Disorienting Hebrew Book Collecting

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The provenance of a book, that is, the history of a manuscript after its writing or a book after its printing, is in the case of Hebraica almost always bound up with the history of the Jews […]. the movement of Hebrew books reflects the wandering of the Jews.¹

My purpose in this essay is to re-think the biography of a seemingly neutral Hebrew codex of biblical commentary (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, henceforth BSB, Cod. Hebr. 5) as the fortuitous survivor of traumatic events, whose scars are barely visible on its parchment skin. After escaping late medieval persecutions and expulsions of Jews from imperial cities north of the Alps, and censorship against Hebrew books, the acquisition for the Catholic Augsburg merchant-collector Johann Jakob Fugger in Venice ca. 1549 saved it from subsequent Counter-Reformation confiscation or destruction in Italy. Yet, this entry into a Catholic collection irrevocably removed it from the environment of a Jewish community and transferred it into a Christian Hebraist

context, thus effectively ending its performance as a Jewish object. Its subsequent life in the Munich court library, later state library, spelled its further integration into a Catholic Hebraist and Orientalist context.

I will argue in this essay that Counter-Reformation era collecting of Hebrew (and other languages connected to the “East,” e.g., Arabic, Syriac, Ge’ez) manuscripts, like the study of those languages itself, was predicated on a conversionary initiative by the Catholic church directed at or against Judaism, Islam and Eastern Christianities. This Counter-Reformation attitude to non-Catholics was shaped by a sense of Catholic mission, sharpened by the contest with Lutheran and other Protestant Reformations after 1517. The new schism within Christian Europe, and the ensuing wars of religion, made all study, printing and collecting of Eastern/Semitic languages overdetermined. Catholic Orientalism, despite all its admirable learnedness, involved a not inconsiderable measure of epistemic violence against Jews as well as other non-Christians and non-Catholics.

In the modern archive, the aggressive Counter-Reformation spirit of Oriental studies has been naturalized. Through this naturalization, Renaissance Orientalism as merely, and innocently, Oriental Studies (that is the study of “Oriental” languages on the part of Christian westerners) becomes truly haunted by Orientalism in a Saidian sense. My hope is that once we uncover the missionary and universalist-unionist agendas that brought medieval Hebrew (and similarly, Arabic, Syriac, Ge’ez, etc.) manuscripts into Renaissance Christian libraries, we can denaturalize this process. Such a denaturalization might, in the long term, break down the library classification of “Occidental” and “Oriental” manuscripts and towards less binary terms.

While both Christian Kabbalah with its ultimately missionary goals and the Christian suppression of the Talmud have been well studied, the conversionary attention to biblical exegesis has only recently come under scrutiny. Thus, Piet van Boxel has shown that biblical commentaries (like the commentary compilation contained in BSB Cod. Hebr. 5) were in danger of being pulled into the same maelstrom that was destroying Talmudic
literature in and after 1553. This means that BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 escaped confiscation and destruction by a fortuitous series of displacements.

Starting from a single medieval Hebrew manuscript in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, this essay is about two aspects of the history of Hebraica collecting and collections: how historic collecting practices’ underlying ideologies could change a medieval object materially and affect its radius of agency. And how residual colonialities have continued to affect the access to and understanding of the archive and the object. I am trying to undo the modern-day institutional sanitization of Counter-Reformation Orientalism, while trying to understand the ambiguous position of Hebrew manuscripts in this sanitization process. I aim to show that the Hebrew manuscript collection of Johann Jakob Fugger, which forms one of the core collections of the historic Munich court library, was connected to Counter-Reformation, anti-Jewish-conversionary, and anti-Islam-ist polemic. Ultimately, by questioning traditional library classification categories, I hope to disrupt invocations and political (populist; extreme right wing) mobilizations of “Judeo-Christian civilization.”

In my reflections on Cod. Hebr. 5’s biography and its part in a continued “ost-westliche” system of archival and library classification, I build on a tremendously rich vein of research on Renaissance Orientalism and Hebraism, especially its Counter-Reformation context in Italy. I am equally indebted to the century and more of research on the history of the Hebrew (printed) book, recently including also considerations of book collecting, which have shown how medieval Hebrew manuscripts were collected, de-accessioned and recollected between the late Middle

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2 Piet van Boxel, “Robert Bellarmine Reads Rashi: Rabbinic Bible Commentaries and the Burning of the Talmud,” in The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy, eds. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 121–32, at 122: “What was at stake in the heated discussion was the question of whether rabbinic commentaries on the Bible should undergo the same fate as the Talmud.”
Ages and the Counter-Reformation, between South Germany and North Italy.³

**A Hebrew Manuscript’s Afterlife**

The object whose biography forms the centre of these reflections is **BSB Cod. Hebr. 5/I-II**, a thirteenth-century illuminated bible commentary compiled from French and German Jewish authors.⁴ Having been copied by a Jewish scribal team in Würzburg (Franconia) in the Hebrew year 4993 corresponding to September 1232 to September 1233 CE, and partially illuminated by a Christian illuminator’s workshop active for aristocratic patrons in the same city and region, it belongs to the geographical area called by Jews Ashkenaz (Germany, German-speaking Switzerland, and Austria). We know that it was originally a single, enormous volume of approximately 450 folios. The wander-route Würzburg–Venice–Augsburg–Munich it took after its completion was almost circular. The codex’s illumination remained unfinished, leaving numerous empty spaces originally reserved for painting. Sometime around 1400 or during the first half of the fifteenth century, an unknown scribe (or the then owner?) completed the large initial word for Ruth in an “inhabited” ornamental square script and added deer hunt friezes above the Leviticus and Ruth incipits; the Leviticus frieze in-


cludes a horn Blowing hunter in a fashionable tailored outfit, a feather in his hunting hat; he is armed with a sword, which he appears to have drawn and raised above his head. These letters and imagery are of Ashkenazi workmanship, suggesting that the manuscript remained in Ashkenaz at this time (or in Ashkenazi hands, if they had migrated elsewhere).

A fifteenth-century ownership inscription in Ashkenazi semi-cursive script intriguingly connects the book to a conversion to Judaism: “It fell unto my lot — the words of the convert Avram Wich/Weich Bach.” Because this ownership mark is inscribed in the outer corner at the top of folio 2, and this folio is quite dirty, we can conclude that by the fifteenth century, the original folio 1 was already missing (this folio 1 was rewritten during the book’s acquisition and modification for Fugger in 1549).

In the context of a series of large-scale persecutions and localized expulsions from the major cities of Ashkenaz during the late Middle Ages, it was taken to Northern Italy probably in the 15th century. Thereby, it escaped the confiscation and destruction of Hebrew books in South Germany in 1509/10, mandated by Emperor Maximilian I at the instigation of the apostate Johannes Pfefferkorn. It subsequently made its way to Venice. Along the route that so many Jewish refugees took across the

5 נפל לחלקי נאם גר אברם ויך בך
Alps and into the Veneto, ending up in Venice in the tumultuous years of the Wars of the League of Cambrai, which indirectly led to the establishment of the Venice Ghetto in 1516. We have to be aware that the Venetian Jewish community was newly established, under conditions of war, and of tremendous heterogeneity — made up of migrants from the Italian south, Ashkenazi migrants and refugees from Germany and France, and *conversos* from the Iberian peninsula. Venice was the Jewish melting pot of the sixteenth century.

