

Crossing Cultures in the Venetian Ghetto. Leone Modena, the Accademia degli Incogniti and Imprese Literature

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I

Introduction

While conversion, forced baptism, inquisition and censorship have occupied the centre stage of studies on early modern Christian-Jewish relationships, less attention has been given to the more creative results of vicinity, physical encounters and cultural exchanges between Jews and Christians during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries¹. Harder for the specialist in religious history or philosophy to detect, more diffusely or randomly transmitted than written testimonials inscribed into the Tanakhic, Talmudic or Kabbalistic tradition, are manifestations of literary exchanges and cross-fertilisation shaped within a non-institutionalised culture of heterodox circles; indeed, to date they linger out of sight, and therefore, of historical understanding. This article treats some such realities of intellectual life in the Venetian Ghetto during the first half of the seventeenth century.

We shall focus, therefore, on writings of two main actors in that space at that time: the first actor is the well-known rabbi Leone Modena (1571-1648), the second actor is the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, founded by Gianfrancesco

1. On contacts between Christians and Jews in Italy, Germany and France, within the context of Hebraism and Hebrew learning during this period, see, among others, M. Kayserling, *Richelieu, Buxtorf père et fils, Jacob Roman. Documents pour servir à l'histoire du commerce de la librairie juive au XVII^e siècle*, in "Revue des études juives", n. 8, 1884, pp. 74-95; M. Kayserling, *Les correspondants juifs de Jean Buxtorf*, in "Revue des études juives", n. 12, 1886, pp. 260-76; Id., *Les Hébraïsants chrétiens du XVII^e siècle*, in "Revue des études juives", n. 20, 1890, pp. 261-8; A. Grafton, J. Weinberg, *'I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue'. Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (MA)-London 2011; J. R. Hacker, A. Shear, *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy (Jewish Culture and Contexts)*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania 2011; S. G. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500-1660)*, Brill, Leiden 2012; S. Campanini, *Correspondances hébraïques des humanistes entre XV^e et XVI^e siècle*, in "Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes Études. Section des sciences historiques et philologiques", n. 146, 2015, pp. 25-6. On Leone Modena and Salomone Rossi, see *infra*.

Loredan (b. 1607) and active between c. 1628 and Loredan's death in 1661². While Modena is famous for his extraordinary autobiography and for his contributions to the debates on Kabbalah as well as to the reform of Jewish sacred music through his collaboration with composer Salamone Rossi, his documentary trail is not adequately explored, and his relation to the bibliophile and literary world of his times, has been ignored. This article begins an analysis of these topics³ to

2. Among numerous studies of rabbi Leone Modena, see mainly: C. Roth, *Leone da Modena and England*, in "The Jewish Historical Society of England, Transactions Sessions 1924-1927", n. 11, 1928, pp. 206-27; C. Roth, *Leone da Modena and the Christian Hebraists*, in *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams*, Press of the Jewish Institute of Religion, New York 1927, pp. 384-401; M. R. Cohen, *Leone da Modena's Riti: A Seventeenth-Century Plea For Social Toleration of Jews*, in "Jewish Social Studies", XXXIV, 1972, 4, pp. 287-321; H. E. Adelman, *Success and Failure in the Seventeenth Century Ghetto of Venice: The Life and Thought of Leon Modena, 1571-1648*, PhD-thesis, Brandeis University, 1985; L. Modena, *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*, transl. and ed. by M. R. Cohen, introd. by M. R. Cohen, T. K. Rabb, H. E. Adelman, N. Zemon Davis, notes by H. E. Adelman, B. C. I. Ravid, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1988; M. Idel, *Differing Conceptions of Kabbalah in the Early Seventeenth Century*, in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by I. Twersky, B. Septimus, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1987, pp. 137-200; J. Weinberg, *Preaching in the Venetian Ghetto: The Sermons of Leon Modena, in Preachers of the Italian Ghetto*, ed. by D. B. Ruderman, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford 1992, pp. 105-28; L. Modena, *Vita di Jehudà. Autobiografia di Leon Modena rabbino veneziano del XVII secolo*, trad. di E. M. Artom, introd. di U. Fortis, note di D. Carpi, a cura di E. Rossi Artom, U. Fortis, A. Viterbo, Silvio Zamorani, Torino 2000; Y. Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2011; C. Facchini, *The City, the Ghetto and two Books. Venice and Jewish Early Modernity*, in "Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC", n. 2, November 2011, pp. 11-44. On the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, see, chiefly, M. Infelise, "Ex ignoto notus"? Note sul tipografo Sarzina e l'Accademia degli Incogniti, in *Libri, tipografi, biblioteche. Ricerche storiche dedicate a L. Balsamo*, a cura di A. Ganda, E. Grignani, A. Petrucciani, Olschki, Firenze 1997, pp. 207-23; W. Heller, *Tacitus Incognito: Opera as History in L'incoronazione di Poppea*, in "Journal of the American Musicological Society", LII, 1999, 1, pp. 39-96; N. Cannizzaro, *Guido Casoni, padre degli Incogniti*, in *I luoghi dell'immaginario barocco*. Atti del convegno di Siena, 21-23 ottobre 1999, a cura di L. Strappini, Liguori, Napoli 2001, pp. 547-60; N. Cannizzaro, *Studies on Guido Casoni (1561-1642) and Venetian Academies*, Ph.D diss., Harvard University, 2001; Id., *Surpassing the Maestro: Loredano, Colluraffi, Casoni and the Origins of the Accademia degli Incogniti*, in "Annali di Storia moderna e contemporanea", n. 9, 2003, pp. 369-97; C. Carminati, *Loredan, Giovan Francesco*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 65, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 2005, pp. 763-70; E. Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA)-London 2007; E. Chayes, *La Vie glorieuse de Rien: la référence à Plutarque dans l'œuvre de l'Accademia degli Incogniti de Venise*, in *Plutarque de l'Âge classique au XIX^e siècle*. Actes du Colloque à l'Université de Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 13-15 Mai 2009, éd. par O. Guerrier, Jérôme Millon, Grenoble 2012, pp. 9-28; J.-F. Lattarico, *Sous l'autorité du bizarre. Le discours académique des Incogniti entre tradition et subversion*, in "Cahiers du CELEC", n. 6: *Académies, Ecoles*, Journée d'Etudes CELEC-CERCLI, mardi 9 octobre 2012, Université Jean Monnet-Saint-Etienne, http://cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31%3Acahiersducelec6&Itemid=2.

3. Issuing from different presentations at meetings of the Renaissance Society of America: *Italian Explorations of the Creative Void. The Afterlife of Ficinian Concepts in Late 16th- and Early 17th-Century Academies*, RSA 54th annual meeting, Session: "Marsilio Ficino: Sixteenth-

be advanced in further papers. Respecting the *Incogniti* Academy, my 2012 article launched this research on the influences of Jewish connections and readings into Judaism on the Academy's publications. For its continuation, thanks are due to Harvard University Villa I Tatti for its fellowship of 2012-2013, work titled *The Accademia degli Incogniti, their «Discorsi» and their Jewish connections*, wherein I was able to uncover exactly these connections – a network stretching out from Spilimbergo to Venice, Rome and Paris – and the literary compositions that carry their traces⁴. The creative centre of these connections was the Venetian Ghetto. Within and without the Ghetto, the semi-official or unofficial circle of intellectuals called *Accademia degli Incogniti* and rabbi Leone Modena were meeting together as early as from 1628, and perhaps before. They read aloud their texts, which were of experimental character and, as we shall see, in the

and Seventeenth-Century Perspectives”, organizer: Valery Rees, 3-6 April 2008, Chicago; *Jewish Connections and Method in the Lives and Works of the Incogniti*, RSA 57th annual meeting, Session: “Intercultural Hebraic Aspects during the Renaissance”, organizer: Ilana Zinguer, 24-26 March 2011, Montréal; *Reassessing Leone da Modena's Historia de' riti hebraici: The Primary Manuscript and Earliest Editions*, RSA 58th annual meeting, Session: “Hebraica: Multicultural Aspects of Hebraism in Europe during the Renaissance”, organizer: Ilana Zinguer, 22-24 March 2012, Washington DC.

4. These researches continue earlier work: E. Chayes, *Language of Words and Images in the Rime degli Accademici occulti 1568: Reflections of the Pre-conceptual?*, in *Language and Cultural Change. Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by L. Nauta, Peeters, Leuven, Paris, Dudley (MA) 2006, pp. 149-71; E. Chayes, *The Creation of Modernity in the Accademie: bridging Literature, Philosophy and the Occult*, in *Officine del nuovo. Sodalizi fra letterati, artisti ed editori nella cultura italiana fra Riforma e Controriforma*. Atti del Simposio internazionale, Utrecht, 8-10 novembre 2007, a cura di H. Hendrix, P. Procaccioli, Vecchiarelli, Manziana 2008, pp. 469-77; Ead., *Les Occulti (1560-1570) ou la divulgation de l'identité au seuil de la modernité*, in *Normes et minorités: l'identité aux prises avec la figure de l'autre. Problématisations historiques, théologiques, philosophiques et littéraires (16e-20e siècles)*. Hommage à Pierre-Marie Beaude. Actes du Colloque international, CAEPR, Metz, 6-7 juin, 2008, éd. par Jacques Fantino, Université Paul Verlaine, Éditions du Cerf, Metz, Paris 2010, pp. 33-46; Ead., *“I vini generosi che non picano al gusto, se non quando passano il mare”. L'usage de la traduction aux cercles ambulants: émancipation littéraire et sociale, du domaine florentin du XV^e siècle aux cercles vénitiens du XVI^e siècle*, in *Dynamic Translations in the European Renaissance. La traduzione del moderno nel Cinquecento europeo*. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Università di Groningen, 21-22 ottobre 2010, a cura di P. Bossier, H. Hendrix, P. Procaccioli, Vecchiarelli, Manziana 2011, pp. 23-39; Ead., *La Vie glorieuse de Rien*; Ead., *Carriers, Companions, Accomplices. The Zaccaria Network*, in *Cyprus and the Renaissance (1450-1650)*, ed. by B. Arbel, E. Chayes, H. Hendrix, Brepols, Turnhout 2012, pp. 231-72; Ead., *Ciprioti fuoriusciti riformati: coinvolgimento accademico e coscienza geografica. L'impresa degli Zaccaria da Padova a Nicosia*, in *La Serenissima a Cipro: incontri di cultura nel Cinquecento*, a cura di E. Skoufari, Viella, Roma 2013, pp. 47-64; Ead., *Cercles, académies et nouveaux mécénes*, in *L'Époque de la Renaissance (1400-1600)*. Tome II: *La nouvelle culture (1480-1520)*, éd. par E. Kushner, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2017, pp. 101-9; Ead., *L'Accademia degli Incogniti: tra Talmud e Kabbalah*, in E. Chayes, G. Veltri, *Oltre le mura del Ghetto. Accademie, scetticismo e tolleranza nella Venezia barocca. Studi e documenti d'archivio*, New Digital Frontiers, Palermo 2016, pp. 49-112; Ead., *Visitatori libertini del Ghetto: Ismaël Boulliau e Charles de Valliquierville*, in E. Chayes, G. Veltri, *Oltre le mura del Ghetto*, cit., pp. 113-40.

course of the relationship built further on a specific strand of Italian academy literature.

