād (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1982); HILLELL I. NEWMAN, 'The Death of Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu* Literature,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 50, no. 1 (1999): 59–79; YAACOV DEUTSCH, 'New Evidence of Early Versions of T*oldot Yeshu*,' *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 177–97.

[7] The edition has been published as MICHAEL MEERSON and PETER SCHÄFER, eds, *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); see also the studies gathered in PETER SCHÄFER, MICHAEL MEERSON, and YAACOV DEUTSCH, eds, *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

[8] See for instance the volume published by DANIEL BARBU and YAACOV DEUTSCH, *Toledot Yeshu in Context: The Jewish 'Life of Jesus' in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020) in the wake of a conference held at the University of Bern in 2015.

expand the search for new sources and the list of manuscripts, as well as indirect and/or partial testimonies deriving from inquisitorial trials; 2) to carry out linguistic studies, particularly on the Aramaic sources; 3) to examine versions in languages other than Hebrew, ranging from Arabic (allowing Miriam Goldstein in particular to show that many aspects of the narrative in later Hebrew manuscripts appeared much earlier than previously thought),[9] to Yiddish and Ladino; 4) to make an in-depth analysis of the features of individual manuscripts or versions of the narrative; 5) to analyse their relations with Christian apocrypha; 6) to study the circulation of the texts, and their apologetic and polemical use; 7) to study their reception among Christians, from Agobard in the ninth century to Luther in the sixteenth, to name just two; 8) to explore the relations with motifs and themes found in ancient and medieval rabbinic commentaries (*midrashim*) as well as in the kabbalistic tradition; 9) and to carry out gender studies, notably exploring the role of women in the various versions of the narrative.[10]

The role of this latest collection of studies should be seen as a valuable new piece to add to a line of critical historical research that seemed to have ended but has now vividly returned to life. The essays gathered here encompass many of the objectives identified above but stand out, in particular, in their attempt to contextualise and historicise specific versions of the narrative, bridging linguistic traditions, exploring the reception and circulation of *Toledot* manuscripts, and relating them to the broader social worlds which gave them their meaning and significance. Because of the long history, the diversity of texts and the contexts that this tradition invites us to consider, but also—beyond the rationality of philological and historical inquiry—because of its strong affective dimension, the subject matter lends itself well to such interdisciplinary research. Hence, it allows us to unfold a never-ending drama, that of the troubled relations between Christians and Jews, the figure of Jesus ambiguously representing both their interconnectedness and their distance.

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[9] MIRIAM GOLDSTEIN, 'Judeo-Arabic Versions of *Toledoth Yeshu*,' *Ginzei Qedem* 6 (2010): 9–42; GOLDSTEIN, 'Early Judeo-Arabic Birth Narratives in the Polemical Story "Life of Jesus" (Toledot Yeshu),' *Harvard Theological Review* 113, no. 3 (July 2020): 354–77; and now her edition of the Arabic manuscripts of the 'Helena' recension: *A Judeo-Arabic Parody of the Life of Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023).

[10] SARIT KATTAN GRIBETZ, 'The Mothers in the Manuscripts: Gender, Motherhood, and Power in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Toledot Yeshu in Context*, eds BARBU and DEUTSCH, 99–129; see also JOHN G. GAGER and MIKA AHUVIA, 'Some Notes on Jesus and His Parents from the New Testament Gospels to the *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *Envisioning Judaism. Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds RA'ANAN S. BOUSTAN et al., 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), vol. 2, 997–1017; NATALIE E. LATTERI, 'Playing the Whore: Illicit Union and the Biblical Typology of Promiscuity in the Toledot Yeshu Tradition,' *Shofar* 33, no. 2 (2015): 87–102; DANIEL BARBU, 'The Case About Jesus: (Counter-) History and Casuistry in *Toledot Yeshu*,' in *A Historical Approach to Casuistry: Norms and Exceptions in a Comparative Perspective*, eds CARLO GINZBURG and LUCIO BIASIORI (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 65–98.

Book Reviews

A Unifying Enlightenment.
Institutions of Political Economy
in Eighteenth-Century Spain (1700–1808)
Jesús Astigarraga
(Leiden: Brill, 2021)
[ISBN 9789004442382]

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The core of this monograph was recently submitted as a PhD dissertation by the author, the well-known economic historian Jesús Astigarraga, who already had a PhD in Economics in 1991. The list of his publications on the Enlightenment and economic thought takes pp. 293–95 of the bibliography (twenty-five items). Unlike most PhD dissertations, this book sums up the investigations of a lifetime. And it does so with a self-assured tone that is unusual in this kind of book. The broader framework is a historical understanding of the emergence of political economy as an autonomous discipline in Europe and Spain in the eighteenth century. For the Bourbon monarchy, the emergence of political economy implied the transformation of knowledge of trade into a consistent vision of the state's role in promoting the nation's collective well-being. Politics as a plan to shape social reality was a crucial factor of eighteenth-century political economy. The period covered in the book goes from Felipe V's Regency in 1700 to the abdication of Carlos IV in 1808.

In the Introduction, Astigarraga gives an overview of the recent trends in the international discussion on political economy and the Enlightenment. His approach is based on a close analysis of the institutions that were created in Spain and that were active through education and print culture to spread three significant innovations: the notion of economic growth, techniques necessary to rational management of state finances, the promotion of the accumulation of economic knowledge, and a better understanding of what political economy was about. Throughout his book, Astigarraga focuses mainly on those public institutions related to economic policies that were the expression of society and were acknowledged by the public power. He agrees with, among others, Joel Mokyr and John Robertson on the importance of economic institutions and the interplay between economic institutions and economic ideas. So, if a straightforward question can point to the crux of Astigarraga's perspective, it would be: how did the notion (and desirability) of economic growth emerge in eighteenth-century Spain?

Astigarraga takes political economy as a connecting discourse within the European Enlightenment to answer this question. There are obviously good reasons for this move. Embracing political economy fostered the emergence of secularism and justified commercial competition (what David Hume called the 'jealousy of trade' in 1758) between imperial powers as an alternative to constant warfare. In the Spanish case, humanitarianism went hand in hand with the centralisation of state intervention as a central feature of the Enlightenment. Regionalism and fiscal fragmentation were perceived as obstacles to be overcome in the Spanish political economy. According to Astigarraga, the Spanish version of the Enlightenment had as its key program the homogenising process of its heterogeneous parts while increasing its well-being and wealth creation.

The book presents itself as an investigation inspired by Franco Venturi's view of the Enlightenment as a process of constant blending of cosmopolitan and universal values and local and patriotic aspirations to increase wealth and security. The book emphasises the interaction and circulation of ideas and practical examples.

The first three chapters focus on the treatises written in the first half of the eighteenth century to provide practical tools for traders involved in transregional exchanges. The point is to emphasise the fragmentation of the Spanish peninsula: internal borders implied hurdles to smooth commercial activity, and handbooks supported the spread of a vision of trade as a distinguished and valuable contribution to the nation's prosperity. The creation of the *Discursos Mercuriales* in 1752 marked the beginning of a new and modernising form of communication between state administrators and the 'educated public.' Both would profit from this semipublic space (49). The *Discursos Mercuriales* indeed contributed significantly to argue that Spain should become a 'commercial monarchy' (67) and enter the fray with the European powers that had started their modernisation earlier than the mid-eighteenth century. The complex process of initiating a public sphere interested in the diffusion of the new science of economics implied that knowledgeable journalists would come to the forefront, despite unfavourable conditions (they had to deal with double preventative censorship, civil and episcopal). In a very detailed analysis of the economic press after the end of the Seven Years' War, the author focuses on the ideas, recommendations, and innovations that the Spanish journalists, Nifo, Saura, Barberi among others, took from the major French and English periodical publications of the 1760s and 1770s. Summaries, partial and integral translations, and adaptations of foreign texts contributed to shaping a new attitude in political economy.

Chapter 4 focuses on the dissemination of useful knowledge through the periodic press. The role played by economic societies in promoting the Spanish press is duly investigated. Astigarraga makes an interesting point when he mentions that the Economic Society of Madrid was given the function of censoring the economic press (112). Vasconcelos became the censor of the *Semanario económico* in 1777. The role of the Economic Society of Madrid and the censors was remarkable in encouraging some journals to be published and in making life difficult for others, like the *Semanario*

económico itself (112–13). Unfortunately, the implications of being active as a censor and promoting freedom of expression and 'enlightenment' (115) are not further explored.

The fifth chapter deals with the genre of dictionaries specialised in commerce and political economy. In Spain they contributed to introducing economic concepts into the language, including neologisms like competition and economists (120). They were crucial in developing general notions about economic life from the more traditional notions of trade (122). Only a politically organised society could promote its members' well-being and foster wealth creation. There were obstacles on the way to creating a new philosophical language. After difficult beginnings, the commerce dictionaries entered a new phase in the 1770s following Campomanes's intervention, but these exertions also failed to really materialise. Campomanes looms large in this chapter as the driving force behind these efforts to modernise Spanish cultural life. He recommended reading the volumes of the *Encyclopédie des arts et métiers* edited by Diderot and d'Alembert, despite the General Inquisitor banning it in the Spanish Monarchy in 1759 (143).

Chapter 6 is about the golden age of the Spanish press: 1780s to 1808. Astigarraga outlines the social core of the 'enlightened public opinion' and its premises: among them, the better general education of an expanding population, and the profitability of the literary career, based on the increasing success of the subscription system (146–48). More than in the recent past, freedom of opinion and expression was vindicated within the framework of a philosophical argument about the advantages of freedom of the press. In fact, in tune with most Catholic countries in the eighteenth century, freedom of the press was achieved not by abolishing preventative censorship but by shifting the balance between civil power and the Inquisition. Centralising control over the publication of Spanish books in the hands of the Council of Castile (150) was instrumental in broadening the scope of economic discussions. A detailed analysis of one of the most significant monthly publications in economics, the *Memorial literario*, proves this point (156–72), for instance when the *Memorial literario* came to discuss the consequences of the agrarian reform and agricultural individualism.

In the late 1780s, two periodicals, *El Correo de Madrid o de los Ciegos* and the *Espíritu de los mejores diarios literarios* epitomised the achievements of the Spanish Enlightenment to create a public sphere in the sense of Habermas.

Part of creating a public sphere interested in the new science of political economy was the foundation of chairs in civil economy and commerce. The first one to be established was in Saragossa in 1784 (194). According to the author (and it is hard to disagree), 'the chair was an institutional creation, prompted and managed by the government and essentially aimed at recruiting future civil servants and statesmen and using new educational material that could be standardised' (201). In general, the support (or lack of it) from the government was a crucial factor in the success of political economy, as testified by the resistance of the Inquisition to the new science

and the active role of several public figures in pushing back the ecclesiastical interference.

Chapter 9 covers the subject of merchants' handbooks throughout the eighteenth century, while chapter 10 deals with the specialised economic press of the very final years of the Spanish Enlightenment: the *Correo Mercantil* and the *Semanario de Agricultura*. Both came to an end in 1808. With the analysis of these two periodicals, the monograph ends.