Ten years after the establishment of the Venice Ghetto, an Ashkenazi scribe inscribed in semi-cursive script the confirmation of a transaction centrally below the end of the scribal colophon at the end of what was then still a single comprehensive volume (pandect):

“This commentary on the twenty-four books [of the bible] was sold to the honorable Rabbi Yekutiel son of the late David in a court declaration today Thursday, 13th of Tevet 5286 (December 29, 1526) here in Venice, so says the smallest amongst scholars Hiya Meir ben David of blessed memory.”

Despite his hyperbolic modesty, Rabbi Hiyya Meir ben David was by no means “the smallest amongst scholars.” He served as one of three judges in the Jewish community of Venice. He is also well known to book historians as an eminent corrector: he corrected the Catholic publisher Daniel Bomberg’s first edition of the Babylonian Talmud (1519–23). In this task he joined Bomberg’s master printer/corrector Cornelio Adelkind, about whom more below. Although Amram states that Rabbi Hiyya Meir ben David left Venice for Nafpaktos (Lepanto) in Greece immediately after the completion of this Talmud project, i.e., 1523, we see from the sale note in BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 that he re-

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7 BSB Cod. Hebr. 5/II, fol. 256.
mained in Venice a little longer. This sale may have been connected with preparations for his departure from Venice.

In 1549, the manuscript BSB Cod. Hebr. 5, then still a pandect, was acquired for the rapidly growing Hebrew library of Johann Jakob Fugger von der Lilie (1516–75). Something more needs to be said about Fugger, his library project, and its historical context. Johann Jakob belonged to a (by no means indigent) side-line of the fabled Fugger banking house. The remaining part of my essay will circle around the connections between this manuscript, Fugger, and his Venetian circle of Jewish and Christian scholars, scribes, and printers. My argument is that even where the relationship between Jews and Christians appeared to be amicable, the project of Jewish conversion was always on the horizon. During the Counter-Reformation, we can speak of competitive conversionary projects among Protestant and Catholic intellectuals. Thus Fugger’s Hebrew library and, after its 1571 acquisition by Albrecht V of Bavaria, the Munich court library, were integral parts of a Counter-Reformation conception of universal Catholic mission — to Lutherans, Muslims, and last but not least Jews.

Ilona Steimann, in her study of Johann Jakob Fugger’s Hebrew manuscripts patronage — the first detailed study of this incredibly important humanist collection — has shown that a complex web of ambivalent relationships enveloped Christian collectors and Jewish scholars and scribes: “[T]heir [Hebraica collections such as Fugger’s] place at the intersection of book cultures offers important evidence of deep tensions between Jewish and humanist attitudes toward Hebrew books and scholarship […] Fugger’s enterprise eventually disassociated the Hebrew book from Jews and integrated it into universal humanist scholarship.”

Fugger’s Hebrew library was a symbolic gesture because Fugger was not a scholar and could not read the Hebrew books he accumulated with liberality and rapidity. A hired scribal team, all Ashkenazi migrants from German lands, under

the overall guidance of the Jewish master printer Cornelio Adelkind, carried out a monumental Hebraica copying enterprise of 270 texts bound into 55 volumes copied between 1548 and 1552 for Johann Jakob Fugger. These codices entered Fugger's library of universal knowledge, and subsequently the Munich court library, today the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Fugger relied entirely on Jewish mediators, chief among them Cornelio Adelkind in his capacity as head of the Fugger scribal workshop. As Steimann demonstrated, Fugger's acquisition of BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 was closely associated with this industrial-scale Fugger Hebrew manuscript copying enterprise, resulting in the creation a large collection especially of kabbalistic and philosophical manuscripts. BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 is among the minority of original Hebrew manuscripts Fugger was able to acquire (commissioning new copies was much more efficient and resulted in a satisfyingly uniform format). As the agent and coordinator of the whole collecting and copying enterprise, Steimann has identified precisely Adelkind: none of the colophons of the codices newly copied for Fugger actually name the Augsburg merchant; if they name any patron, it is Adelkind. Adelkind was most likely a frontman to calm the consciences of Jewish scribes who might otherwise have been unwilling to compromise their Jewish careers by copying Hebrew texts for a Christian, and especially not kabbalistic texts which were controversial because of their known missionary potency. This universal humanist scholarship was predicated on the supersessionist project of Christian expropriation of Jewish culture. Adelkind was the most likely

10 Ibid, 1242–43.
11 Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). When King Ludwig of Bavaria erected a monument to the “patron of scholarship” (Wissenschaft) Johann Jakob Fugger in Augsburg in 1857, the Bavarian king was invoking a concept of universalized, disinterested scientific activity, carefully ignoring its economic foundations and its ideological interests. At the same time (the mid-nineteenth century), Bavarian Jews did not enjoy civic equality, but had to apply for individual residence and marriage permits.
middleman enabling the acquisition of bSB Cod. Hebr. 5, since he had worked together with its previous owner-but-one Rabbi Hiyya Meir ben David during the years (ca. 1519–26) that both worked at Bomberg’s press.

When bSB Cod. Hebr. 5 was acquired for the Fugger library, it was divided into two volumes, which necessitated some violent intervention, but also some restoration. Two Ashkenazi Jewish scribes were entrusted with this modification, who have been identified as Yishai ben Yeḥiel and Meir (only his first name is known). The already-missing folio 1 containing the beginning of Genesis was now replaced by the scribe Yishai ben Yeḥiel; the initial word “Bereshit,” “In the Beginning,” was decorated by another scribe, Meir, with typically Ashkenazi giant letters in a pleated ribbon design that had come into fashion among Ashkenazi scribes around 1400, and saw a revival (always among Ashkenazim) in the early modern period (fig. 1). This calligraphic form was thus understood to be typically Ashkenazi. Because of the division of the pandect into two volumes, the last leaf at the end of the first volume (fol. 218) containing the end of II Kings, was cut off and had to be replaced by Yishai ben Yeḥiel, also in 1549. The original end of II Kings page was now moved over to the newly created second volume. Its recto was covered over with a recycled medieval Latin(!) flyleaf. Its verso, containing the explicit of II Kings, was pasted over with a newly made title page by the Fugger team scribe Meir. In giant block letters, it announces “LATTER PROPHETS,” decorated with skilfully drawn recumbent dog and deer. The original covered-over text is faintly visible underneath (fig. 2). The next folio, containing the beginning of Isaiah, now became the new volume 2’s first page. Finally, the two volumes were rebound by a Venetian binder known as the “Fugger binder” into uniform bindings in two volumes. At this time, a single folio from a completely different book was bound in at the end of volume 2: the beginning of the bible commentary by Rashi’s grandson Rashbam. This rescued folio is