What can we learn from these literary creations? I contend that Jewish-Christian relationships as they unfolded in intellectual life of early-seventeenth century Venice shared an impulse to adapt theology and religious life to changing European realities, outlooks and relationships. The literary compositions that I will discuss show how exchanges between Venetian Jews and Christians had already inspired hybridisation of culture⁵, and also how such new expressions now (ca. 1635) became emancipatory tools of an intellectual milieu wherein the trans-cultural largely overlaid different contending religions. The character of these expressions was of fundamental importance; what exactly do we mean when we talk about «literary creations of the *accademie*» – which creations, and which academies? Answers to those questions will allow us to analyse the documents pertaining to Leone Modena's musical Academy and situate its activity in the specific context of the academies that interest us, and their literary and musical productions. This will cause us to consider in detail two principal themes of these circles in which Jews and Christians took part: the (im)mortality of the soul and republicanism – themes that were moulded into philosophical debates themselves interwoven with artistic (musical and pictorial) and literary creations, thus conducing to publications characterised by *variatio*, overarched by cultural hybridism.

2

Venetian Academies and *Imprese*

Of Italian Academies, those of Venice included, not all were literary. Some had no statutes, no rules, and left us no archives. Considerable research now justifies here my affirmation of a coherence and tradition within a certain group of Veneto academies. Not only did members migrate from one

5. Peter Burke applied the notion of *cultural hybridisation* to Renaissance culture. The metaphorical hybridisation here intended suggests a situation to which individuals of different local cultural tradition contribute, through exchanges, while continuing within their track, now influenced by these meetings. Thus, these observations do not validate the suggestion that cultural hybridisation leads to obliteration of religious identity. The research here presented is a case of inter-culturality, the input of two different and interacting organisms, themselves already inscribed in plural dynamics, while issuing from local traditions of cultural expression. Cfr. P. Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance. Culture, Language, Architecture*, Central European University Press, Budapest 2016; D. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry. A New Cultural History*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, Woodstock, Oxfordshire 2010. Given that the concept of hybridisation originated in biology to describe offspring of parents of “different species” the metaphor “hybrid” can reawaken illusions about original purity of parentage; its use in cultural history has thus attracted over-wrought criticism. For an anthropological critique of the idea of “métissage”, “créolisation” and hybridity, and “l’hypothèse de l’appropriation de signifiants globaux par des signifiés particularistes ainsi que celle de la triangulation des cultures”, see J.-L. Amselle, *Métissage, branchement et triangulation des cultures*, in “Revue germanique internationale”, n. 21, 2004, on-line since 19 September 2011, last consulted 30 August 2017: <http://rgi.revues.org/994>.

academy to another within this group⁶; a literary coherence demonstrably persists from the 1550s until the 1650s, from Brescia and the *Occulti* Academy, Padua and the *Eterei*, to the Paduan *Ricovrati* and the Venetian *Incogniti* Academy.

Table 1

<i>Mantua</i>	<i>Padua</i>	<i>Venice-Brescia</i>	<i>Padua</i>	<i>Venice</i>	<i>Ghetto Venice</i>
Invaghiti	Eterei	Dubbiosi -‘Palesi’ -Occulti	Ricovrati	Incogniti	Sara Copio Sullam Circle and Impediti
1562-	1563-	1540-	1599-1600	ca. 1628-1661	ca. 1620-

The *Occulti* circle, as I have recently explained, involved Jewish contacts and learning that nourished its writings, writings that show an interest in this Hebrew learning and a wider interest that might be called orientalist in general, turned toward non-Christian and non-Latin sources⁷. Some seven decades later, the *Incogniti* frequented intellectuals from the Venetian Ghetto, from whom they solicited knowledge and also manuscripts and antiquities. This orientation toward what they thought of as treasuries of the Ancient, associated with *prisca theologia*, unknown *scientia* and arcane wisdom had found its place in what was, perhaps paradoxically, the creation of an innovative art-form that combined images (engravings), prose, poetry and songs, more specifically

6. Thus, for example, Gioacchino Scaino migrates from the *Eterei* to the *Ricovrati*, Antonio Querenghi, from the *Occulti* to the *Ricovrati*, Giovanni Francesco Musatto, from the *Eterei* to the *Ricovrati*, Guido Casoni, from the *Ricovrati* to the *Incogniti*. Entrees on these academies in M. Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, L. Cappelli, Bologna 1926-29: *Dubbiosi*: vol. 2, pp. 224-26; *Eterei*: vol. 2, pp. 319-23; *Occulti*: vol. 4, pp. 87-91; *Ricovrati*: vol. 4, pp. 440-45; *Incogniti*: vol. 3, pp. 205-6. On the *Dubbiosi*, see M. Faini, *Fortunato Martinengo, Girolamo Ruscelli e L'Accademia dei Dubbiosi tra Brescia e Venezia*, in *Girolamo Ruscelli. Dall'Accademia alla Corte alla tipografia*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Viterbo, 6-8 ottobre 2011, vol. II, a cura di P. Marini, P. Procaccioli, Vecchiarelli, Manziana 2012, pp. 455-519.

7. See the observations in my *Carriers, Companions, Accomplices* and my forthcoming *Réforme, messianisme et divination dans les marges vénitiennes. Empreintes et emprunts orientaux dans la production littéraire de Brescia, XVI^e-XVII^e siècle*, in *Fortunato Martinengo: un gentiluomo del Rinascimento fra arti, lettere e musica*, a cura di E. Selmi, M. Bizzarini, Morcelliana, Ateneo di Brescia, Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Brescia.

madrigals⁸, while hinting at new forms of knowledge⁹. This creation was their *impresa* literature.

In particular to these academies, not only the name of the academy itself, but the academy pseudonym of each individual member, received its proper *impresa*. The *impresa* was a literary genre. It was meant to summarily apprehend, to encapsulate, the life of the person or *persona* represented and to do it in an artistic, visual and poetical way. Several 16th-century writers conceived and wrote rules for an *impresa* – Girolamo Ruscelli (Viterbo, 1500/1518-Venice, 1566)¹⁰, and Paolo Giovio (Como, c. 1483-Florence, 1552)¹¹. The literary *impresa* derived from a court culture in which, by the beginning of the 16th century, the heraldic sign on the courtier's hat – the *impresa* (French: *devise*; coat-of-arms) sign of chivalric order – evolved into a *concettismo* and the art of enigmas, the creators of which used pseudonyms and symbolism. Thus, documents from the Mantuan *Accademia degli Invaghiti*, founded in 1562, tell us that its members wore the academy *impresa* on a necklace and that the *Invaghiti* formed a «chivalric order» recognised by Pope Pius IV in 1564¹². By the end of the 16th century, the *Invaghiti* Academy would engage Jews, Salamone Rossi among them, for their theatre-music productions, about which more below.

The *impresa* – not to be confounded with an emblem, which is intended to represent a universal truth – should combine the persona-name, its motto in Latin, Greek or Hebrew, an engraving representing the image of a non-human figure, and an explanation or illustration in prose or poetry¹³. The engraving should depict a bizarre non-human scene; to this engraving appends a motto and the alias of the Academician to whom this *impresa* pertains. In the analogical effort congenial to their mentality, the *impresistas* identified the engraving, the image, with the body, and the motto with the soul, the explanation or illustration with experience. Thus, the *impresa* of the *Occulti* Academy exhibited here below is a *mise-en-abyme* (like a Russian or *matryoshka* doll) of this concept of an *impresa* as a human being that needs to be “decrypted”, body and soul; it hides a meaning that one must *read into*.

8. See *Le stanze segrete: le donne bresciane si rivelano*, a cura di E. Selmi, in coll. con Paola Lasagna, S. Lorenzini, M. Moiraghi Sueri, Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, Brescia 2008; M. Bizzarini, *La vera identità di Barbara Calini e i madrigali a cinque voci di Giovanni Contino*, in *Rinascimento musicale bresciano*, a cura di R. Tibaldi, in “Philomusica online”, XV, 2016, 1, pp. 575-9.

9. Cfr. Chayes, *The Creation of Modernity in the “Accademie”*, cit.; Ead., *Les Occulti (1560-1570) ou la divulgation de l'identité au seuil de la modernité*, cit.

10. *Le imprese illustri*, Francesco Rampazetto, Venezia 1572.

11. *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose*, Antonio Barre, Roma 1555.

12. See Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie*, cit., vol. 3, p. 363.

13. On the *impresa* as a literary genre, see R. Klein, *La théorie de l'expression figurée dans les traités italiens sur les Imprese, 1555-1612*, in R. Klein, *La forme et l'intelligible. Écrits sur la Renaissance et l'art moderne*, articles and essays presented by A. Chastel, Gallimard, Paris 1970, pp. 125-50; A. Maggi, *L'identità come impresa in “Rime degli Accademici occulti”*, in *Esperienze letterarie: rivista trimestrale di critica e di cultura*, XXII, 1997, pp. 43-61; D. L. Drysdall, *The Emblem According to the Italian Impresa Theorists*, in *The Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe. Tradition and Variety*, ed. by A. Adams, A. J. Harper, Brill, Leiden-New York-Köln 1992, pp. 22-32; Chayes, *Language of Words and Images*, cit.

Figure 1

Title-page engraving of the *Rime degli Academici Occulti con le loro imprese et discorsi*, Vincenzo da Sabio, Brescia 1568



The *Occulti's* motto is *Intus non Extra* («from within, not from without»), of which the first layer of reference is the Silenus's body, the Dionysian half-goat and half-human figure in which resides the truth, the *occult*. Plato articulates this idea in his discussion of Alcibiades, a theme and motif that Erasmus and others had already famously taken up¹⁴. Throughout their *Rime*, the *Occulti's* project is confirmed as one inspired by the *prisca theologia* of the Neo-Platonic corpus (mentioned earlier), importantly transmitted through Ficino. This inspiration contextualised with the background of their philo-Protestant milieu in which ran

lively discussions on sacred eloquence – a spiritual liberation of the Word that would allow for a true *imitatio Christi* and a rhetoric that would be simple but “enriched by philosophical contents” –, discussions influenced by Geneva (Calvin)¹⁵.

14. On the Silenus of Alcibiades, see, e.g., W. J. Th. Peters, *The Silenus of Alcibiades. An Archaeological Commentary on Plato, Symposium 215 A-B*, in Festoen, ed. by Johannes Spiko Boersma, Tjeenk Willink, Groningen [1976], pp. 475-85; Chayes, *Language of Words and Images*, cit.

15. Chayes, *Carriers, Companions*, cit., p. 235.

To these, Speroni was among the first to contribute at the time of the *Occulti*'s most intense activity, ca. 1568¹⁶. The *Occulti* Academy's *impresa* shows the Silenus flanked by Bacchus and Apollo, representing respectively pastoral poetry (Bacchus) and the sonnet and music (Apollo), as well as animal nature and court culture. In the *Occulti*'s prose, the engraving and motto are further developed following the vectors of Hippocratic and Galenic *humoralism*: the different humours within the human body making up for that persona's temperament are influenced by food and culture and echo nature (or the cosmos) as a whole (cf. tab. 2).