Before commenting on the issues raised by Astigarraga, it is fitting to remark that this is a solid, source-based treatment of an essential period of Spanish history in the eighteenth century. As the author acknowledges in the preliminary note, 'the book is the result of a research process of longue durée' (xi). As a consequence, the author could not avoid repetitions, both conceptual and argumentative: for instance, the same information about Morellet's *Prospectus* is mentioned in different contexts almost verbatim. However, a perplexing inaccuracy concerns the foundation of three chairs of political economy, respectively in 1754 (Naples) and 1779 (Palermo and Catania) 'in the Regno delle Due Sicilie,' at a time when the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Regno delle Due Sicilie) did not exist yet (it was founded on December 8, 1816, in the wake of the Congress of Vienna) (195). The author states again (202) that Carlo di Borbone arrived in the Regno delle Due Sicilie in 1739.

In the Epilogue (260–70), Astigarraga makes an overall assessment of the historical significance of Spanish political economy in the eighteenth century, from the perspective of two major issues. The first one regards the nature of the Enlightenment. Astigarraga does not give a preliminary definition of the Enlightenment: that Spain connected to the European Enlightenment is implied in his approach. The reader, however, perceives clearly that Astigarraga has a broad understanding of the different shades of enlightened thinking. In the Epilogue he flatly rejects Jonathan Israel's assumption that the radical Enlightenment was a different and more authentic form of Enlightenment than the mainstream Enlightenment of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Condillac, Locke, Newton, and Hume, who, according to Israel, rejected the main line of egalitarian, democratic, republican, and anti-colonial thought. In Spain, modernisation was possible only through a collaboration with a section of the monarchical apparatus: no monarchy, no modernisation.

> […] the Spanish enlightenment had no need to base itself on an 'abstract theory of basic values' that were rational, secular, and materialist […] in order to develop regalist policies, eliminate privileges, combat the power of the Church, open up participation in the public sphere, activate the circulation of 'useful' writings, found new centers of learning, promote the press, contribute to the professionalization of men of letters and the secularization of art and its representations, support trade's good repute and university education (262–63).

A crucial part of the broad and open-ended notion of Enlightenment entertained by Astigarraga concerns political economy and the institutions created to familiarise the Spanish reading public with its theoretical innovations and practical recommendations.

'These transforming initiatives pointed in the directions of modernity, and political economy and its institutions played an irreplaceable role' (263). This statement leads us to the second general point raised by the author in the Epilogue: the legacy of the Enlightenment in the nineteenth century. The importance of the political economy of the Enlightenment to Spanish modernisation is undeniable, according to Astigarraga. It became evident in the Liberal Triennium from 1820 to 1823, 'one of Spain's great periods' (270), and it provided the nineteenth century with a sound basis for modernity by dismantling essential features of the old regime and breaking the ground for a new social, political, and economic setup. Hopefully, this transition will be the subject of Astigarraga's next book.

Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism

Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke, eds.
(Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021)
[ISBN 9789463720526]

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Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism is an edited volume containing twelve essays dealing with the concept of truth—and its 'manufacturing'—in the early modern Catholic world. Besides the papers, a very important contribution to the field is also the programmatic manifesto written by the four editors. 'Truth' is the word that stands out in the book title but, as the introduction highlights, even the 'carved in marble' reformed world had to deal with uncertainty, doubts, and in-between zones. Catholics, both authorities and the common people, had to find their way and adapt to circumstances, especially in such a globally expanded reality.

The historians and philosophers mentioned in this introduction are many—Michel de Certeau, Bruno Latour, and Pierre Bourdieu among others—and of the utmost importance to understand the scope and perspective of the editors. They wish to adopt an interdisciplinary methodological approach typical not only of historical sciences (mainly religious history and history of knowledge) but also of science studies. This praxeological view is based not on how things should have been (in theory), but on how they were (in real life).

The starting point is the Latin definition of 'fact': 'facta,' that which is fabricated. Thus, looking for univocal and unambiguous 'facts' in history (and also in science, as it has been recently admitted by the scientific community as well) does not make any sense, and even if it would, the fact would not be objective *per se*. What the contributors to this book are looking for is 'credibility,' not the truth, and this can be found in sources that ascertain the actual practices: notes of the Roman congregations, letters, petitions, and also fiction.

Another important element of this book is its focus on the plurality of Catholicism(s) around the globe. Studies by Simon Ditchfield and Peter Burke have well demonstrated how there was no single Roman Catholicism during the early modern period. Such a perspective has been adopted by the POLY research group directed by Birgit Emich ('Polycentricity and Plurality of Premodern Christianities, ca. 700–1800 CE,' funded by the German Research Foundation [Deutsche

Forschungsgemeinschaft] and housed at Goethe University Frankfurt), of which two of the editors (Andreea Badea and Bruno Boute) are active members.

The book is divided into three sections corresponding to how the idea of 'truth' could be depicted and adapted, with the first one focusing on 'Accommodating.' The concept of *accommodatio*, i.e., adapting to local cultures, customs, and languages (if not in clear and open contrast with Catholicism) is well known and associated mainly with the Society of Jesus. However, accommodation practices were necessary for every Catholic, operating both in familiar territories and in the most exotic and distant civilisations. Rome as a central hub is a great starting point for studying the different shades of Catholicism, and clearly, the missionary territories constitute fundamental case studies.

Rudolf Schuessler examines the approaches of the scholarly community toward reasonable disagreements. Controversies of the early modern period brought to the conclusion that, even in the perspective of *una ecclesia*, there was the possibility of the coexistence of multiple opinions, all considered equally 'probable.' Marco Cavarzere studies the fascinating case of oaths pronounced by Catholic and non-Catholic parties in commercial relations in the Indies: were the 'false' (according to the Roman perspective) gods able to guarantee a trustworthy agreement? Steven Vanden Broecke deals with the study of cosmology in the Habsburg Netherlands, a Catholic enclave where Galileo's theories were officially condemned, but at the same time, Copernican heliocentrism continued to be taught. Brendan Röder demonstrates how Roman authorities tended to believe more in the *vox populi* than in medical opinion in cases in which clergymen showed impediments (like diseases and mutilations) hindering their pastoral tasks.

The second section is about 'Performing,' in the sense of 'pretending' but also 'acting as if:' it is in this perspective that Boute examines the administration of the sacrament of penance as a performing act. Birgit Emich focuses on beatifications and canonisations, which were totally reformed in the early modern period. These processes first involved legal experts (summoned to judge holy episodes), then religious personalities (such as cardinals), but in the end, the pope was the one and only proclaiming the blessed or saint. Badea uses the example of the potentially dangerous works written by 'critical' Catholics (like the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum* and Mabillon's *Epistola de cultu sanctorum ignotorum*), to show one of the Roman reactions to changes: counterattacking with discrediting campaigns to establish its *auctoritas* in historical-religious matters. Focusing more specifically on the history of science, Maria Pia Donato studies the approaches to sacramental physics in the Eucharist, while Leen Spruit scrutinises the interactions and clashes between philosophical psychology and Roman orthodoxy.

'Embedding' is the title of the last section, opened by Vittoria Fiorelli's essay on the Neapolitan Giacinto del Cristofaro, which clarifies what at the time could be considered 'atheism'—and as such condemned. Cecilia Cristellon uses the declaration

of Benedict XIV (1741) as a lens to acknowledge the Church's efforts to face what was a common problem of the time, i.e., the marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics or between non-Catholics without sacerdotal attendance. The concluding essay by Rivka Feldhay invites readers to consider early modern history not as a linear path to the progressive autonomy of the religious, political, and scientific fields, but as a stimulating phase in which all of them are intertwined, interdependent, and evolving.

This book is a rich and dense collection of essays looking at / deconstructing 'truth' from complementary perspectives. The scholars involved in the project include historians and philosophers of science, all of them focusing on different sources with different approaches and contributing to answering the fascinating questions posed by the editors in their introduction, which is concluded with a selected bibliography that constitutes a good basis for further studies in this direction. The quality of the contribution is remarkable: clear in its argumentations and wide-spanning, this book creates a fruitful and coherent discussion among scholars studying the early modern period in all its multifaceted complexities.

Trading Companies and
Travel Knowledge in the Early Modern World
Aske Laursen Brock, Guido van Meersbergen and Edmond Smith, eds.
(London and New York: Routledge, 2022)
[ISBN 9781003195573]

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This edited volume is the fruit of the Hakluyt Society's 2017 symposium on travel writing and early modern trading companies. Given that Richard Hakluyt (1553–1616), the famous writer, translator, and compiler of travel writing, was himself a one-time employee of the English East India Company (EIC), the two subjects feel like an obvious match. Aske Laursen Brock, Guido van Meersbergen, and Edmond Smith further spell out the case for considering travel writing and trading companies together in their clear and concise introduction. A key starting-point for their argument is the adoption of a more capacious concept of 'travel knowledge' rather than more restrictive definitions of 'travel writing' that confine it to a specific literary genre. In doing so they draw on earlier work of scholars such as Joan-Pau Rubiés, but their originality consists in applying this insight to the voluminous collections of travel knowledge generated by the activities of trading corporations. Indeed, as companies were repositories of such knowledge, and often exerted considerable efforts in attempting to organise, control, and even censor knowledge in ways that were essential to their operations, they present an opportune site for such an approach. This offers the chance for a reappraisal of both travel writing and trading companies. As the editors point out (11), the former has largely focused on individual travellers, yet adopting a corporate perspective permits the consideration of more collective forms of travel writing, as well as non-textual sources. Seeing the corporation as a vehicle for the creation of travel knowledge, meanwhile, 'throws new light on the internal uses of information by corporate actors and the ways they engaged with, relied on, and supplied various external publics' (6).

The volume is organised into three loose themes, 'Managing information', 'Multiple actors and perspectives', and 'Company lives.' As the editors readily acknowledge, the coverage is not intended to be comprehensive. In fact, all but two of

the chapters treat either the Dutch or English/British corporate experience.[1] This Anglo-Dutch monopoly is somewhat leavened, however, by the inclusion of some of the smaller trading companies beyond the usual suspects of the EIC and the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or Dutch East India Company (VOC), including the so-called *voorcompagnieën* (the precursor companies of the VOC), the Levant Company, and the Massachusetts Bay Company. South and South East Asia provide the dominant geographic focus, with some Atlantic excursions as well as the aforementioned Levant Company's experience of the Ottoman Empire. Temporally the chapters are principally orientated around the seventeenth century, with the later eighteenth century also finding some representation. As is the case with many edited volumes emerging from conference proceedings the themes are not always as tightly or cohesively followed in the individual chapters as one might hope for. However, a looser organising principle does arguably help to accommodate chapters treating such a diverse array of 'travel knowledge'.

The first two chapters of the 'Managing information' section share a similar concern in excavating the particular circumstances in which documents involving travel were produced, used, and on occasion, misused. Djoeke van Netten's innovative contribution looks at how maps and coastal charts were actually employed in practice during the voyages of the *voorcompagnieën* undertaken in the late sixteenth century. An especially fascinating anecdote (35) sees one Dutchman interrogated by a local interlocutor in Bali about the relative proportions of his own nation compared to China. With a map (later brought before a local ruler), he was able to misleadingly show that Holland was much bigger, expanding its borders to include Germany, Eastern Europe, Norway, and some of Russia for good measure. Guido van Meersbergen and Frank Birkenholz's chapter delves into the daunting world of VOC record production, including reports on local polities and cultures recognisable as travel knowledge. Their piece is brilliantly evocative of the reams of paper that tied the VOC's world together, encapsulated in the example of a memorandum issued to Company employees on how to write memoranda. Another strength of this chapter is its comparative treatment of the EIC's forms of record production (49).