Figure 1. bsb, Cod. Hebr. 5/1, fol. 1v. http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00036330/image_5. Licensed by the Bayerische StaatsBibliotheek under a CreativeCommons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.
Figure 2. BSB, Cod. Hebr. 5/II, fol. 1r. http://daten.digitalsammlungen.de/bsb00036327/image_6. Licensed by the Bayerische StaatsBibliothek under a CreativeCommons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.
Figure 3. BSB, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, front cover. http://daten_digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00036327/image_1. Licensed by the Bayerische StaatsBibliothek under a CreativeCommons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.
now of the same dimensions (and is likely to have been of similar dimensions originally). It appears to originate in the same scribal environment as the main commentary compilation. It is to date the oldest manuscript witness to the transmission of Rashbam’s commentary and plays an important role in modern editions. It appears to have originated in the same scribal team as the bulk of BSB Cod. Hebr. 5. It is impossible to tell why only the first folio of this Rashbam commentary was extant in 1549. Had it become detached from its book?

For the binding, four wooden boards were covered in a medium green (now brown) Morocco which was then gold-tooled (fig. 3). The binder used both ornamental and letter punches, in Greek and in Hebrew. A rhomboid cartouche inspired by Ottoman bindings has been inscribed into a double rectangle whose outer and inner lines intersect to form an overlapping circle based on medieval (though of ultimately late Roman derivation) cosmatesque floor mosaics. The centres front and back, within a circle, enclose the title of the book “Perushim/Commentaries” in Hebrew on the (Hebrew) front and a (blank) heraldic shield in a Northern Renaissance style on the back. Above and below the title, the Fugger library signature has been punched in Hebrew (above the title) and Greek (below the title) respectively.¹³

¹³ This binding is described by Aliza Cohen-Mushlin and Ilona Steimann in the Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives, The Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University (Jerusalem) thus: “green morocco faded to brown on wooden boards, gold-tooled similarly on front and back with a central roundel in an undulating floral rhomboid within a large rectangle. The latter is decorated with foliate motifs at the corners and with a flower at the center of each side of the frame […]). The central front roundel is inscribed פירושים (Commentaries). Above and below it is Fugger’s shelf mark in Hebrew and Latin respectively: ר and Y for volume I […], and ψ (sic) and Z for volume II. The roundel on the back encloses a shield-like motif. The spine, blind-tooled with hatching, has five hidden cords and head and tail bands. On the front cover are vestiges of four groups of three plaited leather bands: two on the fore-edge and one each at top and bottom, corresponding to holes from four missing nails on the edges of the back cover (see e.g. Cod. Hebr. 301). The edges of leaves are goffered. The binding was done by the Fugger Binder (also called Venetian Apple
The blind-tooled ornaments include at least two Orientalizing elements inspired by Ottoman bindings: the large rhomboid cartouche, and the floral corner motifs. The small rosette medallions formed by the frame’s overlapping interlaced bands may allude either to Mamluk or to medieval ornaments, either way introducing exotic elements. It is of course true that Orientalizing bindings were not a defining mark of non-Western books. Western literature was also bound in this style. In this case the additional element of the Hebrew lettering contributed to Orientalizing the books as a whole.

The pastedowns and flyleaves are, surprisingly, from Latin manuscripts. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin and Ilona Steimann not only localized and dated the flyleaves and pastedowns as thirteenth-century Latin leaves written in German lands, but identified their content as a passional (front pastedown and flyleaves in both volumes) and two homiliaries (back pastedowns and flyleaves in both volumes). Some of these are bound upside down. Such use of Latin, indeed liturgical manuscripts as flyleaves in a Hebrew manuscript rebound for a Christian, indeed a Catholic patron, may at first sight seem surprising. But I believe that at work was a renaissance ideology that sought to leave behind as obsolete not only the dark ages of Judaism, but also the aesthetic and scribal culture of the Middle Ages that had lost its value. In


The same blind-tool ornamental stamps (though not the Hebrew letters) appear in identical form in the British Library’s Appian, Delle guerre civili de Romani [and] Historia delle guerre esterne de Romani (Florence 1526/31), BL Davis 754; and Castiglione, Libro del Cortegiano (Venice 1541), BL Davis 794. While Orientalizing bindings were common in Venice, it is important not to normalize them.
addition, passional codices had become obsolete after the introduction of breviaries. So to sum up, the rebinding of BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 into the two volumes we have today involved numerous acts of Orientalist and “medievalist” appropriation.

The Many Names of Adelkind

I have already stated that BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 was acquired for Fugger in Venice. Venice was in Fugger’s days Hebrew printing’s undisputed center. Venice’s laws not only fostered, but in fact enforced close Christian-Jewish collaboration. Although the actual work of printing was carried out by Jews, it was not only not sited in the Jewish Ghetto, but had to be fronted by Christians. No Jewish publisher could obtain a permission to print in Venice. And even for Christians it was not easy to print Hebrew books. No less than the pre-eminent Antwerp Catholic publisher of Hebrew books in Venice, Daniel Bomberg, had to more or less bribe the government into renewing his licence. In 1525/6 and again in 1537 his renewal application met stiff resistance (which had to be bought out at a high price). That Hebrew printing was both lucrative and precarious was demonstrated by the 1553 Talmud burnings, an intellectual conflagration that swept all across Italy, whose fuse was lit in a dispute between two Christian Hebrew printers in Venice, a dispute which escalated to the Roman Inquisition.

The cut-throat world of Venetian publishing, the networks encompassing Fugger’s Hebrew manuscript collecting activities


16 Not least on the part of the famous diarist Marin Sanudo, who opposed the renewal of Bomberg’s license and who proudly records his fulminations against the printing of books for the benefit of Jews. See Amram, The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy, 173.
in Venice, and the opaque world of Catholic Renaissance Hebraism and Orientalism were connected by the Adelkind family of Hebrew correctors, and in particular the man born as Israel ben Barukh (ha-Levi) Adelkind and who generally signed himself as Cornelio Adelkind (active 1519–54). As a Hebrew corrector and master printer, Adelkind contributed significantly to the quality of Venetian Hebrew printing. In one sense, he was one of the Jewish professionals who made possible the project of Daniel Bomberg, the Catholic Netherlandish entrepreneur who dominated Hebrew printing in Venice from the establishment of a permanent Jewish Ghetto (1516) until the middle of the sixteenth century, when in 1553 the Talmud, for whose publication Bomberg had done so much, went up in flames in the piazzas of Italy, including Piazza San Marco. Although Bomberg knew some Hebrew, Adelkind had responsibility for the sourcing and accuracy of the published texts. He was familiar with the world of Jewish scribes, who then still copied the bulk of Hebrew literature for Jews as well as for some learned Christians. Adelkind was at home in these Christian-run and financed Hebrew printing presses of the high Renaissance from ca. 1519 onwards and until 1553, when he moved to Sabbioneta to work for the Jewish printer Tobias Foa.