Table 2
The Galenic system of the four humors and the micro- and macrocosmic connections:

<i>Planet</i>	<i>Season</i>	<i>Humor</i>	<i>Temperament</i>	<i>Element</i>	<i>Bodily Organ</i>	<i>Qualities</i>
Jupiter	Spring	Blood	Sanguine	Air	Liver	Warm & moist
Mars	Summer	Yellow Bile	Choleric	Fire	Gall Bladder	Warm & dry
Saturn	Fall	Black Bile	Melancholic	Earth	Spleen	Cold & dry
Mercury	Winter	Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Water	Lungs/ Brain	Cold & moist

3

The Soul Evolving through Pictures, Poetry, Madrigals

In connecting Modena's musical Academy to this larger Italian culture, it is significant that the *Accademia degli Occulti* compositions were products of a court-culture wherein music was a quintessential ingredient. Amidst the poetry (*rime*) accompanying the *impresa* of a specific *Occulto* and the prose explanation, we find texts preceded by the indication «mad.», for madrigal, in between sonnets and episodes of pastoral drama. Recently, Marco Bizzarini made a strong case for situating the *Rime degli Occulti* in the context of musical production within the Brescian circle where women such as Barbara Calini, Veronica Gambarà and Maura Martinengo Gonzaga («*trait d'union* between Brescia and Mantua»¹⁷) played a big role as composers and patrons-dedicatees. Just such a musical component resided in this Brescian circle from its earliest days, as the short-lived *Dubbiosi* Academy under Fortunato Martinengo, then probably continued as the *Palesi* («the visible»; possibly an ironic comment on the *Dubbiosi*'s brief moment)¹⁸ before becoming the *Occulti*. The musical interest took other forms in the various academies in the Veneto region listed above, a network in which Jews participated. It is important to keep in mind how these groups interrelated

16. *Ibid.* Members of the Occulti circle frequented Sperone Speroni in Padua.

17. Bizzarini, *La vera identità di Barbara Calini*, cit., p. 578.

18. A. Gallo, *Le vinti giornate dell'agricoltura*, Camillo e Rutilio Borgnomineri fratelli, al Segno di San Giorgio, Venezia 1572, p. 404.

through patrons, active members, and the academies' respective intellectual programs.

The Mantuan *Accademia degli Invaghiti*, in which Salamone Rossi (c. 1570-1630) became involved, came into being in 1562, its founder Giulio Cesare Gonzaga¹⁹. The *Invaghiti* contracted with Jews to create their productions, Salamone Rossi and the playwright Leone de' Sommi among them.

With the rise to prominence of Salamone Rossi, the importance of Jewish musicians for the musical life of the city seems to have reached a high point; Rossi's name appears in court payment documents, and he seems also to have been in charge of a troupe of travelling musicians with something of a local reputation. Other Mantuan Jewish musicians in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries included Rossi's sister "Madama Europa", Davit da Civita (whose *Premittie armoniche* was dedicated to the then Duke of Mantua), and Allegro Porto. [There was significant] Mantuan patronage of music and the arts as Gonzaga patronage is not an exaggeration, since sponsorship as existed elsewhere in the city was supported by Gonzaga interest and Gonzaga money²⁰.

Rossi's polyphonic music was defended by, and probably directly inspired by, rabbi Leone Modena. Morosini's *Via della fede* tells us that «around 1628» Leone Modena was directing his musical academy, and Don Harrán reminds us that Rossi was in Venice in 1628, to supervise publication of his *Madrigaletti*²¹. These elements call for reconsideration also of Rossi's (or Rossi's and Modena's) *Songs*

19. This Academy obtained Papal privileges by a bull of 1564, for teaching (law, medicine, philosophy), as well as the recognition of their group as a chivalric order, suggesting at the same time Papal supervision. Documents list Scipione Gonzaga as an *Invaghito*. Nonetheless, in 1563 or 1564, Scipione joined the *Accademia degli Etere*i in Padua, where he had been a philosophy student since 1558 and became acquainted with Speroni. After the *Elevati* disbanded in 1560, this new Paduan Academy was organised, as testified by a letter from Sperone Speroni to Bartolommeo Zacco, dated 16 January 1563. It opened formally in 1564. In 1567, its twenty members, among which were Venetians, Paduans, two persons from Vicenza, one from Reggio and a Mantuan, published the *Rime degli Academici Etere*i in Venice, first dedicated to Margherita Valeria Duchessa di Savoia, then, in 1588, to Scipione Gonzaga. Cfr. Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie*, cit., vol. 2, p. 319. So, the Gonzaga patrons were present in important circles in Mantua as well as Padua.

20. I. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-London-New York-New Rochelle-Melbourne-Sydney 1980, p. 43.

21. G. Morosini, דרך אמונה *Via della fede mostrata a'gli ebrei da Giulio Morosini venetiano, scrittore della Biblioteca Vaticana nella Lingua Ebraca, e Lettor della medesima nel Collegio de Propaganda Fide, divisa in tre parti [...] Opera non men curiosa, che utile, principalmente per chi conversa, ò tratta con gli Ebrei, ò predica loro*, Stamparia della Sacra Cong. de Prop. Fide, Roma 1683, cap. XLVI: «Del giorno chiamato da gli Ebrei שמחה תורה Simchà Torà, cioè Allegrezza della Legge, che si celebra nel giorno nono delle Caselle, ò subito dopo l'Ottava nel medesimo mese settimo di Tisri», pp. 793-4; cfr. D. Harrán,, "Dum Recordaremur Sion": *Music in the Life and Thought of the Venetian Rabbi Leon Modena (1571-1648)*, in "Association for Jewish Studies Review", XXIII, 1998, 1, pp. 17-61: 54; cfr. H. T. Adelman, *Rabbis, Politics, and Music: Leon Modena and Salamone Rossi*, in "Notes from Zamir", Spring, 2003, pp. 8-9 and 11.

of Solomon, wherein, as Don Harrán stressed²², the theme of the soul and its immortality are central²³.

Whereas the *Invaghiti* Academy developed as a centre of theatrical and musical composition and performance, exclusively literary preoccupations, as far as we know, dominated the *Eterei* Academy. Scipione Gonzaga had been a student in Padua from 1558. There, in 1564, he founded the *Eterei* Academy and introduced Torquato Tasso into this fortnightly assembly of young poets²⁴. Tasso's contribution, consisting of 42 love-poems, has been termed a «minuscolo canzoniere»²⁵. In the words of Antonio Daniele it traces the «*iter ideale di un animo innamorato*»²⁶ between passion, jealousy, hope and despair. The substructure of this *iter ideale* follows from the Intellect-Will couple congruent with Ficino's depiction of the soul's flight. At the *Eterei* Academy opening in 1564 Anton Francesco Doni dedicated to it his *Pitture, Il Petrarca composto in Arquà*. In my judgment the *Pitture* are a major source of the *Eterei* poems. Doni and the *Eterei* had in common a project, the erection of a temple, a *teatro della Fama*, in honour of Petrarch who lived and died in Arquà and whose *Trionfo della Fama* (1351) honours history's great writers and philosophers²⁷. Doni's *Pitture* depict

22. D. Harrán, *A Tale as Yet Untold: Salamone Rossi in Venice, 1622*, in "Sixteenth Century Journal", XL, 2009, 4, pp. 1091-107.

23. Furthermore, Rossi's title (Songs of Salomon) invokes a biblical book notably popular during the sixteenth century and especially within the heterodox circles of Brescia, Padua and Venice. Cfr. Chayes, *Réforme, messianisme et divination dans les marges vénitienes*, cit.

24. Gonzaga's memoirs, the *Commentarii*, tell that they "avoided obscene talk or themes that were already discussed in the *scuole*". And that, in their rigorous selection, prose and Latin texts give way to poetry in the *lingua toscana*. See Scipione Gonzaga. *Autobiografia [Commentarii]*, intr. e trad. di D. Della Terza, Edizioni Panini, Ferrara 1987, "Liber primo", pp. 12-3: «dopo riflessione apparve chiaro che le orazioni e discettazioni presentate dagli Accademici richiedevano una vigilanza censoria troppo più intensa del tempo disponibile venne stabilito di rendere pubblici solo i parti poetici in volgare e di escludere quelli in latino. Delle poesie in lingua volgare alcune furono rigorosamente selezionate e date con grandissima cura alle stampe».

25. A. Daniele, *Capitoli Tassiani*, Antenore, Padova 1983, cap. *Il Tasso e l'Accademia degli Eterei*, p. 12: «il contributo [è] il più cospicuo (42 componimenti, di cui 38 sonetti, 2 canzoni e 2 madrigali) e rivela caratteristiche di minuscolo canzoniere. A parte un'ombra di sviluppo psicologico (con variazioni sui temi della passione, della gelosia, dello sdegno) che affiora, pur raffreddato entro gli schemi di una maniera ormai consolidata di esibire l'*iter ideale* di un animo innamorato, vale la pena di sottolineare in questo contenuto *corpus* l'emergente vitalità di una lirica già maturissima». Daniele terms this a «raccolta della massima importanza» for lyrical anthologies of sixteenth-century Italy and for the whole development of Venetian petrarchism. A. Daniele, *Nuovi capitoli tassiani*, Antenore, Padova 1998, pp. 1-55: «raccolta della massima importanza (pur nel panorama folto delle antologie liriche del secolo) per la storia e lo sviluppo del petrarchismo veneto (e non solo) cinquecentesco e della nostra tradizione lirica più in generale» (cap. *Le Rime degli Eterei*, p. 3).

26. Daniele, *Capitoli Tassiani*, cit., p. 12.

27. Cfr. Sonia Maffei in her edition of A. F. Doni, *Pitture del Doni Accademico Pellegrino*, La Stanza delle Scritture, Napoli 2004, p. 131: «La dedica ai membri dell'Accademia degli Eterei manca nel manoscritto vaticano, che, come abbiamo detto, è dedicato a Luigi d'Este. Il brano ruota intorno alla figura della Fama, votata con la sua "tromba sonora e chiara" a diffondere lodi e memorie degli accademici, chiamati a contribuire al progetto del "teatro" della Fama per

a palazzo on a mountaintop ascended by 42 steps to which associate vices and virtues. Halfway up is a loggia, its round gallery covered with images of works corresponding to these virtues. Doni calls those representations *invenzioni*, inventions making abstract concepts visible and interrelated by a system of *loci*²⁸. In her *Stanza della memoria* Lina Bolzoni has pointed out how Doni's *Pitture*, years later, still functioned not only as allegorical images «open to interpretation-games» – which often included numbers – but also as *imagines agentes* used in «several real palazzi» and «iconographical contests»²⁹. Doni emphasises ingeniousness, non-imitative invention, grotesque and deforming images³⁰:

Quando si fabbricò la mia casa (per non dir palazzo) che fu in quel tempo, che il Gran Ficino fece fare il fondamento del suo Museo, io entrai in bizzarria di far dipingerla tutta di dentro, mosso dal suo dire, che così al suo palazzo voleva fare, sí che l'addornano con poca spesa, sí per mostrar nuove inventioni³¹.