Moving on from the Dutch, the second two chapters of this section approach the theme from a different angle. Giorgio Tosco's chapter presents a welcome exception to the Anglo-Dutch focus, comparing the little-known transoceanic trading ventures of Genoa and Tuscany. Tosco foregrounds the transnational networks that helped produce the travel and trade reports deployed in the promotion of these ventures, reminding us of the emulative nature of trading companies. Edmond Smith's chapter provides an intriguing counterpoint to the overall thrust of the volume, showing how individuals in the North American context might outmanoeuvre

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[1] Felicia Gottman and Phillip Stern have recently made the case for the importance of other European nations' trading companies as well as their mutual entanglement, see their 'Introduction: Crossing Companies,' *Journal of World History* 31, no. 3 (2020): 477–88, doi:10.1353/jwh.2020.0028, and the other articles of this special issue.

corporations such as the Massachusetts Bay Company in their acquisition and control of local knowledge. Given Smith's remarks about the importance of the North American context in determining corporations' relative success in such matters (92), it would have been interesting to hear more about his thoughts on how his examples compare with the Asian contexts that predominate in the rest of the book.

The chapters of the second section, 'Multiple actors and perspectives', are perhaps more united by their common concern with the EIC rather than their organising theme, which is admittedly quite vague. Amrita Sen examines travel accounts in the context of the Bengal famine of 1770, replete with terrible stories of human suffering. As she argues, these helped to prompt metropolitan criticism of the EIC's regime in Bengal. Jyotsna G. Singh's chapter on William Hawkins' presence at the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) draws a pleasing contrast with Sam Ellis' chapter on the EIC's expeditions to Nepal in the late eighteenth century. Singh's chapter examines how William Hawkins, an English ship captain for the EIC, ended up being assimilated into Jahangir's court as an 'English Khan' and married off to an Armenian woman from the emperor's harem. Ellis' contribution, meanwhile, details the service and writings of Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan, a Bengali ambassador for the EIC sent to Nepal, who also produced reports on topography and nomadic peoples for the colonial state. From different perspectives and periods, both pieces evoke surprising cross-cultural influences, agencies, and mediations that could manifest in such encounters, seeking to complicate older interpretations, rooted either in ideas of cultural 'incommensurability' (118), or reductive applications of Edward Said's notion of Orientalism (161, 178).

The chapters of the final section focus on 'Company lives'. A common feature of the first three chapters are the various disputes and feuds in which these individuals became embroiled. Stefan Halikowski Smith offers a thoughtful and erudite treatment of the controversial Jesuit priest Guy Tachard (1651–1712), whose writings he situates between the French *Compagnie Royale des Indes Orientales*, and that other famous global 'company'—the Jesuit order. Halikowski Smith's contribution is especially welcomed in bringing a missionary perspective on travel literature that also pays attention to the specifics of the French imperial and corporate context (192, 194). One minor quibble, however, concerns his claim that 'there was no real genre of French company travel narrative' (202). At least by the eighteenth century, one can choose from a decent selection of published narratives, with many yet unpublished.[2] The two following

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[2] For some published examples of travel writing by employees of the French *Compagnie des Indes*, see JEAN-BAPTISTE CHEVALIER, *Les aventures de Jean-Baptiste Chevalier dans l'Inde orientale (1752-1765): mémoire historique et journal de voyage à Assem*, ed. JEAN DELOCHE (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984); INDRANI RAY, 'Journey to Cassimbazar and Murshidabad: Observations of a French Visitor to Bengal in 1743', in INDRANI RAY, *The French East India Company and the Trade of the Indian Ocean. A Collection of Essays*, ed. LAKSHMI SUBRAMANIAN (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1999), 121–143, and MARC-ANTOINE CAILLOT, *A Company Man. The Remarkable French-Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies. A Memoir*, ed. ERIN GREENWALD (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2013).

chapters deal with travel writings produced by employees of the Levant Company. Eva Johanna Holmberg contrasts two very different works of autobiographical travel writing to tease out some of the contradictions and gendered strategies lurking beneath the surface of such works. The gossipy account of John Sanderson (c. 1561–1627) is especially compelling, as Sanderson constantly falls out, argues, and even comes to blows with his colleagues. Another contentious Levant Company employee is the subject of Aske Laursen Brock's chapter, which also adds an additional legal dimension, based as it is on a 1697 pamphlet accompanying his bankruptcy case. Souvik Mukherjee's chapter, on the digital archive created from a Dutch cemetery in Chinsurah in Bengal, bears perhaps the most tenuous relation to the volume's theme. Nonetheless, he brings to light the interesting local history of this little-known Dutch colony through some of its notable residents.

Overall the volume succeeds in its stated aim of demonstrating the historical entanglement of early modern travel writing and trading corporations, and the fruitful results of treating the two together. Its coverage and themes are not necessarily cohesive or comprehensive, and a wider consideration of how the relationship between trading companies and travel writing changed over time might also have expanded the book's impact and argument. Nonetheless, the volume represents an important contribution to the study of both early modern companies and travel literature, especially for those working on the English or the Dutch. In her afterword Nandini Das gives a wonderful quote from the famous English ambassador to the Mughal court Thomas Roe (1581–1644) in which he complains that the letters he received from EIC employees were,

> 'nothing but a bundell of contradictions […] wherin I saw they tooke more pleasure to Argue then to execute, and to showe their witt and authoritye then to yield to anything not of their owne propounding, their reasons being a mist of errors.' (290).

The contributions in this volume skilfully unknot such 'bundells of contradictions', delving beyond the often self-serving rhetoric of early modern travel writing to reveal the complicated and ambiguous experiences of cross-cultural interaction that accompanied and facilitated long-distance trade.

I missionari dell'ordine
Pensiero e amministrazione nell'Impero britannico
(secoli XVIII–XIX)
Matilde Cazzola
(Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021)
[ISBN 9788815294791]

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Matilde Cazzola's book reconstructs the transformations of the concepts of sovereignty and government in the political thought and practices of some of the most important administrators of the British Empire between the mid-eighteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. Drawn from her doctoral dissertation, Cazzola's research focuses on three moments of imperial crisis: the American Revolution, the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, in 1865, and the Sepoy mutiny in India in 1857. For Cazzola, these three moments constitute an interesting point of view for reconstructing the 'semantic struggle' on the main modern political concepts, and the mutual influences between the theoretical conflicts and administrative practices deployed to preserve the political and social order of the British Empire. Quoting an essay by Thomas Carlyle entitled *Government* (1843), the Author reads British administrators as 'missionaries of Order': men endowed with a strong pragmatism, concerned with governing the constant insurgencies that undermined the stability of power relations to make colonial disorder an 'ordered world' (19).

The central thesis of the book is that the thinking and practices of colonial administrators show contradictions and aporias of both liberal political theory and colonial discourse. Defined by the Governor of Ceylon Thomas Maitland as the enforcers of a 'middle power' (12), standing between the high sphere of imperial institutions and the low sphere of social conflicts, administrators are thus for the Author particularly effective to highlight the tensions between political philosophy and practices of government. More specifically, the figures analysed challenge the spatial and temporal assumptions of liberalism. First, the distinction, already theorised by John Locke, between the colonial space dominated by despotism and the civil state theoretically grounded in representative sovereignty is blurred. Second, it emerges a reversal of the conception of historical time as progress led by civilised Europe and gradually extended from the centres of empires to the uncivilised colonial peripheries. On the contrary, according to some administrators of the

second half of the nineteenth century, British India was an efficient model of political and legal order compared to the disordered Europe. Indeed, after the revolutions of 1848 and the extension of suffrage in England with the Reform Act of 1867, the problem of democracy was considered a spread of 'barbarism' that prefigured a 'return of the past into the present' (219).

From a methodological point of view, Cazzola's research thus presents innovative aspects. On the one hand, different sources – such as ordinances, legal codes, minutes, memoirs, and private correspondences – are read as texts for the history of modern political thought and put in conversation to the great classics that formed the philosophical references of colonial administrators: from Hobbes to Locke, to Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill. On the other hand, Cazzola's research intersects different historiographical traditions: from the German *Begriffsgeschichte* to the history of political concepts developed in Italy; from the more recent works of legal and imperial history to the history from below and the different strands that have emerged from subaltern studies and post-colonial studies. The ambitious, and successful, goal is to contribute to the formation of a global history of political concepts that investigates the colonial foundations of Western modernity. In this sense, the methodological lesson of history from below is particularly important. For the Author, the transformations of the concepts of sovereignty and government are reactions to colonial insurgencies. Not surprisingly, this book comes out alongside another monograph by Cazzola devoted to the English thinker Thomas Spence (1750–1814), who theorised a revolutionary plot by the exploited workers of the Atlantic.[1]

I missionari dell'ordine's first chapter is devoted to Thomas Pownall (1722–1805), Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay between 1757 and 1760 and a member of the House of Commons from 1767 to 1780. The core of Pownall's theory of government lies in what Cazzola defines as the 'law of proprietary gravitation' (33), which determines power relations both within states and internationally. Criticising contractualism in the wake of Hume, and anticipating the critique of Ferguson and Smith, Pownall argued that government should limit itself to 'organise' and making more efficient the order 'naturally' formed in civil society and characterised by property relations. Through metaphors drawn from Newtonian physics, Pownall thus thought a theory of 'social gravity': like celestial bodies, individuals and states are hierarchically ordered either as owners or as economic powers that attract weaker bodies into their orbit. Pownall measures this concept of government facing the American Revolution. At the outbreak of the Stamp Act crisis, he defended the stability of the British Empire by proposing the creation of an 'imperial federation' that recognised the 'effective freedom' of the thirteen colonies while safeguarding a 'practicable sovereignty' of the Crown and Parliament (63).

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[1] MATILDE CAZZOLA, *The Political Thought of Thomas Spence: Beyond Poverty and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2022).

During the 1770s, Pownall understood that the United States of America loomed as a new power in the Atlantic space that would form its own gravitational orbit, undermining the maritime supremacy of the British Empire (68). On the eve of the Treaty of Paris (1783), Pownall advanced the project of an 'Atlantic alliance': an Anglo-American 'family compact' based on common commercial interests and connected to a liberal turn against mercantilism in economic policy (79–81). It was a project that Pownall also tried to represent in different maps. In particular, in the map entitled *The Atlantic Ocean* (1787), the former governor depicted Britain as distinctly separated from continental Europe because of its imperial projection towards the 'Western Atlantic Ocean.'

The second chapter analyses the problem of 'free' labour government, which came to the fore with the abolition of slavery in 1834 and reached a turning point with the so-called Eyre controversy, the public debate on the brutal repression of the Morant Bay rebellion, ordered by Governor Edward Eyre in 1865. Before addressing these issues, the chapter reconstructs some eighteenth-century premises on labour management by analysing the thought of administrators who confronted the abolitionist movement, such as Edward Long (1734–1815), and the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution (97–103). Afterwards, the Author discusses Edward Gibbon Wakefield's colonisation project of Australia, according to which in the absence of slavery it was necessary to 'produce' the coercion to wage labour by making land ownership inaccessible to colonial workers. The chapter shows the global circulation of Wakefield's plan and its impact on former slave owners, jurists, academics and administrators throughout the British Empire and particularly in the Caribbean. Indeed, after emancipation, Caribbean colonies became a 'laboratory' for practices of labour government and the improvement of workers discipline that could be exported and applied also in Europe (122). However, the rebellion of former slaves undermined the earlier belief in the possibility of 'educating' black workers to 'freedom' and reinforced the spread of racial theories developed in the 1840s and 1850s – a very interesting aspect that could have been explored a little bit more by the Author. In particular, the Eyre controversy, which involved important figures such as Mill and Carlyle, reveals a conflict on the concept of 'sovereignty' won by the advocates of a strengthening of the executive power. Indeed, after this crisis Jamaica became a Crown colony. Through the debates on the abolition of slavery, the chapter reconstructs the emergence of a new notion of 'constitution' conceived as 'an instrument to govern social processes' (151).