Who was Adelkind? And how was his identity affected by the work he did, the people he worked with, and the pressures he was subjected to? Above all, was he a Jew or a Christian? Like a raw nerve or a live wire, the question of Adelkind’s conversion to Christianity (Did he? When did he? Why did he? Did he mean it?) runs through the literature on Hebrew printing. Unlike the clear-cut cases of other apostates such as Samuel b. Nissim Bulfarag/Guglielmo Raimondo de Moncada/Flavius Mithridates (ca. 1450–89) or Jacob ben Chaim ben Isaac ibn Adonijah (ca. 1470–before 1538), Adelkind’s religious identity has generated more debate than any other. The debate began with Stein-schneider in the mid-19th century, who raised the suspicion of Adelkind’s apostasy, admittedly then just in the form of a specu-
lation.\textsuperscript{17} Since then, the arguments for and against have grown. The issues were laid out in Marvin Heller’s classic study of the history of Talmud printing.\textsuperscript{18} Heller reviews both the existing evidence and the contentious history of its interpretation, with Steinschneider and Yaari arguing that Adelkind was an apostate, while Rabbinovicz, Berliner and Sonne argue against apostasy. Amram and Bloch remain undecided, and other historians of Hebrew printing conclude that Adelkind converted very late in his career, i.e., that most of his classics were printed while he was still Jewish. Adelkind’s language in his prologues, epigraphs and colophons never betrays anything—he uses the Jewish calendar, and overall traditional formulas. But two Christian Frenchmen who were contemporaries of Adelkind’s later years assert unambiguously that he converted to Christianity, one of them calling him a “baptised Christian” and the other a “neophyte […] corrected from Judaism,” as discussed further below.

An Ashkenazi from Padua, his father Barukh Adelkind is believed to have migrated or fled to Padua from the increasingly hostile German environment that saw the wholesale expulsion of Jews from all major South German cities during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His Hebrew names were Israel ben Barukh, sometimes also Israel the Levite, indicating that his father Baruch was a Levi. Most of his book colophons, and also his (Italian) letters, he signed as Cornelio, a humanist-inspired name harking back to Roman antiquity. The secular name Cornelio may also have been a subtle homage to his chief employer Daniel Bomberg, whose father was the Antwerp merchant Cornelius van Bomberghen. In turn, Adelkind named his own son Daniel. And yet, a Cornelius the Centurion appears in the Acts of the Apostles as an early convert by Simon Peter (Acts 10:1–48). On one occasion, he calls himself by a retro-transliter-

\textsuperscript{17} David Cassel and Moritz Steinschneider, \textit{Jüdische Typographie und jüdischer Buchhandel} (Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938), 21–94.

ated name Karniel קרניאל. This name, which seems to be the Hebrew aural equivalent of Cornelio, occurs in the fourth printing, third edition of the complete Hebrew Bible with list of Haftarot, published by Bomberg in 1533. The colophon on the last page, after the end of the list of Haftarot (Prophetic portions arranged for liturgical use), states:

Printed for the third time with much investigation/study by Karniel bar Barukh Adel Kind, in the month of Adar [i.e., Feb./March 1528], in the year 1528 in the house of the prince/eminent Daniel Bombergi, may The Rock raise him up.

The main interest is in the name, which skilfully weaves together Hebrew and Latin/Italian onomastics. Karniel translates as ray or rays of God. Keren = ray, horn — those are the rays of light that emanated from Moses’ face when he descended from Mount Sinai. The name is not biblical; rather, in midrashic literature Karniel appears among the princes of the west wind. It is thus a rather rarefied naming indicative of its owner’s and his circle's learning.

19 Anthony Grafton is thus quite wrong to assert that “Karniel Adel Kind, the Jewish printer who designed the layout of Bomberg’s Talmud editions, converted to Christianity and changed his name to Cornelio, though he continued to turn out editions of the Talmud” ("The Jewish Book in Christian Europe; Material Texts and Religious Encounters," in Faithful Narratives: Historians, Religion, and the Challenge of Objectivity, eds. Andrea Sterk and Nina Caputo [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014], 96–114, at 109). Adelkind used both Cornelio and Karniel concurrently and as equivalent noms de plume. In fact, no post-conversion Adelkind imprint is known to me.

20 This colophon was actually a 1533 reprint of that third edition of 1528, so we are looking at the fourth printing.

The circumstantial evidence that made Steinschneider suspect apostasy was the rhymed epigraph of *Petah Debarai* or *Devari* (1546), set on its own page in large square letters:


And thus was finished the book Petah Debarai
In the name of the living god my redeemer and rock
In the year of creation 306
On the 29th day of Tishri
Edited by the Hebrew language grammarian
Elijah the Levite, the lonely man
Printed in the house of the master, the Christian
In Venice the Capital whose standard is a lion
Who is now printing Sifra and Sifre
And may my hand not cease from bringing forth fruit
Israel was my name and Cornelio [will be] my memorial.22

The rhyme is on “-ri,” hence the final word “zekhri,” memorial. Why does Adelkind speak of his name Israel in the past tense?

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We would probably do well not to attempt to resolve all ambiguities in what is after all an artful text that codes its message in rhymed form for the *cognoscenti*. In the colophon of 1546, different temporalities are pitted against each other. And yet even here Adelkind has not abandoned the name his father and community gave him at the age of eight days, when he was brought into the circumcision covenant of his people. This multiplicity of names must lead us to a reflection on the ambiguous and volatile position of Jewish intellectuals in the Renaissance. Adelkind with his many names encapsulates the dangerous terrain of Renaissance Humanist Hebraism and Hebrew book production and collecting during the Counter-Reformation.

The two positive assertions that Adelkind converted to Christianity come from two French sources: the Orientalist–theologian–kabbalist Guillaume Postel (1510–81) and the punchcutter and printer Guillaume Le Bé (1525–98), both of whom knew Adelkind personally. The first source is a 1555 letter by the Oriental linguist, controversial visionary, Christian kabbalist, theologian, and mathematician Guillaume Postel to his fellow Orientalist and Christian kabbalist Andreas Masius. Both were intimately connected to both Widmannstetter and Fugger and both were part of the same northern European Catholic Orientalist circles.