In that Doni was born in 1513 and Ficino died in 1499, Doni seems to re-invent history as he exposit on the capriciousness of painting the interior of his own palazzo. In doing so he harkens to Ficino's *De vita*, book III, chap. 19, where he recommends one to

construct a chamber vaulted and marked with these figures and colours, and he should spend most of his waking hours there and also sleep. And when he has emerged (...) he will not note with so much attention the spectacle of individual things as the figure of the universe and its colors. But I leave this to those who make images. You, however, will fashion a better image within yourself when you know that nothing is more orderly than the heavens³².

The vaulted chamber is a memory that stores images and relates to the faculty of imagination, while recalling the divine, for «the soul journeyed with God» before its fall³³. Ficino talks about an *imitatio*, the analogy between the heavens and the

Petrarca. Il procedimento richiama quello del *Cancellieri* dove Doni ugualmente sceglie la Fama per dar voce al progetto del «tempio» petrarchesco».

28. L. Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria*, Einaudi, Torino 1995, pp. 203-9.

29. Ivi, p. 209.

30. Cfr. S. Maffei, *Introduzione a Doni, Pitture*, cit., pp. 46-7.

31. A. F. Doni, *Pitture del Doni Accademico Pellegrino, nelle quali si mostra di nuova inventione: Amore, Fortuna, Tempo, Castità, Religione, Sdegno, Riforma, Morte, Sonno e Sogno, Huomo, Republica, e Magnanimità, divise in due Trattati. Consacrati à gli Illustrissimi Signori, i Sig. Academici Etereì*, Libro Primo, Gratosio Perchacino, Padova 1564, f. 6r.

32. M. Ficino, *De vita*, III.xix, ed., intr., transl. by C. V. Kaske, J. R. Clark, *Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies*, Renaissance Society of America, Binghamton, New York 1989, p. 347.

33. Cfr. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249c-d: «Then a human soul may pass into the life of a beast, and a soul which was once human, may pass again from a beast into a man. For the soul which has never seen the truth can never pass into human form. For a human being must understand a general conception formed by collecting into a unity by means of reason the many perceptions of the senses; and this is a recollection of those things which our soul once beheld, when it journeyed with God and, lifting its vision above the things which we now say exist, rose up into

invention and ordering of images in ourselves; Doni presents us *unpredictable*, bizarre images – *nuove inventioni*, not-yet-seen inventions, often grotesque, unexpected media for Platonic ideas. The nexus relating Doni, the *Eterei* and the memory of Petrarch is cemented by Ficino's interiorised *imago* and the *Phaedran* charioteer, his wings and steeds³⁴. The title-page engraving of the *Eterei's Rime* represents the Academy's *impresa*: a chariot heading heavenward drawn by two horses, one pulling down towards the lower world, the other up towards the sun. There enters the «*vittorioso carro*» of the soul in poems displaying spirits, the chariot, two wings (Will or desire, and Intellect), two horses (*idem*)³⁵. In these ancient debates some gave supremacy to Will, others to Intellect. In simplified form, Intellect transforms reality; Will chases after it. Intellect relates to Truth, aspires to the universal, and to separation from objects, acts in an inner, enfolding motion, is related to sight and engenders visual metaphors. Will relates to the Good, is directed to the particular, to union with objects, acts in an outer, unfolding motion, relates to desire and engenders love metaphors³⁶.

real being. And therefore it is just that the mind of the philosopher only has wings, for he is always, so far as he is able, in communion through memory with those things the communion with which causes God to be divine. Now a man who employs such memories rightly is always being initiated into perfect mysteries and he alone becomes truly perfect; but since he separates himself from human interests and turns his attention toward the divine, he is rebuked by the vulgar, who consider him mad and do not know that he is inspired».

34. We remember the alternating 42 Vice-and-Virtue steps leading to the gallery of images and, finally, the palazzo of the *Pitture*. This alternation echoes the *Rime's* back-and-forth movement between the force of the black steed causing the soul's fall and the force of intellect and will leading to its re-ascension. The scope of this article forbids a thorough analysis of the *Eterei Rime's* structuring arithmetic, nevertheless my conclusion is that Tasso followed the structure of Doni's *Pitture* and that the structuring thought was Ficino's. The explicit references to him make coincidence implausible. The *Pitture*, we just learned, picture 42 steps leading to the mountaintop palazzo. Tasso contributed 42 poems to the *Rime*. As Michael Allen has shown in his *Nuptial Arithmetic*, Ficino's Commentary on book eight of Plato's *Republic*, 42 is the fifth spousal number as the outcome of 6 times 7, one of the important numbers structuring the material world; M. Allen, *Nuptial Arithmetic. Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on the Fatal Number in Book VIII of Plato's "Republic"*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford 1994. Let us notice among Doni's *Pitture* an allegory of *La Repubblica*.

35. Plato's *Phaedrus* represents the soul as a charioteer with two wings. Two steeds, one black, one white, draw his chariot. "One horse is of noble breed, the other quite the opposite" (246b). The white is opinion, the black appetite and muddled imagination. "[T]he horse of evil nature weighs the chariot down [...] pulling toward the earth the charioteer" (247b) in its effort to rise to "the heaven above the heavens." On the reception of this Platonic allegory during the Renaissance, cfr. P. O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, P. Smith, Gloucester (MA) 1964 [1943⁷]; P. O. Kristeller, *Le Thomisme et la pensée italienne de la Renaissance*, Vrin, Paris 1967; M. J. B. Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, Berkeley University Press, Berkeley 1981; A. Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique. Études sur le Renaissance et l'humanisme platonicien*, chap. 1: *Le médaillon du char de l'âme*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1959, pp. 39-44; A. Chastel, *Le jeune homme au camée platonicien du Bargello*, in "Proporzioni", III, 1950, pp. 73-4; T. Albertini, *Intellect and Will in Marsilio Ficino: Two Correlatives of a Renaissance Concept of the Mind*, in *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology. His Philosophy, His Legacy*, ed. by M. J. B. Allen, V. Rees, M. Davies, Brill, Leiden 2002, pp. 203-26.

36. Cfr. Albertini, *Intellect and Will*, cit., pp. 223; 208-9. Where Ficino favours the Intellect it

Each of our academies here adopted this master image of the soul's two wings to express its ideas about the soul, cognition and the human condition³⁷. This image is a *continuo* in the publications from the *Eterei* and the *Occulti* on to the *Incogniti*.

The *vittorioso carro* of the soul also entered the salons of the Ghetto, and by dint of contact with Jewish texts and ideas, would eventually give rise to an altered conception of the soul, in the writings of the *Incogniti* Academy.

Thus, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Jewish poetess Sara Copio Sullam, who has inspired a fair quantity of studies and essays³⁸, became involved in philosophic debates with the *Incogniti* Ansaldo Cebà³⁹ and Baldassare Bonifaccio on the immortality of the soul⁴⁰. A careful reading of Bonifaccio's writings show Cebà and Bonifaccio were protagonists, meeting in Sara Copio's salon, in what was probably a precedent to the *Accademia degli*

is because it transforms reality «to a more [...] generic, motionless [...] more perfect condition», a benefit superior to Will's dependence on reality, on objects, toward which it moves.

37. Armando Maggi has showed that the couple Intellect-Will structured Alessandro Farra's *imprese* collection of 1571: A. Maggi, *Identità e impresa rinascimentale*, Longo, Ravenna 1998, pp. 23-45.

38. See, esp., L. Modona, *Sara Copio Sullam: Sonetti editi ed inediti*, Società Tipografica già Compositori, Bologna 1887; E. Sarot, *Ansaldo Cebà and Sara Copia Sullam*, in "Italia", XXXI, 1954, pp. 138-50; C. Boccato, *Lettere di Ansaldo Ceba, genovese, a Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa del ghetto di Venezia*, in "La rassegna mensile di Israel", n. 40, 1974, pp. 169-91; Ead., *Testimonianze ebraiche sulla peste del 1630 a Venezia*, in "La rassegna mensile di Israel", n. 41, 1975, pp. 458-67; Ead., *Sara Copia Sullam: La poetessa del ghetto di Venezia: episodi della sua vita in un manoscritto del secolo XVII*, in "Italia", 1987, 6, pp. 104-218; Ead., *Una disputa secentesca sull'immortalità dell'anima. Contributi d'archivio*, in "La rassegna mensile di Israel", n. 45, 1988, pp. 593-606; U. Fortis, *La "bella ebrea": Sara Copia Sullam poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600*, Silvio Zamorani, Torino 2003; D. Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam: Jewish Poet and Intellectual in Seventeenth-Century Venice. The Works of Sarra Copia Sulam in Verse and Prose, Along with Writings of Her Contemporaries in Her Praise, Condemnation, or Defense*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 2009; M. Caffiero, *Amor platonico tra conversione e immortalità. Le lettere d'Ansaldo Cebà a Sara Copio Sullam*, in *Scrivere d'amore. Lettere di uomini e donne tra Cinque e Novecento*, a cura di M. I. Venzo, Viella, Roma 2015, pp. 97-126.

39. Ansaldo Cebà (d. 1623) is mentioned in the 1647 *Glorie degli Incogniti* as an *Incognito*, while there are no traces of the Academy before 1628. Although Cebà died in 1623, he is listed as an "Incognito" in the *Incogniti's Glorie* (1647). As I have shown, this, along with evidence of the debates between Copio and Cebà and Bonifacio, strongly suggests that Copio gathered a circle around her and that the Venetians themselves considered this "salon" (at least in 1647) as the *Incogniti* Academy's embryo. Cfr. Chayes, *L'Accademia degli Incogniti: tra Talmud e Kabbalah*, cit., pp. 74-5.

40. As is evidenced in the following publications: *Rime degli Academici Eterei*, s.e., s.l., [1567]; *Rime degli Academici Occulti*, V. de Sabio, Brescia 1568; *Il tempio della divina signora donna Geronima Colonna d'aragona*, L. Pasquati, Padova 1568; G. Belloni, *Discorso intorno all'Antro delle Ninfe Naiadi di Homero. Impresa de gli Academici Ricovrati di Padova*, Francesco Bolzetta, Padova 1601; B. Bonifacio, *Dell'immortalità dell'anima*, A. Pinelli, Venezia 1621; A. Cebà, *Lettere scritte a Sarra Copia e dedicate a Marc'Antonio Doria*, G. Pavoni, Genova 1623; S. Copio Sullam, *Manifesto di Sarra Copia Sulam Hebraea. Nel quale è da lei riprovata, e detestata l'opinione negante l'Immortalità dell'Anima*, A. Pinelli, Venezia 1621; *Discorsi Academici de' signori Incogniti*, Sarzina, Venezia 1635.

*Incogniti*⁴¹. Moreover, Venetian rabbis such as Simone Luzzatto, Salomon Hai de Seraval and Isaiah ben Eliezer Hayyim Nizza were solicited by the *Incogniti* for learning and debate and were probably present at Academy meetings. Simone Luzzatto⁴², rabbi at the *Scuola Tedesca* and a friend of Leone Modena, wrote a philosophic treatise, *Socrate* (Venice, Tomasini, 1651), 330 pages in-quarto, a work marked by the scepticism of his times, and, what is more, intersecting and overlapping largely with the *Incogniti's Discorsi Academici* (1635). Luzzatto's *Socrate* puts forward considerations about optics, on the limits of human reason, subjectivity of precision, free will of the individual soul and Aristotelian criticism versus rigorous Aristotelianism⁴³. These quite distinct features strongly suggest Luzzatto a habitu  of the *Incogniti* Academy at Loredano's palazzo, where he and the members read and debated their respective writings.