Finally, the third chapter analyses the government of British India, and in particular the two most important codifiers of colonial law: Thomas Macaulay (1800–1859) and Fitzjames Stephen (1829–1894). Through these figures, the chapter outlines the dominant currents of colonial politics in India: the reformist and optimistic moment of the 1830s and the conservative and pessimistic turn of the 1860s. These positions are analysed in relation to the colonial discourse that represented Indian people according to temporal categories: 'barbarians' that lived in

an eternal past. In the first period, Macaulay is the most relevant interpreter of the ideology of 'improvement,' connected to the tradition of white abolitionism and the so-called civilising mission. Similarly to John Stuart Mill, Macaulay theorised a 'despotic good government' that aimed at civilising a population anchored in 'anachronistic' social and political forms (174–75). However, after the Sepoy mutiny of 1857, Stephen's thought became predominant. Strongly influenced by Bentham, Stephen based his codification of colonial law on the idea of a despotic exercise of sovereignty, conceived as 'the totality of social relations of power formalised by the law' (203). For the Author, what is particularly interesting about Stephen is his ability to highlight both the 'authoritarian' aspects of liberalism and the repercussions of colonial power in metropolitan spaces (218). Indeed, Stephen believed that the Anglo-Indian regime was a model for solving the social problems of Great Britain, to correct the 'fundamental fallacies of liberalism,' which was unable to govern the irruption of the masses into politics. More specifically, Stephen did not oppose the Reform Act of 1867, but believed that this process should be governed by the elite in order to preserve social hierarchies. In this sense, his codification of Anglo-Indian law could inspire new forms of political and legal order for a Great Britain dangerously exposed to 'social and racial degeneration,' to the risk of becoming like a 'colony' (227).

Rereading Travellers to the East: Shaping Identities and Building the Nation in Post-unification Italy

Beatrice Falcucci, Emanuele Giusti, and Davide Trentacoste, eds.
(Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2022)
[ISBN 9788855185783]

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This volume edited by Beatrice Falcucci, Emanuele Giusti, and Davide Trentacoste aims to offer a new historical perspective on post-unification Italy by following three research guidelines, namely: travel writing; the search for 'Italianness' and the construction of a national identity in post-unification Italy, and the history of Oriental studies and Orientalism in Italy. These three research guidelines intertwine with one another in the various contributions of the volume, forming a complex web of individual and collective stories that provide the readers with a new and more complete knowledge of the instrumental use of some famous 'Italian' travellers carried out in the past both at an academic and a popular level. The result of a process that had already begun in the past centuries, the exaltation of the Italian genius and the birth of the 'myth of travellers' to the East (13) reached its height in post-unification Italy, particularly, during the years of the Fascist regime. The original perspective and added value of this volume are encompassed in the 'rereading' of the title. The essays of the volume in fact share the same methodological approach in that the authors' analysis does not so much concentrate on travellers' enterprises and/or travel narratives, rather, they aim to disclose the 'rereading' processes of these travellers' enterprises and narratives in order to identify and analyse methods and objectives of rereaders in post-unification Italy. The book contains eight essays (plus an afterword) which provide a vivid and interdisciplinary fresco of the rereading processes of some of the most important travellers of the Italian peninsula: from Marco Polo and Matteo Ricci of pre-unification Italy to the travellers of the 'new' unified Italy such as Pellegrino Matteucci or Giuseppe Tucci. At the time, these rereadings and reinterpretations were carried out both at the institutional level (first of all through the studies carried out by the Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente or IsMEO) and by individual scholars. Through the essays of the contributors and their rereading of these historical processes, it is thus possible to attain a wider panorama of the history of Oriental studies and Orientalism in Italy.

In the Introduction, the editors keenly highlight the pitfalls one could fall into when researching a topic founded on terms such as 'Italian' and 'Oriente' (the East), i.e, 'lands that early modern Europe called the Orient, the Indies or the Levant' (10). These concepts have of course changed over time, and these changes need to be taken into account to contextualise both the Italian travellers analysed and their successive reinterpretations and iterations. Furthermore, the editors' choice to focus on travellers and travel writing is dictated by the very nature of this genre which, more than others, is characterised by an 'openness' and intersectionality allowing 'for virtually endless interpretative possibilities' (14).

The volume opens with an accurate historical reconstruction by Beatrice Falcucci of the rereadings and studies related to Italian travellers of the past. The scholar thus points out how the recovery of pre-unification travellers is part of a process of nation-building and national identity that finds its climax during the Fascist regime and the foundation of the IsMEO and that contributed to making the East more 'familiar and close' to the Italian audience. Fabrizio De Donno's essay focuses on Africa by presenting two different time frames corresponding to two different narratives and visions of Italian travellers in Africa (colonial and post-colonial): from the Fascist reinterpretation of Pellegrino Matteucci's travels by Cesare Cesari—which made him a 'heroic precursor of the Fascist colonialism' (68)—to the contemporary rereading of Emanuelli and Montanelli by Del Boca and Scego respectively, rereadings aimed at bridging the sense of shame and the Italians' 'amnesia' of Italy's colonial past. Alessandro Tripepi focuses on the two Japanese embassies in Italy that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in order to highlight how these embassies were reread in later periods and in particular in post-unification Italy, when they were instrumentally reread to build an alleged history of contacts between the two countries and justify the Italian support for Japan. Aglaia de Angeli's essay concentrates on Ludovico Nocentini's rereading of the life of Matteo Ricci. Nocentini was the first to focus on Ricci's cultural contributions, rather than on his religious objectives and outcomes. Ricci is not only one in the long genealogy of Italian travellers to the East— which, unlike other European powers, are represented as more interested in cultural exchanges than in conquer—but he is also consecrated by Nocentini as the founding father of European Sinology, thus establishing another Italian primacy. Luca Orlandi traces the history of Italian expansionism in the Dodecanese, placing emphasis on Italian contributions in the field of art, architecture, and archaeology especially through the works of Hermes Balducci. The latter, in line with Fascist propaganda, sought historical traces of *Romanità* and *Italianità* on the islands to legitimate Italian power. Through the rereading of the historiography on Fakhr al-Dīn II, Davide Trentacoste draws a fascinating parallelism between the expansionist policies of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Fascist regime. Central to the author's analysis is the biography of the Druze emir written by Paolo Carali in 1935 and aimed at reconstructing a presumed historical continuity in the contacts between Italy and Lebanon. Laura De Giorgi's interesting essay is dedicated to the rereadings of Marco Polo's *The Travels*. Her study provides an overview of the European and Italian rereading and appropriation of the

Venetian traveller over the centuries and also has the merit of underlining that the 'iconic significance' attributed to Polo (in Italy and Europe) has actually had limited reception in China. Taking Iran as a reference, Emanuele Giusti traces the history and birth of Iranian studies in Italy, in particular those on Italian travellers to Iran, which complied with 'the idea of the continuous cultural and "civilizational" exchange between Italy and Iran' (183). This idea was particularly carried forward by scholars who revolved around the IsMEO, so Giusti's essay symbolically closes the volume and returns to the starting point. In the Afterword, Giovanni Tarantino breaks away from travellers and travel writing to address examples of rereading in the field of cinema and theatre. The author focuses in particular on three different works: the documentary *Chung Kuo/China* by Antonioni (1972), the French film *Les Chinois à Paris* (1974) by Jean Yanne, and the rereading of a libretto from 1739 (*Ballet des Porcelaines*) in the recent reinterpretation and re-creation by Meredith Martin and Phil Chan. As pointed out by Tarantino, this rereading, which reverses the roles by replacing the Chinese antagonist with a European, differs from other rereadings because it is not aimed at 'assimilation and domination' but is 'a story of restitution, reparation and beauty' (219).

The mosaic that emerges from the essays in this volume is that of a post-unification Italy and a Fascist regime in which the search for an Italian identity (expressed here through the appropriation, rereading and re-creation of the myth of 'Italian' travellers to the East) sometimes assumes the disturbing contours of the Italian (Fascist) obsession for 'Italian primacy' in order to justify the colonial aims of the regime but also to fill the sense of frustration arising from the lack of recognition of Italian 'greatness' abroad.

As underlined in the Introduction, women are notably absent from this story of traveling and travel writing which suggests, as the editors acknowledge, that studies in this area are still far behind. All the authors have succeeded in providing an overview of the rereading of Italian travellers to the East in their specific field of study, even if some essays give too much space to theory on the rereading or to the historical background than to the rereading itself. Nevertheless, all the essays are accompanied by a rich, useful, and up-to-date bibliography and use accessible language, making for a pleasant and very readable book, which could even appeal to a non-specialist audience. To conclude, the work of Falcucci, Giusti, and Trentacoste has great value and manages to offer readers new perspectives and new views on the recent past of Italy.

The Dawn of Everything. A New History of Humanity

David Graeber and David Wengrow
(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021)
[ISBN 9780374157357]

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'In this book we will not only be presenting a new history of humankind, but inviting the reader into a new science of history, one that restores our ancestors to their full humanity' (24). David Graeber (1961–2020) and David Wengrow (b. 1972) do not shy away from big promises. *The Dawn of Everything* is a book about the early history of humankind and how engaging with this early history speaks to the present. Contrary to ideas of determinism and stages of development—classical teleological narratives that lurk in many history books—the authors emphasise the possible (pre-)historical plurality of social organisations and the role of human choice and 'playfulness' (25) therein. Or, in other words, instead of going from cave dweller to hunter-gatherer, to farmer and then self-inflicted oppression, humans have always experimented with all kinds of ways of living together—none of these has ever been final and the present does not have to be either. For this mission, anthropologist Graeber and archaeologist Wengrow draw heavily on their respective expertise. Nevertheless, they do not only stick to their genre, but also dip into the discipline of historiography, in which neither has a background. This review, on the other hand, takes a historian's perspective and contends that the book is neither *a* nor *the* history of anything, but an informative journey through the diversity of possible prehistoric and indigenous human existences. Yet if history is to serve as a corrective to our limited imagination of possible realities, it would be all the more important to pursue it as a science.

In 1754, Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his famous treatise, explored *The Origin and the Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind*. Graeber and Wengrow wanted to do the same. But then they realised that it would be far more effective to look for the origins of the *question* of social inequality and investigate how this question has shaped our understanding of early history (9). Making this introductory note, the authors express their analytical scope, which operates on two levels. The first concerns conventional representations of early human history. Conveniently, these still take inspiration from Rousseauian or Hobbesian thought: humans were free and equal, until they weren't; agriculture and growth made them put on the shackles of sedentary life, political hierarchy and social inequality. This idea, say the authors, is not only wrong but foundational. It has its origins in the era of European expansion and Enlightenment

(Chapter 2: Wicked Liberty). Confronted with the diverse indigenous peoples of the Americas, through their observation and exchanges with their representatives, Europeans developed a stage-based understanding of history. This understanding was not monolithic; it was a discourse in which indigenous voices were heard as well as used (politically). In order to be able to argumentatively counter these other—at times attractively informal—ways of life, say Graeber and Wengrow, Western intellectuals began to frame them as an earlier stage in history, closer to the original egalitarianism. This myth, they claim, still informs the public today.