But hear what happened when I was passing through the area of Cremona […], I undertook to pass through a small town, previously lowly, Sabbioneta by name, both in order to see the Hebrew press founded there and to visit, for the sake of Bomberg’s memory, the *neophyte* Cornelius Adelkind, who has been corrected from Judaism.23

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23 The italicized words marked with asterisks are written in Greek in the original Latin letter. "Sed audi quid contigit (ut soli Deo gloria, nobis autem pro summis nostris conatibus confusio videatur meritissima adesse faciei) iter agenti per Cremonense Municipium, alioqui ignobile antea, nomine Sabioneta, quod inditione est D. Vepasiani Gonzaghæ Columnae, qua iter institueram, tam ut Typographiam Hebraicam ibi instauratam
The wit of this passage revolves around the wordplay involved in the use of the participle “διορθωτήν,” corrected. After all, Adelkind was the corrector par excellence with decades of experience in the pre-eminent Bomberg Hebrew press, which had dominated Italy and the Jewish world during the formative first half of the sixteenth century. Through his conversion, the corrector was, so to speak, corrected from his Judaic error. Postel’s witty satisfaction needs to be seen in the context of Christian Kabbalah, of which Postel was an avid advocate, and whose theological appropriation of Jewish theologies has come to be clearly recognized:

Christian kabbalists interpreted these texts as containing hidden evidence for the truth of Christianity, transmitted by Jewish tradition unbeknownst to itself. [...] Many Christian kabbalists understood their work in missionary terms. If Jews could be shown that their most sacred and secret traditions confirmed Christian truth, their conversion might finally be achieved. As confessional conflict fractured European Christendom, some even turned to Kabbalah as a means


24 I am grateful to Brad Sabin Hill for drawing my attention to this wordplay.
to universal salvation that could heal the fissures within the Church. Perhaps above all, Christian Kabbalah was the appropriation from Jewish esoteric literature of a set of hermeneutic techniques […] attempted to demonstrate the truth of Christianity from within Jewish esoteric tradition by means of that tradition’s own methods.  

Although BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 does not contain any kabbalistic texts, it is nevertheless connected to Christian kabbalism. Its acquisition by Fugger stood at the beginning of a large scale collecting endeavor, a very significant portion of which consisted of kabbalistic texts.

Guillaume Le Bé (1525–98) was a (French Catholic) punch-cutter who transformed the art of Hebrew printing in France and the Netherlands, inter alia as supplier of Hebrew type to the eminent Antwerp printer Christopher Plantin, publisher of the *Biblia Regia* a.k.a. *Antwerp Polyglot Bible* (1568–72). He is presumed to have met Adelkind during his formative training years spent in Venice (1540s to ca 1550). Sometime between Le Bé’s ca. 1550 (?) return from his Italian apprenticeship and his death in 1598, he compiled an album/scrapbook of 48 pages of cut-out and pasted printed specimens cut out from miscellaneous Hebrew books, which he annotated by hand. It is worth pausing to acknowledge the mutilation of Hebrew books committed in the process of assembling the scrapbook. Hebrew books are ascribed a sacrality that prohibits their dismembering and discarding — even disused or defunct Hebrew books should be placed in a Genizah and ultimately buried.  


26 Falk Wiesemann, *Genizah — Hidden Legacies of the German Village Jews = Genisa — verborgenes Erbe der deutschen Landjuden* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1992); Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University’s Genizah Collection* (Richmond: Curzon,
tograph rubric in his scrapbook, accompanying a few cut-out lines of Adelkind’s typefont, identifies it thus:

[Taken] from a Hebrew gloss by Messer Cornelio, baptized Christian, corrector at the printing establishment of the Bombergs, quite old and cut by a good master.  

By calling Mister Cornelio (without including his surname Adelkind) a “baptized Christian,” Guillaume Le Bé is revealing that he was originally Jewish. In effect, Guillaume meant “juif baptise.” And what did he mean by “bien antique,” given that Adelkind preceded him by barely a generation and actually overlapped with him? Surely what is invoked is a sense that Adelkind’s type designs capture a mythical authenticity relating to biblical antiquity. Le Bé’s scrapbook may have been compiled some considerable time after his return from Italy, during the latter part of his life. It is thus unlikely that Adelkind converted while le Bé was still in Italy; rather, he may have received the information from Postel, who returned to Paris in 1562. Adelkind’s conversion should thus be dated after 1554 (the date of Adelkind’s last Hebrew imprint) and before 7 June 1555 (the date of Postel’s letter according to the Julian calendar, corresponding to 16 June in the Gregorian calendar). After that, we hear no more of Adelkind, who may have died shortly thereafter. Le


Bé's label and Postel's glee at Adelkind's conversion to Christianity should be seen in the context of the conversionary pressure exerted by much of Catholic Orientalism. A significant factor contributing to this pressure was the destruction of Talmud and other Hebrew books in 1553, and the ensuing escalation of the censorship of Hebrew books.

For better or worse, Hebrew books in this era of printing were in the hands of Catholics, who could not help but become implicated in the larger politics of the Counter-Reformation. And the Jews of Italy and their heritage of books and manuscripts were pawns in this larger politics. Controlling, constricting, and eventually converting the Jews — that was the prize that secretly symbolized the superiority of one's Christian confession on all sides of the Reformation—Counter-Reformation divide. Similarly, engaging in late-crusading against the Ottomans was a political act of competitive colonialism that was played out equally in the arena of Orientalist scholarship, printing and publishing.

The Counter-Reformation Persecution of Jewish Books

Hebrew book production was caught between the Scylla of appropriative Christological Kabbalism and the Charybdis of Talmud persecution and censorship. Simultaneously with and at the opposite pole of the avid Christian appropriation of Kabbalalah appears the persecution, confiscation and burning of the Talmud, which reached crisis point in Italy in 1553. In a generally volatile atmosphere, a commercial rivalry spun out of control. The two rival Christian printers of Hebrew books in Venice, Marco Antonio Giustiniani (1516–71, active 1545–53) and Alvise Bragadini (ca. 1500–1575) attempted to undercut each other's editions of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah (a rewriting of Talmud, of course); they accused each other of publishing Jewish books containing anti-Christian blasphemies (Talmudic literature, in

other words). A chain reaction ensued in Rome, fomented by internal rivalries between the Curia and the Holy Office (under the chief inquisitor, the future Pope Paul IV Carafa, the same pope who enclosed the Roman Ghetto in 1555). The outcome of this unwanted inquisitorial attention resulted in a cataclysm of destruction which devoured not only copies of the Talmud printed and manuscript, but also of associated texts such as halakhic compendia and epitomes.

What does any of this have to do with the acquisition and removal from Italy of BSB Cod. Hebr. 5? After all, BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 contains biblical exegesis, not Talmud. Well, one of the debates carried out behind the scenes implicated also the Hebrew biblical commentary tradition. There were voices that alleged that Rashi and his followers were contaminated by Talmudic thinking. Such hardcore thinkers wanted Jews to be able to keep only the Hebrew Bible text itself, without any exegetical aids—in order to all the sooner achieve Jewish conversion to Christianity. Although wholesale destruction of Rashi did not come to pass, nevertheless one may claim that if BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 had not been removed from Italy, and if the proponents of the destruction of all talmudically tainted books had won the upper hand, this massive volume would have escaped this threat with difficulty.