Combining this evidence with Leone Modena's appropriation of the literary component of *accademia*-culture, which I will explain in the next chapter of this article, we can discern the longer continuity and wider nature of this joint participation in literary culture between Jews from the Venetian Ghetto and its Christian visitors.

4

A Jewish Academy Performing Polyphony in the Synagogue

Through a manuscript letter and a seventeenth-century printed source, historians already knew that rabbi Leone Modena directed a musical academy

41. Tucked into Loredano's letters published in 1660, is one to Baldassar Bonifacio: *Lettere del Signor Gio. Francesco Loredano, Nobile Veneto, divise in cinquantadue Capi, e Raccolte da Henrico Giblet Cavalier*, Guerigli, Venezia, 1660 (*Lettere di Scusa*), p. 21: «Al Sig. Baldassar Bonifacio Archidiacono. Trevigi. Voleva nobilitar la mia Musa col rispondere al gentilissimo Sonetto di V. Signoria, ma tutto il calore d'un'assidua applicatione non h  potuto partorire, che un' aborto indegno di luce. In gratia mi compatisca, e riceva la scusa per un difetto d'ingegno, non di volont . S'assicuri, che sapr  servirla ne' suoi comandi, se bene non h  saputo rispondere a' suoi versi. E le bacio affettuosamente le mani. Venetia». Another letter to Bonifacio in Risposta a Lettere di Lode, p. 57. On Baldassare Bonifaccio, see esp. G. M. Mazzuchelli, *Gli Scrittori d'Italia*, II, 3, Brescia 1762, pp. 1644 sqq.; L. Born, *Baldassare Bonifacio and His Essay "De Archivis"*, in "The American Archivist", IV, 1941, 4, pp. 221-37; L. Sandri, *Il "De Archivis" di Baldassare Bonifacio*, in "Notizie degli Archivi di Stato", X, 1950, pp. 95-111; L. Rossi, *Bonifacio, Baldassare*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 12, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1971; A. Mazzetti, *Il vescovo Baldassare Bonifacio*, in "Acta Historiae", IX, 2001, 2, pp. 331-42.

42. Cfr. S. Luzzatto, *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico nella Venezia del Seicento*, a cura di G. Veltri, in collaborazione con A. Lissa, P. Ferruta, Bompiani, Milano 2013; C. Roth, *Luzzatto, Simone ben Isaac Simh ah*, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. by C. Roth, G. Wigoder, vol. 11, Keter, Jerusalem 1972; C. Roth, D. Derovan, *Luzzatto, Simone ben Isaac Simh ah*, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. by M. Berenbaum, F. Skolnik, vol. 13, 2007, pp. 287-8; G. Veltri, G. Miletto, G. Bartolucci, *The Last Will and the Testament of Simone Luzzatto (1583?-1663) and the Only Known Manuscript of the Discorso (1638). Newly Discovered Manuscripts from the State Archive of Venice and the "Marciana" Library*, in "European Journal of Jewish Studies", V, 2011, 1, pp. 125-46.

43. See my *L'Accademia degli Incogniti: tra Talmud e Kabbalah*, cit.

in the Ghetto⁴⁴. From the early seventeenth century, Modena was involved in musical life. Around 1604 he was the teacher of a musical group in Ferrara⁴⁵. We already mentioned his friendship and role of protector vis-à-vis Salamone Rossi, who participated in Jewish theatre life of his town and also led his own musical company. For Rossi, Modena wrote a foreword to the Hebrew psalms *Ha'Shirim asher li'Shlomo* (*The Songs of Solomon*, Venice, 1622-1623). This foreword, a *responsum* (dating back to 1605), defended the introduction of polyphonic music in synagogue services.

In an article published in 1927-1928, Cecil Roth studied two key documents in a first attempt to adequately discover Leone Modena and his *Accademia musicale*. This attempt was followed up by, principally, Werner, Adler and Don Harrán⁴⁶. However, a re-examination of the sources shows it worthwhile to consider them anew, and to correct as well as complement some of Roth's transcriptions and conclusions, later cited by others.

In his 1683 *Via della fede*, the Jewish-Christian convert Giulio Morosini – formerly Samuel Nahmias and pupil of Leone Modena – mentions Modena's musical company⁴⁷. Others (primarily Roth, Werner and Adler), citing Morosini, explain that the Venetian *accademia* was founded by Jewish refugees from Mantua who fled the Mantuan War of Succession, 1628-1631. This arose on Vincenzio II of Gonzaga's death, opposing the French Dukes of Savoy and of

44. First publication of the *responsum* in Salomone Rossi's *Has'sirim aser li'Shelomoh*, P. & L. Bragadini, Venezia 1622-1623, ff. 4b sqq. The only complete edition we have is at the Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France (Rés. VMC-4 (1-8)). Cfr. I. Adler, *Les incunables hébraïques de la Bibliothèque nationale. Extrait du catalogue de l'Exposition du livre hébraïque*, s.e., Paris-Jerusalem 1962, Appendix B, pp. 47-9. Modern edition of Leone Modena's *responsa* collection *She'elot u'teshuvot Zigne Yehudah*, n. 6, ed. by Shlomo Simonsohn, Mosad ha'Rav Kuk, Jerusalem 1955. Cfr. I. Adler, *The Rise of Art Music in the Italian Ghetto. The Influence of Segregation on Jewish Musical Praxis*, in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. by A. Altmann, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1967, pp. 321-64; 330, 336-40; D. Harrán, *Salomone Rossi, Jewish Musician in Renaissance Italy*, in "Acta Musicologica", LIX, 1987, 1, pp. 46-64.

45. See L. Modena, *Igrot Rabi Yehudah Aryeh mi-Modena* [Letters from rabbi Leone Modena], ed. by Y. Boksenboim, Tel Aviv University Press, Tel Aviv 1984, pp. 110-1.

46. See E. Werner, *Manuscripts of Jewish Music in the Eduard Birnbaum Collection of the Hebrew Union College Library*, in "Hebrew Union College Annual", Cincinnati, HUC-JIR, 18, 1943-44, pp. 397-428; I. Adler, *La pénétration de la musique savante dans les synagogues italiennes au XVII^e siècle: le cas particulier de Venise*, in *Gli ebrei e Venezia, secoli XIV-XVIII*, a cura di G. Cozzi, Edizioni Comunità, Venezia 1983, pp. 527-36; I. Adler, *The Rise and Fall*; D. Harrán, *Salomone Rossi, Jewish Musician in Renaissance Italy*; D. Harrán, *Salomone Rossi, the Mystery Man of Jewish Art Music Composers*, in "Notes from Zamir", Spring, 2003, pp. 5-7; Harrán, *A Tale as Yet Untold*, cit.; Harrán, "Dum Recordaremur Sion", cit.

47. Morosini, *דרך אמונה* *Via della fede*, cit., p. 793. Morosini's description of Modena's *Accademia musicale* is partially cited in Adler, *The Rise of Art Music in the Italian Ghetto*, cit., p. 345; C. Roth, *L'Accademia musicale del Ghetto veneziano*, in "La rassegna mensile di Israel", 3, Tebbeth 5688/1927-28, pp. 152-62. Cfr. Werner, *Manuscripts of Jewish Music*, cit.; E. Werner, *The Music of Post-Biblical Judaism*, in *New Oxford History of Music*, I, 1957, pp. 313-35; attribution of a collection of compositions for double choirs to Leone Modena (Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, MS. 4 F. 71), disputed by Adler, *The Rise of Art Music in the Italian Ghetto*, cit., p. 324.

Nevers; the House of Habsburg became involved; the ghetto of Mantua was sacked. The musical *accademia* rehearsed two evenings a week; Leone Modena was the *maestro di cappella* of this short-lived enterprise. The group performed an «extensive Hebrew musical repertoire of “musica figurata”, including compositions for double choirs», which called for instrumental accompaniment. To perform such a composition might require «several hours»⁴⁸. Although Don Harrán cited this text as well, it is useful to specify more precisely what Morosini’s text conveys. Morosini remembers that, around 1628, during the last evening of the Festival of Simchat Torah, *Shemini Atzeret* (Eighth day of Assembly), the Academy performed double choir compositions in Hebrew and the performance of these different liturgical songs took several hours («alcune hore della notte»). For this feast, two wealthy and beautiful people («ricche e splendide») from the community were chosen as “spouses” and one of them was part of the *Accademia di Musica*. Among the instruments that were brought into the synagogue was an organ, despite that, as a general rule, rabbis did not allow these. In the richly-decorated *Scuola Spagnuola*, the synagogue where Leone’s group performed, a great number of people, including non-Jews, gathered to attend a musical spectacle that amazed its audience and drew big applause⁴⁹:

on both evenings, that is, on the eighth holiday, *Shemini Atzeret*, and the *Simchat Torah*, Rejoicing of the Torah, they sang *musica figurata* in Hebrew, parting from the *Arvith* and different *Psalms*, and the *Mincha*, which is the *Vesper* of the last day with sacred music, which lasted several hours in the evening, attracted a lot of noblemen and -women and reaped big applause, such that it was necessary to have many officers and guards at the doors, so that things passed quietly. Among the instruments was an organ, brought into synagogue, which the rabbis didn’t give permission to play, an instrument that one usually plays in our churches. But what? This all was a hay-fire, the Academy didn’t live long and the music returned to what it was before.

The second testimony is included in Leone Modena’s manuscript Or. 5395, a collection of letters and poems that was formerly part of the British Museum Oriental collection (Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts) and is currently held by the British Library. His letter comes down to us only in draft form⁵⁰. Israel Adler reconsidered a transcription of the draft letter first published by Cecil Roth in 1928. To Adler it suggests that Modena inscribed his musical Academy into

48. Ivi, p. 346.

49. «le due sere cioè nell’ottava della festa שמני עצרת *Scemini Nghatzèret* [sic], e שמחה תורה *Allegrezza della Legge*, si cantò in musica figurata in lingua Ebraica parte della ערבית *Ngharbith* [sic], e diversi Salmi, e la מנחה *Minchà*, cioè il *Vespero* dell’ultimo giorno con musica solenne, che durò alcune hore della notte, dove vi concorse molta nobiltà di Signori, e di Dame con grand’applauso, sì che vi convenne tenere alle porte molti Capitani e Birri, acciò si passasse con quiete. Tra gli’istromenti fù portato in Sinagoga anche l’Organo, il qual però non fù permesso da i Rabbini, che si sonasse per essere instromento che per ordinario si suona nelle nostre Chiese. Mà che? Tutto questo fù un fuoco di paglia, durò poco l’Accademia, e la Musica, si ritornò al pristino» (Morosini, דרך אמונה *Via della fede*, cit., p. 793).

50. Some decades earlier, around 1605, Modena had been part of a similar musical association, as testified by his letter to Judah Saltari da Fano, then rabbi in Venice.

the existing Italian academy culture⁵¹. Subsequent scholarship did not enquire further. This transcription⁵², however, required correction – see my edition at the end of this article.