The second analytical level of the work builds on this observation. If our previous way of looking at early history stems from a flawed, colonial narrative, what might a new, open and mindful history of humankind look like? In reply, Graeber and Wengrow decide to highlight what they think distinguishes humankind as a species: our ability to think in complex political terms and to ponder what the consequences of this or that distribution of power and resources would be. The conscious shaping of coexistence, they argue, is not a European achievement, but a natural human characteristic. There never was an original egalitarianism, but a playing field of endless possibilities. Needless to say, their history does not follow a chronological thread. Instead, topical chapters (e.g., slavery, agriculture, early settlements) tackle the presuppositions that follow from an evolutionary scheme. Does agriculture lead to a sedentary life? Does ownership ensure social inequality? Does a large group of people need a central authority of rule and administration; do they have to turn into a proto-state? The authors give unusual, original and thoughtful answers to these questions by bringing together archaeological interpretations of prehistorical places such as Göbekli Tepe, Teotihuacan and Çatalhöyük with historical-anthropological studies on various peoples and tribes such as the Creek, Hadza and !Kung-San. And with some confidence, they draw their own conclusion: that there seems to be no inherent logic or determination in the course of prehistory. Our ancestors were flexible in their forms of political organisation; they were mobile and retained their independence when a system proved no longer tolerable. This lesson, end Graeber and Wengrow, speaks to our present by highlighting that today's nation-state capitalism is not once and for all.

As refreshing and informative as Graeber and Wengrow's anecdotal presentation of their evidence may be, for something aspiring to be the 'new science of history', it bristles with problems. The book defies a solid theoretical and methodological underpinning. By way of example, three basic principles of historical work are mentioned here: connectivity with disciplinary discourses and debates; methodologically elaborate criticism of sources; and thorough contextualisation that is in line with appropriate analytical concepts.

(1) As part of their tour de force, Graeber and Wengrow could touch on countless debates in the fields of archaeology, anthropology and history. This could be the importance of taking indigenous and non-traditional sources seriously and making them accessible; or the compelling question of what a prehistoricism without verbal sources and the modern science of history can learn from each other, and what role

anthropology should play in that. But the authors pass over most (inter-)disciplinary debates. Instead, their targets are the so-called 'Big Histories'. The assumptions they tackle do not come from the highly differentiated academic discourse, but from the simplified takes of Yuval Noah Harari, Jared Diamond, or Steven Pinker. There is a good reason why these takes have not found favour within the discipline. And as interesting as it is to see them deconstructed, Graeber and Wengrow too can only formulate many of their theses by foregoing precision and differentiation and shying away from determining the relationship between fragmentary evidence and the bigger picture.

(2) This is also evident in the nature of their source criticism. To make early modern indigenous voices tangible, Graeber and Wengrow explain that they have often been preserved in the curious treatises of European authors. Serving as their case in point is the French Baron de Lahontan who recorded his *Dialogues avec le sauvage Adario* (1703). The figure of Adario, they argue in line with previous research, is based on Kondiaronk from the North American Wendat Confederacy, who visited Europe in the sixteenth century. According to the authors, Kondiaronk commented on topics such as blind obedience to power and social ills in Europe, naming the organisation of private property as particularly irresponsible. Thanks to Lahontan, say the authors, these comments have been preserved. Graeber and Wengrow do, however, take Lahontan's voice for Kondiaronk's word. They neither contextualise Lahontan politically—his anti-Jesuit positions overlap strangely with Adario's views—nor realise that within the field of Early Modern History a differentiated and complex debate exists not only on indigenous voices and knowledge but also on rethinking European intellectual history as a whole.[1] Unfortunately, this lack of methodological reflection is also apparent in their discussions of archaeological evidence. To give just one example, to the premodern Mesoamerican metropole of Teotihuacan, Graeber and Wengrow attribute a form of 'dare we say republican tradition' (332), since the usual material attributes of Mesoamerican kingship are 'strikingly absent' (330). To infer the existence of one thing from the non-existence of another and then call it a 'republican tradition' is problematic, to say the least.

(3) As the last example shows, rethinking the relationship between archaeology, anthropology and history is nearly impossible if it is not preceded by reflection on the meaning of context and the analytical language developed to access it. Political life in the past did not just happen. When people made life-changing decisions, they certainly reflected on them thoroughly. They weighed these decisions according to their political and religious thinking, they negotiated them through conceptions of social, political and material togetherness. In a critical review essay, Chris Knight gives the example of Graeber and Wengrow's interpretation of the lavish *potlatch* banquets hosted by

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[1] SAMUEL MOYN, 'European Intellectual History after the Global Turn,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales - English Edition* (2022): 1–10, doi: 10.1017/ahsse.2022.6

Kwakiutl hereditary nobles.[2] The authors provide a conclusive interpretation of these festivities and their role in social cohesion, seasonal changes in hierarchies, and the value (or non-value) of wealth and wastefulness. Yet, as Knight points out, *potlatch* festivities developed in the face of rising colonialism, that is, as an old elite's attempt to show off power and wealth to their disintegrating peoples. The anarchic policy, Graeber and Wengrow observe, was therefore a reaction to political pressure and not a generic idea. What context is necessary to draw big conclusions from fragmentary evidence? Can the absence of evidence of an autocracy—as is the case with Teotihuacan—prove a republican form of government? And does the 'republican tradition', as a profoundly Western concept, not cover up indigenous political conceptions, even if we cannot name them? Graeber and Wengrow mistake writing about the past for the writing of history on the one hand, and a political take on history for political history on the other.

The Dawn of Everything wants to 'restore our ancestors to their full humanity' by helping them escape from the primitive patterns within which we usually think about them. Especially from the perspective of anarchist David Graeber, this makes sense. The world looks different once we accept that humans perhaps have no inherent scheme that forces us into permanent and hierarchical political structures. However, assuming that hitherto archaeology, anthropology and history were not aware of their conceptual limitations, and therefore inaugurating a critical reflection as 'a new science of history', is a bold move. Especially since the Graeber and Wengrow narrative turns ahistorical as it leaves little space for actors to think outside the terms of practical social arrangements. That is to say, the material, ideological or paradigmatic aspects of social life and questions of class and gender vanish behind the unfolding of deliberate individual choices in social, economic and religious matters. In speaking about *The Dawn of Everything*, Graeber and Wengrow do not give meaning to the processes they evaluate, but to the political potential of the evaluative process itself.

In the end, *The Dawn of Everything* raises once more (and more profoundly) what is for professional historians the perennial question of how we want to deal with popular Big Histories. Indeed, a core discrepancy is between the question that Graeber and Wengrow claim to raise and the answer that history as a science can give. The authors argue that we should reflect on the terms of our own historical judgment. Historians speak to the present, and do so with an analytical and conceptual toolkit dictated by the present, with a necessarily biased methodology and theory; so— Graeber and Wengrow challenge us—are we aware enough, open-minded enough, to perceive meaning that is outside our conceptual, ideological and paradigmatic framework of understanding? This critical question illustrates where pondering on history and professional discourse diverge. Especially since the development of post-colonial studies, illustrated by thinkers such as Walter Mignolo—a field that Graeber and Wengrow do not even mention—it is safe to say that today most historians are

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[2] CHRIS KNIGHT, 'Wrong About (Almost) Everything,' *FocaalBlog* (blog), December 22, 2021, https://www.focaalblog.com/2021/12/22/chris-knight-wrong-about-almost-everything.

well aware of the need to grapple with the conflict between evidence and interpretation, and between presuppositions, the subjectivity of sources (and research) and the limits of one's own interpretive capacity (languages, accessibility, contemporary bias). The writing of history is the science of exactly that. While speaking about *The Dawn of Everything*, we should not ignore Graeber and Wengrow's limited sense of history as a discipline. However, we should also ask ourselves critically whether the authors' assumption of a widespread simplified, early-modern picture of early history really is exaggerated. Big Histories are a stocktake of the changing public images of history and the political standing of history among the public. For historians, therefore, *The Dawn of Everything* can be an important reminder that the principles of our discipline are anything but familiar and self-evident, even for our disciplinary neighbours, let alone for the public, and that there might be discourses we need to engage with, despite their 'playful' ignorance of our rules.

Geografie del tempo.
Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi
nel Nord America del Settecento

Giulia Iannuzzi
(Roma: Viella, 2022)
[ISBN 9788833139968]

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Geografie del tempo, consisting of an introduction and eight chapters, derives from the author's doctoral dissertation and deals with the multifaceted topic of the encounter between Europeans and the First Nations of North America during the eighteenth century.

The central theme of the volume is the role played by European perceptions of Native Americans in the 'historical hierarchisation of human diversity' developed within eighteenth-century European culture. This process involved a 'disciplinary transformation and secularisation of time' and the construction of a history of society by stages of development, resulting in the overlay of temporal distance from the European present with geographical distance from Europe. The author argues that this hierarchisation also implied the emergence of a European cultural identity and a growing European awareness of the 'global' (7–9). Of course, Iannuzzi discusses these phenomena in connection to imperial projects that aimed to control peoples as well as space and time, thereby linking political and cultural forms of supremacy. This process was shaped in fundamental but ambivalent ways by direct observation of human otherness.

The first chapter ('Distanze temporali, distanze spaziali. Cenni storiografici') provides an overview of the relevant scholarly literature. While the author positions herself in the domain of the history of ideas and the history of historiography, the volume's methodological background is quite complex. Iannuzzi primarily draws on English-speaking literature, but also includes Italian contributions to the history of Europe's intellectual engagement with the 'discovery of America,' such as pioneering work by Antonello Gerbi, Giuliano Gliozzi, and Sergio Landucci, and the Italian-speaking scholarly tradition on otherness (*alterità*). Furthermore, the author uses Reinhart Koselleck's reflections on the notions of time and modernity as a conceptual framework for discussing the inclusion of Native Americans in increasingly

'secularised' and future-oriented narratives of history during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Koselleck's research has an impact on the volume's periodisation too. The author frames the eighteenth century as a turning point in processes that unfolded in the preceding centuries, rather than as an exceptional period (21). The author emphasises the value of the Enlightenment as a research category, as it highlights intellectual processes rather than disciplinary boundaries. The Enlightenment is presented as the convergence point of several phenomena relevant to the book's arguments, including the role of autopsy in knowledge production, the reconfiguration of European knowledge systems, the formation of new secularised and linear concepts of time, and the writing of stage-based histories that led to the temporal hierarchisation of human diversity (40–44). The chosen periodisation ends with Lewis and Clark's expedition, which the author later presents as both a recapitulation of preexisting features of the entanglements between knowledge production, colonial agendas, and commercial expansion, and the 'exploratory prelude' of a new phase dominated by the presence of the US government as an imperial power (77–82).

The volume contains a wealth of insights into potential avenues of research thanks to the combination of different historiographical traditions. However, the primary methodological focus is somewhat more traditional, centring around the interaction of text (or tradition) and observation in the field. As a result, the corpus comprises a wide array of written sources based on firsthand observation, excluding performative and visual sources such as paintings and plays, while the focus on British and 'American' authors allows for an examination of the imperial entanglements at play. Correspondingly, Iannuzzi analyses French writings only insofar as they are part of a shared cultural background and their use by English-speaking authors contributed to the formation of the dichotomy between a European 'self' and a Native American 'other' (66). From this point of view, *Geografie del tempo* offers a partially different picture from such classics as Michèle Duchet's *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (1971) or Landucci's *I filosofi e i selvaggi* (1972).