That even the defenders of Talmudic literature were not exempt from supersessionist and conversionary agendas is demonstrated by the case of Andreas Masius (1514–73). This Catholic humanist Hebraist and Syriacist is sometimes considered a hero in Jewish eyes because he spoke up against the destruction of Talmud copies. We mentioned him earlier as a friend and correspondent of Postel and recipient of the gleeful 1555 letter about Adelkind’s “correction.” But look closely at his defence of the Talmud:

I have found in this Talmud countless testimonies not against the Christians, but against the Jews [...]. No book is more suitable to confound the Jews than the Talmud. To claim the opposite is risible. I had begun to compile materials towards a book which would have won the Jews for Christianity. Out of utter indignation about this thing [(summa rei indignatione) the ecclesiastical Talmud destruction], I have thrown the whole thing into the fire.

In other words, while Masius rejects the Talmud persecutions, he is by no means a defender of Judaism; on the contrary, he suggests that the Talmud is an indictment of rabbinic Judaism! So even Andreas Masius, the Netherlandish humanist and friend of many Jewish intellectuals of his day, and staunchest and most outspoken defender of Hebrew printing in the terrible “battle of the printers” of 1553 leading to the confiscation and burning of all Talmudic literature in Italy, was writing at the same time a tract intended to effect the conversion of the Jews, a tract possibly composed of Talmudic excerpts.

Disorienting the Archive

bSB Cod. Hebr. 5, authored in Northern France, copied and collected in Southern Germany, and rebound in Venice, is a thoroughly European product. Yet its language and script (Hebrew) pushes it into the “Oriental” section of the library. Physically, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (successor of the Munich court

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30 Andreas Masius, letter to Cardinal Sebastiano Pighino, December 24, 1553, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms Clm 23736, nr. 182 (bound folder of numbered original letters). Max Lossen, Briefe von Andreas Masius und seinen Freunden 1538 bis 1573 (Leipzig: A. Dürß, 1886), nr. 128, 144–45, which is usually called authoritative, leaves out these more controversial portions of Masius’s correspondence. Perles’s German partial translation in Joseph Perles, “Ungedruckte Briefe aus den Jahren 1517 — 1555”, in Idem: Beiträge zur Geschichte der hebräischen und aramäischen Studien (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1884), 223–25 is actually more complete than Lossen.
library) operates a single manuscript reading room, regardless of language or script. That means that unlike other major libraries who operate separate “Oriental” reading rooms, in Munich all manuscripts are consulted in the same physical space. It is thus possible, again unlike in in other major libraries, to study BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 together with Latin manuscripts illuminated in Wurzburg around the same time, maybe even by the same painting workshop. But when it comes to library classification, and that is all about the production of knowledge, the distinction between Occidental and Oriental manuscripts is upheld, even reinforced by means of the online presentation of the library, which is its twenty-first-century public face. And in terms of classification, BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 is placed firmly in the Orient.

The first encounter with the library’s manuscript collections takes place through the collection overview “About the collection.” Its titular slideshow of ten images is exclusively Western and predominantly German (9/10), privileging Latin-script manuscripts from present-day Bavarian territories. Notwithstanding its inclusion of two secular texts (Nibelungenlied and Bellifortis), this choice of images establishes a privileged position for Christian objects. The overview of the Munich manuscripts collection thus marginalizes, inter alia, Hebraica (as well as Arabica, Persiana, etc). This is all the more ironic as the ducal library’s original core was an “Oriental” one: it was founded on the ducal acquisition of two “Oriental”/biblical collections, those of Widmannstetter (acquired 1558) and of Fugger (acquired 1571). The collection overview’s binary distinction is


upheld between the “Over 41,000 Occidental and 18,000 Oriental or Asian manuscripts…” — as if the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek’s important other collections did not matter. The twelve highlights of the foundation collection, “Important works from the collection at the time of its foundation,” do not include a single Hebrew manuscript (although they do include one Arabic, Armenian, and Ethiopian each). Importance and diversity are clearly at odds in this selection.

The post-foundation historical outline includes among its over eighty highlights two Hebrew items. The two chosen Hebrew highlights are the Babylonian Talmud Cod. Hebr. 95 and the Tegernsee Haggadah bSB Cod. Hebr. 200. Yet the presentation of both of these Hebraica is problematic. Both are cited as part of an alphabetical list of manuscripts that entered the then royal Bavarian court library from monasteries dissolved in 1803 — the Talmud from Polling Abbey, the Haggadah from Tegernsee Abbey. Thereby, the indubitably important Talmud’s Jewish, pre-monastic provenance is made invisible; the polem-

33 The foundation collection’s highlights list (I retain their orthography but have added translations in brackets): Das Buch der Abenteuer (The Book of Adventures) (Ms Cgm 1), late 15th century; Andalusian Koran (i.e., Quran) from Seville (Cod.arab.1), 1226; Armenian four gospels (Cod.armen.1), 1278; Ethiopian psalter (Cod.aethiop.1); Der Ehrenspiegel des Hauses Habsburg (Mirror of honours of the house of Habsburg) (Ms Cgm 895 and 896); Das Kleinodienbuch der Herzogin Anna von Bayern (Book of gems of Duchess Anna of Bavaria) (Cod.icon.429); Hungarian gospel book (Cod.hung.1); Omnibus manuscript with astronomical-computational and scientific texts from the library of Schedel (Ms Clm 210); Superb codices of the penitential psalms of Orlando di Lasso (Mus.ms. A I and Mus.ms. A II); Motets of Cipriano de Rore (Mus.ms. B); Terrestrial globe of Philipp Apian (Cod.icon.129); Celestial globe of Heinrich Arbores (Cod.icon.186).

34 This codex, copied in an Ashkenazi script and dated 1342, is of outstanding significance because it is the only surviving complete copy of the entire Babylonian Talmud still extant from before the era of printing. Like a brand plucked out of the fire, it has survived medieval and early modern Talmud burnings. Its provenance however is problematic, and the collection overview’s phrasing ensures that such problematic issues are hidden. Judging from its various owners’ inscriptions, it was clearly
ical context of the Tegernsee or “Monk’s” Haggadah — its provenance from a late medieval missionary Christian milieu connected to blood libel accusations — is equally invisible in this presentation. Its choice seems determined more by its unique position among the Tegernsee Abbey library holdings.

in Italy during the 15th century, but appears to have left the peninsula before the Talmud persecution of 1553. In 1588, Solomon Ulma/Ulmo from Gunzburg acquired the Talmud, perhaps in Prague. According to Steimann's research, it was still in his possession in 1610. I owe a debt of gratitude to Ilona Steimann for sharing her unpublished cataloguing notes on this codex with me (p.c., May 7, 2019). Until the 18th century, this Talmud belonged to the Ulma/Ulmo/Ullmann family, who after their 1499 expulsion from the eponymous Ulm eventually settled in Pfersee, just outside Augsburg, and became one of the leading Jewish families there. The last ownership entry by the Ulmo family within the codex is from 1772. Ber ben Yona Ulmo/Ber Bernhard Ullmann (1751–1837), the head of the Pfersee/Augsburg Jewish community, was arrested in 1803 on trumped-up charges of monetary forgery. It is unclear how or why the codex moved from Pfersee to the Augustinian priory of Polling (Upper Bavaria, quite distant from Pfersee/Augsburg). Ber Bernhard Ullmann, *Chronicle of the Year 1803*, trans. & ed. Carl J. Ullmann (New York: n.p., 1928). *Tage des Gerichts: Der Bericht des Ber Ulmo aus Pfersee*, ed. & trans. Yehuda Shenef (Friedberg: Kokavim-Verlag, 2012), suggests that the provenance of this codex is doubtful and that it may have been expropriated from Ber Ullmann against his will. See *Lebendiges Büchererbe: Säkularisation, Mediatisierung und die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2003).