5 From Diaspora to Ghetto to Academy: Rabbi Leone Modena's *Impresa*

The letter clearly shows a bipartite structure. The first part can be seen as a *descriptio* of the *impresa*, the second part as the *impresa's subscriptio*, or glose.

IMPRESA OF LEONE MODENA'S MUSICAL ACADEMY

NAME:	<i>Accademia degli Impediti</i> (Academy of the Incapacitated)
ENGRAVING:	<i>tre salici con molti libretti di musicanti, istrumenti da suono appesi</i> (three poplar trees on which hang many musical scores, and wind-instruments)
MOTTO:	<i>Cum recordaremur Sion</i> (expresses the concetto of Psalm 136)
SUBSCRIPTIO:	<i>l'infelice stato della captività nostra...</i> (the unfortunate state of our captivity)

An attentive reader will remark how the author invested in the letter's compositional effectiveness, its topical organisation and its rhetorical economy. The first phrase of part one (the first paragraph) explains that his musical academy meets so infrequently that it no longer deserves to be called an academy. In the final phrases of the second part, the conclusion of the letter, the rabbi asks his – as yet unidentified – addressee for reinforcements in the form of composers. In between the leading and concluding phrases, the letter enlivens the memory of his musical academy as well as the hope of reanimating it under rabbi Leone's own direction. Starting from phrase two, Leone presents his Academy through the *descriptio* of its *impresa*, which did not come down to us in any form other than this letter. He immediately applies the rules of the *impresa*: the depiction is accompanied by a motto and the Academy's name: the *Accademia degli Impediti*, the Academy of the Hampered – and not the *Imperiti*, as suggested per Cecil Roth's transcription. The image: «three poplars, musical libretti, and wind instruments hanging onto those trees»⁵³. The motto: «*Cum recordaremur Sion*»,

51. Adler, *The Rise of Art Music*, cit., pp. 348-9, taken up by Harrán, «*Dum Recordaremur Sion*», cit.

52. C. Roth, *L'accademia musicale del ghetto veneziano*, in "La rassegna mensile di Israel", 3, Tebbeth 5688/1927-28, pp. 152-62: 160-1.

53. The poplar trees (or willows) connote a long-standing metaphor for infertility, non-procreation and worthlessness. The four species of plant waved at Sukkot include the "willows of the brook", which can be understood here as humility on the part of Leone, for the willow has neither odour nor taste; a midrash identifies this species of plant with a Jew without knowledge or achievements. The willow may also represent the "mouth" of the one who fulfils

Leone explains, is taken from the very well-known Psalm 136. We note that Leone cites the Latin version and takes the numbering from the Septuagint of the *Sefer Tehillim*, the Book of Psalms or Book of Praises, first book of the *Ketouvim*, instead of the Masoretic version of this component of the *Psalms of Hallel*, where this Psalm is numbered 137. Leone does not mention the Hebrew title, *עַל נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל* (*Al naharot Bavel*) – “By the rivers of Babylon”. For the contemporary Italian reader, in order to grasp the full meaning of Leone’s letter, it was of primordial importance (1) to be acquainted with the verses «By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion (we sat and wept as we thought of Jerusalem) / There on the poplars we hung our harps», and also (2) to be aware that the psalm occupies a place within the multi-faceted composition of the *impresa* that Leone presents to his readers.

The explanation, part 2 of the letter, the *impresa*’s gloss or *subscriptio*. The rabbi elaborates on themes of exile and suffering and hope of harmony and fecundity. In Judaism, the willow associates to prayers for elimination of sin and for rain on Hoshana Rabba, the last day of Sukkot: *Shemini Atzeret*, the Eighth day of Assembly, on which rabbi Leone’s musical academy would perform in the Venetian *Scuola Spagnuola*. His explanation of the academy’s *impresa* involves three personifications:

1. the group making up the Ghetto’s orchestra (the *Accademia degli Impediti*);
2. the Jews of Venice and
3. all diaspora Jews past and present, the «we» that «sits by the rivers of Babylon».

This *impresa* evokes directly the relationship Modena-Rossi and their artistic collaboration. Of course, the suffering and melancholic singing within the Jewish diaspora echoes Modena’s 1605 *responsum* on the issue of polyphonic (art) music in the synagogue: the rabbis’ prohibition of this music, he says, «lies in the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of our people: how can we rejoice while our Holy Sanctuary lies fallow and we are in dispersion?». More concretely related to that collaboration, we recall that Rossi wrote a musical composition for the *Al naharot Bavel* psalm, as one of the thirty-three works for eight voices published in 1623, his sole collection of Hebrew songs, the already-mentioned *Ha’Shirim asher li’Shlomo* (Songs of Solomon). These songs were «meant to be performed in the synagogue on festivals and special Sabbaths

the commandment concerning the four species, and other midrashim abound on this ritual. Here, Leone Modena’s Academy offers an example of a literary *impresa* that distinguishes itself from the emblem in that it conveys the truth about the particular instead of pertaining to a universal truth. It refers back to symbols “archived” by emblem literature, however, delving into Greek, Roman and biblical sources for their images and symbolism. Alciato’s emblems published in Lyon under the title *Diverse imprese* (1551) and is denoted as follows: «L’Infruttoso Salice s’aguilia/ A l’huom, che molto ardisca, e nulla vaglia» (p. 189). This harks back to Homer, *Odyssey*, 10, 510; Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, 16, 46, 110; 31, 13, 16; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15, 322 and Erasmus, *Parabolae*, 15.3 and 16.110, in *Collected Works of Erasmus, Literary and Educational Writings 1: Antibarbari/Parabolae*, ed. by C. R. Thompson, University of Toronto Press, Toronto-Buffalo-London 1978, p. 265 and p. 268.

and, where suitable, in confraternities or for private and communal events»⁵⁴. Inaugurating the modernity of Hebrew texts in polyphonic setting, they would become «the cornerstone of Hebrew art music for the synagogue»⁵⁵. In Leone's introduction to the 1622-3 edition of Rossi's songs, he reminds us that Rossi added somewhat of the secular to the sacred of the psalms and songs of praise, «when people sang them and took pleasure in these delights»⁵⁶. Although, as Don Harrán points out, many questions pertaining to the conception of these compositions, as well as their reception, remain open, there is now substantial evidence for a collaboration between Rossi and Modena, who «strengthened and supported the composer in their preparation and who oversaw their printing and undertook their proofreading»⁵⁷. We may now, however, obtain a more precise idea of the nature of their collaboration.

This letter exhibits Leone Modena communicating with colleagues through devices of literary culture, a culture learned Jews of his time shared with Christians of learning, a culture that in fact had developed and been transmitted in heterodox circles since several decades. One cannot say that this literary culture was Christian – elsewhere I have explained that, by its mandatory reference to the particular and contextual the *impresa* genre turned away from Christian orthodoxy. The *impresa* was a genre wherein natural language is replaced by artificial language, re-invented, original⁵⁸.

Modena's *impresa*-image issues from a concept, the idea of an *infelice stato di captività*, a conceptual image that invites synthesised perception of its cognitive content: the specific *infelice stato* of the musicians of the *Accademia degli Impediti*, that of the Jews of the Venetian Ghetto and that of Jewish people in diaspora. Assuming this *impresa* was shared with the *Incogniti* during their gatherings, it is not hard to see how it integrated into their wider political debates and writings. As a matter of fact, the compositions that the *Incogniti* Academy brought forth intertwined with its function as a “laboratory” for political thought. That laboratory had its place in the Venetian Republic, for which Traiano Boccalini, for one, sounded the trumpet in his 1612 *Ragguagli di Parnaso*. Remarkably, several texts convey that the *Incogniti*-circle appreciated the Venetian Jews' self-government within the Ghetto as an example for the wider community⁵⁹. Do

54. Harrán, *Salamone Rossi, the Mystery Man*, cit., p. 6.

55. Harrán, *A Tale as Yet Untold*, cit., p. 1091.

56. Adler, *The Rise of Art Music*, cit., p. 342.

57. «Yet what were the realities of this collaboration», such as the duration and chronology of their collaboration, cannot be detailed with precision of evidence; Harrán, *Salamone Rossi, the Mystery Man*, cit., p. 6.

58. See above on the *impresa* as a literary genre. Of course one should not forget the sixteenth century debates on the *volgare*, the vulgar tongue. Among the projects of the Italian academies mentioned here was a literature in the vernacular, as a valid language for literary composition and for *studia humanitatis*.

59. Cfr. Pier Maria Contarini's *Compendio universal di repubblica* (1602), discussed by L. Campos Boralevi, *Classical Foundational Myths of European Republicanism: The Jewish Commonwealth*, in *Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage: Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by M. van Gelder, Q. Skinner, Cambridge

we here have a variant of the Israelite analogy, the ideal government as another Zion, cultivated by seventeenth-century Calvinists and Puritans? The reference to an existing reality, that of the Ghetto, and living Jews, contemporaries with whom the writers had in-vivo relationships, suggests something different from the Northern *respublica Hebraeorum*.

6

Republicanism through the Ghetto-Academy Mirror

Rabbi Luzzatto, mentioned earlier, wrote a *Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei*, printed in 1638, that later inspired a discourse in defence of the Jewish community (*arringa di difesa della Comunità Ebraica che tra il 1659/1660 rischiava l'espulsione dalla Serenissima*), published by Mileto and Veltri. According to the latter the author of this *Arringa* was Gianfrancesco Loredano himself⁶⁰. It seems in any case likely that it was conceived in the context of the Academy, where its members elaborated the idea of the *respublica* at different levels of analogy.

The *Accademia degli Incogniti* represented itself as a Republic, which, as we will see, some of its members held to be the ideal form of government. In the 1643 *Bizzarrie accademiche*, Gianfrancesco Loredano insists on the two-fold function of the Academy. The interests of the latter go hand in hand with those of the Venetian Republic. First, the Academy is nothing but an assembly of Worthies passing their time looking for virtue and happiness. Second, the chief obligation of its members is to flee from errors:

Qualcosa pregiudichi maggiormente alla conservatione dell' Academie. Gli interessi d'un' Academia, e quei d'una Republica, caminano per mio sentimento co i medesimi passi. L'Academia non è altro, che un'unione di Virtuosi per ingannar' il tempo, e per indagare trà le Virtù la felicità; e la Republica secondo Platone *est unio civium ad felicitatem*.

Il primo obbligo degli Academici è fuggire gli errori⁶¹.

«*Respublica*, dice nel Dialogho della Republica, *felix erit, si Philosophi regnabunt aut Reges Philosophentar*»: Loredan cites Plato's *Republic*, claiming the Republic

University Press, Cambridge-New York 2002, pp. 247-61; cfr. V. I. Comparato, *From the Crisis of Civil Culture to the Neapolitan Republic of 1647: Republicanism in Italy between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, in *Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage*, cit., pp. 169-94: 184-5; D. Raines, *La storiografia pubblica allo specchio. La "ragion di Stato" della Repubblica da Paolo Paruta ad Andrea Morosini*, in *Celebrazione e autocritica. La Serenissima e la ricerca dell'identità veneziana nel tardo Cinquecento*, ed. by B. Paul, Viella, Roma 2014, pp. 157-76. Cfr. also E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic. Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 2010.