Chapter 2 ('Resoconti di viaggio e conflitti conoscitivi') lays the groundwork for the rest of the volume by providing bio-bibliographical outlines for each relevant author. The chapter focuses on administrators, policymakers, fur traders and 'explorers' up to Lewis and Clark. This highly informative chapter displays the author's dedication to a book history perspective. By thoroughly examining the political, social, cultural, and material context of the production of each source, Iannuzzi provides valuable insights into the often-complex process leading to the publication and later circulation of notes collected in the field. This approach allows the author to highlight the links between colonial events, the biographies of the observers, and the specific characteristics of the knowledge they produced about Native Americans. It also illuminates the tension between the individual and collective aspects of knowledge production and the entanglements between experience and tradition.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 delve into how concepts developing in Europe—savage, primitive, barbarian—were used to make sense of Native Americans' place in history, and how first-hand observation shaped such uses in eyewitness accounts. In chapter 3 ('Declinazioni diacroniche della diversità americana') the author explores how perceptions of skin colour, of the standing of women within native societies, and of the local effects of diseases shaped European hierarchical and dichotomous understandings of Native Americans. Chapter 4 ('Scrivere la storia degli altri') and chapter 5 ('Inscrivere gli altri nella storia') focus on classic questions related to European perceptions of Native Americans, such as their origins, their troubling or inspiring resemblance to Europe's past inhabitants, and their place in a history increasingly written by excluding local system of recording the past. The author notes both the continuities and the ruptures between missionary, Bible-inspired readings of the origins of Native Americans and the new temporal-spatial hierarchies within stage-based histories of society. Iannuzzi highlights the profound ambiguities of such readings: because Native Americans were seen as closer to the state of nature, they were simultaneously perceived as less 'civilised' than the European man and less corrupted by the vices of society imported through colonialism.

While this ambivalent picture of European perceptions of Native Americans is well known to scholars, chapter 5 convincingly fleshes it out by contrasting the reports produced by James Adair—trader and author of a *History of the American Indians* (1775)—and by John Douglas, who published the official report of Captain James Cook's third voyage (1776–1779). Adair argued for the Jewish origin of Native Americans while Douglas' *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (1784) provided a complex historical and philosophical framework of stages of development to explain encounters with Native Americans. Iannuzzi argues that Adair's thesis guided his observations and 'the attribution of semantic depth to the customs and traditions of native peoples' (195). Adair's work still served an imperial project, but it also allowed for cultural relativism, which could lead to criticism of colonial society. On the other hand, in the case of Cook's report, the temporal hierarchisation of Native Americans as 'savages' took place through a circular process of textual construction based on the report's theory-laden introduction as well as on the information that Douglas carefully selected for publication in the journal. In summary, these central chapters provide well-crafted examples of how observation in the field contributed to modifying, correcting, destroying, or confirming ethnocentric views of Native Americans that European travellers brought with them from Europe. The author rightly points out that these outcomes were not mutually exclusive, nor were they always clearly distinct from one another.

Chapters 6 and 7—the most original and compelling parts of the book together with chapter 8—further explore these issues in the linguistic domain. Chapter 6 ('Storia e discorso: interpreti, genealogie, gerarchie') focuses on how observers interpreted native languages and chapter 7 ('Vocabolari selvaggi') discusses dictionaries attached to travelogues. Language, recorded in various forms by travellers, was used as a source

for studying the origins of Native Americans and as evidence of their primitive developmental stage. Observers often claimed to have identified a lack of abstract and rationalising tools in native languages, which further solidified the derogatory view of indigenous forms of recording and communicating the past. However, these alleged linguistic deficiencies were also interpreted by Europeans as impacting Native Americans' ability to control the future, as argued in chapter 8 ('Un futuro malleabile'). By analysing, among other sources, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer* (1782), the author provides a dismal view of how European—soon to be 'American'—colonisers excluded Native Americans from their vision of North America's future, thus operating a double removal, first cultural and then material.

In conclusion, *Geografie del tempo* is a fascinating read that updates the Italian-speaking scholarly tradition on the subject through its attention to the linguistic and methodological issues of the last decades, while also offering interesting new research on some understudied subjects. However, the volume makes another important contribution by highlighting a persistent methodological problem within the subfield. The author acknowledges in the introduction that her analysis strives to consider the 'subjectivity of American interlocutors' (9), a perspective partially indebted to the field of Critical Indigenous Studies (38). The work pays commendable attention to the history of Native American polities by presenting a wealth of political and linguistic details and using endonyms consistently. Yet, Iannuzzi points out time and again the opaqueness of social and cultural relations between observers and observed—as seen in written sources—and shows how much European descriptions of Native Americans were socially and culturally removed from the 'source.' This underscores the extreme difficulty that historical sciences face in reaching out to the 'subjectivity of the North Americans interlocutors.'

Utopia
Una storia politica da Savonarola a Babeuf
Girolamo Imbruglia
(Rome: Carocci editore, 2021)
[ISBN 9788829004270]

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The book discusses the presence of utopian thought and discourse in early modern and eighteenth-century Europe, accompanying the reader on a fascinating journey across different centuries and beyond the political and denominational borders at the discovery of narratives, theories, projects, and experiences. More specifically, the volume maps the European cultural geographies of Utopia by following its trajectories as 'a central moment in the history of the secularisation of politics' (9).

The author adopts an entangled vision of European history, integrates different historiographies, and develops the itinerary of the book's four chapters connecting prominent historical phenomena: the intercontinental expansion, the religious fracture in Europe and inside European societies, the ancien régime's political and institutional conflicts, the reforms and the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. Regarding the 1789 turning point, Imbruglia observes, 'if Utopia had not achieved a revolutionary effect, the revolution brought about a utopian effect' (14).

The author chooses to give an extensive diachronic overview. Therefore, he sometimes privileges the description while limiting the historiographic analysis and the intertwining of facts and ideas in historical development. This choice results in minor generalisations and oversights.

However, Imbruglia often adopts an archaeological technique to thoroughly approach the ideological constellations and strata that subtend his collection of sources detecting utopian traces, categories, and grammar in European writers, political theorists, philosophers, and political actors.

Moreover, the author often discusses utopian texts word by word displaying a clear example of critical analysis and a practical approach for educational purposes. This methodology allows the reader to enter into direct contact with a broad multi-linguistic corpus of authors and themes through diachronic scrutiny. As a result, the volume offers true intellectual pleasure to the reader interested in the making and the cultural transfers of utopian reflections, motifs, and projects.

The book demonstrates extensive research experience on specific intellectual and cultural historical dimensions and reflects Imbruglia's predilection for some prominent figures. We refer, for instance, to the in-depth analyses devoted to More, Campanella, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Diderot. Furthermore, the author reaffirms the importance of the Jesuits as cultural mediators and creators of a broad exotic imagination in early modern and eighteenth-century European cultures.

The book intertwines growing European global interactions with utopian narratives, theories, and experiences. However, a more organic integration of the perspectives of Atlantic, global, and cross-cultural history would have probably allowed overcoming the residual tendency to exoticise the 'Others' and the 'Savages' described in the sources from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European 'discoveries' to the eighteenth-century European intercontinental competition through scientific voyages.

Far from being relegated to a remote past, both the 'Others' and the 'Savages' were very often coeval to the European writings carefully investigated by Imbruglia. Therefore, it could have been interesting to deepen the examination of ethnographic information within this utopian framework, considering the knowledge of archaeology, historical anthropology, material culture, and economic, political, institutional, and environmental history.

Imbruglia mainly focuses on the idealisation of the Jesuit missions in Iberian America and the utopian traces in the Puritan experiment in North America. He also mentions the heated debate on Amerindians' nature and rights in the *Monarquía hispánica* in the first half of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, he does not linger on the circulation of Thomas More's *Utopia* in the dawning Spanish America. However, since the end of the 1930s, the Mexican historian Silvio Zavala has discussed the transatlantic trajectories of More's text in post-Conquest Mexico against the backdrop of the evangelisation and the strategies to deal with indigenous peoples' mistreatment by the Spaniards.

Recently, Víctor Lillo Castañ attributed to Vasco de Quiroga the Spanish translation of *Utopia* in the Real Biblioteca's manuscript II/1087.[1] He suggested that the translation depends on the 1519 Florence edition by Filippo Giunti's heirs, given that Giovanni Giunti ('Juan de Junta') was active in Spain in the first half of the sixteenth century.[2]

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[1] VÍCTOR LILLO CASTAÑ, 'De la Utopía al Manual de buen gobierno: Vasco de Quiroga y el manuscrito II/1087 de la Real Biblioteca,' *AVISOS. Noticias de la Real Biblioteca* 26, no. 91 (2020): 1–4. https://avisos.realbiblioteca.es/index.php/Avisos/article/view/782/679. In 2021 the author published *El buen estado de la república de Utopía. Tomás Moro. Traducción de Vasco de Quiroga. Estudio y edición de Víctor Lillo Castañ*, Clásicos Políticos (Madrid: CEPC).
[2] VÍCTOR LILLO CASTAÑ, 'El manuscrito II/1087 de la Real Biblioteca: La primera traducción castellana de la *Utopía* de Tomás Moro,' *AVISOS. Noticias De La Real Biblioteca* 24, no. 86 (2018): 3. https://avisos.realbiblioteca.es/index.php/Avisos/article/view/482.

Lillo Castañ argues that the translation was 'very likely written in Mexico City Tenochtitlan between 1532 and 1535,'[3] and is 'the first vernacular complete version' of More's text.[4] In a new article for *Historia Mexicana* (2022), he examines the translation's transatlantic background as an example of the ever-changing texts' significance according to their creation, reception, and circulation contexts.

> In Europe, *Utopia* was mainly read as a political fiction text and a critique of the society of the epoch, in no way meant to be used to organise society politically. In America, on the other hand, Vasco believed that a model of society could be built following Thomas More's work to educate the indigenous peoples, introduce them to the Christian faith, and protect them from the rapacity of conquerors and colonists.

> Thomas More wrote *Utopia* based on the first chronicles of the New World that reached Europe during the first half of the sixteenth century. The text made the reverse journey from Europe to America with Vasco de Quiroga. Because of More and Quiroga's different horizons of experience, the Spanish jurist was able to give a new significance to this text. Vasco, unlike More, had first-hand knowledge of the American reality and not only through literary sources. However, one last stage remains in More's *Utopia* metaphorical and physical journey. When Vasco's translation reached the Council of the Indies members in Spain, the text had already acquired a different meaning: on this fruitful round trip, *Utopia* ceased to be a book of political fiction and became a manual of good government.[5]

Imbruglia would have probably reduced the contraposition between Europe and the Hispanic world pointed out by Lillo Castañ.

The Italian author mainly focuses on European trajectories of utopian motifs but considers Utopia as a historical actor capable of critically crossing the oceans and the centuries, inviting the reader to reconnect the early modern and eighteenth-century Europe and the present-day globalised world.