As a recent monograph shows, it may have been written and illuminated for a Christian Hebraist whose aim was to know Jewish rituals for the sake of converting Jews. For this reason, the codex has acquired a new name: “The Monk’s Haggadah.” See *The Monk’s Haggadah: A Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Codex from the Monastery of Tegernsee, with a prologue by Friar Erhard von Pappenheim*, eds. David Stern, Christoph Markschies, and Sarit Shalev-Eyni (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015). For the connection with the Trent blood libel of 1475, see Steimann, “The Preservation of Hebrew Books by Christians in the Pre-Reformation German Milieu,” 220–21.
To find out more about manuscripts in Hebrew and Jewish languages, one is referred to the languages/regions section. Occidental Manuscripts range at the top of this list, followed by

- African (Ethiopian, i.e., Ge’ez and Amharic, Coptic, Punic, and the singular Codex Vai)
- Oriental — (Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew and Yiddish(!), Pashto, Persian, Syriac, Turkish, Zend, as well as one each in Balochi, Kurdish, and Mandaic).
- East Asian — (Korean, Japanese, Chinese — why not alphabetical?)
- South Asian — (no separation into languages, but includes Bengali, Chakma, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Lepcha, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Pali, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Singhalese, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu)
- South East Asian (Batak, Burmese, Javanese and Balinese, Cambodian, Lampung, Laotian, Malayan, Thai, Vietnamese, and the languages of the Philippines).
- Central Asian (Manchurian, Mongolian, and Tibetan).

It becomes clear that the position of the African manuscripts directly after the occidental ones is due to the predominantly Christian character of the Ge’ez, Amharic, and Coptic holdings. This Africa is the Catholic, Christian Africa.

The overview over the Oriental section elides the distinction between alphabet, language and geography. Without pausing to worry about the Quran copied in Seville, the Mishnah with Talmud copied in South East France, or the Yiddish books copied in Southern Germany, the overview of the Oriental section calls them “Manuscripts from the Middle East.” In fact, the subsection introducing the Hebrew and Yiddish manuscripts con-

37 Ibid.
cedes that, “Although the Hebrew manuscripts are allocated to the group of Oriental works in accordance with their language, the majority of these works was created in Europe (predominantly Germany, France and Spain).” In this way, the classification system denies that Hebrew and Yiddish (as well as Arabic, of course) have historically been among European languages: a form of collective linguistic expatriation (in German, “Ausbürgerung,” a historic term connoting the Jewish deprivation of citizenship and residence status by the Nazis). Thus an ambivalent attitude to non-Latin-script languages leads to the Orientalization of Jewish books made in Europe.

The flipside of this Orientalization is the sanitation of the term Orientalism in the online history of the Munich Hebrew and Yiddish manuscript department. In the introductory paragraph concerning the foundation of the “Oriental” collections, the terms “Oriental” and “Orientalist” are used six times in the “innocent” way in which they used to be employed before Edward Said’s Orientalism. The Orientalist humanist and diplomat Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (1506–57), rector of Vien-

38 Ibid.
39 “The outstanding value of this collection is owed to the acquisition of the libraries of the diplomat and Orientalist Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (1506–57) and of Johann Jakob Fugger (1516–75) at the outset. Widmannstetter is regarded as one of the pioneers of Oriental studies. The purchase of the private library of the highly educated and polyglot diplomat and Orientalist in the year 1558 by Duke Albrecht V constituted the founding act of the Munich court library at the same time. More than 450 years ago, around 200 — a fairly substantial number at the time — manuscripts in the Hebrew, Arabic and Syrian languages were acquired by the library, among them a number of very important Hebrew works and very rare Oriental early printed works. The Oriental collection was expanded already in 1571 by the incorporation of the library of Johann Jakob Fugger (1516–75), one of the most prolific book collectors of the 16th century. Fugger’s library contained numerous Oriental works, in particular Hebrew works of great importance” (“Hebrew and Yiddish,” Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/en/collections/orient/languages/hebrew-and-yiddish, emphases mine).
na University, used his considerable language skills in Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac for ultimately conversionary aims aimed both at European Jews and at Eastern Christians. In the library’s presentation, Widmannstetter’s linguistic and collecting credentials are endorsed; but he was not only a pioneer of Oriental Studies as in his capacity as Chancellor of Austria and rector of the imperial University of Vienna, he stood at the forefront of the struggle against the Lutheran reformation, and in parallel (and as part of this greater quest for Catholic supremacy) he engaged in anti-Muslim polemics. Widmannstetter’s Islamic studies scholarship was not disinterested: he was the author of the 1543 polemical work *Notae contra Mohammedis dogmata*, which accompanied his edition of medieval Quranic excerpts *Mahometis Abdallae filii theologia dialogo explicata* and the *Vita Mohamme-dis*. All drew heavily on or revived Crusade-era anti-Muslim polemics.\(^4\) When it comes to Widmannstetter’s pioneering study of Syriac and Aramaic, its aim was to recuperate ancient Christianity in a quest for Catholic authentication, and to subject the eastern churches to Roman papal authority. He was explicit that his publication of the Syriac New Testament (Peshitta) in 1555

served conversionary purposes aimed both at Jews and at Muslims as well as non-Catholic Eastern Christians.\textsuperscript{42}

The Peshitta’s St. John frontispiece, with its almost typological correlation between the crucifixion and the “tree” of ten kabbalistic Sefirot, brings to the fore the appropriation of Kabbalah by Catholic Orientalists (fig. 4).\textsuperscript{43} It features the intrusion of Latin and Hebrew into the Syriac context: above the author portrait’s head, we read the incipit of St. John, and above the crucifix “Qui expansis in cruce manibus, / traxisti omnia ad te secula — You who have stretched out your hands on the cross have pulled towards yourself all the world.” These words are taken from the Roman Church’s Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday.\textsuperscript{44} A Hebrew rotulus above Jesus’s head is inscribed “ינמה,” translating the traditional Latin INRI = Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum, i.e., Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). Among the pictorially expressed Sefirot, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob feature prominently among the upper spheres. This use of the patriarchs is a form of supersessionist typology. The supersessionist theme is continued with Temple/Sanctuary symbolism: the foot of the cross is flanked by an altar with a fire burning on it and a sacrificial bull. The Menorah (the seven-branched golden Temple candelabrum) features prominently in the left foreground, in front of an image of the heavens. Although not all the details of this ambitious image are decodable, it is evident that Christian Kabbalah is deployed here


\textsuperscript{43} Wilkinson, Orientalism, Aramaic and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation, 182–85.