60. Loredano died on 31 August 1661, at Peschiera, Lake Garda; cfr. Carminati, *Loredan*, cit., p. 768.

61. *Bizzarrie accademiche*, s.e., Venezia 1643, p. 149. This edition of the *Bizzarrie* had been preceded by that of 1634 (Parte prima, Steffano Curti, Venezia), that of 1638 (Giacomo Sarzina, Venezia), and that of 1640 (Dal Belpieri Cremona).

will meet happiness where Academicians will reign or kings, philosophise. The Republic is a school and academy meant to «erudire la propria anima nei discorsi dei Virtuosi»⁶². Already in the 1620s, the correspondence between Sara Copio Sullam and Baldassare Bonifaccio, their polemics on the immortality of the soul, clearly evidence this political component of their academy culture. Using Sara's family emblem, a scorpion, while taking it for an ant, Bonifaccio tries to construe what seems a *persona* of Sara, an *impresa*, the *subscriptio* of which explains her, the ant, as a society-builder, the creator of an ideal form of government called Republic. Bonifaccio's discussion with Sara *Dell'immortalità dell'anima* echoes his 1621 *Dell'Aristocrazia discorso*, published also with Pinelli in 1620⁶³:

Holding your letter into my hand and I see therein the symbol of the ant, which you wear carved into your seal – thus perhaps tacitly referring to [the example of] Lions and Eagles other people use [for their seals]⁶⁴, I take this occasion to urge you, with Salomon⁶⁵, to approach your ant, and while considering the movements of this little beast, learn from it wisdom. [...] Some Philosophers, admiring the marvellous industry of ants and bees, and considering to their much astonishment the particularly prudent arrangement of their well-ordered Republics, thought they must have an immortal soul. [...] The Isthmians used to sacrifice the ant to the Sun. And you, will you refuse to sacrifice the ant of your soul to that Father of Lights who made the Sun and the Dawn?

The background of this *glose* of Sara's «impronto», her distinctive (family) device, which she wears as a seal-amulet, probably around her neck, is given by the same Bonifaccio in his nineteen in-quarto pages long *Dell'Aristocrazia discorso* (1620). This treatise is dedicated, like the *Dell'immortalità*, to Domenico Molino (1572-1635)⁶⁶, former *reformatore* (censor) at the *Studio di Padova*, who

62. Ivi, p. 150.

63. «Mentre tengo in mano la vostra lettera, e ci vedo l'impronto della formica, la quale voi portate scolpita nel vostro suggello; così forse tacitamente riprendendo i Leoni e l'Aquile altrui: prendo occasione di essortarvi, con Salomone, che vi accostiate alla vostra formica; e considerando gli andamenti di quella bestivola, impariate da lei la sapienza. [...] Alcuni Filosofi, ammirando l'industria mirabile delle formiche e dell'api. E considerando con molto stupore la prudentissima disposizione delle loro ben'ordinate Republiche, giudicarono che elle havessero l'anima immortale. [...] Sacrificavano gli Isthmii la formica, al Sole. E voi ricuserete di sacrificar la formica dell'anima vostra à quel Padre de' lumi, c'ha fabricato il Sole e l'Aurora?» (*Dell'immortalità dell'anima, discorso di Baldassare Bonifaccio*, Antonio Pinelli, stampator Ducale, Venezia 1621, pp. 58-9). My English translation differs in some places from Don Harrán's, *Sara Copio Sullam*, cit., pp. 305-7.

64. However, see Harrán, *Sara Copio Sullam*, cit., p. 305: «As I hold your letter in my hand and see on it the imprint of the ant, which you carry sculpted on your seal, as if you were lightly reproving others' lions and eagles».

65. Proverbs, 6.6: «Take a lesson from the ants». Cfr. Giovanni Pierio Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, sive de sacris Aegyptiorum literis commentarii*, mit einem Nachwort von D. Peil, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 2005, facsimile edition of Basel, 1556, f. 57v, E-F, «Providentia»: «Salomon formicam minimum terrae animal, sapientiorem sapientibus asseverat, propterea quod sibi praeparat in messe cibum [etc.].».

66. Bonifaccio would also dedicate, among other works, his 1632 *De Archivis* to Molino.

had just taken up his seat as Senator in 1618 and was to become a famous patron, correspondent of libertines like Loredan, but also of political thinkers from the North (Vossius, Barlaeus, Casaubon). Bonifaccio builds on the analogy, richly furnished by literature from Plato to compilers like Valeriano, between the animal kingdom and the different forms of organisation of human society⁶⁷:

It is without doubt that ants govern themselves as in a Republic. Furthermore, we see clearly the distribution of responsibilities among them, the dividing of tasks, of community food, the assemblies, almost conversations, when they deliberate among themselves respecting public affairs. [...] That kind of Republic, our Nature, which is of utmost sensibility in all works, introduced in our souls, giving to intellect the responsibility of the Prince, to reason that of the Senate, to appetite that of the people, as all Platonists and especially Maximus of Tyre say⁶⁸. And this same form of government the Lord introduced among his people of Israel, as the great light Aquinas said. [...] Ants, as Valeriano tells us, bit a snake that was one of Tiberius's delights⁶⁹. Ants are, as we said, in the Republic's likeness, the snake is the symbol of Monarchy, of the type, however, that needs to reign over frogs, as in Aesop⁷⁰. Thus is Monarchy always corrosive of the free Nations. How much do we observe this in happenings of our times.

Furthermore, S. Signarolli, *Il trattato "De Archivis" di Baldassare Bonifacio e Domenico Molino: politica, storia e archive nel primo Seicento veneto*, in "Archivi", X, n.1, gennaio-giugno 2015, pp. 75-90: 79: «Basterà ricordare, come esempio della sua azione politico-culturale, il ruolo da lui svolto nella fondazione della Biblioteca universitaria di Padova, che si colloca vicinissimo all'opera di Bonifacio: come senator, portò in aula il testo del provvedimento e lo sostenne fino all'approvazione, il 5 luglio 1629; come riformatore dello Studio padovano, sottoscrisse il primo regolamento del neonato istituto, nel 1631». Cfr. T. Pesenti Marangon, *La Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova dalla sua istituzione alla fine della Repubblica Veneta (1629-1797)*, Antenore, Padova 1979, pp. 7-15, 185-8. Discourse of Molino in the *aula* of the Palazzo Ducale at the occasion of the 1628 Mantuan succession crisis – see B. Nani, *Historia della Repubblica Veneta*, I, Per Combi et La Noun, Venezia 1662, pp. 420-32; G. Cozzi, *Venezia barocca. Conflitti di uomini e idee nella crisi del Seicento veneziano*, il Cardo, Venezia 1995, pp. 381-402.

67. «Delle formiche non è da dubitare se elle si governino à Republica: Poi che si vede chiaramente la distributione tra loro de gli uffici, il compartimento delle fatiche, il vitto commune, le ragunanze, e quasi colloqui, quando tra se intorno le cose pubbliche vanno deliberando. [...] Tal maniera di Republica introdusse nell'anime nostre la Natura, in tutte l'opere sue prudentissima. Dando all'intelletto l'ufficio del Principe, alla ragione del Senato, all'appetito della plebe: Come tutti i Platonici, e specialmente Massimo Tirio considerarono. E questa medesima forma di governo introdusse Iddìo nel suo popolo d'Israelle, come avvertisce il gran lume Aquino. [...] Le formiche, si come riferisce il Valeriano, rosero un serpe, ch'era tra le delitie di Tiberio. Le formiche sono, come dicemmo, il ritratto della Republica: Il serpe è simbolo del Monarca, ma di quello c'habbia da regger le rane; com' habbiamo in Esopo. In tal guisa resto corrosa la Monarchia da gli Stati liberi; quanto si osserva ne' successi de' nostri tempi» (*Dell'Aristocrazia discorso di Baldassare Bonifaccio, Humanista nello Studio di Padova*, Antonio Pinelli, Stampator Ducale, Venezia 1620, ff. Br-C3r).

68. See Maximus of Tyre, *Oration*, 15, 4-5; Plato, *Laws*, 964d-965b.

69. See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica*, cit., f. 58v, D, *Multitudo infeste*: «Ferales etiam fuere Tiberio, quae serpentem ab eo in delitiis habitum adhuc viventem corro ferre: nam aruspices cavendum sibi esse à multitudine responderunt».

70. See Aesop, *Phaedri fabulae*, I, 2: *Ranae Regem Petunt* (The Frogs who desired a King).

In an undated letter from Gianfrancesco Loredan to Udine's *luogotenente* Andrea Bragadin (1606-1647) concerning rabbi Salomon Hai de Saraval (or Vita de Saraval, 1609-1687), Loredan praises the following qualities in the rabbi: his humbleness, his ability to preach with erudition and oratorical skills and his negotiation skills – as with the Venetian *Collegio* – not just for his own synagogue but for all society and public benefit:

Al Signor Andrea Bragadino. Udine.

Salamon Vitta Serravale Hebreo è un huomo, che merita la protettione d'ogn'uno. Gode il primato tra' suoi, essendo Capo dell'Università co'l titolo di Rabbi. Predica con molta eruditione, e discorre con sodi fondamenti. Si lascia spesso vedere alle Porte dell' Eccellentissimo Collegio, nelquale tratta negotii, non tanto per la sua Università, quanto a favore e del publico. Se ne viene egli costà a maneggiare certi interessi, e publichi, e particolari; onde hò voluto accompagnarlo con le presenti. Sò, che appresso V. Eccellenza si farà strada con l'ingenuità, e con l'humiltà, doti sue particolari e perciò non sono necessarie le raccomandationi. Con tutto ciò la bontà, e la virtù meritano d'esser protette in qualunque soggetto, che si ritrovino. V. Eccellenza faccia a mia intercessione esperimentat'a quest' huomo gli atti della sua gentilezza, e del suo amore; mentre io attestando le mie obligationi le bacio riverente le mani. Venetia⁷¹.

The self-image of the *Incogniti* Academy as a Republic is thus doubled by a Hebraic self-image, which would circulate widely and evolve in political thought of seventeenth-century England and the Low Countries. As several scholars pointed out, foremost among them Schama, the functioning of this Israelite analogy was most successful as “unifying bond” in the Dutch Republic⁷². In their *Discorsi* (1635), the Venetian patricians of the *Incogniti* Academy presented what stand out as rather original literary-philosophic elaborations of this ‘civic humanism’. In these *Discorsi*, collaboration and dialogue with Jews within the Academy become explicitly integral to the compositions. The *Discorsi* authors sometimes project, in a playful way, characteristics of the *imprese* to these texts, in which pictorial images are in fact absent (the subject of a future article in this series). In what follows I discuss one striking example of the way this publication engrosses the themes we have discussed. It will illustrate a high point in cultural hybridisation in and around the Venetian Ghetto.