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[3] VÍCTOR LILLO CASTAÑ, 'Una utopía para el Nuevo Mundo: Vasco de Quiroga y su traducción de la *Utopía* de Tomás Moro,' *Historia Mexicana* 72, no. 2 (2022): 639. https://doi.org/10.24201/hm.v72i2.4505.

[4] LILLO CASTAÑ, 'El manuscrito II/1087 de la Real Biblioteca,' 5. VÍCTOR LILLO CASTAÑ, 'Una traducción castellana inédita del Siglo XVI de la *Utopía* de Tomás Moro: Estudio del Manuscrito II/1087 de La Real Biblioteca de Palacio,' *Moreana* 55, no. 2 (2018): 184–210.

[5] 'En Europa, *Utopía* se leyó principalmente como un texto de ficción política, muy crítico con la sociedad del momento, pero que en ningún caso podía usarse para organizar políticamente a la sociedad. En América, en cambio, Vasco creyó que sobre la falsilla de la obra de Tomás Moro podía erigirse un modelo de sociedad que permitiera escolarizar a los indígenas, introducirlos en la fe de Cristo y protegerlos de la codicia de conquistadores y colonos. Tomás Moro escribió *Utopía* a partir de las primeras crónicas del Nuevo Mundo que llegaron a Europa durante la primera mitad del siglo XVI. Con Vasco de Quiroga, el texto hizo el viaje inverso, de Europa a América. Debido al distinto horizonte de experiencias que mediaba entre Moro y Quiroga, el jurista español pudo darle un nuevo significado a este texto pues Vasco, a diferencia de Moro, conoció de primera mano la realidad americana y no sólo a través de fuentes librescas. Queda, con todo, una última etapa en el viaje, metafórico y físico, que hizo la *Utopía* de Moro. Cuando la traducción de Vasco llegó a los miembros del Consejo de Indias, en España, tenía ya un sentido distinto: en este fecundo viaje de ida y vuelta, *Utopía* había dejado de ser un libro de ficción política para convertirse en un manual de buen gobierno' (LILLO CASTAÑ, 'Una utopía para el Nuevo Mundo,' 640).

More specifically, Imbruglia observes:

> Today, social and individual life structures are so diverse and complex that they push us to renounce the materialist monism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hence, the question of Utopia returns, and the need to consider Utopia as a hybrid, as [writers and philosophers] thought it in the modern age, resurfaces (168).

The author invites us to approach his book 'not [as] a history of Utopia as [a] genre […] inaugurated by Thomas More and dried up with the French Revolution' (9), but as a diachronic study that 'points out a problem to reconsider' (168). With this interpretation, he reaffirms Utopia as an ever-valuable intellectual and political tool because of its hybrid nature, nourished by multifaceted human reflections, aspirations, and experiences. That explains why he underlies that universalism and relativism, the pursuit of happiness and the acknowledgment of conflict, theory and practice, communitarianism and liberalism, may coexist within a utopian framework.

Imbruglia's ethical vision of the past encourages the reader in these challenging times marked by cultural and political polarisation, exploding inequality, environmental and climate crisis, and war.

Democratic Passions.
The Politics of Feeling in British Popular Radicalism, 1809–48
Matthew Roberts
(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022)
[ISBN 9781526137043]

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Politics is an emotional domain, as any observer of contemporary affairs would acknowledge. Despite this, studies of emotion in political life have been relatively slow in getting off the ground. In the Sociology of Emotion, there is now work on the emotions of protest movements and the crowd, and International Relations, particularly studies of humanitarianism, are now getting to grips with how emotion drives engagement across nations and shapes diplomatic relations. We might have expected more to be done in History, given that one of the founders of the modern field of the History of Emotions—William Reddy—brought us the concept of 'emotional regimes' through a study of regime change during the French Revolution. And yet, there is less that one might hope. *Democratic Passions* then brings a welcome and original contribution to the History of Emotions through a study of the uses of emotion by and in response to the writings, speeches, and political activities of a number of British radicals during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Over seven chapters and a scholarly introduction, Roberts considers eight political radicals and the emotional politics of their public personas: William Cobbett, Richard Carlile, Robert Owen, Richard Oastler, J.R. Stephens, William Lovett, and in the same chapter, Daniel O'Connell and Feargus O'Connor. The men share a common interest in political reform, notably around the expansion of suffrage and the rights of the working man, but each were known writers and campaigners with their own distinct agendas and political concerns. The volume takes a similar format in that each chapter looks at how its subject thought about the role of emotion in political life and how these beliefs shaped their political practice. It then highlights how these ideas were received by different audiences and used to configure support for or critiques of their political position.

Carlile, for example, offered an austere and dispassionate politics, but it came with a theory of emotion that located feeling in the body, not the heart or the mind. In doing so, he provided a form of emotional management to counteract the fear and awe that limited people's access to happiness. J.R. Stephens, by contrast, was known

for his impassioned rhetoric, that led to accusations that he lacked self-control. Yet even his emotion had rules, seeking to promote a form of 'refined sympathy' and expecting his followers to follow a moral code. Responses to these men reflected their emotional politics. Carlile's philosophy was viewed as blasphemous, but he also received criticism for failing to practice what he preached. Stephens' rhetoric inspired crowds, but alienated him from the propertied classes, who viewed such emotion as unruly. *Democratic Passions* argues that during the period of the study 'claims to political rationality were not only paved with affective tension, but that reason itself was an affective construct' (236). Through exploring how each of his subjects produced and performed political rationality, and how their ideas and politics flowed into larger conversations on this topic, this book provides a nuanced account of how nineteenth-century British society imagined emotions to function and their role in the governance of the self and the state.

The period of Roberts' study is a curious one for British historians of emotion. In my own scholarship, I have argued that for Irish and Scots alike, emotion was an important tool in a sentimental toolbox, readily deployed to persuade audiences, to demonstrate manliness to a watching public, and as a framework for political life. In contrast, English historians—although again until now no one has tackled these questions head on—have tended to argue for a decline in sentimentality and emotional expression for rational debate and selves that wish to distance themselves from feeling. If national distinctions are of course a possibility, it is a divergence of emotional cultures that has been calling out for further research. Can the United Kingdom really contain such an emotional divide? One of *Democratic Passions* important interventions is to demonstrate that the English do have a place for emotion in their imagining of the political subject, and through that the man, but that there was no simple story here of a uniform emotional political culture. Different radicals and their movements thought about the role of emotion in political life in different ways and that thinking shaped their politics, their persuasive strategies, and how they were treated by others, the public, the press, and the state.

The real art of the book is its capacity to tease out these complexities in thought and practice while nonetheless mapping the shared logics and connections that crossed movements and located these men as part of a shared emotional community or regime. The case study approach often risks failing to offer more than the sum of its parts, but this book offers an exemplar on how this approach can be used to offer nuance without losing sight of the bigger picture. Similarly, this is a book informed by emotions scholarship—Reddy's regimes and Rosenwein's communities are deployed at particular moments to consider how particular radical movements cohered, or did not—but where theory is used with a relatively light touch. *Democratic Passions* instead offers a study of the 'feeling rules' that were evident in their work, and which in some cases these men sought to shape, and 'affective politics' as the political condition they produce. Roberts argues that attention to how feeling rules are used by particular

groups allows us to pay greater attention to place and performance in productions of emotion, than the more holistic categories offered by Rosenwein and Reddy.

One result of this is that this is a historian's book, full of rich detail and context, and offers an important contribution not just to emotions history but to our understanding of radical politics, and I would suggest too to histories of masculinity and religion, during this era. If that is the case, it is a model for how to do this sort of research and will be of interest to everyone grappling with how to tease out the role and uses of emotion in political life.

Educating the Catholic People.
Religious Orders and Their Schools in Early Modern Italy
(1500–1800)
David Salomoni
(Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022)
[ISBN 9789004436466/9789004448643]

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Written by David Salomoni for Brill's series devoted to the History of Early Modern Educational Thought, *Educating the Catholic People* pursues an ambitious and brave aim, as brave and ambitious should be whoever enters the forest of the Catholic religious orders as a historian of early modern culture. Whereas the adjective 'Catholic' recalls the alleged universal reach of the Roman Church, the origin and development of its many institutes reveal the spiritual unrest of its flock, a structural issue that soared in the sixteenth century in the wake of Protestant Reformation and combined with the inherent particularism of Italian states and cities. Salomoni confidently navigates the complexity of this scenario while attempting to trace and highlight the educational landscape that several of these orders helped to build and, so far, needed a comprehensive treatise.

The volume can be seen as a logical and successful continuation of the author's debut monograph in the field of history of education (*Scuole, maestri e scolari nelle comunità degli Stati gonzagheschi e estensi: tra tardo Medioevo e prima modernità*, Rome: Anicia, 2017), which stemmed from his doctoral dissertation and dealt extensively with school systems in the regions ruled by Gonzaga and Este seigniories, through a wealthy and meticulous archival research. In a broader sense, as far as methodology and the design of the treatise are concerned, *Educating the Catholic People* gratefully declares its debt to the strand of studies inaugurated by Paul Grendler, still the fundamental achievement on the history of educational institutions in Italy during the Renaissance. Consistent with the model of Grendler's research on Italian universities, Salomoni maps the geographic distribution of religious orders and their scholastic endeavours through three levels of sources: unpublished archival documents, including notarial papers, contracts and letters; coeval printed sources, which include regulations and constitutions but also historical, religious and hagiographic texts; the reorganisation of a vast selection of post-1830 secondary literature, often with a local history or case study character, is also valuable. This aspect ensures the multiplicity of

perspectives indispensable in studying educational institutions, where politics, economic and social history, and the history of ideas and culture, including material culture, of a community intersect.

The author's historiographical thesis consists of two main statements. First, schools on the Italian peninsula in the modern age were not a monopoly of the Jesuits. Although the system of Jesuit colleges represents for Salomoni 'a benchmark in the background' (13) and also a parameter for non-denominational research, as it used to be studied by Jesuit and non-Jesuit scholars as well, the educational vocation emerged in many other religious orders and gave rise to long-lasting institutes and institutions, aimed at users of different ages, gender and social backgrounds, deeply linked to the territory: Barnabites, Somascan, Piarists, Theatines and Servites (only the latter were born before the Reformation, namely in the Medieval period) and then the Ursulines and the Angelic Sisters. Second, the density of educational experiences in the Po valley of Piedmont, Lombardy and especially Emilia-Romagna (Barnabites, Theatines and Piarists, Ursulines and the Angelic Sisters) contributes to further downplaying the 'black legend' of a North-Central Italy that after Cateau-Cambrésis declines irreparably as for economics and culture. On the contrary, schools proliferated where instances of religious renewal and concrete educational needs coexisted. For this reason, in the long centuries of the modern age, the areas of the Po valley were a second propulsive spiritual centre alongside that of the Roman area, which produced, however, more literacy for the ordinary people and more choice of schools for the ruling class. This way, the dissolution of the religious orders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries left on the field many ruins but also a ground well prepared to welcome the post-1815 moral, civil, and productive redemption and its limits.

In chapter 1 ('Educating the Modern Catholics?'), Salomoni outlines the prominent features of the Italian educational mosaic between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They set the passage from the communal era to the early modern period by modifying the relation between governments' aims and power representation. The path to the predominance of religious teaching is described through the dissemination of the Schools of Christiane Doctrine, which were first based in Milan and 'laid the groundwork for the arrival on the educational market of the new religious orders' (39). Grouped in male and female, for each order, Salomoni provides a careful survey on their genesis and, particularly, he recounts and investigates how each of them came to realise and put into effect its peculiar pedagogical vocation (chapter 2, 'Historical Paths'). It also highlights how the schools were involved in a threefold dynamic of tension, thus the conflict between orders and the Church (i.e., inconsistencies and dissent toward the Tridentine decrees), between orders and the secular power, and eventually internal conflicts within the orders themselves.