\textsuperscript{44} Fer. 5 in Cena Domini, Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday). The reference of this antiphon may be to John 12:32: “Et ego, si exaltatus fuiro a terra, omnia treham ad meipsum.”
Figure 5. bsb, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 65. http://daten.digitalsammlungen.de/bsb00036327/image_137. Licensed by the Bayerische StaatsBibliothek under a CreativeCommons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.
to expropriate the “Old Testament” (not printed in this book!), all the while depicting its harmony with the New. Thus, Widmannstetter’s scholarly work cannot be divorced from his participation in Renaissance anti-Islamism and anti-Judaism. One only needs to peruse Wilkinson’s comprehensive study of Syriac studies to discern the entanglement between Renaissance-era Oriental Studies, Christian (ultimately anti-Jewish) Kabbalah and anti-Islamism. As a keen Christian Hebraist with a special interest in Kabbalah (always read christologically), his conversionary agendas are well known — but in the online celebration of this figure, the dark face of Renaissance Orientalism is hidden.

BSB Cod. Hebr. 5, the manuscript with which we started, occupies a prominent place in the Hebrew and Yiddish section of the Oriental Manuscripts collection (among the selection of images here, the illuminated incipit from the book of Daniel is illustrated). It, too makes a visual statement about the continuity of the Temple/Sanctuary imagery, in its monumental full-page image of the Menorah on fol. 65 of the first volume (fig. 5). But at the same time, its angular formation resists the normative roundedness of the Christian seven-branched “Menorah” candelabra of the Middle Ages, such as those in the churches or cathedrals in Essen, Braunschweig, Reims, Klosterneuburg, Prague, Milan, which appropriated this object for claims that their churches replaced/displaced the ancient Temple. The Menorah depicted in the Peshitta’s St. John, by contrast, is in-

46 Steven Fine, *The Menorah: From the Bible to Modern Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). Re the three-stepped stone at the feet of this Menorah, see Babylonian Talmud, Menachot 28b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Beit Habechira* 3:10: “A stone with three steps was placed before the Menorah. The priest stood on it and kindled the lamps. Also, he placed the containers of oil, the tongs, and the ash-scoops upon it while kindling it.”
debted to both that sculpted on Titus’s triumphal arch erected in celebration of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and to rabbinic Jewish exegesis insisting on its tripod base—a combination then of humanist antiquarianism and of appropriated Hebraic learning.

Conclusion

The conversion of the Jews and that of Muslims, in parallel to the unification of the Eastern churches under the papal banner, was an integral core of Catholic Orientalism. I hope to have demonstrated that BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 carries the scars of such intellectual and political encounters on its leather-bound body. It narrowly escaped being swept up in more than one campaign intended to starve Jews of their traditional textual sources. This conversionary project was an integral part of the Catholic Orientalist project, a grandiose proto-Orientalist scholarly undertaking motivated by a truly Catholic, sometimes also apocalyptic vision of a universal religious unification under the shelter of papal spiritual power. My argument has been that by not critically interrogating these connections in present-day archival organization and classification, we risk sanitizing these extreme pressures on “Renaissance” Jews under the seemingly benign banner of Renaissance Humanism, and that we risk overlooking the chain of actions that at the same time preserved this Hebrew manuscript and removed it from Jewish agency.48

How would it be to instead place at the center of our epistemic vision the Ashkenazi synagogue of Venice known as the Candelabrum in the Sixteenth Century: Documents and Hypotheses,” *The Burlington Magazine* 153, no. 1294 (2011): 4–12.

Scuola Grande Tedesca (the Great German School)? This oldest house of Jewish prayer in Venice was founded in 1528/29 by Ashkenazi migrants from hostile environments north of the Alps to Venetian-controlled Northern Italy; during the War of the League of Cambrai (1508–16), these Ashkenazi people sought refuge in Venice itself, which then temporarily lifted its embargo on Jewish residence in the lagoon city—only to be contained in the “Getto Novo” in 1516, at the end of the war. Like a book, the synagogue is a body inscribed. The building’s west entrance faces the main piazza of the Ghetto Nuovo (that is the oldest part of the Ghetto). An otherwise unremarkable unadorned façade, only the five window arches, solemnly grouped on the third floor above low-ceilinged living quarters, suggest something more than an ordinary dwelling. Above the outer of the five windows, two small inscribed plaques are placed, probably too high up to be read. Using artful allusions so as to code the dates contained in them, the right-hand plaque records the original foundation of the synagogue, and its restoration in the early eighteenth century:

And when the House was founded, the year was [1528/9]; and when it was rebuilt for the second time, the time had come to rebuild the House of the Lord [1732/3].

50 Cf. Haggai 1:2: “Thus said the LORD of Hosts: These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for rebuilding the House of the LORD.’”
The second plaque makes reference to fire damage necessitating this rebuilding (which involved major internal modifications, including the erection of the oval women’s gallery). Even higher — very, very high up, just below the roof cornice, almost hiding from passers-by, runs a monumental Hebrew inscription (fig. 6):

Great House of Assembly, m[ay] G[od] p[rotect it], of the Holy Congregation of the Ashkenazim, may their Rock preserve them, Amen.

Divine protection is invoked twice in this short text, once on the building and once on the community. The particularist identity as “Ashkenazim” suggests a consciousness of the multi-ethnic nature of the population of the Ghetto. This space served as the place of encounter between the various Jewish people who owned or came into contact with BSB Cod. Hebr. 5, among them the rabbi, religious judge and editor Rabbi Hiyya Meir ben David (if he was still in Venice) and the “honorable Rabbi Ye-kutiel son of the late David,” who had bought the book from the former in 1526. This was likely the place where the various editors, typesetters and correctors who worked in the flourishing Hebrew printing industry worshipped, together with the

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51 Even though the present placement of the inscription above the 18th-century ladies’ gallery suggests a later date, the inscription is likely a replica of a 16th-century inscription.
Ashkenazi scribes working for Fugger. Including the master printer Israel ben Barukh alias Karniel Adel Kind alias Corne-lio Adelkind, and the scribes who rearranged BSB Cod. Hebr. 5 into two volumes. The interior of the synagogue is also a kind of book: the Ten Commandments are inscribed in gold paint on a crimson band which runs all the way around the hall not much above head height, and originally marked the upper limit of the first, low-ceilinged hall (fig. 7). The leaders of the congregation had plenty of reasons to implore divine protection: not only was the 1516 residence “privilege” for Jewish people in Venice, which enabled the establishment of the Getto Novo, always temporary and threatened by termination upon expiry, but there were plenty of cultural and religious pressures and vulnerabilities in the pressure cooker that was Counter-Reformation Orientalism.
Bibliography


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