71. *Lettere di Raccomandatione*, in *Lettere del Signor Gio. Francesco Loredano*, cit., p. 15. Another letter to Andrea Bragadin, in the Risposta a lettere di Congratulatione, pp. 38-9: «Nel mio rimaner alle Pompe V. S. fa pompa della sua gran benignità. Io come m'humilio à così benigna dichiarazione; così l'accerto, che le Pompe non faranno già mai insuperbire il mio cuore, onde non mi dichiarerò sempre di V. S. etc. Veneetia [sic]». I first presented this letter at the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting in 2011. More details about Salomon Hai de Saraval in Chayes, *L'Accademia degli Incogniti: tra Talmud e Kabbalah*, cit.

72. S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, Univresity of California Press, New York 1988, pp. 94-6.

7
**The *Incognito's* Body and Soul
 in a semi-Kabbalistic *Demonstratio***

A literary work, the *Discorsi* of the *Accademici Incogniti*, manifests new forms of culture and served its intellectual milieu as an emancipatory tool; one sees there, in literary compositions, assimilated strands of Hebrew learning. In their *Discorsi* of 1635, several members of this circle take up serious topics in the guise of ribaldry. Among these exhibitions we find one on *Cursed cheese* (Il formaggio biasmato), signed by Alessandro Gatti, who seems to be also discoursing on the human condition. In reality, he is discoursing on creation, space and time.

Once done with his *philosophic* demonstration contra cheese, Gatti proposes a *scientific* demonstration, which, near its conclusion, shifts to a semi-Kabbalistic demonstration. It is announced by allusions to alimentary rules, by citation of Job 10 and its interpretation, by the comparison with semen, and by supposed deformation of human body and disturbance of man's soul caused by cheese. Gatti addresses his audience directly when he writes: «You are making me a Kabbalist»⁷³.

[I]n the holy tongue cheese is called גבינה, from which word, if we want to study it closer according to the rule called “transmutation”, we form this other word גנבה, which (as we see in Exodus, chap. 22) means nothing else but theft, or larceny. By grace, this larceny we would like to conceive as deriving from cheese, which is that which in the body of he who eats it, will always steal its [the body's] cardinal humour and bit by bit the *dolce e cara vita*, by removing it.

Gatti talks about a practice that he calls *transmutatione*, but is known in Judaism as *midrash*. In Talmudic and Kabbalistic writings, this is what scribes do when they “search out” the meaning of unvocalised Hebrew words and propose variant “readings” that the absence of vowels easily permits. Alessandro Gatti deploys this practice rather freely; he wants to move from cheese – or, more precise, the coagulating substance curd – to theft. From *gevriinaah* (cheese) he goes to *geneeyvah* (a stolen thing).

What is the idea? Curd “steals” (he uses the verb *rubbare*) the body's «humido radicale» and bit by bit «la dolce e cara vita». From here he jumps to the domain of medicine, citing Hippocrates and Galen on the balance of bodily humours, which cheese dramatically disturbs. This associates to discussions on Aristotelean

73. «che il formaggio in lingua santa vien chiamato גבינה dalla qual parola se considerarla vogliamo, secondo la regola chiamata trasmutatione, si forma questa altra parola גנבה la qual come si vede nell'Essodo al capitolo 22, non altro significa, che rapina, ò furto; e che furto di gratia vogliamo pensare, che sia questo, che dal formaggio deriva, se non quello, che nei corpi di chi lo mangia, vada di continuo facendo, sempre rubbandoli l'humido radicale, e a poco, a poco la dolce, e cara vita, togliendoli» (*Discorsi Academici de' signori Incogniti, Havuti in Venetia nell'Academia dell'Illustrissimo Signor Gio. Francesco Loredano Nobile Veneto. All'Illustrissimo, e Eccell.mo Sig. Gasparo Thuillierio Consigliere di Stato del Rè Christianissimo, e suo ambasciatore ordinario appresso la Serenissima Republica di Venetia, Sarzina, Venezia 1635, p. 205*).

ethics and the golden mean, which golden mean, by the way, Maimonides invokes on the first page of his revered codification of the Pentateuch, *Mishneh Torah*. Gatti makes clear that this *Discorso* is not about suffering, but about creation of man. The writer invokes Kabbalistic speculations in the Zohar on Creation and the three Hebrew appellations or *personae* of “soul” – *nefesh* (animal part, vital constituent), *ruah* (spirit, awareness), *neshamah* (super-soul, intellect) –, and concludes with a facetious refutation of the World soul’s circular movement. The ideal cheese would not be round but square, thus assuring stability not movement. This imaginative, subversive, so-called midrash on the ideal world composition reminds us that the *Incogniti* themselves insisted time and again that their Academy was an ideal society, a miniature Republic. Meanwhile, they offered a workplace where they invented “new thinking”, perhaps less as Christians than as free-thinkers, open to new connections and methods. The waggish turns in this text do not prevent us from perceiving that this *Incognito* proposes another way of conceiving the human soul, in debt to Jewish sources. How the *Incogniti* elaborated their idea of the soul further into a Kabbalistic mould is the topic of another article⁷⁴. As I pointed out above, the *Discorsi*’s themes related to rabbi Luzzatto’s *Socrate*, which he initially might have intended to be read aloud and discussed during the *Incogniti*’s gatherings. In the same way, the *Socrate* shows kinship with Gianfrancesco Loredano’s ironic “romanzo” titled *L’Adamo*, not yet mentioned here: both works draw on major themes such as men’s *colpo-discolpo*, human reason and divine will. While discussing these topics, Loredano does not omit tongue-in-cheek allusions to contemporary politics and society. The life of *Adamo* blends sacred (biblical) history with popular (profane) tales; while a study of Loredano’s possible use of Jewish sources remains to be carried out, it is certain that this treatise was composed in the context of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*⁷⁵.

On the Jewish side, any researcher acquainted with different Venetian archive collections pertaining to Jews will confirm that these testify to the full evolution of the Jewish self-government (*nazione*) during the first half of the seventeenth century. I mean, in a political, juridical and social sense. Jewish societal and juridical systems – those interior to, ruling within the Ghetto – were evolving by negotiation with the majoritarian political and juridical systems around them. Jews were trying to secure their own European position, presence and patrimony that was neither identical to, nor inferior to that of Christians (an equivalence of course conceptual to some degree). Equivalence differs from a claim to item-by-item equality under the law. The literary culture discussed here allowed *Incogniti*

74. Cfr. Chayes, *L’Accademia degli Incogniti: tra Talmud e Kabbalah*, cit.

75. Giovan Francesco Loredano, *L’Adamo*, Sarzina, Venezia 1640; Valeriano Castiglione, *Lettere dell’abbate D. Valeriano Castiglione, su l’opere dell’Illustrissimo Signor Gio. Francesco Loredano Nobile Veneto*, per il Valvasense, Torino, Venezia, 1646, pp. 27-9; *Lettere del Signor Gio. Francesco Loredano*, pp. 50-3. See M. Miato, *L’Accademia degli Incogniti di Giovan Francesco Loredano, Venezia (1630-1661)*, Olschki, Firenze 1998, pp. 72-3; Tiziana Menegatti, “Ex Ignoto Notus”. *Bibliografia delle opere a stampa del Principe degli Incogniti: Giovan Francesco Loredano*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2000, pp. 175-7.

and Jews to re-invent models of life in a pluralistic society. However, in view of ideas on inter-culturality and trans-culturality, terminology much in vogue today in cultural studies, I would like to make a case for a research model that hypothesises an array of distinct concepts on one side, and rival sets on the other side. I am mindful here of case studies that show limits to cultural exchange. We should distinguish between distinct cultural realities in order to perceive, census and situate these conceptual phenomena of trans-culturality or hybridity and discern how cultures are interpenetrating or, equally interesting, failing to interpenetrate despite their face to face array. Thus, we avoid a facile version of universalism instead of the piecemeal discovery of plurality. I have come to believe that this two-sidedness is the most important orientation one could or should bring to studies of the Venetian Ghetto's cultural history.

Letter from rabbi Leone Modena⁷⁶

Molto Magnifico et Eccellente Signore

Hebbe una volta il nostro congresso musicale nome giustamente⁷⁷ d'Accademia⁷⁸, perche v'⁷⁹ erano⁸⁰ alcuni non indegni⁸¹ d'esser connumerati tra musici e di voci e di mano⁸². Era impresa⁸³ tre salici con molti libretti di musicanti⁸⁴, istrumenti da suono appesi, col motto *Cum⁸⁵ recordaremur Sion*, il concetto preso dal Salmo 136 *Super flumina Babilonici*⁸⁶, et il nome era de gli impediti, tutto per alluder all'infelice stato della captività nostra che si impedisce d'ogni atto virtuoso⁸⁷ la compitezza.

Ma aggiunta si la⁸⁸ sciagura che l'anno della peste⁸⁹ perdemmo i migliori soggetti che v'erano⁹⁰, ma compagnia rimase sola, all'ora⁹¹ non piu accademia, riservando il nome infatti poichè⁹² per comuni impedimenti rade volte siamo insieme e imperfettamente vien esercitata.

Qual ella si sia, però gradisce vivamente il bon affetto che V.S. per una gentilissima sua delli 28 passato gli dimostra, egli promette viridico contracambio dolendoci

76. British Library, British Museum MS Or. 5395, f. 23. In this edition I sought to respect as much as possible Leone Modena's original orthography. I normalised the 'u' into 'v', rendered titles in italics and in rare cases adapted the punctuation.

77. Add. interlin. *giustamente*.

78. Struck through; *e con ragione*.

79. Add. interlin. *v'*.

80. Struck through: *copiosa di Sigg ecc. [...]*.

81. Struck through: *del*.

82. Add. interlin. *no alcuni ad mano*. Struck through: *Hauea*.

83. Struck through: *due*.

84. Add. interlin. *lib.i di musicanti*.

85. Corrects *Dum*.

86. Add. interlin. *il concetto ad Babilonici*. I correct *fluminai*, while leaving *Babilonici*.

87. Struck through: *con*.

88. Struck through: *disgratia*.

89. Modena refers to the bubonic plague of 1630, which had reduced Venetian population by one third (from 143.000 to ca. 95.334).

90. Struck through: *e rimasta la nostra compagnia nostra*.

91. Add. interlin. *ma ad all'ora*.

92. Add. interlin. *riservando ad poiche*. Struck through: *imperfetta d'attori, e d'esercitio che rade volte*.

molto piu a noi, non poter fruir della sua presenza fermamente⁹³ in questa città⁹⁴ che siamo sicuri che darebbe pienezza d'Armonia alle nostre insipidezze. Godremo così⁹⁵ volentieri l'effetto della sua cortesia se ne farà parte de' frutti maturi che saranno prodotti nella nova loro Academia che ne significa, poiché di quà non gli potemo offerir altro tanto non havendo pianta fertile di Compositori. Ma come sia sarà sempre da noi amato, stimato e ricordato degnamente. A quale nella sua memoria raccomandarci altresì⁹⁶ gl'auguramo dal S.re ogni felicità.

Venezia, 12 Agosto 5399⁹⁷

D. V.S. M.ca et ecc.te.

Affettissimi sempre

La Compagnia de' Musici del Ghetto di Venezia

93. Struck through: *con noi*.

94. Add. interlin. *in questa città*.

95. Add. interlin. *così*.

96. Add. interlin. *altresì*.

97. I.e. 1639. In his letters Leone often puts the first part of the date in Gregorian style and the year according to the Jewish calendar.