The 'Processes of Settlement' of schools and colleges (chapter 3) offer the most outstanding amount of quantitative data to understand the geographical key of

the work, thus the importance of the northern Italy urban net in the diffusion of religious schools throughout the Italian peninsula and abroad—as it was the case of the Somascan institutes. Its maps, numbers, and lists also provide tools for prospective comparative studies on the same subjects. Chapter 4 returns to the narrative style that is the author's signature and, under the title 'Different Types of Schools Operated by Religious Orders,' reconstructs a collection of cases exemplary of the primary forms the orders gave to their educational facilities. Extremely well-documented is what happened in the Duchy of Modena, where Jesuits and Piarists competed for the school population and the support of the local authorities. The same happens with the paragraph devoted to the little city of Guastalla, which proves the remarkable ease of Salomoni with local archives and microhistory sources. Nor the other paragraphs are less well finished, and the political reading of every single educational event (Somascans and the Diocesan Seminaries) and the cultural deepening of the female contexts (St. Charles' 'educandato') stand out.

The fifth and last chapter ('The End of an Educational Season') returns to tune the myth of the obscurantism of Catholic culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth century and the Enlightenment, as it deals with the intersection of science, education, and religious politics. Salomoni delves into some case studies that are relevant and fascinating at the same time. On the one side, the vicissitudes of religious scientists, mostly Piarists and Barnabites working during the age of 'scientific heresy' revolving around Galileo's and Newton's theories prove one more time how blurred the seventeenth-century Catholic culture was, shaped in any case by schools and teaching. On the other hand, through the history of religious schooling in the Republic of Venice, the author recalls some cornerstones in the general history of religious orders and tells the progressive fade of the dogmatic and cultural rivalry between the Catholic Church and the Protestant world. Finally, he collects the threads of some eighteenth-century cultural issues towards 'the end of an educational season' to eventually state that the Catholic schools of the religious orders did not finish either because clergymen were ignorant, or their methods were old-fashioned. They failed because the educational system provided by the religious orders had become too mixed, complex, and weak to face the needs of an all-embracing historical turn like the one set off by the French revolution and Napoleon.

Salomoni's work brings to the history of education the most rigorous methods of archival research and painstaking attention to details necessary to give solidity to the reconstruction of such a fluid institution that were schools before the era of the national school systems. In doing so, he also puts forward some historical judgements which can, of course, be questioned and hopefully will enliven the scholarly debate on this challenging subject, as good contributions can do.

The Color of Equality
Race and Common Humanity in Enlightenment Thought

Devin J. Vartija
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In this timely, thoroughly documented, and well-argued book, Devin J. Vartija takes on one of the enduring paradoxes of intellectual history: why is the Enlightenment seen as the origin of modern egalitarianism even as it is understood as a source of scientific racism? Vartija begins the book by presenting the paradox of Enlightenment thinking: intellectuals at once 'politicized the concept of equality while simultaneously making the naturalization of inequalities between Europeans and non-Europeans thinkable' (1). Vartija delves into the primary contradictions in Enlightenment thought by retracing the development of equality and racial classification within the tradition, elucidating how scholars have perceived this development as dichotomous: '[…] either the Enlightenment was an emancipatory intellectual movement foundational to the modern, liberal democratic defense of human rights, or it is the primary culprit in the dark side of modernity, from scientific racism and sexism to colonialism and even genocide.' Vartija's book, chronological in its framing, addresses this dichotomy through analysis of the encyclopaedias as primary sources: Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* (London, 1728), Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1751–1765), and Fortunato Bartolomeo De Felice's *Encyclopédie d'Yverdon* (Yverdon, 1770–1775). The choice of these three encyclopaedias is important, as Vartija demonstrates that they formed a genealogy, each drawing from the other. Vartija's appraisal of these also brings into relief the heterogeneity of debates around the questions of equality and race among the Enlightenment thinkers. His choice of corpus allows the reader to engage with how eighteenth-century thinkers made sense of these tensions, notably through the naturalistic account of humanity. Salient and evocative in highlighting the contradictions of the Enlightenment, this book traces continuities of conceptions of human sameness and differences from the eighteenth century to our present day. Vartija's book not only shows the origins of how claims of common humanity were present in the works of Enlightenment thinkers, but also demonstrates the innovative role that these writings played in shaping slavery and colonisation.

Vartija resists what he reveals to be anachronisms in certain readings of eighteenth-century texts, underscoring the necessity of situating a text within the conventions of a given genre in the history of ideas to decode its context. By committing to using the methodology of the Cambridge School of Intellectual History to understand how these encyclopaedists used and transformed the concepts of equality and race, he underscores the importance of studying an idea in context. Yet, at the same time, Vartija's deft analysis reminds the reader to not grant overdue importance to contextualism as 'a global and exhaustive theory of meaning.' Vartija thus avoids methodological dogmatism and justifies interweaving approaches from the disciplines of cultural history and intellectual history.

In the first chapter ('Early Modern Debates on Human Sameness and Difference'), Vartija outlines how the modern racial classificatory system developed within the ambit of natural history. This chapter situates Enlightenment encyclopaedists' interventions in the context of early modern European debates on human origins, history, and physical diversity. Through a tour of early modern debates on human nature, Vartija provides an intellectual history of the classificatory system of human and non-human species in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He argues:

> In addition to the growth of comparative anatomy, the treatment of human beings as subjects of natural history gradually became acceptable practice in the early eighteenth century. This occurred most significantly in the work of Carl Linnaeus, one of the most influential eighteenth-century naturalists. Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*, published in Leiden in 1735, was immediately successful, going through ten editions in Linnaeus's lifetime. His inclusion of the human species in his natural history was controversial and, indeed, forms part of the increasingly secular and scientific treatment of human beings in early modern science. But his division of humanity into four groups must not be read anachronistically as a modern racial classificatory system. (33)

Through his discussion of the sixteenth-century Europeans' articulation of the law of nature, Vartija shows how Spanish colonialism made the argument for conversion of Native Americans (26), distinguishing different modes of classification of peoples prevalent among European thinkers based on language and religion. His appraisal of European colonial thought also reminds the reader that despite Christianity's important role in 'bequeathing to early modern Europeans a powerful monogenetic legacy and an emphasis on humanity's linguistic and religious diversity,' this strain of thought co-existed with deeply racialist interpretations of the Scripture during European expansion (25-26).

In Chapter Two ('Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* and *Supplement*: The Growth of the Natural History of Humanity'), Vartija investigates *Cyclopaedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* and its conceptualisation of cross-cultural equality and cultural and ethnic differences. Vartija distinguishes an egalitarian ethos in Chambers's *Cyclopaedia*, reflecting what some historians maintain are structural

changes in European society of the era (60). Although restricted to a limited readership because of its cost, Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* participated in the nascent Republic of Letters and, as Vartija argues, provides remarkable insights into human and cultural diversity in the eighteenth century. He emphasises that notions of common humanity in Chambers' work on the equality of rights structure his definition of religious tolerance. Chambers' critical stance against the slave trade coexists within the larger conception of Mankind, in which 'whiteness serves as the norm from which blackness deviates' (64). Another interesting feature of this chapter is Vartija's exploration of Chambers' notion of temporality, in which Europe has reached the zenith of arts and culture, surpassing even that of ancient Rome, and stands in contrast to the '[s]avages [who] are described as nomadic peoples who live without religion, law, or policy, and the article states that a great part of America is populated with savages, many of whom are also cannibals' (62). The quest to understand differences and search for answers in natural history marks a shift as '[…] older notions of European civilizational superiority were complemented by the emergent anatomical and natural historical interest in human physical diversity' (66). Thus, Vartija argues, Chambers' *Cyclopedia* consolidates the role of natural history in defining racial difference.

In Chapter Three ('Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*: A New Human Science'), Vartija explores the diverse voices of Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, thereby establishing the multitudinous, contradictory, and heterogeneous nature of Enlightenment thought. He establishes how the salience of equality as a political concept in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* distinguishes and differentiates itself from the definition in previous English encyclopaedias (85). Vartija proposes the 'idea of a thin coherence' in Enlightenment thought, thereby eschewing the dichotomy between radical and moderate Enlightenment thought and reminding the reader that the '*Encyclopédie* […] contains ideas and philosophies running the gamut from radical to counter-Enlightenment' (87). Vartija also demonstrates that the range of views represented in the *Encyclopédie* reflects 'the relationship of the Enlightenment to the politicization of equality and the development of a racial classificatory system' (87). Thus, Vartija argues, whereas slavery is 'tacitly defended in a few *Encyclopédie* articles,' it would be erroneous to see these articles as representative of the views of all Enlightenment thinkers (87). This chapter also outlines how sociality is embedded in notions of natural equality as worldviews shifted among many thinkers. The *Encyclopédie* can be equated with the Enlightenment as a whole only to the extent that it reflected and contributed to 'a series of debates' (87). Furthermore, the lack of consistency in Enlightenment thought accommodates both Eurocentric justification of slavery and more progressive condemnations thereof.

Chapter Four ('De Felice's *Encyclopédie d'Yverdon*: Expanding and Contesting Human Science'), examines De Felice's *Encyclopédie d'Yverdon*, introducing readers to the text's demonstration of the naturalness of inequality. Vartija observes that 'key articles in the *Encyclopédie d'Yverdon* […] assert that a natural gulf separates Europeans

from non-Europeans, particularly Native Americans and sub-Saharan Africans' (149), which he argues '[r]eflect(s) the "hardening" of racial categories in the second half of the eighteenth century.' Written by Protestants in Switzerland, many articles in this encyclopaedia are drawn from Diderot and D'Alembert's text and subsequently revised, representing both the iterative and evolving aspects of the concepts of inequality and race. Vartija also points towards the growing importance of the topic of equality in the eighteenth-century world, given its large presence in the articles, even in a work that brought together debates grounded in atheistic materialism and Christian doctrines. This chapter demonstrates the dual function of natural rights, where on the one hand natural rights contest oppressive religious and political structures, and on the other hand remain committed to the inevitability and necessity of hierarchy in society (153).

Emphasising the commonalities and differences between different ideas of equality and racial classificatory systems, Vartija situates Enlightenment encyclopaedists' interventions in the context of early modern European debates on human origins, history, and physical diversity. Vartija's attention to the paradox of imagining humankind as a unified species while simultaneously dividing it based on different traits allows him to present the contradictions, innovations, and political tensions of equality and race within the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, Vartija's book does not elide the paradox or attempt to resolve the contradictions of different strands of thought. Situating his work in conversation with scholars such as Anthony Padgen, Anthony Strugnell, Siep Stuurman, Andrew Curran, Lynn Hunt, and Sankar Muthu, among others, Vartija lays bare the intertwinement of the political and the philosophical in the fashioning of ideas of equality and race. Vartija's book presents the Enlightenment in its complexity, multiplicity and heterogeneity. *The Color of Equality: Race and Common Humanity in Enlightenment Thought* provides an exceptional model for locating the inherent intellectual tensions that the Enlightenment embodies and addressing the problematic interpretive legacies that it leaves in its wake.